

NextLevelMarketing

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

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THE BIG PICTURE



A Glimpse Inside the World Spirits Competition

The recently concluded San Francisco World Spirits Competition is the largest competition of its type in the United States and is widely considered the most prestigious of its type.

Now in its sixth year, the two-day competition is the brainchild of authors and spirits authorities F. Paul Pacult and Anthony Dais Blue. Paul is a widely published writer and the editor of the critically acclaimed *Spirits Journal*. Anthony Dais Blue is a *Bon Appetit* contributing editor and the author of numerous books on cocktails and wines.

The competition is held in two elegantly appointed meeting rooms at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The 20 judges are divided into panels of four. In addition to Pacult and Blue, this year's roster included spirits authorities Robert Plotkin, Richard Carleton Hacker, Stephen Beal and Sean Ludford; authors and master

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SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

The Classiest Thirst Busting Drinks on the Planet

Thirst is something not confined to summer. Anyplace that heat is a permanent resident — whether it's a dry heat or the drippy, humid kind—thirst is a nearly constant companion. Busting that parched feeling isn't something you want to entrust to a plain glass of water.

No, the best prescription for washing away the thirst and the troubles of the day is a refreshing cocktail. When you find a drink that can do that, etch the recipe into the bar top and make it a specialty of the house. To that end, we've uncovered the classiest thirst busters ever devised.

The first of these marvels is the *Mojito*. It has captured the collective American imagination and sparked a boom in restaurants and lounges around the country. The drink is about as lively and refreshing as any ever

concocted. The libation was born in the heart of Havana, Cuba at the Bodeguita del Medio back in the early part of the 20th century and became an international hit during the '30s and '40s.

The elegant and eminently refreshing Mojito is a cross between a *Mint Julep* and an *Old Fashion*. It is made in a highball, bucket or specialty glass. Place simple syrup, fresh lime juice, lime rind, and a generous portion of mint sprigs in the glass. Then muddle the ingredients together, thereby releasing the essence of the mint.

Add ice, 2-3 ounces of light rum and a splash of club soda for effervescence. The final touch is a garnish of sprigs of fresh mint.

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PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

Stolichnaya Elit Vodka

Vodka drinkers have the most entrenched brand loyalties of all spirit enthusiasts. They staunchly contend that their brand of choice is the purest, smoothest and most sophisticated vodka available in a bottle. Persuading them to sample another brand is like getting them to switch political affiliations. That was until the release of incomparable *Stolichnaya Elit Vodka*. A moment alone with this amazingly luxurious spirit is all it takes to convert even the most entrenched consumer.

The new flagship of Stolichnaya's world-class range, Elit is the first ultra-luxury vodka available in the United States. This most appropriately named spirit is arguably the finest vodka made. It is skillfully crafted employing small batch distillation from pristine glacier water and select winter wheat. But the secret to this amazing distilled spirit is something called "freeze filtration."

The technique was first employed in the days of the czars when vodka was barreled and subjected to the terrible cold winter weather. Impurities in the vodka slowly

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The Man with the Million Dollar View

Ken Kribel has one of the most singular perspectives of the on-premise spirits business, making him an exceedingly valuable person to know. He is the vice



president of national accounts for **Southern Wine & Spirits of America**, the largest distributorship in the country with over 7 billion dollars in sales. A native of southern California, Kribel spends most of his time criss-crossing the country, working with spirit companies and multi-unit restaurant and hotel operators, ensuring that their comprehensive drink programs, marketing and promotions are successfully executed.

Kribel has spent more than half his life immersed in the on-premise business. While a student at Cal State Long Beach, he began waiting tables for the now defunct Rusty Pelican chain. Before joining Southern Wine & Spirits of California, Ken was a sommelier in Aspen and worked for several national chains, including Houlihans.

