



Chapter 1



*Cocktails from
America's
Oldest
Standup Bar*



Tujague's bar of the early twentieth century (Tujague's Private Collection)

It's little wonder that the oldest standup bar in America is in the city where the cocktail was created. Elizabeth Kettenring Dutrey opened Dutrey's Coffee Exchange with her husband, Louis, in 1867. "Coffee exchange" was the pleasant name given to barrooms in those days, although what most patrons were imbibing was a lot more spirited than coffee. An imposing mirror backs the bar. The piece is said to have spent nearly a century in a Parisian bistro before it was shipped to New Orleans. Imagine the passing parade of history reflected in *that* mirror!

Two years after Louis's death, Hipolyte Bégulé became Madame's barkeep—then her husband—and the tradition continued.

In 1914 the bar became "Tujague's" and ownership passed to Philip Guichet and John Castet. Four years later, Philip travelled to New York City to compete in a national cocktail contest. His creation, the frothy, mint-hued Grasshopper cocktail, placed second. Upon Philip's return to the corner of Madison and Decatur, the Grasshopper became a patron favorite and remains such.

Even Prohibition could not alter the tradition of Tujague's bar. "Yeah—we tried to close for a few hours when Prohibition began, but it just didn't work out," Philip Guichet said of the era. Photos of that time are particularly revealing. The once liquor-laden bar is devoid of vessels. A soda syphon and bottles of near beer—a brew containing less than one-half of 1 percent alcohol—are all that remain on display. Gentlemen stand innocently at the bar wearing an expression that says, "Nothing's going on in here." In truth, the liquor never stopped flowing. Waiters spiked drinks from bottles concealed in their apron pockets.

In 1931, Tujague's made headlines. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* reported: "New Orleanian Philip Guichet was seized by a raider after serving absinthe. He denied selling liquor despite the accusations of a Prohibition agent who claimed to have seen him serving absinthe to a patron in the restaurant below his apartment."

Once Prohibition ended, Philip continued to compete in national cocktail competitions. In 1956, he travelled to New York City for the Early Times National Mixed-Drink Competition. He vigorously shook together whiskey, cream, orange flower water, sugar, an egg, and ice. Finished with a sprinkle of nutmeg, the cocktail was served in a stemmed glass. The drink Philip called Whiskey Punch won first place.

At home, life in the bar at Tujague's was good. Philip devoted his life to it and was amply rewarded. He poured bourbon for Harry Truman and made a Sazerac for Dwight Eisenhower. For Philip, Tujague's was a family affair, and his sons, Otis and Philip, Jr., grew up in the business and spent much of their lives working the bar. Politicians, judges, prizefighters, and movie stars all flocked to Tujague's, where it was never too early for a drink.

The center of the action in the bar was a big, square table. Otis's earliest memories were of his father sitting there with friends, eating beef brisket with horseradish sauce, breaking fresh cap-bread loaves, and swapping tall tales.

In the family tradition, Otis's son, Ronald "Noonie" Guichet, was working as a Tujague's busboy by the time he was sixteen. He has fond memories of the activity at that barroom table, where everyday regulars would sit from lunchtime on, rolling poker dice. When Steven Latter purchased Tujague's from the Guichet heirs in 1982, Noonie stayed on as bar manager.

It is an obscure fact that, in a state renowned for lax liquor laws, the sale of miniature bottles was prohibited in Louisiana until 2014. Steven Latter was fascinated by the miniatures and collected them. Customers brought him rare and unique minis from their global travels and he displayed these gifts in glass cases throughout the restaurant and bar. The collection numbers in the thousands and visitors still marvel at them today.

*Steven in his favorite spot at Tujague's
(Photograph by Louis Sahuc)*



Mark remembers that his dad rarely drank alcohol, but when he did, his drink of choice was Crown Royal. A few years before his death, Steven saw a Crown Royal throne that he simply had to have. He pestered Michael Shlenker of Glazer's, one of Louisiana's largest liquor distributors, to secure one for him. Once his purple velvet throne was installed in the back corner, from its cushy comfort Steven held court in America's oldest standup bar.



