

Food

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BEVERAGES



BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

Steve Wood's zero-waste cocktail handiwork, from left: Matcha Peas Co. Sour, Remodeled Cobber and Strawberry Bon-Bon Negroni.

WASTE-NOT COCKTAILS

Willow Valley Communities' Steve Wood turn scraps into specialty sips; here's how you can, too

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Bartender Steve Wood is the first to tell you he's been around the local cocktail block. Over the past 15 years, Wood has manned the bar at several Lancaster city restaurants, including John J. Jeffries, Hunger-N-Thirst, Luca and The Pressroom. This spring, he decided to step away from the downtown bar circuit and take his mixology skills down the road to Willow Valley Communities. We found him shaking cocktails at Local Table, the full-service, seasonally inspired dining room led by executive chef Josh Manny. Together, Wood and Manny are collaborating on a zero-waste beverage initiative, in which they literally pass fruit and vegetable scraps between the kitchen and bar with the goal of extracting maximum flavor for delicious cocktails (and keeping garbage out of the bin).

Lately, he's been tinkering with the leafy green tops on strawberries, which he discovered infuse layers of fruitiness to Campari. He's making syrups from local elderflowers or sparkling wine that's lost its sparkle. Instead of pouring the flat bubbles down the drain, he's cooking it with citrus rinds and pulp. Empty pea pods that once housed shelling peas

are getting a reboot in the South American brandy known as Pisco. The possibilities, he is discovering, are endless.

By early next year, Wood will bring his zero-waste experimentation back to Lancaster city; in his new role as beverage and hospitality manager, he will oversee all things beverage at Bar 1888, the

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Steve Wood shows off his version of the negroni, which features Campari infused with strawberry tops rescued from the garbage bin.

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Cocktails

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marquee bar at the forthcoming, revitalized Southern Market on South Queen Street.

Earlier this month, Wood whipped up a bunch of his latest creations, all with repurposed fruit and vegetable scraps. The cocktails admittedly have multiple elements and may require a few advance steps before you get shaking. But Wood told me not to fret about having all the recommended booze and making the drinks exactly as originally designed. “If you are missing one ingredient, that doesn’t mean it won’t be a great experience,” Wood said. “I add several ingredients for layers of complexity. But if you subtract one layer of complexity, it’s still a really good drink.”

What follows are the road maps for three zero-waste cocktails. You can make the repurposed infusions and call it a day, or you can take things to the next level.

Project No. 1: Resist the urge to throw away the green leafy strawberry tops.

STRAWBERRY TOP-INFUSED CAMPARI

Amounts may be halved. Keep strawberry tops in an airtight container in the freezer as you accumulate the amount needed.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups strawberry tops
- 1 bottle Campari or Aperol

Directions:

1. Place strawberry tops in a blender or food processor and pulverize.
2. Transfer to a jar, pitcher or container and pour the liquid on top. (Do not discard bottle.)
3. Cover and let sit at room temperature for at least 24 hours.
4. Strain through a wire strainer, then strain resulting

liquid through a coffee filter to remove any remaining impurities. (Plan B: Line the strainer with a paper towel.)
5. Return infusion to the reserved spirits bottle and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for up to a year.

SPIRIT-FREE PLAN B:

- Brew three cups (24 ounces) of black tea and infuse with 1 cup strawberry tops. Proceed as with original recipe. Keeps in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

TAKING THE INFUSED CAMPARI TO THE NEXT LEVEL

- Make a spritz with your favorite seltzer water and/or Spindrift sparkling strawberry lemonade, or go all in with Steve Wood’s Bon-Bon Negroni.

STRAWBERRY BON-BON NEGRONI

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 ounces gin
- 1 ounce strawberry top-infused Campari
- 1/2 ounce sweet vermouth
- 1/2 ounce rosé wine (Not a wine drinker? Substitute vermouth.)
- 1/4 ounce elderflower and vanilla cordial (No elderflowers? Use St. Germain elderflower liqueur.)
- Garnish: Lemon peel

Directions:

1. Combine everything in a mixing glass with ice and stir until well chilled and appropriately diluted.
2. Strain into a rocks glass over an ice cube.
3. With a Y-shaped vegetable peeler, remove a portion of lemon peel, about an inch wide. Twist to release essential oils and rub on edge of glass.

ELDERFLOWER (OR WHITE PINE) CORDIAL

Steve Wood likes to make infused syrups (sometimes known as cordials) with herbs. The elderflower version is intended for the Strawberry Bon-Bon Negroni and the

pine/rosemary version for the Remodeled Cobbler, but feel free to experiment and come up with your own beverage creations.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 cups filtered water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1/2 lemon, sliced into thin rounds
- 5 elderflower heads, rinsed (or 5 white pine or rosemary sprigs, for Remodeled Cobbler recipe)

- 1/2 vanilla bean, sliced in half lengthwise and scraped of its paste (or 1 teaspoon prepared vanilla paste)
- 1 tablespoon citric acid

Directions:

1. Place sugar and water in a large saucepan set over medium heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved.
2. Bring mixture to a boil and immediately remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon zest, sliced lemon, elderflower (or pine or rosemary sprigs), vanilla and citric acid.
3. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 24 hours.
4. Strain and pour resulting syrup into a bottle or jar.
5. Store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about 6 weeks.

Project No. 2: Give new life to pea pods.

PEA HUSK-INFUSED PISCO

Amounts can be halved. Keep pea husks in the freezer until you have accumulated what you need.

