

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

September 2007 ~ Volume 6, Issue 9

manage. serve. profit.

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THE BIG PICTURE



What Guests Really Want

The deceptive thing about change is the nearly imperceptible pace at which it happens. Such is the case with shifts in consumer preferences. For example, what people liked to drink in bars five years ago has changed. How much it's changed and in what ways is an important business consideration. The products and drinks once popular may no longer be so now.

In December of 2006, Next Level Marketing conducted an extensive online consumer study for *Cheers Magazine* and 2,260 people who frequent casual restaurants participated. We uncovered a number of significant consumer trends that throw light onto the question of what people want to drink. For example, 60% of the respondents — more than half of which were women — told us that they usually always order a beverage alcohol drink when they go out for dinner.

Of equal importance is what type of beverages they said that prefer drinking. The largest group (22%) responded that

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SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

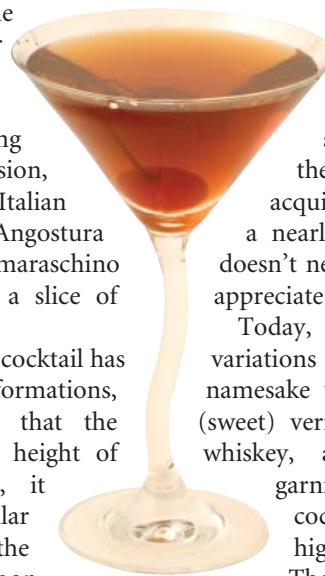
"I'll Take a Manhattan, Please"

The *Manhattan* originated in the mid-1870s at the Manhattan Club in New York. The occasion was a reception for Lady Jenny Jerome, mother of Winston Churchill. The esteemed men's club, looking to make a lasting impression, devised a cocktail using Italian vermouth, several dashes of Angostura bitters, two dashes of maraschino liqueur, rye whiskey, and a slice of lemon garnish.

Over the past century the cocktail has undergone several transformations, and while it is unlikely that the Manhattan will eclipse its height of popularity of the 1950s, it is experiencing a popular resurgence. Perhaps it's the renewed interest in bourbon that's behind the Manhattan craze, or perhaps it's simply being swept up in the renaissance of the cocktail.

It is equally likely that the Manhattan's revival has everything to do with the drink itself. It is about as marvelous as a cocktail gets. It's smooth, aromatic, and has a thoroughly satisfying flavor. And unlike the martini, which is more of an acquired taste, Manhattans possess a nearly universal appeal, one that doesn't need an air of sophistication to appreciate.

Today, there are three principal variations of the Manhattan. The namesake version is made with Italian (sweet) vermouth, bourbon or blended whiskey, and a maraschino cherry garnish. While many make the cocktail without bitters, it is a highly recommended ingredient. The bitters add a most wonderful aroma and flavor to the cocktail, such that without it the drink seems a bit lost.



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Blending Your Way to Cooler Profits



PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

1800 Tequila — "The Ultimate Portfolio"

1800 is the Cadillac of super-premium tequilas. Both are iconic brands immediately recognizable for style and sophistication. Both are of uncompromised quality, both have come to symbolize something aspirational, something to strive for. *1800 Tequila* was the brand that preceded all other top-shelf tequilas.

For a generation of tequila enthusiasts, 1800 represents trading up to the good stuff.

Named to commemorate the year tequila was first placed into oak barrels for aging, the highly acclaimed range of 1800 Tequilas is made at Hacienda Los Camichines in Jalisco. The tequilas are distilled entirely from mature, 8-year old blue agaves grown in rich volcanic soil of the highlands surrounding Jalisco. After distillation, the tequila is transferred

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Unbalanced – Biggest Cocktail Blunders

Anyone who has attempted to create the next cocktail sensation will appreciate the difficulties involved. Attempting to devise a concoction that a broad spectrum of consumers will find extremely appealing is a daunting task. The cocktail can't be too potent, too tart, or too sweet. If it has too little flavor the drink is perceived as lackluster, too much flavor and it becomes oppressive.

As daunting as the road is, many others have successfully traversed it. Indeed, there likely has never been a better time to be a mixologist, bar chef, or a drinks enthusiast for that matter. Today's class of new cocktails is every bit as soul satisfying as any that have come before it.