(Photograph by Sam Hanna)



(Photograph by Sam Hanna)

Grasshopper

In 1918, on the eve of Prohibition, Philip Guichet travelled to New York City to participate in a prestigious cocktail contest. His creation—the Grasshopper—placed second in the competition, but it has remained a winner at Tujague's bar ever since.

Makes 1 cocktail

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. green crème de menthe

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. crème de cacao

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. white crème de menthe

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. brandy

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. heavy cream

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. whole milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. brandy for topper

Combine all ingredients, except for the brandy, in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously. Strain into a champagne flute and top with brandy.



Early Times National Mixed-Drink Competition, 1956 (Tujague's Private Collection)

Whiskey Punch

Philip Guichet's Grasshopper cocktail achieved international fame, having placed second in the 1918 New York competition. His Whiskey Punch never received that attention, despite winning first place in the 1956 Early Times National Mixed-Drink Competition. Philip preserved a copy of his recipe behind a framed group of photos from the event, discovered in Tujague's third-floor attic. In 2015, for the first time in the twenty-first century, Philip Guichet's prizewinning Whiskey Punch was served again at Tujague's.

Makes 1 cocktail

2 oz. Early Times or other bourbon whiskey
1 whole fresh egg
2 oz. heavy cream
4 drops orange flower water
2 tsp. sugar
Grated nutmeg

Combine all ingredients, except for the nutmeg, in a cocktail shaker filled with crushed ice. Shake vigorously for 2-3 minutes. Strain into a stemmed cocktail glass. Garnish with grated nutmeg.



Tujague's bar during Prohibition (Tujague's Private Collection)

Absinthe Frappé

Although wildly popular with artists and writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who drank it in copious amounts to “chase the green fairy,” absinthe was banned worldwide by 1915. After a century, it is legal again, and Tujaque’s patrons can once again enjoy an authentic Absinthe Frappé.

Makes 1 cocktail

1½ oz. absinthe liqueur
½ oz. simple syrup (see index)
2 oz. club soda
6 mint leaves

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with crushed ice. Shake vigorously until frothy. Pour into a chilled coupe glass.



(Photograph by Sam Hanna)

Pimm's Cup

The refreshing Pimm's Cup was created in London in 1840. Traditionally Pimm's liqueur was combined with lemonade, a dash of soda water, and a cucumber garnish. Tujague's takes the Pimm's Cup to new heights with a proprietary base crafted in-house. Fresh fruits and vegetables are macerated for three weeks with Pimm's liqueur. The fruits and vegetables are strained off and the enhanced liqueur goes back into the bottle for mixing to order in the customary way.

Makes 1 cocktail

1½ oz. Pimm's base (recipe follows)
 ½ oz. simple syrup (recipe follows)
 ½ oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice
 ½ oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
 Club soda
 1 thin slice cucumber

Pour Pimm's base in a highball glass filled with ice. Add the simple syrup and lemon and lime juices; stir. Top with club soda. Garnish with a slice of cucumber.

Pimm's Base

Makes 1 fifth

1 celery heart with leaves, finely chopped
 ¼ cup each finely chopped strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries
 1 medium cucumber, chopped
 Half a lemon
 Half a lime
 Half an orange
 1 fifth Pimm's liqueur

Combine all ingredients, crushing solids to extract juices. Macerate together in a sealed container set in the refrigerator for 3 weeks. Strain. Store in a cleaned liqueur bottle in the refrigerator.

Simple Syrup

Makes 1 cup

1 cup sugar
 1 cup water

Combine sugar and water in a saucepan and cook over a medium heat until it reaches a boil. Cook until the sugar has dissolved, 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Store in a clean glass jar with a lid. Syrup can be refrigerated for up to 6 months.

