

Welcome to Casa Isla...

We built this near the turn of last century, and our extended family has been visiting this beachfront idyllic ever since.

The last time we had a proper tidy up was in nineteen twenty nine, everything seemed more glamorous then, the cities swarmed with people desperate to escape the eighteenth amendment whilst drinking away their financial woes.

Here life shrank to trips on Fathers boat to watch flamingos or hunt for Marlin or late evenings with friends to the sound of cocktails shaking in the kitchen, laughter and music.

I tried to keep a diary all those years, but to be honest the frequent impact of large gatherings and Lilitiana's drink experiments meant too many mornings were missed and it turned into more of a journal.

As for Cubanista, I can't remember who came up with the term, but for us it began to define those breaks to the Cayo and gatherings with friends after long sun drenched days with our favourite tunes setting the pace.

## MONTECRISTO

Espresso, Rum, Tobacco and Chocolate £15

The perfect digestive after Liliana's big family dinners, somehow she managed to cram all of her favourite post dinner treats into one glass, naming it after her favourite cigar.



## FLAME VIOLET

Gin, Soda, Egg White, Violet, Honey, Raspberry £15

These beautiful flowers littered the garden out back, creating a haven for bee's. The constant buzz on sunny days played as a lazy soundtrack lulling Catalina to sleep on more than one afternoon.



## CUBANISTA

Rums, Lime, Chocolate Bitters and Maraschino £15

After a long days fishing this little pick me up, it reminded Guillermo of trips to Liliana's house which hummed with the smell of rum.



'The' place to go for a Daiquiri however, other than Cubanista obviously, is La Floridita in Havana.

Not having one here on a trip to Cuba is a little bit like not seeing the Eiffel tower on your first trip to Paris, sure, you can do it, but its not right, not by a long way.

Today at this famous bar sits a life size bronze of Ernest Hemingway at the end of the bar, on his favourite seat. Hemingway LOVED this bar, and wiled away many a day propped up on the mahogany knocking back his own version of a Daiquiri, the Papa Doble.

Our favourite story about this comes from a friend of his, after bad weather cancelled a fishing trip in the morning. In Guillermo's words 'We drank seventeen double frozen Daiquiris apiece in the course of the day without leaving the bar except for an occasional trip to the can'. This works out to be about two and a half bottles of rum PER PERSON. The truly scary bit came next however, as they met back up again the next day "at noon and had a couple of frozen Daiquiris. We both felt good and neither one of us had a hangover."



## Daiquiri's

So the fine looking gentleman to near the bottom is Jennings Cox who was installed as head of a copper mine on the southern coast of Cuba after the US invaded in 1898. The story goes that he was having a cocktail party with some visiting US military dignitaries a few years later, ran out of gin, switched to rum and the drinks were a hit. When asked about the name of the drink he offered up the nearest towns name, Daiquiri, and a legend was born. The town of Daiquiri has been lost in the mists of time, there's a Daiquiri beach, but not for tourists.

A Classic Daiquiri is one of the simplest cocktails to make, and in my personal top five cocktails of all time.

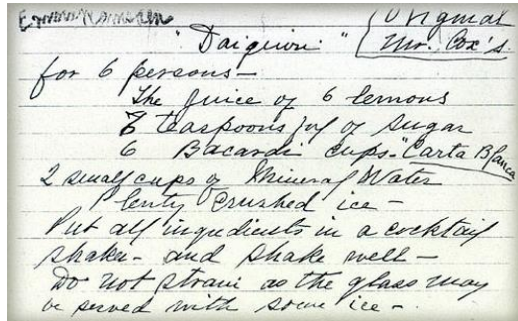
Classic Daiquiri

4 parts Bacardi Carta Blanca rum

2 parts lime juice

1 part sugar syrup.

Here we make this a little differently, using a mix of an aged Cuban rum with a lighter white rum, then we add in a dash of chocolate bitters and maraschino liqueur for a bit more 'depth of flavour'.



## PRESIDENTE

Presidente Rum Blend and Lillet Blanc

£16

Was there a finer drink than this? Guillermo wasn't sure, OK, to the north they had Martinis and Manhattans, but somehow this was just better, it was probably the rum.



## FLAMINGO

Watermelon, Mint, Lime, Soda and Rum

£15

July always reminded us of that last trip to Cayo Coco with Pirro fixated on flamingos and watermelon season. Watermelons being the only thing that made Liliana's mojitos even better.



## MARGOT-RITA

Jalapeno, Tequila, Cointreau and Lime

£16

It seemed that sometimes life was one boat trip away from sanity. That one boat trip had seen the cousins head to Alvarado to see Margot and load up on tequila and chilli's which now coloured every trip to their house.



## LOVE BIRDS

Grilled pineapple, rum, lime, vanilla and cardamom

Catalina found the first one on the porch outside.

