



Putting Your Signature on Reception Cocktails

For brides looking to add a unique touch to their special day, a signature wedding cocktail is a must! Since you aren't the one tending bar, all this takes is a little initiative to prompt your reception venue to suggest some possibilities for you. Constraints breed the best ideas so be sure to describe the characteristics you favor. Some criteria: elaborate or simple; modern vs. classic; organic, local ingredients and color. Bear in mind the seasonality of ingredients. Spring and summer recipes should include fresh berries and herbs while fall and winter recipes should lean more towards apples or pears and spices such as cinnamon or nutmeg.

If you have a specific drink – from a classic movie for instance – communicate that. The same goes for a special recipe from a friend or family member. A first class venue will work with you to customize your drink and even provide a tasting to make sure you approve, and if it is an original creation make it truly your own by naming it!

My Fave

I love to source key ingredients locally for a signature drink when given the opportunity, and the recipe below is one of my favorite signature drinks. It is delicious, playful and draws upon Stoneleigh's historic past as part of Colonel Frank Sleeter's Hill-High Apple Orchard, and therefore is a great conversation starter. (I omitted the recipe components for simple syrup and candy apple, but if you'd like them let me know.)

Iced Candy Appletini

Makes two 4 oz drinks

- 4 oz of Eiswein of a Beerenauslese
- 3 oz of simple vanilla cinnamon syrup
- 1 oz Sour Apple Pucker
- Garnish with 1 slice of candy apple

Dispensing

Creating the signature drink is one-third of the fun. Next you've got some decisions to make about how that drink will find its way into the hands of your guests. The good news is you have options depending on your budget and style.

First Impressions: Your guest has come from the wedding and arrives at the reception. She doesn't immediately see a close friend and is not sure where to sit. She is thinking when she should be celebrating. A server approaches with a tray of beautiful signature drinks. She isn't familiar with the name and asks the server. Another guest takes a drink and the two guests start talking about the drink. Instant icebreaker!

To create a warm, welcoming first impression arrange for servers to greet your guests upon arrival at the reception with your signature drink. This avoids searching for bars and waiting in line for a drink or having a delay after placing an order with a server. This also provides you the control over consumption and timing by offering the signature drink only for a predetermined period of time.

Theme Bar: Spice up the bar area by creating a cozy lounge area with high-top cocktail tables, soft furniture and a fire pit where people can mingle and enjoy their specialty drink. The bar area can play into the theme of your drink. For example, when using an Appletini cocktail, you could use small green or golden apples in tall, clear cylinder vases, topped with a simple pillow of roses as center pieces on the surrounding cocktail tables. Large, sturdy apples would make ideal bases for pinning a themed menu with your signature drink name and recipe. Add smaller apples to hold take home recipe cards, interesting facts about the local area and pictures.

Ice Luge: Kick things up several notches by serving your signature drink in an ice luge designed to go with your theme, in a fun shape or monogrammed with your initials. Some of the more interesting ideas I've seen are interlocking wedding rings, last names spelled out in ice, music notes, puzzle pieces, kissing swans and Cinderella's slipper.

The Final Step

You are two-thirds complete...now sip and enjoy your big day!

Aisle Dish is written by Meredith Thomas, Stoneleigh's in-house Event Consultant. If you would like assistance planning your special day, Meredith offers a complimentary one-hour consultation to all brides hosting their wedding at the Club and is available for further planning services at an additional fee. Contact Meredith at mthomas@stoneleighgolf.com or 540.338.4653 ext. 303.