

NextLevelMarketing

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

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THE BIG PICTURE



It's The Show to be at in Las Vegas

Forget the Oscars, American Idol or even the Kentucky Derby. For those of us in the food and beverage industry, the place to be seen is "The Show" in Las Vegas. Formerly known as the Las Vegas Nightclub and Bar Show, the event is a veritable feast for the senses and a tremendous learning experience. If you're looking for ideas on how to improve your business, increase your profitability, enhance your beverage program and have a blast while doing it, this is the show for you.

Twenty-two years and counting, The Show is hosted by the publishers of *Nightclub & Bar Magazine* and held at the sprawling Las Vegas Convention Center. The convention that just concluded was the most successful to date. If you haven't been, allow me to tell you what you missed and hopefully give you impetus to attend next year's convention.

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SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

Profiting in the World of Cappuccinos

As the largest coffee-consuming nation in the world, it is little wonder why Americans have turned on to the satisfyingly rich flavor of *Cappuccino*. 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 equal parts of steamed and frothed milk, although this proportion may vary somewhat. 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.

Should you field the request for a dry Cappuccino, it is prepared with a

larger percentage of frothed milk. A *Brevé Cappuccino* is made using half & half instead of milk. On the other hand, a *Skinny Cappuccino* is prepared with nonfat milk.

There are several exceptionally popular variations of the Cappuccino, most notably the *Café au Lait* and *Caffè Latte*. The *Café au Lait* is served in an over-sized cup and made with a demitasse

full of espresso coffee—or strong, freshly brewed coffee—that is then highly diluted with steamed milk. The proportion of milk to coffee is a matter of personal preference, although it is often made with one part espresso to 4-8 parts steamed milk. A thin layer of frothed milk is often floated on top.

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PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

Stolichnaya Blueberi Vodka

Back in the days of the Cold War, news that the Russians had beaten the West in producing the first blueberry vodka would have struck fear in our decadent hearts. It would be the Sputnik all over again. Well, those days are behind us, and now on behalf of all humanity, I'd like to say to the good folks at Stoli, thank you! *Stolichnaya Blueberi Vodka* is sensational and represents the long awaited, last piece of the flavored vodka mosaic.

This new addition to the Stolichnaya repertoire is bound to rejuvenate our nation's tired taste buds, a collective fatigued by a steady stream of the same old flavored vodkas. What we Americans have been waiting for is the fresh, luscious flavor of blueberries. Infuse that into our spirit of choice and you'll hold our attention. It's of no surprise that Stoli was the brand that delivered the goods.

As with all of their flavored vodkas, 70-proof Stolichnaya Blueberi Vodka is made with natural flavoring,

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A Couple's Dream Creates San Francisco Gem

Scan the 20th century and you'll likely not find a more uncertain, romantically charged place and time than Shanghai during the 1930s. The Japanese were on the move to colonize Asia and the Pacific. Dubbed the "Paris of the Orient," Shanghai was a city teeming with spies and an



atmosphere of international intrigue and fatalism. When an evening might be your last, memories were made to last.

Such is the palpable mystique George Chen has created with **Shanghai 1930**, an award-winning restaurant in San Francisco renown for its multi-regional Chinese specialties. "The décor is evocative of the period between the wars," says owner George Chen. "Our lounges have a bit of a speakeasy feel or underground opium den. The interior design features lots of art deco and nouveau with touches of East and West."

To be whisked away to another time and place is the quintessence of intriguing. The lounge is dominated by a 40-foot aquamarine bar with an expansive back bar. The rich wood accents and subdued lighting creates a romantic, yet convivial atmosphere. It's the perfect setting to enjoy one of the expertly prepared classic cocktails that are the specialty of the house.

To describe George Chen as cosmopolitan would be an understatement. Born in Taiwan, Chen has lived in the United States since the age of ten. He started

working in restaurants in high school and while attending the University of California at Berkeley he worked at the famous Mandarin Restaurant in San Francisco. After graduating Chen started a career in securities, which often required him to travel to Asia. It was on these extended stays that he realized that what San Francisco needed was a restaurant featuring authentic Asian "street food."