Ingredients:

- 1 bottle Pisco
- 3 cups rinsed pea husks (Plan B: fresh mint leaves)

Directions:

1. Pour the Pisco in a large bowl and add pea husks.
2. Reserve the bottle.
3. With gloves, massage the pea husks to release their flavor, 3 to 5 minutes.
4. Squeeze husks to remove any liquid.
5. Strain and pour infused liquid into the Pisco bottle.
6. Label and date and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for 4 to 6 weeks.

TAKING THE INFUSED PISCO TO THE NEXT LEVEL:

- Mix with seltzer for a Pisco and soda or add fresh lime juice and simple syrup for a Pisco Collins. Or go all in with Wood’s Matcha Peas Co. Sour, a frothy egg-white cocktail lightly sweetened with a matcha-dyed honey syrup.



BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Wood puts the final touches on his Pisco sour, infused with pea pods from shelling peas.

MATCHA PEAS CO. SOUR

Ingredients:

- 2 ounces pea husk-infused Pisco
- 1/2 ounce matcha honey syrup
- 1/2 ounce fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 ounce fresh lime juice
- 1/2 ounce egg white (less than half of a large egg white)
- Angostura bitters, for garnishing

Directions:

1. Pour everything (except for the bitters) into a metal cocktail shaker along with a cube of ice.
2. Shake vigorously until you no longer hear the ice cube bouncing around; this means the mixture has emulsified.
3. Add more ice (for chilling) and shake vigorously.
4. Strain into a sour glass.
5. Garnish with three drops of bitters and/or a sprig of mint.

MATCHA HONEY SYRUP

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup water
- 4 tablespoons matcha powder

Directions:

1. Place honey and water in a small saucepan and set over low heat, stirring until the honey is melted.
2. Add the matcha powder, whisking until the mixture is free of lumps.
3. Let cool.
4. Transfer to a bottle or jar.
5. Label, date and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for 2 to 4 weeks.

Project No. 3: Give berries on the verge another reason to live.

BERRY SHERRY-VERMOUTH

Ingredients:

- 2 cups less-than-perfect berries (any combination of blueberries, blackberries or raspberries)
- 1 750-ml bottle dry sherry
- 1 750-ml bottle white (or blanc) vermouth

Directions:

1. Puree 2 cups of less-than-perfect berries and transfer to a large container. 2. Pour sherry and vermouth on top and stir until evenly distributed. (Do not discard spirits bottles.)
3. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours to infuse.
4. Pass the mixture through a fine strainer (or coffee filter).
5. If liquid is still seed- or pulp-heavy, feel free to return to the refrigerator for more infusion time and strain again.
6. Pour resulting liquid into reserved bottles.
7. Label, date and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for several weeks.

SPIRIT FREE PLAN B: INFUSE GREEN OR BLACK TEA WITH THE BERRY PUREE.

- Take the infused fortified wine to the next level with Wood’s spin on the Sherry Cobbler, a classic American cocktail dating to the 19th century. Wood sweetens things with an infused cordial, this time with sprigs of the white pine tree, which grows in Lancaster County. Late summer is a good time of year to forage for these white needles, but rosemary can be used in a pinch. Instead of throwing out sparkling wine in his bar that had gone flat, he heated it with leftover orange peels and pulp, morphing into a neon-orange syrup that could zip up all kinds of drinks.

REMODELED COBBLER

Ingredients:

- 3 ounces berry-infused sherry-vermouth blend
- 5 ounces white pine cordial (see infused cordial recipe for details)
- 1/4 ounce mimosa syrup
- White pine sprig or grated orange zest, for garnish

Directions:

1. Pour everything, except for the garnish, into a wine glass.
2. Stir and fill with crushed ice.
3. Add garnishes of your choice.

MIMOSA SYRUP

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flat sparkling wine
- 1 cup scraps from an orange (peel, rind, pith, pulp)
- 1 cup granulated sugar

Directions:

1. Place everything into a medium saucepan set over medium heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved.
2. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and cook until the orange pieces are softened, 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Strain and pour into a jar or bottle. 4. Label, date and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for 2 to 3 weeks.

WHAT TO DO WITH SUMMER PRODUCE REMNANTS?

We asked Wood for his thoughts on how to retool some of our summer favorites.

Peaches: “Save your peach pits!” Wood suggests this easy recipe for a quasi-fermented peach pit syrup:

Place 1 cup peach pits, 1 cup sugar and 1 cup water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature. Transfer to a jar, cover and let sit at room temperature for up to 1 week. Strain and pour into a clean jar. Label, date and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for months. (Note: Peach pits

do contain trace amounts of cyanide.)

If peaches are really soft and falling apart, ferment them with this equation: Weigh your fruit and add two percent of its weight in salt. Cut peaches and remove pits. Mix together with the salt and place in a vacuum seal bag. Let sit for two to three days at 75 to 80 F.

Corn: Make your own corn syrup from corn cobs: Place cobs in a saucepan and add enough water to just cover. Bring to a boil and lower the heat, cooking until the water has reduced to a syrup-like consistency.

SELECT SPIRITS

Steve Wood’s picks for the spirits used in the recipes, which are all available through PA Fine Wine & Good Spirits:

- **Gin:** Bluecoat, based in Philadelphia, is an American-style gin, which goes easy on the juniper and amps up citrus notes. Wood says it’s a good gin for mixing.
- **Sweet vermouth:** Carpano Antica (“It’s the quintessential brand. It’s bittersweet and has a nice vanilla note.”)
- **White vermouth:** Lustau Vermut Blanco.
- **Dry sherry:** Lustau Fino.