

YES COCKTAIL COMPANY

RECIPES AND MEDIA



NEW TIMES PROFILE:

Yes Cocktail Co. is shaking up your summer drinks with fresh produce Just say yes!

BY HAYLEY THOMAS CAIN

Yes to that!

Lauren and Brandon Alpert know a thing or two about this great country, its backroads and watering holes. For three years, they traveled most of it—45 states to be exact—in a red F-150 truck. Touring by the seats of their pants as part of a children's theater group, "home" became wherever they could rest their heads next. "We'd stay with various host families or they'd put us up in a hotel. It could be anything from a gorgeous winery villa to the dregs of the worst motel you have ever seen," Lauren said. And then, there were the kids, so full of life and excitement. Sure, the couple loved their work—traveling to different towns, casting 60 kids on Monday then putting on a full-fledged musical by Friday—but it was mildly exhausting. "It was just two of us: one on stage, and the other wrangling behind the scenes," Lauren added with a laugh. "At the end of a long day, you could say we needed a drink." And drink (responsibly) they did. From famous decades-old dive bars with animal heads mounted on the walls to the Sip 'n Dip in Montana (where you can slurp an aqua "fish bowl" with friends while eyeing a mermaid-filled pool and listening to the piano).

You could say the theatre actors got their fill of fizzes, 'tinis, and tonics. They even crossed off a bar "bucket list" as they went.

"It really clicked in Wisconsin," Lauren said. "They had all these local spirits and local cocktails that we were exposed to, some products were being made at home." This was between 2012 and 2015, and although the resurgence of cocktail culture had been raging in both actors' stomping grounds—upstate New York for Lauren and Southern California for Brandon—they realized that some communities were particularly well-positioned to embrace a mixology makeover.

The pair moved to Paso two years ago with the dream of starting up a theater group in the area, but quickly got sidetracked by the region's incredible array of produce. This is the true inspiration behind their line of natural mixers, which range from floral hibiscus rose to spicy ginger citrus. "When we made our home on the Central Coast, we were disappointed because there was all this great local produce, but a dearth of fresh mixers," Lauren said. "There's been such an amazing push for craft beer and wine, and we saw cocktails having a renaissance." So, the pair made their own mixers. Each small batch is made simply, with fresh, recognizable ingredients. With the exception of hibiscus rose, every ingredient is, in fact, grown in California (or within the county, when possible). We're talking Sriracha lime, grapefruit thyme, and other seasonal flavors, too. As you can already gather, these are not your mom's cocktails. No artificial flavors, colors, corn syrup, or additives here. "People still think 'cocktail' equals sugar and really unhealthy. That can be the case, but it can also be the case that they are innovative, fun, and not so high in sugar," Lauren said. "Making a great cocktail can also be as easy as opening a can of beer." The company is set to release three syrups next month inspired by the Central Coast: a cold brew coffee syrup made in partnership with Paso's Spearhead Coffee Roasters, a passionfruit flavor utilizing fruit from Los Osos, and an almond syrup that harkens back to the classic age of cocktails as well as Paso's early ag history. "For the almond cocktail syrup, we are partnering with a local business that would otherwise throw away the almond material we need, and we're reusing it," Lauren said. "We want to be part of the community." In many ways, this proactive attitude is exactly what's behind the brand's perky name. "Saying 'Yes, and' is the first rule of improv," Lauren said. "'Yes, and' means contributing to the whole and being part of the area. We love working with local partners Re:Find, Krobar, Wine Shine."

Each bottle is still made by hand the old fashioned way. You can find the couple at six farmers markets per week, too. If they're not bottling, they're muddling. If they're not muddling, they're juicing. You get the idea. Still, just because they work hard doesn't mean you should have to. "Our product is easy. You can mix it one-to-one or one-to-two with alcohol and it's simple and good, but you can also use it in a more complex cocktail," Lauren said. "We want people to enjoy it. Somebody took a lot of time to craft that amazing spirit, and we're here to try to say 'yes, and' to that flavor."



