

For Hotel, Resort, and Casino Food & Beverage Operations

Hotel F&B™

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Members of Starwood's North America Division F&B team (L-R): Michiel Bakker, senior director; Brian Abel, senior director; Julia Tolstunova, F&B specialist; Christoph Leu, corporate chef. [Photo by Wayne Chinnock]

PROFITABLE PROFILES

Starwood aligns Westin and Sheraton menus to guest demographics. Page 30

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New Allerton lobby transforms F&B

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Splurging for breakfast at Edgewater Seattle

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Trailside snack bar captures locals

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Hard-working NYLO lobby serves entire hotel



The World of Wine, Beer & Spirits

BY FRED TIBBITTS

VARIETY AND CONSISTENCY

Fabrice Blondeau, VP, operations and quality for Sofitel Asia-Pacific, focuses on system-wide wine training.

What do you consider to be the most important elements for a successful regional hotel wine and spirits program?

As a French company, wine is a part of our culture. The most important elements are quality of wines, to bring consistency to all our properties throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and training provided to all of our service teams by our Masters of Wines.

How long will your new wine program be in place? Who are your wine partners, and what are your objectives?

It will run for two years, with the possibility of continuing further into the future. Our winery partners are Dourthe for Bordeaux, Bouchard and William Fèvre for Burgundy, Perrin for Rhône Valley, Frescobaldi for Italy, Beaulieu

and Sterling Vineyards for California, Concha y Toro for Chile, Catena Zapata for Argentina, Nederburg and Fleur de Cap in South Africa, Howard Park and Mad Fish Wineries in Southern Australia, and Margaret River and Kim Crawford for New Zealand. Also, Grace Vineyard will be available in our China Hotels. Objectives are to develop a quality wine-by-the-glass program and offer our customers a good range of wines with different price levels and wine experiences.

What is your approach to wine training for the Asia-Pacific market and how do you ensure that it is being done with excellence?

We have built this program for Sofitel Ambassadors; they each receive three days of training to be able to talk to the guests about wines they are selling. We will also have specific training for two employees in each hotel to develop them as wine specialists. We have hired two Masters of Wine who are currently writing the training program. With our Masters of Wine, we're guaranteed to have the most qualified people training our staff while not solely relying on vendor training. You have distributors today who say

to hotels, "Buy our wines, and we will train your people." This approach is dangerous because you are not controlling the training anymore, and distributors will just focus on their portfolio. We want our people to be able to sell any type of wines.

Do you think in terms of New World and Old World when you develop a wine program?

We have developed the program evenly between New World and Old World to satisfy all our customers. Quality was our first objective, but [we needed wines] having a distribution in any country where Sofitel has a property. We have three types of orientation for wine list presentation: the classic way, by countries; by type of grapes in a given region; and more innovatively, by flavors. Hotels will adopt the best presentation for their local market. ☺

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MIXING IT UP

Stirring up popular drink trends was a challenge that noted Chicago chef Charlie Baggs was enthusiastic in accomplishing. "We looked at some of the most popular mixed drink trends in the big city bar and nightclub scene to assure that we developed drink recipes that consumers will understand—but with a new, exciting twist," Baggs says.

A key element in Baggs' concoctions is Sacramento Tomato Juice from Red Gold. "Tomato juice is amazingly versatile at the bar, and we are taking the lead in sparking the imagination of thousands of bartenders nationwide," explains David Halt, director of foodservice sales for Indiana-based Red Gold, LLC.

Baggs' one-of-a-kind, trendsetting recipes take tomato juice drinks far beyond the Bloody Mary. And it's not just favorites such as the Bloody Orange Mojito (orange juice, Sacramento Tomato Juice, rum, and club soda) that have bartenders and crowds buzzing. New recipes including the Mango Tomango (mango purée, Sacramento Tomato Juice, orange juice, and tequila) are irresistible to clientele looking for something deliciously out of the ordinary. For a copy of the recipes and a coupon, call 888-926-7028 x44. —SS
Visit www.redgold.com/fs for more information.



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