After moving back to California, he became a wine rep with Southern. It took about five years for him to develop the national accounts division, which ultimately became a hugely successful development for the company. "For the first time we had the ability to help national operators effectively interact with liquor and wine suppliers," says Kribel. "Back then there was only a handful of national accounts that had more than four or five units. Now many of those same companies have 100 or more properties. The growth in the category has been phenomenal."

Kribel coordinates the efforts of roughly 50 people in 27 states whose job is to work with Southern's multi-unit restaurants and hotel clients. Their objective is two-fold. "Ensuring that all of us at Southern speak with one voice and deliver consistent messages is crucial," says Kribel. They are also responsible for making sure that the

beverage programs and promotions initiated by their national accounts are executed with precision. This entails that there's sufficient product on-hand to meet the increased demand and the corresponding beverage menus and point of sale items are available at each of the units.

"But I think that we serve another equally important function. We act as a communications link between the spirit producers and our national accounts. Perhaps conduit is a better description. We're often given creative promotional ideas at the store level that we forward on to the appropriate people at their headquarters, as well as the liquor producers. Likewise, we want to understand our national accounts strategies and develop the most beneficial program to meet their needs."

Much of what Kribel's team concentrates on is the development of drink menus and highly creative specialty cocktails. "Drink menus drive sales. It's the single most effective marketing tool that an operator can use to pique consumer interest and stimulate beverage sales. Generally speaking, national operators are exceptionally adept at this type of marketing, which is perhaps the biggest difference between them and their independent counterparts."

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FEATURED SPECIALTY

Innovative Mojito Mix a Guaranteed Success

Nightclub & Bar Magazine calls the Mojito the "hottest drink in the country—bar none!" The Latin classic cocktail is burning up clubs and lounges from Miami and New York to the trendy venues of Southern California. The recent release of *Daily's Mojito Mix* will only further serve to fan the flames.

This superior mix streamlines the making of a *Mojito*, which any bartender will tell you is ordinarily a rather involved process. And let's face it, not every bar in America stocks bunches of fresh mint sprigs. With a bottle of this innovative mix, however,



one needn't be a battle-tested mixologist to make crowd pleasing Mojitos.

The Daily's Mojito Mix is a skillfully crafted blend of premium lime juice, natural mint flavoring and a hint of sweetener. It has an authentic lime hue and the same alluring aroma of fresh mint when crushed between your fingers. 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.

Those with adventure in their souls should consider pairing the Daily's Mojito Mix with aged, dark rum. The result is a

cocktail with slightly more character and caramel-laced flavor. The mix also marries beautifully with raspberry-infused products — such as Chambord or Stolichnaya Razberi Vodka — and mango-flavored rums.

After a half-century in business and more than a dozen successful fruit mixes in their line, Daily's has deservedly attained preeminence. As for their new Mojito Mix, it's a slam dunk winner. —RP ♦



Kiddie Cocktails Are Great for Business

As almost any parent will attest, kids' menus are a lifesaver. But open one up and what you likely won't find are specialty drinks marketed exclusively to kids. If there are special food items for kids, why not offer them special drink choices as well? Why make them suffer with the usual selections of post-mix sodas and orange juice?

Well, the fact of the matter is that good things happen when a restaurant looks to enhance the dining experience for kids by offering them special things to drink. Showing consideration for kids generates loyalty in their parents, as well as increases the odds that the whole family will want to return another night.

If generating good will isn't motivation enough, there's also the little matter of generating more profits. While most of these small fry specialties retail for less than their adult counterparts, they deliver relatively the same amount of gross profit. All things considered, marketing signature drinks to the minor leaguers makes good sense.

Creating Classics for Kids

Special to kids usually means being served a great looking, great tasting concoction, served in a sensational looking glass that mom and dad wouldn't normally let them drink at home. The objective is to create specialty drinks that will knock their socks off.

So where to start? Here are some ideas that should help you create an Olympic class beverage program for our country's youth.

