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# Virtual cocktails hijack your senses to turn water into wine



**A matter of taste**  
ACM Multimedia 2017

**By Timothy Revell**

Drinks are so last century – but they’re getting an upgrade. A device called the Vocktail is shaking up the traditional cocktail by mixing in a dash of electronics designed to fool your senses.

Made by Nimesha Ranasinghe and his team at the National University of Singapore, the Vocktail – short for virtual cocktail – is a glass that can be made to alter and augment flavours via a phone app. Once a liquid is poured into the glass, a drinker can change three aspects affecting its taste.

First, they can change their perception of the drink by altering its colour via an LED in the glass. Next, they can make the drink seem more sweet, salty or bitter using tongue-stimulating

Virtual drinks can make you think you are drinking something sugary when you are in fact just swigging water, letting people satisfy their taste buds without any of the calories. The app also lets you share your favourite virtual cocktail recipes with others.

One day, devices like the Vocktail may become part of an ultimate virtual reality experience in which all sensations are simulated digitally. "A Vocktail could become a welcome addition to social experiences in virtual pubs or bars," says Adalberto Simeone at the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) in Belgium.

The Vocktail was presented at the Association for Computing Machinery Multimedia Conference last month.

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