

GUEST EXPERIENCES MASTERCLASS: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

WITH **LORENZO ANTINORI,**
FABRIZIO CANNIZZARO & EMILY DOHERTY



1. HOW CAN WE INNOVATE WITHOUT RELYING ON “FASHIONABLE” RESOURCES THAT ARE SATURATED AND EXPENSIVE?

Innovation is about being curious and looking at things from a different angle. There are a few things to consider:

- Only follow a trend if it is something you stand for! If the trend is wasteful, this may not correspond with your core values.
- Visiting and experiencing other bars will help you learn the stories behind the different bar concepts, whether that be the interior or the cocktail menu.
- Once you know what else is out there, it's up to you to experiment, whether it be a new recipe or presentation of your serves.



2. WHAT ARE KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING YOUR OWN SIGNATURE COCKTAIL AND HOW DO YOU BALANCE THE RECIPE?

It's important to ask yourself the following questions:

- What kind of flavour do I want to achieve?
- What style of drink do I want to recreate?

Based on this, you can use [classic cocktail recipes](#) as your base and develop your signature from there, whilst always aiming to achieve balance. Here are some top tips to do so:

- Research flavour pairings and learn more about botanicals and techniques on how to extract the flavours .
- The more experience you have behind the bar making different cocktails, the more natural this will become.
- Balancing flavour is interchangeable, it varies from person to person and from culture to culture. For example, a well balanced cocktail for guests in Hong Kong, may not appeal to guests in Toronto.
- It's always helpful to taste your cocktails with different specs and ask others for their opinion.

BAR ACADEMY



3. HOW DO YOU DEVELOP NEW WAYS TO DRAW IN NEW CUSTOMERS AND HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE?

Social media is the easiest and quickest method to draw in new customers to your venue. Creating aesthetically pleasing content, showcasing your best offering and having consistent messaging is sure to connect with the audience.

Once you have got the guest through your doors, how do you ensure they return? Evolve your offering! You can do this through your cocktail menu, special collaborations or one-off events with likeminded people (e.g., bartenders, chefs). This will provide you with strong new content for social media and will therefore place your venue in the eyes of your target audience.



4. HOW DO YOU BALANCE THE EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING YOUR SERVES. CAN YOU STILL ENJOY A WELL-MADE COCKTAIL AS A GUEST IF IT'S AN EXPENSIVE SERVE?

Pricing strategy can be tricky, but guests are willing to pay for high quality experiences. It's all about being honest with your customers - show them why certain drinks are priced at certain points. For example, a [serve with an explosive garnish](#) or one that uses very expensive ingredients.



5. IS HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CLASSIC COCKTAILS IMPERATIVE TO BECOMING A GREAT BARTENDER?

Ultimately, it's fundamental to master the classics, as they form the basis of all great cocktails. For example, you can learn how a cocktail is balanced by looking at the basics of a long-standing serve like an Old-Fashioned.



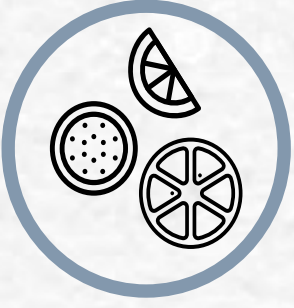
6. CAN YOU RECOMMEND SOME BOOKS THAT HELPED YOU TO LEARN ABOUT PAIRING INGREDIENTS?

The Flavour Thesaurus is a great book – it helps with flavour pairings, in season fruits, food pairings and more. Also looking at a range of cook books can be helpful to learn how flavours work together in certain dishes and how to compliment these flavours with a cocktail. Liquid Intelligence is another book we would recommend to get inspiration for creating cocktail recipes.

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R A I S E T H E B A R



7. WHAT QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK THE BAR OWNER BEFORE YOU PLAN YOUR SALES GROWTH STRATEGY?

Asking plenty of questions is essential for your own personal growth, thus helping the business long-term. Key areas to determine would be, performance of the previous year and any learnings, the goals for the year and the budgets available.



8. GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF A COMMON PROBLEM IN BAR BUSINESS AND HOW YOU HANDLE IT?

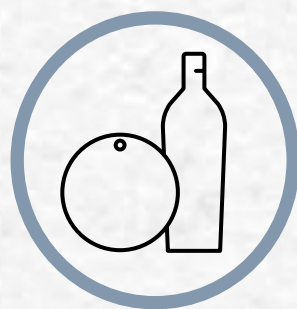
Every bar is different, but it appears there is a common problem across the board when it comes to communication from the top, down and lack of staff involvement. Having a core message and values are very important, but if you don't communicate this with your staff, or if they don't feel involved in the process, problems can occur. It's important to have regular staff trainings and staff meetings to ensure any issues are addressed and everyone is aligned.



9. HOW DO YOU MANAGE NON-PERFORMING BRANDS AND WHAT'S CUSTOMER SERVICE TO YOU?

"[Menu engineering](#)" allows us to understand the trends and the performance of menu items; whether that's cocktails or food. If any of our items are not performing, we try to understand the reason why. Is it a pricing issue, or maybe that brand doesn't fit into our beverage programme? Once we understand the issue, we take action. This might also include swapping that brand for something else. Customer service means being ready to go the extra mile for our guests and a "can do" attitude.

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10. CAN YOU SHARE YOUR WORST SITUATION WITH A GUEST WHILE WORKING AT BAR? HOW DID YOU HANDLE THAT SITUATION?

[Managing intoxicated guests](#) can be a challenge. We as operators are responsible to ensure the safety of the environment and as well the our guests' individual safety. Whenever facing a case of intoxicated guest, it's key to manage the situation responsibly. You have a team around you, ensure you look to each other for support. Language barriers can sometimes be difficult also, especially with loud noise within the venue, so it's important to listen and ask the customer to repeat if you aren't sure. This will minimise mistakes, and more chance of a satisfied customer.



11. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT COCKTAIL OF THE MONTH IN TERMS OF PROFITABILITY?

This is a great way to increase profitability by triggering guests' interest and curiosity in a new offering. It's also a good opportunity to create collaborations with meaningful brands which might offer good pricing.



12. WHAT FLAVOURS ARE GOING TO BE POPULAR FOR GUESTS IN 2023?

It is often hard to predict and can sometimes be a costly process when forecasting trends, as they might not always pan out as expected. The trends can also vary from country to country, so it is difficult to standardise any particular trends. However, we have seen recently a rise in [popularity of savoury drinks](#). Additionally, guests more willing to try new flavours and will be drawn in by [local, organic ingredients](#).