OUR FAVORITE RECIPES:

HIBISCUS ROSE:

WILD HIBISCUS SOUR:

1 OZ HIBISCUS ROSE MIXER
2 OZ RYE WHISKEY
1/2 OZ LEMON JUICE
1 EGG WHITE

COMBINE ALL INGREDIENTS IN A SHAKER. SHAKE VIGOROUSLY ON ICE AND STRAIN INTO A CHILLED COUPE.

CUCUMBER JALAPENO

CUCMBER JALA-VINO PUNCH

1 BOTTLE OF CUCUMBER JALAPEÑO MIXER
1 BOTTLE INEXPENSIVE SAUVIGNON BLANC OR VIOGNIER

COMBINE INGREDIENTS IN A PUNCH BOWL ON ICE. AND SERVE ACCORDINGLY.

GINGER CITRUS

PENICILLIN

2 OZ BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKEY
1.5 OZ GINGER CITRUS MIXER
1/2 OZ FRESH LEMON JUICE
1/4 OZ SINGLE MALT SCOTCH

COMBINE FIRST 3 INGREDIENTS IN A SHAKER ON ICE. AND SHAKE VIGOROUSLY FOR 20 SECONDS. STRAIN INTO AN ICE FILLED ROCKS GLASS. POUR THE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH OVER THE BACK OF A BAR SPOON SO THAT IT FLOATS ATOP THE DRINK.

BLUEBERRY BASIL

BLUE BALLER

1 OZ BLUEBERRY BASIL MIXER
2 OZ BOURBON
1/2 OZ FRESH LEMON JUICE

SHAKE INGREDIENTS ON ICE. AND STRAIN INTO A ROCKS GLASS FILLED WITH ICE.

LAVENDER HONEY

LAVENDER 75

1 OZ LAVENDER HONEY MIXER
1 OZ GIN
3-4 OZ CHAMPAGNE OR SPARKLING WINE

COMBINE MIXER AND GIN IN A CHAMPAGNE FLUTE. TOP UP WITH BUBBLY.

ORGEAT SYRUP

ORIGINAL MAI-TAI

2 OZ AGED CARIBBEAN RUM (I.E. APPLETON ESTATE)
3/4 OZ LIME JUICE
1/2 OZ PIERRE FERRAND ORANGE CURACAO
1/4 OZ RICH SIMPLE SYRUP (2 TO 1 SUGAR TO WATER)
1/4 OZ YES ORGEAT SYRUP

SHAKE ALL INGREDIENTS IN A SHAKER OVER CRUSHED ICE. EMPTY ALL CONTENTS INTO A DOUBLE OLD FASHIONED GLASS. GARNISH WITH A MINT SPRIG AND SPENT LIME SHELL.

TONIC SYRUP

CALIFORNIA G+T

1/2 OZ YES TONIC SYRUP
2 OZ GIN
3-4 OZ SPARKLING WATER

COMBINE THE TONIC SYRUP AND GIN IN AN OLD FASHIONED GLASS WITH ICE. STIR AND TOP UP WITH SPARKLING WATER.

COLD BREW COFFEE SYRUP

(OLD FASHIONED)

1/4 OZ YES COLD BREW COFFEE SYRUP
2 OZ RYE WHISKEY
2 DASHES OF FEE'S OLD FASHIONED BITTERS

COMBINE INGREDIENTS IN A MIXING GLASS ON ICE. STIR AND STRAIN INTO AN OLD FASHIONED GLASS WITH ICE.

PASSION FRUIT SYRUP

SATURN

1/2 OZ YES PASSION FRUIT SYRUP
1/2 OZ LEMON JUICE
1/4 OZ FALERNUM
1/4 OZ YES ORGEAT SYRUP
1 1/4 OZ DRY GIN

COMBINE INGREDIENTS IN A SHAKER ON ICE. SHAKE. AND STRAIN INTO A CHILLED COUPE.

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