



Shaken,

story by Jennifer Chesak
photos by Werner Straube

not stirred

Sea Rays are world-renowned for their classic lines, impressive features and luxurious amenities. Their owners are known for their fine tastes, gregarious personalities and adventurous attitudes. You and your Sea Ray go together much like the perfect ingredients in a fine drink. Did someone say cocktail? Of course, cocktail on a lavish boat—whether vacationing in an exotic locale or lounging in your local marina—requires taking what’s on the rocks beyond your basic gin and tonic.

Enter Adam Seger, master mixologist. Standing in the galley of a 48 Sedan Bridge, he peers through dark, square-framed glasses and makes art out of ginger, Michigan black cherries, sugarcane sticks, mint and curlicue orange peels. The meat of the drink is Don Eduardo’s Añejo Tequila. “It has the most complexity from the age,” says Adam of the añejo, one of three Don Eduardo ultra-premium expressions. “This drink has a

lot going on flavor-wise.” What exactly is this concoction, you ask? Even the sculptor himself hasn’t named it yet. “A Black Cherry Smash, maybe,” he says raising an eyebrow. The cherries—found only this morning at a local farmer’s market—were his inspiration, and his masterpiece took shape from there. “The bar is like the ultimate open kitchen,” says Adam, the general manager and sommelier at Chicago’s *nuevo latino* restaurant, Nacional 27. “You customize for your guests.”

While Adam can master-mix with all sorts of spirits, he’s focusing on the tastes of those onboard the 48 Sedan Bridge. Javier Orendain, grandson of the actual Don Eduardo who launched the company, is enjoying a cruise on the Chicago River with executives from spirit producer and marketer Brown-Forman Corporation. As a third generation guardian of a tradition of making tequila in what he calls, “the old-fashioned” way, Javier certainly knows his spirits.





(Left to right) Adam Seger (front) and Brown-Forman execs toast with a Dark and Stormy—a mix of ginger beer and Appleton Estate 21-Year-Old Jamaica Rum; the luscious Black Cherry Ginger Habanero Mojito; Javier Orendain (left) talks tequila with Patrick O’Reilly and Lis Wilthew.

recipe

Black Cherry Ginger Habanero Mojito
(build in a 16-ounce pint glass)
1/2 lime, quartered
16 mint leaves
8 black cherries, halved and seeded
2 ounces Appleton Estate V/X
Jamaica Rum
1 ounce Ginger-Habanero Syrup
(see recipe below)
splash of Ginger Beer

Muddle lime, mint and cherries until juicy and aromatic. Add rum and Ginger-Habanero Syrup. Fill 3/4 to top with ice and stir. Fill to top with ice, splash with Ginger Beer and stir once more. Garnish with a Sugarcane swizzle stick.

Ginger-Habanero Syrup (1 cup)
2/3 cups white sugar
2/3 cups water
6 quarter-inch slices fresh ginger
1 halved/seeded habanero pepper

Bring sugar and water just before a boil. Take off heat and add ginger and habanero. Remove habanero after 10 minutes. Cool in the refrigerator.

“It’s such a big responsibility,” says Javier, who is in charge of marketing for Don Eduardo in Mexico. “I have to continue with the tradition as a tribute to my grandfather for what he taught us, his love for the tequila fields and our heritage.”

Javier says that having the family involved in making the spirits sets Don Eduardo apart from other tequilas. “We put all our effort into things like choosing the best plants,” he explains. Don Eduardo owns its own fields, creates its own yeast, uses stone ovens rather than stainless steel and employs slow cooking, distillation and fermentation processes. Don Eduardo also has the first triple distiller on the market, which makes the tequila very soft. “Tequila is the only thing we know how to do,” says Javier. “And if it’s the only thing we know how to do, let’s do it the best we can.”

Adam serves the brightly colored Black Cherry Smash to Javier up on the bridge, where he has been enjoying tapas prepared by Luis San Martin, lead server at Nacional 27. A tray of Costa Rican hearts of palm with jalapeño and tomato salsa, papaya, kalamata olives, avocado and avocado vinaigrette dressing is traded for a plate of Manchego cheese from Spain mixed with Spanish chorizo and served over cumin crisp. “The chorizo is nice with the añejo,” Javier says. Even with all the fruit flavors, the tequila shines through without making the drink overpowering.

“If you get a drink really well-balanced, you don’t taste the heat from the alcohol—but it can be dangerous,” explains Adam with a smile, knowing how quickly some of his drinks can go down the hatch (especially considering how tempting it is to munch on those tequila-infused cherries at the bottom).

Adam’s Michigan black cherries serve as inspiration for another round of cocktailing when Brown-Forman executives marketing Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum storm Chicago. He sets up a row of glasses in the galley of the

48 Sedan Bridge and prepares the ingredients to create a fresh take on a Cuban classic: the mojito.

This mojito has more adjectives than a Crate and Barrel catalog and is a color any woman would die to have in a lipstick. But the Black Cherry Ginger Habanero Mojito with Appleton Estate V/X Jamaica Rum is anything but froufrou. It begins with a nice sweetness and finishes with the spice of a Bloody Mary. “You think fruity at first,” says Patrick O’Reilly, Brown-Forman’s off-premise manager for Illinois, “but it ends with that burn—in a good way.”

Appleton Estate V/X is the flagship brand for Appleton. This rum is a blend of several rums between five and ten years old. They have been hand-blended and placed in large oak vats for an extended period of time, allowing the flavor and bouquet to mingle. “The V/X doesn’t overpower this drink, whereas older rums would,” says Joe Murray, brand manager for Appleton. “It’s great, a Jamaican rum in a Cuban drink. The mojito has become unrecognizable now.”

Certainly, looking at this crimson beverage, you’d never know it was a version of Ernest Hemingway’s favorite cocktail. “Who would ever think habanero peppers and black cherries could taste good together?” laughs Patrick.

That’s why Adam is called a master mixologist. It’s his passion to ponder new flavors and how he can make any concoction more intense. For Sea Ray owners mixing it up in their own galleys or at home, he recommends juicing up your old standbys. “You can order a vodka tonic anywhere,” explains Adam. “I like to start with a classic and then think about what I have that’s fresh. The cherries just looked so great.”

As evidenced by the drained glasses onboard, his guests thought so, too. Adam continuously presents them with new drinkable art as they bob through the city enjoying the evening sun on the Sea Ray. It appears that while giving the mojito a new edge, Adam has put a new twist on a classic saying: Life may just be a *glass* of cherries. SRJ