

# NextLevelMarketing

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# BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

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## GUEST COLUMN



## L.A. Mega-Trends vs. the Evil Monotony

I've been living in Los Angeles for ten years and a witness to the almost impossibly trendy and cutting edge society that is L.A. nightlife. Nothing better illustrates its mercurial swings than looking at the ever-changing face of the cocktail.

For example, in the mid- to late-90's we saw the birth and phenomenal popularity of the *Apple Martini*. Every night out there were countless Angelinos nursing a green libation shaken and strained into a Martini glass with a thin apple slice floating lightly on the surface. It brought about a significant change in drinking patterns. The trend was shifting. Specialty drinks were getting nudged out of style and being replaced by flavorful and colorful Martinis. The simple explanation is that Martinis are elegant, sophisticated drinks. And what

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## SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

## Making Money in the Wild Blue Yonder

There is something intriguing about sipping on a blue cocktail. It must tickle the kid inside of us because people get a kick out of drinking blue concoctions. Maybe they remind us of a Star Trek episode, or perhaps it's just another fun way to break up the week. Whatever the reason, few things in bars and nightclubs sell better than blue drinks and the featured performer in these ultra-popular libations is invariably Blue Curaçao.

While it's true that Blue Curaçao receives little fanfare, professional mixologists wouldn't be caught behind a bar without it. It may be one of the best moneymaking bottles in the house.

Today there is little discernible difference between the aroma and flavor of triple sec and Blue Curaçao. Both

have a delightful semi sweet, orange character, but obviously, the Blue Curaçao adds something singularly compelling to the equation that triple sec can't muster even on its best day.

To fully comprehend the revenue potential of this unassuming product, take a glance across the spectrum of mixology and you'll start to get a sense of what a marketing bonanza Blue Curaçao is for the savvy operator.

Let's begin with the Margarita. The obvious first step is to substitute Blue Curaçao for the triple sec, thereby creating the *Blue Margarita*. If you use a gold tequila and add in Blue Curaçao, the drink darkens slightly in hue and is called a *Midnight Margarita*.

Add a splash of amaretto and the drink becomes the *Margarita Azul*. The

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Who Said You Can't Have Your Dessert and Drink It Too?



PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

## Suntory Yamazaki Single Malts

For whisky aficionados, tasting *Suntory Yamazaki Single Malt* for the first time is something along the order of discovering the lost continent of Atlantis. It is such a singularly delectable whisky that for a brief moment you are fairly sure that your senses have betrayed you. But worry not, this whisky is the real deal and not an apparition.

Suntory was the first company to introduce western-style spirits to Japan and has been handcrafting whiskies at the country's oldest distillery since 1923. All of the company's whiskies are distilled from high grade barley malt and pure spring water from the Vale of Yamazaki. The whisky is distilled twice in copper pot stills and only the middle portion of each distillation is used in the finished malt. The whiskies are matured in oak casks in the expansive warehouses located on the distillery grounds.

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# Reducing Wine Costs

Wine is a relatively fragile product, one that is highly susceptible to waste and spoilage. It's not uncommon for bars and restaurants to lose hundreds of dollars worth of wine annually due to improper storage and handling. These are almost totally avoidable losses that add up extremely fast. As little as a \$1.25 portion of wine going to waste a day equates to nearly \$500 in lost profits per year.



label to be opened prior to a shift.

Something as simple as not pulling a cork completely out of the bottle can help preserve wine and reduce spoilage. If a cork is pulled only 3/4 of the way out, the bottle remains sealed and the wine is protected from oxidation.

## ⇒ Wine Preservation

— For open, partially full bottles there are several proven methods to ideally preserve the wine thereby diminishing the risk of

It is important that management implement a program aimed at ensuring that the wine inventory is stored and portioned properly. The following are points to consider including in your wine management program.

## ⇒ Establish Par Levels for Opened Bottles of Wine

— Only a limited number of bottles should be opened prior to each bartending shift. Open bottles of wine are highly susceptible to spoilage, especially bottles of red wine. Establish par levels for each label of wine stocked behind the bar. The list should include the number of each

spoilage. One such system is the Vacu-vin system. It can prolong the freshness and inherent quality of wine by several days. The system is inexpensive and easy to use. It utilizes a rubber stopper that is inserted into the neck of the bottle. A small hand pump is then attached and the air inside the bottle is sucked out.

