

# BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

November 2007 ~ Volume 6, Issue 11

manage. serve. profit.

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## THE BIG PICTURE



### Maximizing Beverage Profitability

Driving traffic to a restaurant is an expensive and challenging proposition. In today's highly competitive marketplace, the rate of return an operator will recoup on that investment depends entirely on exceeding guest expectations, and fully realizing the profit potential each guest passing through the front door represents.

For most in this business, beverage plays a huge role in profitability. Industry wide beverage sales average around 25% of revenue, while at the same time account for over 50% of average gross profits. Attaining this level of profit contribution from your beverage program necessitates having a strategy. Of the various approaches frequently employed, none have proven more successful and easier to implement than sales initiatives aimed at getting guests to upgrade whatever they're drinking to a more premium version.

In a recent consumer research study we asked people who said that they drink beverage alcohol to list the types

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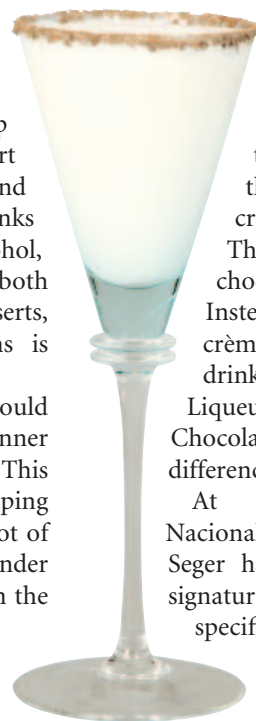
## SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

### Have Your Dessert and Drink it Too

Some of the finest and most satisfying desserts you'll ever wrap your lips around originate behind the bar. 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 makes 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. The Alexander is the reason many of us eat dinner in the first place.

But few things exist that cannot be improved upon. Such is the case with the Brandy Alexander. Consider



substituting the Kahlúa in a specialty Alexander with premium Patrón XO Cafe, or Starbucks Coffee Liqueur. Since the liqueurs don't taste the same, each will yield a creatively different drink. The same can be said for the chocolate liqueur you select. Instead of using ubiquitous crème de cacao, try making the drink with Godiva Chocolate Liqueur, or Van Gogh Dutch Chocolate Vodka instead. The difference will be significant.

At Chicago's ultra-popular Nacional 27 drinks guru Adam Seger has devised a magnificent signature cocktail geared specifically for the dessert crowd. Priced at \$55, the *Century Alexander* is a museum-grade specialty

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### Highland Park Single Malts

Consistently ranked among the Celite and upper crust of Scotch whiskies, *Highland Park Single Malts* are handcrafted in Kirkwall on the wind swept island of Orkney. The small, desolate island is situated off the northern coast of Scotland on the same latitude as Alaska, which makes Highland Park the northernmost whisky distillery in the world. Orkney lays completely exposed to the ravages of the North Sea and North Atlantic. For Highland Park, the

harsh conditions and unique terroir have proven crucial to its enduring success.

Highland Park has been distilling whisky the same way for over 200 years, employing techniques abandoned by others as too expensive and labor-intensive. For instance, they still hand turn the malt as it dries over a peat-fueled fire, a costly practice that greatly enhances the whisky's aromatics and smoky notes.

After distillation, the malts are matured primarily in American and Spanish oak barrels seasoned with Oloroso sherry. Orkney's narrow range in temperature

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# Bar Design Affects Profitability More Than You May Think

If you've ever worked behind a bar on a busy shift, then you already know that there isn't such a thing as a perfectly designed bar. Ill-devised layouts and poorly placed equipment can prove to be insurmountable obstacles leaving bartenders incapable of performing their duties behind the bar in an efficient manner.

"I think one explanation for poorly designed bars is that operators are often forced to make compromises between concept and function," suggests Steve Goumas, owner of the Rula Bula Irish Pub in Tempe, Arizona. "While it's often unavoidable, it typically results in a great looking bar that nightly operates in chaos. The design changes might work on paper, but the ramifications they have on bartender productivity may end up costing lost sales for the life of the business."



