

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

February 2007 ~ Volume 6, Issue 2

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THE BIG PICTURE



Designated Drivers Drive Our Business

No plan for a night out on the town is complete without a designated driver. I'm sure you've had that assignment once or twice – you stay sober all night long and watch your friends get progressively silly, and then you shove them in the car at the end of the night and drop them safely at their front doors. You've done your duty; it's their job to make it through the door and into bed.

Being the designated driver for a night can actually be quite fun, but what's more important is that, aside from renting a limo or taking a cab, it's the only way to make sure everyone gets home safely. Left up to our own judgment, 9 out of 10 of us would get behind the wheel after a few drinks, completely unaware of our blood alcohol levels. The consequences of a single careless act like this could be dire, or even fatal. Do yourself a favor and have a plan. Start the trend in your circle of friends if you haven't already.

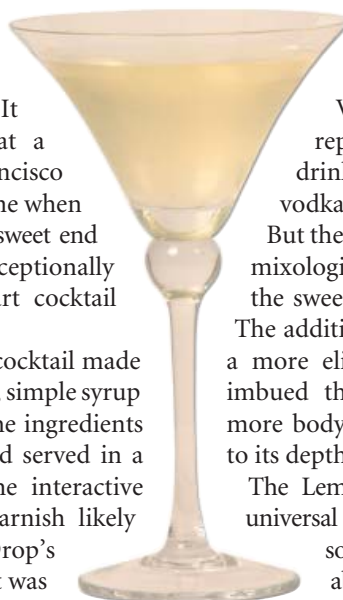
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SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

Lemon Drops Surging in Popularity

A sterling example of cocktail greatness from the 20th century is the *Lemon Drop*. It purportedly originated at a Henry Africa's in San Francisco in the early 1990s. At a time when drinks leaned toward the sweet end of the spectrum, this exceptionally light and refreshingly tart cocktail bucked the trend.

The Lemon Drop is a cocktail made with citrus-infused vodka, simple syrup and fresh lemon juice. The ingredients are shaken vigorously and served in a chilled cocktail glass. The interactive nature of the original garnish likely fueled the Lemon Drop's tremendous popularity. It was a sugared rim and the ritual was after each sip to take a lick of sugar and suck on the lemon. Slowly that gave way to the drink being presented with a sugared rim.



In its earliest incarnation, the Lemon Drop was little more than a well-presented Vodka Sour. To this day many reputable drink guides still list the drink's ingredients as citrus-infused vodka, lemon juice and simple syrup.

But the cocktail's big break came when mixologists began using Cointreau as the sweetener, instead of simple syrup. The addition catapulted the cocktail into a more elite status. The classic liqueur imbued the drink with better balance, more body and contributed considerably to its depth of character.

The Lemon Drop's appeal is nearly as universal as that of lemonade. There's something especially tantalizing about a cocktail that can deftly deliver so much lip-smacking, mouth-puckering flavor and do it with class. It's a cocktail with great creative potential as well. Here are some of the best kept secrets behind America's greatest Lemon Drops.

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PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

Starbucks Coffee Liqueurs

It's hard to imagine a better conceived and more welcomed product than *Starbucks Coffee Liqueur*. Considering that there will soon be a Starbucks on every street corner in the U. S., it's safe to presume that Americans have an insatiable hankering for Starbucks' coffee. Now that signature flavor is available in a delectable coffee liqueur. The question remains though, what took so long?

Super premium Starbucks Coffee Liqueur is an impressive product that ranks with the best in its class. It is made with a light, sugar-based spirit that is infused with the company's famed blend of high grade, Arabica coffee beans. The 40 proof liqueur has the rich, inviting look of brewed espresso, a satiny, lightweight body and an alluring bouquet of fresh ground coffee. It rolls over the palate without a trace of sweetness, another attribute that distinguishes it from the competition. The coffee-steeped finish is delicious, slightly sharp and remarkably long lasting. The

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How to Get Bartenders Where They Need to Be

Where do you stand on the debate? Some contend that the best results are obtained by educating bartenders, not training them, that the days of training people stops at the potty. They suggest that what bartenders need is a steady diet of education. Others argue that while some aspects of the job require continuing education, technical proficiency is a strict matter of training and guidance.

