

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

manage. serve. profit.

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THE BIG PICTURE

Maximizing Beverage Revenue



Driving traffic to a bar or 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 it is they're drinking to a more premium version.

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SPOTLIGHT ON COCKTAILS

Old Fashioneds are Trendy and Fresh

Despite their name, Old Fashioneds are in step with contemporary tastes and the growing trend of using fresh ingredients in cocktails. Thankfully for drink enthusiasts, the neo-classic cocktail is experiencing something of a renaissance.

Credit for originating the Old Fashioned goes to the *Pendennis Club*, a gentlemen's club in Louisville, Kentucky. In the mid-1880s, the drink was popular with its members, one of whom was bourbon distiller Colonel James Pepper. In turn, he introduced the concoction to the bar staff at the *Waldorf-Astoria Hotel* in Manhattan, which provided the drink with its big break. The Old Fashioned of that era was constructed in a whiskey glass with a small lump of sugar, Angostura Bitters and a small amount of water, ostensibly to hasten the sugar dissolving. Recipes of the



day instructed the barman to then add in a jigger of bourbon and piece of lemon peel and to mix the ingredients with a spoon, which was to be left with the guest.

The practice of muddling a cherry and orange slice in the bottom of the drink can be traced back to Prohibition. Times were rough and bootleg whiskey even rougher. Muddling fruit into the mix was no doubt a necessary response to the raw, inferior spirit.

The present incarnation of the Old Fashioned is prepared in a rocks or bucket glass by combining 2-3 dashes of Angostura Bitters, a maraschino cherry, orange slice and simple syrup. The ingredients are muddled together before adding ice, a healthy measure of whiskey and a splash of soda.

The drink's timeless appeal lies in the interplay of the whiskey and muddled

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A Boon For Fresh Mixology



PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

Midori Melon Liqueur

Midori burst into the American limelight in the early 1980s and the brand can now be found on every self-respecting back bar in the country, not to mention the world. In fact, its popularity continues to grow as steadily increasing numbers of contemporary mixologists incorporate *Midori* into their recipes.

This indispensable liqueur is produced in Japan by

the famed spirits company, Suntory. Midori is made from a base of neutral spirits and proprietary flavors, the most readily identifiable of which is honeydew melon. Its lustrous, emerald green color is absolutely intriguing, which has most certainly played a role in the liqueur's meteoric success.

Midori has a lively bouquet with the engaging aromas of melon, banana and strawberry. Its soft, supple body immediately fills the mouth with the fresh fruit flavors of honeydew, ripe cantaloupe and bananas. The medium-weight body

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What to Do When Your Profits Fall Short

Beverage operations need to be hitting on all cylinders to crank out maximum profits. When they fall out of tune, profitability quickly takes a beating. Keeping the operation running at optimum efficiency takes knowing what to look for and making the necessary adjustments at the appropriate time.

Unfortunately when it comes beverage management, most of us are graduates of the school of hard knocks. We graduated only after making every possible mistake several times until it dawned on us to do things differently. Don't laugh, it's an effective way to learn.

The downside to this curriculum track is that it takes years to earn your diploma and the tuition is unbelievably expensive. Another consideration is that good businesses needlessly suffer while trudging up the learning curve.

If you've looked at your day planner and decided that you don't have the ten years or so to learn from your mistakes, and you need to know how to turn your bar into a profitable entity, here's a strategy designed to keep the learning curve short and shallow.

- **Monitoring PC** — Determining your bar's ongoing cost percentages—pour costs—reveals your level of profitability. As your cost of goods increases, gross profits diminish. Success behind the bar greatly depends on safeguarding your profit margins. No profit, no success.

Tracking your cost percentages is a fundamental form of control. The more frequently you conduct an audit and determine pour costs, the more insight you'll have into the operation. If the audit indicates a problem, you'll be able to respond quickly and appropriately.

- **Reduce Shrinkage** — One of the plagues of the beverage business is shrinkage. Bartenders control both ends of every transaction at the bar. They portion and prepare product, as well as handle all sales. All this occurs before your register or P.O.S. system knows anything about the transaction. For some, the temptations of handling a steady stream of cash can be irresistible. Implement solid cash controls and look to reduce your vulnerability to theft. The savings often spell the difference between financial viability and the unpleasant alternative.