Poor bar design frequently results in delayed service, which negatively affects sales, customer satisfaction and may also result in increased labor costs if one bartender is not able to work the bar alone. Conversely, erring too heavily on the side of function to the detriment of concept is equally harmful and may undermine the viability of the business.

Designing a bar involves determining the specific size and shape of the physical bar structure and the precise layout of the equipment. The optimum design allows bartenders to work at peak efficiency, servers to receive their drink orders quickly, and most importantly, for patrons to enjoy the bar's products and ambiance. All of these must work in synergy if the operation is to perform at its highest level of profitability.

There are a number of specific factors that affect the physical shape of the bar, not the least of which is the area in which the bar is to be situated. Popular shapes include a linear bar, L-shaped, horseshoe and oval or island bar, and each has its merits. A linear design may work great for a wine bar in Soho, but be a disaster for a crowded bar on Sixth Street in Austin. The shape of the bar should be determined by the way that the patrons will use it.

The linear bar is undoubtedly the easiest shape for bartenders to work efficiently. It allows for unobstructed vision of the patrons seated at the bar and often can be worked by only one bartender in non-peak hours of business. The design is also the easiest of the various shapes in which to position equipment, outfit with workstations and properly merchandise inventory. It typically requires less square footage to accomplish the same volume of business and to accommodate the same number of bar stools as other shaped bars.

"Linear bars are unfortunately the least interesting and appealing shape from a design standpoint," suggests Rock

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**"ONE MORE THING. . ." by Robert Plotkin**

## Does Gin Still Have a Pulse?

Reports of gin's imminent demise have been exaggerated. At establishments where people still appreciate civility and style, gin is thriving. My optimism over gin's long-term viability and strength in the marketplace is based solely on anecdotal evidence, largely because the depletion statistics for the last several years paint an entirely different picture.

With deference to vodka's market dominance, drinking patterns in this country will inevitably shift. Vodka accounts for 27% of all distilled spirits sold in the United States and the category continues to grow at about 6% per year. But all empires eventually return to Earth. So will the vodka franchise.

The question being bandied about is this, which light spirit will be the

largest beneficiary of ex-vodka aficionados searching for a different, light spirit experience. Potential converts are being created almost nightly, as lapsed vodka drinkers grow disenchanted with the spirit's austere, aloof personality. The marketing blitzes and conflicting quality

### Is it such a stretch to believe that gin's return to the limelight is just around the corner?

claims associated the torrential release of new vodka brands alone is a major turnoff for consumers and retailers alike. Signs of the exodus are not imagined.

Certainly the romantic appeal of rum and the outlaw image of tequila are going to attract the most new converts. The categories are well positioned for growth with high-quality products at

every plausible price point, certainly enough to keep consumers on the path of discovery for quite some time.

Is it such a stretch to believe that gin's return to the limelight is just around the corner? The exact composition of each brand's proprietary recipe of aromatics and botanicals ensures that no two premium gins taste the same. Each is a singular commodity representing a certain house style. Gins also constitute a rarefied lot, with the fewest number of premium brands of all major spirits. For label-battered vodka drinkers, fewer choices might well be a welcome break. Lastly, gin is imminently mixable and one of the founding fathers of the cocktail culture.

By the way, did I mention that we Americans swoon over British accents? Well, we do. —RP ♦

# New Classy Cocktails Crafted with Port

The secret to the Manhattan's enduring popularity can be largely attributed to the natural affinity between spirits and fortified wines. These aperitifs are imbued with tremendous flavors and lavishly textured bodies, making them incomparable ingredients in cocktails. The annals of mixology are replete with classic drink recipes that marry fortified wines and spirits, and today's practitioners are continuing to explore and redefine the boundaries of this magical pairing.

The explanation for their compatibility lies in how fortified wines are crafted. Back in the days of sailing ships, sending wines across the oceans required vintners to add spirits to their wines to enable them to withstand the rigors of long sea voyages. The spirit, typically a grape distillate, raised the wine's alcohol level to 13% to upwards of 20%. Out of necessity was born an entirely new and delightful genus of potables, namely fortified wines.