There are also a number of inert gas systems available. The systems use aerosol type canisters that inject nitrogen, argon, or carbon dioxide to displace the oxygen in the open bottle of wine. Carbon dioxide is not inert, but wine reacts slower to it than it does to oxygen.

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## “...And Never Shall the Twain Meet”

Mark Twain was once challenged by a customs inspector who had found a bottle of bourbon in a suitcase that the famed author had insisted contained only clothing. Twain defended himself, “It’s the truth, sir. That is my much needed expiate nightcap.”

It seems that Twain, a.k.a. Samuel Clemens, went nowhere without his bourbon. While staying at the Savage Club in London, during an extended visit to England, Twain’s stash of bourbon was exhausted. Asked by his hosts how he was enjoying the accommodations, he said they were fine except for the lack of his bourbon. Determined to make the famous American visitor comfortable, club members secured two cases of bourbon for him. But on the day they arrived, Twain was called home unexpectedly.

“Save them,” Twain pronounced as he departed. “Let no one touch them while I am gone.”

And so it was—for decades. Twain never returned.

Shortly before the Savage Club was destroyed in World War II, a reporter for the Detroit Free Press got a look at the two cases kept in the sub-basement. He informed his English guide that the club was absolved of its pledge, since Twain had died many years before.

“We know of his death,” the guide replied. “But he told us to keep them until he came back. And, of course, we will.”

Happy Holidays!

## FEATURED SPECIALTY by Robert Plotkin

# Holiday Drink Making Essentials

The holidays are time compressed for all of us. This season deserves a change of approach. Before you spend the little free time left in your day prepping drink mixes for your holiday visitors, stop and weigh your options. Daily’s make an exceptional line of drink mixes that are intended to help you make great tasting cocktails without spending an inordinate amount in the process.



While challenging to single out only three mixes that have the most holiday

applications, the list must assuredly include the **Daily’s Mojito Mix**, a skillfully crafted blend of premium lime juice, natural mint flavoring and a hint of sweetener. It has an authentic lime hue and an alluring aroma of fresh mint. The combined effect is both delicious and exceptionally refreshing. Essentially all one need do then is add rum, ice and a splash of club soda.

Next would be the **Daily’s Cosmopolitan Mix**. The mix is delicious, by itself in a glass. It’s lightweight and spry with an iridescent, Ferrari-red hue. The taste is what earned my thumbs up. The blend of



lime and cranberry is perfectly balanced, with each flavor presenting itself to the same degree and the cranberry just a moment in front of the lime.

You’d also be well advised to get **Daily’s Sweet & Sour Mix**. It has an authentic lemon hue, excellent opacity and a lightweight body. In the all-important category of taste, the vibrant, lemon flavored mix is tangy and almost puckery.

Spend more time where it counts. Pick-up some Daily’s and start mingling. —RP ♦



# Exploring the Cappuccino World

As the largest coffee-consuming nation, it was only a matter of time before this obsession led Americans directly to the satisfyingly rich flavor of Cappuccinos. Its popularity has never been higher and is a trend not likely to run out of steam.

Cappuccinos are typically prepared with a demitasse full of espresso coffee and roughly equal parts of steamed and frothed milk. The key to making a fabulous cappuccino lies in learning how to properly steam the cold milk so that it produces dense froth.

Nearly every espresso machine is equipped with a steaming nozzle. Cold, whole milk is used to make a cappuccino, although 2% reduced fat milk works equally well. A container or pitcher that is wider on the bottom than at the top is considered the efficient shape for the job. The vessel should be no more than half full with milk at the beginning of the procedure.

Place the tip of the nozzle just under the surface of the milk and slowly release the steam. To prevent scalding the milk, the pitcher should be moved in a circular motion. When done properly, the bubbles of the frothed milk should be compact, tightly knit, and long lasting, similar to the head of a well-crafted beer. Once the milk is frothed, carefully pour some of the steamed milk—about 3 to 4 ounces—into the espresso, and then spoon on the frothed milk.

Should you field the request for a dry cappuccino, it is prepared with a larger percentage of frothed milk.

A brevè cappuccino is made using half & half instead of milk. On the other hand, a skinny cappuccino is prepared with nonfat milk.

