

Shaken, not Stirred

Recipes for the Creation of 4 Classic Cocktails

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Advanced Comp

Fall 2012

Cocktail hour evokes images of glamour, social networking and relaxing with friends. Happy hour can hit a sour note, however, when a cocktail is improperly prepared.

I began my part-time career as a seasonal bartender at Shelter Island Country Club, the local golf club on Shelter Island, New York, in the spring of 1989. The bar was the local happy hour mecca, and the regular crowd bore an uncanny similarity to the regulars from the television show *Cheers*. The customers' beverage of choice was beer, although there was an occasional order for a shot, or a glass of wine, or a Long Island Iced Tea. The job was easy and enjoyable, and I looked forward to returning every year—until 1999, that is, when the HBO hit show *Sex in the City* ignited the Cosmopolitan craze. Gone were the days of pouring draft beer and simple shots; now, my clientele clamored for complicated beverages with exotics names like Mojito and Daiquiri. My initial attempt to craft these beverages was nothing short of disaster. Customers unhappy with my concoctions threatened to imbibe elsewhere. I needed to learn how to make Martinis, Cosmos, and Manhattans, and I needed to learn quickly.

The debonair Robert Sinko, affectionately known as Mr. White Shoes because of his penchant for wearing white tasseled loafers, graciously volunteers to be my guru for the fine art



**Bob Sinko, aka Mr. White Shoes
(Shelter Island, NY, 1999)**

of mixology. Bob, a retired insurance salesman, is currently the assistant manager at the golf club. During his career as a salesman, Bob moonlighted as a weekend bartender. He has over thirty years' experience as a mixologist and knows how to create every alcoholic concoction ever invented. Bob is eminently qualified to coach me in the art of mixology.

My introduction to the art of creating the perfect cocktail begins early one Saturday afternoon. When I arrive at Bob's house, he already has the tools of the trade neatly arranged on his dining room table. By the end of the lesson, Bob has taught me how to create a perfect Martini, a flawless Cosmo, and an immaculate Manhattan. He has also provided a recipe for a Mocktail, a non-alcoholic cocktail, for the nondrinker or for a designated driver.

Tools of the Trade



Bar Tools (Google Images photo)

- Shaker
- Strainer
- Measuring tools
 - Jigger
 - Pony
- Bar Spoon
- Sharp Knife and Cutting Board
- Liquor
- Martini Glasses

A few tools are essential for the proper creation of your choice of cocktail.

- First, you will need a shaker. There are two types of shaker, the cocktail shaker (pictured above) and the Boston shaker. The cocktail shaker has a fitted cap and a built in strainer. Professional mixologists generally favor the tin cup and glass combination of the Boston Shaker because of its easier pour. “The caps on cocktail shakers tend to leak,” says Mr. White Shoes. “This makes for a sloppy pour and wasted beverage.”

- The Boston Shaker requires the use of the second item on the list, a strainer.
- The next items, the jigger and the pony, are necessary for measuring your ingredients. A jigger holds 1 ½ ounces of liquid, as opposed to a pony which holds only 1 ounce.
- Shaking is the preferred method for mixing many cocktails, but some require stirring. The bar spoon (simply a spoon with a long handle) is an indispensable tool for stirred beverages.
- Have a sharp knife and a cutting board on hand for slicing lemons, limes, and oranges.
- Do not skimp on quality when selecting the liquor for your cocktail; incorporating top shelf liquor results in a better tasting creation.
- Lastly, enjoy the fruits of your labor in style; invest in some proper martini glasses.

The Creation

Creating the perfect cocktail consists of four basic steps:

1. Chilling the glass and shaker

To chill the martini glass, fill it with either ice or seltzer or with ice and water. “The ice and seltzer combination is preferable,” states Mr. White Shoes, “because it makes the glass colder.” Set the martini glass to the side and allow it to chill while you prepare the cocktail. Next, fill the shaker about two-thirds of the way with ice. You are ready to add your ingredients.

2. Filling the shaker

Proper proportions are essential to mixing the perfect cocktail. Professional mixologists often free pour rather than measure the ingredients. Free pouring requires a special dispenser for the bottle (speed pourer), and manual dexterity combined with a finely tuned pouring cadence. The



Speed Pourer
(Google Images)

speed pourer has a small aperture in its side. To control the volume and the flow of liquid, place a finger over the aperture while pouring. This technique takes years of practice and is not recommended for the novice. To ensure a perfect cocktail, make sure you select the correct tool, either the jigger or the pony, and measure your liquids.