Then there's the third possibility, that being they're all wrong. The practical reality is that bartenders require training, education and a healthy dose of something called applied learning, or savvy.

It's true that training is an essential component of maintaining excellence and continuity in an organization. For instance, major league baseball doesn't conduct spring education. At the onset, bartenders need training on specific policies and procedures, pricing and mixology fundamentals. Familiarization with all aspects of the operation is important. You can't hold people accountable if you haven't fully detailed the scope of their responsibilities.

Training a professional staff needs to go further than that though. All frontline employees should be thoroughly trained on precisely what to do in the event of medical emergencies, acts of violence, fire and armed robbery. The heightened stress and critical nature of these potential occurrences requires training. Anticipating situations before they occur and devising a strategy for handling them often makes a huge difference in averting tragedy. At the police academy, cadets are taught that in a crisis situation, a person can do one of two things — panic or think. The police are trained to think, so should your employees.

Education involves an entirely different subset of learnings, typically involving products and mixology. For example, you don't train professionals about wine, you educate them. The same holds true for spirits, beers, bottled waters, Daiquiris, entrees and appetizers. The educational process, in this context, melds intellect with sensory perceptions. The ultimate goal being a

heightened appreciation for the products, which should translate to enhanced interaction with the guests.

Training and education are not enough, however. In fact it shortchanges your employees and business alike. What's fundamentally crucial is not the degree of training, or level of education; it's the savvy application of those things that matters.

Consider drink making. Learning how to make cocktails involves training in proper technique. Repeat the process enough and it will be ingrained as muscle memory. For bartenders to make the grade as mixologists, however, they need more than training, they need to be educated in the classic cocktails — what they are and why their balance of flavors has garnered them legendary status.

Yet this level of understanding alone won't catapult a bartender into being a franchise player. Exceeding guest expectations entails making each cocktail like it genuinely matters, because it does. It involves a feel for when to suggest premium

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“ONE MORE THING. . .” by Robert Plotkin

Don't “No Problem” Me

At the risk of sounding like a surly Acurmudgeon, I hereby declare war on the phrase “No Problem.” It has no place on-premise. Last night, our server refilled my coffee and when I said thanks, she replied “no problem,” pirouetted and left.

What is this fascination with this horrid phrase? What's the problem, you ask? These two seemingly innocuous words are representative of the pervasive decline in gracious hospitality. I can hear you now shaking your head. Well, perhaps I am losing it, but not on this point.

The field-tested, time-proven response to a guest who expresses thanks for a hospitable act is a smile, a nod and a “you're welcome.” Wait, wait, before you tune me out, consider the inherent differences between “no

problem” and “you're welcome” on the perceived quality of your establishment's level of service.

“These two seemingly innocuous words are representative of the pervasive decline in gracious hospitality.”

First, a “you're welcome” conveys that the individual was pleased to be of service. Addressing the wants and needs of guests is ultimately what the entire hospitality industry is built on. Ah, but what message does the all-too-popular phrase “no problem” convey to guests? The clear inference is that the no effort was required and “It's a good thing for you buddy, because had it been a problem for me, you may not have gotten that coffee refill.”

It's a flip, jocular response that goes contrary to hospitable service. It's street lingo that should be left at the service entrance.

To my way of thinking, I want guests to feel indulged and treated as if their patronage is genuinely appreciated. “You're welcome” is a gracious response, while “no problem” is like wagging one's finger and warning guests to shape up.