There are several popular variations of the cappuccino. The café au lait is served in an oversized cup and made with a demitasse of espresso coffee—or strong, freshly brewed coffee—that is highly diluted with steamed milk. The proportion of milk to coffee is often made with one part espresso to 4-8 parts steamed milk. A thin layer of frothed milk is often floated on top.

The caffè latte originated in Italy and is similar in most respects to the café au lait. In Europe the caffè latte is typically prepared using one demitasse of espresso and four parts steamed milk with no froth. In America, the drink is popularly served as one part espresso diluted by four to six parts steamed milk and one part frothed milk.

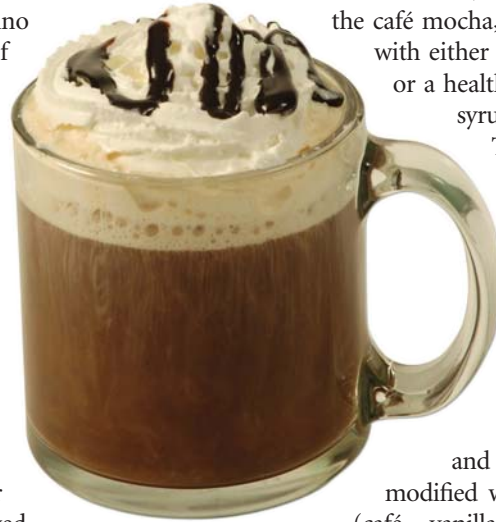
## Creative Variations of the Cappuccino

The mochaccino, which is also known as the café mocha, is a cappuccino made with either frothed chocolate milk or a healthy portion of chocolate syrup or powdered cocoa.

The drink is called a Vienna cappuccino when made with equal parts of espresso, hot cocoa and whipped cream. The caramella is a cappuccino with added caramel sauce.

Both the mochaccino and caramella can be modified with a splash of vanilla (café vanilla) or orange syrup (mandarin mocha). The butterscotch cappuccino or latte is made with a dose of butterscotch syrup. Since the taste of coffee and chocolate works equally well with any and all of these three flavors, why not experiment with the various syrups and create your own specialty mochaccino.

So go ahead, add a scoop of French vanilla ice cream to your cappuccino. Splash in some chocolate syrup or caramel sauce. Drop in a dollop of whipped cream and crumble a bit of fudge brownie on top. The creative possibilities are only bounded by one's imagination. ♦



## PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

Suntory Yamazaki Single Malt is now available in the United States in two versions—the long-revered 12 year old and the recently launched 18 year old. Both whiskies are marketed at 86 proof.

Introduced in 1984, the award winning *Suntory Yamazaki 12 Year Old Single Malt* is a rare treat for the senses. The amber, almost tawny colored whisky is richly aromatic, a luxurious array of malt, fruit and vanilla aromas. The bouquet is worth the trip alone. The whisky enters softly, gradually building in intensity,

but never generating unwanted heat. The round, plush, medium-weight body delivers a palate that completely fills the mouth with the flavors of caramel, toffee and toasted oak. The finish is long, relaxed and tinged with wood-laced flavors.

Launched earlier this summer, the *Suntory Yamazaki 18 Year Old Single Malt* is best described as noble. It's a highly sophisticated dram of whisky, genuinely world-class in all respects.

After spending nearly two decades in wood, the whisky has gained a lustrous tawny hue and full, velvety smooth body. While the nose is somewhat less robust than that of the younger version, it is every bit as satisfying. It heartily exhibits

the aromas of honey, vanilla and malt. The whisky has a graceful entry and slowly builds in intensity, bathing the palate with layers of warm, semi sweet flavors, such as malty cereal, caramel, vanilla and hints of toffee and oak. The flavors persist a remarkably long time, gradually fading away in the satiny smooth finish.

With these single malts Suntory has created a top-shelf tour de force. Malt enthusiasts and aficionados will relish the opportunity to discover these oriental gems. Watch out, though, you'll become a lifelong devotee after the first sip. —RP ♦



# What Does Your Staff Really Need to Know?

Let's be honest. Few things are easier to put off than training. It's rarely something that's considered pressing and the results are often not readily apparent. The irony, of course, is that few things, if any, are more critically important to a food and beverage operation than training. Ongoing education pays big dividends with benefits guaranteed to propel your business to greater profits.

