

The Seven-Year Itch

Lucy Brennan's Mint celebrates a milestone anniversary

To honor the seventh anniversary of Mint, I sat down over drinks with owner **Lucy Brennan**, who is ranked one of the nation's top mixologists by *Food and Wine*, *Bon Appétit* and *Playboy*. But first, I stopped in at Gilt Club to ask what the men of Salon Q prefer to imbibe.

Hank Harris likes a dirty martini, as does **Blake Ellis**, but only in the summer; for wintertime, he switches to Manhattans. **Kevin Coulson's** drink of choice is also a Manhattan, because

"it starts with man and ends with in." Some guys go for the quick hit, like **Dan Ly**, who chooses the aptly named hurricane, while **Spencer Warden** paces himself with bitters and soda. Other drinkers on display were **Phil Marshall**, **Abraham Rubio** and **Ryan Reilly**, who sticks with microbrews because "Portland is the home of beer."

Then it was over to Mint to congratulate Lucy. "Seven years," she said. "That's like 70 in any other business. Thank God for Botox."

Floyd Sklaver: How has the cocktail scene changed since you arrived from San Francisco in '94 to manage Saucebox?

Lucy Brennan: Now I see people having specialty cocktail lists in practically every restaurant and every bar. People are experimenting...I think Saucebox was probably the leader of the pack in bringing fresh juices and making creative cocktails, infusions.

FS: What's an infusion?

LB: An infusion is when you take a spirit, typically vodka, then you put in a fruit and let it sit for three or four days, so basi-

cally you're draining the essence of the fruit into the vodka, instead of doing artificial flavoring, which was popular in the '80s and early '90s.

FS: Like your beet vodka?

LB: Yeah, that's a great example of infused vodka.

FS: What distinguishes a good cocktail?

LB: Definitely using fresh product, being creative and having it balanced...I don't want something too sweet or too tart; you have to get all the ingredients to pretty much marry and perform well. And not put too many ingredients into a cocktail.

FS: Do you have a maximum number you'll use?

LB: I try to keep it under five. You see some cocktail lists and they're just over ambitious. Customers just want to know what is the primary taste.

FS: Are there certain elements that go together better than others? Are there certain don'ts, for instance?

LB: Well, I definitely wouldn't recommend taking something real high end, like a single malt scotch, and try making it into a cocktail. You wouldn't

take a premium wine and make it into sangría. You have to have respect for the product you're using and know what to marry it with.

FS: What forgotten or old-fashioned cocktail deserves to come back?

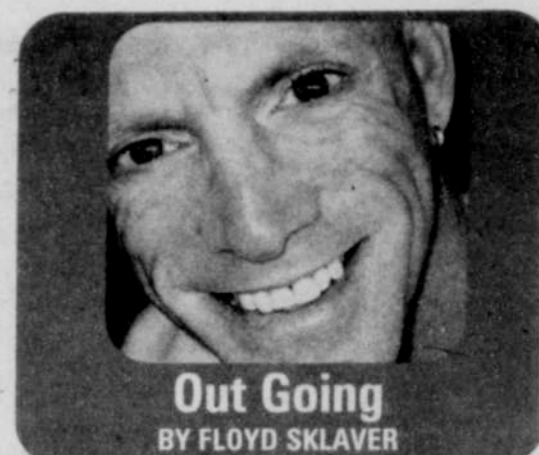
LB: I think a lot of the New Orleans-style cocktails, like the French 75. French 75 is gin, fresh lime juice and champagne, and it's a classic. When you hear those together it sounds, eww, but if it's made well, it's a fabulous cocktail. I love champagne cocktails. If it's made right, it's delicious. A lot of bartenders and mixologists don't know their classics; they don't know their foundations of cocktails, and they come up with these fabulous smoked-salmon-infused blah blah, but...people should study their classics.

FS: OK, I'm almost afraid to ask, but what's a lollipop rim?

LB: It's a sugar rim on most of my cocktails, and I refer to it as lollipop because I like watching my customers lick it.

FS: Why is it your signature?

LB: A lot of my cocktails have sugar...and I'm known for at least a 2-inch rim—that doesn't sound right—a



Out Going
BY FLOYD SKLAVER

2-inch rim of sugar on the martini glass.

FS: What are the latest trends in mixology today?

LB: A lot of use of bitters; a lot of people making their own tonic waters. It's a lot of work, but the end product is quite delicious... Gin is really popular; rum is becoming quite popular. It used to be vodka; now it's rum and gin. I love tequila—high-end tequila. I am a lady, after all.

FS: And a beautiful one.

LB: Thank you, Floyd.

FS: Thank you.

And a special thanks to **Royce Hostetler** for the lovely note and *Peanuts* cartoons in which Charlie Brown takes dance classes in order to be more Out Going. 10

FLOYD SKLAVER wants to know about your event. E-mail him at floydsklaver@comcast.net.



Lucy Brennan with a brand new concoction, The Marcotini, created in honor of former *Just Out* columnist Marc Acito.



Shea Steel
Realtor
503-282-4000 Ext 112
sheasteel@remax.net

Dawnie Grubstein
Mortgage Broker
503-557-9100
dawnie@moxiemortgage.com

We cover both sides of the fence.

We'll find you a home and get you the loan.

Close your transaction with Shea and Dawnie and receive \$200 off your closing costs! Offer expires 6/30/08





Our quality will stun you, our prices will thrill you.




JEWELRY BY PONCE PORTLAND


8079 SE 13th Ave.
503.233.3698

Open: Tues to Sun 11-7


Come visit us in our new beautiful Sellwood location!



jewelrybyponceportland.com



don't let your doctor take YOU out of the picture



DON VALERIO, MD
INTERNAL MEDICINE / PRIMARY CARE
FANNO CREEK CLINIC
2400 SW VERMONT 503-452-0915



Voted "Portland's Best Specialty Pet Food Store" by *Portland Monthly Magazine*

All Natural Foods 🍄 Raw Food Diets
Allergy Relief 🍄 Grooming Products
Collars & Leashes 🍄 Fun Toys
Pet Beds 🍄 Small Animal Supplies
Herbal & Homeopathic Remedies

Northeast Portland
2224 NE Alberta Street
503-249-6571

Southeast Portland
1402-A SE 39th (at Hawthorne)
503-236-8036

Southwest Portland
7642 SW Capitol Highway (Multnomah Village)
971-222-2686

Online
www.healthypetsnw.com
M-F 10-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. Noon-5



The Natural Alternative for Pet Foods & Supplies