

Created by: Debra C. Argen

2006 Tales of the Cocktail Panels

[Tales of the Cocktail](#) 2006 provided guests with the opportunity to attend interesting panel discussions with trendsetting mixologists, celebrity chefs, and cocktail and culinary authors.



Get the Hot Dish hosted by the "Food Goddess" Lorin Gaudin featured Chef/Owners Frank Stitt (Highlands Bar and Grill in Alabama), Marcus Samuelson (Aquavit in New York), Aaron Sanchez (Paladar in New York), and King Cocktail himself, the preeminent mixologist, Dale DeGroff, looked at culinary trends.

Frank, "As a chef, I think about the seasons. With cocktails, I like Belinis for the summer; I know old hat, but remembering Harry's Bar in Venice with a fresh squeezed basket of white peaches, and the old fashioned way to do things, you really can't beat it. Alain Ducasse influenced me with his making three preparations of a dish using the same ingredients: raw, semi-cooked, and cooked. I love reading 18th and 19th century French recipes, which were very creative. I am not afraid to look back and borrow some ideas, and then make it cleaner and lighter, and it is a matter of technique."

Marcus, "Very little is "new," what is very trendy was once poor man's food. When I started, the most popular fish was sole, now you never see it. If I put sole on the menu, it would be trendy. In the past, CEOs spent long hours drinking at lunch, now there are very few cocktails served at lunch. Little is new in food, but rather how we pair it, such as French braising Japanese food. I love Asian cooking. When I came to the United States from Sweden, I found Chefs like David Burke and Alfred Portale were already doing it. I like layering flavors, that is how people eat, and that is how they want to drink. Food is also evolving through immigrants; it is personal, how you live and travel."

Lorin advised to get chefs behind the bar, and Marcus replied, "Counter eating is very popular now. When the chef and the bartender share space, they share more than that, they trade ingredients from the kitchen to the bar."

Dale, "Prohibition dealt a death blow to cocktails; recipes disappeared, skilled labor was lost, and people are still getting their mixes out of hoses in most bars. Latin things are hot now, and can be made be simply, using the mint from the kitchen. People want better cocktails because they have it on the food side. I like cassis, and sage and pineapple margaritas."

Aaron, "80% of food for me is from the gut, the rest is cerebral. I like to do traditional food but with taste, I like to use cuitlacoche instead of truffles. I like to serve cactus with steak; everyone will eat the steak but I want them to try the cactus. I like a drink with pineapple and jalapeno. What is savory and what is sweet? Why not carry recipes from the kitchen to the bar?"

Pairing Cocktails and Food with Robert Hess, Audrey Saunders (aka The Libation Goddess), Ryan Magerian, and Authors Andrew Dornenburg and Karen Page, helped to demystify how to pair cocktails with food.

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Robert Hess said that, "Cocktails are just like cooking. I'm creating the drink, I'm the artist." Audrey advised, to "Deconstruct wine and then create the same elements in a drink. Try a Margarita with Key Lime Pie, a Ramos Gin Fizz with a lemon tart, which will complement each other." Ryan suggested a Northeast Apple Sidecar with a Grilled Romaine Salad with Roquefort vinaigrette.

We had the opportunity to do conduct our own research, pairing a Daiquiri and a Manhattan with green olives, endive, dates, pickles, and walnuts, which seemed unlikely companions. However, almost everyone at our table liked the Daiquiri with the green olives, endive, and pickles, and the Manhattan with the dates, pickle and walnuts. Andrew liked the pickle with the Manhattan because it took him to Asia, and Audrey liked the dates and walnuts with the Manhattan.