Drink experts have been consulted and the following list of the five most frequently observed cocktail blunders has been assembled. Traveling as we do and being frequent visitors of this nation's pubs,



bars and cocktail lounges, compiling it is as much a collective cry for relief, as it is a primer for the advancement of the craft.

⇒**Too Soon to Tire** — There's one quality that all great cocktails share in common and that's sessionability. It's a term used to describe a drink that people can sip throughout the course of a visit.

That's difficult to create. Ultimately it means that its taste is sufficiently interesting to keep consumers interested and wanting another.

Balance is arguably a most telling success factor in a cocktail. Balance means that all character dimensions can be perceived. There are portioning considerations. The goal is to taste the spirits in the drink, not feel the burn of the alcohol. A cocktail with a light and effervescent nature trumps one that's heavy and cloying. Balance means that all flavors are tasted somewhat equally.

⇒**Crossing the Line** — There are several immutable laws governing the crafting of cocktails. One of these undeniable truths is the better the liquor, the better the drink. While some may

see committing the world's finest spirits to cocktails a sacrilege, others see it as an act of creative genius. The sustained popularity of super-premium spirits has strapped a booster to the cocktail boom. The cocktail's uncomplicated and unfettered structure makes it an ideal vehicle for showcasing the enhanced character and unsurpassed quality of top-shelf spirits.

Another guideline to etch in stone is that a cocktail is only as good as its lowest component. Look to save a few cents using a lesser product and that will invariably be the ingredient that prevents the cocktail from reaching its fullest potential. Shortcuts diminish the end result, which is why mixologists are more frequently making their own flavored sweeteners and drink mixes for use in their cocktails.

Last is the inviolate truth is that the fresher the ingredients, the more vibrant and enjoyable the drink. "Look to your kitchen to help determine a flavor 'voice' for seasonal specialties," recommends Tim Kirkland, manager for bar and beverage development at Rock Bottom Restaurants. "Seasonality is well represented in the kitchen by ingredients such as fresh fruits,

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"ONE MORE THING. . ." by Robert Plotkin

The Gin That Launched 1000 Ships

I recently had the rare privilege of visiting one of the most acclaimed stills in the world, second only to the inimitable Stephen Stills, that is. I'm talking about the centuries old pot still at the Black Friars Distillery in Plymouth, England, maker of the all too glorious Plymouth Gin.

As a lifelong gin aficionado, the Black Friars Distillery has the same irresistible allure to me as Graceland does to Elvis fans. At the 2006 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, the brand earned a coveted double gold medal and was named the Best White Spirit of the prestigious event. I recall that judging and how much more vibrant and brilliant it was than any other white spirit entered that year. Visiting its historic birthplace coalesced my feelings and solidified my belief that

Plymouth arguably ranks among the elite spirits in the world, all at an inexplicably reasonable price.

The landmark brand has a long, storied history with the British Royal Navy; in fact it is still the daily issue to its officers. Black Friars Distillery is the England's oldest, continuously operating distillery. Now over 200 years old, the venerable brand is distilled in a large copper alembic still using pure grain spirits, soft water from the Dartmoor Reserve and an infusion of seven, hand-selected botanicals. It should also be noted that in 1896 the first published recipe for the Martini called for the use of Plymouth.

A quick sniff is all that's necessary to explain the gin's enduring popularity. It has an expansive citrus and juniper bouquet and a seamlessly smooth body. The gin immediately fills the mouth with

the exuberant flavors of juniper, coriander, orange and lemon.

The gin finishes long and amazingly flavorful. What an unadulterated joy.

In my next life I want to come back as a pimento-stuffed olive so I can soak in Plymouth Gin and not be deemed a social deviant. That would be a marvelous change.

—RP ♦



Avoiding the 10 Critical Errors

As the adage goes, “When a man with money meets a man with experience, the man with the experience ends up with the money, and the man with the money ends up with the experience.” As any teacher will tell you, making mistakes is an essential part of gaining experience. Some things you just have to learn at the school of hard knocks.

In the beverage business, there are a number of critical errors that should be avoided like the plague. Every industry has them, ours is no different.

1. Not Setting the Stage for Success

— The back bar makes a marketing statement to the public. It’s essential to remove dead stock, those products that take longer than 9 months to deplete, and stock the back bar with a balanced offering of exciting spirits.

2. No Inventory Control

— Running a bar requires making an investment in liquid assets, liquid that can disappear without a sale at an alarming rate. Failing to implement an effective inventory control system places at risk the capital you’ve invested in that inventory.

