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# Craft Honey Cocktails: BeElyxir recipe from Hôtel Le Place d'Armes

For World Bee Day, James Hayward of Le 18bar at Hôtel Le Place d'Armes in Luxembourg showcases a creative combination of local, organic and urban honey with Absolut Elyx.



## The Property



Hôtel Le Place d'Armes

EXPLORE



**IAN CAMERON** - Ian Cameron is an award-winning writer who has spent the last 15 years in and around the drinks industry, first as a journalist and editor covering global bar culture, then within marketing agencies working for some of the world's biggest spirit brands. Photo © Rob Lawson Photography.

## BeElyxir Cocktail *(serves one)*

- 50ml Absolut Elyx vodka infused with herbal tea and milk-washed
- 25ml citric acid-modified blood orange juice
- 20ml Luxembourg Ville honey syrup or your favourite local honey
- 10ml D.O.M Bénédicte liqueur
- 2 dashes mango-infused Angostura Bitters



Bartender James Hayward arguably personifies the modern mixologist: an expert in liquids, the cunning of a contemporary chef, and always with one eye on his local environment. It's no surprise that locally produced honey, from one of the few urban bee populations in the world certified organic, is the centrepiece of a remarkably culinary cocktail: the BeElyxir.

The bees in question, from 100 hives across Luxembourg City, forage among 100-hectares of carefully managed, pollinator-friendly public spaces (take note, cities everywhere!) and its many private gardens. Luxembourg Ville honey, made by local

beekeeper Hugo Zeler, boasts a complex palate led by lush florals, with even a hint of Mediterranean botanicals. James gently dilutes the honey into a syrup to aid mixing.

Next comes the culinary wizardry: his base spirit undergoes not only a flavourful infusion but is also 'milk-washed' (passed through milk solids, then filtered); blood orange juice is given extra 'zing' with powdered citric acid; and Angostura bitters becomes extra exotic after being macerated with mango.

Absolut Elyx was James's perfect go-to partner for honey – distilled in copper, the vodka boasts a fittingly silky mouth-feel and is made using raw materials gathered from a 15-mile radius in a carbon-neutral process.

The result? A delicate Spring cocktail with honey, bees and local ecology swarming at its centre, drawing together disciplines of the modern bar and kitchen.



This recipe calls for four homemade components, and the instructions for each one will yield quantities for multiple cocktails, so the drink works best when you are planning an event with a number of guests.

*Luxembourg Ville honey syrup:* **Combine** a small jar of raw honey from your local beekeeper with a third of its weight of lukewarm water. It may help to liquify solid honey first by gently stirring it over a bain marie with simmering water. When the mixture has cooled, you can refrigerate it for a month.

*Citric acid-modified blood orange juice:* **Mix** freshly squeezed blood orange juice with a small amount of powdered citric acid – use five per cent of the weight of the juice (for example, 5g or citric acid powder to 100ml orange juice). Mix until the acid is fully dissolved, then pour it into a glass bottle and refrigerate for up to three days.

*Mango-infused Angostura Bitters:* **Blend** two diced mangos (seek out Fairtrade and organic when sourcing tropical fruit), 200ml of Angostura Bitters and 30ml of overproof rum (69% abv), leave to rest for forty-eight hours, then blend again. Filter twice, first with a mesh strainer and then again through a coffee filter. Because of the high alcohol content, the bitters will keep for years at room temperature. Bottle it in a dasher bottle (like the original Angostura bottle).

*Infused and milk-washed Absolut Elyx:* **Infuse** a 70cl bottle of Absolut Elyx with 70g of chamomile, lime flower and orange blossom tea for twenty-four hours. (You can make your own tea blend by combining equal weights of chamomile and lime flower tea with the zest of one orange – though we use Palais des Thés Herboriste n°74). Pass the liquid through a coffee filter, add 105ml of fresh lemon juice and 210ml of fresh whole milk and stir. Leave it to rest in the fridge for two hours, then pass through a coffee filter to remove the curds. Finally, using a fresh filter, pass the liquid through twice more (no need to change out this filter between passes). Bottle and keep at room temperature.

*Garnishes:* **Dehydrate** slices of blood orange by laying them on baking parchment and placing in an oven on a low heat (150°C) for four to six hours.

**Combine** the ingredients in a cocktail shaker, add a handful of ice and shake well for 15 seconds.

**Double strain** (this means passing the liquid through not only a cocktail strainer – or the built-in strainer of a Boston shaker – but also a fine mesh strainer) into a chilled small wine glass.

**Garnish** by placing a slice of dehydrated blood orange on the rim of the glass.

*\*Alcohol abuse is dangerous for your health.*

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