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Bar Notes

Mixing It Up

GARVIN BURKE



There is no rule to how often a restaurant should change its cocktail menu but they all do it. “We typically change it monthly,” says Eric Ribeiro, the former beverage director for **Napa & Co.**, “but we’re always playing around so ordering The Bartender’s Choice is always a fun way to see what I’m currently obsessed with.”

Bartaco’s drinks menu doesn’t change as often, says Gretchen Thomas, the restaurant’s beverage director. “[I change it] twice a year; I don’t change all the drinks, though. We have staples like the margarita, mojito, caipirinha, Port Chester Reviver and the Old Thymer.”

Creating new cocktails relies on watching trends, tasting other mixologists’ concoctions and plenty of travel. “If I come across something really clever that could also work for either Bartaco or Barcelona, I’ll work on a recipe on my own, modify with my own spins, and see what sticks,” says Thomas. “This is how most mixologists get their next ideas; we borrow from each other and feature each other’s work. If I try a drink somewhere that I think is awesome and I don’t change anything about it, I’ll keep its original name because that’s the right thing to do [out of] respect of its creator.”

Ribeiro finds inspiration “in both obvious and obscure places; traveling is a great wellspring of ideas. This year I made it to Toronto, New Orleans, Los Angeles and Paris, not to mention every moment I spend in New York City with fellow bartenders and industry greats... as I always learn something new.”

Napa & Co.

THE BLACK AFFAIR

Johnny Walker Double Black, Lejay Crème de Cassis, Falernum liqueur, grated nutmeg, four blackberries and freshly squeezed lemon juice

WHAT ARE THE LEADING TRENDS IN COCKTAIL TASTES

“Rum [drinks] and rum tiki classics were hot during the summer, and when served in the fall, make us long for easy beach bum days; and local ingredient sourcing in small batch producers like Barr Hill. Gin will [continue to] be popular with botanical-laden brands like Monkey and Fords Gin offering alternatives to traditional London dry gins. [We’ll see] more housemade syrups, bitters and tonics.”

Eric Rorro

former bar manager, Napa & Co.

Bartaco

LOTHMER

Four Roses bourbon, Carpano Antica vermouth, orange and a sprig of thyme

WHAT ARE THE LEADING TRENDS IN COCKTAIL TASTES

“Only time will tell what really crops up as the trend this fall but right now I’m seeing a large interest in rums and all things Caribbean. Classic ‘island’ drinks are being made new; house infused spices are the way to make them a real signature for each bar. Some of these drinks can be heavier and a bit sweeter, so they are good [for] fall. What I hope to not be seeing this fall is pumpkin everything.”

Gracie Tosa

beverage director, Bartaco and Barcelona