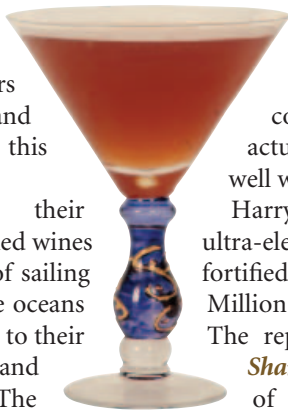
Among the most enduring of these wines is Port, which are made primarily from red wine grapes cultivated in the Upper Duoro Valley district of northern Portugal. Most are shipped from the city of Oporto, located at the mouth of the Duoro River. Ruby Ports are crafted from a blend of young wines from different vintages, while Tawny Port is a blend

of older wines, pale in color with a distinctive amber edge.

"I think using Port in cocktails is a resurgent "lost art," says Jacques Bezuidenhout, bar manager at Harry Denton's Starlight Room in San Francisco. "I like incorporating Ports into our cocktails as they add tremendous body, depth of flavor and complexity to the drinks. Many of the popular cocktails made with Port are actually classic recipes that have well withstood the test of time."

Harry Denton's features several ultra-elegant specialties laced with fortified wines that they've dubbed the Million Dollar Cocktail Collection. The repertoire includes the *Angels' Share*, a decadent combination of Louis XIII de Rémy Martin Cognac, Charbay Nostalgie Black Walnut Liqueur, Porto Rocha 20-year old Port and a splash of Chartreuse VEP.

A signature at the Rickshaw Far East Bistro and Bambú Lounge in Dallas is the *Port of Comfort*. The staff collectively devised the popular recipe using 2 oz. of Fairbanks Tawny Port, a jigger of Stoli Vanil Vodka, a 1/2 oz. each of Disaronno Amaretto and Southern Comfort and some sweetened lime juice. The concoction is shaken vigorously and served in a chilled cocktail glass. While at Seattle's Ibiza Dinner Club, Andria



Herron recommends a house specialty called the *Mediterranean Sparkler*, a drink that combines an ounce of Domaine Charbay Napa Valley White Port poured in a champagne glass and topped off with chilled Prosecco.

At famed 33 Restaurant in Boston, owner Greg Den Herder promotes several cocktails made with Port. The cast includes the *Pomport Cosmo*, which features 1 oz. Ruby Port, Cointreau, lime juice and a splash of pomegranate juice. Also popular at 33 Restaurant is the *Cherry Bomb*, a cocktail made with 10-year old tawny Port, Effen Black Cherry Vodka and Godiva Dark Chocolate Liqueur. "The tawny Port already has a cherry, vanilla and chocolate palate, which ties in all of the flavors quite well."

Marco Recio is the resident master mixologist at Courtright's Restaurant in Willow Springs, Illinois. With decades of experience, Recio often uses fortified wines when creating his bevy of sought after drinks.

Cocktail maestro Francesco LaFranconi created the *Le Colonial*, a drink made with Plymouth Gin, Cockburn's Fine Ruby Port, Cherry Heering, bitters, lime and pineapple juice. Francesco finishes the sumptuous drink off with fresh mint and a sprinkle of nutmeg.

Concocting drinks with Port is a growing trend a century in the making. ♦

## PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

permits the whisky in the warehouses to age slowly and gently. Each batch of whisky is comprised of select malts matured in different types of oak. The blend is transferred back into oak barrels to allow the individual whiskies to become fully integrated.



The highly esteemed *Highland Park 12-Year Old Single Malt* is the distillery's core expression. The malt is generously endowed with aromatics, a wafting collection of sea spray, floral and vanilla aromas with smoky notes. Its lush, medium-weight body delivers a dry palate brimming with malty,

peaty flavors. The finish is thoroughly enjoyable.

*Highland Park 15-Year Old Single Malt* is an elegant and highly accessible whisky. The award winning malt has a subtle floral nose, a palate imbued with dry, floral and lightly peated flavors, and a long, graceful finish.

Critically acclaimed *Highland Park 18-Year Old Single Malt* is a masterpiece. The malt is richly aromatic with prominent notes of oak, spice and honey. Its palate is a lavish affair of almonds, heather honey and wisps of peaty smoke. The lingering finish is loaded with flavor.