(Photograph by Sam Hanna)



Old Fashioned

Noonie Guichet remembers batching large quantities of Old Fashioneds early on Sunday mornings. The whiskey-laden drinks were stacked up on the back of the bar in anticipation of the post-Mass rush. As soon as High Mass at St. Louis Cathedral concluded, those thirsty Catholics stormed the bar at Tujague's for the first drink of the day!

Makes 1 cocktail

1 sugar cube
Half an orange slice
1 maraschino cherry
2 dashes Angostura bitters
2 dashes Peychaud bitters
Splash simple syrup (see index)
2 oz. bourbon whiskey

Muddle sugar cube, orange, cherry, bitters, and simple syrup in an old fashioned glass. Fill glass with ice, then top with bourbon.



(Photograph by Sam Hanna)

Zesty House Bloody Mary

This breakfast cocktail's name comes from a legend of divination. Believers stand before a mirror and call out Bloody Mary's name three times, expecting an apparition who will reveal the future. Have enough of these spicy drinks and who knows what you can conjure.

Makes 1 cocktail

1½ oz. vodka
½ oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice
½ oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
Bloody Mary base (recipe follows)
Pickled vegetables for garnish, such as green beans,
peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, or okra (optional)

Pour the vodka and lemon and lime juices in a highball glass filled with ice. Fill the glass with Bloody Mary base. Stir to combine. Garnish with pickled vegetables if desired.

Bloody Mary Base

Makes about 6 ½ cups

46 oz. tomato juice
2 tbsp. ground black pepper
½ cup Crystal hot sauce
½ cup olive juice
½ cup Lea & Perrin's Worcestershire sauce
1½ oz. prepared horseradish

Combine all ingredients.

Brandy Milk Punch

This indulgent, rich, breakfast cocktail dates back to seventeenth-century Europe but has found fame on New Orleans' festive brunch tables, where it's never too early for a Brandy Milk Punch!

Makes 1 cocktail

2 tbsp. powdered sugar

½ oz. brandy

½ oz. Herbsaint

¼ oz. vanilla extract

½ oz. crème de cacao

½ oz. simple syrup (see index)

