

firstclass

COCKTAIL

## Warm Up to Brandy Cocktails

**F**rom riffs on the classic sidecar to fancy punches, brandy cocktails are the ultimate fireside sipper. Here are some great takes from bars and restaurants to try throughout the holiday season, plus a little insight into the brandy behind each drink. —*Kara Newman*

### AUTUMNAL PUNCH, AT BRASSERIE BECK

This Belgian brasserie offers a "rich but refreshing drink with a hint of spice to celebrate the changing of the leaves," says bar manager G. Alex Quayle. It's almost a tiki drink, made with nutty Armagnac, ruby port, falemum (a spiced syrup often seen in tropical drinks) and lemon juice, served over crushed ice.

The brandy: Tariquet VS Bas Armagnac, a French brandy. Armagnac, made in the Gascony region of southwest France, pairs well with French (and Belgian) food.  
1101 K St. NW, Washington, D.C.; 202-408-1717, [brasseriebeck.com](http://brasseriebeck.com)

### HONEY THAI CHILE SIDECAR, AT RECETTE

This restaurant made its name by fusing traditional French cuisine with local American ingredients, and this drink, created by bartender Tammy Cammer, fits right in. It's a riff on the classic brandy-based sidecar cocktail, with honey and hot peppers.

The brandy: Jacques Bonet Brandy V.S. It's made in California using French brandy traditions, which fits with the Recette aesthetic. A strong list of fine Cognacs and Armagnacs also are available on the menu, though some might consider them too dear to mix.

328 W. 12th St., New York; 212-414-3000, [recettenyc.com](http://recettenyc.com)

### MT. VERNON'S APPLE, AT BAR VOLVER

Created by lead bartender Scott Rodrigue, the warming apples-and-spice sipper is made with Laird's apple brandy, rich, raisiny amontillado sherry, Averna amaro, walnut bitters and allspice.

The brandy: Laird's Bonded "Apple Jack" Brandy—that's right, brandy distilled from apples, not grapes. Made nearby in New Jersey, this bold, flavorful stuff is 100-proof, so go easy on the refills.

300 S. Broad St., Philadelphia; 215-670-2303, [philadelphia.volverrestaurant.com](http://philadelphia.volverrestaurant.com)

### RUBBER BAND MAN, AT HIGHBALL LOUNGE

Quirky Highball Lounge (best known for a drink with a rubber ducky floating in the glass) offers this booze-forward rum-and-brandied combo for the speakeasy set. It's made with house-spiced Caña Brava rum, Pierre Ferrand Cognac, Cardamaro and Benedictine, garnished with two brandied cherries on a toothpick.

The brandy: Pierre Ferrand is a small producer in France's famed Cognac region; this is a brand with serious mixologist street cred.  
90 Tremont St., Boston; 617-772-0202, [highballboston.com](http://highballboston.com)

The Rubber Band Man cocktail at Highball Lounge.