3. Failing to Monitor Pour Costs

— One of the many truisms in this business is, “If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.” Determining the bar’s ongoing cost percentages, or pour costs,

reveals its level of profitability. As cost of goods sold increases, gross profits diminish. No profit, no success.

4. Failing to Track Productivity

— Calculating sales per hour is an enormously effective means of assessing employee effectiveness. An employee with chronically low sales per hour may indicate a problem. On the positive side, a bartender with consistently high sales per hour deserves acknowledgement.

5. Serving Inconsistent Product

— Bartending staffs typically operate without a clearly defined set of recipes. The result is fluctuating costs and shoddy drinks. Determine what the bartenders are to pour, or they’ll do it for you.

6. Stale Bill of Fare

— A restaurant that doesn’t routinely change its menu always has plenty of open tables. Same too with bars. Don’t fall into the trap of offering your clientele the same tired, old drinks that your competitors do. Change spices things up and helps keep your clientele interested. Offer creative and intriguing signature drinks that will put your bar on the map.

7. Fiscal Irresponsibility

— One of the crucial disciplines to instill into your operation is strict portioning controls. Over-pouring is an insidious

source of losses. It also hastens and exacerbates intoxication. Another operational malady is the scourge of shrinkage. For some, the temptations of handling a steady stream of cash can be irresistible. Implement solid cash controls and reduce your vulnerability to theft.

8. Slash Marketing

— The only marketing some do is to slash prices. Strive instead to promote your business from the inside out. People are open and receptive to timely suggestions on what to drink. Develop bar menus, table tents, wipe-off boards on which to market your house specialties. If you’ve created delicious signature drinks, make sure you announce your success.

9. Alcohol Orientation

— A key trend in the industry is that increasingly more people will be socializing without alcohol. Be prepared to market to this segment of the population with a diverse and dynamic selection of alcohol-free beverages. They are loaded with profit and incur no third party liability.

10. Not Monitoring Labor Costs

— Payroll is the largest expense after cost of goods sold. An elevated labor cost means you’re squandering expensive dollars. A low labor cost means there’s a lack of adequate staff coverage, which invariably results in lost sales. ♦

PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

to French and American oak barrels for aging.

The newest addition to the super-premium range is **1800 Silver 100% Blue Agave Tequila**, a delicate and highly versatile spirit mellowed in oak for fifteen days. The tequila is crystal clear with a satiny, lightweight body and floral and ripe fruit bouquet. Its palate is a pleasing array of black pepper, butterscotch and vanilla. The finish is clean and crisp.

Renowned **1800 Reposado 100% Blue Agave Tequila**

is a primary reason that reposados are the best-selling style of tequila in its native land. Aging for nine months in oak imbues the shimmering gold and copper colored tequila with a round, medium-weight body and lush texture. It has a generous citrus, dates and floral bouquet and lilted palate of ripe fruit, dried herbs, vanilla and toasted oak. The finish is long and flavorful.

1800 Añejo 100% Blue Agave Tequila is aged in new French Limousin oak casks and charred American oak barrels for up to three years. The sultry añejo has a rich amber hue and seamlessly smooth, medium-weight body. Its enticing, spicy bouquet serves as an ideal entree for the herbaceous, vanilla and cocoa flavors on the palate. The elegant, lightly peppered finish is long lasting and eminently enjoyable.

One of the brand’s enduring contributions is its role in the creation of the **Ultimate Margarita**, a contemporary classic drink made with 1800 Reposado Tequila, Cointreau and fresh lime juice. The tequila brand has also spawned another highly popular cocktail dubbed the **Ultimate Cosmolito**. The eminently refreshing drink features 1800 Silver Tequila, Grand Marnier, cranberry juice and a splash of fresh lime.

Why drink an uninspired brand of tequila when there’s 1800 on the shelf? —RP ♦



Bartending Etiquette – Part 2

Let's be honest, bad service stinks. Taking your vitamins and getting a raise isn't enough to stop a snarling bartender or inattentive server from really ruining what might have been a fun outing. What's worse, we get to pay for the pleasure of being ignored or mistreated. There oughta be a law.

In our ongoing series on trying to stamp out bad service, here are a few pointers to the ranks of the employed. Take heed, your tip jar will thank you.



