

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

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THE BIG PICTURE

The Hottest, Bestselling Irish Whiskeys



Irish whiskeys have quietly become the fastest growing, barrel-aged spirit in America. According to *Adams Liquor Handbook*, sales of the classy import continued their climb up the charts growing at a blistering 17.5 percent in 2007, this compared to ostensibly flat growth for Scotch (0.1 percent) and Canadian (0.3 percent) experienced during the same period. So what's the attraction?

It may be no more complicated than Irish whiskeys are exceptionally easy to drink. They're accessible, highly aromatic and loaded with palate pleasing flavors. Equally tempting, years of steadily increasing popularity hasn't significantly driven up their price making them relative bargains. For a category long existing with nary a pulse, these are heady days.

Ireland's standards of quality are such that there is no such thing as a mediocre Irish whiskey. In a marketplace where demand for super-premium spirits is soaring, Irish whiskeys are hot commodities. The strategy is clear, give the people what they want and order more bar stools.

The bestselling brand of Irish whiskey continues to be **John Jameson**, whose range grew an impressive 23 percent in the U.S. in 2007. Founded in 1780, their accumulated

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RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

Timely Intel or Just Plain Cool

• Restaurant Stocks Rise as Confidence, Home Value Sink—

Restaurant stocks continued their December rally despite gloomy economic news that included an all-time low in consumer confidence readings and another large drop in home values.

Through trading on December 30th, the NRN Stock Index rose 8.8 percent in December, following declines of 10.3 percent in October and 5.1 percent in November. The NRN Index, which is market-cap weighted and includes all 61 publicly traded restaurant companies, still is down 19.5 percent for the year. The S&P 500 is down 38 percent for the year. [December 31, 2008 — Source: *Nation's Restaurant News*]

• Beer's Stay-At-Home Image May Give It Boost In Downturn—

Alcoholic drinks have seen slower growth rates as consumers have cut spending as the U.S. economy has tipped into recession. But beer may be gaining a

slight edge in the downturn because of its perception as a drink that can be downed at home. That may aid beer sellers in the U.S. like Anheuser-Busch InBev, SABMiller and Molson Coors Brewing Co.

According to Nielsen, dollar volumes for beer sold at retail grew 2.9% in 2008, compared with about 3.2% in 2007. Dollar volume for wine rose 4.7% for 2008 as of mid December, compared with a 6.1% rise in the previous year. [January 14, 2009 — Source: *Dow Jones Newswires*]

• U.S. May Outstrip Italy In Wine Consumption—

Despite downturn in global economy, world's appetite for wine continues to grow. Global wine consumption, on the rise in past years, is forecast to continue to grow in the coming ones, with the United States overtaking Italy as the world's biggest consumer by 2012, according to a new report released Tuesday by the International Wine and Spirit Record.

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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 backbar 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 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 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

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Notable New Releases

St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur — This artisanal, handcrafted masterpiece is made in the foothills of the French Alps from wild elderflower blossoms. St-Germain has a curvaceous body and pronounced aromas of tart citrus, pears and honey. Its floral-induced palate is expertly balanced and features layers of light fresh flavors, including: mango, rock candy and tangy grapefruit. The finish is long and satisfying. (Cooper Spirits Int'l)



X-RATED Fusion Liqueur — In a trade where flavor rules supreme, handcrafted X-RATED Fusion from France is a liqueur that warrants consideration. Its opaque, electric pink-hue in no way prepares you for the artful seduction to follow. The liqueur is surprisingly light-bodied with floral and citrus notes and a luscious, tropical fruit palate. Attention-grabbing and delicious are good traits to possess. (SKYY Spirits USA)

Domaine de Canton — Made in the heart of the France, the small batch, ginger-laced liqueur is crafted with a blend of VSOP and XO Cognacs and museum-grade eaux-de-vie, which is patiently macerated with baby Vietnamese ginger, Tahitian vanilla, honey and ginseng. The remainder of its ingredients is a closely held secret. The liqueur is sublime and it adds delectably warm and spicy ginger notes to cocktails. (Charles Jacquin)



Cointreau Noir — The liqueur is an enchanting blend of Rémy Martin Cognac and the grande dame of liqueurs, Cointreau. Introduced this in 2008, Cointreau Noir has a rich amber-hue, a satiny, lightweight body and an irresistible vanilla and fresh citrus bouquet. It's so precisely balanced that the spicy wood flavors of the Cognac and vibrant orange notes of the Cointreau are enjoyed simultaneously and to the same lovely degree. It's a marriage that clearly works. (Rémy Cointreau USA)