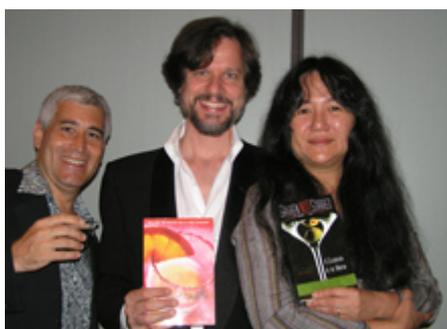


Hot Drinks, Cool Bars hosted by Jack Robertiello, with Author Simon Difford, Lucy Brennan (Restaurant and Portland, Oregon Lounge Owner "Mint 820" and Author), and Edward F. Nesta and Debra C. Argen (Luxury Experience Magazine), looked at cocktail trends around the world, and shed light on the "next new trend."

Jack Robertiello addressed cocktail changes around the world, including the new favorite, elderflower liqueur, which began in London. Simon said bartenders in London are using nitrogen gas in Chef's siphon cans. Putting chamomile tea in siphon cans to create foam to top drinks. Rum is fashionable and gin is coming back. The best bars are smaller, intimate, and more lounge-like. In Australia, they are fruit muddle crazy, called stick drinks.

Lucy likes using vegetables as cocktail ingredients; she made an avocado daiquiri that started out as a joke. It took five years to perfect, and now she cannot take it off the menu. Now she likes to use vegetables in drinks, infuses beets with vodka, uses herbs, spices, and purees.

Traveling around the world as we do, we always chat with the bartenders and check out the bar menus, and found that cachaça is making a huge impact on bar menus around the world, and can easily be found in most liquor stores. One of the more interesting ways that we saw cachaça consumed was as a "candy" in Brazil, which we created for the panel for the guests to sample. Martinique rums are also on the rise, and while cocktail pairing dinners are popular in the United States, we have not seen that trend elsewhere in the world.



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Vodka Classics: All About Vodka with Anistatia Miller and Jared Brown, the celebrated authors and creators of Heavy Water Vodka, provided an in-depth overview of the history of vodka and the some of the all-time great vodka cocktails. Although the 1960 James Bond movies popularized the vodka martini, vodka was essentially born in 1450. By 1680, Peter the Great invented the first flavored vodkas using cherry, coffee, lemon, and other ingredients, and in 1818, Pierre Smirnoff was using double filtration when making vodka. Vodka has come along way, and with it, cocktails with names like Moscow Mule (1940s), the Screwdriver (1950s), and in 1985, a true modern cocktail came along, The Cosmopolitan, created by a bartender in South Beach for a client who wanted something pink to match her outfit!

Tasting is an important part of learning about spirits, and the best way to taste spirits is to taste them at room temperature in a wine glass, to get the nose and flavor. We tasted Stoli (silky, glycerin finish), Ketel One (lemon meringue, peppery bite, spicy finish), and Heavy Water Vodka (fennel, licorice, anise, cinnamon and powdered sugar finish), to realize that vodkas are not colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

The Recipes

Vodka Martini

4 ounces Stoli vodka
.5 ounce Lillet Blanc
2 dashes orange bitters

Shake ingredients over ice for at least 21 seconds, and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a lemon twist.

Bloody Mary

1.5 ounce Ketel One vodka
4 ounces tomato juice
.25 ounce fresh lemon juice
2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
4 dashes Tabasco sauce

Build ingredients in a shaker filled with ice. Using another shaker, gently pour the mixture from one shaker to another two to three times. Strain into a highball glass filled with ice. Garnish with a lime slice and a lemon slice.

Vodka Espresso

2 ounces Stoli vodka
1 splash Cointreau
1 ounce cold espresso coffee

Shake ingredients over ice for at least 21 seconds, and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with three espresso beans.

Caipiroska

2 ounces Luksusowa vodka
2 tablespoons sugar
2 quarters of a lime

Muddle the sugar and limes in a rocks glass. Add ice and vodka, and top with a splash of soda water and stir.

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South of the Border ... Down Mexico Way, a tequila seminar with Dale DeGroff, explored the history, and culminated with a tasting. Tequila is the only DOC spirit in North America can only be made from agave grown in five central Mexico states. Agave, is a member of the lily family, and is only harvested once after growing for 8-12 years.