One principle source of ruffled feathers is failing to acknowledge that customers exist. When people sit down at a bar, they will extend the bartender a certain grace period before she sidles over to take their order. Miss the grace period and she'll have to nearly kill them with hospitality to overcome the snub. If the bartender is temporarily too busy to wait on guests, that grace period can be easily

extended with a smile and an "I'll be right with you."

Tacky too is a bartender who is conspicuous when counting his tips. Gratuities are a private matter between two people — the customer and bartender — played out in a public setting. Counting ones tips is indiscreet. Likewise, tip jars overflowing with large bills and treasury notes should be kept out of view. It is unlikely that it will make people want to dig deep to contribute and some may actually find it offensive.

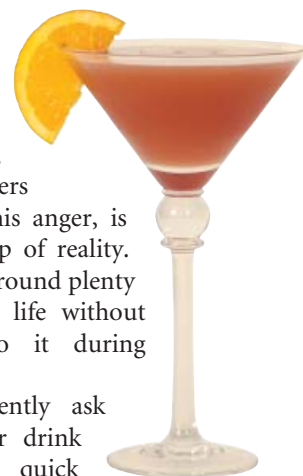
If you're one who likes to keep score, forgetting what a person is drinking leaves a negative impression (minus two points), while recalling a regular customer's name and using it correctly in a sentence is a major bartending coup (plus six points). Being friendly and polite is still politically correct (plus five), but gratuitous, overly friendly behavior is as convincing as a soap opera love scene (minus 3).

A bartender's professionalism is most apparent when the bar is busy. Whether it's that certain "calm under fire" quality or their precise bursts of movement, really good bartenders are a pleasure to

watch. On the flip side, a bartender who loses his cool, making the customers bear the brunt of his anger, is like a cold hard slap of reality. People get slapped around plenty in their day-to-day life without being subjected to it during "happy hour."

Customers frequently ask bartenders for their drink suggestions and a quick shrug of the shoulder is an inappropriate response. Bartenders are well-advised to have a repertoire of good tasting, creative drink recipes in mind that will fit the bill. They should also make sure that they hear drink orders in their entirety, noting any and all pouring instructions such as "...with a twist," "...with a splash" or "...with a water back." Customers seldom hide their irritation when their drinks aren't made to their specifications.

If all else fails, treat your guests like your employer's family. They're guaranteed to get great service. ♦



THE BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

they like to socialize with cocktails and spirits, compared with 19% who said that they are primarily beer drinkers and 11% who drink wine. Of interest also is how the consumers responded when asked how many drinks they order per occasion. Over 80% responded that they stop after the second drink, while 32% said that they hold after the first.

It doesn't come as a surprise that 78% of the respondents said that they enjoy drinking alcohol with dinner. Over 40% of the consumers said that they drink alcohol before dinner, while 29% said they order drinks after the meal. Only 13% of people say they will order alcohol with lunch.

Drinking alcohol is exceedingly popular when people are celebrating special occasions (73%), relaxing and socializing with friends (69%), having a romantic

meal (68%), or just hanging out with pals (61%). The percentage of people who drink alcohol at a family meal drops to 40% and down to 24% when it's a quick meal with family or friends. Over 50% of

the consumers reported that they prefer drinking spirits or cocktails when celebrating a special occasion. Compare this with 30% who prefer drinking wine at special events, 16% who choose beer and

2% who abstain altogether.

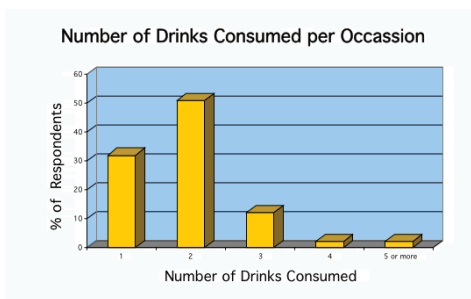
When the type of occasion changes, so do consumer preferences. For instance, at a relaxed, leisurely dinner, the percentage of people who prefer drinking spirits/ cocktail, beer and wine are nearly identical at 32%, while when socializing with friends, nearly half responded that they prefer drinking spirits and cocktails,

compared with 32% who prefer wine and 14% beer. At a romantic or intimate meal, more than half of the people said that they prefer sipping wine, while a third said spirits or cocktails.