Plymouth Sloe Gin — Black Friars Distillery—makers of Plymouth Gin—has resurrected its legendary, traditionally produced sloe gin. The succulent ruby-red liqueur is made by macerating Plymouth Gin with fresh sloe berries and a touch of sugar all according to the original 1883 recipe. The liqueur has a generous bouquet of sliced plums and vine-ripened raspberries and a lingering, pleasantly tart finish of honey and berries. Plymouth's sloe gin is still in national rollout. (Pernod Ricard)



Mata Hari Absinthe — This is the most seductive 120-proof spirit you'll ever taste, which is fitting since its namesake is one of history's most celebrated temptresses. The liqueur has a pale sage appearance and a layered herbal bouquet comprised of sultry anise, cinnamon, spice and eucalyptus-like aromas. It's ethereal body sizzles across the palate delivering an initial wave of mouth-filling anise. That quickly yields the floor to a long lasting array of spicy, minty and warm mentholated flavors. Like Mata Hari herself, it'll charm the socks off you. (Beacon Beverage Imports)

Clément Créole Shrub — Long a favorite throughout the Caribbean, the exotic, highly aromatic liqueur is a blend of Clément silver and barrel-aged rhums that are infused with spices—including: vanilla, nutmeg and cloves—fresh cane syrup and grapefruit and orange peels from Curaçao. Créole Shrub adds magnificent spicy, floral and zesty orange notes to a cocktail. There's nothing on the backbar remotely like it. (Rhum Clément USA)

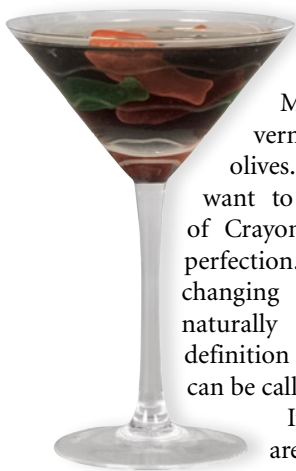


Pyrat Cask 1623 Rum — An ultra-premium, pot-still rum brimming with high-ester character and taste. It's crafted from a blend of 9, barrel-aged alembic rums distilled in the Caribbean. Cask 1623 has a luminescent, deep amber-hue and lush, smooth body. The bouquet is soft and enticing with the aromas of vanilla, chocolate and oranges. The palate slowly builds in intensity revealing layers of spicy flavors. (Patrón Spirits)

Partida Elegante Tequila — This handcrafted gem is a dramatic example of what can be achieved when patience and expertise melds with unbridled passion. Distilled from estate-grown agaves and matured in oak for 36 to 40 months, the ultra-premium has a dark amber-hue and an enticing bouquet of caramel, baking spices and vanilla. The satiny medium-weight body bathes the palate with waves of captivating spicy flavors that gradually subside into a memorable finish. (Partida Tequila)



When is A Martini Not a Martini?



Purists typically balk at the inclusion of any ingredient in a Martini other than the vermouth, gin and green olives. They suggest that if you want to be creative, get a box of Crayons, but don't mess with perfection. Others suggest that changing drinking habits have naturally led to an evolving definition of what sort of libation can be called a Martini.

If change and individuality are at the heart of the Martini's mystique, then where does one impose creative limitations? In other words, when is the drink so severely altered that it stops resembling a Martini and begins to more resemble something entirely different?

The Martini is a highly individualized drink. Vary the ratio of vermouth to the gin and the resulting cocktail will taste markedly different. Certainly changing the base liquor from gin to vodka will have a profound effect, as will serving the drink on the rocks versus the more traditional straight up. Even substituting pimento-stuffed green olives for ones stuffed with garlic or bleu cheese will dramatically alter the taste of the drink.

The nation's finest mixologists have been tweaking the Martini into glorious new incarnations. While some of these drinks may bear similarities to other cocktail styles; one can still see the genetic footprint of the Martini in their formulation. Is it possible to be overly enthusiastic and lead a Martini too far off the path? Perhaps, but why dally in the theoretical? If the cocktail looks and tastes delicious and you're holding the glass, does it really matter?

- **Modifier Bonanza** — When *Lola's* first combined **DeKuyper Sour Apple Pucker** and **Ketel One Vodka** and introduced the *Original Appletini*, a new wave of Martinis were born. Soon **Kahlúa** was enlisted for use in *Coffee Martinis* and **Godiva** in *Chocolate Martinis*. A splash or two of a liqueur in a Martini contributes flavor, alluring hue, heft to the body and a touch of sweetness. Inspired modifiers are not limited to liqueurs, however. For instance, add an effervescent dose of champagne in your Martinis heat things up with a few dashes of jalapeño juice.

