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state of the cocktail

Our Expert Panel

Meet Julie Reiner, Audrey Saunders, and David Wondrich.

Classics with a Twist

New spins on daiquiris, Bloody Marys, martinis, and margaritas.

Masters of the Mix

When our experts are thirsty, here are the bartenders they trust.

Trend Report

What's hot, from sassy saketinis to all cocktails pomegranate.

Get the Recipes

Our panel of experts provides recipes from the city's best bars.

Masters of the Mix

Our panel of experts pick their favorite bartenders. It wasn't easy: "New York is full of folks who know how to run a bar, manage a crowd, get everybody exactly what they ordered, and make it all look easy," says David Wondrich. "Which it most assuredly ain't."



The Pour House: Stefan Trummer works his magic at Bar Masa. (Photo credit: Kate Appleton)

BY CARLA SPARTOS

Jerri Banks

• Taj, 48 W. 21st St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves.; 212-620-3033; tajlounge.com



You won't find Banks behind the bar at Taj, but you'll certainly find the creations of her cocktail genius, including the signature Juniperotivo, which we liken to alcohol nirvana. "I love her work," says Audrey Saunders. "She creates a wonderful aroma," adds Julie Reiner, who's particularly smitten with the essences Banks creates.

Winston Cole

• Zarela, 953 Second Ave., between 50th and 51st Sts.; 212-644-6740; zarela.com



"He understands balance," says Audrey, explaining why Cole's margaritas taste so good. "They're always a perfect ratio."

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New Yorkers are crazy for sake, sidecars, pomegranate, and flower blossoms. Remy Red subway ads? That's another story.



Flower power: Jerri Banks's Elderflower at Taj. (Photo credit: Kate Appleton)



It's the pom: Stefan Trummer's Magnolia at Bar Masa. (Photo credit: Kate Appleton)

BY CARLA SPARTOS

THE "IT" COCKTAIL

"Anything made with sake," says Audrey Saunders, who adds that many bars are "over-infusing" the Japanese rice beer (or wine, depending on who you ask) or mixing it with too much fruit puree. Cocktails made with pomegranate are also hot. Says Julie Reiner of her pomegranate martini: "It sells like ridiculous." Bars are now combining the two trends: Bao 111 infuses sake with fresh pomegranate, and Bar Masa serves their saketinis mixed with fresh-squeezed pomegranate juice.



Audrey Recommends: A basic saketini at Geisha, Bao 111, or Bar Masa. Sake can be likened to dry vermouth, explains Audrey, and its gentle flavor isn't overpowered by vodka or gin.

SUMMER'S HOTTEST

"It's not likely the mojito will be replaced anytime soon," says Audrey, but when the weather heats up, David Wondrich wants "a nice big Tom Collins with lots of gin, lots of ice," while Julie can't get enough of "iced tea-based cocktails."



Julie Recommends: A tea-based cocktail at Taj (the new Pomander mixes in clove tea) or one of her own signature house infusions at Flatiron Lounge.

IT'S A DATE

"I generally witness champagne or a champagne cocktail on dates," says Audrey. Julie likes the classic French 75, a blend of gin, lemon juice, and