



Creating Bar/Kitchen Synergies

Ryan Magarian, a mixologist at Kathy Casey Food Studios in Seattle, WA, aims to raise the bar on quality drinks by adding fresh ingredients.

One thing that characterizes the rise in cocktail culture is the move to professionalize bartending and make it more creative, linking the bar to the kitchen. At Kathy Casey Food Studios, Ryan Magarian, a mixologist and chef Kathy Casey work together with clients to come up with cocktail menus that borrow ingredients from the kitchen.

"This new wave of mixology will bring the bar into a new arena. The kitchen was not attached to the bar program. Now what I am hoping happens is that the re-education will come through and the bar will be attached to the culinary program," says Magarian. "Hopefully when you go into a high end restaurant, the drinks will be as integral a part of the dining experience as the food and the wine."

One of Magarian's goals is to get wine drinkers to drink cocktails. "Wine drinkers want cocktails that are not too sweet, not too sour, that are complex and balanced, an Opus on the nose," he says. One drink that almost made a convert out of a devout wine drinker was the Katana, made with vodka, saké, fresh lime and cucumber, served with a slice of raw ahi tuna and wasabi on a toothpick. "The sake plays with the cucumber, the vodka is the palette and the lime plays with each, with a garnish that adds a zing."

At Jaegger, a restaurant in Kirkland, WA, the team developed The Mango, made with a squeeze

of grapefruit, Appleton VX Rum, fresh lime juice, simple syrup and mango puree with a dash of Angostura bitters with a float of Prosecco, paired with smoked trout served with a sour apple and horseradish dip. "The drink is prepared in front of the customer, shaken up high by the ear and garnished with a long grapefruit curl zest. I think it's important to let the guest see the whole spiel. And it adds a perception of value which allows you to charge more for the drink," Magarian says.

Magarian believes a culinary-mixology program works best when processes are standardized to ensure consistency. Training, he says, is one of the lost elements in many bar programs. "The bar is often the afterthought in a restaurant. A new bar person should go through a regimented training schedule before he or she begins working," he says.

Magarian and Casey are now developing a mixology program for the Holland America Cruise Line. Magarian built a training manual, created culinary inspired drinks with Casey using fresh fruit and fresh vegetables along with Casey's new line of high-end cocktail mixes for foodservice called Cocktailors in three flavors, Classic Cosmo, Lemon and Lime Sour and Sapphire Mojito. "The goal is to have people leaving the ship talking about the great cocktails they had on board. Our goal is to imprint high standards," Magarian says.