

## London Life Food

**B**LAWYERS and strikers at the ready, with autumn taking hold and London Cocktail Week on its way (October 3-9), it's time to shake up your cocktail habits. And there are few better spirit guides than Oskar Kinberg, whose bar, Oskar's, sits below Michelin-starred restaurant Dabbles.

Kinberg's friendship with Ollie Dabbles has given the bartender a chef-like approach to cocktails: his new *Cocktail Cookbook* is arranged not by spirit, region or style but by the store cupboard fridge ingredients that inspire each drink. "In an ideal world you would look at a menu and go, 'I like this, I like avocado. This should be a good drink. Not, I don't like this, I won't like this,'" he says. In other words, "don't let the alcohol put you off".

Even if you're a hardcore drinker who can sink anything, Kinberg's approach makes choosing your drink more straightforward than ordering yet another Negroni. Here are his boozey recommendations for autumn.

### The new mulled wine

Kinberg has a clever alternative to a top of scalding red wine sweetened with orange juice and a slodge of spices floating on top: the Parisian Plum Plum Plum, named after the Christmas card *The Little Drummer Boy*. There are just two ingredients: fig and plum-infused rum and Cocchi Americano. Yes, that makes it a glass of fruit alcohol but it tastes dangerously innocent and less cloying than mulled wine. The heady Christmas flavours mean Kinberg recommends serving the Parisian Plum Plum warm.

## Shake up the season

### Drink

From plum-infused rum to Scandi syrups, top mixologist Oskar Kinberg is your autumn spirit guide, says **Frankie McCoy**

### Cosy up to Cocchi

The days when cocktail mixers mean either Coke or lemonade are long gone. In fact, the best autumn mixer isn't even a soft drink. Cocchi Americano is an aperitif wine, and the golden sector which Kinberg uses in practically every other drink in the cookbook. "I use it like ketchup," he explains, a "bridge-between-flavours" or "like blue but tarter", which adds a hint of acidity without having to resort to lemon or lime.

It heightens the aromatics of aquavit and cucumber in a cocktail called Scandinavian Leather, and brings extra sweetness to Pear and Mint.

### Green juice

"There's no way of getting around it," says Kinberg. "I use and use and use." Flavors: Chops and milkshakes brilliant." But he isn't suggesting that you blend a McDonald's Happy Meal with some vodka. Quite the opposite. Many of his cocktails are based around green veg and herbs, from pea shoots

and nettles to the sorrel leaf, normally found garnishing fish. Kinberg is a big fan of sorrel's slightly wine-inducing tartness ("like green apples, ones that aren't quite ready yet"), and blots the leaves with lemon, water and sugar before straining to create a teeny-green, vegetal sweet juice.

Besides the flavour, sorrel is ripe for cocktail puns - Better Safe than Sorrel (sorrel, gin, pear liqueur) and Sorrel seems to be the Hardest Weed (sorrel, prosecco, melon liqueur). Best of all, it's green juice, making these cocktails good for you. Sort of.

### Look to the north (and east)

Nordic cuisine has been influencing London's hippest kitchens for some time now. Kinberg, a Swede, predicts one drink are going Scandi: Sorrel sprouts. No, the two Michelin-starred Danish restaurant in Copenhagen with a strong focus on foraging as do nettles and pine, which he turns into a syrup for the gin-based Norwegian Wood. Kinberg is also

championing Gammel Dansk, a Danish liqueur which crops up in the journey to hairs-on-your-chest cocktail of cognac, Cocchi Americano, pear liqueur and Gammel.

Kinberg also has a thing for Japan. Specifically in the form of shiso, the herb also known as perilla. Although it's often called Japanese mint it's milder and more citrusy than the British variety's eye-wasering toothpaste smack and gives an extra herbal boost to the salad-like Shiso Pine-lingula, celery, lime, cucumber and Thriver in Perilla (gin, violet liqueur, lemon).

### Burn the midnight oil

Olives aren't just for plopping into an ice-cold martini. For a sophisticated drink, hit the bottle - of olive oil. It's not as simple as topping up your Negroni with extra-virgin, but "warming" spirits in oil, mixing and freezing so that the fat separates into a "vial" you can peel off the top.

You might have seen bacon-washed booze before but Kinberg prefers the cleaner taste of vegetable oils such as olive, the "grown-up fruit". In *A Taste of Paradise*, olive oil-infused gin is mixed with (you guessed it) Cocchi Americano, lemon, bay leaf syrup and egg white for an incredibly smooth selt. And for rabbit fans, Kinberg has something right up your (sesame) street: a sesame-infused vodka. No, it tastes richly peanut-buttery and slightly sweet. During London Cocktail Week Kinberg will combine it with violet, lemon and his old favourite, shiso.

atfrankiemccoy  
Oskar's *Cocktail Cookbook* by Oskar Kinberg £15. Franco Leocali is available from October 8.

Tails of the city: some of Oskar's concoctions

