

The Vineyard Martini

2012 International Caterers Association CATIE Awards Submission

INNOVATIVE MIXOLOGY

Last summer we had the honor of creating a lovely event at a local winery event space and their group of 100 happy revelers! Naturally we wanted to greet these special guests with a new and fabulous specialty beverage worthy of the surroundings.

The cocktail would be enjoyed during the welcome reception along with a “vineyard table” of farm fresh fare, before a family style feast at the winery’s lake and gardens.

The Vineyard Martini was created to enhance the experience of a cocktail reception surrounded by grapes on the vine and fields of fresh herbs.



the cocktail



THE VINEYARD MARTINI

This event, in a beautiful vineyard setting, was for a professional organization taking some time out to soak up some local flavors in the beautiful summer sun.

In a winery, one would of course assume that wine would be the featured beverage. Well, wine did certainly play a part in the day's celebration but the event was sponsored by a fledgling vodka brand— Stockholm Krystal Vodka. Naturally they wanted their product to be seen and featured prominently.



Challenge accepted! We set out to create a deliciously innovative cocktail featuring vodka that would work well in a vineyard.

Immediately we considered using farmers-market fresh grapes this cocktail. It is true that grapes are wildly under-utilized in cocktails—mainly because there isn't a mass-produced mixer or flavoring on the market— so we were on our own to create something from scratch.

So it was off to the produce refrigerator, snacking on grapes and nibbling on fresh herbs until we found a favorite combination: Grapes and fresh oregano!



Tastings and trials lead to creating an oregano simple syrup that we would blend with diced grapes and the slightest hint of white pepper. We shook this cocktail base with ice and vodka and strained it into a martini glass, but it was missing something!

After a day or two of thought and trying other ingredients such as orange and elderflower flavors, we topped this cocktail with a splash of sparkling French lemonade.

The garnish was as simple as a pair of colorful grapes on a rustic wooden skewer and a sprig of fragrant oregano.

By producing the custom Grape Base and Nectar prior to the event beginning, we were able to serve a truly handcrafted cocktail to a large group rather quickly, and we think this sort of care is really appreciated!

Well, the cocktail was a huge hit! It's easy to get your guests to try the "specialty drink" once, but when they come back for seconds and thirds you know you have a success on your hands.

The cocktail was enjoyed along with the winery table featuring artisan cheeses, fresh figs, summer sweet pea arancini, and a delicious refreshing peach & thyme agua fresca, for those wanting something lighter.



the cocktail

the recipe

THE VINEYARD MARTINI

Martini:

2 tablespoons grape base and 1 ounce of its nectar (recipe below)

2 ounces premium vodka

splash of French sparkling lemon soda

grape skewer and oregano sprig garnish

Ice

Method:

First, place 1 teaspoon of the diced grape base in the bottom of a martini glass.

In a martini shaker, combine ice, vodka, 1 tablespoon grape base and 1 oz nectar.

Shake until icy cold and strain into martini glass. Top with a splash of French

lemon soda and garnish with grape skewer and

oregano sprig.

Grape Base and Nectar:

(for about 20 drinks)

Combine:

2 cups each red and green grapes, diced

1 teaspoon ground white pepper

3 cups oregano infused simple syrup (1 ½ cup sugar, 1 ½ cup water, 6 sprigs of oregano, heat until sugar is fully dissolved and remove oregano. Chill until cold.)

Stir above ingredients together and let soak at least thirty minutes and up to 2 hours, refrigerated

