



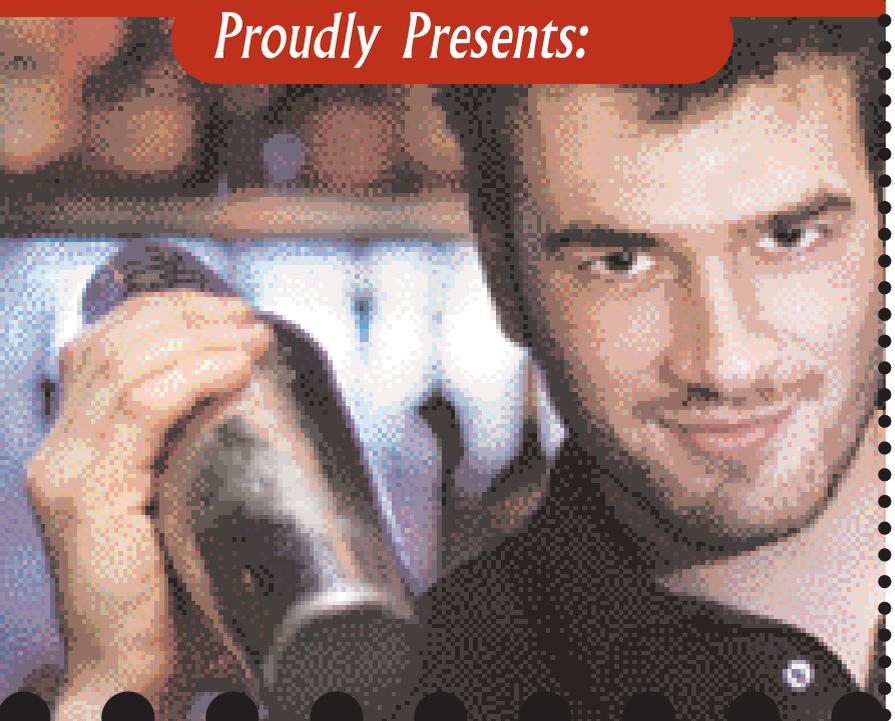
Raising the Bar



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: _____

Sponsored by:



Branding – Not just for Cattle

If you look up the word “brand” in the dictionary, you will discover that a brand is, “a mark or symbol to differentiate one’s cattle from another’s.” The key word in that definition, as it relates to your establishment, is differentiate. It takes courage to be different and faith in your vision to be successful in the long-term.

In today’s highly competitive world, developing and promoting your difference or brand is increasingly difficult. There are a few companies that have done it well and have enjoyed the rewards of successful branding. For example, when you think of the Bellini, most people think of Milestone’s. The company has a great cocktail menu, yet the Bellini is their flagship cocktail, and the one that they are known for. Why is this drink so successful? Consistent quality and eye-catching presentation ... you know that the drink is going to look great and taste great at the same time.

At the Bier Markt, located on the Esplanade in Toronto, they have made a commitment to have a huge variety of premium beer, over 100 brands from 24 countries. They impeccably maintain their draught system to ensure that you get the best beer every time you come in. They understand that maintaining the number one position in the minds of beer drinkers is paramount to their success. In short, they stand by their commitment.

The Keg Restaurant is well-known for keg-sized cocktails, most notably, the Caesar. Over time they have created an association between this uniquely Canadian cocktail and their brand, and wisely so, Canadians consume over 30 million Caesars annually. They are so passionate (and well-known) for this drink that they have concocted their very own Keg Caesar Mix version of Clamato juice, to put their own unique stamp on the cocktail that makes it almost impossible to replicate.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MILESTONES.

To that end, it’s worth noting that 76 per cent of all purchases are made at the first place we think of in a given category – that might be McDonald’s for burgers, Tim Hortons for coffee (two brands that have based their success around consistency). If you are to earn a position in the minds of your prospects and customers, you must firmly and consistently establish your difference.

So how do you do it? This part is tricky, and sadly there is no overnight key to success. Branding and association takes time, but that doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t do it, in fact, it means that you must do it now! You may choose to be known for having the coldest beer, or cocktails made with the freshest ingredients, or making a drink using a method that makes it uniquely your own. Deciding what you want to be known for is the easy part, making the commitment to stand behind your decision is considerably harder.

Each of these concepts made the choice to do one thing better than everybody else. This is not lip service in their training, they live their brands. This doesn’t mean that you have to be the best in the country or the best in the world (although a commitment like that would work wonders for any brand). It just means that you are going to provide the best beer, cocktail, service, or combination in your specific market. Trying to be everything to everyone quite often results in mediocrity across the board. Do one thing really well and consistently and your guests will come back for it again and again. Pick your area of expertise or focus and own it! I recently heard that the secret to success in any business is to do the things that others aren’t willing to do. The choice is yours. Until next time keep ‘raising the bar’ in your establishment, because if you don’t, someone else will!



Gavin MacMillan is a master mixologist and bar chef, and owns BartenderOne Corp., Canada’s fastest growing group of bartender training facilities. He is an award-winning flair bartender and published author and is considered one of Canada’s leading authorities on cocktails and mixology. You can reach him at gavin@bartenderone.com.