The two oldest and most luxurious expressions of Highland Park are bottled at 96.2 proof to preserve the natural character of the whisky. The *25-Year Old Highland Park* is a magnificent single malt

with toasted oak, sherry and cocoa aromas and a brilliant palate of toffee, honey, sherry and chocolate. The finish is a sublime pleasure.

The flagship bottling, *Highland Park 30-Year Old Single Malt*, is a glorious achievement, one graced with a semisweet nose of oak, chocolate and orange zest, the flavors of sea spray, fudge, toffee and nuts, and a dream-like finish.



The fact that these majestic whiskies hail from such a small, desolate island only serves to fuel the Highland Park mystique. Enjoy! —RP ♦

# Tapping the Lighter Side of Beer

Evidence exists that proves man knew how to brew a fairly sophisticated beer 3800 years ago in Mesopotamia, well before the invention of the Barcalounger. In fact, many of the same brewing techniques mastered by the Sumerians of the Bronze Age are still being used today by many of this country's brew masters.

Archie Bunker maintained that you don't buy beer, you just rent it for awhile. Well a lot of Americans must be renting these days. Beer remains the favorite alcoholic beverage of men and the second most frequent request of women. Yet despite its enormous popularity, there is a lot about beer you might not know.

For example, when you pop the cap off a 12 ounce bottle of brew, the sudden loss of pressure causes the bottleneck temperature to plunge for a fraction of a second from 41°F to an incredible -31°F. The nearly instantaneous drop in temperature causes water vapor inside the neck to condense and form a white vapor cloud — a beer cloud inside what essentially becomes a rudimentary cloud chamber.

Anyone who's chugged a beer only to have it gush out his or her nostrils knows that beer contains carbon dioxide, a natural by-product of the fermentation process. When sealed, the internal pressure within a bottle of beer — approximately 30 to 45 pounds of pressure p.s.i. — is so high that the carbon dioxide within the brew cannot



expand and form bubbles, which explains why no bubbles are visible in a capped bottle. Once opened, the compressed gas in the beer is allowed to expand and rise.

Greg Bohren, renowned Penn State physicist and beer aficionado, determined that the streams of bubbles actually start as

loose clusters of carbon dioxide molecules that require microscopic cracks or pits in the glass to cling to and accumulate into individual bubbles. As they begin to rise from these departure points, called nucleation sites, the bubbles are joined by other CO<sub>2</sub> molecules, expand in size and accelerate toward the surface in a steady stream where they will form the head.

In an article in Discover Magazine, Bohren explains why the time-worn habit of adding salt to beer will recreate the head, and contrary to popular belief, the reason has absolutely nothing to do with the chemical composition of sodium chloride. The same phenomenon can be achieved by sprinkling any granular substance into beer like pepper, sand or dust. The crystalline structure of the granules form countless nucleation sites for CO<sub>2</sub> molecules to cluster and create torrents of bubbles that subsequently collect on the surface as a foamy head.

However, should you feel a need to add a granular substance to your beer, most experts agree that salt is preferable to pepper, sand or dust. ♦

## THE BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

of beverages they order most frequently in full-service bars and restaurants. Just under 30% of the consumers we surveyed reported that they still order tap water. Not only is tap water a non-revenue producing drink, it does little to nothing to enhance the guest experience. It has a negative impact on beverage profitability because you have to pay your staff to serve the water, clean the glasses and offer free refills.

Typically the first step in driving beverage trade-up is to entice guests to switch from tap water into ordering revenue-generating products, such as iced tea and soft drinks. It's a good start, however, because refills are usually free, there's still room for improvement.

The next step up the ladder from soft drinks is moving guests to order specialty alcohol-free beverages. Products such as bottled waters, flavored spritzers and alcohol-free drinks usually fetch prices between \$4 to \$5, or more, and invariably really ramp up beverage profits. First, these products command higher profit margins because they're perceived as special or unique. Secondly, they're single serve drinks with no free refills.

