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Reflections in an Ice Cube: The Drinks of Memory; FOR A FUTURE THAT'S ALWAYS ROSY

By **MONIQUE TRUONG**

HIDDEN within our current tastes and penchants are the persistent and often ignoble residues of our former selves. I call it the Holly Golightly-Lula Mae Principle. Allow me to demonstrate how it works.

Of late, my summer drink of choice is a white sangria. It's a floral concoction of white sparkling wine, Cointreau, apple juice and a splash of club soda, generously perfumed with thin slices of white nectarines, green pears and sweet navel oranges.

This is my reverse-engineered recipe for a drink that I had first at a restaurant so incandescently hip and cool that it saw no reason to cook its food. An editor at a fancy magazine was paying, so I allowed myself to be taken to a raw foods restaurant. In lieu of a proper meal, I decided to drink myself full and I did.

I don't remember too much about the raw foods, but that nutty place really had a way with the white sangria. I serve pitchers of it now on summer evenings and nod with delight when my friends comment on its subtle beauty and intoxicating charm. I hesitate to share with them, though, why my inner Lula Mae adores this chic little quaff.

White sangria reminds me of the bottles of convenience store wine coolers that my girlfriends and I consumed in alarming quantities in the back seat of cars while stuck in Texas in the prime of our teenage years. Sweet, cheap and perversely and resolutely not beer (long necks being the patriotic drink of the Republic of Texas), wine coolers were our fast ticket out of sobriety and the confines of our suburban youth.

As we twisted off their caps and guzzled their artificial flavors, we were imagining the future. Beautiful and transporting, ambrosial with promises, and complex but never complicated: we wanted it so much we could taste it. The future for us finally arrived and, of course, wasn't quite what we had desired, but a sip of white sangria on a summer night comes pretty close.

WHITE SANGRIA Adapted from Monique Truong Time: 15 minutes, plus chilling

2 small white nectarines or white peaches

1 small green pear or green apple

1 small navel orange

1 bottle cava, moscato d'Asti or other sparkling wine

1 3/4 cups apple juice

1 1/3 cups Cointreau

1 cup club soda.

Slice fruit into thin bite-size pieces. Place in large pitcher. Pour in sparkling wine, apple juice and Cointreau. If possible, refrigerate an hour or two to draw out sweetness and floral aromas of fruit. Add club soda, and stir. Spoon some fruit pieces into glasses filled with ice, and pour.

Yield: 8 cocktails.