- **Track Productivity** — Every industry tracks employee productivity except ours. In this case, we're looking to measure each bartender's productivity or sales per hour, which is calculated by dividing the shift's gross sales by the number of hours the person worked. A bartender with chronically low sales may indicate a serious problem, such as a poor attitude, working too slowly or theft. On the positive side, a bartender with consistently high sales per hour deserves acknowledgement.

- **Suds Watch** — Industry wide, we lose roughly 20% of our draft beer due to waste, spillage and theft. That translates to losing one out of every five kegs of beer we purchase. Clamping down on the associated cost is essential. Operations that depend on draft beer sales to remain financially viable should consider investing in a draft beer control system. They're an effective way to close what has been a chronic black hole for operators.

- **Loss of Control** — Running a bar requires making a significant investment in liquid inventory, stock that can disappear at

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“ONE MORE THING. . .” by Robert Plotkin

Infusions a Hit Behind the Bar

From coast to coast and all points between, mixologists and bar chefs are infusing spirits with everything from kiwis to sun-dried tomatoes to create palate pleasing, true-to-nature flavor combinations. It's an uncomplicated process involving macerating fruit, among other things, in airtight containers filled with spirits. Several days to a week later, the vodka, tequila, rum or whatever, will be imbued with loads of appealing flavor, color and tantalizing aromas.

The secret behind their phenomenal success is that infusions are a profitable way to create something singularly exciting, something the competition can't duplicate. When you create a winning infusion, there's only one place to get it.

One of the keys to marketing fruit-infused specialties is to put the jars somewhere conspicuous—on the back bar, for example, with big neon arrows

dangling overhead. Drawing attention to the containers is part of the mystique. Anticipation will build such that by the time it's ready to debut, there will be more than enough demand.

The possible fruit combinations are limited only by availability. Among the more interesting and exotic selections are mandarin orange, kiwi, star fruit, honeydew, mango, papaya, watermelon, black currants, dried apricots, raspberry and cranberry.

There's no reason to limit yourself to only using fruit to infuse spirits. For example, the **Sonoran Spittoon infusion** is made with Jalapeño, Red and Green Pepper Infused Gold Tequila. The peppered tequila can then be mixed with horseradish-laced Bloody Mary mix and served with a scallion and shrimp garnish. The specialty of the house at London's Dog House is the **Prairie Oyster**, which

features **Chili-Infused Vodka**, Tabasco and oyster sauce.

A popular favorite at Houston's **Rickshaw Far East Bistro** is a **Vanilla Bean and Pineapple Infusion** made with Rain Vodka. It's the main attraction in the **Pineapple Upside-Down Cake**, a cocktail concocted with Absolut Vanilia, pineapple juice and grenadine and 1 ¾ ounces of the infusion.

The creative potential of infusions are boundless. As further evidence consider the **Beefeater Deli Gin**, an innovative infusion made with Beefeater Gin, sun-dried tomatoes, large stuffed olives, fresh garlic, dill and red onions.

Infusions are also highly profitable, yielding profit margins between 88-92%, just slightly lower if premium spirits are used.

High demand at great margins—it's an unbeatable combination. ♦

Style vs. Substance—Weighing in on Free-Pouring Shots

Operating a bar requires maintaining a significant capital investment in liquid assets that are especially vulnerable to internal theft and can be siphoned off at an alarming rate. Regardless of whether bartenders over-pour liquor, give it away, sell it and pocket the cash or drink it themselves, the negative impact is the same.

An essential means of safeguarding profitability is to implement portioning controls. Over- or under-pouring liquor wreaks havoc on a bar's cost percentages. Because the price of a drink is hinged to a specified amount of alcohol, if that portion fluctuates, so does the drink's profit margin. It's challenging for a bar to remain in the black if the staff is playing fast and loose with the liquor.

Free-pouring is a stylish technique in which bartenders measure liquor without using a jigger, relying instead on an internal count or cadence to meter the rate of flow. With training a bartender can quickly become adept at pouring accurately. It's the fastest, most expedient method of pouring. The speed is derived from the bartender being able to portion the spirits with one hand, while simultaneously adding in the mixer with the other.