"After spending four years developing the concept and our fresh approach to fusion cuisine, my wife Cindy and I opened our first restaurant, **Betelnut**, on Union Street in San Francisco. That was in 1995. It was an immediate success and garnered a great many awards and national honors."

Buoyed by the experience, the Chens launched the multi-unit **LongLife Noodle Company**, which earned the distinction of being one of the "Five Hottest Concepts" in the U.S. by Chain Leader and Restaurant Hospitality magazines. In 1997, the dauntless couple opened Shanghai 1930 Restaurant and the **Guanxi Lounge** in San Francisco and the **Shikumen Bistro** in China.

The Chens appreciate that their hectic pace and the demands of owning restaurants on two continents isn't necessarily conducive for most couples. George admits that it's both a challenging lifestyle and difficult business. "It requires perseverance, hard work and total commitment of both partners. As I often remark, there's a thousand ways that money leaves a restaurant, yet only one way it comes in."

Cindy and George work hard, but refuse to be slaves to their many ventures. "After developing twelve restaurants, I've learned that the most important thing to do to ensure having a personal life is to hire great people who share the same ideals and passion for the business as you do. Then it becomes a matter of good training and supervision."

One component of the Chen success is the consistent emphasis placed on developing a strong bar business. "We tend to believe that it's not a question of how many different spirits you stock on your back bar that counts, it's what you do with them that matters most. For example, our resident mixologists at Shanghai

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Stoli Blueberi Cocktail Contest

Stolichnaya, the genuine Russian Vodka and number one family of imported vodka flavors is laying down the gauntlet and challenging bartenders and consumers, 25 years and older, to create refreshing and delicious cocktail recipes for the newest flavor to join the Stoli family – Stoli Blueberi.

"We're introducing this great new flavor," notes Susan Kilgore, Stolichnaya Brand Director, Pernod Ricard USA, "and decided that the best place to go for great cocktail recipes that highlight Stoli Blueberi is right to the source – bartenders and consumers. These folks are on the front lines everyday and know what tastes and looks great."

The contest officially kicks off on April 1, 2006 and runs through July 15, 2006. Those who are eligible and are interested in submitting their original Stoli Blueberi cocktail recipe(s) can view contest rules and find the official form for entry online at www.stoli.com. All recipes submitted will be evaluated by a panel of judges. Three winners will be selected based on originality and taste. The first place winner and winning recipe will be featured in a press release that will be submitted to industry publications. All three winning recipes will be featured in an upcoming cocktail recipe booklet and will appear on the Promotion's web page for 90 days.

"It's a great way to get our newest flavor out there and help our on-premise partners by creating recipes that consumers will enjoy. At the end of the day, that's what matters," concludes Kilgore. ♦

Drink Pricing for Optimum Profits

The objective when developing price lists for the bar is to establish a set of prices that will yield the highest profit margins and result in products selling at their optimum sales volume. If you raise the sales price substantially past this equilibrium point, you can anticipate the sales volume will drop, thereby decreasing the amount of profit realized. After all, how many people are willing to pay \$20 for a vodka and tonic?

On the other hand, if you price that same drink well under a dollar, you can expect the drink to sell fairly vigorously, but you'll virtually make no profit on the many transactions.

Establishing Pricing Structures

When constructing the pricing structures for your operation, thought should be given to making them "user-friendly." The more involved and complicated you make the price list, the more likely it is that your employees will charge your guests the wrong prices. Your research and hard work are negated when your employees fail to charge the right sales prices; even if those errors result in higher gross sales, treating the clientele fairly and safeguarding the business's reputation is worth more than a few extra dollars.

