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# LAGUNA BEACH

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Magazine

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## Dessert, Shaken or Stirred

Martinis mimic sweet treats on bar menus around Laguna, allowing diners to enjoy after-meal indulgences with a boozy twist.

By Sharon Stello

Close your eyes and taste the key lime martini at Tommy Bahama Bar & Grill or the Orange Creamcycle at Ristorante Rumari: The flavors recall classic confections and childhood favorites, but in liquid form—with an adult spin—proving you can have your cake or pie and drink it, too.

Dessert cocktails often take a martini form because there's no need to have space for ice, which would water down the sweetness. And the glass' sleek shape is perfect for displaying a silky smooth mixture that's already been chilled in a shaker.

"I think the martini glass is more sophisticated—more sexy," says Ristorante Rumari owner Vince Crivello, adding that it looks better than sipping from a highball, for example. "There's a sort of sensuality to it as well."

A feast for both the eyes and the palate, these inventive concoctions sometimes start with chocolate drizzled in

the glass and end with a dollop of whipped cream incorporated for extra richness. Martin Ballina, manager at Ristorante Rumari, says dessert drinks have taken off over the past two decades as alcohol brands began offering flavored vodkas and mix-ins that allowed for experimentation to replicate the taste of everything from cookies to tiramisu. What started with vanilla- and citrus-infused vodkas has expanded to watermelon, grape lollipop and even marshmallow varieties.

"When you think about it, when you were a kid and had candy, all the flavors are like that," Martin says. "... This is why you can create anything you want."

Limited only by a bartender's imagination, combinations abound at restaurants and bars in Laguna. Indulge your sweet tooth with this tour of dessert cocktails, but don't let the treat-like taste deceive you—these drinks still pack a punch.

..... **WARM SEA SALTED CARAMEL MARTINI**  
**WATERMARC**

This eye-catching layered drink is the perfect nightcap to warm you up during chilly winter months. Joseph Guillena, director of operations, retooled one of Watermarc's steamed martinis to give it some serious "wow" factor. To assemble the masterpiece, bartender Anthony McLeod steams milk and equal parts John D. Taylor's Velvet Falernum, butterscotch schnapps and Tuaca vanilla-citrus liqueur, then pours the warmed mixture (reserving the foam) into a martini glass prepared with caramel sauce and sea salt in the bottom. Next, he pours espresso into the glass, using a spoon to direct it into a middle layer. On top, the foam is mixed with a bit of espresso to create a painted look, garnished with a couple of espresso beans. "[As you drink it,] the caramel melts and it gets richer as you go," Anthony says. It looks almost too beautiful to drink, but after one sip, it's too good to put down. (949-376-6272; watermarcrestaurant.com)



**DURBAN PIE**  
**MOZAMBIQUE**

Like pineapple pie in a glass, this juicy cocktail will have you licking your lips. To create the beverage, bartender John Boddy says he muddles fresh pineapple with lime, then adds Smirnoff vanilla vodka and ice, shaking the mixture and pouring it into a chilled martini glass garnished with a pineapple wedge. John says the citrus and vanilla balance each other out for a smooth sip. "Although this is a sweet drink that's the perfect end to any meal, I also consider this a refreshing cocktail appropriate at any time of day," John says. "We're lucky to be in Laguna Beach where the weather and views are always appropriate for a tropical-inspired drink." (949-715-7777; mozambiqueoc.com)



**MINT CHOCOLATE COOKIE MARTINI**  
**SAPPHIRE LAGUNA**

Thin Mints, a beloved type of Girl Scout Cookie—and one of the first varieties (then called Chocolate Mints) sold by troops nationwide—spawned a new addition to Sapphire Laguna's cocktail menu last year. The mint chocolate cookie martini, the brainchild of chef Azmin Ghahreman and bartender Adam Bernstein, brings together Ketel One vodka infused in-house with mint, Godiva dark chocolate liqueur, creme de cacao, creme de menthe and house-made whipped cream. With all its mint-chocolate goodness, this drink will satisfy your cravings until you can grab a box of Girl Scout Cookies—on sale this winter through March 6—and after the last cookie is gone for the season. (949-715-9888; sapphirecc.com)

**ORANGE CREAMCYCLE**  
**RISTORANTE RUMARI**

A childhood summer staple takes a new—yet still refreshing—form in this citrusy concoction reminiscent of Creamsicle Popsicles, known for their iconic outer orange layer and creamy vanilla filling. Stoli orange vodka, Cointreau, a small squirt of whipped cream and a crushed orange slice are mixed together in a shaker with ice, then added to the glass with orange soda. While the soft drink is essential to the martini's flavor, it skips the shaker because the carbonation would cause it to fizz. (949-494-0400; rumari.net)



## KEY LIME MARTINI

TOMMY BAHAMA BAR & GRILL

Exuding the relaxed, tropical feel of the Tommy Bahama brand, this cocktail version of the eatery's popular key lime pie is at once tangy and sweet, complete with a graham cracker crumb rim and garnished with a lime wheel. To make the drink, a bartender mixes Stolli vanilla vodka, Kē Kē Beach key lime cream liqueur and fresh lime juice. The ingredients are combined with ice, shaken until chilled and strained into a martini glass for a beverage that can serve as a pre-dinner sip or dessert substitute. (949-376-6886; tommybahama.com)



## DEATH BY CHOCOLATE MARTINI

LUMBERYARD

For chocolate lovers, this is the ultimate indulgence. Lumberyard's take on the traditional chocolate martini makes it even richer by using dark creme de cacao and Stolli vanilla vodka mixed with chocolate sauce and a bit of cream. To enhance the presentation, the glass is drizzled with chocolate for a double dose of the sweet syrup. The drink has been offered for at least a few years, but was elevated with the dark creme de cacao—a dangerous addition for chocoholics. (949-715-3900; lblumberyard.com)



## S'MORES MARTINI

SPLASHES RESTAURANT AND BAR,  
SURF & SAND RESORT

Inspired by a favorite campfire treat, this s'mores martini replicates the gooey, sweet confection of roasted marshmallows and melted chocolate sandwiched between two graham crackers. "I have always loved desserts and especially s'mores when I'm at the beach," says Matt Heinz, Surf & Sand Resort's outlets manager. "I had just gotten back from a weekend camping, and thought it would be great to come up with a dessert cocktail that resembled a s'more." The drink combines Smirnoff Fluffed Marshmallow vodka, cream, Godiva chocolate liqueur and drizzled chocolate syrup in a glass with a graham cracker crumb rim and topped with mini marshmallows. (877-741-5908; surfandsandresort.com) LBM

S'MORES MARTINI PHOTO COURTESY OF SURF & SAND RESORT