Training is a dollars and cents issue. If bartenders and servers are insufficiently trained, every aspect of the operation will suffer. Consider the ramifications of servers who aren't familiar with the menu, bartenders who don't know about the products on the back bar, or who aren't comfortable cutting someone off. This just begins to scratch the surface on the education a staff needs to know.

Suffice to say, there's cause to revisit the status of your training program. The logical starting point is to determine what your staff needs to know. Our short list includes these five areas of learning.

⇒ **Product** — Maintaining consistency of product is crucial. This means ensuring that all of your bartenders are making drinks according to the same recipes, serving them in the same types of glasses and charging guests the same prices. Bartenders have to be as fluent about the products on the back bar as they are about the beers featured on draught and the varietal wines served by the glass.

⇒ **Public Safety** — Akin to training lifeguards in lifesaving techniques, your entire service staff must be armed with the knowledge of what is legally expected of them. They must be fully apprised of the responsibilities they incur when serving alcohol and given a clear understanding of how alcohol affects the physiology. There should be no doubt in the staff's collective mind as to what management deems the responsible service of alcohol.

⇒ **Operations** — It is fundamentally important that the staff know what is expected of them as employee's of a business. For example, they need to understand the operation's cash handling

procedures and what their opening and closing responsibilities are. They need to understand how to be proficient with the POS system, how to interface with the kitchen and security policies.

⇒ **Terms of Employment** — This is a highly litigious society, which mandates that you review all conditions of employment with every employee. These should include everything from your policies on sexual harassment to what constitutes grounds for termination. Each employee needs to receive a copy of the operation's employee handbook, acknowledge in writing that they will familiarize themselves with its provisions.

⇒ **Service Standards** — One consistent thread running through all genuinely successful food and beverage operation is the ability of its staff to render efficient and hospitable service. Guests deserve to be treated as guests, not customers, and when people who frequent your business are treated like guests, the ambience and quality fare have a chance of winning rave reviews. ♦

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## GUEST COLUMN *continued from page 1*

better type of cocktail to define a town like L.A.?

Then it was Vodka and Red Bull giving us wings, or the "*Incredible Hulk*" giving quite a punch. Yes, the new bar sensations rose and fell according to what was fashionable that month. But as the trends continued to shift, an interesting and noticeable difference started to occur; consumers started to become better informed and more spirit savvy. I've noticed that people will rarely order a Margarita without stating his or her tequila preference. Gin drinkers are specifying a particular brand of gin.

I recently came across a bartender named Li (pronounced Lee) Vega who took Suntory's newest creation, ZEN Green Tea Liqueur, and made what he called the *Zengria*, a luscious specialty now being featured at Chakra



restaurant in Beverly Hills. By combining ZEN, Merlot and fresh fruit juices, Vega created an interesting variation of the popular Sangria. I was amazed to find how the different flavors blended perfectly together to create a delicious, refreshing cocktail. I think this bold creativity is what drives trends.

The *Blood Orange Martini* and the *Melon Mojito*, both of which feature Midori, are popular favorites at The Republic Restaurant and Night Club in Los Angeles. These and other cocktails are swinging the current trend back toward mixology and opening the door for new brands to make their mark.

The newest VIP hotspot on the Sunset Strip is Hyde, where bar manager Jim Saviano created an exciting and eclectic set of drinks using fresh watermelon

and cucumber. This type of cutting edge thinking is what helps keep L.A. one of the centers of innovation in the bar industry.

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*"Specialty drinks were getting nudged out of style and being replaced by flavorful and colorful Martinis."*

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Angelinos are sophisticated cocktail enthusiasts. Whether it be the girl in her 20's calling for an 18 year old Scotch, the middle-aged socialite buying a round of Gran Centenario shots, the bar manager spending his nights creating the next Apple Martini, or the passionate market manager sipping his *Skyy 90 Martini* as he writes this piece, Los Angeles is once again raising its glass high and raising the bar for the traditional cocktail.

Joshua B. Freedman  
Guest Columnist  
Suntory Market Manager

**Blue Moon Margarita** features Sauza Conmemorativo, Blue Curaçao and a scoop of lemon sorbet.

Equally interesting is the **Purple Margarita**, an attention grabbing blend of reposado tequila, Chambord, cranberry and lime juice, sweet 'n' sour and a healthy splash of Blue Curaçao. The drink is as delicious as it is interesting to look at.