- **A Muddled Affair** — The Mojito and Old Fashioneds are illustrative of how to incorporate fresh ingredients into cocktails. Increasingly mixologists are reaching for the bar muddler when constructing their specialty Martinis. Examples abound, such as the *Berry Basil Martini*, a signature at *33 Restaurant & Lounge*, which features muddled fresh blackberries and basil; the *Cote d'Azur*, a specialty Martini at *Brasserie JO*, in which muddled English cucumbers and finely chopped parsley are used to modify **Lillet** and **Ketel One Citroen**.

- **Improving On Perfection** — Garnishing a Martini isn't an obligation or act of embellishment; it's a creative opportunity. In a cocktail consisting of little more than a spirit and aperitif wine, the garnish essentially becomes another source of flavor and dimension. A thoroughly engaging garnish ensures that the Martini will be as visually appealing as it is delicious, so consider your options. ♦

Cantaloupe Martini

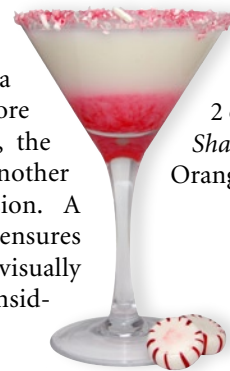
Specialty of *Lola's*, West Hollywood, Ca
Cocktail glass, chilled
Pour into iced mixing glass
2 oz. Blue Ice Vodka
¾ oz. Marie Brizard
Watermelon Liqueur
½ oz. fresh lime juice
½ oz. fresh orange juice
Shake and strain
Fresh cantaloupe slice garnish

The Starlight 200

Specialty of Harry Denton's
Starlight Room
Cocktail glass, chilled
Pour into iced mixing glass
1 ¾ oz. Plymouth Gin
¾ oz. Leacock's Rainwater Madeira
½ oz. Otime 10 year Tawny Port
Dash of angostura bitters
Stir and strain
Orange spiral twist garnish

Chai Tea Martini

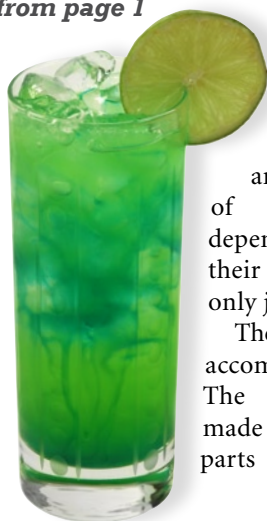
Specialty of the Original
McCormick & Schmick's
Cocktail glass, chilled
Pour into iced mixing glass
1 ¾ oz. Ketel One Vodka
½ oz. half & half
2 oz. Tazo Chai Black Tea
Shake and strain
Orange twist garnish



PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

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" backbar 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.

The Margarita is especially accommodating to Midori. The *Melon Margarita* is made with roughly equal parts of Midori, **Hornitos**

and sweet 'n' sour. 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 knockoffs, 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. ♦

Sweetener Crucial to Cocktail Balance

Anyone who has ever attempted to create the next cocktail sensation will attest to the difficulties involved. Drinks lacking character and dimension are a bore and guaranteed to send people packing. On the other hand, those with excessive amounts of flavor quickly overwhelm the palate and rankle the sensibilities like an accordion.

Balance is the long-acknowledged secret to sessionability, a term used to describe a cocktail guests can enjoy throughout an evening without it becoming tiring, overbearing or otherwise unsuitable. Although consumer preferences have been moving steadily away from sweet drinks, syrups remain indispensable behind the bar. Doled out in splashes, their role in mixology is to flavor and sweeten a cocktail, while ridding it of bitterness or biting edge.

For generations simple syrup has been the workhorse responsible for balancing the character of such classics as the Old Fashioneds, Irish Coffee, Caipirinha and Mojito. Unlike granulated sugar, simple syrup immediately goes into solution, a decided benefit when making cocktails.

