

## Beverage Alcohol Resource Five-Day Certificate Program

The BAR program is taught by six of the top experts in the beverage industry: Paul Pacult, Steven Olsen, David Wondrich, Doug Frost, Andy Seymour and Dale DeGroff. This intensive and by all accounts challenging course has been offered twice each year in New York in the past, but will only be offered once this year in September. For each category of spirits, the class covers production and regulation, historical and current cocktails and essentials of service. There is a written test, a bartending test and a blind tasting exam. Graduates are awarded the BAR Certificate, and those who pass the exams with unusual honors and high marks receive the BAR Ready Certificate. The course costs \$3500. The list of graduates includes many of the top bartenders, beverage directors and brand ambassadors in the country.

[www.beveragealcoholresource.com](http://www.beveragealcoholresource.com)

## BarSmarts Advanced and BarSmarts Wired

The BAR team developed this bartender training program for Pernod-Ricard. BarSmarts Advanced is a four-week home study course that includes a booklet, DVDs and online quizzes for each of the four chapters. After completing the coursework, students register for a live event that is a half-day review with the BAR team, a written test and a bartending test. The course costs just \$35 (as it is underwritten by Pernod-Ricard). The course is being offered to approximately 1,000 bartenders in ten markets in 2008 and 2009. BarSmarts Wired is an online-only course aimed at broader range of bartending professions and markets where the Advanced course may not take place.

[www.barsmarts.com](http://www.barsmarts.com)

## The Society of Wine Educators' Certified Specialist of Spirits (CSS)

This recently-launched certification program includes a home study

text and an in-person written exam. Here the audience is largely employees of distributors, wholesalers and importers, though SWE Executive Director Carla Williams says it is applicable for journalists, bartenders, hotel restaurateurs and the like. The emphasis of the program is on production and differentiation in spirits, rather than on mixology or blind tasting. As the exam can be proctored by other CSS graduates, testing locations are coming available quickly. Some educators such as Harriet Lembeck in New York have expanded the program to include



a multi-week course in a classroom setting, followed by the exam. The regular course and exam costs \$340, \$310 for SWE members.

[www.societyofwineeducators.org](http://www.societyofwineeducators.org) ■

## All-Star Tequila Training

*Bartenders get a crash course from the BAR team*

This fall in San Francisco, forty bartenders from the West Coast (and one TASTING PANEL reporter) attended the Partida Tequila Immersion Day, a full-day training and tasting course taught by members of the Beverage Alcohol Resource (BAR) team: Dale DeGroff, Paul Pacult, Steven Olsen, Andy Seymour and David Wondrich. Though Pacult introduced the event, each of the spirits superstars added to the information shared throughout the day.

Steven Olsen spoke about the terroir of tequila. "Tequila is a spirit that comes from the people, from the land," he said. "We think about tequila more like wine." The importance of soil, climate and altitude and the crucial role of the harvest decision-makers more closely resemble factors in wine production than is the case with the average spirit.

After a short lesson on how to taste tequila (always taste twice, using the first one to rinse out the mouth), the class moved on to sample eight blanco tequilas. This was followed by an introduction to the history of the barrel (a Roman invention, originally made from palm tree wood) and a flight of reposados. The tasting was serious but lively; of one sample, Paul Pacult said, "This is one you want to rub all over your body."

At lunch, Steve Olsen and Andy Seymour spoke about pairing cocktails with food, but soon the group was gathered with a new set of glassware for the afternoon tasting. David Wondrich gave a talk on the history of tequila and tequila mixology in America. "There are a million stories about the origin of the Margarita," he remarked, "and most of them are demonstrably horsesh\*t." Wondrich then went on to explain how the Tequila Sunrise became the first popular tequila drink in America, and how the Daisy cocktail made with tequila became the ubiquitous Margarita.

Dale DeGroff, long famous for advocating the use of fresh juice in cocktails, said he had his first fresh Margarita in Los Angeles only after a customer requested one from fresh limes. He explained that there is no proper level of sugar for a Margarita; it's up to the customer. "If I have five people drinking a Margarita in front of me, they probably have five different versions," he said.

After the next two tasting flights, of añejo and extra-añejo tequilas (including Partida Elegante), the class adjourned—for more tequila cocktails, of course. —*Camper English*