

Black Velvet

for the win

Presidential campaigns in the United States are kind of like the Olympics of politics; they can be emotional and mental rollercoasters with ever increasing production values, and victories are often eked out by the smallest of margins. Fortunately there's a drink for that.

On election night my ritual has been to watch the play-by-play from the couch with a bottle of bubbly at arm's length. Whether the results create a moment of inspiration or indigestion, it helps to have something carbonated on hand.

This year I'll be mixing a historic cocktail called the Black Velvet. Its story of origin begins in Britain and calls for two ingredients of differing densities that manage to coexist in the same glass. The first ingredient is a dark and malty stout beer. The second ingredient is champagne. If you're balancing your budget, any sparkling wine or cider will work.

The Black Velvet was invented in 1861 at a gentleman's club in London to mourn the death of Queen Victoria's hubby, Prince Albert. The bartender, who came up with the drink, decided even the champagne should be put into mourning and poured a Guinness over it.

Meanwhile, back in the States, Lancaster's own James Buchanan had declined to seek re-election, clearing the path for Abraham Lincoln to win the nomination and preside over what would be one of the darkest periods in American history, the American Civil War.

There are a few ways to make a Black Velvet.

One way is to layer each component without mixing them completely. For this effect, start by filling a tall glass halfway with champagne. Then gently pour the stout over the back

of a spoon so that it falls down the sides of the glass without splashing.

An easier, less messy method is to fill half a glass with the stout. Then top it off with the champagne for a happy, frothy finish. The result is an effervescent cocktail with some depth that gets my vote of approval.

November will be here before we know it. So when this election cycle has run its course and the ballots have all been counted, raise a glass to salute our nation's newest leader (or just stand there and hold it in disbelief). And try to remember, whatever the outcome, we're all in this together. 🍷

