

For Hotel, Resort, and Casino Food & Beverage Operations

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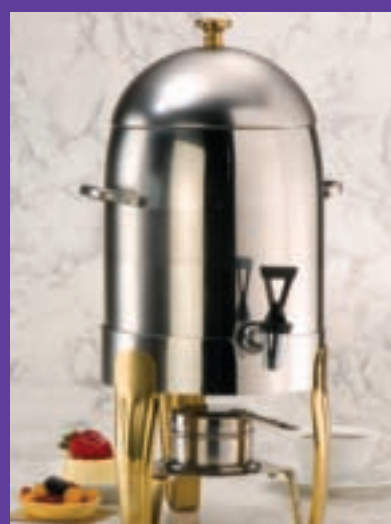
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Michael Morton, co-owner,
N9NE Group, left, and
George Maloof, owner, the
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The World of Wine

BY FRED TIBBITTS

HYATT IN FOCUS ■■■



Fred Tibbitts

Barry Prescott discusses 2008 promotions, wine training, and a new carafe program.

How did you arrive at your position?

Over the past 17 years, I have been a food and beverage director, a wine sommelier, and a beverage manager. With Hyatt for over 11 years, I was food and beverage director at two of the company's largest properties. When I moved to the Hyatt Regency Chicago and a corporate position came up, I joined the corporate office as food and beverage director. Because of my beverage background, I now head up beverage only.



Barry Prescott

What are your responsibilities as corporate beverage director at Hyatt Hotels & Resorts?

This new position was created to get beverage up to the same brand standards as other areas within Hyatt. Hyatt has done good things with food menus and recipes but not much with beverage. So it was important to start from scratch and build a new beverage program. Every product had to be analyzed. That started with the signature wine list; then spirits; and finally beers, mixers, frozen drinks, controls, and service.

What is your vision for moving Hyatt Hotels & Resorts into a leadership position in terms of beer, wine, and spirits offerings?

We must streamline and give guests quality cocktails and drinks with great service. Hyatt has had three tiers of liquor, and I plan to change that to two: preferred premium and super premium. I am also working on a beer directive and other initiatives. I believe in a mandated program to build the standards but leaving room for hotels to add their own product. A good example is beer. Each city or region must be able to add local or regional beers for the program to work. I followed the same approach for wine.

You launched a new national wine program.

What are its most important features?

I implemented a two-year signature wine program. It includes a mandatory signature list and a highly recommended list. Depending on property size, each location must select a number of wines from the highly recommended list but can still select several from the director's selections list. We also launched Canvas, a private label by Folio Studios and Michael Mondavi, as a Hyatt

exclusive wine. We have received rave reviews on the taste as well as the look of the label.

Hyatt plans to launch an innovative promotion focusing on rosé wines. Tell us what you can.

The spring 2008 promotion will be "Pink" and feature rosé wines from around the world, not so much the blush sweeter wines but the dry rosé varieties. It is important to make a promotion appealing as well as practical. The cocktails must be easy for bartenders to make, and the wines must be those guests want to try. The promotion philosophy is simply that it has to be exciting, yet increase gross revenues without displacing existing revenues. We concentrate on bars and three-meal restaurants for revenue increases. Our summer beverage promotion, "Get Fresh with Hyatt," included freshly squeezed fruit tableside or hand-squeezed fruit by the bartender. We provided recipe cards for guests, and it was so successful that all future promotions will have a guest interactive component.

Where do you feel the on-premise hotel and restaurant industry is headed with respect to wine by the taste (wine flights) and wine by the glass?

Wine flights work in certain hotels and markets. In busy convention hotels, for example, they may not work. Instead, I am concentrating on wine carafe club service. I am developing a carafe with 5 ounces, 6 ounces, and 7 ounces marked, so wine by the glass can be poured into the carafe multiple times to the premarked 5-ounce line. The guests know they are getting what they paid for, and the bartender/server elevates his service and does not have to keep topping off and bending down. This is important since wine by the glass has increased its presence—and because wines are getting more and more expensive to over or under pour.

How is Hyatt's wine program addressing the challenge of wine training?

When I implemented the signature wine list, I hired Andrea Immer Robinson to consult on the list. She developed a training DVD for each Hyatt hotel on every wine on our signature list, which includes an overview, taste profile, appellation, and distinctive highlights of each. I have

also teamed up with WineQuest to create consistent wine lists throughout the company with their online program.

Creating great wine lists means sourcing excellent values in wines from around the world. Do you believe New World wines will continue to outsell Old World wines in the United States?

New World wines are important for price, value, and expectations. The challenge is the amount of wines on our lists. The trend is to do smaller wine lists. When starting with New World wines, how many countries do you include? It is a matter of balance, and, because I do wine lists for North America, California wines naturally play a bigger role. Another challenge is to ensure balanced pricing within each grape variety. The Hyatt signature list is comprised of 27 mandated wines; 80 percent of these are from the key wine growing regions of North America. We feature boutique wines and new labels as well as old favorites. With large wineries producing as many as three quality levels of wine, it is important for each wine's appellation to be included. The other 20 percent are from France, Spain, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. And with each hotel adding their own wines, I feel we have globally balanced lists. With the growing importance of New World wines, I see them taking a larger percentage of future wine lists.

What are your favorite wines and why?

I like Sauvignon Blancs from New Zealand with my appetizer, especially shellfish ... I like the screw caps no one else wanted to touch. I like Pinot Grigios, especially the Italian versions like a Danzante. But there is a wide range of quality with this variety, so one must be careful. For reds, my favorites are big Cabernet Sauvignons and Australian Shiraz from the Barossa valley. I think Cabernets from Monterey or Napa are the best. I must mention Chardonnays: Sonoma valley makes the best Chardonnay, and Chateau St. Jean is one of my favorites. Back in the day, Chateau Petrus Pomerol or a Batard Montrachet were the wines for special occasions. Spanish Riojas and South African wines still intrigue me, but so do many others ... ●

Fred Tibbitts & Associates Inc. is a leading wine-by-the-glass consultant, working with and promoting chains around the world. Contact Fred at fredbev@fredtibbitts.com.

KEY TO THE PANTRY

CHARDONNAY 2006



Napa Cellars 2006 Chardonnay opens with an assortment of rich aromas: melons and granny smith apples mingle with clove spiced oak and coconut. The palate showcases huge fruit flavors balanced by a layer of citrus acidity accentuating the long, polished finish. Consider pairing this beautiful round wine with Chicken Pasta Primavera.

For information on the vineyard and its winemaking, visit www.napacellars.com.

TURKEY TIME

The top 200 U.S. restaurant chains are showing a double-digit increase in menued turkey items, according to Food Beat™, Inc., with turkey sandwiches accounting for nearly 70 percent of mentions. Its growth can be partly attributed to new dayparts and applications. Breakfast accounts for eight percent of menu incidences reported. Accordingly, Perkins Restaurants added Turkey Scramblers with breakfast potatoes and scrambled eggs topped with oven-roasted hand-carved Butterball® turkey breast to its All Day Scramblers lineup. For information, visit www.carolinaturkeys.com or www.butterball.com.



LIME-GLAZED WINGS

Put the popularity of Tyson® Tequila Lime Glazed Wings to work on the menu and see why they're so popular. Each fully cooked wing is glazed with a zesty combination of lime juice and tequila to deliver on-trend taste and full flavor. Medium-sized wing portions provide balanced plate coverage and visual appeal. For menuing ideas or other information, visit www.tysonfoodservice.com.