

The Telson, A Cocktail Worth Traveling For

Serves 8-10 | 5 minutes

Recipe courtesy of Gander & Goose

On a recent sojourn up to White Salmon, Washington for our 10th anniversary, Kate and I ducked into a new-to-us cocktail bar called Gander & Goose one quiet afternoon, and were pleasantly surprised to find owner and barman Sam Schauer behind the bar.

We hadn't seen each other in over a decade. Back in the Woodsman days, he tended bar at the Tavern while I was running the Woodsman Market, and suddenly here we were — older, grayer, and catching up like no time had passed at all.

While looking over his menu, one cocktail stopped me cold: The Telson — mezcal, Cynar, lime, grapefruit bitters, a sweet-and-savory sumac rim, twist, served up. I asked him about it, and of course he made me one. It was perfect — smoky, bright, bitter, and uniquely refreshing in that way great bartenders understand instinctively.

As we lingered and talked, Sam surprised us with a flight of his house-made amaros, infused with wild-foraged botanicals from the Gifford Pinchot wilderness. They were beautiful — dark, woodsy, herb-driven, the kind of thing you only get when someone is both obsessed with and deeply rooted in a place.

Before we left, he scribbled the recipe for The Telson on a scrap of paper. I've made it at home a number of times since, and it holds up — a killer cocktail. Sam uses grapefruit bitters, but I've also made it with Angostura and it's equally delicious. Below, I've scaled it up so you can batch it and bring it to any dinner you're headed to this season. It's the kind of thing that makes you look like you know what you're doing behind a bar, even if you don't.

15 oz Mezcal

7.5 oz Cynar

5 oz Lime juice

5 oz Simple syrup

**10 dashes grapefruit bitters (or
about ¼ teaspoon)**

Sumac (optional)

Grapefruit twists, for garnish

Step 1 Combine all the liquid ingredients in a large container and chill thoroughly.

Step 2 Serve up, with or without a sumac-salted rim. Finish with a grapefruit twist.