

THE RITZ-CARLTON MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2018

IN
PURSUIT
OF
SUMMER

BALI'S
SISTERHOOD
OF SURFERS

OLD CHARMS IN
NEW SHANGHAI

24 HOURS IN
VIENNA





Re



HOT ROCKS
The Besito Picante, one of Diego Baud's inventive concoctions, is a barrel-aged Negroni made with chilli-infused tequila, coffee-infused Campari and red vermouth, and garnished with a chili. Opposite: Baud is behind the cocktail menus at Hotel Arts Barcelona.

STORY BY JACOB MUSSELMANN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RUS ANSON, GRACIELA CATTAROSSI, OLAF HAUSCHULZ AND PETER TAYLOR

Mixology

Beyond the ballyhoo of the craft cocktail craze, four spirited connoisseurs are employing new senses — using everything from fragrance to Instagram — for a whole new kind of buzz.

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DIEGO BAUD

The Best in Show
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BEVIES OF BARKEEPERS ARE CONTENT TO SIMPLY STAY UP ON THE trends, but in this arena, Diego Baud is just as well an escape artist. As the head bartender at Hotel Arts Barcelona, his mission is simple: surprise and delight at every turn.

"Our guests are seeking an opportunity in which they can be momentarily lured away from their reality," he says. "I believe guests are inherently pleasure seekers, and we are their ride operators."

To do this, he starts with flavors that dance well together. His first bartending book was actually a cookbook, so he could first understand food harmony. This might explain why more than a few traditionally solid foods — such as mushrooms, beets, pumpkin and herbs — have made it into his cocktail recipes. Or why the ingredients of others make so much sense to the mind's eye. (A favorite, Let It Bee Honey Bee, swirls white tea-infused tequila with a calm of chamomile honey, "a kiss" of zesty mole, lime, egg white and pollen.)

But Baud knows an exceptional cocktail experience is not built on taste alone, but also on presentation. Once he has his potion, he retreats into the "basement of his brain" to dig up more ideas — a process that could happen overnight or last weeks. "If you want to present a cocktail in a birdcage, a chair, a shopping cart or even in a lightbulb," he says, "do it!"

Flick through his Instagram feed, and you'll realize this is no hyperbole. Drawing inspiration in part from his mother, an artist and florist, Baud knows the visual value of a fresh arrangement. For him, social media is a spur for conversation, competition and, ultimately, progress. "We have to keep studying, traveling and innovating."

For the Colorado native, the most important trends of the future are being less about the drinks and more about the chameleon-like qualities of their makers. "A bartender juggles the role of storyteller, magician, psychologist and good friend," he says. "Sometimes the art of conversation comes down to a simple acknowledgment of a guest's presence, letting them know that you've got them, and that they have entered your world."





SHAKEN AND STIRRED
Clockwise from far left: Artisanal ice is an important element of Baud's cocktails; Alexa Delgado, lead bartender at Lightkeepers at The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne, Miami; the Miami '35, made with gin, hibiscus-lime syrup, St. Germain and sparkling wine; El Farito, a gin-based cocktail made with housemade cranberry, mint and cucumber syrup.

ALEXA DELGADO

The Storyteller

@brown_eyed_grrl

AS A STUDENT OF HISTORY AND ENGLISH LITERATURE, ALEXA DELGADO has always loved stories. And it was a simple story, in fact, that unlocked her craft.

Always fond of beer, Delgado found her inspiration when she was reading a magazine about a woman who opened her own brewery, which set her off to research the trend. "I was surprised at how few women were involved in the industry," she says. "I felt inspired and decided I wanted to succeed in a world where few women were given the opportunity."

With a clipping of that article in her wallet as a reminder of her goals, the Miami native is now the lead bartender at Lightkeepers at The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne, Miami, where she updates classic cocktails with modern twists, putting "a little lore in every pour."

But unlike some stories with spines, these narratives, for Delgado, are not lost on social media. They're amplified. As someone who's been spurred by Instagram posts to try new eateries, she sees a "global word of mouth" being a net good for her niche. "Bartenders can share images and recipes with people around the world," she says. "With the inclusion of geotags, people traveling can literally plan vacations around specific bars and restaurants."

To be sure, these high-velocity narratives are speeding up the future of mixology. As for the next chapter? Along with the general resurgence of bourbon, she sees gin following whiskey as the next heir in the Japanese liquor craze, as well as another buzz-up. "Now we're seeing a generation raised on Starbucks being able to drink," she says. "So it would make sense to me if bars started utilizing different coffee elements in cocktails."

