

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

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100th

ISSUE

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THE BIG PICTURE

Avoiding Recession Depression



Let's face it, we live in interesting times. The current money crunch has impacted all of us and changed our spending habits in ways unimaginable even a few years ago. Yet despite talk of things grinding to a halt, commerce continues.

Nightclub & Bar magazine commissioned my company—NextLevel Marketing—to conduct a consumer research study into how the recession has affected on-premise beverage trends. We interviewed more than 1000 people who frequent nightclubs and restaurants and had ordered beverage alcohol on-premise within 30 days of the interview. What consumers told us may change how you manage your business.

Not surprisingly, nearly 80% of consumers we interviewed said they're going out less often and a quarter of them are spending less when they do. In an effort to cut back, 27 percent of the consumers said they're now ordering less expensive entrees, more frequently taking advantage of special price promotions (21%) and cutting out appetizers (11%). Only 8 percent of those we spoke with are reducing or eliminating cocktail purchases.

A large majority (78%) responded that the price of beer, wine and spirits/drinks was an "important" purchasing

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PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

Suntory Hibiki 12 Year Old Blended Whisky

The requisite skill and artistry needed to blend whiskies of varying ages and types into a genuinely remarkable whisky are nothing short of astounding. Few brands better demonstrate this expertise than super-premium *Hibiki 12 Year Old Blended Whisky*.

The highly acclaimed brand was introduced in the United States this past October to commemorate its 20th anniversary. The Hibiki signature blend is comprised of over 30 handcrafted whiskies, each of which is produced at the Yamazaki and Hakushu distilleries and aged more than 12 years. Some of the malts featured in the blend were matured in Umeshu casks—barrels used in the long process of aging Japanese plum liqueur. The carefully selected malts are then combined with grain whiskies and finished with a dose of vintage whisky barrel-aged more than 30 years. Prior to bottling, the whisky is filtered through bamboo charcoal,

a process partially responsible for its sweet and mellow flavor.

The 86-proof blend is deserving of its critical acclaim. Hibiki is an accessible whisky with an enticing amber hue, a smooth textured body and a generous bouquet of honey, chocolate and ripe red fruit. The whisky's palate presents a grand array of long-lasting, spicy and semisweet flavors.

The Japanese symbol on the label means Hibiki, a word that holds many positive meanings in Japanese, one of them being "harmony." Suntory chose the name Hibiki to express the ideal balance of this whisky. —RP



Suntory Yamazaki 1984 Single Malt Whisky

There is something remarkably poignant about *Yamazaki 1984 Single Malt Whisky*. Like a fading pleasant dream, when this great malt is gone, it's gone. There'll be none to replace it. Released to commemorate the distillery's 110th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of the Yamazaki brand, this extraordinary malt is a slice of life not to be missed.



Created in 1984, Suntory Yamazaki is the most popular single malt whisky in Japan and the thirteenth bestselling single malt whisky in the world last year. All Suntory whiskys are double-distilled in copper pot stills from high-grade barley malt and pure spring water drawn from the

Vale of Yamazaki, the same water prized by the famous Japanese tea ceremony master Senno Rikyu.

A significant portion of Yamazaki's success can be attributed to it being aged in three different varieties of oak—American, Spanish and Japanese. The native Mizunara oak barrels imbue the whisky with its distinctive sweet fragrance.

Yamazaki 1984 Single Malt is exquisite. It has a deep amber hue, a satiny full body and a glorious bouquet of cinnamon, ripe red fruit, toffee and incense. On the palate, the 96-proof malt shows tremendous depth of character and the flavors of vanilla, black cherries, honey and lingering wisps of peaty smoke.

This past October, 300 individually numbered bottles of Yamazaki 1984 were released in the United States. Like the return of Haley's Comet, this was a once in a lifetime event not to be missed. —RP

Notable New Releases



SKYY Infusions Pineapple — Among the top lottery picks of the Class of 2009 is SKYY Infusions Pineapple. The all-natural infusion is made by steeping super-premium SKYY Vodka with freshly pressed pineapples. Over the passage of time, the featherweight vodka becomes saturated with the lush aroma and tangy flavor of pineapple. If someone doesn't have a good time making cocktails with this outrageously delicious spirit, check his or her pulse and call a medic. (SKYY Spirits)

