

# A BITTER MAN



Ever see that small bottle on a bar, wrapped from base to cap in weird, newspaper like labeling?

You can't even see the contents of the bottle!



This craft liquid barely gets used and when you finally see it in action, it's an underwhelming 2 drops. This liquid is referred to as

*bitters.*

It's designed to add depth of flavor and spice to drinks as well provide a background of 1 main flavor, such as orange or grapefruit. Being the nerdy and ominously inventive people we are here at the Empire Grille, we took this simple idea of bitters in cocktails and turned it on its head! But first, a brief background on bitters to help everyone understand where this all started.



Bitters are quite possibly the most underrated and under utilized tool in the libations business. Your typical bartender or even your average restaurant operator MIGHT be able to tell you the proper application for a bitter or what's inside of the bottle.



Bitters started out over 1,000 years ago as an "*elixir*" of sorts, supposedly meant to alleviate several ailments of the stomach. Its first recorded version came from the Middle East region of the globe in what is now known as the country of Iraq. Over the centuries, the elixir found its way to Europe. It gained global exposure in the great seafaring days of the 16th-18th centuries, where sailors and traders spread it across the globe on their journeys. Only as of the late 1800's/early 1900's, have bitters become a flavoring component and cemented a place behind curtain of speakeasies and bars.

You can use almost any *spice, seed, root, fruit, crop or flower* in developing your bitters. You can also use almost any type of alcohol to soak your ingredients in. The secret is in being able to balance the flavoring power of your ingredients and measuring what the ideal soak time is to bring out the desired level of flavor intensity.



Now for the good stuff!

The traditional way of forming cocktail around a base spirit is boring and pretty limited, there are only so many levels of flavor that exist in even a finely crafted bourbon. We have designed each of our cocktails around the bitters or infusions that are in them.



These craft bitters include:

- Strawberry, Elderberry & Raspberry Bitters
- Golden Raisin Bitters
- Maple Bitters
- Chamomile Bitters
- Fennel, Cardamom & Caraway Bitters
- Dill Bitters
- Cherry & Vanilla Bitters
- Cola & Lemon Bitters



We designed these Bitters to be broader than any other style I've encountered. Instead of using 2 drops, many of our cocktails call for 1/4-1/2 fl oz of Bitters. It allows you to experience a drink with *unparalleled depth of flavor*, which will evolve as you continue to enjoy it. It's a dining experience poured down the center of a glass!





AUTHOR

MONTE FERRIS, JR



*Empire Grille*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Empire Grille Restaurant  
Venus de Milo Banquet Facility

75 Grand Army Highway  
Swansea, Massachusetts 02777

Phone: (508) 678-3901

Email: [venus@venusdemilo.com](mailto:venus@venusdemilo.com)

HOURS OF OPERATION

Mon / Tue: Closed  
Wed: 11:30am – 9:00pm  
Thu: 11:30am – 9:00pm  
Fri: 11:30am – 9:30pm  
Sat: 5:00pm – 9:30pm  
Sun: 11:30am – 9:00pm