



# Root Beer Is the Best New Cocktail Mixer

Why top bartenders say the classic soda is the ultimate cocktail mixer

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Pam Wiznitzer's Wiz Fizz gets topped with root beer | Photo: Tasting Table

A growing number of bartenders are reaching for the root beer—and you should be, too.

In the post-*amaro* world, where sharp, herbal-tinged elixirs like Campari and Cynar stack the back bar, root beer offers a similar roots-and-herbs flavor minus the bitterness. So it's no wonder bartenders are pouring root beer—

particularly **regional bottlings** made with cane sugar and mild carbonation—into drinks intended distinctly for grown-ups.

At New York speakeasy **Dear Irving**, Abita root beer from New Orleans is the star of the Hero of Little Venice, a rich cocktail made with Santa Teresa 1796 rum, sweet vermouth and an egg yolk, served in a coupe glass and topped with grated nutmeg.

"I wanted an adult root beer float cocktail for a nightcap option," bartender Meghan Dorman, who created the drink, explains. "I always tell people it's not nearly as sweet as it may read—the rum is quite dry and helps give the cocktail a lovely finish."

Further **uptown** at **Seamstress**, the Wiz Fizz, named for its creator, bartender Pamela Wiznitzer, sees Dr. Brown's root beer (a New York City **deli classic**) providing flavor and fizz for a Ramos Gin Fizz-inspired drink made with Aviation gin, Cynar, cream and an egg white. The root beer is intended to play off of sarsaparilla, one of the botanicals used in the gin.

But not every drink has to be so elaborate. At San Francisco's **Trick Dog**, root beer finds sweet simplicity in a highball format: Dang!, a slightly butterscotch-y craft root beer made in Milwaukee, is combined with Averna amaro for one recent offering, plus a quick twist of lime. On another recent menu, Sioux City Birch Beer, a close cousin to root beer, is mixed with Bulleit Bourbon and poured over ice.

To create a highball version of Dorman's Hero of Little Venice drink, pour one and a half ounces of aged rum into a tall glass, then scoop in ice. Top with root beer and serve with a straw. Dorman also recommends as an optional finishing touch: "Add a scoop of vanilla gelato for extra fun!"