⇒ **Lemonade** — This great American beverage is a good starting point. Using flavored syrups you can feature an unlimited variety of colorful combinations, such as blueberry lemonade or strawberry lemonade. Two other creative options are to blend lemonade with sorbet and fresh fruit into a slushy drink, or mix Hawaiian Punch with lemonade and ice for a novel specialty.

⇒ **Smoothies** — Kids love smoothies, as long as they don't know they're drinking something borderline healthy. Smoothies need not be more complicated than blending juice, fruit, yogurt and ice together. For fun, blend in a few cookies as well.

⇒ **Spin Doctor of Drinks** — Frozen drinks are tall, colorful, delicious and extremely lucrative. There are scores of creative blended specialty drinks ideally suited for young people. For instance, starting with an alcohol-free strawberry daiquiri or piña colada, add a banana, some vanilla ice cream, a few sweet strawberries and a healthy dash of chocolate syrup.

Consider promoting a swirled blended drink for kids. Swirls are made by combining two complementary blended drinks in the same glass. An excellent example is swirling together an alcohol-free raspberry daiquiri and vanilla milkshake in the same glass.

⇒ **Soda Drinks** — Looking at life from a kid's perspective, every restaurant that their parents take them to offers the same selection of sodas. Why not offer these future voters sodas with unusual flavors that aren't typically stocked like black cherry, root beer, vanilla, or kiwi strawberry? These sodas can also be used to create fabulous floats, such as Mandarine lime soda and lemon sorbet, vanilla soda and chocolate ice cream, or cream soda and Cherry Garcia ice cream.

⇒ **Hot Cocoa & Chocolate Milk** — When in doubt, call on a kid's best friend, chocolate. Make hot cocoa something truly special by floating a scoop of ice cream on top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of shaved chocolate. Hot cocoa can also be served with a layer of frothed chocolate milk on top. Chocolate milk can be served as a tall, slushy specialty drink by flash blending with ice in a blender.

Have fun and think like a kid. The drinks will be smash hits with the kids and their parents, too. ♦

PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

Stolichnaya elit

gravitated to the wooden staves where they would become frozen and fall out of solution. Later, the essentially pure vodka would be poured out through an opening in the bottom of the barrel.

Be prepared to be shocked and amazed immediately upon your first taste of Stolichnaya Elit. Despite its sleek designer package, the vodka is not what you have come to expect, not in the least. Elit has a seamless, featherweight body and a wafting citrus bouquet. Its entry is soft as

cotton and it gradually, almost hesitantly fills the mouth with a touch of warmth that swiftly dissipates into a relaxed finish.

Here's a vodka that begs to be sampled neat, or with a slight chill. Stolichnaya Elit will make believers out of those who doubt that vodka is a standalone performer. Most mixologists will naturally opt to use it as the featured attraction in gourmet Martinis, Cosmopolitans



and other vodka-based cocktails. It will make any drink that much better. Reflecting its lofty status Stolichnaya Elit retails for \$59.99 per 750ml.

Stolichnaya Elit has a magnificently clean, flavorful character and is completely devoid of harshness. Guaranteed, you won't believe the vodka is 80-proof. Indeed, Elit is the smoothest and most satiny textured vodka on the market. It will undoubtedly become the standard bearer for what sociologists call the "pursuit of small indulgences," a mega-trend in which we are all a bit more receptive to periodically sampling the good life. And that's just what Stolichnaya Elit is - a slice of the good life. -RP ♦

Top Ten Ways to Motivate Employees

Captain William Bligh of the H.M.S. *Bounty* is a historic figure because of his astonishing skills at motivating people. His draconian methods helped motivate the crew of the *Bounty* to sail half way across the world; unfortunately he couldn't get them to return the ship.

Suffice to say, motivating people is an acquired skill, which partially explains why the turnover rate of employees in the hospitality industry runs at about 300%. So how can managers better motivate employees and create a more positive working environment?

Here's our short list on that very subject.

