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THIS IS HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT WINTER COCKTAIL, ACCORDING TO THE GENIUS MIXOLOGISTS AT RITZ-CARLTON MONTREAL'S MAISON BOULUD

January 4, 2015, 3:09 pm by Ava Baccari



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The Spiced Apple cocktail served at Maison Boulud at the Ritz-Carlton Montreal.

It's negative 14 degrees in Montreal and naturally, I forgot to check the weather forecast before hopping on a train to spend New Year's with one of my favourite friends, Lindsay (to be fair, it was a balmy seven degrees in Toronto, and so I just assumed that **the rest of Canada** would obligingly follow suit. It did not.)

After blanketing me in a plaid scarf and mitts, that great friend Lindsay and I headed to Maison Boulud at the Ritz-Carlton Montreal to warm up with a festive drink at the bar (conveniently nestled beside a fire). Jason Griffin, our bartender for the evening, served up two Spiced Apple cocktails, the drink of the month.

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"It's made from apple cider," Jason tells us. "We used Calvados Boulard Grand Solage as the base, there's a little bit of Grey Goose Vodka, which is also what gives it a nice texture and Dégel, it's a nice soft apple cider, kind of like a wine." He places two drinks in front of us. We instinctively nudge closer to them as he speaks. "And then we made a stewed apple compote with a little bit of rosemary—it's really subtle, the rosemary. And a little bit of homemade cinnamon syrup. And that's about it. It's very simple."

The cocktail is shaken with ice, and served straight up with fresh apple. "It's almost going to be like apple pie in a glass," he says.

"So can we try it now?" Lindsay excitedly interjects. Jason laughs, and we cheers.

It is like apple pie in a glass.

"You need a **nice, rich cocktail**—you don't get as many mojitos in the winter," Jason describes as the perfect beverage this season. "People like their classics that are a little more decadent: your Old Fashions, your Manhattans. And we have a bittersweet cocktail that has a gingerbread syrup in it, so it's with an Italian vermouth, gingerbread syrup, and it's a sour so there's a little bit of egg white in there for the texture. Those are the cocktails people want, they want richness and they want decadence."

We couldn't agree more.