



Bartenders turn to kitchen to create new cocktails



(Reuters Life!) - Bartenders are turning to the kitchen, using ingredients such as cinnamon smoke and colorless tomato juice and cutting-edge cooking techniques, to spice up martinis and other cocktails.

"The use of the kitchen -- this is where I see bartending moving," said Todd Maul, bar manager at Clio.

Maul and the chefs at the high-end Boston restaurant strip colors from tomato juice and apple cider and use the clarified liquids for cocktails. Other so called "bar chefs" are mixing drinks with juices such as yuzu and kaffir lime and spices like curry and myrrh.

"With the rise of bar chefs, I predict seeing unique high-quality ingredients such as fresh herbs, fruits, and savories," said Mariena Mercer, who helped to create the cocktails at The Chandelier.

The bar in The Cosmopolitan Hotel in Las Vegas is home to the "Fire Breathing Dragon," a cocktail flavored with raspberry, lemongrass and Thai chili and garnished with a dehydrated raspberry treated with liquid nitrogen.

"Once you put the raspberry in your mouth, the smoke releases from it," said Mercer, who compared the latest trend in cocktails to the introduction of molecular gastronomy.

The wine and spirits industry has taken notice of what is happening. Vodka producers, for example, have been looking to infuse an ever-growing array of flavors in their products.

"Vodka companies may want to think about ingredients that are not so easily accessible to bartenders and macerate them and infuse those flavors," said Charlotte Voisey, portfolio ambassador at distillers William Grant & Sons.

Despite the popularity of the innovative drinks Maul believes that the thirst for novel cocktails will likely outstrip the talent available to create them.

"There is very little established talent. A lot of people are over-reaching in what they are trying to do with whom they have. I think it's going to set back the cocktail movement a little," he said.

He advises purists and drinkers who may be overwhelmed by the exotic concoctions to speak up if they want a gin-and-tonic.

Special report: A day without genetically altered orange juice
Fri, Dec 3 2010

Related Topics

[Lifestyle »](#)

[Zagat Power Lunches »](#)