Plymouth Gin — deserves its status as the world's finest light spirit, an accolade awarded by judges at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. The venerable brand is distilled in a large copper alembic still using pure grain spirits, soft Dartmoor water and an infusion of seven hand-selected botanicals. A quick sniff is all that's necessary to understand Plymouth Gin's enduring popularity. It has an expansive, citrus and juniper bouquet and a balanced palate of juniper, coriander, orange and lemon. The gin finishes long and is brimming with flavor. (Pernod Ricard)

ZEN Green Tea Liqueur — There's something rather confident about a product like ZEN Green Tea Liqueur that doesn't feel the need to overstate its case. It's delectably understated, yet varied with nuance and appeal. The shining ingredient in the liqueur is ultra-premium Kyoto green tea, leaves cultivated by one of Japan's finest tea brands, Marukyu-Koyama-En. The master distiller uses a blend of whole and ground green tea leaves, herbs, lemongrass and spices to infuse the spirits. Rest assured that there isn't another liqueur on the market equal in intrigue as Suntory ZEN. (SKYY Spirits)

Mount Gay 1703 Old Cask Selection — is a sterling example of how seductive barrel-aged rums can be. Priced just under \$100, this ultra-sophisticated spirit is a blend of rums ranging in age from 10 to 30 years drawn from the impressive Mount Gay cellars. Its bouquet alone is worth the price of admission, which means that its lingering finish of oak, caramel, ripe banana and spiced fruit is thrown into the deal for free. Clearly a rum created with a snifter in mind. (Remy Cointreau USA)



360 Eco-Luxury Vodka — Being eco-friendly is becoming increasingly important to vodka producers. But regardless of whether a spirit has a small carbon footprint, it still needs to satisfy the senses. 360 Eco-Luxury Vodka does just that. The top-shelf spirit is produced using 21st century thinking and state-of-the-art technology. Alone in a glass, the vodka has a glimmering, crystal clear appearance and notes of citrus, nutty almond and sweet grain. Every aspect of its production and packaging is brilliantly conceived and eco-friendly. It's a great product with immaculate karma. Kudos! (McCormick)



With the holidays just around the corner, we thought you'd appreciate a great rum cake recipe. —Roberto de Tucson

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups of dried fruit
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup brown sugar
- lemon juice
- nuts
- 1 bottle of dark rum

Sample the rum to check for quality. Check the rum again. To be sure it is the highest quality, pour one level cup and drink. Repeat. Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon and beat again.

Make sure the rum is still okay. Cry one tup. Turn off the mixer. Break two legs and add to the bowl, and chuck in one cup of dried fruit. Mix on the turner. If the fried fruit gets tuck in the braterers, pry it loose with a drowscriber.

Sample the rum to check tonsisticity. Next, tift two cups of salt. Or something. Who cares? Check the rum. Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nutes. Add one table. Spoon. Of sugar or something. Whatever you can find.

Grease the oven. Turn the cake tin to 350 degrees. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out the window. Check the rum again and go to bed.

Champagne Classics Dressed to the Nines



Don't get caught toasting the New Year with something boring in your glass. This time why not ring in the new with a truly inspired cocktail worthy of the occasion. For those times when an ordinary cocktail won't do, savvy mixologists invariably enlist the drink making services of the grand dame of sparkling wines—Champagne.

Champagne's effervescence and sensational flavors can transform a lifeless cocktail into something genuinely memorable. They're light, effervescent and exceptionally delicious. Reusable bottle-stoppers will keep the wine carbonated overnight, so you can pour it into cocktails without being concerned that the unused portion will go flat and be wasted.

The venerable Champagne Cocktail was named one of the ten best drinks by Esquire Magazine in 1934. One famous variation of the drink originated at London's Savoy Hotel in the 1920s. The *Savoy Champagne Cocktail* was made with an Angostura Bitters saturated sugar cube,

equal parts of Grand Marnier and V.S. cognac, filled with chilled Champagne and garnished with an orange twist.

With the New Year fast approaching, this year why not treat your guests with truly inspired libations worthy of the occasion? ♦



The Zen Of New Years

Champagne glass (9 oz.), chilled
Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass
 1 3/4 oz. Zen Green Tea Liqueur
 2 oz. sweet 'n' sour
Shake and strain
 Fill with 3 oz. chilled Champagne
 Lemon twist spiral garnish

Countdown Cocktail

Champagne glass (9 oz.), chilled
Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass
 3/4 oz. SKYY Infusions Citrus
 3/4 oz. Midori
 1/2 oz. fresh lime juice
 1 1/2 oz. sweet 'n' sour
Shake and strain
 Fill with chilled Champagne
 Garnish with a lemon twist spiral