One last interesting glimpse into the collective minds of your guests. When not socializing with alcohol, 42% of the respondents said that they would be interested in ordering alcohol-free beverages priced up to \$4.00. There has been a steady increase in the acceptance of beverages without alcohol.

Shifting consumer trends inevitably leads to changing sales mixes. The sales relationship between categories, such as spirits, wine and beer, and the sales relationships between comparable brands is an aspect of the business that deserves careful and regular scrutiny. It affects both the revenue side of the profit equation, as well as the cost side.

Mike Ginley
Next Level Marketing

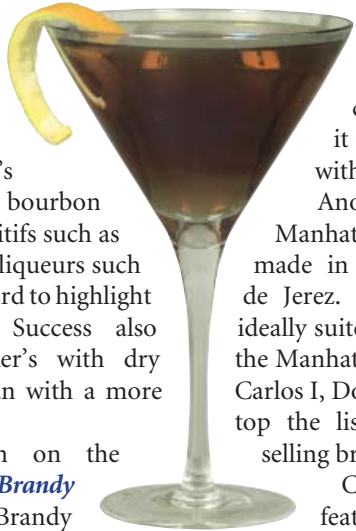


The *Dry Manhattan* is made by substituting French (dry) vermouth for sweet, and is garnished with either a lemon twist, or pimento-stuffed green olives. The *Perfect Manhattan*, or *Medium Manhattan*, is prepared using about a 1/4 oz. of each type of vermouth, and garnished with a lemon twist. Should a guest request their Manhattan “sweet,” add a splash of maraschino cherry juice.

Knowing the characteristics of the bourbon being featured in the cocktail is essential.

All-world Maker’s Mark, for example, has a magnificent, semi-sweet finish, which partially explains its endless popularity. The bourbon is often paired with aperitifs such as Dubonnet or Lillet, and liqueurs such as amaretto and Chambord to highlight the whiskey’s palate. Success also lies in matching Maker’s with dry aperitifs for a Manhattan with a more balanced taste.

A popular variation on the Manhattan theme is the *Brandy Manhattan*. The Brandy



Manhattan is prepared using sweet vermouth, the *Dry Brandy Manhattan* with dry vermouth, and the *Perfect Brandy Manhattan* is made with both vermouths.

It should go without saying that the Manhattan is a superb method to market a cognac such as Courvoisier. The Courvoisier VS and VSOP are vibrant, flavorful and marry beautifully with a splash of an aperitif. While not all cognacs are as adaptable as Courvoisier, the key is to find a brandy with enough charisma and personality that it can shine even when presented with other ingredients.

Another outstanding source for Manhattan talent are the brandies made in Spain, most notably Brandy de Jerez. These vivacious brandies are ideally suited for drink making, especially the Manhattan. Brands such as Fundador, Carlos I, Don Pedro and Terry Centenario top the list and rank among the best selling brandies in the world.

Canadian whisky is often the featured performer in a Manhattan



because of its soft, accessible palate and universally appealing personality. The *Maple Leaf Manhattan* pairs Canadian Club with sweet vermouth and a splash of cherry juice, while the *French Raspberry*

Manhattan is the creative alliance of dry vermouth, Chambord and Canadian Club.

Mastering the Manhattan requires the use of high quality vermouth. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking that since it is comparatively inexpensive, any brand of vermouth will do. While it may be inexpensive, vermouth is a complex aperitif wine, one that is difficult and laborious to make well. The difference between a great vermouth and one that’s merely adequate is enormous.

While it’s true that few cocktails will transcend the popularity of the Martini, it’s equally true that few cocktails will ever taste better than a well-chilled Manhattan. The choice is yours — fame or soul satisfying bliss? —RP ♦

SAFEGUARDING YOUR PROFITS *continued from page 2*

vegetables and herbs. Even ingredients like fresh basil, pumpkin and aged balsamic vinegar are jumping behind the bar at different times of year.”

⇒**Resistance to Muddling** — Increasingly mixologists are reaching for the bar muddler when constructing their specialty drinks. Examples abound. The application of the century old drink making technique has elevated the craft to fresh new heights. While it takes longer to prepare a drink made with muddled ingredients, the results are worth it.

The Mojito and Old Fashion are illustrative of how to best incorporate fresh ingredients on a per cocktail basis. In their preparation, ingredients such as cut limes, oranges, or fresh mint sprigs are muddled, thus releasing their succulence and essential oils. Sugar is added to balance out the acidic pith. The cocktail is then ready to receive the spirits and various modifiers that make it a singular creation.

