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Reds, whites and blues

Malachy Duffy shares recipes for Blue Curação cocktails as refreshing as an ocean breeze.

he appeal of tropical concoctions often lies as much in their eye-catching allure as their potency. Trader Vic's signature mai tai, with its hues evocative of a Hawaiian sunset, comes swiftly to mind. But for pure visual punch nothing beats a blue cocktail.

Although they may vary widely in intensity and hue, these have one common ingredient: Blue Curação. Developed in the 19th century on the Caribbean island of Curação, the liqueur takes its predominant flavor from the dried peel of a citrus fruit, the laraha. This evolved from the sweet Valencia orange trees imported by Spanish explorers. Not able to thrive in the dry climate and the arid soil, the Valencia became the smaller, bitter laraha. But the peel proved to be distinctly aromatic, which led to the rise of Curação liqueur. (This is naturally clear; how the blue colorant came to be added is unknown.)

With the surging interest in cocktails, Blue Curação, once relegated to the dusty recesses of most bars, has sprung up as a popular ingredient with cocktail craftsmen. Here are recipes I've gathered from distin-

guished bars around the world.

One of my favorite resorts in the Caribbean is Malliouhana in Anguilla. Their signature cocktail is light, refreshing and resembles the stunning waters that the resort overlooks.

Malliouhana Sea

6 fresh mint leaves

½ oz. fresh-squeezed lime juice

1/2 oz. Blue Curação

1 oz. white Mount Gay Rum

3 1/2 oz. prosecco

Dash floral bitters

Dash simple syrup (combine

equal parts of sugar and water

over gentle heat)

Place five of the fresh mint leaves and lime juice in a shaker glass and muddle well. Fill shaker with ice, then add rum, Blue Curação, floral bitters and simple syrup. Shake well. Pour in a highball glass and top off with prosecco. Garnish with a fresh mint leaf.

While Nantucket is hardly a tropical island, its ties to the sea are intimate and timeless. Nantucket is home to some of the country's top resorts, including the White Elephant, whose Brant Point Grill is a favorite dining spot. Here is one of its year-round popular drinks.

The Wave Cocktail

1½ oz. Captain Morgan Spiced Rum 1½ oz. fresh-made sour mix 34 oz. Blue Curação

(equal measures of fresh lemon, lime and simple syrup)

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker. Add a dusting of cinnamon sugar to the rim of a martini glass, pour the drink into the glass and garnish with a twist of orange.

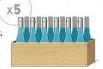
Hawaii's Big Island is home to one of my favorite places in the entire world – the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel. This drink was specially created for ShowBoats International by the hotel's Director of Restaurants and Special Events, Raymond Kanehailua.

HOW TO SPEND \$1,000 AND GO BLUE



Three cases of Senior Curacao of Curacao Blue. Said to be the original Curação, this is made on the Caribbean island itself. \$1,007, astorwine.com

Five cases of Hpnotiq liqueur. A sky-hued liqueur that was created in New



York, but now made in France. A blend of vodka, cognac and tropical flavors, it is especially popular with the nightclub set. \$1,140, missionliquor.com

Six bottles of Johnnie Walker Blue Label. This is the pinnacle of the Johnnie Walker portfolio. The main component is the very smooth single malt Royal Lochnagar, to which a dash of peaty Islay single malt is added. \$1,014, calvertwoodley.com



Two cases of Ocean Vodka (1-liter bottles). This smooth spirit has a unique provenance: It is made from organic sugar cane on the island of Maui, the only such product

in the world, \$1,008. crossroadswines.com

Mauna Kea Blue Skies

2 sprigs tarragon

2 thinly sliced lemon wheels

34 oz. Blue Curação

1 oz. Perrier

3/4 oz. Bombay

Sapphire East gin

34 oz. St-Germain elderflower liqueur

34 oz. fresh lemon juice

Muddle tarragon sprigs and lemon

slices in a Collins glass. Add gin,

Blue Curacao, St-Germain, lemon juice and Perrier. Stir to combine.

Serve over ice.

Crystal-blue persuasion

The venerable Irish firm Waterford is branching out from its more traditional crystal wares. The Mixology Argon Blue decanter has a sleek shape and melds blue and clear crystal. \$375, waterford.com