You've all been forewarned. The next bartender or server who says “no problem” to me will get an ice pick in their temple (yeah, not really). The only time you want to hear the words “no problem” is from your physician in response to the question, “How's my heart?” —RP ♦

Are You Getting Ripped Off Blind?

To the uninitiated, the term “shrinkage” may sound harmless, but just the thought of it is enough to make seasoned beverage managers wince and bar owners shudder. Shrinkage — or the liquor that is lost due to waste, spillage and theft — can chew up 20 - 30 percent of the bottom line. Bevinco auditors have determined that the average shrinkage is actually 23% on liquor and draft beer, about 10% on wine and 2% on bottled beer. With over 100 franchises throughout North America to draw from, the company has found consistently these figures to be reliable.

Eliminating shrinkage can mean the difference between financial success and failure. Theft alone is an insidious source of losses. Opportunities are rife for theft behind a bar. Bartenders are often working without direct supervision. They steal from the bar and its customers because it's easily accomplished, hard to detect, and extremely difficult to prevent on an ongoing basis. The temptations posed by constantly handling large sums of cash and dealing with a liquid inventory can often prove overwhelming. At some point, most bartenders contemplate stealing cash, giving out free drinks, or any one of a multitude of transgressions.

Effectively limiting internal theft behind the majority of bars is no easy task and eliminating it altogether is unrealistic. But

it's essential to formulate and implement an operational strategy for containing the problem.

To that end, here are practical recommendations on how to reduce your vulnerability to theft.

⇒ Bartenders Prohibited from Checking-Out Their Cash at the End of a Shift

— In many operations, bartenders are required to reconcile their cash drawers. This entails using the cash in the drawer to compile the bar's opening bank for the following shift, and to itemize the remaining cash proceeds onto a deposit slip. If the bartenders are stealing, the checkout process provides them with an ideal opportunity to safely remove stolen funds secretly deposited into the register's cash drawer during the course of their shift. Taking this responsibility away from the employees, bartenders will be forced to either pull the money out of the cash drawer during the shift or opt not to use the till as a place for their stolen funds.

⇒ Create Tip Jar Procedures

— The bartenders' tip jar should be placed well away from the operation's cash register or POS. If the tip jar is located right next to the register, it is far too easy for bartenders to divert stolen funds away from the register and into the tip jar. In addition, bartenders should be prohibited from

making change out of their tip jar or taking currency from the tip jar and exchanging it for larger denominations out of the cash drawer. If the bartenders are stealing from the business and using the cash drawer for the stolen funds, they can easily retrieve the money from the register under the pretense of making change.

⇒ Don't Allow Bartenders to Conduct Physical Audits

— The process of auditing the bar's physical inventory is solely a management function. Bartenders who are stealing can use their participation in the physical inventory process to alter the recorded data such that it offsets previous theft. This can be accomplished by overstating the amount of liquor inventory on hand at the end of the month. Overstating the amount of liquor on-hand will essentially have the same effect as if the theft never occurred.

⇒ Create a Perpetual Inventory System

— The perpetual inventory system tracks the changes in the liquor rooms inventory. You can monitor against internal theft by comparing the last entry on a product's perpetual inventory sheet with the actual number of bottles on-hand in the liquor room. The more inventory you store in the liquor room, the more reasons you have to implement a perpetual system. ♦

PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

overall result is a sensational recreation of the Starbucks's experience.

In a nation fueled by coffee, exploring your drink making options when it comes to coffee-infused products makes good sense.

Starbucks' light body and dry, authentic flavor is perfectly suited for mixology. For example, Starbucks exquisite balance makes it the definitive choice for making a Coffee Martini. It yields cocktails that are noticeably less sweet, which is perfectly in step with contemporary trends.

Who wouldn't crave flavor-laced cream infused with a dram of alcohol? Those cravings are bound to thump off the charts once you taste *Starbucks Cream Liqueur*. Strap yourself in because this is great stuff.

