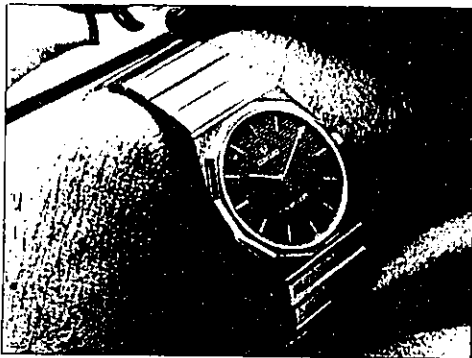


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Holiday spirits**Right mix can add festive touch**

Holidays are the time, more than any other, when people entertain guests in their homes. These get-togethers generally include alcoholic beverages. This holiday season you can add a touch of festive elegance, sparkle and romance by serving special alcoholic drinks. Some suggestions: sparkling wines and liqueurs.

Once prized by medieval monks for their curative value, liqueurs now are known for their delicious flavors and the versatile ways in which they can be served.

The classic way to serve a liqueur is as an after-dinner drink with coffee. Long, leisurely dining has been a particularly enjoyable part of European life for centuries, and the custom of extending the gourmet experience with a liqueur developed in Europe during the post-Napoleonic era.

The traditional way of serving a liqueur — straight up in a small cordial glass — still is most popular. Connoisseurs prefer drinking from snifters because it concentrates the bouquet, according to Robert

Cointreau, great-grandson of the creator of Cointreau, an orange liqueur from France.

Other popular methods for serving liqueurs:

- On the rocks in an old-fashioned glass. Devotees of this method feel that the ice cuts the sweetness of their drinks and makes them seem more aromatic.

- Frope — served in a glass filled with crushed or shaved ice. The liqueur is poured over the ice and finished with two small straws.

- In coffee rather than alongside it. The drink can be garnished with whipped cream, a slice of lemon, orange peel or a sprinkling of cocoa, depending on the flavor of the liqueur.

- Over ice cream, to make a sundae with extra punch.

- In elegant desserts like flambes, parfaits, cheesecakes and mousses.

An after-dinner liqueur tray will add an elegant flourish to home entertaining, and allow guests to try new flavors and serv-

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