3. Shaking or Stirring

Now, it is time to either shake or stir the cocktail. The merits of shaking versus stirring are the subject of much debate. The basic rule of thumb is to stir when the ingredients are all spirits, and shake if the cocktail contains juice, cream, eggs, or other cloudy ingredients. Mr. White Shoes does not adhere to this rule as he feels the finished product is colder when shaken. The only cocktail Mr. White Shoes stirs is the Manhattan since, as he couches it, “shaking a Manhattan turns it murky.”

Ultimately, the decision to shake or stir is yours. If you are using a cocktail shaker, simply place the cap securely on the cup and shake. If you have opted for the Boston shaker, invert the glass into the tin cup, hold the two pieces firmly together, and shake. Mr. White Shoes recommends shaking the cocktail “until frost appears on the tin cup and you feel the onset of frostbite in your fingertips.” When shaking has produced this effect, the cocktail is ready to pour. For cocktails that require stirring, use the bar spoon to mix vigorously for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

4. Pouring and Garnishing

To pour the cocktail, first empty the ice and seltzer mixture from the martini glass. If you are using a cocktail shaker, simply remove the cap and pour. The built in strainer will prevent ice chips from leaving the shaker. For the Boston shaker, remove the glass, cover the tin cup with

the strainer, and pour. Finally, add the appropriate garnish and your perfectly concocted cocktail is ready to serve.

The Recipes

Mr. White Shoes has graciously provided the following recipes. The names brands of liquor are his personal choices for the creation of the perfect cocktail.

<p>Martini</p>  <p>(Google Images photo)</p>	<p>Ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 2 jiggers Bombay gin✓ 1 jigger Martini & Rossi dry vermouth✓ Cocktail olives for garnish <p>A true martini is made with gin, not with vodka.</p>
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<p>Cosmopolitan</p>  <p>(Google Images photo)</p>	<p>Ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 2 jiggers Absolut citron vodka✓ 1 pony cranberry juice✓ 1 pony Cointreau triple sec✓ Thin slice of lime
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Cranberry juice is more for color than for flavor. A Cosmo has a light pink coloring; if the finished beverage is red in appearance, too much cranberry juice has been added.

Manhattan	
	<p>Ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2 jiggers Crown Royal whiskey ✓ 1 pony Cinzano sweet vermouth ✓ A dash* of Angostura bitters ✓ Maraschino cherry for garnish
(Google Images photo)	*a dash is slightly less than 1/8 of a teaspoon

Stirred, not shaken, is the rule when creating a Manhattan. Shaking causes the beverage to become cloudy. Bitters are not added to the drink, they are used to coat the chilled glass. Swirl the bitters in the chilled glass and then empty it before pouring the stirred Manhattan.

Virgin Cosmo	
	<p>Ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2 jiggers cranberry juice ✓ 1 pony fresh lime juice ✓ 3 jiggers seltzer ✓ Splash of orange juice ✓ Lime wedge for garnish
(Google Images photo)	

Combine cranberry juice, lime juice and seltzer in shaker, shake the mocktail and strain into well chilled martini glass. Add a splash of orange juice and garnish with a lime wedge. Fresh lime juice is preferable for this beverage, but Rose's lime juice is an acceptable substitute.

Parting Pearls of Wisdom from Mr. White Shoes

My class in mixology lasts well into the evening. Since sampling the beverages is an integral part of the lesson, Mr. White Shoes calls a taxi to carry me home. While waiting for the cab, he offers the following advice about bartending:

- A true connoisseur of cocktails will always specify a brand of liquor when ordering.
- If a customer does not request a specific brand, always pour top shelf liquor. This will increase the cost of the cocktail and, hopefully, your tip.
- For good customers, always mix a little more than the glass will hold. Keep the extra cocktail, along with the ice, in the shaker. After the customer has consumed about one-third of their beverage, top off their glass with the remaining mixture. Their appreciation of the extra pour is reflected in your tip jar..
- Always provide “nibblies” as is not a good idea to drink on an empty stomach. Complimentary peanuts, goldfish, pretzels or popcorn are appreciated by customers.
- Never let an “over served” customer drive.

Right on cue, the taxi pulls into the driveway. I climb into the back seat fully prepared for my next bartending shift—after I sleep off the effects of training, that is.