Many operators believe that investing in point of sale (POS) systems will

alleviate the need to train their employees on the operation's pricing. The thinking being that with a few keystrokes servers or bartenders can find any drink, product or menu item price. The problem with relying on technology in this way is that guests frequently ask servers and bartenders about prices. If the employees can't quickly and competently answer the question, they will have to excuse themselves and check the POS for the answer. Not only does this needlessly waste time and reduce the employee's productivity, it undermines the bartender's credibility. Guests are left wondering if the server doesn't know the prices, what other surprises are in store for the evening?

The following are suggestions on how to make your price list easier to use and less prone to employee pricing errors.

⇒ Establish Major Price Categories

— Group products together based primarily on their wholesale costs. Use a standard increment such as fifty cents to separate the price categories, such that the well price plus fifty cents equals the call price, call plus fifty cents equals the premium price, etc. Often the high cost of super-premium liquors will necessitate an incremental increase of \$.75 or more. The price points are commonly referred to as well liquor; call liquor; premium

liquor; super-premium liquor and top shelf liquor. Grouping similarly priced products together requires the staff learning fewer prices.

⇒ Keep Drink Prices Based Only on Quarters

— Prices ending in \$.25, \$.50, or \$.75 are easier for bartenders and servers to add mentally. In addition, rounding prices up to the nearest quarter make them less sensitive to wholesale cost increases.

⇒ Product Prices Hinged to a Specific Portion

— All sales prices for each product in the liquor inventory should be listed with a corresponding portion. For example, the listed sales price for a Stoli and tonic, made with 1 1/4 ounces of Stoli, is \$4.00. An Stolichnaya Martini made with 2 1/2 ounces of Stoli is listed at \$8.00.

⇒ Staff Training and Avoiding Employee Pricing Errors

— Regardless of the reason, employee pricing errors hurt the beverage operation's profitability and its reputation with the clientele. It is therefore important to work with the service staff on learning the bar's prices. This is best accomplished by reviewing the pricing structures with the staff, explaining as you go the rationale for the prices. A test should be given several days later after the staff has had a chance to study and learn the prices. ♦

PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

not artificial syrups. The difference in the finished product is astounding. The vodka has impeccable clarity, a satiny, lightweight body and wafting bouquet other flavored vodkas would kill for. The enticing aroma of just-picked blueberries fills the glass, an authentic experience down to the leafy herbal notes.

The reasons for its pending success are immediately evident with the first sip. Stolichnaya Blueberi bathes the palate with mouth-filling flavor — smooth, succulent, true-to-fruit flavor, which steadily increases in intensity until the mid-palate point. The taste lingers on the palate long into the graceful and relaxed finish. From start to finish, Stoli Blueberi is a phenomenon in the making.

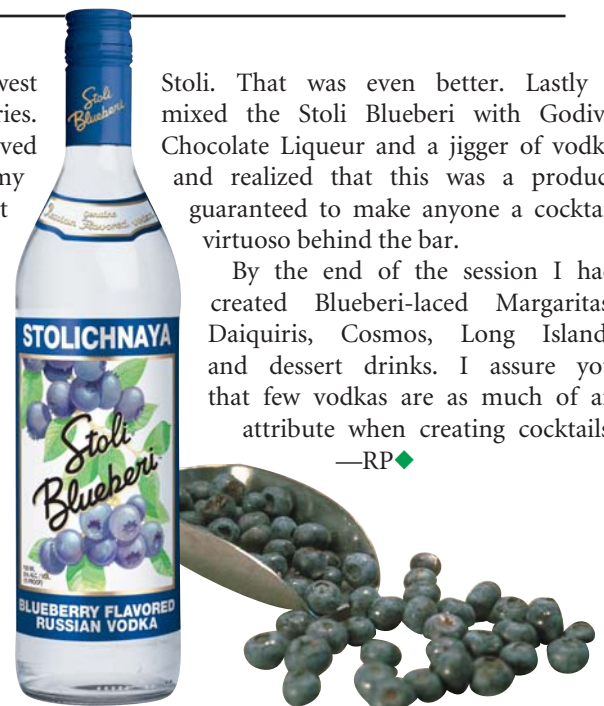
Growing up in the midwest I know all about blueberries. They grew wild where I lived as a kid. Perhaps it's my ardor for blueberries that prompted Stolichnaya to send me two sample bottles of Blueberi to make cocktails with prior to launch.