A Wild Turkey New Years

Rocks or Old Fashioned glass
Build in glass
 3 dashes Angostura Bitters
 1/2 oz. simple syrup
 2 peach slices (peeled)
 1 orange slice
Muddle contents and add ice
 2 1/2 oz. Wild Turkey Bourbon
 Top with chilled Champagne
 Garnish with a peach slice

The Sky's The Limit

Champagne glass (9 oz.), chilled
Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass
 3/4 oz. SKYY Infusions Raspberry
 3/4 oz. SKYY Infusions Citrus
 1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice
 1 oz. orange juice
Shake and strain
 Fill with chilled Champagne
 Garnish with a lemon twist spiral

Blueberry Fizz

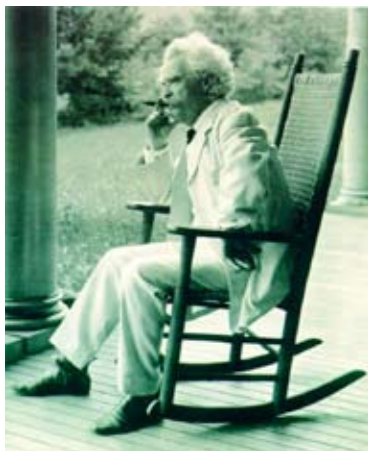
Specialty of Bookmarks, NYC
 Champagne glass, chilled
Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass
 10-12 fresh blueberries
 1 tsp white sugar
 1/4 oz. fresh lime juice
 1/4 oz. simple syrup
Muddle contents and add ice
 1/2 oz. Grand Marnier
 3 oz. chilled Moët & Chandon Champagne
 Garnish with 3 blueberries on a pick

MIXOLOGY EVENTS IN THE NEWS

“...And Never Shall the Twain Meet”

Mark Twain was once challenged by a customs inspector who had found a bottle of bourbon in a suitcase that the famed author had insisted contained only clothing. Twain defended himself, “It's the truth, sir. That is my much needed expiate nightcap.”

It seems that Twain, a.k.a. Samuel Clemens, went nowhere without his bourbon. While staying at the Savage Club in London, during an extended visit to England, Twain's stash



of bourbon was exhausted. Asked by his hosts how he was enjoying the accommodations, he said they were fine except for the lack of his bourbon. Determined to make the famous American visitor comfortable, club members secured two cases of bourbon for him. But on the day they arrived, Twain was called home unexpectedly.

“Save them,” Twain pronounced as he departed. “Let no one touch them while I am gone.”

And so it was—for decades. Twain never returned.

Shortly before the Savage Club was destroyed in World War II, a reporter for the Detroit Free Press got a look at the two cases kept in the sub-basement. He informed his English guide that the club was absolved of its pledge, since Twain had died many years before.

“We know of his death,” the guide replied. “But he told us to keep them until he came back. And, of course, we will.”

Happy Holidays! ♦

Club Suntory Mixology Competition, San Francisco '09



Can You Identify These Backbar Celebrities?



ANSWERS
 A. St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur B. Hendrick's Gin C. Scorpion Mezcal Añejo D. Partida Elegante Tequila E. Right Gin F. Grand Marnier Cuvee du Cent Cinqquanteatre
 G. Gran Patron Burdeos H. Hennessy X.O. Cognac I. Tanteo Jalapeño Tequila J. Remy Martin XO Fine Champagne Cognac K. ZEN Green Tea Liqueur

BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

consideration, while 28% of those people said price was now a “very important” factor. Six out of ten consumers rated “everyday drink prices a good value” as the most important beverage program element.

In a marketplace loaded with options, consumers are increasingly turning to the internet when choosing where to frequent. Nearly 8 out of 10 people told us they rely on recommendations of local bloggers and on-line entertainment reviewers. A third of the consumers decide where to go based on an establishment’s web site. Regarding what features they’re looking for in a bar, the largest response was stocking a great beer selection (47%), followed closely by offering a wide range of drink prices (42%) and a great spirit/cocktail selection (41%).

It’s particularly interesting to learn what motivates people to order a particular cocktail or drink. As it turns out 90 percent of the consumers read a bar or restaurant’s drink menu and for 25 percent of them it’s how they decide what to order. More

than half of the consumers said that they prefer a standalone drink menu compared to 17 percent who rely on drink listings on tabletop cards and 11 percent who prefer drinks be promoted in the food menu. Nearly 6 out of 10 surveyed said that they want the drink menu left on the table at all times.