Simple syrup can be made in-house by combining equal parts of sugar and boiling water. If looking for a creative

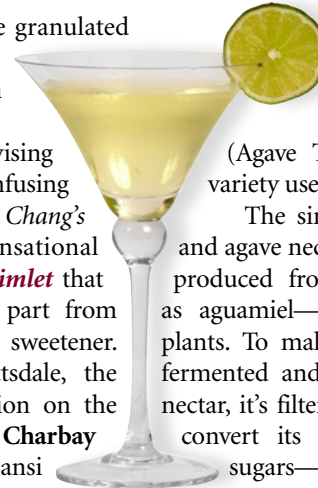
twist, consider substituting the granulated white sugar with guarapo (fresh sugar cane juice), brown sugar or raw sugar.

Another option when devising a specialty simple syrup is infusing it with flavor. For example, *PF Chang's China Bistro* promotes a sensational cocktail named the *Jasmine Gimlet* that derives its singular flavor in part from the use of jasmine syrup as a sweetener. At the *Mosaic Cafe* in Scottsdale, the *Kalamansi Breeze* is a variation on the Lemon Drop concocted with *Charbay Meyer Lemon Vodka*, kalamansi juice and ginger-infused syrup.

The Blue Agave Difference

Flavored or not, however, simple syrup is essentially nothing more than dissolved crystallized sugar. Not necessarily the stuff dreams are made of. In a culture where cocktails reign supreme, a more intriguing sweetener was bound to surface...and it has in the form of agave nectar imported from Mexico.

This all-natural marvel is made from agave, a succulent related to the aloe and lily best known as the raw product from



which tequila is distilled. In fact, the nectars most in demand are those sourced from the majestic blue agave (Agave Tequilana Weber), the only variety used to make tequila.

The similarities between the spirit and agave nectar don't end there. Both are produced from the fresh juice—known as aguamiel—of mature, hand-harvested plants. To make tequila, the juice is then fermented and double distilled; for agave nectar, it's filtered for purity and heated to convert its natural carbohydrates into sugars—principally fructose.

The result is sublime. Premium agave nectars have naturally obtained colors and pronounced aromas and flavors. They are also 1.4 to 1.7 times sweeter than cane sugar. While less viscous than honey, agave nectars typically need to be first rendered into a thinner, more easily dispensed syrup before using in drink making.

Agave syrups are already making significant contributions behind American bars. Loaded with looks, fragrance and flavor, agave syrups are capable of lifting cocktails to heights heretofore impossible relying solely on tried-and-true simple syrup. ♦

PRODUCT PROFILE

Agave Nectar Syrup Goes Uptown

Those looking to avoid the trial-and-error of creating a house agave nectar and skip directly to the part where they're making all-world cocktails, say hello to **Finest Call Agave Nectar Syrup**. Not only does this new release have all of the requisite attributes of one made from scratch—easy to use, uncompromised quality, engaging flavor and natural color—it possesses game-changing advantages you can't replicate in-house.

Finest Call's agave syrup is made from mature blue agaves grown in the prestigious tequila-producing region of Jalisco, Mexico. The plants used in its production are certified

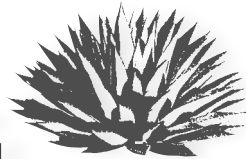
organic and were selected both for their quality and breadth of flavor. Over the decade or so it takes for blue agaves to reach maturity, they absorb nutrients and minerals from the region's rich volcanic soil, which in turn imbues its nectar with distinctive characteristics. As is often the case with fine tequilas, microclimate and growing conditions are at the heart of why agave nectars vary greatly in taste and aroma.

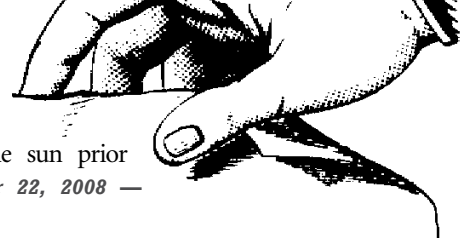
Finest Call Agave Nectar Syrup is a contemporary phenom in the making, a sweetener ideally suited for use in cocktails and sour mixes. It has the look of fine white wine, the fragrance of cocoa and malt and a delicious, honey-like flavor laced with delicate caramel and herbaceous notes. It's an appealing, high quality product with a handmade, artisanal feel.

What distinguishes Finest Call's agave syrup from those made in-house is it's

designed to exceed the demands of commercial use. First and foremost is the immeasurable benefit of being shelf-stable, so there's no need to keep it refrigerated or possibility of it going bad in the middle of a busy shift. Equally attractive is its cost per ounce, which is a mere fraction of the price boutique nectars fetch at retail.

