

**Cream** is new to the Canadian market as well. I know, yet another cream liqueur, but it is wonderfully smooth and quite mouth-watering, with flavours of coconut and baking spices in a velvety amber rum cream.

While **Bailey's** is still the undisputed leader, there are a lot of different, reasonably priced cream liqueurs that won't break the bank. How many people think of maple syrup as exotic? Tweak it a bit with **Maple Syrup and Cream** liqueur, and off you go on the simple pleasure of touring a Maple bush during sugaring off season. **Dooley's**, a vodka toffee cream is another liqueur that goes back to childhood pleasures. Remember your first red plaid box of Macintosh toffee?

Many cognac-based liqueurs have gone to the tropics in order to get out of the den and into the cocktail glass, putting a finish to an elitist French stigma. Some of the new flavour mixes sound like a day at the beach or imaginary worlds. One recent product out of Sweden via Cognac, France, is **Xanté**. Although pear flavoured, it's different enough to give pause. In the glass, it could be a brandy, but the aromas are a sweet, ripe Poire William eau de vie. This would be another apropos "dessert" after a spicy Asian meal.

The beauty of liqueurs lies in their colours, flavours, textures and levels of sweetness. You can enjoy them neat or on ice. Or, pull out a cocktail book and experiment with elixirs for after meal pleasure. I like to mix and match a few different liqueurs and create something special for my friends, just in case we don't get to dessert.

My final thoughts? Dessert in a glass should treat your taste buds and capture your imagination. Oh, and one more thing... forget the calorie count. ■



## What do you get when Xanté, Adam, Eve and 36 photographs are combined?

by mike brassard

On a recent Friday night, Toronto's Gallery Bibianne hosted Dan Couto and his *Naked in the House '04* photography exhibit. Twelve photographers, 11 professionals and one student, were given a *Mission Impossible* task. Take your best shot of a naked woman — who you have never seen — using only one camera, one lens, one roll of film and one venue. And do *it* in 30 minutes.

If that wasn't hard enough, there was an even harder task of setting up the party where the photographers, the organizer and the model could meet members of the public, show their work and learn who won. Fashion TV was coming and rumour had it that Jeanne Beker would also make an appearance. What to serve?

Well, if Dan Couto seduced the partygoers' eyes with lush images, CURA Communications had Toronto party consultant Miss Martini seduce their palates with Xanté. Created by Richard Heinrich, master blender at Maison Heinrich Liquoristerie Artisanale, Xanté Poire au Cognac takes Poire William's sensual pear flavour a step further and intensifies it even more adding cognac. The result is a very smooth sort of pear brandy almost too rich to take on its own. Enter Adam and Eve. The drinks that is.

Perfect complements, Adam is sweet sensual, full and rich on the palate with pear juice and a touch of Sake, garnished with a quartered strawberry and served in a classic martini glass. Oh, so elegant! Adam is just the thing to sip while contemplating the female form lounging in a hammock, resting on a beach, backlit by a rich blue sky, or shadowed by window dressings.

Eve, with her lemon/lime juice, shaken and garnished with fresh mint leaves, and served in a martini glass is saucy and fresh — the perfect foil to Adam.

For those who aren't interested in mixing, right now, Xanté can be served in a brandy snifter accompanied by a poached pear dessert. I can seduce the palate almost as much as *Naked in the House* seduces the eyes. ■