



Raising the Bar



FOODSERVICE *news*
The Industry's National Newspaper



Proudly Presents:



THE SEMI-ANNUAL BEVERAGE MENU MAKE-OVER CONTEST

One lucky restaurant will win 2 days of hands-on staff and management training by master mixologist and renowned flair bartender Gavin MacMillan, focusing on:

- accuracy • speed • flair • cocktail synergy
- time management behind the bar • review of current menu and full menu makeover

Here's what to do: Complete the ballot below (one entry per establishment). Mail or fax your ballot to the coordinates listed below. We'll take care of the rest. Gavin will visit your restaurant to help your staff 'Raise the Bar.'

Name: _____

Establishment: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

5255 Yonge street Suite 1000, Toronto, Ontario M2N 6P4 Or by fax 416.512.8344

My, Oh My, Oh Margarita

For some reason, the world's most popular cocktail has never quite captured Canadian hearts. Instead, the margarita has always had a bit of a seedy reputation, the chief protagonist in stories that start "remember that time in Mexico." But rather than take up time and space determining our national opposition to the cocktail (bar mix instead of fresh lime, maybe?), let's play with some variations sure to temp any palate.



pomegranate-flavoured tequila would make for a fun drink special. There are also some infusion ideas. We could keep it simple and add fresh oranges to tequila for a couple of weeks – Kaban makes a few varieties to save you that step, 100 per cent agave infused with Tangerine or Lime. Such products are great conversation pieces, as bartenders are becoming more product savvy and

guests demand quality product.

The original margarita is as simple as its little brother, the tequila shot (salt, tequila and a slice of lime). Classic recipes call for three parts tequila, one part Cointreau and three parts fresh lime juice, shaken hard over ice. Made like this, the cocktail is deliciously balanced, the strength of the tequila working with the sweetness of orange and sourness of the lime. But while it will no doubt go down in history as one of the classics, we are lucky to be in the middle of a cocktail revolution, allowing us to use everything and anything in our power to concoct new creations.

Now that we have established that there are a few solid tequila options, let's start at the beginning by creating the original lime margarita. First thing's first, we need to rim the outside of our glass with a nice chunky rock salt. Sea Salt or Kosher Salt work best for rimming. It's important to keep the rim on the outside of the glass, as it is not meant to be an ingredient, but rather a garnish. Nothing is worse than taking a big sip of a margarita and getting a mouthful of salt because the bartender rimmed the inside of the glass and the salt dissolved into the drink.

With the convenience of the latest juicers, either hand presses or powered, it's shocking that we take the easy way out with our beverage programs by using the corn syrupy goodness that is our post mix beverage syrups. With global demand for ethanol on the rise, and corn being a major factor in the production of ethanol, the cost of post mix is not only rising, but set to skyrocket as the demand increases. Perhaps re-introducing a fresh fruit juice component to your beverage program is worth looking at.

Next, grab a Boston Shaker and add one-and-a-half ounces of Kaban lime tequila and a half-ounce of Cointreau. Now, with your citrus press or juicer, juice one whole lime and one whole orange into the shaker. Add ice and shake like you've never shaken before (now is the time to show off those hips). Fill your glass with fresh ice and strain your margarita into it. Garnish with a flamed orange zest.

Now there is no perfect occasion for any drink. There is, however, a perfect drink for every occasion. I think the margarita is that drink, because of its flexibility. True, it is usually served over ice or even frozen, but if shaken vigorously with ice and strained into salt-rimmed margarita or martini glass, it makes a lasting impression on the adventurous.

While you may find that you've reconnected with a first love again, its time to take this relationship to the next level. Bartenders should never feel shy about talking to the kitchen, and vice versa. Perhaps there are extra blue berries on hand, or someone ordered tangerine for a dessert recipe that has just been pulled from the menu. The connection between the kitchen and the bar should be encouraged at your establishment. A symbiotic relationship between the two will at worst lower your food waste. In this case, it's fruits and berries. But why stop there? The bar is quickly becoming a home for vegetables, herbs and spices, as bartenders evolve into bar chefs, and push the envelope of traditional mixology.

For those of you who have already started to pucker up at the thought of limejuice, how does adding a bowl of fresh blueberries sound? A little less offensive? Still a little too tart for some? What if we add a handful of strawberries and a sweet kiwi to the mix? Getting interested? As you can see, there is an unlimited supply of options out there for us to explore. I won't lie. I've explored quite a few of them.

Anyway, start by muddling seven or eight blueberries in your Boston shaker. From there, let's use the Kaban tangerine this time and follow the same recipe from above. This one works well if strained through a fine tea strainer and served strait up in a salt rimmed martini glass. To garnish this one, a paper-thin orange slice is quite aesthetically pleasing. These can be prepped ahead of time and frozen for a day or two.

A great margarita starts with great tequila. Chances are you have a few to choose from. Consider that the finest tequilas are made from 100 per cent agave. That said, we could grab the Patron and substitute some Grand Marnier for Triple Sec, making a "top-shelf" margarita. Or let's say we wanted to step it and have some fun by playing with our tequila selections. Maybe a

Now go and create and have fun!

Until next time, keep Raising the Bar, because if you don't, someone else will!



Chris Purdy is a master mixologist, bar chef and BartenderOne's director of corporate events. Having spent 16 years fine tuning his craft in various clubs, lounges and fine dining establishments across Canada, he can now be found at Canyon Creek Chophouse, located in downtown Toronto. Chris also acts as the head trainer for BartenderOne's Master Class program. He can be reached at chris@bartenderone.com.