

Blossoming into a trend

Elderflower cocktails springing up in NYC

By **Cristina Velocci**
Metromix.com

Since its debut in early 2007, St. Germain — a liqueur made from rare wild elderflower blossoms that grow in the foothills of the Alps — has made a splash in the spirits world. Mixologists praise its delicate citrusy notes and easy confluence with other spirits.

Fittingly, elderflower cocktails have slowly blossomed at bars around the city, and though the liqueur's floral qualities are usually associated with spring, its lesser-known medicinal properties make it perfect for combating the fall flu come cold season.

Roses \$12 P*Ong

150 W. 10th St., between Greenwich Avenue and Waverly Place
212-929-0898

Considering dessert guru Pichet Ong's pedigree, it's no surprise he would create a cocktail that resembles liquid candy. In a riff on the Bellini, Ong pours Italian prosecco over syrupy elderflower cordial and Lebanese rose candies in a champagne flute misted with edible 23-karat gold. "When you take a sip, your lips get all glittery, so it's very sexy," Ong says. The cordial and candies rest unmixed at the bottom, and the prosecco bubbles distribute the sweetness as they fizz to the top.

La Fleur de Paradis \$12 Pegu Club

77 W. Houston St., between Wooster Street and West Broadway
212-473-7348

To satisfy Pegu Club's weekend patrons, who regularly request lychee martinis despite their absence on the menu, head bartender Kenta Goto created this delicate cocktail that replicates the sweet, floral flavor by using elderflower

liqueur. The result is a soft and fizzy gin-based cocktail. The walk-off is citrusy and light, thanks to freshly squeezed lemon and grapefruit juices, while orange bitters keep things grounded. Floating edible pansies make for an elegant presentation.

The Elderflower Blossom \$13 Olana

72 Madison Ave. at 28th Street
212-725-4900

This fragrant, fruity-floral cocktail — made with pureed strawberry and lychee, Stoli Blackberi and St. Germain — might be designed as an aperitif, but the thick texture and robust flavor makes it seem like a meal. The lychee provides the drink with body, a gummy texture and an earthy sweetness; the elderflower balances the strawberry's acidity for a mellow taste resembling spiked fruit punch. "It has a floral bouquet sensibility," says Olana's assistant general manager, Colleen Hickey.

The Fling \$11 Jane

100 W. Houston St., between Thompson Street and LaGuardia Place
212-254-7000

While most other cocktails use elderflower to build upon the character of another spirit, Jane's general manager, Jeff Blath, uses ingredients to build upon the qualities of the elderflower itself, starting with Jane's house white wine, a French Sauvignon Blanc. Tarragon

and lemon are muddled together for a subtle herbal taste and balance the sweeter, floral notes, while vodka gives it kick. The crisp, mellow mix is served in a highball glass and topped with a spritz of club soda.

Juniper Breeze \$13 Flatiron Lounge

37 West 19th St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues
212-727-7741

Cocktail queen Julie Reiner created this light, refreshing punch after sampling Plymouth Gin for the first time. "I thought it was a soft, feminine-style gin, and that it would go well with the elderflower cordial," she says. Since the cordial boasts a more concentrated, super-saturated floral taste than the liqueur, Reiner balances its robust sweetness with freshly squeezed pink grapefruit and lime juices for an acidic citrus tang, and a splash of cranberry juice for dryness. The popular light-pink punch has been a staple since its debut on the opening menu in 2003 — long before "elderflower" became part of the nightlife vernacular.

Yellow Jacket \$15 Employees Only

510 Hudson St., between Christopher and W. 10th streets
212-242-3021

When Jason Kosmas, the bartender and co-owner of this retro-classic speakeasy, created the Yellow Jacket, his muse was not delicate elderflower liqueur, but rather Partida Reposado tequila. "I knew I could use the floral aromas of the St. Germain to retain the tequila's integrity while also giving it some sweetness," Kosmas says. A dash of orange bitters adds depth and bridges these flavors to round out this silky smooth cocktail.

La Fleur de Paradis
at Pegu Club
(Michael Harlan Turkell)

WEEKEND PICK

Coney Island Freaktoberfest

■ **When:** Friday, 5 p.m. to midnight
■ **Price:** \$50, general admission; \$75, VIP admission (includes access to the Coney Island USA Museum, where you can taste vintage beers and talk to brewers)

■ **Get there:** 1208 Surf Ave., Coney Island
coneyislandlager.com
Shmaltz Brewing company unveils its bloodcurdling (well, blood-alcohol-raising) new Halloween/Oktoberfest brew, Freaktoberfest, a 6.66 percent alcohol blood-red lager with an evening of live music (Smoke Wagon, Tone Tank, Iller Than Theirs, Dogs of Winter and

Chin Chin), titillating burlesque, sideshow freakery and barrels of beer. Besides the terrifying Freaktoberfest, visitors can sample brews from a dozen other Northeastern breweries, including Sixpoint, Captain Lawrence, Dogfish Head and Lagunitas. **Drink, dance and be merry, all for the good of the 'hood:** Proceeds benefit Coney Island USA, a non-profit dedicated to preserving the "lost forms of American popular arts and culture" in historic Coney Island.

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