Over 80 percent of the consumers told us it’s important that drink prices be listed on menus, followed closely by drink descriptions (68%), pictures of the drinks (50%) and listing of the brand name products used in making the drink (40%). According to the research, it’s clear that if your marketing strategy doesn’t include a well-conceived drink menu, you might be spinning your wheels.

The study looked at attitudes toward ordering premium brands. More than 80% of the individuals surveyed agreed strongly that cocktails made with premium brands taste better than those made with house brands. When asked how much more they

expect to pay for premium products, on average the consumers said \$1.81 more for premium beer, \$2.44 more for premium wine and \$2.80 more for a premium cocktail.

A dynamic in-house marketing place is a proven means of driving incremental beverage sales. Most people don’t know what they want to order in advance. Why leave money on the table? Promote your bar and reap the rewards.

Happy New Year and here’s to a prosperous 2010. ♦

Mike Ginley
 NextLevel Marketing

Robert Plotkin's Tucson, AZ



I am not a particularly interesting person; in fact, I'm kind of a bore. Not boring in a bad way, more like uninteresting. So when the person scheduled for this piece wound up being unavailable, I rejected suggestions that I interview myself. Boring people do not make good interview subjects, me included. That having been said, I'm old enough to recall a time when cocktails weren't popular. Can you imagine that?

After a stint as a bar back, I started bartending at a local restaurant while at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. My first shift was the day after Nixon was inaugurated in 1973—so you know the bar was slammed. It was a time of Gin Gimlets, Harvey Wallbangers, Strawberry Daiquiris, Rose and Tom Collins. The bar only stocked one brand of vodka, rum and tequila—and they were rarely called.

Anyway, in 1979 I relocated to Tucson and bartended and managed a bunch of places around town. It was the era of shooters, slammers and rock drinks like the Godfather, Rusty Nail, Kamikaze and Dirty Mother. Then in the prosperous '90s came Cosmos, Mojitos, high-end tequilas and a tsunami of imported vodkas. After more than 25 years, I pulled my last shift behind the stick in March 1997.

So I've relented and sat down with myself to find out more about my life behind bars in Arizona. —RP

Q: *What prompted you to become a bartender?*

A: "Being OCD and a neat freak, I greatly enjoyed being a bar back. Few people can hand wash a sink full of glassware better

or faster than me. I was a pro at cleaning ashtrays, wiping down cocktail tables and changing kegs on the fly. Then slowly but surely I became enthralled with bartending, making drinks and meeting women. So I jumped ship and got hired on as a relief bartender at a happening restaurant. That, as they say, was that."

Q: *Looking back, is there something you did when you first started bartending that now makes you shake your head in disbelief?*

A: "I made every mistake in the book. Once a guest asked me to call him a cab. The bar was rocking, so I looked at him and said, "Okay, you're a cab." Turned out to be the owner's nephew. Ouch."

Q: *What's your favorite cocktail to serve?*

A: "Although no longer actively engaged as a bartender, I still make command appearances now and then. I really enjoy preparing Margaritas and Mojitos. They require more precision than people realize, and when made well, are universally met with approval. Being fatally flawed, I'm a junky for approval."

Q: *Is there a cocktail you automatically recommend to a guest stuck on what to drink?*

A: "I've never met anyone who didn't like Amaretto Sours. The same is true about Caipirinhas, that is until they learn it's made with cachaça—which sounds foreign and scary—then they usually switch to beer."

Q: *What songs are on the recently played list on your iPod?*

A: "Get Up, Stand Up by Bob Marley, She Caught The Katy by The Blues Brothers, Redemption Song by Bob Marley, Suite Judy Blue Eyes by Crosby, Stills and Nash, No Woman No Cry by Bob Marley and In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida by Iron Butterfly."

Q: *What's your cocktail of choice?*

A: "A Martini up made with Plymouth Gin and three olives."

Q: *Who makes the best burgers in town?*

A: "The J Bar and Grill in the foothills is my favorite restaurant. Their southwestern burgers and brats are amazingly delicious."

Q: *What's your favorite website?*

A: "As a movie fanatic, you can often find me on IMDb.com (Internet Movie Database)."

Q: *What advice do you pass on to rookie bartenders?*

A: "Keep your head up and eyes moving at all times. Don't serve an inferior drink and never call a guest a cab."

Q: *What famous person would you most like to share a drink with?*

A: "Humphrey Bogart."

Q: *What's the best pick-up line you've heard that actually worked?*

A: "I once heard a guy ask a woman, "If I told you that you had a great body would you hold it against me?" She said yes, picked up her purse and they left. You gotta be kidding me!" ♦

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