Here's an innovative product that can be pressed into service immediately. The nectar syrup is enormously capable at smoothing out harsh or bitter aspects in lime or lemon sour mix and it easily outperforms simple syrup in Mojitos, Caipirinhas and the myriad of other classic cocktails that require on a splash or two of sweetener to stay on course. Truth be told, it appears to do everything simple syrup can do behind a bar—only better. *Kudos, Finest Call.* ♦





RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES *continued from page 1*

It predicted that the financial and economic crisis affecting many wine-consuming countries worldwide would only have "limited" consequences for the growth of the wine sector. The report forecast growth for the coming four years roughly in line with pre-crisis trends.

Global production and consumption are both expected to rise, the report said, with production expected to grow by 3.83% from 2008-2012 to slightly over 3 billion 9-liter cases. World consumption is to grow at an even quicker pace - 6% - over 2008-2012, reaching 2.8 billion cases, the report said. [January 13, 2009 — Source: MSNBC]

- German Scientist Logs Champagne Cork Speed—** Friedrich Balck of Clausthal Technical University in northwest Germany has registered the speed of a Champagne cork as it leaves the bottle. Using photoelectrical and acoustic equipment, the German scientist found that a vigorously shaken bottle of Champagne, with a pressure of 2.5 bars, expelled its cork at 24.8 mph.
 According to Swiss newspaper *Le Matin*, Balck said that theoretically a Champagne cork could reach 62 mph. This would require 3 bars of pressure, achieved if the bottle was not

shaken, but left in the sun prior to opening. [December 22, 2008 — Source: Just-Drinks]

- Chateau Latour For Sale—** Bordeaux first growth property Chateau Latour is reported to be for sale, with some pundits suggesting a purchase is close to completion. According to the Sunday Times, the renowned Pauillac estate is being marketed with a price tag of \$150m-200m (£145m-193m), although sources in Bordeaux suggest that the property would "not go for less than \$600m." [December 30, 2008 — Source: Decanter]
- SWA-Scotch Whisky Will Ride Out The Downturn —** Scotch whisky producers remain optimistic as the spreading economic flu bug sees the industry facing its first rocky period for several years. Exports of Scotch fell 3 percent by volume in the first 9 months of 2008, according to provisional figures from the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA). The slip indicates that an increasingly global economic downturn is threatening to dampen a series of record annual growth figures for the sector. [December 22, 2008 — Source: Just-Drinks] ♦

BAR TRIVIA

Vodka—Can You Identify These Backbar Celebrities?



- W. Van Gogh Double Espresso Double Espresso Flavored Vodka X. Zodiac Luxury Potato Vodka Y. Rain Organic Vodka Z. pink, Caffeine & Guarana Infused Vodka
 V. Van Gogh Agai-Blueberry Vodka U. Tito's Handmade Vodka X. Zubrowka Bison Grass Flavored Vodka
 U. Tito's Handmade Vodka T. Boru Vodka Y. Rain Organic Vodka
 T. Boru Vodka S. Absolut Pears Vodka Z. pink, Caffeine & Guarana Infused Vodka
 S. Absolut Pears Vodka R. Oval Structured Vodka
 R. Oval Structured Vodka Q. LEVEL Vodka
 Q. LEVEL Vodka P. Cold River Distinctive Maine Potato Vodka
 P. Cold River Distinctive Maine Potato Vodka O. ZYR Russian Standard Vodka
 O. ZYR Russian Standard Vodka N. Russian Standard Vodka
 N. Russian Standard Vodka M. Ulimat Vodka
 M. Ulimat Vodka L. Blue Ice American Vodka
 L. Blue Ice American Vodka K. Absolut Raspberry Vodka
 K. Absolut Raspberry Vodka J. 360 Eco Luxury Vodka
 J. 360 Eco Luxury Vodka I. SKYY Vodka
 I. SKYY Vodka H. Absolut Citron Vodka
 H. Absolut Citron Vodka G. Imperia Russian Vodka
 G. Imperia Russian Vodka F. Rain Organic Vodka
 F. Rain Organic Vodka E. IMPERIA Russian Vodka
 E. IMPERIA Russian Vodka D. Absolut Vanilla Vodka
 D. Absolut Vanilla Vodka C. XELLENT Authentic Swiss Vodka
 C. XELLENT Authentic Swiss Vodka B. Absolut Vodka
 B. Absolut Vodka A. SHAKERS Original American Vodka
 A. SHAKERS Original American Vodka

ANSWERS

Top 10 Bar Resolutions For 2009

Despite the downing economy, 2009 could well be the most profitable year your bar and you will ever have. Historically

people like socializing with alcohol in good economic times and bad. To that end, we've put together 10 New Year's Resolutions that will help make it so.