1. **Acknowledgement** — It's only human nature to want to be appreciated. According to the One Minute Manager, you should catch employees doing things right and acknowledge the behavior. They will naturally want to continue doing whatever it is that draws praise.
2. **Solicit Input** — Employees want to know that their ideas matter, especially if they know something that you don't. Take time to solicit employees opinions and give their thoughts due consideration.
3. **Empathy** — Dealing day in and day out with the public can take its toll. It's a hard business and affording your staff genuine understanding will go a long way to creating a positive working environment.
4. **Stability** — People need to feel like they belong, especially where work is concerned. Look to give employees a sense that their jobs are secure and you'll witness your staff solidify into a team.
5. **Good Pay** — If an employee is making a decent living, why would he or she want to do something to jeopardize that? Ensuring your staff is walking with good money is an excellent motivator.
6. **Prevent Stagnancy** — Keeping your people professionally challenged is an effective way to stave off job burnout. Allow employees to evolve within their job by giving them more responsibility.
7. **Career Advancement** — Growth potential within the company gives employees a better sense that they're on the right job track. Look to create promotion opportunities for your people to advance their careers inside your business.
8. **Loyalty** — Loyalty towards your employees is essential to instilling mutual trust and creating a cohesive, professional staff. The essential first step is to relate to your people on a human level, as individuals, not merely as names on a work schedule.
9. **Positive Work Environment** — Is your business a good place in which to work? Are the managers supportive? Do they look to work with the employees, or do the employees work for the managers?
10. **Equitable Treatment** — People want to be treated fairly. Everything from discipline to scheduling should be handled equitably. Nearly every decision management makes will effect their employees' ability to earn a decent livelihood. ♦

THE BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*



sommeliers Steve Olson and Doug Frost; noted mixologists Dale DeGroff, Tony Abou-Ganim, and David Wondrich, and restaurateurs' Julio Bermejo and Audrey Saunders.

This year just over 700 spirits and liqueurs from 52 countries were submitted for evaluation. Stringent measures are taken to prevent the judges from even accidentally learning the identity of a brand being evaluated. The organizers and support staff squawk noisily if a judge happens to wander near the area where

the participating products are staged and prepared for review.

The tasting flights usually consist of between ten and twenty products, which are positioned in front of each judge in covered glasses marked only with a letter. Each flight consists of spirits falling within the same category.

Each spirit is nosed in succession, the impressions of which will correspond closely to how the spirit will taste on the palate. Once completed, it's back to the beginning of the line for a slow and methodical evaluation of each spirit's taste and finish.

After a panel has finished their evaluations, each entry is discussed in turn and medals are awarded. Medals range from bronze through gold. The coveted double gold medal is awarded when the four judges agree that the product is a consensus gold medal winner.

At the end of the competition, the judges convene and choose between the double gold winners in each category to select the "Best of Show" captions. Once again, this year's honorees are magnificent, the short list of which includes:

Best of Show

- ⇒ White Spirit — Plymouth Gin
- ⇒ Whisk(e)y — Laphroaig 30 Year Old Single Islay Malt
- ⇒ Tequila — El Tesoro Paradiso
- ⇒ Fruit Liqueur — Grand Marnier Cuvée Speciale Cent Cinquantaire
- ⇒ Irish Whiskey — Jameson 12 Year Old
- ⇒ Blended Scotch — Johnny Walker Green Label
- ⇒ North American Whiskey — Rittenhouse Bottled-in-Bond Rye
- ⇒ Rum — Ron Matusalem 10 Year Old Clasico
- ⇒ Vodka — Zyr

My congratulations to all of the medalists.

Mike Ginley
Next Level Marketing

At Philadelphia's Cuba Libre Restaurant, Mojitos are the signatures of the house. While all are popular with the guests, the most unusual is likely the *Sandito Mojito*. It's made with white rum, herba buena mint leaves, guarapo (fresh sugar cane juice) and freshly squeezed watermelon juice.

