

# The Basics of Bartending

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Sunday, 18 November 2007

It is quite easy to set up and start up your own bar. There are a few basic elements that a good bartender must keep in mind to run a bar with as little effort as possible. All bars must contain the most basic and important spirits and liquors as well as equipment. Also, there are essential techniques a bartender must learn about mixing cocktails and long drinks.

First and foremost is the physical set up of the bar. Location is the key. It will be to your advantage if your bar is in an easily accessible place in the room and make sure that you have enough space behind the bar. This is a good tip because you can store extra liquor and glasses. In the space, install a small sink with running water, which is important to keep hygienic, a small refrigerator and a chair or two for you to rest in your free time. The bartender must know his way in, out and around his bar to avoid confusion and to save time and energy especially when he is catering to a party of a thousand people. The rush hour, which is from one to two in the early morning, the mixing stations can serve up to 180 drinks per hour. In these situations, four to six mixing stations are set up all around the place. Inventories must be made before the bar opens.

The next step is to know your menu and learn how to mix the drinks by heart. But with the wide variety of drinks, a "Mixing List" can be posted discretely under the bar. Since you may not have a lot of time in mixing, you will not have time to read the labels of each bottle of liquor. To help in this dilemma, you can set up your spirits and liquors in a certain order. You may have whiskey to Swedish punch arranged from left to right according to the decrease in alcohol content of the different liquors. You may end with grenadine and sugar. In the refrigerator, there should be a supply of fresh fruit juices, sodas, cream, milk, lemons and other ingredients that are perishable.

Each mixing station should contain the base spirits which are Vodka, Tequila, Gin and Rum. Also, the stations should have available sets of fruit juices and extracts such as Orange juice, Pineapple juice, Lemon and Lime. These are present in a lot of cocktail drinks. Below the bar of each station, there should be available cooled soft drinks like Schweppes, Russian Water, tonic water and the usual Coca Cola, Sprite and others.

Some drinks require the use of special gadgets. All stations must have them handy at all times. A Shaker, a measuring cup, a rinsing bowl and straws should be present and ready to use. Each station must have sets of glasses in three sizes, 32cl, 25cl and 8cl. They should also have the ever-needed cloth that is placed over the mixing area to wipe off spills and deal with other incidences.

Lastly, hygiene and sanitation is very important for all bartenders. Your nails must be trimmed short and make sure to wash your hands and gadgets in between drinks as much as possible. Wash glasses when they become empty so that you will always have spare glasses. Always serve napkins to the customers so they too will keep clean.

Michael Russell Your Independent guide to Bartending

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