Here's a rule of thumb. When a liquor bottle outfitted with a medium-speed commercial pour spout is inverted between 45° and 90°, it will dispense approximately

½ oz. of spirits per second. Based on that, an internal cadence of “one-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thousand” will yield a 1 ½ oz. portion of spirits.



If the bartender's internal cadence is too slow there will be more than a jigger of spirits in the glass. If there's less than a jigger, the person's internal count is too fast. After that, it's just a matter of the bartender being consistent. Liqueurs, which are more viscous than spirits, pour at a slower rate, which means they need to compensate by counting more slowly.

The technique does have its shortcomings though. Free-pouring accurately throughout a long shift requires an inordinate amount of mental stamina. It's especially difficult for bartenders to pour accurately when they're tired

or working at a frenzied pace, which is when profitability and drink consistency really take a beating. But regardless of the circumstances, it is easier to pour heavy shots when free-pouring than when using a shot glass, and it's harder for supervisors to spot the overage.

Routinely testing bartenders' accuracy can mitigate the downsides. This is accomplished by arranging a half-dozen glasses on the bar rail and having them quickly pour a staggered series of measurements into each. Afterwards, pour the contents of each glass into a graduated cylinder to gauge their accuracy. Many operators establish standards for pouring accuracy and if a bartender doesn't measure up to those standards, he's required to use a shot glass when on-duty until such time as the individual is able to free pour consistently accurate measurements.

Permitting bartenders to free-pour liquor can be an expensive proposition. On the other hand, many contend the opportunity cost of slowing their bartenders' speed of service by mandating the use of shot glasses is equally steep. The deciding factor is typically based on the operational demands of the concept.

Since no bar or restaurant operates under the burden of too much profit, effective portioning controls are a must. ♦

PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

and slightly sweet palate make it ideal for use in mixed drinks. The liqueur has excellent persistence of flavor.

Midori's ascendancy into celebrity status can be attributed to its one-of-a-kind flavor, vivid color and moderate 42-proof, all of which contribute to its exceptionally high mixability quotient.

Add to that a distinctively shaped, textured bottle and you've got a modern classic.

It's difficult to imagine operating a popular club without Midori. Like most great supporting actors, it receives little fanfare, but among professionals, it ranks on the short list of “must

have” back bar entries. Without it a large segment of popular mixology drops off-line.

The *Alien Secretion*, *Melon Margarita*, *Sex on the Beach* and *Jamaican Ten Speed* are among a long list of mainstream libations dependent on Midori for their identities. But that's only just the beginning.

Midori is popularly added to Martinis, Cosmopolitans and Kamikazes for a refreshing burst of flavor. The liqueur is unrivaled in Piña Coladas, Daiquiris and Long Island Iced Teas. Midori is also a featured ingredient in the *Jolly Rancher*—a popular concoction made with Midori, vodka, amaretto, sweet ‘n’ sour and pineapple juice and the *Acapulco Breeze*—a tall, iced specialty made with Midori, Sauza Hornitos, sweet ‘n’ sour and cranberry juice.

The margarita is especially accommodating to Midori. The *Melon Margarita* is made with equal parts of Midori and *Cabo Wabo Reposado Tequila*. Add in some triple sec and frozen seedless watermelon cubes to create the delectable *Neon Watermelon Margarita*. The liqueur is also a performer in the both the *Santiago Margarita* and *Two-Toned Margarita*.

In a world of substitutes and knock-offs, it's interesting to note that no brand has even made an attempt to go head-to-head with Midori. Some things just can't be duplicated. ♦



Pizzazz Injections for Your Bar

Some restaurants over the years are able to maintain their competitive edge and the same creative spark they possessed at their inception. While some do, the reality is that most don't.

Time has a way of diminishing the shine, dulling the glamour and dampening the sizzle of even the glitziest of clubs. In the same way that a high-performance engine needs constant tuning, so does your beverage operation. No major over-haul, just a few minor adjustments. Here are some suggestions to fuel the process.

• **Drink Flourishes** — Embellishing a drink is like adding sizzle to a steak. For example, swizzle sticks are enjoying a renaissance in bars and nightclubs. More than mere implements for stirring, swizzles are contemporary memorabilia, mementoes of an evening embossed with your logo. “Hang-ons” are also in vogue. Descendants of the paper umbrellas of old, examples include blue plastic whales that hang on the rim of a glass, pink flamingo fruit spears, dangling chimpanzees. Their appeal is universal.