Another avant-garde specialty Mojito is the *Wild Damasco*, a medal winning concoction created by mixologist Camber Lay of San Francisco. A delicious twist on the Mojito, the drink is made with mint leaves, lemon slices and apricot liqueur, which are muddled in a Collins glass. She then adds ice, pours in two ounces of Oronoco Rum and tops it off with club soda.

Fundamentally similar to the Mojito is the Brazilian sensation, the *Caipirinha* (pronounced "kuy-per-REEN-yah"). It is a marvelously refreshing drink served in a bucket or tumbler. It's prepared with simple syrup and a quartered lime, both of which are muddled. The driving force behind this classic cocktail is *Cachaça*, a clear Brazilian spirit produced from sugar cane. Use between 2 and 3 ounces of cachaça, add ice and garnish with a fresh lime wedge.

Micheladas and Sangrias

Virtually unknown outside the Hispanic community, the *Michelada* is a phenomenally refreshing concoction served in a



tall iced glass with a salted rim. The recipe calls for a dose of fresh lime juice, a fill with Mexican lager and a lime wedge garnish. One variation of the drink calls for a shot of tequila, while another

requires an added splash of pepper sauce. It's simple, yet marvelous.

Few libations, however, are more satisfying than *Sangria*. Often served in a pitcher, it is a punch made from a blend of red wine, fresh fruit and an assortment of spirits and liqueurs. So delicious is sangria that it has evolved into a national treasure of Spain.

This light, thirst-quenching classic is typically made with a moderately priced red wine. In addition to wine, sangria recipes often include brandy, peach schnapps, port, or triple sec.

Most seasonal fruits are excellent in Sangria. Citrus like limes, lemons and oranges are especially suitable because their acidity helps balance the punch and keeps the other fruit from discoloring. Fragrant fruit and berries, such as peaches, nectarines, blackberries and strawberries are popular additions. Letting the sangria steep is advisable so the flavors of the wine, fruit and spirits have time to marry together.

So perhaps it's time to take your guests on a trip south of the Equator. *Salud!* ♦

SPOTLIGHT ON A PROFESSIONAL *continued from page 2*

He considers one of the opportunities beverage operators currently enjoy, is offering their guests new and exciting cocktails. To that end, Southern has been hard at work recruiting a stable of dedicated and highly skilled mixologists to help clients with their drink development.

"The most notable of these talented folks is Francesco Lafranconi, director of the Southern Wine & Spirit's Academy of Fine Spirits and Service in Las Vegas. Having a team of creative mixologists on retainer in most of our states is a tremendous resource to offer our clients. The cocktails that these individuals have created are sensational and have been extremely well received."

From his vantage point, Kribel sees an irreversible trend toward enhanced drink quality. Increasingly more independent operators are preparing cocktails from scratch, using fresh ingredients and seasonal products, and many national accounts are following suit.

"I think it's a mistake to underestimate the consumer and what they're willing to

pay for cocktails made with impeccably fresh products. Operationalizing the strategy, especially on a national basis, takes planning and foresight. For national operators, prepared drink mixes are an absolute necessity for achieving consistency of product. But many in the national arena are beginning to take those mixes and tweaking them behind the bar such that they become more distinctive and individually tailored to the particular concept."

Along the same lines, Kribel says that the trend toward marketing cocktails with premium brands has solidly taken hold. "It creates a win-win situation for everyone involved. Guests receive better, higher quality drinks, while beverage operators generate higher profit. The days of operators and bar managers bemoaning that promoting drinks prepared with premium brands drive up cost percentages are behind us. After all, what's more important – a low pour cost, or improved guest satisfaction and higher net profits?"

