

Make Paddy Proud

If you care at all about the flavor profile of your drink, or about chatting with your bartender, you may want to avoid going to a bar on St. Patrick's Day. However, if you insist, might we suggest patronizing a place that's more swanky than dive-y, and ordering something that's classier than Guinness? It is, after all, a holiday in honor of Ireland's patron saint, who probably wasn't that into drunken debauchery. Here are a few of our favorite Irish-inspired mixed drinks from D.C.'s most stylish cocktail bars. **FIONA ZUBLIN (EXPRESS)**



TEDDY WOLFF FOR EXPRESS

Part-Irish: Dirty Mojito

Cedar's Dirty Mojito (\$12) is a twist on the rum classic that combines mint and lemon with raw honey and Ireland's spirit of choice: Jameson whiskey. Created by bar manager Matt Perkins, the cocktail has the snappy, summer feel of a julep and the comforting warmth of a winter toddy. The honey, which is featured in several Cedar cocktails, is the secret ingredient — it's made at Rocky Ridge Farm in West Virginia, which is run by Perkins' brother-in-law, Eric Lindberg. And speaking of secrets, Cedar is the perfect place to avoid the drunken masses this weekend because it's underground and inconspicuous: You have to know to look for it, and once you find it, you'll want to keep it to yourself. ● Cedar, 822 E St. NW; 202-637-0012, Cedardc.com. (Gallery Place)



MARTINA FURNACE

Irish by Design: Trinity

Room 11 has created three different cocktails for St. Patrick's Day weekend (\$12 each), and all are worth trying. The Trinity, above, is perhaps the most festive of the trio. A smooth, light blend of creme de cacao, coffee bitters, cream and Jameson, it's a more elegant alternative to shots of Baileys, Jameson and Guinness. "I was thinking about car bombs and how we're not going to do them," says general manager Jess Woods, of the cocktail's unlikely inspiration. The pearly orange Kildare Club melds whiskey and amaro in a twist on a Blackthorn, which is normally made with bitters, vermouth and sloe gin. The Green Sazerac subs in green Chartreuse and a rosemary tincture rinse for the cocktail's usual absinthe. ● Room 11, 3234 11th St. NW; 202-332-3234, Room11dc.com. (Columbia Heights)



ADAM SCHUBERT

Leprechaun-Related: End of the Rainbow

Wisdom's End of the Rainbow (\$10) cocktail was designed especially for this holiday. It's a light drink containing Jameson, apple schnapps and Three Pins alpine herbal liqueur, making it sweet and fruity — but not so sweet that you can't taste the unmistakably Irish alcohol. Though Wisdom takes the same care with cocktails as more-upscale bars do, it avoids the Prohibition-era pageantry (exclusive entry, super-dressed-up clientele) associated with modern speakeasies. Instead, it offers up complex, thoughtfully concocted cocktails in a pleasantly low-key setting, making it another great place in which to hide from the hordes. ● Wisdom, 1432 Pennsylvania Ave. SE; 202-543-2323, Dcwisdom.com. (Potomac Ave)

Accidentally Irish: Ojos Verdes

Find an apropos green cocktail at D.C.'s original speakeasy, The Gibson. The Ojos Verdes (\$15) doesn't have anything to do with bartenders' usual standby emerald liqueurs (creme de menthe and Midori). Instead it contains naturally green ingredients: lime and avocado, plus celery bitters and Aquavit. The avocado gives the drink a viscous, smoothie-ish mouthfeel initially, which is followed by the sharp, unmistakable flavors of citrus and Aquavit. If it seems strange to be drinking Scandinavian liquor on an Irish holiday, keep in mind that Vikings raided Ireland constantly for a couple of hundred years starting in the late 700s, so you're making an ironic comment on the history of conquest. ● The Gibson, 2009 14th St. NW, 202-232-2156, Thegibsondc.com. (U Street)



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