

[A homegrown martini for shaky times, or shaky cities](#)

- Gary Regan
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"What's shakin', Professor?" asks Doc, a regular customer at our cocktailian bartender's slab of mahogany.

"Choose your words carefully, Doc. Another week will see the centennial of the earthquake of 1906, you know," the Professor warns.

"Right you are, Professor. Right you are. Now tell me this -- I'm in the mood for a dry gin martini right now. Would I have been able to get one of those in 1906?"

"Matter of fact, the drink was born right around that time, Doc. Perhaps a little earlier. Wanna try the version they were sipping back then?" Doc agrees, and the Professor starts to assemble the drink.

It's impossible to pin down the birth of the dry gin martini, but by perusing cocktail recipe books from the turn of the last century, we can get an idea as to how the drink was born, and approximately when it came into existence. A drink called the Martinez, made with gin, sweet vermouth, maraschino liqueur and bitters, cropped up in the late 1880s, and by 1900 the name had been changed to martini in some books, but the ingredients remained essentially the same.

In 1906, a book called "Louis' Mixed Drinks with Hints for the Care and Service of Wines," by Louis Muckensturm, detailed a dry martini that called for 2 parts dry gin, 1 part dry vermouth, a few dashes of curacao and some orange bitters.

Curacao is a generic name for an orange-flavored liqueur produced by many different companies. Only one brand is actually distilled on the Caribbean island of Curacao. This bottling is called Senior's Curacao of Curacao and is available in a few different colors, though the sweet orange flavor remains constant throughout the range.

"What's shakin', Doc?" the Boss asks as he bursts in. Doc and the Professor exchange a knowing glance.

"Choose your words carefully, Boss. Know what's coming up next week?"

"Sure as heck do, Professor. Just got back from One Market. They're serving earthquake-inspired cocktails to commemorate the centennial."

One Market restaurant in San Francisco is offering a range of drinks made with local ingredients in honor of the 100th anniversary of the earthquake. One of them, the Trembling Martini, calls for Vya extra-dry vermouth, a flavorful product made in Madera in California's Central Valley. Vya contains a mixture of Colombard and Orange Muscat wines, and a whole host of botanicals including lavender, sage, alfalfa and linden.

The gin in the Trembling Martini, Gin No. 209, is made on Pier 50 in San Francisco at the No. 209 distillery. New to the market, it joins another San Francisco product -- Junipero, a wonderful gin made at the Anchor Distilling Co. -- on well-stocked local bars' shelves.

"So, Professor, you planning anything special for next week?" the Boss says, staring expectantly at the man behind the stick.

"Sure am, Boss. Free drinks all day. They'll come from far and wide just to watch you quake in your boots."

The Boss scowls and disappears to the basement.

"This one on the house, Professor?" Doc says with a grin.

Trembling Martini

Adapted from a recipe created by Steven Izzo, beverage manager at One Market, San Francisco.

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 ounce Vya extra-dry

vermouth

3 ounces No. 209 gin

1 olive, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

Pour the vermouth into a chilled cocktail glass and, by tilting the glass and rotating it at the same time, coat the entire interior of the glass. Discard the excess vermouth.

Fill a cocktail shaker two-thirds full of ice. Add the gin and shake for approximately 15 seconds.

Strain into the prepared cocktail glass. Garnish with an olive.

Gary Regan is the author of "The Joy of Mixology: The Consummate Guide to the Bartender's Craft" and other books. E-mail him at wine@sfchronicle.com.