Ken Kribel is the man with a million dollar view. When asked what the hottest

chain in the future will be, he answered without hesitation. "It probably hasn't been launched yet." -RP ♦

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Cool Latin Cocktails Sizzle in the Limelight

Salsa has surpassed ketchup as America's favorite condiment. The country has got the Latin beat and we're liking it. People are kicking off their shoes and reaching for the nearest *Mojito*. Don't miss out on the Caribbean attitude that's sweeping the land. It's the hottest thing next to the Miami sun. —RP ♦

Caipirinha

Rocks or old fashion glass
Build in glass
 4 large lime wedges
 3/4 oz. simple syrup
Muddle contents and add ice
 2 1/2 oz. Cachaça
 Lime wedge garnish

Caipirissima

Rocks or old fashion glass
Build in glass
 4 large lime wedges
 3/4 oz. simple syrup
Muddle contents and add ice
 2 1/2 oz. Light Rum
 Lime wedge garnish

Caipiroshka

Rocks or old fashion glass
Build in glass
 4 large lime wedges
 3/4 oz. simple syrup
Muddle contents and add ice
 2 1/2 oz. Vodka
 Lime wedge garnish

Mojito

Bucket glass
Build in glass
 3/4 oz. fresh lime juice
 1/2 oz. simple syrup
 3-4 mint sprigs
 2-4 large lime wedges
Muddle contents and add ice
 2 oz. Light Rum
 2-3 splashes club soda
 Lime wedge and mint sprig garnish

Sauza Michelada

Pilsner or pint glass, ice
 Rim glass with salt (optional)
Build in glass
 1 1/4 oz. Sauza Hornitos Tequila
 1/2 oz. Rose's Lime Juice
 6-7 oz. Corona Beer
 Serve with bottle of Corona
 Lime wedge garnish

Lemon Mojito

Bucket glass
Build in glass
 1 oz. fresh lemon juice
 1/2 oz. simple syrup
 3-4 mint sprigs
Muddle contents and add ice
 2 oz. Limoncello
 2-3 splashes club soda
 Lime wedge and mint sprig garnish

Kentucky Mojito

House specialty glass, ice
 Pour ingredients into mixing glass
 1/2 oz. simple syrup
 5-6 mint sprigs
Muddle contents and add ice
 1 1/4 oz. Maker's Mark Bourbon
 1/2 oz. Cointreau
 1/2 oz. Rose's Lime Juice
 1 1/2 oz. sweet 'n' sour
 1 1/2 oz. iced tea
 Shake and strain
 Orange slice and mint sprig garnish

Raspberry Mojito

Bucket glass
Build in glass
 2-3 lime wedges
 1 3/4 oz. Daily's Mojito Mix
Muddle contents and add ice
 1 3/4 oz. Appleton Estate
 V/X Jamaica Rum
 3/4 oz. Chambord
 Lime wedge and fresh mint
 sprigs garnish

Hey, Where's That Come From?

Everyone and everything hails from somewhere. You know where you come from, but what about the products on your back bar? You work with them everyday, but do you even know their hometowns?

Let's take a quick check of how familiar you are with where these famous products come from, shall we? Match each spirit with its city of origin.

Questions

1. Bacardi Reserve
2. Beefeater Gin
3. Blanton's Bourbon
4. Chivas Regal Royal
 Salute Blended Scotch
5. Courvoisier VSOP Cognac
6. Tanqueray Gin
7. Dewar's White Label Blended Scotch
8. Türi Vodka
9. Wild Turkey Bourbon
10. Jameson 1780 Whiskey
11. Ketel One Vodka
12. Wodka Gorbatschow
13. Mount Gay Eclipse Rum
14. Original Cristall Vodka
15. Seagram's Seven Whiskey

- A. Aberdeen, Scotland
- B. Bardstown, KY
- C. Berlin, Germany
- D. Bridgetown, Barbados
- E. Dublin, Ireland
- F. Finsbury England
- G. Jarnac, France
- H. Lawrenceburg, IN
- I. Lawrenceburg, KY
- J. London, England
- K. Moscow, Russia
- L. Perth, Scotland
- M. San Juan, Puerto Rico
- N. Schiedam, Holland
- O. Tallinn, Estonia