Super-premium Starbucks Cream Liqueur is made with dairy fresh cream, sugar-based spirits and flavored with the company's famed blend of high grade, Arabica coffee beans. It's bottled at 30 proof and packaged in a replica art deco cocktail shaker.

Sure, most cream liqueurs will taste good when chilled, but a truly world-class brand will taste delicious even when sipped neat. Such is the case with delectable Starbucks Cream Liqueur. The

recent arrival has the look of cafe au lait and a discernible brewed coffee aroma. The liqueur has a supple, medium weight body that coats the palate with chocolate and toffee flavors. The finish is where it really shines. As the liqueur slowly ebbs away the slightly dry, coffee flavors become prominent.

Change is a good thing, especially when it involves an ingredient so popular in mixology as cream liqueurs. Not only will Starbucks Cream Liqueur contribute a singularly marvelous coffee dimension to your cocktails, it will do so without adding cloying sweetness. What more can one ask?—RP ♦



Breaking the Cycle: Reducing Glassware Costs

If the sound of breaking glasses affects you like fingernails on a chalkboard, then take steps to protect your investment. Outfitting your bar with glassware can cost you a tremendous amount of money over the course of a typical year. Glassware is fragile, expensive, and capable of chewing up the bottom line.

Reducing glassware costs is a sizable task but the pay-off is considerable. The strategy begins during the initial selection process. How many types of glasses will you need to adequately meet the dynamics of your operation? A detailed shopping list is essential.

The glasses you select must be durable enough to withstand the rigors of commercial use. Obtain a sample of each glass you intend to purchase and roll up your sleeves. Wash them vigorously in the bar's three-sinks. Put them through the same paces they will be subjected to during Friday Happy Hour.

Of the factors affecting the durability of glass, the most significant is heat-tempering, a process whereby molten

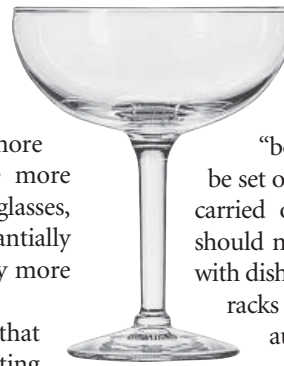
glass is rapidly cooled making it more durable and shock resistant. While more expensive than other types of glasses, heat-tempered glassware has a substantially longer life, and is therefore ultimately more cost-effective.

Finally, elicit reasonable assurances that the line of glassware that you're investing in will be available from the manufacturer for the foreseeable future. Discontinuation of your primary line of glassware is definitely deep-pocket news.

Illegal Use of the Hands

While losses through breakage are inevitable, there are substantive measures that will greatly increase your glassware's chances of survival. Glasses stocked behind the bar should be returned there for cleaning. Sending glasses to the kitchen for washing is tantamount to signing their death warrant. Without direct supervision, breakage in the dish room is astronomical.

Instruct your staff to never carry an excessive number of glasses at once, either stacked in their hand, pyramided or in a



“bouquet.” Limits should also be set on how many glasses can be carried on a service tray. Glasses should never be placed in bus tubs with dishes and flatware. Always use racks when washing glasses in an automatic washer.

Another leading cause of breakage is thermal shock. It occurs when glass is subjected to a sudden change in temperature. Bartenders should pre-heat glasses with warm water before pouring in hot coffee or tea. Don't dump the ice out of a glass and then plunge it into hot water. Likewise, let glasses cool down right out of the glasswasher before returning them to use.

Despite the obvious temptations, don't stack glasses on top of one another. The result is often two broken glasses. Rotating glassware on a regular basis will lessen the chances of glasses becoming dirty and sticking to the shelf matting. Hanging glass racks are notorious for causing breakage through frequent glass-to-glass contact or vibration shock caused by shimmy. ♦

THE BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

Offer to be the first designated driver and assign a different friend each time. Most of all, have fun with it. Here are a few ways that you can make the most of your night:

- ⇒ Snap digital pictures of your friends to use for future blackmail.
- ⇒ Dance the night away without feeling the room spin.
- ⇒ Get a great laugh as your friends get giddy.
- ⇒ Have the bartender whip up an alcohol-free daiquiri for you, or be seen drinking an ultra-premium bottle of water.
- ⇒ Enjoy a hangover-free morning the next day.
- ⇒ Best of all, congratulate yourself for being a great and responsible friend and look forward to the night when another one of your friends will be the designated driver.

