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How about a chocotini?

BY SHAWN LANGLOIS
 CBS MarketWatch

Remember Sex on the Beach? Forget it. What you really want is a Pink Squirrel.

No, it's not a Cinemax special. Catchy, or at least provocative, names are a hallmark of trendy cocktails today as they were decades ago. But drink fads change at the drop of a miniature umbrella.

"We're like an ice cream shop these days -- 31 flavors," said Bob McCambridge, a 33-year veteran of the San Francisco bartending scene.

"It used to be simple stuff like scotch and water. Now, 99 percent of what these young folks order changes every day."

In the 1920s, it was all about moonshine and fruity mixes designed to hoodwink the prohibitionists. After that, Manhattans and martinis were all the rage.

Fast-forward through the free-love, cocktails-are-for-grandma years, and a resurgence has brought back many of the classics while making way for some worthy newcomers.

The following is a list of a few of the more popular mixed booze choices imbibers have been quaffing of late:

• **Martinis:** When it comes to the martini, the old adage applies: The more things change, the more they stay the same. The quintessential not-for-neophytes' drink, however, has strayed from the straight up vodka and gin versions, gradually morphing into a blank canvas on which "mixologists" have painted a variety of elixirs: The appletini, a shot of vodka and a half shot of apple schnapps served with a raisin. In a chilled martini glass, of course. The green apple martini is a slight variation.

The chocotini is a hot choice for the martini rookie with a sweet tooth for chocolate. And the dirty martini, the gin or vodka classic with plenty of olive juice. Serve it with an extra olive or two -- try almond or garlic stuffed olives. A personal favorite.

• **Cosmopolitan:** Not quite the "it" drink it was a few years ago when the *Sex and the City* vixens knocked back a few while boning up on raunchy gossip at some trendy Manhattan nightclub, it remains a very popular choice, primarily among women. The basic recipe: vodka, lime, cranberry juice and Triple Sec. For a variation, try a Rude Cosmo, which substitutes vodka with tequila and some Grand Marnier.

• **Tequila, straight-up:** Interest has grown in recent years as premium brands have entered mainstream trendiness. Stepping out from behind the intense flavors of the margarita, Mexico's finest contribution has become a stand-alone drink to be savored. Try sipping a reposado or anejo, two high-end varieties of aged tequila. Enthusiasts point to brands like Don Julio, Porfidio and Patron.

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• **Champagne cocktail:** Not just your geriatric aunt's drink anymore, the champagne cocktail has enjoyed a renaissance of sorts among the hip crowd. The no-frills recipe in its most basic form includes champagne, a sugar cube, and Angostura bitters.

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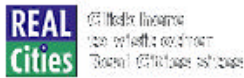
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