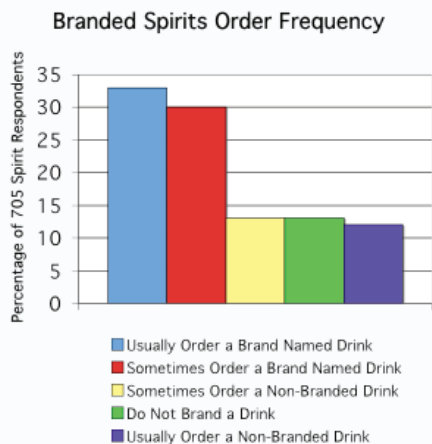
Creating sensationally delicious alcohol-free drinks is an uncomplicated proposition, one that often entails combining iced teas, juices and soft drinks with one or two ingredients like flavored syrups and a garnish. Our research shows

that consumers are positively influenced by menu items that they perceive to be unique and difficult to make at home.

You can even drive trade-up within the alcohol-free specialty drink segment. Keeping in mind that consumers go out for drinks that they perceive to be special and difficult to make at home, the frozen alcohol-free specialty drink is a great up-sell opportunity. Blended alcohol-free specialty drinks have a high-perceived value and can be sold for at least \$1.00 more than their unblended counterparts.

The strategy culminates with promoting captivating signature drinks that your guests can't get anywhere else. Consumers are willing to pay \$8, \$10 and more for signature cocktails made with premium spirit brands. Even better, the specialties will keep guests coming back another night because they can't get them anywhere else.

Mike Ginley  
Next Level Marketing



made with Blandy's 1935 Verdelho Madeira, Camus XO Cognac, Clément Créole Shrub Liqueur and homemade tres leches ice cream.

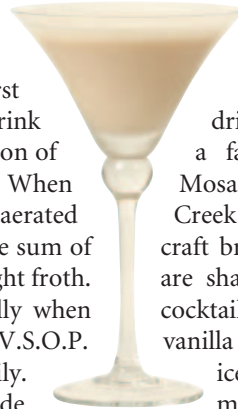
The Alexander is also irresistible served with an additional splash of Chambord, Frangelico, or Disaronno Amaretto. You could make a living serving nothing but Brandy Alexanders and all of its creative variations.

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

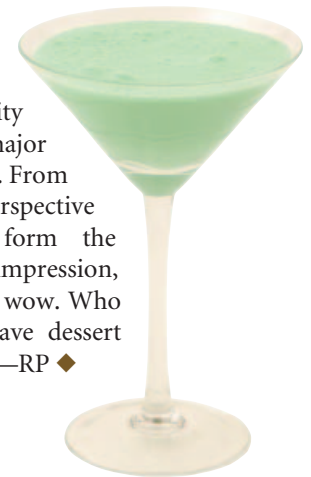
Joining the Alexander in stature is the **Stinger Cocktail**, the postprandial darling of the first half of the 20th century. The drink is little more than the combination of brandy and crème de menthe. When vigorously shaken with ice the aerated cocktail becomes lighter than the sum of its parts, literally tingling with light froth. It's a marvelous drink, especially when made with an elegant brandy. A V.S.O.P. cognac performs the role handily. Likewise, the better the crème de menthe, the better the Stinger.



Also tempting for dessert is a **Frappé**, which is not a specific drink, rather a style of service. Frappés are items poured over mounded shaved or crushed ice and served in Champagne saucers with short straws. In some cases, it's just a liqueur or cordial served over ice, such as green crème de menthe, other times it's a cocktail devised specifically as a frappé. Classic examples include **Mulatta Frappé**, the combination of Bacardi Gold Rum, dark crème de cacao and lime juice, **Coffee Marnier Frappé**, which features equal parts of Kahlúa and

Grand Marnier, and the **Mocha Frappé**, a drink made with Kahlúa, white crème de menthe, white crème de cacao and Cointreau.

Another innovative dessert drink is the **Float up the Creek**, a fanciful specialty at Scottsdale's Mosaic Restaurant. It's a blend of Knob Creek Bourbon, Kahlúa and a dose of craft brewed root beer. The ingredients are shaken and strained into a chilled cocktail glass containing a large scoop of vanilla ice cream. The ingredients and ice cream swirl together creating a memorable effect.



