

Revelers gather at Washington, DC's Tavern Club to celebrate the 75th anniversary of repeal of Prohibition.



Repeal Still Appeals

Washington, DC celebrates the 75th anniversary of the end of Prohibition

by Kelly A. Magyarics



Gina Chersevan mixes up a batch of her Bitter Passion, with Campari and Skyy Infusions Passionfruit.

Despite all the new legislation being considered right now in Washington, an amendment that hit the books way back in 1933 garnered far more attention recently in the District. On December 5, 2008, revelers gathered at DC's City Tavern Club to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the repeal of Prohibition—the “Noble Experiment” that quickly and undeniably proved to be anything but.

Organized by the DC Craft Bartenders Guild, the festive event gave partygoers the chance to sample libations made by the most talented mixologists in the city, with the proceeds benefiting the Guild, the Club's Preservation Fund and the Museum of the American Cocktail. Guild founding member Derek Brown of DC's The Gibson explained the importance of the city's bar talent joining forces to locally promote creativity in mixology: “We share information and discuss our craft and community. Bartending has always been a social occupation, and one that stands at the center of local politics.”

Cocktail lovers had their pick of both clas-

sic and newly-concocted sips. Old-time favorites include the tart and heady gin-based Aviation, and the the eggnog-esque Tom & Jerry. To create the latter's signature batter, special guest Tony Abou-Ganim of the Fine Living Network's *Raising the Bar* series used a stand mixer and lots of eggs to give guests a culinary lesson in making meringue. The resulting foam was ladled into warm mugs and topped with brandy and hot water. [See Tony's complete Tom & Jerry recipe in the December 2008 issue of THE TASTING PANEL.—Ed.]

Some newer ingredients on the market also found their way behind the bar, including Domaine de Canton ginger liqueur, which Brown added to VSOP brandy, lemon juice and The Bitter Truth's Repeal Day bitters for his aptly-coined “December 5th” cocktail. Gina Chersevani of EatBar combined Skyy Infusions Passionfruit with Campari and fruit juices for the refreshing and citrusy Bitter Passion.

Flapper dresses, fedoras and feathers set the festive mood, and guests also got into the swing of things with a 1930s jazz band. A balcony was the stage for toasts (and roasts) throughout the evening—a tradition on Repeal Day.

Seventy-five years ago, 3,000 bartenders in Washington, DC alone lost their livelihood. But the anniversary party proved that bartending is both a career and a well-respected craft, squelched during a dark time in American history, but reemerging these days all over the U.S. stronger than ever. And that's something to raise a glass to. ■

Repeal Day at The Edison, L.A.

Owner Andrew Meieran (left) and Director of Beverages and Spirits Aidan Demarest of The Edison welcomed guests to the 75th anniversary of Repeal in downtown Los Angeles on December 5. A special barrel of Woodford Reserve fueled the festivities.



PHOTO: DAVID GADD