

For Hotel, Resort, and Casino Food & Beverage Professionals

Hotel F&B Executive[®]

MAY/JUNE 2006

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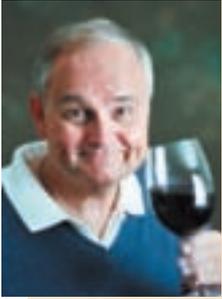
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The World of Wine

BY FRED TIBBITTS



**Fred Tibbitts, the
Globetrotting Wine Guy**

Fred Tibbitts talks with Roger Taylor, VP of Food & Beverage, Columbia Sussex Corporation, about the company's beverage program.

Fred Tibbitts For those not familiar with Columbia Sussex Corporation, please give us a brief company profile.

Roger Taylor Columbia Sussex is a privately held company that operates 100 hotels, casinos, and resorts across America and the Caribbean. The brands include Marriott, Westin, Sheraton, Crowne Plaza, Doubletree, Holiday Inn, Courtyard By Marriott, and various casinos—land based as well as riverboat.

FT Tell us about your food & beverage and hotel experience.

RT I have none. Okay, my father owned restaurants and my uncle owned hotels in Australia. The business was in my blood. I worked on Chandris Cruise Lines

for a year, then hotels in England. I came to America in 1976. I have worked for Brook Hotels, Ramada Hotels, Winegardner & Hammons, and now Columbia Sussex.

FT You have a very diverse portfolio of brands and types. Do you have a mandatory food & beverage program and, if so, how does it work?

RT Yes, we have a mandatory corporate food & beverage program. The essential components are: food, small wares, and beverage. Our GMs, F&B directors, and executive chefs all understand the importance of consistent national standards, so we have excellent compliance among our associates at all our properties.

FT Is their compensation tied to their compliance?

RT No.



Roger Taylor

We have four core menu tiers to fit various hotel types and the demographics they service, PLUS A

SPECIALTY TIER for casinos, Westins, and JW Marriott's.

FT Do you use a mystery shopper service or what?

RT No, we use Steritech, which conducts an annual food sanitation audit in conjunction with an unannounced beverage audit. This works very well. In addition, each hotel does a quarterly self-audit on food & beverage and the results go directly to me. The operations police themselves, and I am there to ensure that there are no misunderstandings.

FT Okay, so what's your beverage policy like?

RT Because of our diversity—the Montbleu Casino Resort & Spa at Lake Tahoe with eight food & beverage outlets has different needs from, say, the Marriott at Mobile,

Alabama, or the Crowne Plaza at the Orlando Airport—I've divided the policy into various tiers. We have four core menu tiers to fit our various hotel types and the demographics they service, plus a specialty tier for our casinos, Westins, and JW Marriott's, where they have a set of mandated wines by the glass but are free to fashion their own more elaborate lists with corporate approval. We also have six catering tiers: house, select, premium, an Italian theme with cavit from Palm Bay Imports and an Australian Theme with Jacob's Creek from Pernod Ricard. Our spirits, liqueurs,



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and beer policy is composed of three tiers that accommodate the various needs of our smaller properties, larger full-service hotels, and casinos.

FT How long have you been doing your beverage policy like this, and how long is each new policy in effect?

RT For over seven years. The policy is reviewed every two years.

FT What is the most satisfying aspect of your job?

RT To see the development of young managers into seasoned food & beverage hotel professionals and their growth in our organization.

FT Do you collect wine and, if so, do you have a wine cellar at home?

RT Yes I do. I have over five hundred bottles of every size and shape with some great vintages. Its temperature and humidity controlled with shelving.

FT What do you see as the most important consumer wine trends over the next five years that will influence wine sales in your restaurants and hotels?

RT New World wines, plain and simple. They're Western food friendly, fruit forward, ready to drink. And the value and price points are excellent. In addition, countries like New Zealand, Australia, and Chile and now California are leading the way, converting their whites (and even a growing number of reds) from cork to screw cap. This is great for our customers as well as our servers in terms of freshness and a marked decrease in the number of bad bottles.

FT What are your favorite wines and why?

