

COLUMBIA BAR

Bloody Mary

By RYAN HUME

The Portway Tavern lays claim to being the oldest-running saloon in Astoria, with its doors first opening as a café deep inside the Prohibition Era year of 1925. With age comes mystery and stories to explain the unexplained, especially in a bar.

For instance, what is going on with that trapdoor sawed into the wood floor? Rumors of hauntings have belled around the bar for years. In fact, during a recent visit, the bartender on duty claimed to have had her first eerie occurrence after several months on the job when she was opening up that very morning. She'd had the very distinct sensation that something (not someone, mind you) was peeking at her from around the dart machine that led to the bathrooms.

Though I don't think this recent incident informed her decision to stir me up a Bloody Mary, a cocktail now synonymous with the popular urban legend, both of which sneer homage at Queen Mary I, who wasn't very popular with the Protestant set.

The Portway doesn't use a mix for their Marys, but concocts each one to order. The bartender advised to start slow on the fixings, as you can always add spice and salt, but never take away. Bloody Mary, the venerable cocktail, turned 80 in 2014. And while there is certainly something nice about sitting in one of Astoria's oldest bars, sipping on an old lady, make sure you only have one, never three, and never in front of a mirror.

Ingredients:

- 1 or 2 wedges fresh lime
- 1 wedge fresh lemon
- 2 ounces vodka
- A few dashes of A.1. Steak Sauce, to taste
- A few dashes of Worcestershire sauce, to taste
- A few dashes of Tabasco, to taste
- Celery salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- A drizzle of Manzanilla olive brine
- Tomato juice
- Ice
- Lemon, lime, olives for garnish



Optional:

- Kosher or coarse salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon prepared horseradish

Directions:

If salting the rim, rub down the lip of a pint glass with a lime wedge before dredging it in salt. (Note: For additional kick, add the cayenne to the salt beforehand.)

Fill the pint glass to the brim with ice. Add the vodka and the juice from one lime and one lemon wedge. To taste, add the celery salt, black pepper, A. 1., Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, olive brine and horseradish if using.

Finish with tomato juice and garnish with olives and additional citrus. (Note: Or run it through the garden at home. Leafy celery can double as a stirrer and a snack. Pickled vegetables — such as cocktail onions, pepperoncini, green beans or asparagus — are a nice addition. Some even go the extra distance and spear meat or seafood onto the toothpick. Try a hunk of salami or mortadella or add a cooked shrimp.)

—Recipe courtesy of Jennifer Mills, bartender at the Portway Tavern, Astoria, Oregon



Submitted photo courtesy Don Child

From left, Ryan Tallman, Don Child, Bryce Nurdning and Jonathan Williams pose in front of a Wisconsin sign as they enter the state July 21. After leaving Astoria June 18, the group is biking across America this summer to raise funds for Operation Comfort Warriors. They expect to reach New York City Aug. 15.

Bike Trip America

Astoria to New York City
Update #2, July 8 to Aug. 4

By MARILYN GILBAUGH

The crew: Astoria teenage Boy Scouts Bryce Nurdning, Ryan Tallman and Jonathan Williams are just two states — Pennsylvania and New York — away from completing their cross-country biking odyssey. Adult support team cyclist Don Child, of Hawaii, and Suburban driver Pat Wollner, of Gearhart, keep on with the boys.

States under their belt: Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

Mileage: As of Tuesday, Aug. 4, they've traveled 2,854.5 miles into the 3,521.3 total according to Bryce Nurdning's calculations.

Highlights:

On schedule: The crew has spent close to seven weeks on their bikes — daily burning 5,000-plus

calories. They are on their way to reach NYC on Aug. 15.

Raising the bar: The mission of this biking trip is to raise funds and awareness for Operation Comfort Warriors. These Boy Scouts set their goal at \$10,000 — and surpassed it while in Indiana. Not settling after achieving that number, they've set a higher goal of \$15,000 and are well on their way to the \$12,000 mark.

Support from strangers: People all along the way have been unbelievably supportive with meals, lodging and tours of home towns.

The going is good: Aside from a couple of flat tires, some tire changes, and a tune up or two, things are (knock on wood here) going really well.

July 26: Hosts in Manitowoc, Wisconsin treated the boys like royalty on their super farm, complete with TV, X-box, paintball, nerf-ball, basketball, kayaking, a pool table, a pond with a zip line across it and Wisconsin ice cream.

July 31: Riding into LaGrange, Indiana, the crew was met with a police escort, lights flashing, siren blazing, and a welcome committee of 300 people for dinner at the local American Legion Hall.

Aug. 3: Happy 17th birthday to Bryce Nurdning!

Scenic summer: Midwest fireflies and flatlands, beautiful old towns, and large brick homes resemble movie sets. American flags fly everywhere.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

An occasional feature by MATT LOVE

Downtown Coffee Shop

Once upon a time ago, coffee was coffee, and a coffee shop was a coffee shop, and people didn't talk about coffee; they drank it for free and they actually talked to one another rather than fiddling nonsense on their phones and tablets.

That was so long ago, no one under 35 will probably remember that era. But there is a golden return to the ambiance of the old days with the Downtown Coffee Shop, a hidden gem of Astoria's café scene.

I started frequenting the joint, located on 10th Street just south of Commercial, when it became almost impossible to find a seat (or languor) at my other favorite coffeehouses in town. I now use Downtown's quiet outdoor seating area as my summer writing studio and love how I can stare at ancient fire escapes, the mighty river, and watch the comings and goings of the customers from the beauty salon across the street. Everyone always looks happy when they leave the salon. I like watching happy people, and the outside tables of Downtown are a perfect place to do that.

The coffee is good and plentiful here, and owner Hayley Clark leads an excellent smiling crew who create a fun atmosphere to hang out in. How could it not be with the huge poster of Fabio presiding over the room?

Downtown offers a breakfast and lunch menu, virgin cocktails, assorted baked goods, and the occasional toasted peanut butter and jelly sandwich special for Throwback Thursdays. What's next? Folgers drip coffee? Yes, please.

I almost forgot to mention: Downtown Coffee delivers between Eighth and 14th streets. How is that for old school?! It's open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

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Matt Love lives in Astoria and is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon. They are available at coastal bookstores and through www.nestuccaspitpress.com

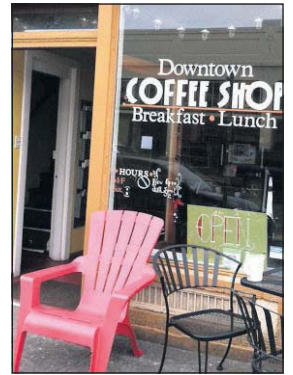
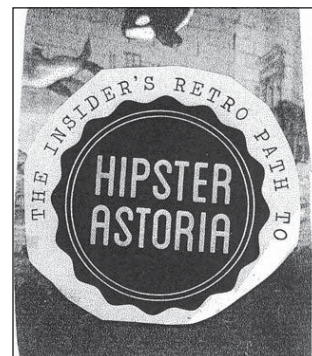


Photo by Matt Love

The coffee is good and plentiful at Downtown Coffee Shop in Astoria.



IN THE ZINE

Nestucca Spit Press's Hipster Astoria, a fold-out zine guide, is out this August and features a 1940 map of Astoria and all the cool retro spots in town. It's written by Matt Love and designed by Amira Shagaga and field tested by a legion of visiting hipsters. Available exclusively at Godfather's Books and Espresso in Astoria for \$1.