We're not sure if it fell out of a nest or escaped the grumpy old six toed tom that only appeared at dinner time. It turned into an obsession with brightly coloured things inhabiting cages all over the house, a welcome addition in the afternoon, less welcome at the crack of dawn.

£ 32



## BOLIVAR

Rum, Angostura, Lime, Almond and Nutmeg

Angostura seemed to be this magical ingredient that transported Carlos back to Christmas and College days in Massachusetts. He wasn't sure if crisp snow, egg nogg and weekend breaks to Boston made up for being a million miles from home, but this drink while transporting him back always made him smile.

£ 15



## REPUBLICA

Banana, Rum, Chocolate Bitters, Nutmeg

It felt like Oriente was rapidly turning into one big banana plantation, and being stupidly convenient on the way back from Santiago meant frequent car boots full of bananas and sipping these slowly on the veranda around sundown.

£ 15



La Hechicera - Colombia	£17
Zacapa 23 - Guatemala	£22
El Dorado 12 year old - Guyana	£14
Appletons Signature - Jamaica	£12
Wray n nephew - Jamaica	£12
Blackwells - Jamaica	£12
Rhum JM XO - Martinique	£28
Diplomatico - Venezuela	£14
Pampero Anniversario - Venezuela	£12
Santa Teresa 1796 - Venezuela	£16

## TEQUILA

Avion 44	£40
Avion Plata	£15
Avion Reposado	£17
Avion Anejo	£17
Don Julio 1942	£50
Cenote Blanco	£13
Cenote Reposado	£15
Cenote Anejo	£18
Curado Espadin	£19
Clase Azul	£40
Patron Plata	£13
Patron Reposado	£16
Patron Anejo	£25

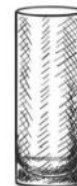
## RUM

Eminente - Cuba	£12
Eminente Reserva - Cuba	£15
Havana club 7 years old - Cuba	£12
Havana club Seleccion - Cuba	£18
Havana club 15 years old - Cuba	£49
La Progresivia - Cuba	£14
Legendario Anejo - Cuba	£12
Legendario Anejo Blanco - Cuba	£12
Ron Cubay - Cuba	£12
Ron Santiago de Cuba Plata	£12
Ron Santiago de Cuba 8 year old	£13
Ron Santiago de Cuba 11 year old	£14
Ron Santiago de Cuba 12 year old	£16
Elements 8 Republica Cuba / Panama	£12
Bacardi Carta Blanca - Puerto Rico	£12
Bacardi Cuatro - Puerto Rico	£12
Bacardi 8 years old - Puerto Rico	£13
Bacardi 10 years old - Puerto Rico	£15
Bacardi Spiced - Puerto Rico	£12
Bacardi Facundo Neo - Puerto Rico	£17
Mount Gay XO - Barbados	£16
Mount Gay Eclipse - Barbados	£12
Plantation 3 star - Barbados Blend	£12
Equiano - Barbados / Mauritius	£13

## TRAVELLER

Whiskey, Black Tea, Lime, Soda, Aromatics £15

It felt like a lifetime since that Irish couple had visited, with suitcases seemingly packed with whisky. Strange coffee requests vanished with hot spring days, tea on the other hand found a home alongside the whisky in this late afternoon highball which seemed to take the edge of the heat.



## PARADISE

Gin, Pineapple Juice, Vanilla, Peychauds £15

Veronica wasn't sure why she stayed one more week Casa Isla. A day turned into a week into a month into a..... It was just hard to leave. Luis had more than a little to do with this and after years stuck in the hustle of Havana being 'trapped' here by the sea with the scent of vanilla and pineapple felt like paradise regained.



## WHITE WINE

Chardonnay, Shadow Point	£10 / £38
Sauvignon Blanc, Moko	£11 / £40
Gavi Cortese 'Nuvole Sul Poggio'	£12 / £42
Marsannay Blanc, Vallet Freres	£75

## ROSE

Grenache Cinsault, Pur Azul, C de P	£11 / £45
Whispering Angel, Cotes de Provence	£18 / £75

## RED WINE

Tempranillo 'Calendas Tinto'	£10 / £38
Rioja Crianza, Gomez Cruzado	£11 / £44
Malbec 'Explore' Krontiras	£12 / £45
Valpolicella Ripasso	£75

## CHAMPAGNE

Perrier Jouet brut NV	£24 / £140
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## BEER

Cubanista Lager	£8
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## GIN

Bombay sapphire	£12
Bombay Presse	£12
Falconbrook	£12
GinRaw	£16
Engine	£12
Monkey 47	£16
The Botanist	£14
Seventy One	£50

## VODKA

Absolut Blue	£12
Absolute Flyx	£13
Grey Goose	£14
Stoli Elit Vodka	£15

## WHISKEY

Glenmorangie	£13
Dewars	£12
Makers Mark	£12
Buskers	£12
Woodford Reserve	£13

## COGNAC

Martell VS	£12
Remy XO	£50