4 oz. whole milk

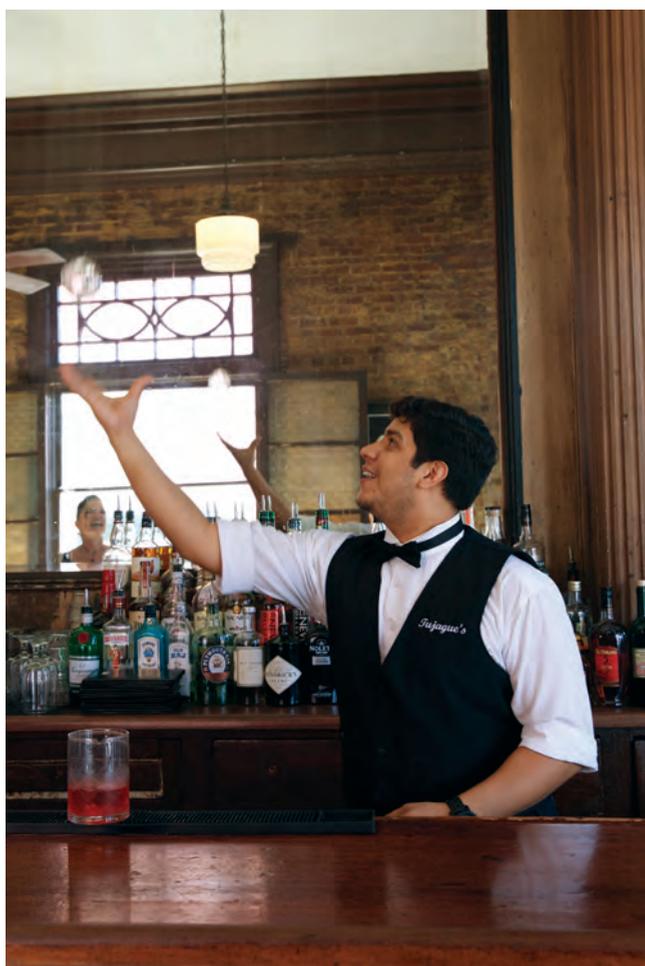
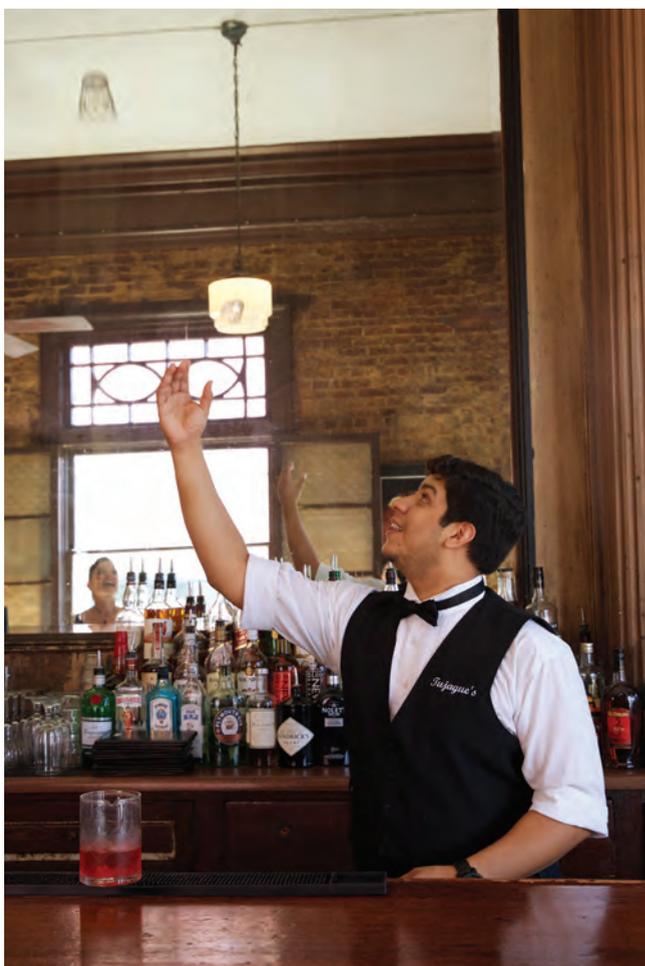
¼ oz. heavy cream

Grated nutmeg

Combine the powdered sugar, brandy, Herbsaint, vanilla, crème de cocoa, and simple syrup in a bar mixing glass. Stir well to combine. Add the milk, heavy cream, and some ice. Shake vigorously until frothy. Strain into a chilled glass and top with a sprinkle of grated nutmeg.

Sazerac

In 1838, Antoine Amédée Peychaud, a New Orleans apothecary, invented the cocktail. He created a special elixir he called bitters and combined it with a popular French cognac, Sazerac de Forge et Fils. He served this drink to patrons as a pick-me-up. The classic two-sided French eggcup it was served in was called a coquetier. When English-speaking Americans began to visit his apothecary, they mispronounced the word, asking for a “cock-tay,” which eventually became known as the “cocktail.” By 1873, American rye whiskey replaced the French cognac. After Prohibition was repealed in 1933, the pastis Herbsaint was created and became part of the classic cocktail. The chilled glass is an essential component of this heady drink, so don’t neglect that detail.



Sazerac

Makes 1 cocktail

2 oz. simple syrup (see index)
10 dashes Peychaud bitters
1½ oz. Old Overholt rye whiskey
½ tsp. Herbsaint liqueur
1 strip of lemon peel

Chill an old fashioned glass by filling it with ice and water. Leave the glass to chill while preparing the rest of the drink.

In a separate bar mixing glass, combine simple syrup, bitters, rye whiskey, and ice. Stir.

Discard the ice water. Add Herbsaint to chilled old fashioned glass and rinse by tossing the glass into the air. Discard the Herbsaint. Strain the chilled whiskey mixture into the glass. Twist the lemon peel over the drink to release its essence, then discard.



(Photographs by Sam Hanna)

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(Tujague's Private Collection)