Beverage operators can also help their guests do the right thing by expanding their alcohol-free program. Not only will this help them reach the ever-expanding segment of the population that is predisposed not to drink alcohol, but alcohol-free beverages are loaded with appeal and profitability. Here are a few suggestions on how to support designated driver programs:

- ⇒ Offer free admission to designated drivers. Give them a free glow bracelet at the door, which will signal servers that they are alcohol-free for the evening.
- ⇒ Have an alcohol-free cocktail menu, or offer 1-2 alcohol-free drinks on your current cocktail menu. Include Cosmopolitans, Martini's and other ultra-chic drinks.
- ⇒ Make designated drivers cool. Have the DJ give a shout-out to them a few times during the night.

⇒ Host a designated driver night.

⇒ Work with companies like Stirrings to create a signature alcohol-free drink. Give your drink a cool name, like the “Peruvian Hill Climbing Water Buffalo.”

⇒ Partner with a local cab company and offer reduced-rate rides to your patrons.

⇒ Best of all, be a hero in your community for being responsible and doing your part to ensure that the roads are safe at night.

So whether you're a party-goer, or party-giver, support designated driving. As Mike Ginley likes to say, “All's well that ends well”.

Paige Seager
Next Level Marketing

⇒**Spirit Options** — The Lemon Drop is a clean and uncomplicated cocktail, qualities that make it ideal for presenting top-shelf vodka brands, citrus-infused or otherwise. The better the vodka, the better the Lemon Drop.

For more than a decade, however, the nation's mixologists have refused to leave well enough alone. As it turns out, the cocktail adapts beautifully to a wide array of flavored vodkas.

An excellent example is the **Pineapple Drop**, a signature at Seattle's ultra-swank Ibiza Dinner Club. The cocktail is made with Van Gogh Pineapple Vodka, Cointreau and fresh lemon juice. At the Mosaic Restaurant in Scottsdale, the drink to be seen with is **Mia's Drop**, an expertly conceived concoction featuring Charbay Lemon Vodka, Charbay Raspberry Vodka, lemon juice and muddled raspberries.

The Lemon Drop is also marvelous when

prepared with light rum, flavored rum or blanco tequila. An illustration of its flexibility is the **Lemon Balm Drop**, a specialty cocktail of the Jade Bar at luxurious Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain. The drink is made with Bombay Sapphire Gin, lemon balm leaves (an herb related to mint with a lemon fragrance), triple sec and sweetened fresh lemon juice.

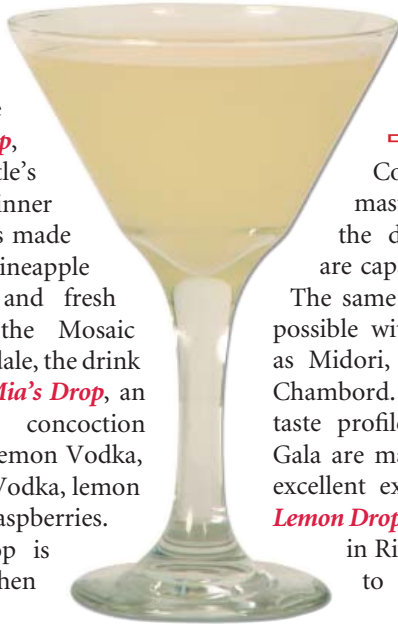
⇒**Liqueur Drops** — Adding Cointreau to the Lemon Drop is a masterful stroke, one that elevated the drink into stardom. Liqueurs are capable of doing that to cocktails.

