

9 cocktail trends to watch in 2022

It's safe to say that events of the past two years have changed the world, especially the alcohol industry. But if 2021 was about adapting to the 'new normal', 2022 is all about thriving.



Source: Supplied

Beverage company Angostura spoke to its friends in the know to find out which cocktail trends you can expect to see more of this year:

Health conscious

In the last few years, mindful drinking was trending with many opting for low-ABV or non-alcoholic drinks, but now we'll see that get pushed further.

"Companies and brands seem to be on a mission to bring health drinks and cocktails together, as people are more conscious of what they are consuming and also healthy lifestyles are trending," says Bruce Dorfling, restaurant and bar manager at KwaZulu-Natal's Lucky Shaker.

He says you can expect to see more cocktails that are low calorie or that include medicinal extracts. "Look out for oxygenated drinks and even collagen added to the mix with bars being brighter and well-lit to suit," Dorfling adds.

Convenience comes first

The rise of delivery service apps made buying food, drinks and groceries even simpler while being stuck at home. It's easy to see why we'd all like our cocktails to be just as convenient.

“Many people are looking for convenience and simplicity,” says Tšepang Molisana, 2016 Veritas Young Wine Writer of the Year Award winner and host of the *In My Kitchen* podcast. “And this will translate into more quality ready-made cocktails.”

Consumers want to be able to enjoy the company of their friends rather than spend an hour trying to put together drinks, but quality matters - think pre-batched cocktails in a bottle from your favourite haunt.



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Tiki-resurgence

We've seen the Tiki cocktail rise, fall, rise and then fall again. It was huge in the 60s, made a comeback in the 90s, but mixologist at David Higgs' new cocktail lounge Zioux, Bheki Khumalo aka Jozi's Dapper Bartender, says don't count the Tiki out just yet.

Though the drink was seen as kitschy before, Khumalo says you can expect to see mixologists put their own modern take on the island drink. “You are going to see more mixologists infusing those typical Tiki flavours into the rum and looking at clarified Tiki cocktails,” he says.

Also, he adds, you can say goodbye to those tiki mugs: “Simple is better - we'll focus on four or five ingredients instead of the 15 that would be used before and it'll be served in a Martini-glass, tumbler or highball.”

So, no crazy straw?

The reboot

Talking about nostalgia. The return of Carrie, Miranda and Charlotte in the *Sex and the City* reboot and *Just Like That* saw a 204% increase in global searches of the show's famous serve, the Cosmopolitan, according to online drinks retailer The Bottle Club.

Award-winning editor and writer specialising in drinks and World's 50 Best Bars Academy chair Leah van Deventer chalks this trend to our longing for pre-Covid-19 days.

“In fashion, this has manifested in the resurgence of baggy, stone-wash jeans and scrunchies. In cocktails, this is translating to a trend towards drinks of the same era like Cosmopolitans and Amaretto Sours.”

'Baby' mixologists not familiar with the 80s and 90s will get to learn a whole new genre of drinks.



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Bitter is better

Jay Chiwala, liquid innovator and bar manager at Cape Town rooftop bar Tjing Tjing says that in 2022 more people will want bitter-forward cocktails: “Not just in taste, Angostura aromatic bitters elevate the appearance of cocktails.”

This is never more evident than in a traditional sours cocktail. Plus, a dash or two in your vodka and soda will add that aromatic finish in an otherwise simple drink and it is even great in a margarita.

“It adds a layer of complexity and brings flavours together while not taking anything from the classic but giving it a boost,” Chiwala says.

The return of simple, classic cocktails

Molisana says that we’re seeing a growing appreciation for the OG cocktails: “There seems to be a turn to the classic cocktails like the martini, negroni and the Brandy Old Fashioned with a touch of Angostura aromatic bitters.”

This trend may have been helped along by Daniel Craig’s final James Bond outing, but these cocktails are also easy enough to make at home...

Home mixologist gets better

After being forced to whip up our own drinks during the pandemic, we’ve grown a taste for entertaining at home.

“The more dedicated cocktail enthusiasts will likely try to perfect the classics,” says van Deventer. “Others will look for quick fixes with a difference. Instead of mixing up a whisky and soda or gin and tonic, for example, they may try a Campari and soda or vodka and ginger ale, to keep things interesting.”

Either way, van Deventer says that more home mixologists will be ensuring they have a bottle of Angostura aromatic bitters on hand: “It’s a necessity in many classic recipes and a simple addition of a few dashes is an easy way to make a basic highball more balanced (and more sophisticated looking).”



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Members-only

Dorfling explains that exclusive memberships and subscriptions are on the rise for themed bars and dinner clubs.

“People want a sense of exclusivity and also less crowded, safer spaces to take them away to another world,” he says. “The pandemic has forced us to change our interaction styles with others and so this was inevitable and also a good thing for the respect for greater hospitality.”

Connection

The most important trend we’ll see, though, is that people are feeling safer and more confident in coming together.

“People are looking to connect, after an extended time apart, few things rise to the occasion like glasses clinking in a toast,” Molisana concludes.

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