Give Martini drinkers something to talk about by garnishing their drink with vodka-steeped, anchovy-wrapped green olives. Put some pizzazz in your Bloody Marys with a shrimp and Slim Jim garnish. You can prepare strawberry fans and lime camellias, honeydew wedges and papaya moons.

• **Staff Gone Flaccid?** — If bartenders could be replaced by tuxedoed robots or drink-making holograms, someone would have done it by now. Fact is, no machine, gadget or computer can provide the dynamics necessary to transform a room into party central the way a great bartender can.

Want some heat? Light a fire under your bartenders and turn them loose. Flair bartending—flipping bottles, tossing glasses and flinging mixing sets—is definitely hot. So are bartenders who sing opera or occasionally dance on the bar. Others prefer “magic-tending,” which entails performing feats of prestidigitation behind the bar with ordinary objects found behind the bar.

It should be stated that hot bartending is more mind set than circus act. A bartender with a genuine smile, quick wit and winning personality is a hotter commodity than a drink-dispensing knife juggler who makes patrons feel as welcome as a boot camp drill instructor.

• **Passé Product?** — If it's true that the better the spirit, the better the cocktail, why not prepare all of your signature drinks with super-premium spirits. Up-selling is an excellent means of stirring up some excitement and increasing sales without promoting inebriation.

For some added pizzazz, what about adding Starbucks Coffee Liqueur to your Irish Coffees or using Baileys in White Russians? If your competition doesn't offer their guests a Kahlua/chocolate/peanut butter/banana milk shake, somebody should.

Anyone can make drinks, but few make drinks special. Pizzazz behind the bar entails doing something out of the ordinary. The sales axiom “Don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle!” is equally true here. If it doesn't sizzle, who needs it? ♦

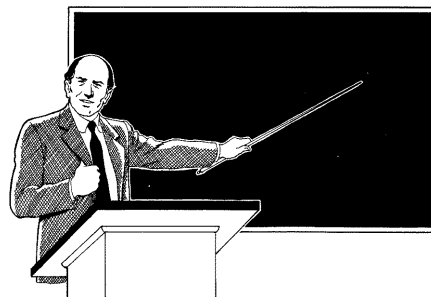
THE BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

In a recent consumer research study we asked people who said that they drink beverage alcohol to list the types of beverages they order most frequently in full-service bars and restaurants. Just fewer than 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. And when guests want a slice of lemon in their free ice water matters get even worse.

Typically the first step in driving beverage trade-up is to entice guests to switch from tap water to a revenue-generating product, such as iced tea or a soft drink. It's a good start, however, because refills are usually free, there's still significant 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 next jump up the beverage profitability ladder targets entry-level drinks made with value brands. While still profitable, you can unlock more exciting flavor experiences for the guests and generate higher profits by up-selling guests into drinks made with name brand spirits.

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

base. The cocktail once again proves the adage about the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. Here are the secrets to crafting world-class Old Fashioneds.

• **Spirit Options** — The drink is ideal for showcasing whiskeys of all nationalities. Bourbons, ryes, Canadians, Irish and the malts of Scotland are all at home in the cocktail. Brandies also thrive in the fruit mélange of the Old Fashioned, as in Wisconsin, where the drink is typically prepared with brandy.

And then there's Southern Comfort. For generations the classic American liqueur has been popularly featured in Old Fashioneds. Its semisweet character and peach-forward palate melds seamlessly with the muddled fruit and bitters. One example, the *New Orleans Tribute*—a signature cocktail at the *Refectory Restaurant* in Columbus, Ohio—is a muddled Old Fashioned made with Southern Comfort and Woodford Reserve Bourbon.

The *33 Restaurant & Lounge* in Boston has made famous the *33 Old Fashioned*, a

delectable drink prepared with fig and almond-infused Jim Beam Black Bourbon. The award for sheer innovative wizardry goes to Scott Beattie of *Cyrus Restaurant* in Sonoma for his *Burley Old Fashioned*. His muddled masterpiece features 12-year old Weller Bourbon infused with Burley tobacco.

