

Spirits Sanctuary

Jamie Boudreau's Seattle bar Canon is a drinking destination

By 2011, the U.S. cocktail renaissance was well underway and Jamie Boudreau was a hospitality veteran. "I'd been in the industry since 1987 and had wanted to operate my own venue without having to bend my will to anyone else for a very long time," he says. "I had many, many ideas in mind but in the end, guest requests and expectations molded Canon into what it is currently." Now known as the "Whiskey and Bitters Emporium," Canon boasts what it says is the largest public spirits collection in the world, at 4,000 SKUs and counting.

A backbar like that could be intimidating to any drinker, but Boudreau's ultimate goal at Canon is to be welcoming and inviting to all patrons. "Our focus is on American whiskey and cocktails, but I make every attempt to ensure that my menus will have at least one drink for every guest who comes through our doors," he says. The cocktail list is certainly expansive, encompassing classics as well as more complex originals. "We try to make our original drinks as interesting as possible, without being too weird, and find fun and unusual ways of presenting them," Boudreau notes. Examples of these inventive originals include his Rubicon (\$24), which blends Sipsmith gin, Dolin Blanc vermouth, Green Chartreuse and Luxardo Maraschino liqueurs, fresh lime juice,



At Canon in Seattle, hospitality veteran Jamie Boudreau aims to welcome all patrons with his creative cocktails.

and rosemary, plus a house-made "evergreen fyre starter" comprising Everclear and Green Chartreuse, served alongside a sprig of rosemary that's been lit to resemble incense. His Canon's Cannon (\$20), meanwhile, features Maker's Mark Cask Strength Bourbon, Luxardo Abano amaro, St-Germain liqueur, house-made blueberry thyme shrub, and Angostura bitters, and is served in a mini cannon and topped with liquid nitrogen for a "just fired" effect. "I first became known for drinks utilizing molecular mixology at the beginning of the century, and while I still employ some of these techniques, it's much more subtle now," Boudreau adds.

Most cocktails at Canon are \$16-\$24, but take a gander at the list of vintage selections and you'll find recipes featuring spirits that date back to the early 20th century, priced at \$205-\$650 each. "Canon is a unique place—I love when people come in and we blow their minds," Boudreau says. "We have around \$4 million in inventory but only six tables—any businessperson would shake their head at the insanity of this, but I never set out to become a wealthy person. I just wanted to offer something fun and unique in our city and as long as we're paying the bills, I'm all for it."

mw
Sally Kral

Jamie Boudreau's Recipes



CANON'S CANNON

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ ounces Maker's Mark Cask Strength Bourbon;
- ½ ounce Luxardo Abano amaro;
- ¼ ounce St-Germain liqueur;
- ½ ounce blueberry thyme shrub¹;
- ¼ ounce Angostura bitters;
- Liquid nitrogen.

RECIPE:

In an ice-filled cocktail shaker, combine Bourbon, amaro, liqueur, shrub, and bitters. Shake and strain into a crushed ice-filled cannon and top with liquid nitrogen.



RUBICON

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ ounces Sipsmith gin;
- 1 ounce Dolin Blanc vermouth;
- ½ ounce Green Chartreuse liqueur;
- ½ ounce Luxardo Maraschino liqueur;
- ¾ ounce fresh lime juice.
- ½ ounce "evergreen fyre starter"²;
- 2 rosemary sprigs.

RECIPE:

In an ice-filled cocktail shaker, combine gin, vermouth, liqueurs, and lime juice and shake. Separately, place 1 rosemary sprig and "fyre starter" in a glass. Light the rosemary on fire, and immediately extinguish by straining the cocktail into the glass. Top with crushed ice. Serve alongside the remaining rosemary sprig, lit aflame.

¹In a pot, combine 5 pounds blended blueberries, 1 liter apple cider vinegar, and 2 liters sugar and heat until sugar dissolves. Add a bundle of thyme and let sit, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes. Strain out solids and refrigerate.

²Combine 1 part Everclear with 4 parts Green Chartreuse.