

For Hotel, Resort, and Casino Food & Beverage Operations

Hotel F&B

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(L-R) Holland America Line's Herbert Waldner, manager, culinary operations; Rudi Sodamin, master chef; and Steve Kirsch, director of culinary operations



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GREAT EXPECTATIONS



Fred Tibbitts

Stephen Rosenstock, Sr. VP of brand standards and F&B, Omni Hotels & Resorts, sees more bartenders becoming master mixologists and dynamic specialty cocktails flourishing.



Stephen Rosenstock

How and when did you enter the hotel business, and when were you first exposed to food and beverage?

I grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and all through high school and college I worked in various hotels and restaurants along the oceanfront during the summers. I also worked in my

father's restaurant, so you can say I grew up in the business. After graduating from Virginia Tech, I went to work for Omni Hotels part-time while in graduate school. The Omni in Norfolk, Virginia, was the second Omni to open. Afterwards, I went to the Omni in Miami as the director of catering/convention services.

With the ever-popular and growing audience of the Food Network,

I wouldn't be surprised to see one day

THE LAUNCH OF THE BEVERAGE NETWORK.

What are the most important elements and why for a successful hotel beer, wine, and spirits program?

To me, the most important element for a successful program is ensuring a well-trained and knowledgeable

staff. You need to have a staff that is engaged and excited. The staff must be confident to interact with guests and be comfortable with suggestive selling.

Do you rely on intuition in terms of looking over the horizon to position your hotels as beer, wine, and spirits destinations, or do you just look at the facts as you know them to be?

I listen, read, and keep up with what is taking place in the world of beer, wine, and spirits. I also rely on what guests ask for and what they buy in our restaurants.

You have a beverage program in place. For how long will it run? Tell us about it.

The beverage program in place will run for two years. It consists of core wines, spirits, and beers that all Omni Hotels must offer. Each hotel has the ability to offer other beverages, over and above the core items.

Wine flights are attracting a great deal of interest around the world. Will you include a wine flights minimum standard in the future? If so, how might your wine flights work?

I do not see including wine flights in our restaurants. However, we are opening an Omni Hotel in Fort

continued



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THE WORLD OF WINE continued

Worth this January, and it will have a wine bar that will offer wine flights based on flavor profile.

Beer, wine, and spirits training is one of the most important aspects of a beverage program. What is your approach to training, and how do you ensure that it is done well?

As I mentioned, I am a firm believer in training. We have been working with Wine Quest for several years to assist us with ongoing training modules. Training must be dynamic, and it must be fun at the same time. Omni Hotels also has an annual Educational Wine Experience where 40 chefs and F&B directors visit a country to learn firsthand about certain wines of that country.

Wine preservation is an issue when a hotel expands its by-the-glass and by-the-taste offerings. Do you specify a preservation system or let the decision be made at the property level?

It depends on the restaurant and bar and the overall volume of wine being sold. The current wine preservation system we use is the Le Verre De Vin.

While California wines are the largest selling in the United States, projections are that it will be the top imported wine market by 2010. What is your view?

I believe the weakening of the U.S. Dollar will have some impact; however, I am a firm believer that the American consumer will continue to seek out different wines from other countries to try and to enjoy.

Do you think in terms of "New World" and "Old World" wines when developing a wine program or more in terms of country by country? How do guests prefer to see wines grouped on your menus?

Country by country. To me, the general public sees it

this way as well. New and Old World are used more in our industry as descriptors. The more educated wine consumer understands the descriptors, but I do not believe they have a real preference. I do believe the general public feels more comfortable when viewing a wine list with wines listed by flavor profiles.

Five years from now, how do you see the hotel beer, wine, and spirits business changing? What will be most important for a successful beverage program in 2020?

I see more bartenders becoming trained and elevated to master mixologists and hence more and more creative and dynamic specialty cocktails with emphasis on fresh ingredients and unusual concoctions. With the ever-popular and growing audience of the Food Network, I wouldn't be surprised to see one day the launch of the Beverage Network. Could you imagine what that would do to the beverage world, based on what the Food Network has done to food? To me, a successful beverage program—whether it be tomorrow, five years, or twenty years—is to keep it simple. Stay current with what the consumer enjoys and wants, and, as I said earlier, ensure that you have a well-trained and engaged staff that feels comfortable in suggesting and recommending drinks, from cocktails to wine.

What are your favorite wines and why?

It depends on the season. In Dallas, when it is 100 degrees outside, I enjoy a nice Sauvignon Blanc or a Sancerre. In cooler months, I enjoy a great Pinot Noir with my wife when I first get home from a busy day and then a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon with dinner. 🍷

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.

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Versatile Culinary Pepper Sauces

A TASTE FOR ALL AGES

Serving delicious cuisine to a discerning, flavor-conscious clientele is a challenge met with enthusiasm by Chef Clifford Pleau, director of culinary development for Seasons 52, the seasonally inspired fresh grill and wine bar with seven locations in the southeast. Playing a role in achieving this passionate chef's high standards are TABASCO® brand Pepper Sauces.

Chef Pleau loves to tell the story of his earliest encounter with TABASCO®. What was designed to discourage the child from sucking his thumb turned into a life-defining experience for him. "I first knew I wanted to be a chef when I was four years old and Dad put [TABASCO®] on my fingers," he explains. "I didn't stop sucking my thumb because I really liked the taste."

Today, as Chef Pleau focuses on rustic cooking techniques to create highly flavorful, healthful dishes at Seasons 52, it is the variety of colors and flavors together with the consistency of TABASCO® brand Pepper Sauces that please him. He prefers using liquid pepper sauces for the stability of their flavor.

"What I taste today is what I will taste in two days," says Chef Pleau. "That's really a big plus for us."—JT

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