

# The Bitter Truth

HERBAL CONCOCTIONS PUNCH UP SPRING COCKTAILS. BY JESSICA LANIEWSKI

## Alden & Harlow

Bar manager Seth Freidus looked no further than American heartland history for the story behind the River Run, a cocktail named after Johnny Appleseed's time preaching along the Ohio River in the 1800s and planting apples. Bonded applejack makes the base for this savory, earthy cocktail along with dry oloroso sherry, Alden & Harlow bitters, Demerara, and lemon juice. **40 Brattle St., Cambridge, 617-864-2100; aldenharlow.com**

## The Blue Room

This Kendall Square restaurant's cocktail menu is stocked with aperitif wines and sherries that whisper of warm-weather tipples, and the Bianca (Castafore) packs a ka-pow with Bully Boy white whiskey, St-Germain, Pamplemousse Rose, and Peychaud's bitters. **1 Kendall Square, Cambridge, 617-494-9034; theblueroom.net**



The River Run cocktail, spiked with house-made bitters and applejack.

## Cru

It's never been hard to lure cocktail enthusiasts into this island restaurant, but now the bar will be even more popular thanks to mixologist Matt McGarry's Catcher in the Rye cocktail, made with Willett rye, Barolo Chinato, Aperol, Carpano Antica Formula, and orange bitters. It's meant to be a sipping cocktail, but the pace is up to you. **1 Straight Wharf, Nantucket, 508-228-9278; crunantucket.com**

## Eastern Standard

Take a trip to the West Coast with the Cypress, a mix between a daiquiri and a tiki drink, made with Bacardi eight-year rum, maple syrup, lime and grapefruit juices, honey syrup, and Peychaud's bitters. The cocktail takes its name from the Lone Cypress, a storied cliffside tree on the coast of Monterey, California, that has inspired countless photos.

**528 Commonwealth Ave., 617-532-9100; easternstandardboston.com**

## M.C. Spiedo

Turn back time with the 14th-Century Manhattan, made with Angels Envy bourbon, house-made M.C. Husk cherry bitters, Capano Antico, and Lazzaroni Amaretto. The bitters are made by fermenting husk cherries in rye for two weeks, a process that goes hand in hand with the restaurant's Italian Renaissance vibe and rustic cuisine. **Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel, 606 Congress St., 617-476-5606; mcspiedoboston.com**

## No. 9 Park

Never afraid to toss bitters into his cocktails, mixologist Ted Kilpatrick created the Diversionary Dam in honor of two regular patrons who orchestrated a barstool lockdown to protect him from the crowds of patrons on the

first night of Restaurant Week. The cocktail will keep you fortified with Chartreuse, Angostura bitters, lime juice, and Kübler absinthe. **9 Park St., 617-742-9991; no9park.com**

## Pain D'Avignon

The Cape has its share of fine watering holes, but this French bakery-turned-bistro stands apart. Stop by before your flight to Nantucket for bar manager Iryna Savchyn's The End, an homage to spring made with mint bitters, Bombay dry gin, green Chartreuse, Luxardo maraschino liqueur, fresh mint, and lime. **15 Hinckley Rd., Hyannis, 508-778-8588; paindavignon.com**

## Ribelle

The cocktail menu at this new Brookline restaurant matches the cuisine in inventiveness. Bar manager Sean Woods has concocted the Fortune and Glory with a dash of Fee Bros. whiskey-barrel-aged bitters, lemon juice, Nux Alpina walnut liqueur, crème de cacao, house-made cherry bark gin, and Daron Calvados. **1665 Beacon St., Brookline, 617-232-2322; ribellebkline.com**

## Wink & Nod

Don't be fooled by the Prohibition-era vibe at Boston's newest speakeasy: It's a snap to get a stiff drink at this spacious bar. Start with a signature cocktail like La Pistola, made with Montelobos mezcal, Montenegro amaro, Luxardo maraschino liqueur, Punt e Mes, coffee bitters, and a grapefruit twist. **3 Appleton St., 617-482-0117; winkandnod.com BC**

## FLAVOR PROFILE

Alden & Harlow's **Seth Freidus** on making his own potent bitters.

**How do bitters elevate a cocktail?** They add depth of flavor, complexity, texture, and body.

**What makes a successful cocktail?** It must be balanced in its flavors, and it should pique the palate to make you want another.

**What goes into Alden & Harlow's house-made bitters?** They're vermouth-based. We infuse our own blend of herbs, spices, roots, and barks into the wine and Madeira mixture at a boil.

