

# The First Martini—a Timeline

This timeline and the collection of quotations and illustrations are far from exhaustive, but selected to offer a concise (and hopefully) coherent perspective.

—David Wondrich & Martin Doudoroff

**c1800** various historical evidence of the emergence of the Cocktail, a style of taking spirits—typically genever, brandy or whiskey, whatever is handy—with sugar, water and medicinal bitters; the Cocktail initially fits into the day as a morning “bracer” or “hair of the dog”; the Cocktail was an alternative to other styles of drink, such as Punch, Julep, Posset, Toddy, Sangaree, and Sling

**c1805–1840** ice gradually becomes cheap and ubiquitous for most Americans (mainly through the lake ice industry); iced drinks like the julep abound, joined by the Cobbler, Smash, and—eventually—the Cooler and Highball; ice gradually replaces the water in the Cocktail; force carbonated water becomes ubiquitous

**c1840** sporadic evidence that vermouths from Italy and France had made appearances in some US markets; no evidence of use in mixed drinks

**1850s** the Crusta and Sour gradually begin to introduce the citrus juice from punch to cocktail-adjacent drinks; the Champagne Cocktail emerges as the first “new” cocktail, with the sparkling wine simply inserted into the cocktail template in place of the spirits (the Champagne Cocktail drink remains essentially unchanged today)

**1860s-1870s** the Collins, Fizz and Flip become fashionable; the notion of “inventing” new cocktails begins to emerge, beginning with Joe Santini’s Crusta and Jerry Thomas’ Japanese Cocktail... thus begins a gradual process of decades, at the end of which all mixed drinks are “cocktails”, there are literally thousands of cocktail recipes (many redundant), and the original Cocktail becomes known, instead, as the Old Fashioned

the Cocktail  
(one drink,  
swappable base)

## 107. Brandy Cocktail.

(Use small bar glass.)

3 or 4 dashes of gum syrup.  
2 do. bitters (Bogart’s).  
1 wine-glass of brandy.  
1 or 2 dashes of Curacao.  
Squeeze lemon peel; fill one-third full of ice, and stir with a spoon.

## 109. Whiskey Cocktail.

(Use small bar glass.)

3 or 4 dashes of gum syrup.  
2 do. bitters (Bogart’s).  
1 wine-glass of whiskey, and a piece of lemon peel.  
Fill one-third full of fine ice; shake and strain in a fancy red wine-glass.

## 111. Gin Cocktail.

(Use small bar glass.)

3 or 4 dashes of gum syrup.  
2 do. bitters (Bogart’s).  
1 wine-glass of gin.  
1 or 2 dashes of Curacao.  
1 small piece lemon peel; fill one-third full of fine ice; shake well, and strain in a glass.

Jerry Thomas. Bar-Tender’s Guide. 1862

## OLD TOM GIN COCKTAIL.

(Use a large bar glass.)

One to two dashes of Orinoco Bitters;  
Two or three dashes of gum syrup;  
One or two dashes of absinthe;  
Fill the glass with fine shaved ice;  
One wine glass of Old Tom gin;  
Stir well with a spoon, strain in a fancy cocktail glass, twist the oil from a piece of lemon peel on top, then serve.

George Winter. How to Mix Drinks. 1884

**1863** in the wake of the unification of Italy (1860), Martini & Sola (later known as Martini & Rossi) is created by established Piemontese wine-makers with high volume export markets in mind and vermouth is one of their products (soon to become their focus as unequivocal and permanent global market leader)

**1863** earliest indication of the “Vermont Cocktail” (a mistaken name for the Vermouth Cocktail), where imported vermouth is inserted into the Cocktail template in place of the spirits (and, at first, the bitters, as vermouth was thought to be medicinal enough on its own); the “Vermont cocktail” would resurface for decades as a morning bracer even after the same drink is well-known as the Vermouth Cocktail

**1868** New York Herald mentions the vermouth cocktail being served at Demonico’s, and in a manner that suggests it is an established drink at this point

**1869–1881** continued sporadic references to “vino vermouth bitters”, the “Vermont cocktail”, even a “Martina cocktail” (1881), and examples of the marketing of vermouth by Martini & Sola (later Martini & Rossi)



1875 advertisement

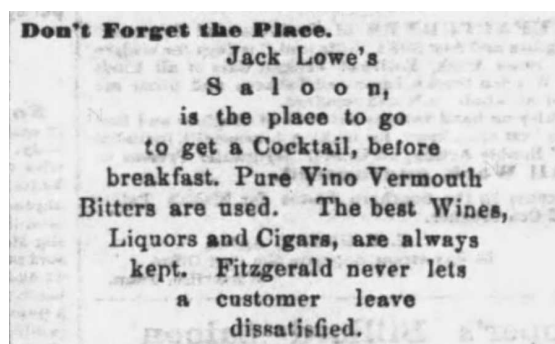
# 118.—VERMUTH COCKTAIL.