Whatever the new fad might be, Delgado is content to do her job — making people happy — sans the semantics. "At the end of the day, it's up to the preference of the person sitting at the bar," she says. "If they're happy and they enjoy their drink, it doesn't matter to me if they call me a bartender or a mixologist." Sling on.

“Syncing scents with flavors is an interesting way to discover traits you share with others. It invites more human connection — both with the bartender and other guests — than merely rattling off an item from a drink list.”

ARND HEISSEN

The Scentologist
@heissenarnd



IF YOU'RE GOING OUT FOR A DRINK, START BY PUTTING ON YOUR favorite cologne. If you're going to one of Arnd Heissen's bars, it will get you more than a little luck.

If you fancy yourself smelling of, say, vetiver (a fragrant tropical grass similar to lemongrass), you're probably into structure, and bound to like people who have everything in order or who have strong personalities. Sound strange? Step right up to Fragrances at The Ritz-Carlton, Berlin, where a menu of 18 scents — nothing more — will lead you to a libation you (and, supposedly, those attracted to you) are bound to love.

“Syncing scents to flavors is an interesting way to discover which traits you share with others,” Heissen says. “It invites more human connection — both with the bartender and other guests — than merely rattling off an item from a drink list.”

Heissen got shaking with drinks as a bored teen who wanted to impress his friends. But about 10 years ago, after nomadic stints in America, Latvia and Turkey, he moved to Berlin and was hankering for a hobby. That's when he came across books on aromatherapy and psychology that gave him a new sense of things — namely, the way smell, taste and personality traits are connected.

So, what do these profiles say about us? Rosemary, pine tree, mint and sage open your mind. Extra nice, say, for someone who tends to think too much. Similarly, he says, certain flavors can even elevate your mood.

“Grapefruit, basil, lemongrass, bergamot — these four things are euphoric,” he says. “With a person who likes grapefruit, for example, I can also give them a drink with basil, without even asking, and they will like it.”

Hearing Heissen connect mouth and mind feels a bit psychic. And it's safe to say he has created a world that is about much more than slinging delicious cocktails; it's about who you are.

“You can spray a perfume you like on a sugar cube, and if it's edible, you will like the taste,” he says. “It's all about perception.”

POTENT POTABLES
Clockwise from far left:
Arnd Heissen's Circle
of Friends, a rum and
mezcal cocktail with
prickly pear, is served in
an Aztec-inspired dish;
Bob Peters, who helms
K Lounge and The Punch
Room at The Ritz-Carlton,
Charlotte; Peters'
Carbonated Aviation;
Heissen, who created
the menus at Fragrances
and Curtain Club at
The Ritz-Carlton, Berlin.



BOB PETERS

The Rocks Star

@bob_peters

IN A STATE BRIMMING WITH DISTILLERIES — AND KNOWN FOR ITS GIN — North Carolinian Bob Peters didn't choose mixology. It chose him. Specifically, on an ordinary day in Charlotte when his buddy whipped up a tipple and asked him to sample it.

"When I tried it, fireworks started to go off in my head! There were these unexpected flavors that changed over the course of just one gulp," he says.

The Sazerac has been his drink of choice ever since. And now, as the creative director of bar operations of K Lounge and The Punch Room at The Ritz-Carlton, Charlotte, he's taken that notion of change over time into his own mixing philosophy.

"I really like the idea of using something that typically detracts from a drink, like too much dilution, and turning it on its head," he says.

Take the Strange Brew, a concoction of locally made bourbon stirred with homemade hazelnut milk, then poured over double-brewed coffee ice cubes, melting flavor right into the drink.

"About every two minutes the cocktail is completely different," Peters says. "If you have enough patience and can take small sips, then you get to try about 10 different cocktails inside one glass."

It's ideas like these that, through all the noise, have taken Peters far — including to the James Beard House in New York City in 2016, where he helped present Charlotte cuisine to the Big Apple's fooderati. But he's not afraid to admit that these days, mixology has become a bit homogenized.

"The term 'craft cocktail' gets thrown around pretty loosely," he says. "There is so much more that goes into a craft cocktail program than just throwing a mule on your menu."

Time plays a part in his ingredients as well, as he forges syrups, specialty ice, nut milks, pumpkin seed oil and other infusions from scratch, or tends the organic garden on the roof of the hotel.

The future can be seen on his Instagram feed, where moody cocktails, sexy and serious, seduce the imagination. If you have a minute to see one, you might want a good hour to taste it. ●