

PERFECT STORM

Flood your sorrows with a classic cocktail equal parts apropos and refreshing BY CRISTINA VELOCCI

LIQUIDITY

IT WAS A DARK *and stormy market*. Were financial history written by cliché-wielding novelists, this would surely be the opening line about today's economic maelstrom. Quite appropriate, then, that at Polynesian-themed club Mahiki, a short stumble from Curzon Street in London's Mayfair district, hedge-funders have lately been gathering after work to swill a rum-based cocktail known as the *Dark and Stormy*.

The drink, whose murky brown color is said to resemble a tumultuous island sky, was supposedly invented more than a century ago when members of Bermuda's Royal Naval Officer's Club added a splash of local rum to their zesty homemade ginger beer as a sort of panacea to the rigors of being a sailor (ginger to combat seasickness, lime to ward off scurvy, rum to do its usual trick). Still, Mahiki manager Jules Gualdoni ascribes the drink's current popularity to the fact that it is both "long and refreshing," and here the old saw applies that one man's credit crunch is another man's liquidity event: "Since the market hasn't been doing very well, more people have been coming in — even if they got sacked or lost a lot of money — because they need the distraction." In other words, the market on drunkards is booming.

Those not interested in hopping a flight to London to drop £10 on a cocktail have the option of making it themselves. And since the *Dark and Stormy* is one of the few drinks out there that depends on the use of specific brands, it's almost impossible to botch the recipe. Indeed, Gosling's has pronounced it "unlawful" to use any rum other than its own Black Seal to craft the cocktail; Gualdoni agrees, noting that Gosling's lends creaminess while other rums result in a tangier, drier and less well-balanced drink. And though the recipe traditionally calls for Barrit's Bermuda Stone Ginger Beer to deliver the bite needed to cut the sweetness of the rum, Gualdoni uses Fentiman's Ginger Beer at Mahiki for an extra fiery kick — so we will, too.

And as for that dash of lime? Well, it's meant to add tartness. But in case you've had your fill of that lately, you can always do without. ■

DARK AND STORMY

1½ oz Gosling's Black Seal Rum
3 oz Fentiman's Ginger Beer
½ oz Lime juice

DIRECTIONS: Combine ingredients in a highball glass filled with ice. Garnish with two lime wedges.