One wine glass of vermouth ; one very small piece of ice ; one small piece of lemon pe.l. Serve in a thin stemmed wine glass with curved lip.

Haney's Steward & Barkeeper's Manual. 1869.

els. Altogether, he appears to be an excellent sample of the matinee-young-man. He braced himself with a Vermont cocktail and took an early and solitary breakfast in the cafe. That duty performed he saun-

Philadelphia Times. 1882.



Knoxville Daily Press, 1869

**THE BOHEMIAN BANQUET TO THE SOROSIS'ANS.**

At the exceedingly ungentlemanly hour of three yesterday afternoon the fair members of the Sorosis Club sat down to a banquet given in their honor at Delmonico's by a coterie of male admirers. The majority of the entertainers are in some degree associated with the minor journals of this city, and among the gentle guests were quite a number of prominent "Blues"—

— that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets,  
And with the pages of the last review  
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets.

At first it was evident that the Bohemians were rather nervous, but the quiet assurance and considerate condescension of the fair Sorosisians had the effect of putting them almost at their ease. Having partaken of their sherry and bitters, vermouth cocktails and other appetizing mixtures usually included in the programme on these occasions—not that such gastric stimulants were at all needed—the gallant hosts escorted their guests to the dining room, where they were duly sandwiched and seated. About sixty persons sat down to table, the whilom "lords of creation" being in majority. It has been remarked that literary men are generally sad-

New York Herald, June 14, 1868



**1882** first concrete reference to the combination of whiskey, vermouth, and bitters as the Manhattan or Turf Club or Jockey Club; note that these are all social clubs in New York City, with overlapping membership

**1882–1884** various references to the Manhattan cocktail being popular, made with “gin” (could be genever or imported old tom gin at this point) or whiskey (bourbon or rye); note that a Manhattan made with genever is mostly indistinguishable from one made with bourbon or rye; people are clearly still drinking the Vermont Cocktails (not always by that name)

**1884** Manhattan Cocktail recipes are memorialized in two notable books—it has arrived with both a name and a settled base spirit: whiskey (rye or bourbon); moreover, there are versions for Italian and French vermouth, and there is a new Turf Club memorialized that combines bitters, old tom gin and Italian vermouth and a Martinez that is a Manhattan made with gin (again, Old Tom gin or genever in this era)

“Manhattan cocktails are in demand, too,” said the artist. “I introduced them some time ago, and they have become quite popular. They are made of vermouth and gin. I used to keep a bottle of it compounded and serve it out regularly.”

Chicago Tribune, 1883

used as flavors. Vermouth is an excellent appetizer, and is made into cocktails. It is also used in making what is called the Manhattan cocktail, the liquor in which is gin. A

Cleveland Leader, 1883

stantly being brought forward. It is but a short time ago that a mixture of whisky, vermouth and bitters came into vogue. It went under various names—Manhattan cocktail, Turf Club cocktail and Jockey Club cocktail. Bartenders at first were sorely puzzled what was wanted when it was demanded. But now they are fully cognizant of its various aliases and no difficulty is encountered. At one of the hotels,

Crawford Avalanche, 1882.

#### Manhattan Cocktail, No. 1.

(A small wine-glass.)

- 1 pony French vermouth.
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pony whisky.
- 3 or 4 dashes Angostura bitters.
- 3 dashes gum syrup.

#### Manhattan Cocktail, No. 2.

- 2 dashes Curacoa.
- 2 “ Angostura bitters.
- $\frac{1}{2}$  wine-glass whisky.
- $\frac{1}{2}$  “ Italian vermouth.
- Fine ice ; stir well and strain into a cocktail glass.

#### Martinez Cocktail.

Same as Manhattan, only you substitute gin for whisky.

The Modern Bartender's Guide. 1884.

— 52 —

#### MANHATTAN COCKTAIL.

(Use large bar glass.)

- Two or three dashes of Peruvian Bitters;
- One to two dashes of gum syrup;
- One-half wine glass of whiskey;
- One-half wine glass of Vermouth;
- Fill glass three-quarters full of fine shaved ice, mix well with a spoon, strain in fancy cocktail glass and serve.

George Winter. How to Mix Drinks. 1884

#### TURF CLUB COCKTAIL.

- Two or three dashes of Peruvian Bitters;
- One-half wine glass of Tom gin;
- One-half wine glass of Italian Vermouth;
- Fill glass three-quarters full of fine ice, stir well with spoon and strain in fancy cocktail glass, then serve.

