

MY LIFE ON THE ROCKS

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Qi Liqueurs



Qi liqueurs are produced by the fine people at St. George Spirits. So far, they produce Qi Black, made with black tea, and Qi White, made with white tea and exotic oranges. Both of these liqueurs are quite interesting and distinctive products. Lets begin by looking at the Qi Black.

On the OBG forums, I'd heard some questions about how to mix the Qi Black. One of the comments even said something like, 'I added some of the Qi Black to my bourbon and turned it into scotch'. It definitely has a pronounced smoky flavor. So much so, that in mixing this product, less is definitely more. But its delicious stuff, and in proper context can make for some wonderful cocktails. At 80 proof, the Qi can also hold its own in a cocktail, it doesn't need to play a supporting role to a primary liquor. In fact, it steals the show in the cocktail below, my riff on the nonalcoholic classic, the Arnold Palmer. I offer you, the John Daly #2 (yes, there was a John Daily #1, but this version is better).

John Daly #2
1 1/2 oz Qi Black Liqueur
4 oz fresh lemonade

2 dashes Fee Bros Lemon Bitters

Build dry in a mixing glass, add ice, shake briefly, and pour contents into a double rocks glass.

When I review a product, I like to let fellow bartenders taste what I have, to see their opinions. I also like to play around with a product (which is why I find airline bottles useless). I'll take whiskey and try it on the rocks. Then maybe as a manhattan, then finally maybe as something else, to see how mixable a product is and also to taste all the "angles" for lack of a better word of a particular spirit. Well, my friend Neil Koppelin of Carlyle tasted the Qi Black and told me, "This would be great on salmon". Somehow, Neil's suggestion stuck in my head until today, when I was out shopping and found wild salmon on sale. I took it home, and made this (quite delicious");

Neil's Salmon

1 filet wild salmon
1 oz Qi Black Tea Liqueur
1 oz Olive Oil+ oil for the aluminum foil
Salt and Black Pepper to taste

- 1) Preheat oven to 400
- 2) On a large sheet of aluminum foil (make sure its a lot larger than your filet), take a small amount of olive oil and rub it across the area the salmon will sit
- 3) Place salmon on aluminum foil
- 4) In a small bowl, mix Qi Black liqueur and olive oil, stirring vigorously to incorporate (act like you are making a vinaigrette)
- 5) using a pastry brush, lightly brush the salmon with the Qi/Olive oil mixture. Use the entire amount.
- 6) Season salmon with fresh ground pepper and salt to taste
- 7) Wrap salmon up (basically make a tinfoil envelope) and place in oven for 15 minutes
- 8) Enjoy

This salmon isn't overwhelmed by the smokiness of the Qi but instead takes on a nice smoky background note. Good stuff, thanks Neil.

So lets talk Qi White. Of the people that I've tasted on the Qi White, the majority of them can't taste the white tea base in the liqueur (I can't either and I kind of suspect those that claim to taste the tea of lying). However, there is a pronounced orange flavor to the liqueur (80 proof). Now, you may ask yourself, why would anyone make yet another orange liqueur for the market. Orange liqueur may be the second most saturated market in the distilled spirits category (behind only vodka), with offerings from your cheap triple sec to some of the finest liqueurs on the market, Grand Marnier and Cointreau. Qi White falls someplace between Cointreau and Grand Marnier, definitely richer than Cointreau but lighter than Grand Marnier. I never knew that I needed an orange liqueur between GM and Cointreau, but Qi White has

convinced me that I definitely need to keep a bottle on hand at all time. In a word, Qi white is delicious. A very well balanced liqueur that can hold its own in a variety of cocktails as well as being perfectly suited for baking and cooking. In fact, after getting inspired to use the Qi Black on our salmon this evening, I decided to use the Qi white to create this dessert, a delicious ending to any meal.

Qi White Fool (serves 2)

Qi White whipped cream (see recipe below)
3 navel oranges peeled and sliced
1/4 c lightly packed brown sugar
1/2 oz Qi White liqueur
1 oz Navan liqueur

- 1) Peel oranges and slice into 1/4 inch rounds
- 2) Place orange wheels into a pyrex bowl, sprinkle with brown sugar, Navan and Qi white and toss to incorporate. Let stand at least 30 minutes.
- 3) Place orange wheels into a small bowl, top with syrup and finish with a topping of Qi white whipped cream.
- 4) Enjoy

Qi White whipped cream

1 pint heavy whipping cream
1 c granulated sugar
1 oz Qi White Liqueur

- 1) In a KitchenAid mixer (if you don't own a KitchenAid, go buy one) add all ingredients to bowl, attach whip attachment, and process at med/high speed until the cream forms stiff peaks.
- 2) Refrigerate until needed.

I've also tried the Qi White in some (not very) creative cocktails, namely Qi white and OJ or Qi white and soda, both make for an excellent cocktail and I'll post more recipes involving both Qi products as I have time.

On that note, I think its time for me to turn in for the night. The OBG has its 2nd event tomorrow, "Lost in Translation", which I am quite excited about. It should be a good time. Jeff Morgenthaler, Matt Mount and Neil Koppelin are all going to be presenting, and I'm excited to have the chance to host. Let me know if you are interested and I'll make sure that you get on the OBG mailing list.

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