

GRAB BAG

BOOK SHELF // GLIMPSE // WILDLIFE // POP CULTURE // WORDS // Q&A // FOOD // FUN

COLUMBIA BAR

Mango Rita

By RYAN HUME

Just up the street from Haystack Rock on a recent sunny Saturday afternoon, there was plenty of bustle inside Cannon Beach Hardware & Public House — though this crowd seemed to be searching out sustenance and the type of screwdriver that is neither standard nor Phillips.

The Screw & Brew, as it is colloquially known, isn't just a popular destination with locals and tourists alike because of its quirky, relaxed atmosphere and the novelty of its invention, but also because the small kitchen and bar are turning out a menu of scratch-made food and cocktails as well as plenty of pints. You're not going to find house-made pastrami and sour mix at Home Depot, no matter how hard you try. And yes, the Screw & Brew may be the only coastal hardware store proud to serve up both Rusty Nails and saltwater-resistant fasteners.

So, sure, there may be two floors of home improvement, gardening and plumbing supplies, but it's what's behind the bar that counts. Here you'll find a rotating supply of infused spirits made in-house that can shake the dust off any old margarita or Mary. More often than not, infusers confuse the word "fruity" for "sugary" and the Screw & Brew's subtle dry infusions are a nice reminder that those two words are not synonymous.



This is not a recipe for a mango margarita. You can put away your blender and your Slurpee straw. This is a recipe for a classic margarita, balanced on the edge of tart and citrus forward, accompanied on the backend by a smack of mango, that juicy stone fruit that takes salt and pepper so well. To get it right, make your own sour mix, like DK does at the Screw & Brew. "It makes all the difference," he said.

Ingredients:

1.5 ounces mango-infused tequila*
¼ ounce orange liqueur, such as Triple Sec or Grand Marnier
1 teaspoon agave syrup (or simple syrup)
1 ounce sour mix
Ice
Orange wheel
Lime wedge
Coarse salt

Directions:

Squeak a lime wedge around the rim of a Mason jar, highball or other cocktail glass and dip the rim into the salt. Add ice and then stir in all of the liquid ingredients. Finish by squeezing out the juice of the orange and the lime before depositing what's left of the citrus into the glass.

*The Screw & Brew uses Luna Azul tequila for its infusions, though any moderately priced silver tequila will do. Add some peeled and chopped up mangos and the tequila to an air-tight container and let sit in a cool, dark place or in the back of the fridge for five days or so before straining.
—Recipe courtesy of David Kinhan, bar manager of Cannon Beach Hardware & Public House

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

Sea Gypsy Gifts

By MATT LOVE

I asked Naomi Pena, Astoria's premier mermaid costumer and owner of Sea Gypsy Gifts on Commercial Street, if any tourist couples ever bought a mermaid outfit when they came into the shop or at her booth at the Astoria Sunday Market.

"Sure," she said, kind of winking, certainly smiling. "It happens all the time."

It does? That surprised me. I tried picturing the mermaid role-playing scene unfolding in a room at the Cannery Pier Hotel or Lamplighter Motel or maybe a tent at Fort Stevens State Park. I wasn't seeing it. This is a gillnetting and vaping town to me.

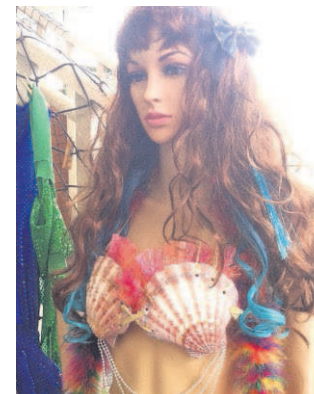


PHOTO BY MATT LOVE

Sea Gypsy Gifts in Astoria sells mermaid costumes.

But Astoria is changing. You can feel it in the air.

"To spice things up?" I asked.

"Sure," said Naomi. "Why not?"

Why not indeed? What happens in Astoria stays in Astoria.

That goes for mermaids, too. This Prohibition-era town was once Capitol Sin City with gambling, booze, drugs, brothels and shanghaiing. Maybe it's on the way back. I hope so. A mermaid costume craze would really spice up the old brand.

Naomi reckons she's sold close to a thousand mermaid costumes in the last decade. That has to be a record in Oregon. Halloween is the hot season, but why not get one for the summer and surprise that special someone or first date? Imagine the look on that person's face when you unveil the costume in a dark Chinese restaurant lounge.

Why not indeed? Head down to Sea Gypsy Gifts, and Naomi will set you up in style.

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Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books, including "A Nice Piece of Astoria." His books are available at coastal bookstores or his website, nestuccaspitpress.com

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