

# Hurricane Season



Proof  
of LIFE

*Mardi Gras may be impossible to replicate in other towns, but good music is easy and good drinking should be, too.*

**WHEN** listing New Orleans cocktails, bartender friends tick off iconic names they feel people ought to know: the Sazerac, the Daiquiri, Ramos' famous gin fizz. Several even mention the more obscure rye-based Vieux Carré cocktail before getting around to the rum bomb that non-bartender friends already know: the Hurricane.

It's not true, as some claim, that Crescent City natives neither eat **Lucky Dogs** nor drink Hurricanes, but that drink is a decidedly tourist affair aggressively seasoned with dark rum. After that, opinions diverge on ingredients. If you order a Hurricane in New Orleans today, you likely will be served a strong red drink. None of what you're likely to get is particularly good. Whether from a bar or a clandestine street vendor, the rule for concocting one seems to be "Make it red, make it rum"—but that's not how it started, and that's not what growing numbers of drinkers around the world are mixing when they want to evoke the French Quarter and Mardi Gras.

The drink originated at Pat O'Brien's, a sprawling warren of bars off Bourbon Street, where white-shirted servers have been pushing it for almost 70 years. For many tourists it is the New Orleans drink. The red version is wholly authentic and has been around so long that it's the style most commonly found outside New Orleans. Back home in Ames, in Temecula, in Toronto, the desire to recreate the sheer, unadulterated joy of Carnival season drives those who have tasted Mardi Gras to put on Professor Longhair CDs, break out the rum, and tear open foil packets of cherry-flavored mix.

Those poor people. Mardi Gras may be impossible to replicate in other towns, but good music is easy and good drinking should be, too.

My introduction to the Hurricane happened, appropriately, while an underage drinker. On the courtyard patio of Pat O's, I downed three — one, two, three, right in a row — lurid sweet drinks from curvy souvenir glasses. I say *appropriately* because, as it's usually served, the Hurricane cocktail is an uncomplicated drink, fitting for inexperienced drinkers. In fact, the recipe from Pat O'Brien's lists only two ingredients other than ice and garnish: dark rum and their own sugary red Hurricane mix. After I rose from an unplanned nap, the hangover was brutal.

By MATTHEW ROWLEY

Photographs by

RYANNAN BRYER DE HICKMAN



## 1940s HURRICANE

2 oz. lemon juice  
2 oz. passion fruit syrup  
4 oz. dark Jamaican rum

*Shake with ice, strain into a glass with crushed ice.*

—Beachbum Berry Remixed



## RumDood's HURRICANE

- 2 oz. dark Jamaican rum
- 1 oz. lemon juice
- 1 oz. passion fruit syrup
- ¼ oz. passion fruit liqueur

*Shake with ice, strain into a glass with crushed ice.*

The 1940s recipe is nothing special. It's heavy on the lemon and if the rum is no good, don't bother. But its three ingredients are a fantastic jumping-off point for personalizing the drink. It's my suspicion that the unrealized promise of both the tart *original* and the saccharine *authentic* Hurricanes drives experimentation. Those are good ingredients, but they need help. "I've had them with pineapple, grenadine, cranberry, orange, lime—sometimes all in the same glass." Berry told me. "Like most Zombie knock-offs, most Hurricanes feel like their maker was throwing flavor darts blindfolded."

If you want to make your own variations on the Hurricane, don't do that. Stick with the original trinity as core component—lemon, passion fruit and dark rum—and the promise of the drink starts to reveal itself. Southern California blogger and bartender **Matt "RumDood" Robold** intensifies the tropical flavors by adding a ration of passion fruit liqueur to the syrup. Add some orange juice and simple syrup and you've got the Chief Lapu Lapu, an excellent tiki punch. In Stockholm, **Helena Tiare Olsen** opts for the funky Smith & Cross rum from Jamaican pot stills. The Tiki Queen of Sweden then adds orange and lime juices, homemade hibiscus grenadine and a garnish of stemmed cherries, passion fruit halves and mint.

The most divergent riff I've had on the Hurricane, though, comes from **Dale DeGroff**, author

of *The Craft of the Cocktail* and *The Essential Cocktail*. In the latter, he adds light rum, pineapple, bitters—and a dose of Galliano. It was his version that I pre-batched and took for a long weekend in Palm Springs.

Palm Springs is far from Louisiana and DeGroff's recipe is a wild outgrowth of the original, but pouring some for friends under the desert sun made me smile and yearn for next year's Mardi Gras.

## Funky HURRICANE

- 3 oz. Smith & Cross rum
- 1 oz. orange juice
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice
- ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
- 2 oz. passion fruit juice OR
- 1 tablespoon passion fruit syrup
- 1 oz. simple syrup
- 1 teaspoon hibiscus grenadine
- Stemmed cherries, passion fruit halves and mint to garnish
- Cracked or crushed ice

*Half-fill a Hurricane glass with crushed or cracked ice. Shake all ingredients and pour unstrained into the glass. Fill up with more ice if needed and garnish with a passion fruit half, a mint sprig and stemmed cherry. —Helena Tiare Olsen*

## Chief Lapu Lapu HURRICANE

- 3 oz. orange juice
- 2 oz. fresh lemon juice
- 1 oz. simple syrup
- 1 oz. passion fruit syrup
- 1½ oz. dark Jamaican rum
- 1½ oz. light Puerto Rican rum

*Shake well with ice cubes and*



*pour into a large snifter. Add more ice to fill. —Beachbum Berry*

## Syrups

**Trader Tiki** sells an array of first-class tropical syrups, including cinnamon, vanilla, passion fruit and hibiscus grenadine. *℘*

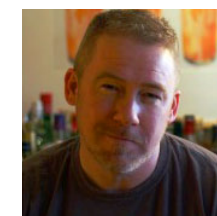
## Dale DeGroff's HURRICANE

- 1 oz. Myer's dark rum
- 1 oz. light rum
- ½ oz. Galliano
- 2 oz. fresh-squeezed orange juice
- 2 oz. unsweetened pineapple juice
- 2 oz. passion-fruit nectar
- ¾ oz. fresh-squeezed lime juice
- 1 oz. simple syrup
- Dash Angostura bitters
- Fresh tropical fruit, such as pineapple and passion fruit, for garnish.

*Combine the ingredients (except garnish) with ice in a mixing glass and shake well.*

*Strain into an ice-filled Hurricane glass and garnish with the fruit.*

—The Essential Cocktail



Matthew Rowley, is a freelance writer who traveled more than 14,000 miles and interviewed more than 50 extra-legal distillers to debunk the notion that moonshining is a dead or dying craft. The result is his book *Moonshine: Recipes, Tall Tales, Drinking Songs, Historical Stuff, Knee-Slappers, How to Make It, How to*

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