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Tuesday, April 1, 2003

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Spring tonics
Welcome warmer weather with these fresh and fruity cocktails

By Claire Zulkey

Spring in Chicago might only last three days, but you can enjoy these refreshing drinks straight through 'til the next frost.

Pimm's Cup, \$5.50

Like a little pick-me-up on spring afternoons? The Pimm's Cup is a dignified and zingy refreshment. The Red Lion makes it with Pimm's No. 1, a sweet and spicy gin aperitif, ginger ale and a cucumber garnish. It'll put as much "spring" in your step as wheat grass juice, only it's tastier and a lot more fun.

Summer Solution, \$5.50

Nothing signals the start of warm weather like lemonade, and Schubas serves it up freshly squeezed, made for big kids with Skyy Citrus. Fresh, sweet and yellow--just like you used to sell on the sidewalk--but with a bit more kick.

French martini, \$7

Or a "freedom" martini, if you prefer. Made with Stoli Vanil, Chambord and pineapple juice and garnished with fresh raspberries, this sweet martini at Yoshi's Cafe's a frothy treat.

Shark Bowl, \$6

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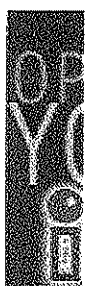
Post-work tippling is best when the weather warms up. One of the Loop's most popular after-work bars, Cactus, serves a dangerously tasty drink called the Shark Bowl, made with coconut rum, blue Curacao, and pineapple and orange juice. It's garnished with a plastic shark and grenadine "blood." The shark won't bite, but drink too much and the cocktail might.

Sangria, \$7

Even if it's snowing in May, sangria makes you feel like you're soaking up the sun outside at a Spanish cantina. Aria serves up six variations on this sweet punch made with wine, brandy, triple sec and chunks of fruit. If you can't decide on a flavor, go for the Wednesday sangria flight special, in which you can sample the red, white and mango flavors for \$16.

Claire Zulkey is a freelance writer.

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