

Ushering in a new era for brandy at the Cause | Effect Cocktail Kitchen

 By [Cari Coetzee](#)

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As our mixologist for the evening, Justin AwehWolf Shaw, noted, everyone is all about the gin right now - everyone has been indulging in the bevy of concoctions that can be found around almost every corner. Perhaps it's time for all the "pot-valorians" to turn to our local award-winning brandies for some liquid courage.

Inspired by Cape Town's fynbos, oceans, vineyards and mountain, Cause | Effect is an experiential cocktail kitchen and brandy bar that celebrates locally produced brandies – with a few international labels and other spirits to complement the mixes.



Image: [causeeffectbar](#)

Opening up in a time of peril

The bar opened a few months ago as Cape Town scrambled to preserve every precious drop of water to stave off 'Day Zero'. Being cognisant of this and with the ethos 'Re-use, Recycle and Rethink Waste', the establishment has made every effort to save water and cut waste. No taps are left running and all melted ice water is used for cleaning.

They utilise both fruit and peel on the menu. The humble pineapple, for instance, plays multiple roles with the bar making drinks from the pineapple skins called pineapple tepache. They also use the leftover pulp from pineapple juice to make pineapple paper for their drinks (Shaw says one pineapple is actually used no less than four times)!

With this in mind, I would frequent the bar on principal alone.

Brandy alchemy

A dimly, romantically lit bar saw us take our seats, mesmerized by the beautiful bottles and a fruit tray – which was more

like an aromatics tray with fynbos on the bar and hanging behind it, lemon-rind infused salt, dehydrated pineapple, and all kinds of creative goodies with which to spice up the cocktails.





Defying gravity and attempting alchemy, Shaw vigorously shook and then tossed the liquid from one metal cup to the other. No drop is spilt as he performs a strangely nerve-wracking dance behind the bar, mixing it into a new form that is set to dazzle – a perfect marriage of flavours and kick.

Giving the angels their share, we start the tasting...

Funky grapes

The cocktails ranged from incredibly beautiful to strangely challenging, with a pink elephant mixed in somewhere (apparently a favourite and it's easy to see why).



Image: [causeeffectbar](#)

The first round - an aperitif of red vermouth (made in-house) with sparkling San Pellegrino, orange slice caperitif and a grapefruit slice - already alluded to how much more there is to brandy than just mixing it with Coke and ice.



The second round came with some theatre – a burning bush and an artsy tree. I chose the Tree of Life – baobab, coconut ash, green pineapple tea, Absolut Elyx and roasted oats - which was served in a quirky mini baobab tree made of wire. Finding purchase for your face is a bit of challenge, but it's also part of the experience. Once you have your face wedged between the right branches you get to sip on what was described as a “breakfast” cocktail (due to the oats and tea) – but with a whole lot of kick as I was reminded that I’m indeed partaking in brandy.

My partner opted for the Daisy – 100% Agave Tequila, Verjuice, nutty sherry, orange bitters and lemon Pelargonium cordial. Lighting a little buchu bush on fire to awaken the senses, the milky cocktail was presented in a bowl with some orange rind salt and a sweet on which to suck in between careful sips.

Instead of being cumbersome, the challenge to drink the cocktails ends up being a lot of fun and very much part of the experience.

For the last course, we enjoyed a mix which was clearly designed to put the brandy centre stage. Tempted by both name and description, I got to enjoy the Sazerac – New Orleans circa 1850 – Peychaud's bitters, absinthe and buchu brandy. A smooth, thoroughly enjoyable drink. My partner opted for the Table Bay – Cape Town circa 2017 – caperitif, brandy, Wilderer - Obstler and Van der Hum – which reminded us that Cause & Effect is ultimately inspired by Cape Town and its surrounds.

For those who are ready to discover the versatility and uniqueness that is our brandies, the entire experience will challenge, surprise and delight your senses whilst dealing the death blow to the brandy and coke culture.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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