Substitute Blue Curaçao for the triple sec in a Kamikaze and you've created the **Divine Wind**. The two drinks will taste almost identical, but one has more eye appeal. Go ahead and add in some Blue Curaçao into your next Cosmopolitan. The splash of blue in the drink contributes a touch of iridescence to the cocktail that few other products behind the bar are capable of adding.

Triple sec is also a standard ingredient in the Long Island Iced Tea and once again creative possibilities abound. There are numerous popular variations of the drink that call for Blue Curaçao instead of triple



sec, including the **Bimini Ice Tea**, the **Blue Kangaroo** and the **Dirty Ashtray Iced Tea**, a bizarre looking drink that tastes fabulous.

Why stop there? Consider the classic **Blue Hawaii**. This tall, alluring concoction is made with a bevy of rums, Blue Curaçao, sweet 'n' sour, pineapple juice and coconut. The **Blue Lemonade** is made with citrus vodka, lemonade and Blue Curaçao. Substitute reposado tequila to make the **Blue Wave**. The **Blue Lagoon** is prepared with Malibu Rum, pineapple juice and a float of Blue Curaçao.

Champagne drinks are experiencing a resurgence in popularity and again Blue Curaçao is a key player. It's an ingredient in the **Blue Moon Café**, which is essentially a Mimosa with a splash of Blue Curaçao and the **Blue Train Special**, a savory blend of brandy, pineapple



and Blue Curaçao. The **Blue Flute** features amaretto, Blue Curaçao and champagne.

As one would expect, Blue Curaçao is well represented in the shooter category as well. Among the hits are the **Cool Mint Listerine** (vodka, peppermint schnapps and Blue Curaçao), **Flaming Blue Blaster** (bourbon, peppermint schnapps, Blue Curaçao and spiced rum), the **Milwaukee River** (Kahlúa, Blue Curaçao and Irish Cream) and the **L.A.P.D.** (Sauza Hornitos, Blue Curaçao and Chambord).

Add to the list the shooters **Windex**, **Tidy Bowl**, **Smurf Piss**, **Stars & Stripes** and the **Stealth Bomber** and you'll begin to get a better impression of just how popular blue really is.

So grab a bottle of Blue Curaçao and start making some real money. ♦

*\*Recipes found in The Original Guide to American Cocktails and Drinks or The Original Guide to Alcohol-Free Beverages and Drinks*

## SAFEGUARDING YOUR PROFITS *continued from page 2*

For champagne and sparkling wines there are reusable bottle stoppers with clamps that hook onto the lip of the bottle. This inexpensive, uncomplicated

method is to take a wine glass and fill it with the correct portion of wine. Place the glass next to a vertical surface by the bartenders' workstation, such as the slant

board (silent bartender), and make a mark on the board where the level of the wine is. After that, the bartender can verify that a glass of wine is properly filled by comparing it to the mark.

**“Determining how many servings in a bottle and making note of it at the bartender's workstation is an effective technique of emphasizing the importance of proper portioning.”**

device keeps the champagne properly pressurized and effervescent. The stopper will allow you to affordably pour champagne by the glass without being overly concerned that the unused portion will go flat and be wasted.

⇒ **Over-Portioning** — Over-pouring is a constant concern with wines served by the glass. Determining how many servings in a bottle and making note of it at the bartender's workstation is an effective technique of emphasizing the importance of proper portioning. Another effective

⇒ **Estimate Sales Through Potentializing** — Taking a physical audit of a shift's emptied bottles is advisable for two reasons. The first is that it reinforces to the staff that there is strict inventory control over the wine inventory. The second is that it allows estimating wine sales through potentializing. Multiplying the quantity of each label emptied by the number of servings per bottle will give you an estimate of wine sales.

For example, if a bartender empties six 1.5 liter bottles of house wine and

the specified wine serving is 5 ounces, the individual should have entered approximately 60 to 61 glasses sold. ♦

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# People Buy with Their Eyes Making These Drinks Best Sellers

It is an accepted truth in marketing that people buy with their eyes, meaning simply that the more visually appealing something is the more likely consumers are to purchase it. For beverage operators, this universal truth means that a classic liqueur like Blue Curaçao is a huge moneymaker. It's a highly versatile product. It has a light body and a savory orange bouquet and flavor. Couple those traits with its lustrous blue color and you've got an exceptionally marketable product.

