

Wine Wanderings Interview with Shaun Meglen, Mixologist on Low ABV [Alcohol by Volume] Cocktails

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Tricia Conover, DipWSET, CSS - Certified Spirits Specialist, Wine Wanderings, Editor

Welcome to **Wine Wanderings**. Today we have Southern Glazer's, Texas state mixologist, Sean Meglen with us. Welcome, Shaun.

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

Hey, Trish. Thanks for having me.

Tricia Conover, DipWSET, CSS - Certified Spirits Specialist, Wine Wanderings, Editor

It's a pleasure having you. Shaun is with us today to discuss lower alcohol cocktails. He'll demonstrate making one. Shaun, tell our subscribers at Wine Wanderings what you do at Southern Glazers [Wine and Spirits] to begin.

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

I'm the state mixologist for Texas. Which basically means that I helped build beverage menus and cocktails for different bars and restaurants across the state that might not have the resources to do so themselves. I also help train staff and keep our internal employees educated as far as our products and the new trends in mixology.

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Great, thank you. Can you tell us about the emergence of no and low alcohol cocktails?

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

We've seen a big surge, especially recently, within the last few years of people wanting to drink a little bit healthier, perhaps, and maybe extend their evening a little longer by having alcoholic beverages that have a little lower alcohol in them. Instead of having just two big boozy drinks, you can actually have four or five of these sort of low ABV [Alcohol by Volume] drinks.... Like an Aperol Spritz as a great example.

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Great idea and I would think in Dry January times, you see a lot of that.

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

Yes, Dry January, you even jump into the No-ABV cocktails, just to avoid alcohol altogether.

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That's right. Lots of people are doing that now. What will you be making for us today? Let's go ahead and get started.

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

Great. Today, I thought we would explore a twist on a classic cocktail. I'm sure we've all heard of the Manhattan with rye whiskey, sweet vermouth, and a little bitters. What we're going to make today is called a **Reverse Manhattan**. Essentially, we're going to take the Manhattan and flip it around. So, for a Manhattan we

need vermouth. First and foremost, I'm going to grab some out of the refrigerator because you should always keep your vermouth cold. We're going to use a little Foro Vermouth di Torino Rosso. This is a sweet vermouth from Italy. For the rye whiskey, I think I'll go with Redemption Rye Whiskey. Instead of the normal whiskey-heavy Manhattan what we're going to do is make a vermouth-heavy Manhattan. The two ounces that would normally be rye whiskey, we're going to use sweet vermouth. Two ounces of sweet vermouth. And, then just one ounce of rye whiskey. I went ahead and chose a rye whiskey that is a little lower ABV as well. Some whiskeys can get up to 100 Proof, or even more. This guy is that a nice 92 proof so we'll still keeping it a little lower in ABV. After that, a couple dashes of the good old trusty Angostura bitters. One-Two-Three

Now, we're going to ice it down and give it a nice stir. You can do this at home with a pint glass. If you've got one, it works really well.

But I will say do yourself a favor and get a nice stirring spoon because a teaspoon is just not going to cut it. Stir that up so it's nice and cold. Then we're gonna take a chilled coupe glass. You can also serve this on the rocks, if that's your style. There's really are no rules. We're gonna pour this just up like that. Beautiful! You see, it even looks like a Manhattan. We've got a very similar color here. Only the flavor profile is going to be a little bit more delicate, a little bit sweeter. With those beautiful vermouth notes playing the star roll. We're gonna just go and garnish that with Luxardo cherry, as per normal Manhattan, and this is the reverse Manhattan. Cheers.

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Cheers. Tell us about the cherries you use.

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

These are Luxardo Maraschino cherries. These are the original maraschino cherry. It was a preservation method originally preserve these cherries after you pick them in the spring in summer, so you could have nice cherries during the winter months. Now we use them in pretty much any cocktail that calls for a cherry. If you're trying to make your cocktails, these are the best they can be.

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Yes, there really is a difference. Shawn, what was your Ah-HA moment that got you into the mixology business?

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

Funny enough, it was wine that got me into the mixology business, I had the opportunity to work at an incredible restaurant in Austin, Texas, that unfortunately is no longer around. I worked under some sommeliers and wonderful chef who really inspired me to take the service industry in general a little more seriously. With that restaurant experience came my need to find something to gravitate towards. And for me, it was cocktails. After that, I just sort of started running with it and the rest has been a good trip.

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Well, cheers, Shawn, thank you for joining us on ***Wine Wanderings***.

Shaun Meglen, Southern Wine and Spirits, Texas State Mixologist

My pleasure. Thanks for having me Trish.