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# Kombucha Cocktails

PROBIOTIC DRINKING MADE DRUNKER by Camilla Mortensen

I survive mainly on kombucha, coffee and hard liquor. Mixing coffee with whiskey is kind of a no-brainer. I'm perky and buzzed — what could go wrong? Kombucha, in large doses, has a similar effect on me. Given my predilection for caffeine and adult beverages, kombucha cocktails strike me as pure genius.

For those of you who are new to the kombucha craze — I hesitate to call it a fad, since I've got friends who have been singing its praises for years — kombucha is a probiotic brew of tea fermented with yeast and bacteria, aka a "mother" or a "scooby" (symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast), often likened to a mushroom. It has low levels of caffeine and alcohol. If you don't like it now, try it with a hangover — there's something about the probiotics mixed with a smell reminiscent of stale beer that makes it strangely palatable when you are green and feeling icky.

Recently, a friend of mine who shall remain nameless told me that he would never again drink the bubbly elixir while driving because the device installed on his vehicle to prevent him from doing something stupid like drinking and driving locked up after he took a hit. I mocked him, thinking that he was just blaming the 'buch for his own backsliding.

To prove him wrong, I took a slug from my mini-growler of Townshend's Brew Dr. Superberry. Then I whipped out the keychain Breathalyzer I had just won at a Sheriff's Posse Poker Ride and blew.

I huffed a .02. That's enough to get a DUII in this town. Duly noted: You are not supposed to breathalyze right after drinking; you are supposed to wait 15 minutes. Two minutes later I blew nothing.

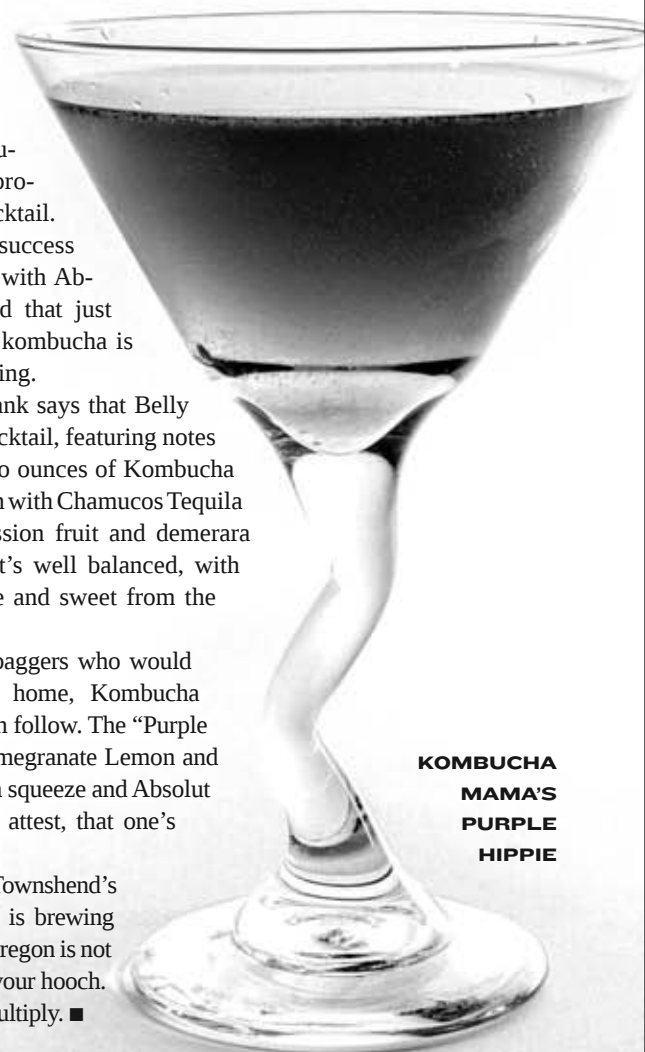
So the fact remains: mixing kombucha and liquor is brilliant, but bring a designated driver along if you will be sampling the alcohol-added wares at Belly, The Cannery, The Granary or The Barn Light, all of which I'm told feature a tempting mix of liquor and probiotics — because there's nothing like getting a little drunkered up and promoting good digestion.

If you are new to kombucha, I'd suggest going to a professional for your first cocktail. While my co-worker found success in mixing Brew Dr.'s Love with Absolut Hibiscus, I discovered that just dumping gin into whatever kombucha is at hand was less than appealing.

Bar manager Jeremy Shank says that Belly will mix you a kombucha cocktail, featuring notes of bitter and sweet, from two ounces of Kombucha Mama's Pomegranate Lemon with Chamucos Tequila Reposado, lemon juice, passion fruit and demerara simple syrup. Shank says it's well balanced, with bitter from the pomegranate and sweet from the passion fruit and demerara.

For you kombucha low-baggers who would rather mix your drinks at home, Kombucha Mama has a drink list you can follow. The "Purple Hippy" also features the Pomegranate Lemon and it uses a lemon twist, a lemon squeeze and Absolut vodka. As the EW staff can attest, that one's pretty darn good.

From Kore Kombucha to Townshend's to whatever your best friend is brewing from the scooby in his closet, Oregon is not lacking in 'buch to mix with your hooch. Go forth and let the scobys multiply. ■



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