In addition to being delicious and thirst quenching, these drinks have enhanced production value and the muddled

ingredients in the glass makes for an interesting appearance.

⇒**Fizzling with Spritz** — Adding a fine effervescence in a drink is a marvelous thing, a centuries old practice. Today, however, drink designers far too often commit a splash of club soda to a cocktail. Mere carbonation is passé, now it’s about adding quality effervescence. Spritz helps achieve all-important balance between the various elements in a cocktail. It enhances a drink’s mouth feel and most importantly, effervescence energizes a libation, transforming it from flat and lifeless to teeming with vibrancy and pizzazz.

One thing that will immediately improve ones drink making abilities is looking beyond carbonated water from the beverage gun. Artificially charged water created on-site can hardly compare to the natural effervescence of sparkling waters, source derived products like San Pellegrino or Perrier. These famous waters have an abundance of fine bubbles and mild acidity that invigorates a cocktail. Club soda can’t begin to measure up.

The final piece of advice is to adopt the habit of swirling and spitting while devising drinks. It will prove to extend your career by light years. ♦

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September 2007 ~ Volume 6, Issue 9

©Liquid Enterprises 2007

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It's Hard to Find Classier Cocktails than Manhattans

Manhattans rate among the most elegant and sophisticated of the classic cocktails. They are also a dynamic way to market world-class whiskeys, not just bourbons, but single malts, brandies and Canadian whisky as well.

The key to success is pairing complementary aperitifs and modifiers with the whiskey or brandy base. Unlike the more delicate light spirits, such as gin and vodka, whiskies and brandies are stalwart souls with sufficient breeding and charisma to blend with a wide range of products. This versatility creates innumerable marketing opportunities, most of which center around the Manhattan.

If you're looking for some creative inspiration on how to capitalize on the Manhattan craze, consider the following recipes. —RP◆

Bob-Tailed Nag

Specialty of Absinthe Brasserie & Bar

Created by Jonny Raglin

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

2 oz. Michter's US 1 Unblended

American Whiskey

1/2 oz. Barolo Chinato Cocchi

2 dashes Fee's Mint Bitters

Stir and strain

Garnish with a lemon twist

Caballito

Specialty of Cuba Libre Restaurant &

Rum Bar

Created by Cuba Libre's staff

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

2 oz. Cuba Libre Dark Rum

1/4 oz. Sweet Vermouth

Splash guarapa

Splash fresh lime juice

Shake and strain

Garnish with a mint sprig

Cunningham

Specialty of Harry Denton's Starlight Room

Created by Marco Dionysos

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

1 1/2 oz. Johnnie Walker Black

Label Scotch

1/4 oz. Benedictine

1/4 oz. Cherry Heering

1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice

1/2 oz. fresh blood orange juice

Shake and strain

Garnish with brandied cherries and a flamed orange twist

CAUTION! Extreme care must be used whenever flame is used in or near an alcohol drink.

Manhattan BH

Specialty of Mosaic Restaurant

Created by Stephanie Kozicki, Matt Rinn

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

2 1/2 oz. Basil Hayden's Bourbon

1/2 oz. Vya Sweet Vermouth

1/4 oz. Vya Extra Dry Vermouth

2 dashes Angostura Aromatic Bitters

Stir and strain

Garnish with a lemon twist

Midnight Manhattan

Specialty of Stone Rose Lounge

Created by Jeff Isaacson

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

1 1/2 oz. Woodford Reserve Bourbon

1 oz. Grand Marnier

Splash fresh lemon sour mix

Splash simple syrup

1/2 oz. white cranberry juice

Shake and strain

Nattahnam

Specialty of Indigo Eurasian Cuisine

Created by Jason Castle, Tim Skelton

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

3 oz. Jack Daniels Tennessee Whiskey

1/2 oz. Tuaca Liqueure Italiano

1/2 oz. Sweet Vermouth

Stir and strain

Testing Your Rum/Rhum Geography IQ. Part One

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 rum sales surging, 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

- A. Mauritius
- B. Jamaica
- C. Bermuda
- D. Trinidad
- E. Barbados
- F. Haiti
- G. Puerto Rico
- H. US Virgin Islands
- I. Anguilla
- J. Tennessee



10-A
9-C
8-J
7-D
6-H
5-I
4-E
3-G
2-F
1-B

Answers

Blending Your Way to Cooler Profits

If doctorates for blended drinks were handed out, the good folks at Vita-Mix would be the first recipients. They have made it their business to know everything there is to know about preparing and marketing killer frozen drinks.