Finally, the *New Age Old Fashioned* is appropriately named. Its recipe features a muddled base comprised of a half an ounce of limoncello, a cherry, lemon slice and orange slice. The drink is finished off with a double shot of premium bourbon and a splash of chilled champagne. The drink is exceptionally flavorful and effervescent.

• **Muddling the Works** — For many a bartender, the Old Fashioned was their first experience with a cocktail that required muddling. While now an increasingly frequent technique for

infusing the flavor of fresh ingredients into a cocktail, for decades the Old Fashioned was the only such example in contemporary drink making.

Altering the composition of the muddled base in an Old Fashioned will also significantly change how the drink will taste. Two such examples include the *Knob Creek Old Fashioned*, which is prepared with a muddled peach slice instead of the conventional cherry and orange slice, and the *Santa Anita Old Fashioned*, a classy recipe calling for muddled raspberries and an orange slice.

The only unfortunate thing about the Old Fashioned is its name. The cocktail is far from being a relic, or out of step with contemporary trends. To the contrary, few drinks are more perfectly align with what people are looking for from their cocktail experience, namely brilliant fresh flavors in an easy to drink style. ♦



SAFEGUARDING YOUR PROFITS *continued from page 2*

an alarming rate. Failing to implement an effective inventory control system places at risk the capital invested in that inventory. To be profitable, you need to know exactly what inventory you have, what you paid for it, at what rate you use it and exactly where it is at any point in time.

• **Weak Links** — Your business is only as strong and vital as your weakest employee. The bartending staff impacts every aspect of your operation, from portioning and marketing your bill of fare, to rendering prompt and hospitable service to clientele. An important step in assembling a professional staff is implementing an on-going training program. What your people don't know can most certainly hurt you and reflect poorly on your business. Educating your staff is an investment, not a hardship.

• **Shoddy Product** — A restaurant that doesn't routinely change its menu will always have plenty of open tables. The same holds true for the bar. Add some pizzazz to your beverage line-up. Shake up

your specialty drinks. Likewise, bartending staffs typically operate without a clearly defined set of recipes. The result is a loss of product consistency, fluctuating costs and shoddy, hit-or-miss drinks. Determine what they're to pour or they'll do it for you.

• **Slash Marketing** — The only marketing some operators do is to slash prices during happy hour. Promote your business from the inside out. Inform your guests about your signature drinks on bar menus and table tents. You'll notice the sales for whatever you actively promote will skyrocket.

• **Alcohol Orientation** — Increasingly more people are socializing without alcohol. Fortunately our stock and trade is hospitality, not alcohol. It is critically important to market to this growing segment of the population with a diverse and dynamic selection of alcohol-free beverages. They're loaded with profits and incur no third party liability. ♦

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Classy Muddled Mélanges

There's nothing dated or out of style about the classic cocktails from the early days of mixology. These drinks have timeless themes and rely on formulations that are every bit as relevant today as they were when first conceived. Such is the case with the venerable Old Fashioned.

If you're looking for some creative inspiration on how to capitalize on the drink's revival, consider the following recipes. ♦

Barcelona Old Fashioned

Old Fashioned glass, chilled

Add to the empty glass:

2 orange slices

1 maraschino cherry

5-7 fresh raspberries

½ oz. simple syrup

3 dashes Angostura Bitters

Muddle contents and add ice

2 ½ oz. Cardenal Mendoza Gran

Reserva Brandy

Splash San Pellegrino Sparkling Water

Add the orange slices, cherry, raspberries, simple syrup, and bitters into the empty Old Fashioned glass.

Muddle and add ice. Pour in the bourbon and add a splash of San Pellegrino.

33 Old Fashioned

Specialty of 33 Restaurant & Lounge

Created by Jenn Harvey

Bucket glass, chilled

Add to the empty glass:

1 orange slice

1 cherry

½ oz. simple syrup

2-3 dashes Angostura Bitters

Muddle contents and add ice

1 ½ oz. Fig & Almond-infused Beam

Black Label Bourbon

Splash club soda

Add the orange slice, cherry, simple syrup and bitters into the empty, chilled bucket glass. Muddle and add ice. Pour in the bourbon and add a splash of club soda.