After dinner drinks have enjoyed enduring popularity and remain a major focus of mixology. From a hospitality perspective these cocktails form the evening's final impression, the last chance to wow. Who said you can't have dessert and drink it too? —RP ♦

**SAFEGUARDING YOUR PROFITS** *continued from page 2*

Bottom's beverage guru Tracy Finklang. "Working an exceptionally long bar, where to get from one end to the other requires marathon type-endurance, poses its own unique challenge."

The L-shaped bar is an often used shape because it is relatively easy to incorporate in most floor plans and to outfit with equipment and work stations. It can also be worked effectively by only one bartender. The L-shape does at times obstruct the bartender's line of vision. A bartender standing at one end of the bar cannot see patrons seated at the other end, which may lead to delayed service.

Horseshoe and oval bars also require constant movement on the bartender's part to ensure that all the patrons seated at the bar receive proper service. Horseshoe and oval bars require more bartenders to work during hours of peak business to provide the same level of service.

Bartending at a high-volume bar is a highly choreographed art; one that fully depends on properly designed workstations. Nearly everything a bartender needs to fill any drink order

should be positioned within a six-foot radius of the station, which realistically translates to a step and a reach. The ice bin is the focal point of the bartender's workstation. The balance of the equipment and supplies should be positioned around the station to create an effective use of space so that drink orders can be made with a minimum of wasted motion. Wasted motion equates to lost sales.

Goumas thinks that outfitting a facility with a narrow bar top is a costly mistake operators often make. "Considering how popular eating at the bar has become, many operators haven't factored into their bar tops the width necessary for adequately serving food. Bar tops less than 24 inches can't accommodate all that's required to present menu items properly. That's an example of how poor design can needlessly constrict revenue."

He also recommends making room behind the bar for such items as menus, silverware, napkins, plates, water glasses and assorted condiments. This will allow the bartenders to professionally service the guests eating food at the bar. It's a

modification that will likely bolster food sales at the bar. ♦

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# After Dinner is a Time to Shine

Is it any wonder why people get indigestion? You may not know the answer, but your subconscious does. It's because people leave the dinner table unsatisfied. Something's missing and they can't put their finger on it, so instead of listening to their gut instinct, they just amble away with an unrequited desire for more.

Hasn't this gone on long enough? This is a new millennium and we're still not living life to the fullest. As any great philosopher will tell you, life truly begins after dinner, but before the check arrives.

Here's to celebrating that moment. We've assembled some outstanding libations that will help set things straight with the world. —RP ♦

## Russian Raspberry

Large brandy snifter, ice  
*Build in glass*

- 1 oz. Stolichnaya Razberi Vodka
- 1 oz. Starbucks Coffee Liqueur
- 3/4 oz. Chambord
- 3/4 oz. Baileys Irish Cream

## Caramella Soprano

House specialty glass, chilled  
*Ribbon inside of glass with caramel and chocolate syrup*

*Pour ingredients into blender canister*

- 3/4 oz. Jack Daniel's
- 3/4 oz. Starbucks Coffee Liqueur
- 3/4 oz. Starbucks Cream Liqueur
- 2 oz. cold espresso coffee
- 2 large scoops vanilla ice cream

*Blend ingredients*

Spoon on layer of frothed milk  
Garnish with a chocolate biscotti

## Brandy Alexander

House specialty glass, chilled

*Pour ingredients into blender canister*

- 3/4 oz. Brandy
- 3/4 oz. Dark Crème de Cacao
- 3/4 oz. half & half cream
- 2-3 large scoops vanilla ice cream

*Blend ingredients*

Garnish with a sprinkle of nutmeg

## Tiramisu

House specialty glass, chilled

*Pour ingredients into blender canister*

- 1 oz. Kahlúa
- 3/4 oz. Dark Crème de Cacao
- 3/4 oz. Amaretto
- 3/4 oz. half & half
- 2-3 large scoops vanilla ice cream

*Blend ingredients*

Garnish with a sprinkle of nutmeg

## Gorilla Milk

House specialty glass, chilled  
*Pour ingredients into blender*

- 1 oz. Light Rum
  - 3/4 oz. Kahlúa
  - 3/4 oz. Baileys Irish Cream
  - 3/4 oz. Crème de Banana
  - 3/4 oz. half & half
  - 2-3 large scoops vanilla ice cream
- Blend ingredients*  
Garnish with a pineapple wedge and banana slice