The same potential leap in evolution is possible with a handful of brands, such as Midori, ZEN, PAMA, limoncello, or Chambord. Staying within the orange taste profile, Grand Marnier and Gran Gala are marvelous in Lemon Drops. An excellent example is the **Herbert Hoover Lemon Drop**, a specialty of the Mission Inn in Riverside, California. In addition to Grand Marnier, the drink

contains Absolut Citron, a splash of lemon-lime soda and lemonade. The touch of effervescence and the cognac in the Grand Marnier are welcome additions.

⇒**Base Modifiers** — Making a fresh lemon sour mix (a.k.a. sweet 'n' sour, sweetened lemon juice) from scratch is uncomplicated and often yields the finest results. In a classically uncomplicated cocktail like the Lemon Drop, using the freshest ingredients possible makes a perceptible difference.

Another creative course of action is modifying the cocktail's base mix. An example would be the **Prickly Pear Drop**, a specialty cocktail at Scottsdale's Mosaic Restaurant. It's made with Stoli Strasberi Vodka, Cointreau and three teaspoons of prickly pear puree. The drink is shaken and served in a glass rimmed with pink colored sugar. ♦



SAFEGUARDING YOUR PROFITS *continued from page 2*

spirits and to whom. Knowing how a certain brand of spirit tastes is one thing, understanding how it will alter the delicate balance of a cocktail is another. These applied learnings fall outside the purview of training and education both; it exists within that murky, grey area of bar savvy.

Are these things best gained through experience? Perhaps. But experience is a hit or miss proposition. Are operators expected to suffer their bartenders' lack of savvy until their experience fills in the gaps? Consider the ramifications of their deficiencies on revenue, other staff, guest satisfaction and legal compliance. The cost of waiting for bartenders to gain the necessary competency may be cost prohibitive.

Once you begin to look at training and education as mere foundations that need to be further developed into savvy, illustrations abound. Take for example serving food at the bar. How to properly present appetizers and entrees is a training issue, while learning about the dishes is a matter of education, another melding of intellect and sensory perceptions. But what items to recommend, when and to whom is all about savvy.

Wait, there's more. Situations will likely arise that inconveniently fall through the gap between training and education. What if two people sit down and order three drinks, the third cocktail ostensibly for a friend in the restroom or parking the car, should the bartender prepare and serve all three drinks? It is not an uncommon ploy. The absent person is likely a minor or already intoxicated. What if your bartender had never encountered the situation and proceeded to serve the alcohol?

This begs the obvious question, how do you instill savvy in your bartenders? This is one instance where managers, corporate trainers and owners aren't up to the task. The time-tested answer is mentoring, pairing novice bartenders with seasoned pros. Savvy is gained by emulating the actions and professionalism of another, in this case, a well-trained and well-educated bartender who knows how to keep the guests satisfied while watching out for the best interests of the house.

Bartenders work in a highly charged environment. Affording them every opportunity to excel is in everyone's best

interest. Mentoring may well be the best strategy to ensure they do. ♦

Beverage Authority

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Lemon Drops

Lemon Drops make up some of the essential genetic building codes of contemporary American mixology. Light, flavorful and refreshing, the cocktail has become a creative workhorse, the recipe that launched 1000 libations. Here are some of the notable examples.