NOTE: Fig & Almond-infused Bourbon

1 liter Jim Beam Black Bourbon

½ lb. figs

½ lb. blanched almonds

Steep the figs and blanched almonds in a liter of Jim Beam Black Bourbon for 2-3 days in a sealed glass container.

Mole Old Fashioned:

Specialty of Clover Club, New York

Created by Giuseppe Gonzales

Old Fashioned glass, ice

Add to the empty glass:

2 oz. Premium Añejo Tequila

1 tsp. Mole Agave Syrup

1-2 dashes Angostura Bitters

2 dashes orange bitters

Stir thoroughly

Garnish with an orange twist

Combine ingredients in an iced Old Fashioned glass, stir thoroughly and garnish with a freshly cut orange twist.

Santa Anita Old Fashioned

Old Fashioned glass, chilled

Add to the empty glass:

½ oz. simple syrup

2 orange slices

3 dashes Angostura Bitters

5-7 fresh raspberries

Muddle contents and add ice

2 ½ oz. Bourbon

Splash club soda

Combines the bitters, simple syrup, orange slices and raspberries in the empty Old Fashioned glass. Muddle and add ice. Pour in the bourbon. Add a splash of club soda.

Knob Creek Old Fashioned

Old Fashioned glass, chilled

Add to the empty glass:

½ oz. simple syrup

1 peach slice, peeled

3 dashes Angostura Bitters

Muddle contents and add ice

2 ½ oz. Knob Creek Bourbon

Splash club soda

Combine the bitters, simple syrup and peach slice in the empty Old Fashioned glass. Muddle and add ice. Pour in the bourbon and add a splash of club soda.

Questions for the Seasoned Pro

1. Sheep Dip's and Pig's Nose are examples of what type of spirit?
2. Imported from Martinique, this liqueur is made with barrel-aged rhums infused with spices, fruit peels and fresh cane syrup.
3. This German Brandy is made from French grapes, twice distilled in pot stills and aged in oak for 8 years.
4. Laird's is the producer of what famous American brandy?
5. What is a Marc?
6. Similar in character to vodka, this Asian spirit has been distilled since the 1500s from grain, molasses or sweet potatoes.
7. This South American cane spirit is likely the oldest distilled spirit in the world.
8. This dry Spanish liqueur is flavored with star anise.
9. This brand of pastis has been made in Marseilles, France since the 1930s.
10. Kolsch is a pale golden ale brewed exclusively in what country?
11. Legend has it that this Italian liqueur was formulated as a love potion by a coven of witches?
12. Bonnie Prince Charles brought the recipe for what liqueur to Scotland in 1745?
13. Drier and more potent than anisette, this anise liqueur is made in Greece and Cyprus.
14. What American spirit brand was the first to be marketed in a square-shaped bottle?

1. Scotch whisky: Pig's Nose is a blend of Highland malt and grain whiskeys; Sheep Dip is an 8-year-old Highland single malt
2. Clement Cr ole Shrub
3. Asbach Uralt Brandy
4. Applejack
5. Marc is a French brandy distilled from pomace—the remnants of the wine making process.
6. Shochu
7. Aguardiente
8. Ojen
9. Ricard
10. Bonn and Cologne, Germany
11. Liqueur Strega
12. Drambuie
13. Ouzo
14. Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey

A Boon for Fresh Mixology

We're a nation that takes our cocktails seriously, and while we place a premium on originality and style, what really captures our attention is flavor. Well, not just any kind of flavor. No, we thirst for flavors that taste like they once saw the light of day.

The reality however is that crafting cocktails with fruit from the neighborhood market offers no guarantee of great tasting drinks. Seasonality and unanticipated shortages cause fresh produce to fluctuate greatly in price and quality. Fruit on either side of ripeness contributes little to cocktails in the way of flavor, color and aroma, without which the resulting drinks are bound to be a little disappointing.

In a business where success is measured one sip at a time, serving guests lackluster cocktails is hardly an option. So bar chefs and mixologists are increasingly using syrups to bolster the flavor of the fruit used in cocktails. Designed specifically for making drinks, a premium brand like *Monin Syrups* can be relied upon to deliver their true-to-fruit payload day in and day out regardless of the season or market availability.

Essentially Monin takes over where nature left off. Their ultra-sophisticated flavorings are created from the finest ingredients sourced from the top growing regions around the world. As a result, Monin Flavorings taste and smell like the real thing. And when it comes to truly authentic sun-drenched flavor, you know it when you taste it.