## Alexander the Great

House specialty glass, chilled

*Pour ingredients into blender*

- 1 1/4 oz. Metaxa Seven Star Greek Brandy
  - 3/4 oz. Starbucks Coffee Liqueur
  - 3/4 oz. Godiva Chocolate Liqueur
  - 3/4 oz. whole milk
  - 2 scoops vanilla ice cream
- Blend thoroughly*

Garnish with whipped cream and a drizzle of chocolate syrup

## 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 syrup
  - 1 oz. half & half
  - 2 scoops vanilla ice cream
- Blend thoroughly*

Garnish with whipped cream and shaved chocolate

# Wine/Vin/Vino/Vinho/Wein Quiz

For some the following questions may be easy pickin's, for others they may be the grapes of wrath. Nevertheless, uncorking a few questions regarding one of the oldest potables seems overdue. So dust off those wine caps, swirl and spit.

## Questions

1. This highly sought-after French red wine is bottled extremely young and cannot be legally sold before the third Thursday in November.
2. Stags Leap District is a renowned appellation within this famous California wine-growing county.
3. Made entirely from Chardonnay, wine from this famous appellation in Côte d'Or, Burgundy is France's most expensive dry white wine.
4. This category of American wines is a blend of two or more varieties of grapes and is often labeled as a red or white table wine with a vintage and appellation.
5. It is the grape variety of California's premier white wine, Burgundy's Pouilly-Fuisse and nearly all of Blanc de Blanc Champagne.
6. This is the palest, lightest and usually driest type of Sherry.
7. Located near San Francisco, this famous California wine-producing county encompasses such appellations as Russian River Valley, Alexander Valley and Dry Creek Valley.
8. This wine-producing region in north central Italy produces such famous wines as Chianti and Brunello di Montalchino.
9. Long used to soften Californian Cabernet Sauvignon, this grape variety has become a popular varietal wine on its own merits.
10. This type of Port is a blend of well-aged wines, pale in color with a distinctive amber edge and is relatively expensive.

10. Tawny Port
9. Merlot
8. Tuscany
7. Sonoma
6. Fino
5. Chardonnay
4. Meritage
3. Le Montrachet
2. Napa Valley
1. Beaujolais Nouveau

**Answers**

# "Sir, We've Received News From the Front"

How well do you know your clientele? Consumer preferences shift and eddy at an imperceptible pace. For example, many of the drinks and name brand spirits popular just five years ago have dropped off the scope. Gaining insights into how much consumer trends have changed and in what ways is valuable intelligence in a competitive marketplace. So, what do your guests really want? Get a handle on that question and you're well onto your way to success.

No one within the beverage industry knows more about what consumers are looking for from their on-premise experiences than Mike Ginley of Next Level Marketing. Considered the guru of beverage market research, his findings are often cited in leading trade publications and analyzed in scores of boardrooms to fully ascertain the extent of their meaning. Fortunately for us, I snuck a peak at his latest study conducted in May 2007 on consumer beverage trends.

His research revealed that nearly 60% of the 516 people surveyed either always or usually order beverage alcohol when they visit full-service bars and restaurants. When asked what they considered the most important attribute for drink to possess, 65% reported that taste was of paramount importance, compared to 10% who cited price, 5% that said made from scratch and 3% who prefer fresh, natural ingredients.

