

Exploring New Cocktail Domains - Domaine de Canton



It's almost my one-year anniversary from setting foot in the Windy City as my new home. So, my blog is discovering new territory and attracting new readers as I've been finding my way around the city and blogging about locales that caught my eye. In other words, most of Chicago has yet to discover TheRebeccamendations®. So, when I was invited to a four-course meal, each inspired by and created with Domaine de Canton (a ginger liqueur I had never heard of before) hosted at Sepia, I was ecstatic and eager to dine (not hesitant or gingerly).



I walked in to the event space adjacent to the main Sepia restaurant, and began to mingle with some of Chicago's most in-the-know trendsetters and cocktail crafters like beverage directors, mixologists, bloggers and other liquor brand representatives. I was offered a light beverage of champagne and Domaine de Canton (pronounced Do-maine de Can-ton). Shortly after, we were seated where we received an introduction about the liquor's roots in France, the fresh baby ginger and special filtration process that makes the floral beverage so silky smooth and herbal.

We were offered a sip of the liquor on its own, which reminded me of a very sweet moscato wine with floral notes and a breath of warm spice. Tasting the liquor in its pure form allowed us to explore its pure flavors on our palates before the meal so we could detect the transformation and essence of it in the dishes and accompanying cocktails...and there were many...



My favorite was the top cocktail shown, Domaine de Canton, cachaca (Brazilian rum), lime, and ginger bitters. It was minimally sweet, more citrus-y, and reminded me of a well-balanced and refreshing margarita (not the Sweet 'n Sour mix kind). The first course was a hamachi (Japanese amberjack fish) served with a cocktail reminiscent of a morning mimosa with Domaine de Canton, vodka, orange, ginger, and soda. (I may just have to try this at home for brunch guests with the bottle I was so generously gifted - thank you, Domaine de Canton!)



The second plate was so memorable and so delicious, my fellow dining guests and I collectively wished we could return to Sepia to find it on the menu. Luckily and sadly for us, we got to experience this coconut and red curry fish stew with pristinely seared scallops, but it was specially crafted for this event. The flavors of ginger combined with the coconut in the broth were light, warm, nutty, and rich.



The third course of spice crusted duck was one that I shared with my table-mate since I prefer fish to meat typically. But, the last course incorporated the ginger liquor so lovingly - Domaine de Canton-caramel semifreddo (partially frozen), coconut sable, passionfruit, vanilla and blueberries. The light and fruit fusion of flavors complemented the final cordial of Domaine de Canton, black bottle blended scotch, caramel, and clove.



More on Domaine de Canton. It is made from a base of eau de vie (a colorless fruit brandy) and fresh baby (young) ginger, then VSOP (Very Superior Old Pale - a grade of brandy) and Grande Champagne XO Cognac, Provence honey and fresh vanilla beans are added and infused before the filtration process. There is so much care and care-acter that makes this liquor such a distinctive digestif (herbal alcoholic beverage served before or after dinner to assist in digestion) on its own, a curious foundation on which to build a complex cocktail, or special ingredient to elevate the sophistication of any dish.

Inspired to pick up a bottle of the chic frosted glass, scalloped-edge gold and black bottle of Domaine de Canton? Consider entering their savory or sweet recipe contest - entries are accepted until December 31, 2013. The winner will receive \$1,000, and the recipe will be featured in their 2014 recipe book and on the website.

*Thank you to Domaine de Canton and Sepia for a memorable meal, for the complimentary bottle of ginger liquor, and for introducing me to a new friend in the kitchen and at the bar.