

LIQUIDS

# Pass the Salt

Season your cocktail for maximum flavor.

By Brandy Rand

**SALT OR NO SALT?** We've all been asked this question when ordering a margarita. While a salted rim is often considered a matter of personal preference, it actually has a purpose when it comes to cocktails. "Like food, cocktails also need to be balanced, and certain flavors can be expressed and drawn out through the use of salt," explains Clayton Belanger, chief bartender at Short & Main in Gloucester.

Salt is a mineral substance composed primarily of sodium chloride that has been used for centuries as a preservative and a flavor enhancer. As one of the five human tastes along with sweet, sour, bitter, and umami, salt cannot only enhance the flavor of a cocktail but also the aroma. Bartenders have used salt in everything from a Bloody Mary to a Salty Dog, and that extra dash can make all the difference.

Belanger likes to use salt (and sometimes even oyster brine) in drinks that contain sour or bitter elements because it intensifies the taste. He recommends using kosher salt over standard iodized or table salt, which can make a cocktail bitter. If you happen to have exotic versions like pink or volcanic rock salt, Belanger says these will add more fruity and briny flavors to dazzle the senses.

Like its sister restaurant The Market, one-year-old Short & Main pays close attention to the beverage program, ensuring an unparalleled dining—and drinking—experience. A savory selection of wood-fired pizzas and oysters are the stars of the menu, along with an Italian-inspired selection of salads, antipasti, and digestifs.

Belanger draws inspiration for his



## San Salvador

- 2 oz. Siete Leguas Reposado Tequila
- 1/2 oz. Yellow Chartreuse (an herbal French liqueur first made by the Carthusian monks in 1737)
- 1/4 oz. Salers Gentiane (a bittersweet French liqueur)
- 10 dashes of St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram salt tincture

For dram salt tincture: Add equal parts Allspice Dram and kosher salt into mixing glass and stir to dissolve. Add into medicine dropper (four drops equal a dash in this case).

Preparation: Add all ingredients into mixing glass and stir with ice. Stir for 20 seconds and strain into coupe with a lemon twist.

curated cocktail selection from the past. He created and named the San Salvador after the Portuguese ship an explorer named Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed on from Jalisco, Mexico. This innovative cocktail uses aged tequila—no stranger to salt—as its base, and the addition of flavorful French liqueurs and a concentrated mix of kosher salt and Allspice Dram (a rum-based liqueur with hints of

clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, and pepper). "The spicy fruit and vanilla notes are drawn out by the salt in this cocktail," says Belanger.

The San Salvador is a perfect segue to summer and a sophisticated step up from the margarita. The ingredients are attractive, splurge-worthy bottles that will raise the craft component of any home bar. [shortandmain.com](http://shortandmain.com)