RT Well, if you mean as a category, I'd probably have to say Bordeaux blends from around the world and California Meritage in particular ... the expression of Bordeaux blends is so marvelously different from Bordeaux to South Africa to New Zealand to Australia to Chile to California. It's something you can compare and contrast but enjoy each for its unique beauty to no end. In fact, I'm thinking of doing a wine promotion on just that, Bordeaux blends from around the world, offering customers two-ounce tastes of flights of Bordeaux blends from various countries and letting the properties rotate the flights every few days to ensure our longer-stay guests good variety. I read a tag line the other day I really liked and that I think I'm using when doing the promotion "Celebrate the Wonderful World of Bordeaux Blends—Remember Where It All Began." What do you think?

FT Roger, I'm familiar with that tag line and I think it's a real winner. And your timing couldn't be better as far as I'm concerned.

RT But, actually, while Bordeaux blends is my favorite category of wines, for me it really depends on the occasion, atmosphere, location, season, weather, and of course the company. Your palate is always evolving, so I'm always finding new wines that I very much enjoy. 🍷

Fred Tibbitts & Associates Inc. is the foremost global wine-by-the-glass consultant, working with on-premise chains around the world. fredbev@fredtibbitts.com.

corporate wine program

Doing What The French Do Well

ACCOR N.A. adds joie de vivre while expanding its attitude and offerings. BY GERALD D. BOYD

In a world where wine wars pit the Old World against the New World, it is refreshing to hear a French beverage professional say unabashedly that he likes California wine.

"I'm a big fan of California wines," admits Jean-Marc Jalbert, corporate director of food & beverage for Accor N.A., the North American arm of Accor, a French-owned hotel management company. Accor owns or manages more than 4,000 hotels and casinos in 92 countries, with such recognizable names as Sofitel, Novotel, Ibis, Motel 6, and Red Roof.

Jalbert's fondness for California wines and, in fact, all New World wines, has prompted him to move the wine program at Accor N.A. properties away from French wine dominance toward a New World approach that emphasizes wines of California, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, and Chile. The French wine section, says Jalbert, is a balanced selection of classified growth Bordeaux and Burgundy and he's adding

HOTEL DINNERWARE FRENCH TABLE STYLE

"Fantastic" repeated Jean-Marc Jalbert, when asked about the Revol Porcelaine line of dinnerware, distributed in the U.S. by Villeroy & Boch.

Jalbert, corporate food & beverage director for Accor Corporate, uses Revol dinnerware throughout his North American hotels.

After testing the plates offered by Revol Porcelaine, Jalbert chose to use multiple sizes of their all-white dishes for his Sofitel hotels in the United States and Canada. "The quality, price, and durability are excellent," says Jalbert.

Accor has found many uses for these high-quality plates. "We're using the small dishes for mini-pastries at lunch and for room service, and are using the square plates to present cheeses and entrées," explained Jalbert.

Jalbert contests the quality of Revol was the true reason he picked the plates for his hotels. "The product is fantastic. It keeps its shine and doesn't scratch at all."

Revol is among the cream of culinary-grade ceramics, manufacturing only the finest French porcelain, designed to offer solutions to today's chefs that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing.—CS
CONTACT: Mike Coggins, 800-villeroy, coggins.mike@villeroy-boch-usa.com, www.revol-porcelaine.fr



A rendering of the new Rande Gerber-managed bar at the Sofitel Los Angeles

more affordable Crus Bourgeois from the Medoc. "I've rediscovered some great Bordeaux that are reasonably priced and will complement our new lists."

Among the properties under Accor's North American umbrella are nine Accor-owned Sofitel hotels and two Sofitels that Accor N.A. manages, including Sofitel Los Angeles. Sofitel is a leader in the international upscale hotel market offering a unique French art de vivre style to prime locations around the world.

With the theme of art and life in mind, Jalbert and his assistant are busy putting a number of new ideas in motion, such as themes of art in gastronomy that will revamp and refresh Sofitel's beverage program. One project he is especially excited about is the hiring of noted bar operator and designer Rande Gerber of Midnight Oil Company, to integrate a hip and trendy design for the new bar in the Los Angeles Sofitel.

