

# CURE FOR WHAT ALES

Published on January 1, 2003

© 2003- The Press Democrat

BYLINE: PEG MELNIK THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

PAGE: D1

You say you had only one glass of champagne last night. It's not your fault that people kept refilling the glass.

You stayed up too late, you had a fitful sleep. That may have been the sunrise you saw at one point.

For those who unwittingly partied more than expected, local bartenders and servers have been tapped to share their favorite cures. At least one concoction includes a raw egg.

For the pragmatists in the crowd, we include the latest on what science has to say about these local remedies. An important disclaimer: No controlled studies have been done to determine if chasing a headache with a red beer or a double espresso with grappa has a positive effect. We're certainly not encouraging anyone to try these concoctions. We're simply curious about the remedies. What's folklore? What's science?

Keep in mind, even most bartenders say their recipes have more of a psychological effect than a true health benefit.

And yet when New Year's Day brunch beckons in slow-moving households, even a placebo is encouraging.

Cures?

Michael Turner, a server at Bouchon in Yountville, said the raw egg in his ``Red Beer'' is definitely for the psychological effect. It helps people forget they're not feeling 100 percent, he said.

To make a Red Beer, fill a glass with 12 ounces of Gordon Biersche beer, a San Francisco favorite, add one ounce of tomato juice and a raw egg.

Turner said that once he actually won ``bet money" on his Red Beer because one of his customers refused a dare to drink it, leaving a \$20 bill instead.

Other cures offered by local bartenders:

Bobby McGraw of the Trophy Room in Santa Rosa: A shot of Fernet Branca, an Italian liqueur.

Aaron Rodriguez of Don Giovanni in Napa: ``Bloody Beer," half a pint of organic tomato juice, the other half a light, nonlager beer such as Heineken.

Kate Houser, also of Bouchon: ``Bullshot," a shot of vodka, a shot of beef bouillon, 3 1/2 ounces of tomato juice, and a spritz of Tobasco and Worcestershire sauces. Shake it up, then garnish with a pickled asparagus spear plus an olive and a lemon wedge speared on a toothpick.

James Curtis of the Flamingo in Santa Rosa: A scoop of **vanilla ice cream** with Budweiser poured on top.

Curtis doubts his unorthodox scoop will cure anyone, but he said it's good for comic relief. Curtis perhaps best sums up the common belief of bartenders: ``The best cure is a dark room, some aspirin, and peace and quiet. Figure on feeling better tomorrow."

The best medicine?

Too much partying can cause dehydration, so the best remedy is to drink lots of water and juices, according to two Santa Rosa-based doctors.

``I've never seen any study that says drinking tomato juice or eating a raw egg has any medical benefit, other than providing nutrition and fluids," said Amy Shaw, a doctor with Doyle Park Family Medicine. ``Alcohol is a refined sugar and it dehydrates you, so drink lots of fluids and good juices. And stay away from caffeinated drinks."

As for eating a raw egg, Lynn Mortensen, a family doctor with Primary Care Associates, said, "I would worry about salmonella poisoning. Then you have an even bigger problem."

She advises drinking six to eight glasses of water throughout the day.

Mortensen said she realizes some families have a ritual of drinking a Bloody Mary or a Gin Fizz on New Year's Day, and that's OK for the general populace, which excludes pregnant women or those who have a problem with alcohol, Mortensen said.

"I just don't think there's any real magic in bartenders' concoctions," she said, adding, with a laugh, "At least I've never seen any controlled clinical trials of them."

PHOTO: 1 by MARK ARONOFF / The Press Democrat Michael Turner, a server at Bouchon in Yountville, suggests his concoction of "Red Beer" as a post-New Year's Eve recovery libation. It consists of beer, tomato juice and a raw egg.

**Infobox: SURE CURES** According to a review in the journal "Annals of Internal Medicine" of 108 studies on hangovers conducted since 1965 only three things have been shown to help:

- 1) Over-the-counter pain pills like ibuprofen and aspirin
- 2) Vitamin B6, which taken before drinking makes hangovers less severe
- 3) Drinking lots of water or other non-alcoholic fluids

#### MEDICALLY SPEAKING

Too much partying actually has a medical name: "veisalgia."

It's the combination of the Norwegian term meaning "uneasiness following debauchery" and a Greek word meaning simply "pain." The most common symptom is a headache.

#### CULTURAL CONCOCTIONS

\* In Russia one cure is pickled cabbage water

\* In the Middle East, a glass of olive oil

\* In India, fiery mulligatawny soup

\* In Peru, spicy ceviche

\* In Mexico, huevos rancheros, fried eggs with creole sauce

\* In Poland, peppery tripe soup

**Keywords:** HOLIDAY ALCOHOL HEALTH