Equally impressive is the breadth of the Monin product line. In addition to every imaginable fruit flavor, it features the likes of Green Tea, Pumpkin Spice, Lavender, Roasted Chestnut and Crème Brûlée. Or perhaps infuse your cocktails with the taste of Pineapple Chipotle, Habanero Lime, Spicy Mango or Mayan Chocolate—just one of thirteen varieties of chocolate in the range. Creative potential alone qualifies them as indispensable.

Taking a Test Drive

There's no better way to assess the capabilities of Monin Flavorings than to take a few behind the bar and put them through their paces. Living in the Southwest, I was

immediately drawn to *Monin Habanero Lime*, a sensational flavoring with a pale yellow/green hue, light citrus aroma and a healthy dose of peppered warmth on the finish. The product's shimmering opacity gives it the look of a handmade, habanero and lime juice infusion.

While its citrusy flavor and lingering heat are superb in a Mojito or Pisco Sour, the Margarita ultimately proved to be the definitive host. Less than a shot of the Habanero Lime Flavoring twisted a perfectly glorious cocktail into something genuinely memorable. Its lime component contributed appreciably to the Margarita's balance, at the same time the habanero laced the drink with peppery spice and radiating warmth.

In short, Monin Habanero Lime is a high performance product worthy of the Autobahn. It's a natural paired with premium tequilas, rums, cachaça and citrus-forward liqueurs and a likely smash in any cocktail predicated on lime or lemon sour mix.

Next up was exotic *Monin Açai*, a garnet-red flavoring loaded with lush fruity aromas and a slightly tart, currant-like finish. It was marvelous taking the place of maraschino in a riff on the Aviation, as well as in a cocktail made with fresh raspberries, VSOP cognac, lemon sour and Champagne.

The highest marks were reserved for a Margarita prepared by muddling fresh blueberries, orange slices and ¾ ounce of Monin Açai, along with premium silver tequila, lime juice and orange liqueur. The finished Margarita was a beauty with a lustrous appearance and an enticing array of succulent, long lasting flavors.

The final subject was *Monin Chipotle Pineapple*, an exuberant syrup tailor-made for contemporary cocktails. To illustrate the point, I concocted a Mojito with muddled pineapple cubes, Demerara sugar, fresh mint leaves and a shot of the Chipotle Pineapple, to which I added ice, lime juice and an elegant, well-aged rum. After a vigorous shaking, the Mojito was served in a chilled tumbler and finished with a splash of Perrier, a lime wedge and pineapple spear.

What a sublime way to make a point. ♦



Featured Hot Cocktails

Chipotle Pineapple Mojito

Serve in a tall house specialty glass
 Add the following to an empty mixing glass
 ½ cup fresh pineapple, cubed
 6-9 fresh mint leaves
 1 oz. Monin Chipotle Pineapple
 ½ oz. Monin Mojito Mix
 Muddle thoroughly and add ice
 2 oz. Premium Silver Rum
 ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
 Shake thoroughly
 Pour contents, without straining, into the house specialty glass
 Splash of sparkling water
 Stir gently to mix
 Garnish with a pineapple cube, mint leaves and lime wedge

Habanero Lime Margarita

Serve in a salt rimmed, chilled Margarita glass
 Pour into an iced mixing glass
 1 ½ oz. Premium Silver Tequila
 ½ oz. Premium Orange Liqueur
 ½ oz. Monin Agave Nectar
 ¾ oz. Monin Habanero Lime
 1 ½ oz. fresh lime juice
 1 ½ oz. lemon sour mix
 Shake vigorously and strain contents
 Garnish with a lime wedge

Fresh Blueberry Açai Margarita

Serve in a salt rimmed, iced Margarita glass
 Add the following to an empty mixing glass
 3-4 orange slices, rind removed
 6-9 fresh blueberries
 ¾ oz. Monin Açai
 Muddle thoroughly and add ice
 1 ½ oz. Premium Silver Tequila
 ½ oz. Premium Orange Liqueur
 1 oz. fresh lime juice
 1 ½ oz. lemon sour mix
 Shake vigorously and double-strain
 Garnish with a lime wheel