If you're looking for a little creative inspiration on how to capitalize on this understated liqueur, consider the following recipes. ♦

## Purple Hooter

Cocktail glass, chilled  
 Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass  
 1 1/4 oz. Vodka  
 3/4 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 3/4 oz. Chambord  
 3/4 oz. Daily's Cosmopolitan Mix  
 Shake and strain  
 Lime wedge garnish

## Midnight Blue Margarita

House specialty glass, ice  
 Rim glass with salt (optional)  
 Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass  
 1 1/2 oz. Reposado Tequila  
 1 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 1/2 oz. Rose's Lime Juice  
 2 oz. fresh lime sour mix  
 Shake and strain  
 Lime wedge garnish

## Purple Haze Margarita

House specialty glass, ice  
 Rim glass with salt (optional)  
 Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass  
 1 1/2 oz. Reposado Tequila  
 3/4 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 3/4 oz. Chambord  
 1/2 oz. Rose's Lime Juice  
 1 oz. cranberry juice  
 2 oz. fresh lime sour mix  
 Shake and strain  
 Lime wedge garnish

## Divine Wind Kamikaze

Cocktail glass, chilled  
 Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass  
 1 3/4 oz. Premium Vodka  
 3/4 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 1/4 oz. Rose's Lime Juice  
 1 oz. fresh lime sour mix  
 Stir and strain  
 Lime wedge garnish

## Dirty Ashtray Iced Tea

House specialty glass, ice  
 Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass  
 1/2 oz. Gin  
 1/2 oz. Vodka  
 1/2 oz. Light Rum  
 1/2 oz. Tequila  
 3/4 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 1/2 oz. grenadine  
 1 1/2 oz. pineapple juice  
 2 oz. sweet 'n' sour  
 Shake and strain  
 Lemon wedge garnish

## Blue Hawaii

House specialty glass, chilled  
 Pour ingredients into blender  
 1 1/2 oz. Light Rum  
 1 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 3/4 oz. White Crème de Cacao  
 3/4 oz. half & half cream  
 2 scoops French vanilla ice cream  
 Blend ingredients (with ice optional)  
 Orange slice and cherry garnish

## Blue Flute

Champagne glass, chilled  
 Build in glass  
 1 1/4 oz. Disaronno Originale Amaretto  
 3/4 oz. Blue Curaçao  
 1 1/2 oz. orange juice  
 Shake and strain  
 Fill with Champagne  
 Orange twist spiral garnish

# Questions for the Seasoned Pro

## Questions

1. What are the ingredients in an Aviation Cocktail?
2. What is Strega?
3. This liqueur from Martinique is made with orange peels and a blend of silver and aged rhums.
4. What is Velvet Falernum?
5. What is the principal difference between a Caipirinha, Caipiroshka and a Caipirissma?
6. What is Lillet?
7. What are the ingredients in James Bond's Vesper Martini?
8. What is Poire Williams?
9. In what cocktail might you use guarapo?
10. What is Pineau de Charantes?
11. What is Amarula?
12. What is Roth Vodka?

## Answers

1. An Aviation Cocktail is made with gin, maraschino liqueur and sweetened lemon juice.
2. Strega is an Italian liqueur made from a blend of 70 herbs and citrus.
3. Clement Créole Shrub is a Barbadian elixir made with muddled limes, sugar and a base of cachaga; a Caipiroshka is made with vodka and the Caipirissma is the same drink made with light rum.
4. Lillet is a French fortified aperitif infused with oranges, herbs, spices and quinine.
5. The Vesper Martini is made with three parts gin, one part vodka and a half part of Lillet.
6. Poire Williams is an eau de vie distilled from Anjou pears.
9. Guarapo is a sugar cane syrup and is ideal for sweetening Mojitos.
10. Pineau des Charantes is a French aperitif made from a blend of unfermented grape must and Cognac brandy.
11. The second best-selling cream liqueur in the world, Amarula is flavored with the fruit of the South African marula tree.
12. Ultra-premium Roth Vodka is distilled entirely from California premium grape varietals.

# Who Said You Can't Have Your Dessert and Drink It Too?

Some of the finest and most satisfying desserts you'll ever wrap your lips around are made behind the bar. Like their brethren crafted in the kitchen,

crowd. Priced at \$55, the *Century Alexander* is a museum-grade specialty made with Blandy's 1935 Verdelho Madeira, Camus XO Cognac, Clément

Créole Shrub Liqueur and homemade tres leches ice cream.