1. Bleed Off Dead Stock—The backbar is your prime merchandising space. It sends a marketing message to every guest seated at the bar. So why devote precious shelf space to products that don't sell?

2. Stock Some New Products—While you're shaking things up on the backbar, why not entice your clientele with a few new spirits and liqueurs now and again? A fresh product mix keeps things interesting for everyone concerned.

3. Create a Different Looking Bar—Move things around your bar and lounge. Reposition mirrors and neon signs. You can even move a plant

or two and spruce things up. Look to make your bar more functional and visually appealing.

4. Adopt a New Staff Uniform—Wearing the same thing day in, day out gets boring for both your staff and clientele. Start the year off right with a new look and some groovy threads.

5. Change Your Beer Selection—The same tired list of beers gets as stale as last night's coffee. There is an ever-changing marketplace in which new labels of micro-brews, imports and American beers come and go. Bring in some new brands as specials and gauge the response.

6. Review Your Drink Prices—Why is it that wholesale prices change on a monthly basis, yet we review the prices we charge for those products annually? If left unchecked, rising wholesale costs take their toll on profitability. Take some time to review your current pricing structures to ensure that they are yielding the profit margins that you need to be successful.

7. Conduct Product Tastings—Horizontal tastings are fun and informative for your clientele and staff. People tend to order what is familiar, so exposing guests to new and exciting brands creates an opportunity for them to expand their horizons and develop an appreciation for top-shelf spirits.

8. Create an In-House Newsletter—A monthly publication is a dynamic way to inform people of what things are happening at your bar, such as new promotions or special events. Put your drink menu on the other side. Most of all, make it fun reading.

9. Adopt a Cause—Go green and turn your business environmentally friendly. Hold fundraisers for local charities. Adopt-a-highway and keep the road free of trash. Do the right thing and get free publicity at the same time.

10. Do Some "Spring" Cleaning—Keeping a bar clean is an ongoing challenge. Bring the whole staff in and give the bar a thorough cleaning. Make it a catered affair and have some fun. ♦

BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

expertise is immediately evident in **Jameson 12 Year**, a blend of malted and unmalted barley whiskeys aged in ex-bourbon barrels and Oloroso sherry casks. The sherry-finished whiskeys in the blend give it a slightly sweet, fruity and nutty palate.

Also contributing to the brand's continued success is **Jameson 18 Year**. The acclaimed spirit pays homage to the Jameson's preference for aging whiskeys in Oloroso sherry casks. After maturing a minimum of 18 years in the sherry wood, the whiskey is finished for 6 months in American oak. (Pernod Ricard USA)

The next fast-tracking brand is Bushmills, the oldest, continuously produced Irish whiskey. The acclaimed range grew 6 percent, lead by **Black Bush**, a blend comprised of malted barley whiskeys triple-distilled in copper pot stills. Most are aged up to 9

years in Oloroso sherry oak casks. **Black Bush** is a full-bodied beauty with a sherry influenced nose and a rich, malty palate. Its silky body makes **Black Bush** a highly accessible whiskey, an ideal entrée to the category. (Diageo)

The third bestselling Irish in the U.S.—**Tullamore Dew**—increased its U.S. sales 20.8 percent. Created in 1829, the brand is triple-distilled at the Midleton Distillery in Cork and aged for a minimum of 3 years in American oak barrels and ex-Sherry casks. It's a premium dram at a value price. (SKYY Spirits USA)

In a country known for its abiding appreciation of whiskey, **John Power & Sons** remains the bestselling whiskey in Ireland and the fourth, fastest growing brand here. It's an elegant, unmalted whiskey whose U.S. sales increased 12 percent in 2007. (Pernod Ricard USA)

Rounding out the top fast-tracking brands is **Redbreast Pure Pot Still**, which grew a robust 25 percent. It's a prestigious whiskey crafted in heavy copper pot stills from malted barley and spring water and then barrel aged for a minimum of 12 years. The whiskey is delightfully assertive and smooth as satin. It has a bouquet laced with malt and fruit aromas and a palate brimming with the flavors of honey, spice and sherry. (Pernod Ricard USA)

As pubs become one of this country's favorite watering holes, Irish whiskeys are once again ultra-chic. Their chart-busting sales over the past decade portend great things for the category. ♦

Mike Ginley
Next Level Marketing

Beverage Authority

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