

renown for its brilliant fragrance and aphrodisiac properties. The sultry import has a spicy floral bouquet, and a semisweet, herbal palate.

Molecular bartender Josh Durr is an ardent fan. "Agavero makes a marvelous modifier in cocktails. It marries beautifully with a wide range of spirits and the lively peppery notes on its finish are unexpected and quite pleasant."

Aperol is a soul-soothing aperitif from Padua, Italy that's infused, in part, with bitter oranges, gentian root, and rhubarb. A trim 11 percent alcohol by volume, the brand is now gaining traction in the U.S., and Patricia Richards is glad of it. The acclaimed mixologist for the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas is impressed with its subdued bitterness and lively notes of rhubarb and strawberry. "Aperol is a versatile product that's proven to be a marvelous find for us. It's delicious on its own, and so well balanced that it makes an ideal modifier in cocktails."

In a trade where flavor rules supreme, handcrafted X-Rated Fusion from France is a liqueur that warrants consideration. Its opaque, electric pink hue in no way prepares you for the artful seduction to follow. The liqueur is surprisingly light-bodied with floral and citrus notes and a luscious, tropical fruit palate. Attention-grabbing and delicious are good traits to possess.

It's fitting this recap of burgeoning superstars concludes with American-born PAMA Pomegranate Liqueur. Not relying on its striking good looks, the all-pro delivers on its promise of pomegranate with waves of refreshingly tart flavor. In its brief existence—the brand launched in 2006—PAMA has become indispensable behind the bar.

The final advice comes from New York City drinks muse Jerri Banks. "These liqueurs are so complex and mesmerizing that a little goes a long way in a cocktail. They're the 'secret weapons' in every great mixologist's arsenal of magic."

Robert Plotkin is a judge at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition and has recently authored his 16th book, Secrets Revealed of America's Greatest Cocktails. He can be reached at www.BarMedia.com or by e-mail at robert@barmedia.com.

BEER TRENDS by Michael Kuderka

In Tough Economic Times Many Consumers & Retailers Turn to Beer

Liquor Outlet Wine Cellars might not sound like the kind of place that would stock a huge selection of great craft and traditional domestic and imported beers, but recent trends in consumer buying and current economic times have the management of the approximately 15,000 square foot store in Boonton, New Jersey convinced that right now is the perfect time to transform their store into a beer lover's paradise.

"We began seeing an steady increase in consumer interest in domestic craft beer really pick up about three years ago, and we knew that it made sense to give the ever increasing number of craft brews more room to grow in our store," explained **Mark Taylor**, Beer Manager. "What we didn't expect was the incredibly positive effect the economic slow down would have on our beer business."

"Surprisingly with the slow down, we are seeing our loyal wine and spirits buyers making a switch to craft beer," **Kevin Malavarca**, Assistant Beer Manager commented, "Our customers see the value in beer and we are stepping up with a new point of sale resource, called Style Trends™ from MC Basset, to make sure we grab this new opportunity with beer consumers."

Unlike with wine sales, retailers in New Jersey are not allowed to offer beer tastings or samplings in their stores. "Beer today offers so many styles and flavors, we needed a way to enable our customers to more easily find and choose the right beer for them, but we wanted a resource that worked for any beer brand, local, regional and national, imports and craft beers – that was when we found Style Trends from MC Basset," added Kevin Malavarca.

"The Style Trends resources provided us with beer training and made Liquor Outlet Wine Cellars' 'beer wall,' a beer information center. The shelf tags are packed with the kind of information our customers need, including a brief beer description, the



price, the beer color in a style-appropriate glass, the beer flavor and the best way to match the beer with food. Our customers love it," concluded Mark Taylor, "and we have eliminated the jumbled look of shelf talkers coming from various other sources with inconstant information, in competing formats."

"We launched Style Trends resource last August. Style Trends provides on-line resources that lets retailers truly educate their loyal customer base and sell the best that beer has to offer. As consumers become more beer savvy and seek out new beer brands from the US and all corners of the world, retailers are challenged to keep pace with customer's demands and the ever increasing number of beer styles and products," stated Michael Kuderka, Managing Partner at MC Basset, LLC.

Style Trends™ tools are available on-line, updated weekly, are customizable and have information for just about any beer brand (craft, domestic and imported); access to Style Trends™ starts at \$120 per year. <http://www.thebeerbible.com/home.php>

MC Basset LLC is the creator of the Style Trends™ beer selling solutions. Style Trends™ begins with beer training/certification, reinforces this training with monthly newsletters and updates, and then puts this training into action with our One-of-a-Kind online tools and resources designed to "Sell the Best of Beer".