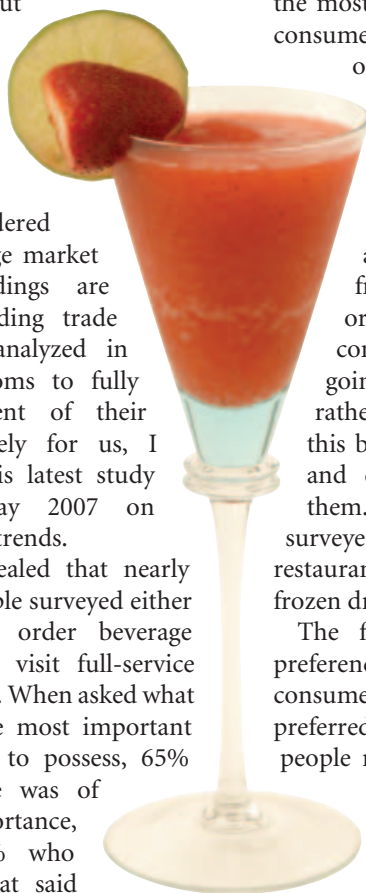
The study found that the Margarita remains the consensus most popular and frequently requested drink, this by almost a two-to-one margin over flavored Martinis. Nearly 80% of those surveyed said that they had ordered a Margarita at a bar or restaurant within the last month. Regarding how consumers prefer the drink be prepared, 59% said that they order their Margaritas frozen/blended, while 35% prefer it be served on the rocks.

Furthermore, sixty percent of the consumers reported that the brand of tequila used in a Margarita is the most important factor in overall quality, while 46% responded drink mix and 15% said the type of orange liqueur. Regarding lacing the cocktail with additional flavoring, 50% responded that they fancy strawberry Margaritas, 21% said raspberry, 17% peach, 16% peach, while almost two-thirds prefer the classic, unadulterated taste of the Margarita.

Frozen, blended concoctions remain the most popular drink type with today's consumers, now accounting for 25% of on-premise consumption. More than half of the people (54%) responded that they had ordered a blended drink containing alcohol at a bar or restaurant within the past month and three-quarters prefer their frozen drinks to be 12 ounces or more. A whopping 92% of the consumers said that they prefer going out to enjoy frozen drinks rather than preparing them at home, this because of the perceived difficulty and expertise required in preparing them. Almost 60% of the consumers surveyed stated that they'd like to see restaurants and national chain offer more frozen drinks on their bar menus.

The findings regarding drink flavor preferences are interesting. When the consumers were asked what flavors they preferred in their drinks, 45% of the people responded strawberry, 31% lime, 29% raspberry, and pineapple and peach tied at 28%. However, when asked to identify the flavors that they'd be most interested trying in a drink, 17% said either raspberry or pomegranate, 14% would like to try mango or watermelon, and 12% answered vanilla, sour apple or chocolate.

If it's true that the key to success in business is giving people what they want, then this glimpse into the consumers' collective consciousness should help you cut a straight course. —RP ♦



# "Survey Says..."

Let's see if I have this right. According to the very consumers who frequent our bars and restaurants, the majority of them prefer drinking something blended when they go out. In fact, most of those people want restaurants and national chains to offer more frozen drinks on their bar menus. That's great news. Frozen drinks are versatile, offer guests good value for their money and yield the kind of profit margins that attracted you to the bar business in the first place. —RP ♦

## Xmas Cocoa Blizzard

Large house specialty glass, chilled  
*Pour ingredients into an iced blender canister*  
 1 1/4 oz. Stoli Vanil Vodka  
 1 1/4 oz. Stoli Razberi Vodka  
 3/4 oz. Kahlúa  
 2 oz. milk  
 2-3 scoops (8 oz.) chocolate ice cream  
*Blend ingredients*  
 Garnish with whipped cream and chocolate shavings

## Pineapple Volcano Colada

Large house specialty glass, chilled  
*Ribbon inside of glass with chocolate syrup*  
*Pour ingredients into an iced blender canister*  
 1 3/4 oz. Cruzan Pineapple Rum  
 2 oz. coconut syrup  
 3 oz. pineapple juice  
 6 oz. vanilla ice cream  
*Blend ingredients*  
 Garnish with whipped cream and a drizzle of 3/4 oz. Starbucks Coffee Liqueur

## Aussie Holiday Special

House specialty glass, chilled  
*Pour ingredients into an iced blender canister*  
 1 1/4 oz. Malibu Rum  
 3/4 oz. Malibu Mango Rum  
 3/4 oz. Malibu Pineapple Rum  
 3/4 oz. fresh lime juice  
 1/2 oz. half & half cream  
 1 1/2 oz. pineapple juice  
 1-2 scoops (6 oz.) lemon sorbet  
*Blend ingredients*  
 Garnish with whipped cream and a pineapple wedge



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