Lemon Drop

Cocktail glass, chilled
Rim glass with sugar
Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass
1 1/2 oz. Citrus-infused Vodka
1/2 oz. Cointreau
1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice
Shake and strain
Garnish with sugar coated
Lemon wedge

Pineapple Drop

Specialty of Ibiza
Created by Ibiza staff
Cocktail glass, chilled
Rim glass with sugar
Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass
1 1/2 oz. Van Gogh Pineapple Vodka
1/2 oz. Cointreau
1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice
Shake and strain
Garnish with sugar coated
Lemon wedge

Herbert Hoover Lemon Drop

Specialty of Mission Inn
Created by Alan Lee
Cocktail glass, chilled
Rim glass with sugar
Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass
1 1/4 oz. Absolut Citron
3/4 oz. Grand Marnier
1/2 oz. lemon-lime soda
2 oz. lemonade
Shake and strain
Garnish with lemon wedge

Lemon Balm Drop

Specialty of Jade Bar
Created by Daniella Gonzalez
Cocktail glass, chilled
Rim glass with sugar
Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass
5 Lemon Balm Leaves
2 oz. Bombay Sapphire Gin
1/2 oz. triple sec
1/2 oz. margarita mix
Shake and strain
Garnish with lemon wheel

Mia's Drop

Specialty of Mosaic Restaurant
Created by Stephanie Kozicki
Cocktail glass, chilled
Rim glass with colored sugar
Pour ingredients into empty mixing glass
4 raspberries
1/2 oz. sweet & sour (made in house)
Muddle contents
Add ice
1 1/2 oz. Charbay Meyer Lemon Vodka
1/2 oz. Charbay Red Raspberry Vodka
Splash fresh lemon juice
Shake and strain
Garnish with lemon wheel

Prickly Pear Drop

Specialty of Mosaic Restaurant
Created by Stephanie Kozicki
Cocktail glass, chilled
Rim glass with pink colored sugar
Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass
2 oz. Stoli Strasberi Vodka
1 oz. Cointreau
3 tsp prickly pear puree
Shake and strain
Garnish with lemon twist



Testing Your Product I.Q.

Questions

1. What was the first London Dry Gin?
2. Made in Perth, Scotland since the 1860s, this blend has the distinction of being the first bottled Scotch whisky.
3. What brand is acknowledged as the first 100% blue agave tequila imported into the U.S.?
4. What ingredient in sambuca, ouzo and Pernod turns these liqueurs cloudy when poured over ice or mixed with water?
5. What whisky was introduced in 1939 to commemorate the unprecedented visit of King George and Queen Elizabeth to Canada?
6. What is the principle character difference between lagers and ales?
7. What liqueur is actually a bottled gin sling cocktail, a drink originated at a London restaurant in the late 1800s?
8. What popular Scandinavian spirit is twice-distilled from either grain or potatoes and has the flavor of caraway?
9. This German liqueur is made from an infusion of 56 herbs, roots, fruit and gentian.
10. This classic French liqueur was originally labeled "Triple Sec White Curaçao" and is now known by the name of its creator.
11. This aromatic liqueur is made in Nassau, Bahamas, from herbs, spices, vanilla and light rum.
12. Established in 1804, this Jamaican firm produces one of the most famous brands of Demerara rum.

1. Booth's has been distilling House of Lords Gin since 1740.
2. Dewars White Label Scotch Whisky
3. Herradura Tequila was first imported into the US in the 1950s by Bing Crosby and Phil Harris.
4. Oil of anise
5. Crown Royal Canadian Whisky
6. The principle character difference between the two types of beers is that ales have a fruit-laced bouquet.
7. Pimm's Cup #1
8. Akavit (aquavit)
9. Jägermeister Liqueur
10. Cointreau Liqueur; created by Edouard Cointreau
11. Nassau Royale
12. Lemon Hart Demerara Rum

Smoothies Break into the Popular Mainstream

Some of us still subscribe to the theory that anything high in nutritional value must taste awful. Likewise, if something tastes bad, it must be just what the doctor ordered. It is, however, difficult to cling to this point of view after taking a long draw from a smoothie. Even its name sounds comforting.

In fact, smoothies could possibly be the best of all things. They're delicious and nutritious, which for many, is a completely alien concept. Nevertheless, smoothies are healthy, potable meals with the look, feel and taste of fruit milkshakes. In this time-conscious, nutrient-depleted day and age, smoothies are something of a panacea, a 21st century concoction perfectly in step with the times.