I started by concocting Martinis and came up with three drop-dead gorgeous cocktails before the bottle cap hit the bar. The first was equal parts of Stoli Blueberi and Red Label Stoli. Bolstered by that success, I paired Blueberi with Kahlúa Especial and two shots of Red Label

Stoli. That was even better. Lastly I mixed the Stoli Blueberi with Godiva Chocolate Liqueur and a jigger of vodka and realized that this was a product guaranteed to make anyone a cocktail virtuoso behind the bar.

By the end of the session I had created Blueberi-laced Margaritas, Daiquiris, Cosmos, Long Islands and dessert drinks. I assure you that few vodkas are as much of an attribute when creating cocktails.

—RP♦



Refusing Service Without Guilt or Hesitation

Refusing service needn't necessarily be challenging. But let's be honest, most servers and bartenders find it one of the most daunting aspects of their job. What makes refusing further service often intimidating is that alcohol can have a destabilizing effect on a drinker's emotional state. It is difficult to anticipate whether a customer will acknowledge the refusal calmly or react in a belligerent manner.

The primary service rule regarding the sale of alcohol should always be, "When In Doubt, Don't Serve." While this may seem oversimplified, it is the best guideline available. It is important to forego the sale if there is any doubt as to the sobriety of the patron. You can ask no more from your staff than to exercise their best judgment in these situations.

Regardless of what is said when "cutting off" a customer, the simpler the approach the easier it will be to intervene in the future. The more automatic it becomes to deliver the lines, the more

comfortable servers will be when obliged to refuse a patron further service.

Informing a guest that he or she is being refused another drink is better received and less involved when done before the person is intoxicated. For example, a guest orders a cocktail and the bartender knows that it will be the last one that can be safely served to the person that night. When the bartender serves the customer the cocktail, he or she should lean forward and quietly say, "Here you are . . . drink this one slowly because it's the last one I can serve you tonight."

In essence, the guest is only being denied further service of alcohol, and is not being deprived the opportunity to "nurse" what will be his or her last drink of the evening. This approach will cause little embarrassment for a patron and will usually not cause a negative response.

Telling someone who is already intoxicated that he or she will not be served any more alcohol is a straightforward

proposition. The bartender or server should inform the patron that "in my best judgment you've already had enough to drink, so I won't be serving you any more alcohol." There is no need to add anything else to a statement that is direct and to the point.

The message says that it was the decision based on a bartender's or server's best judgment. It doesn't accuse the patron of being drunk. When delivered properly, it will likely not foster a negative response. If it does, the manager should be notified immediately. It is management's responsibility to handle these kinds of customer situations.

Management should arrange alternate means of transportation for the guest to get home. The options available are to either call a taxi to drive the customer home, or assist the patron in calling a friend or relative to take custody. It is important that the intoxicated person not get behind the wheel of his or her car. ♦

THE BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

The first two days of the convention are devoted entirely to educational programs; seminars and workshops presented by working professionals for working professionals. Subjects range from reducing liability, hosting effective promotions, improving hiring techniques and getting the most out of your sound and lighting. Our own Robert Plotkin presented three seminars, one on preventing internal theft, another on building repeat business and a workshop on how to overhaul your beverage operation.

The exhibition hall opens on the third day of the show. Wear comfortable walking shoes and be fully prepared to be wowed. There are over 1500 booths in the two cavernous halls. Exhibitors include everyone from coin-op manufacturers, glassware companies and cocktail food purveyors to bartender supplies and lighting and sound equipment representatives. As one would expect, spirits, beer and wine company booths rank high among attendee favorites. You can sample just about anything sold in a bottle.