When the Spaniards came to Mexico, they found the indigenous people drinking pulque, which could only be drunk once per year at the festival. Only the priests could drink it all year. If anyone was caught drinking pulque during the year, the punishment was death. Talk about tough DUI laws!

Dale addressed tasting techniques. Do not sniff spirits like you would a wine (up to 14% alcohol), as tequila has 40% alcohol. Bring the glass to your face, breathe in through your mouth, take the glass away, and repeat, so that you do not anesthetize your nose. The next step is tasting the tequila twice. The first time you rinse your mouth with the tequila and then spit it out to get your mouth ready for the alcohol and clean the palate. The second time is to get the alcohol on the center of your tongue and over your gums. You will feel a burn; let air in from your mouth and blow it out your nose, to cool the heat. You will have a menthol like feeling, and the sides of your tongue will still feel the burn, for a medium finish. Of course, there was plenty of tasting after our tequila lesson.

The Recipes

Copa Verde

(Makes 4 cocktails)

4 ounces Silver Herradura Tequila
2.5 ounces agave nectar
2 ounces Clover honey
1.5 ounces freshly squeezed lemon juice
3 ounces water
½ of an avocado

Prepare the nectar with two parts mild honey and one part warm water. Puree the avocado, honey syrup, water, and lemon juice. Add the tequila and stir with ice cubes to chill. Strain into four port-style glasses.

Cocktail Japon

1.5 ounces Herradura Reposado
1 ounce sake
.5 ounce cassis
.25 ounce simple syrup
1.5 ounces grapefruit juice

Place all ingredients into a shaker with ice and shake well. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass, and garnish

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with a thin slice of European cucumber.



Cake-tails and Pie-tinis hosted by Michael Waterhouse of Dylan Prime featured luscious dessert cocktails. Michael reminded the audience "The jigger is my friend. It is not old school, because consistency is important, and ingredients do matter." At his bar, they make their own liqueurs. Everyone is entertaining at home, and an easy way to create dessert cocktails is to flavor whipped cream and cream cheese by adding your favorite liqueurs and blend them in the blender or shake them in a shaker.

The Recipes

German Chocolate Cake

Step 1:

2 ounces dark chocolate liqueur
1 ounce Malibu rum
1 ounce caramel
Splash of Frangelico

Place ingredients into a shaker, fill with ice, shake, and strain immediately into a prepared martini glass about a half-inch from the rim.

Step 2:

1 part chocolate syrup
3 parts heavy cream

Place into a tumbler, shake, and strain on top on Step 1 using the back of the spoon placed close to the ingredients and against the side of the glass. Slowly pour to layer the top of the drink.

Step 3:

Lightly sprinkle top with toasted coconut.

Tiramisu

Step 1:

1.5 ounces espresso
1.5 ounces Kahlua Especial
1.5 ounces Licor 43

Place ingredients into a shaker, fill with ice, shake, and strain into a martini glass.

Step 2:

1 part Licor 43
3 parts heavy cream

Place into a tumbler, shake, and strain on top on Step 1 using the back of the spoon placed close to the ingredients and against the side of the glass. Slowly pour to layer the top of the drink.

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Step 3:

Lightly sprinkle top with cocoa powder.

Amaretto Cheesecake

Step 1:

Take a clean dry martini glass and place the rim in freshly whipped cream, covering the rim about 1/8 inch, and then dip the glass into finely crushed graham crackers, creating an evenly coated rim on the glass.

Step 2:

2 tablespoons whipped cream cheese
1 ounce Licor 43
.5 ounce Hiram Walker Amaretto
1 ounce simple syrup
1 ounce heavy cream

Place ingredients into a shaker, fill with ice, and shake hard for approximately 30 seconds - until the cream cheese has mixed with the cocktail. Strain into the prepared martini glass.

Step 3:

Lightly sprinkle top with toasted almond pieces.

To learn more about attending the **2007 Tales of the Cocktail** (July 18-22, 2007), please visit their website at www.talesofthecocktail.com or contact Ann Rogers at: nolacocktails@yahoo.com.

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