The essential first step in preparing a classic smoothie drink is to plug in the blender, after that let the creative juices flow. To give the process a shove in the right direction, think of smoothies as containing four basic elements, namely juice(s), fruits, modifiers and base mix.

⇒ **Juice** — If it's true that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, smoothies could seriously dent the medical profession. In addition to the likes of orange, apple, pineapple and cranberry, consider adding other less conventional juices such as grape, raspberry, peach nectar, apple cider, tangerine, kiwi, passion fruit nectar, strawberry nectar and mango juice.

⇒ **Fruits** —

In addition to adding flavor and nutrients to a smoothie, blending in fruit boosts the drink's fiber content and enhances its texture and consistency. Since these are cold, blended drinks, for the best consistency freeze fruit prior to use.



⇒ **Modifiers** —

Much of the fun begins with the addition of modifiers, those things that begin to give the creation its individuality. Modifiers come in

two basic categories. There are those ingredients intended to improve the quality of the recipient's life. Perhaps they're antioxidants, such



as vitamins A, E and beta-carotene, or fiber, such as wheat germ and oat bran, or sources of protein, such as bee pollen, brewers yeast and soy. Also falling into this health store variety of modifiers are flaxseed oil, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, lecithin, protein powders, wheat grass, echinacea, calcium, folic acid and vitamins B, C, D and K.

Then there are smoothie modifiers that just plain taste great. They may be intended to add flavor or provide a welcome touch of sweetness. Either way, these are ingredients

that are bound to satisfy the kid in all of us. This tasty category includes, but is not limited to chocolate or caramel sauce, coffee, agave nectar, espresso coffee, Reese's peanut butter cups, candy bars, walnuts, vanilla extract, cinnamon, nutmeg, grenadine, chai tea, coconut cream, coconut milk, peanut butter, raspberry or strawberry preserves, honey, malted milk powder, maple syrup, cookies, (dried) unsweetened coconut and brown sugar.

⇒ **Smoothie Base** — The final consideration is the foundation of the drink. Because of its low-fat nature, frozen yogurt is a popular choice as a smoothie base. It has a rich, creamy texture and comes in a slew of interesting flavors. Others may prefer to use soy milk or soy yogurt.

So rev up the blender and join one of the hottest, most delectable beverage trends in the country. ♦

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Creating Smoothie Classics

So what is a smoothie? Essentially, it is a blended drink made with fruit, non-fat frozen yogurt, sherbet and/or sorbet and ice. Some are even dairy-free. But there's no reason to stop there.

For example, mega-popular Jamba Juice, a national chain of smoothie purveyors, adds such highly beneficial things as vitamins, minerals, fiber, herbs, amino acids, soy protein and phytonutrients to their various blended concoctions. They have smoothies designed to do everything from provide a boost of energy or fight a cold, to bolster one's immunity or to help shed a few unwanted pounds. All this and they're sumptuous too.

Blue Aloha Smoothie

House specialty glass, chilled
Pour ingredients into blender
1/2 cup blueberries
6 oz. pineapple juice
3-4 scoops vanilla frozen yogurt
Blend ingredients with ice
Garnish with Pineapple wedge

Caribbean Dream Smoothie

House specialty glass, chilled
Pour ingredients into blender
1/2 cup mango, fresh or frozen
1/2 cup peaches, fresh or frozen
1-2 scoops orange sorbet
1-2 scoops lemon sorbet
Blend ingredients with ice
Garnish with Orange wheel

Strawberry Sunrise Smoothie

House specialty glass, chilled
Pour ingredients into blender
1 banana, peeled
1/2 cup strawberries, fresh or frozen
5 oz. apple juice
3-4 scoops vanilla frozen yogurt
Blend ingredients with ice
Garnish with Strawberry and Banana slice



Vita-Mix BarBoss Advance