Trust me, this isn't your run-of-the-mill business expo. The place literally thrums with energy. The hard driving music, strobe lights and laser shows are clues



that this show is something out of the ordinary. Two days of non-stop sipping, swirling and munching also distinguish this event from other more staid conventions.

Yet, perhaps the greatest aspect of this incomparable event is the networking possibilities. The Show attracts in excess of 30,000 operators from around the globe. Walking the show you have

an equal chance of getting elbowed by a restaurant owner from Manhattan as you do the CEO of Anheuser-Busch. There are many presentations designed to facilitate your networking with other attendees, to share insights, comments, concerns and questions with fellow beverage operators. It is an invaluable opportunity to expand your perspective and gain a deeper understanding of the subtleties and nuances of this business.

I've attended the Las Vegas "Show" for the past 12 years. Each is bigger, better and more impressive than the one before. There's simply not enough time for me to recount the ways that it's benefited my career and the careers of countless others I've worked with.

So, if you haven't had the opportunity to attend this annual event, please make a point of doing so in March 2007. I'll see you there.

Mike Ginley
Next Level Marketing

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 Monin or Torani mint syrup (*Café Mocha Mint*), vanilla syrup (*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.

Steamers are also popular. They are little more than steamed and frothed milk that is flavored with a Monin or Torani syrup. Steamers do not contain espresso or coffee.



Iced Cappuccinos have made it possible to sip and savor these drinks even in the heat of summer. It's made by pouring 8 ounces of cold milk

and two, freshly brewed demitasses of espresso into an iced mixing glass. Shake the concoction vigorously and then serve in an iced, 16-ounce specialty glass. Garnish the drink with whipped cream and a sprinkle of shaved chocolate.

An *Iced Caramella* is made in the same manner, the only addition being a tablespoon each of chocolate and caramel syrup. It, too, is garnished with whipped cream. Substitute Torani or Monin hazelnut syrup for the caramel and you've made a *Chocolate Biscotti*.

Embellishing is another way to add some pizzazz to your specialty Cappuccinos. In addition to dusting the frothed milk with cinnamon, nutmeg, cocoa, vanilla, or shaved chocolate, consider crumbled brownies or cookies, nut slivers, or shredded coconut. Top the drink with some whipped cream and add a decorative swizzle, such as a cinnamon stick, candy cane, or specialty straw.

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 fudge brownie on top. The creative possibilities are only bounded by one's imagination. ♦

SPOTLIGHT ON A PROFESSIONAL *continued from page 2*

1930 and Guanxi Lounge—Anthony and Lawrence—consistently create interesting, delicious and attractive cocktails that sell. They're like talented chefs who take disparate ingredients and concoct works of art."

Chen asserts that an appealing bar menu is essential at driving sales, just as an alluring food menu propels sales in dining rooms. It's something of a dance of seduction he contends, where everything about a cocktail from its name to appearance combines to entice a guest into being adventurous.

"We've had enormous success with the *Shanghaiopolitan* — our take on the Cosmo — and a cocktail we call *Sexual Healing*, which we make with lychee nut liqueur. Most recently we've been having fun with the *Dragon Fly Cocktail*. It's an attractive and delicious drink. More importantly, it's sexy and mysterious, which is what we're all about."

Chen encourages his bartenders to be adventurous. "While we're not a Mexican restaurant, we've had considerable success marketing tequila. In fact, one of our elegant Margaritas was recently on an international series broadcast on the Discovery Channel."

The bar at Shanghai 1930 has also drawn attention with its creative spirit infusions. "We've played with infusing vodka with ginseng, pineapples and cucumbers and showcasing them in cocktails. One thing we've learned is to make sure guests know what brand of vodka is being infused. Branding is a significant factor with consumers today.

