



Raising the Bar

Sweet on Sours

With the diversity of liqueurs on the market today it is possible to make a drink taste like virtually anything. Distillers have made it easy for mixologists to shape the profile of a drink. With base flavours like vanilla, cacao and hazelnut, it's no wonder drinks like the Crispy Crunch shooter are consistently popular. I often wonder how long it will take before we see a chocolate martini dessert, where the kitchen begins to mimic the flavours being produced on the bar instead of the other way around. Perhaps the service of fusion dishes in traditional bar glassware like wraps in oversized shooter glasses and dessert mousses in martini glasses is an indication that it's already happening.

There is definitely an attraction to sweets that makes drinks like the chocolate martini popular. Everyone has a sweet tooth, but most people can't have more than a few sweet cocktails before they need a change of pace and flavour profile. With a myriad of sour liqueurs on the market, it's hard to know which flavours will complement each other. Sour peach or blueberry have vibrant eye catching colours, but too often, these ingredients find their place on the back bar and never move because no one has taken the time to experiment. Current bar books and recipe manuals will give you an overview with some recommendations. Some manufacturers will also include token recipes on the bottle itself, but there is no better way to find out what fits with your concept or client base than spending some time experimenting for yourself.

Regardless of whether you're a bartender, bar manager or concept director, (or perhaps you're all three) a little education and the willingness to experiment can go a long way towards creating some great custom cocktails. Before you spend any more money on additional ingredients like sour watermelon liqueur, look at what you can make with what you've currently got on your bar. There are lots of drink engines on the Web, including a good online cocktail cabinet for free at www.bartenderone.com where you can check-off the ingredients (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) from a huge list and it'll generate a list of all the cocktails you can make with your current ingredients.

I find that quite often the bottled sours have a bit of a laboratory look and taste to them, and if using sour liqueurs is not your speed, I encourage you to experiment with traditional sour cocktails made with raw ingredients. I guarantee that it will render better results than the bottled concoctions available, and you may just



find a new favourite cocktail in the process. Whisky and Amaretto Sours are definitely the most common in Canada. South of the border, Bourbon, Midori (melon liqueur), Pisco (brandy) and Tuaca (vanilla) sours are all very popular. If your bar makes an amaretto sour with a shot of Amaretto and barmix, try taking a few extra seconds to craft one from scratch using the sour recipe that follows and then do a taste test. The results are like night and day. The sour recipe below can be modified into many different variations simply by changing the alcohol.

This month, the Frangelico Sour is the cocktail of the month courtesy of bar chef Rob Montgomery of Toronto's Vertical Restaurant. "The amaretto sour is so last year!" he says with a sarcastic laugh. When I first heard the name, I couldn't help but say 'why didn't I think of that?' and after trying it, I'm certain that this is one of my new favourites. It's a well balanced drink that is light, refreshing and easy on the palate. Give it a try and you'll never go back! A willingness to experiment and a little bit of time are two keys to some of the most fun and rewarding research and development you'll ever do. You'll find that you can easily broaden your knowledge base about the products you serve and great ways to serve them.

This month's Move of the Month is a show stopper that must be practiced. It works on the same premise as throwing a candy in the air and catching it in your mouth. It's important to start with a few cherries in your hand in case you miss the first one... you don't want to be searching for garnish with an audience. World Champion Christian Delpech says it best... "You throw the cherry and then you pray!" Under the right circumstances you may choose to lean across the bar and feed the cherry to the guest who ordered the drink. Use discretion before garnishing a drink with something that has been in your mouth, no matter how often you brush your teeth! Until next time keep Raising the Bar!

FRANGELICO SOUR

1 1/2 oz. Frangelico
 2 teaspoons of Turbinado Sugar
 2 Key limes cut in half and squeezed or muddled
 1/2 oz. of pasteurized egg white
 Shake vigorously and strain over fresh ice in a rocks glass



Gavin MacMillan was Canada's Top Ranked Flair Bartender in 2005. He trains, competes and performs all over the world and operates Canada's Premier Bartender Training Facility, BartenderOne. You can reach him at gavin@bartenderone.com.

Move of the Month



Step One

Start with a cocktail sword between your teeth and 3-4 cherries in your hand



Step Two

With your head back and the cocktail sword completely vertical throw a cherry up in the air.



Step Three

Catch the cherry by skewering it on the cocktail sword.

To see streaming video of this move visit www.bartenderone.com and click on the move of the month link.