

Margarita Makeover

An Asian spin on a classic après cocktail



BY ERICA DUECY

> FOR A FEW DAYS EACH SPRING, THE GRAND MARNIER & NAVAN Mixology Summit convenes in Vail, turning that great ski town into a capital of cocktail creation. The nation's top bartenders attend demonstrations and lectures, and engage in friendly but intense competition behind the bar and on the slopes.*

Talent comes from around the country, but (nearly) local favorite Denis Côté, a mixologist at Aspen's 39 Degrees Lounge, always makes a strong showing. His latest concoction, the Yuzu Margarita, stunned everyone, including Alexandra Marnier Lapostolle, president of Grand Marnier. "Denis' cocktail showcased a new flavor profile for Navan," she said, noting his innovative use of herbs and fruit to enhance the flavor of the vanilla liqueur.

The Yuzu Margarita is infused with the fresh taste of cucumber, and with Asian notes from Thai basil and citrusy Japanese yuzu juice. Côté's aspiration — to create a tequila cocktail that was "cutting-edge and different" from any he'd had before — resulted in a drink he describes as "smooth and flavorful — not at all overpowering." Since its springtime debut, Côté's margarita has become a top seller at 39 Degrees Lounge. And now you too can whip up a Yuzu at your next après-ski gathering. ●