Vita-Mix recently conducted a market survey of leading casual dining establishments around the country and found that the average 16-ounce blended drink yielded a profit margin of \$3.02. Selling fifty blended drinks a day equates to a profit of just under \$55,000 per year.

It's hard to imagine a more lucrative, more responsible type of adult beverage to serve at a bar. Blended drinks possess every marketing attribute one looks for in a specialty drink. You just need two things to successfully pull off the strategy — know-how and the proper equipment.

Educating the staff on how to prepare consistent blended drinks is crucial. If the first drink doesn't taste great, the guest won't buy a second. You can have the best recipe on the block, but if your bartenders don't properly measure the ice, or don't blend it for the right amount of time, the drink is going to be inferior. Consistency in every sense of the word is critical to the process.

When it comes to investing in bar equipment, beverage operators today are savvier than ever. They're looking past purchase price and considering such factors as maintenance cost and speed of service.

Jamba Juice switched to Vita-Mix blenders because they found that the increased speed of service and the resulting

enhanced quality of their smoothies more than offset the higher purchase price of the equipment. Their people were no longer having to re-blend drinks with more ice to achieve the desired consistency.

Don't try to get Ed Kolesar to go back to using inexpensive bar blenders in his restaurants. As the operating partner of P.F. Chang's in Scottsdale, he has tossed out more than his fair share of weak, burnt out blenders. "We actively promote our frozen drink specialties and we need equipment that can keep up with demand. We found that in the Vita-Mix blender. It's durable, gear-driven and makes consistent drinks every time."

Kolesar didn't outfit his machines with the optional noise abatement chambers. "The blenders rev like well-tuned engines and their sound injects energy into our bistro. I think the sound alone makes people more receptive to ordering blended drinks. It certainly works well for us." The machine's time function allows Kolesar's bartenders to make other drinks in an order and simultaneously create a perfectly blended drink.

The secret to a technologically advanced blender like the Vita-Mix can be found in the design of its blades, the singular shape of their canisters and the power efficiency of their 2-3 horsepower motors.

Outfitting your bar with state of the art equipment is like handing a talented musician a finely crafted instrument. In both cases expect a standing ovation. ♦



Pushing the Creative Envelope

The key to maximizing the profit potential of your blender is to look past the Margarita, Piña Colada and Strawberry Daiquiri, and take stock of your options. The blender has the remarkable capability of transforming nearly any combination of ingredients into a frozen work of art. To stir your creative juices, consider the following recipes:

Chocolate Covered Grasshopper

Specialty of Mosaic Restaurant

Created by Stephanie Kozicki

House specialty glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an empty blender canister

1 oz. Mozart Black Chocolate Pure 87

1/2 oz. DeKuyper Green Crème de Menthe

1/2 oz. DeKuyper Light Crème de Cacao

2 scoops vanilla ice cream (3-4 oz. each)

Blend thoroughly with 1 small scoop of ice

Garnish with a cherry

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Specialty of The Spanish Kitchen

Created by Misha Krepon

Beer glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an empty blender canister

3/4 oz. Godiva Chocolate Liqueur

3/4 oz. Baileys Irish Cream

3/4 oz. Kahlúa

1/2 oz. Patrón Citrónge Orange Liqueur

1 1/2 oz. cold espresso

1 scoop vanilla bean ice cream (6-8 oz. scoop)

Blend thoroughly with 1 scoop of ice

Garnish with whipped cream

Kiwi Cooler

Specialty of Mosaic Restaurant

Created by Stephanie Kozicki

House specialty glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an empty blender canister

1 1/2 oz. Stoli Strasberi Vodka

1/2 oz. Cointreau

1/4 oz. Kiwi Liqueur

1/4 oz. fresh lemon sour mix

1/4 oz. Lorina Sparkling Pink Lemonade

4 oz. strawberry puree

Blend thoroughly with 1 small scoop of ice

Garnish with a fresh strawberry



Vita-Mix BarBoss Advance

Tip from the Pros:

All blended drink recipes should clearly state how much ice is required to attain uniform consistency. Specifying the amount of ice is typically measured in scoops or ounces.

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