George Winter. How to Mix Drinks. 1884

#### Manhattan Cocktail.

This is made in the same way as any other cocktail, except that you will use one-half vermouth and the other half whisky, in the place of using all whisky, omitting absinthe.

Theodore Proulx. Bartender's Manual. 1888.

**1886-1888** the Martini Cocktail (also listed as “Martine”, “Martin”, “Martingny”, “Martinez”, etc.) is mentioned in various sources and described variously, but most commonly as old tom gin and vermouth. The Turf Club has definitively become a gin drink; it’s unclear how it’s different from the Martini, if at all.

**1888** alongside the Manhattan, the Martini Cocktail—old tom and [Italian] vermouth—is memorialized in recipe form in two notable books; the drink is clearly settling on the “Martini” name

Imported soda. The Martini cocktail, made of Vermouth, Booth's gin, and Angostura bitters, is never so popular as at this season; and the same can be said of the Rosa cocktail, made of Vermouth, sherry, and Pepsin bitters; and of the celebrated Manhattan cocktail, which everybody knows.”

Chicago Tribune, 1887

upper Broadway. The last one was the “green tea cocktail,” the one before that was the already ancient “Manhattan,” and now they are coquetting with a subtle compound of gin and vermouth, which they call “the Martini,” though its name is spelled “Martinez.” It is one of those drinks that give the worth of their cost, and necessitate a man's standing under a pile driver to have his hat put on next morning.

New York Sun, 1887

The Martini is dainty and delicate enough for the feminine palate even, should the physician think a tonic necessary. The Martini is concocted of vermouth—the Martini vermouth at that—a *souperon* of gin and a dash of orange bitters. Angostura will not do, orange being essential to the dainty pale-gold tint of the drink. A bit of lemon peel completes the mixture.

DC Sunday Herald via St. Louis Republic, April 5, 1891

*The First Martini - David Wondrich & Martin Doudoroff*

## Martini Cocktail.

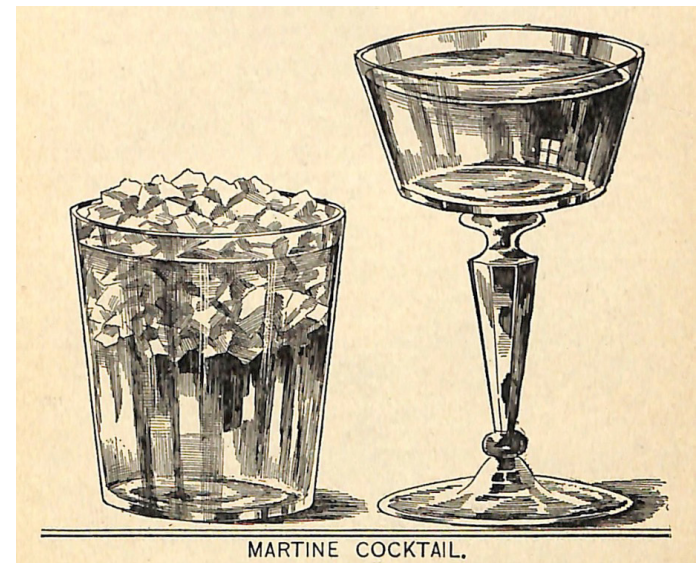
Is half Tom gin and half vermouth made like any other cocktail; no absinthe.

Theodore Proulx. Bartender's Manual. 1888.

## 57 MARTINI COCKTAIL

(Use a large bar glass.)

Fill the glass up with ice;  
2 or 3 dashes of Gum Syrup;  
2 or 3 dashes of Bitters; (Boker's genuine only.)  
1 dash of Curaçoa;  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  wine glassful of Old Tom Gin;  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  “ “ “ Vermouth;  
stir up well with a spoon, strain it into a fancy cocktail glass, squeeze a piece of lemon peel on top, and serve. (See Illustration, Plate No. 13.)



Harry Johnson. New & Improved Illustrated Bartender's Manual. 1888.  
(note common mis-spelling of Martini—this is the same book as the recipe above)

*(Martini Expo Sept 13, 2025) page 4 of 5*



**1890s–1910s** busy period in which imported London Dry gins displace old tom and genever in the market, the Dry Martini becomes highly fashionable on the back of the new gins, an explosion of novel cocktails occurs, right up to Prohibition (1920)