"The drink has been extremely well received," says Seger. "It's as beautiful to look at as it is delicious and

an ideal way to finish off a marvelous evening, which is really the point."

The brandy and cacao based Alexander is also irresistible served with an additional splash of Chambord, Frangelico, or Disaronno Amaretto. You could make a living serving nothing but Brandy Alexanders and all of its creative variations.

Staying with the ice cream theme, try the *Tiramisu Shake*. A liquid version of the Italian classic, it's made with Godiva, Disaronno Amaretto, Kahlúa and vanilla ice cream. Another guaranteed crowd pleaser is the *International Cappuccino*. It's a luscious blended concoction made

with a demitasse of espresso, Baileys, Kahlúa, crème de menthe and amaretto. The ingredients are blended with either frothed milk and ice, or several scoops of ice cream.

Two other premier blended desserts are the *Louvre Me Alone*, which is made with VS Cognac, Grand Marnier, Tia Maria and vanilla ice cream, and the *Foreign Legion*, a blend of brandy, Benedictine, Frangelico, Disaronno Amaretto and chocolate ice cream.

So plug in the blender this holiday season and treat your guests to a bevvy of sippable desserts. ♦

*"Like kitchen originated desserts, the realm of after dinner libations is bounded only by one's imagination."*

dessert drinks come in many different styles and are drop-dead delicious. What sets them apart from plate bound pastries, flans and bowls of ice cream is that dessert drinks also feature a dram or two of alcohol, which easily make them the best of both worlds. Like kitchen originated desserts, the realm of after dinner libations is bounded only by one's imagination.

Any discussion of dessert drinks should begin with the king of all after dinner cocktails—the *Brandy Alexander*. This classic libation is made with a heaping portion of vanilla ice cream and a shot of brandy, and crème de cacao. Blended and served with a dusting of nutmeg, the Alexander is the reason many of us eat dinner, simply to get to the last course.

But few things exist that cannot be improved. Consider adding the Kahlúa in your specialty Alexanders with Kahlúa Especial, Jamaican Tia Maria, Patrón XO Cafe, or popular Starbucks Coffee Liqueur. Since no two coffee liqueurs taste the same, your choice will creatively alter the drink. The same can be said for the chocolate liqueur you choose. Instead of using ubiquitous crème de cacao try making the blended drink with Godiva Chocolate Liqueur, or Van Gogh Dutch Chocolate Vodka.

Nacional 27 is one of Chicago's elite restaurants. General manager Adam Seger has devised a magnificent signature cocktail geared specifically for the dessert



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# Only Cool People Sip Their Desserts

Dessert drinks. Anyone who doesn't find them irresistible needs to present their IDs to security, because they're likely impersonating an American. They are also chock full of health benefits. They allow you to sip dessert instead of the more strenuous regimen of chewing and smacking ones lips.

So help your fellow countrymen out by promoting devilishly delicious after dinner drinks. Let other countries deal with those little forks and their itty-bitty tines. We drink our desserts in these parts. —RP

## Alexander The Great

House specialty glass, chilled

*Pour ingredients into blender*

1 1/4 oz. Metaxa Seven Star Greek Brandy

3/4 oz. Starbuck Coffee Liqueur

3/4 oz. Godiva Chocolate Liqueur

3/4 oz. whole milk

2 scoops vanilla ice cream

*Blend thoroughly*

Whipped cream and chocolate

syrupe drizzle garnish

## Brandy Alexander

House specialty glass, chilled

*Pour ingredients into blender*

3/4 oz. Brandy

3/4 oz. Dark Crème de Cacao

3/4 oz. whole milk

2 scoops vanilla ice cream

*Blend thoroughly*

Whipped cream with a dusting of nutmeg garnish

## Brown Cow Milkshake

House specialty glass

*Pour ingredients into blender*

1 1/2 oz. Bourbon

3/4 oz. Godiva Chocolate Liqueur

1/2 oz. chocolate syrupe

1 oz. half & half cream

2 scoops vanilla ice cream

*Blend thoroughly*

Whipped cream and shaved chocolate garnish



Vita-Mix Barboss Advance