When asked what he thought was the key to success in the restaurant business, George Chen hardly hesitated before answering, "Develop a great business plan, be well-capitalized and persevere." That about sums it up. —RP ♦

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Exploring America's Love Affair with Cappuccinos

Creating delicious cappuccino signature drinks need not be a complicated process. While there are scores of fabulous cappuccino recipes, several recipes stand out as absolutely indispensable. The robust *International Cappuccino* is a superb combination of rich espresso coffee, a bevy of liqueurs and a layer of frothed milk. The *Louvre Me Alone* is a savory cappuccino made with VS Cognac, Grand Marnier and Tia Maria. —RP♦

Blast From The Past

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 1/2 oz. Tia Maria
 1/2 oz. Grand Marnier
 1/2 oz. Chambord
 Near fill with hot espresso coffee
 Top with frothed milk
 Shaved chocolate garnish

Cappo de Tutti Cappi

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 1/2 oz. Tia Maria
 1/2 oz. Dark Rum
 1/2 oz. VS Cognac
 Square of Ghiradelli chocolate
 Near fill with hot espresso coffee
 Top with frothed milk
 Shaved chocolate garnish

Emerald Isle

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 1/2 oz. Irish Mist
 1/2 oz. Irish Cream
 1/2 oz. Irish Whiskey
 1/2 oz. Kahlúa
 Near fill with hot espresso coffee
 Top with frothed milk
 Shaved chocolate garnish

Gran Cappuccino

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 1/2 oz. VS Cognac
 1/2 oz. Grand Marnier
 1/2 oz. Kahlúa
 1/2 fill with hot espresso coffee
 1/2 fill with hot chocolate
 Top with frothed milk
 Shaved chocolate garnish

Iacocca

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 3/4 oz. Kahlúa
 1/2 oz. Grand Marnier
 1/2 oz. Irish Cream
 Near fill with hot espresso coffee
 Top with frothed milk
 Drizzle 1/2 oz. Frangelico
 Shaved chocolate garnish

International Cappuccino

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 1/2 oz. Kahlúa
 1/2 oz. Disaronno Amaretto
 1/2 oz. Godiva Chocolate Liqueur
 1/2 oz. Irish Cream
 Near fill with hot espresso coffee
 Top with frothed milk
 Shaved chocolate garnish

Louvre Me Alone

Cappuccino cup, heated
Build in glass
 3/4 oz. VS Cognac
 1/2 oz. Grand Marnier
 1/2 oz. Tia Maria
 Near fill with hot espresso coffee
 Top with frothed milk
 Shaved chocolate garnish

Testing Your Rum/Rhum Geography IQ.

Rum is the most popular spirit in the world. Every bar in the country carries it in their well and several brands on their back bar. With summer approaching, now is the time to capitalize on rum's nearly universal appeal. But first, you have to know who the players are. To that end, we've created a little trivia challenge that will test your Rum/Rhum IQ. ♦

Questions

1. Appleton Estate Extra
2. Rhum Barbancourt Réserve Spéciale
3. Bacardi Carta Blanca
4. Mount Gay Eclipse
5. Pyrat Planter's Gold X.O.
6. Cruzan Single Barrel
7. Angostura 1824
8. Pritchard's Crystal
9. Gosling's Black Seal
10. Starr
11. El Dorado 15-year
12. Rhum Clément
13. 10 Cane
14. Havana Club Añejo Reserva
15. Westerhall Plantation
16. Kaniche
17. Zaya Gran Reserve
18. Pampero Anniversario
19. Doorly's XO
20. Flor de Caña Gran Reserve

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| A. Mauritius | M. Cuba |
| B. Jamaica | N. Martinique |
| C. Bermuda | O. Barbados |
| D. Trinidad | P. Venezuela |
| E. Barbados | Q. Guyana |
| F. Haiti | R. Nicaragua |
| G. Puerto Rico | S. Guadeloupe |
| H. US Virgin Islands | T. Trinidad |
| I. Anguilla | |
| J. Tennessee | |
| K. Guatemala | |
| L. Grenada | |

1-B, 2-E, 3-G, 4-E, 5-I, 6-H, 7-D, 8-J, 9-C, 10-A, 11-Q, 12-N, 13-T, 14-M, 15-L, 16-S, 17-K, 18-F, 19-O, 20-R