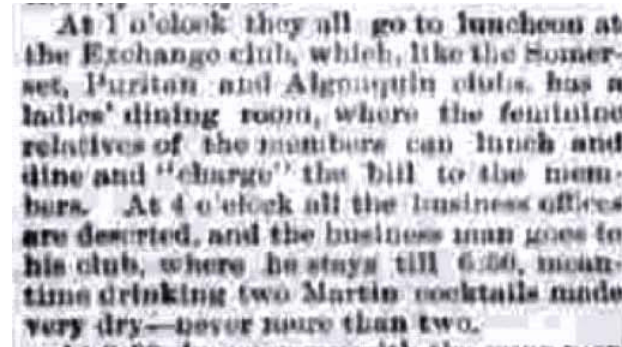
**1890** the first (maybe) documentation of the Dry Martini, served on a transatlantic Ocean Liner; unclear whether this drink was made with a dry gin (London Dry or Plymouth) or old tom gin, but it was explicitly made with French vermouth and a dash of Angostura bitters

**1890** allegedly the year Martini & Rossi starts producing their own dry vermouth, which they would not have done if they did not perceive a market for it (and the Martini is probably the only real market dry vermouth has ever had)

**1890–1904** myriad references to Dry Martinis; clearly a popular drink

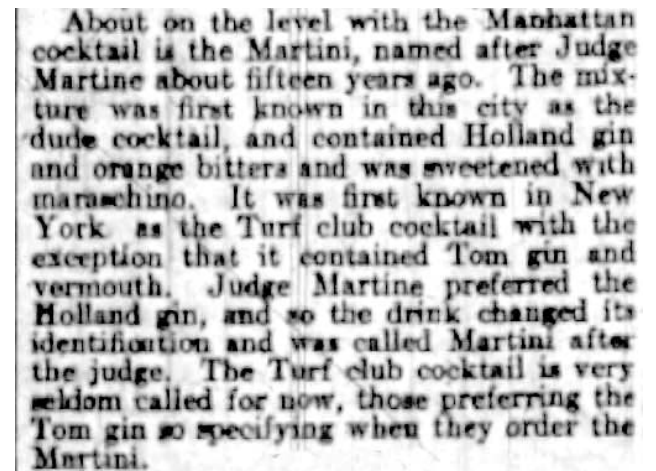
**1897** explicit reference to the use of Plymouth Gin (a dry gin) in a Martini

**1904, 1906** the Dry Martini is first formally memorialized as a recipe in French and American books



At 1 o'clock they all go to luncheon at the Exchange club, which, like the Somerset, Puritan and Algonquin clubs, has a ladies' dining room, where the feminine relatives of the members can lunch and dine and "charge" the bill to the members. At 4 o'clock all the business offices are deserted, and the business man goes to his club, where he stays till 6:30, meantime drinking two Martini cocktails made very dry—never more than two.

Shenandoah Evening Herald, 1898



About on the level with the Manhattan cocktail is the Martini, named after Judge Martine about fifteen years ago. The mixture was first known in this city as the dude cocktail, and contained Holland gin and orange bitters and was sweetened with maraschino. It was first known in New York as the Turf club cocktail with the exception that it contained Tom gin and vermouth. Judge Martine preferred the Holland gin, and so the drink changed its identification and was called Martini after the judge. The Turf club cocktail is very seldom called for now, those preferring the Tom gin so specifying when they order the Martini.

Albany Times-Union, 1899

Within the last few days Mr. Croker's followers have developed a decided taste for cocktails. "I got the tip from Colonel Gardiner's barkeep," explained a thirsty courtier, ordering his fourth. "They're the real thing. The swell guys in the Union Club drink 'em all night long and talk golf." Thus far the faithful followers are drinking plain gin cocktails, but in a short time someone will apprise them that the proper thing just now is a dry Martini made of Plymouth gin, and then they will be right in it, and no mistake.

Albany Evening Journal, 12/30/1897

Saturday, September 13, 1890.

*At sea on board La Champagne, bound from New York to Havre. ...*

The purser has introduced me to a new drink called Martini cocktail, which he mixes in his cabin at noon, before luncheon. It is made of a mixture of gin and French vermouth and a dash of Angostura bitters; most alluring and certainly a better drink than the dreadful wormwood stuff called absinthe, which they sip all day long in the smoking room. I am told that this absinthe

R. D. Blumenfeld, *R. D. B's Diary, 1887-1914*. 1930.

N° 79

### Dry Martini Cocktail

Verre n° 5

Prendre le verre à mélange n° 1, mettre quelques morceaux de glace :

3 traits d'angostura ou orange bitter.

Finir avec gin et vermouth sec, quantités égales, remuer, passer dans le verre n° 5, servir avec un zeste de citron, une cerise ou une olive, au goût du consommateur.

Frank Newman. American-Bar 1904.

### DRY MARTINI COCKTAIL

Take two dashes of orange bitters,

One dash of Curacao,

One liqueur-glass of French Vermouth, and

Two liqueur-glasses of dry gin.

Fill the mixing-glass with ice; stir well and strain into a cocktail-glass. Squeeze a small piece of lemon peel on top.

Louis Muckensturm. Louis' Mixed Drinks. 1906.