

Spirited Entertaining

Mixology 101: Bar Essentials For Your Home

(NAPSA)—With the popularity of cocktails stronger than ever in bars and restaurants, hosts at home can update their cocktail bar at home with some basic tools.

According to Rums of Puerto Rico's Chief Mixologist Ahmed Naveira, here are the essential "drinks dozen" to set up any home bar:

- metal cocktail shaker for mixing;
- bar strainer that fits the top of the shaker to separate liquid from the ice;
- 1-ounce jigger;
- bar spoons or measuring spoons for making sure portions are accurate;
- a muddler for combining spices, oils, bitters and sugar (essential for mojitos);
- tray for garnishes;
- ice bucket and tongs;
- bottle opener;
- corkscrew;
- electric blender for making frozen drinks;
- paring knife; and
- hand towels.

All of these items can be found at department and specialty stores, including many that specialize in wines and spirits. A basket of bar tools makes a great gift for the bride and groom or the new homeowner.

"One of the easiest spirits to work with is rum," says Naveira. "Rum is an extremely versatile spirit because you have a range of styles and flavors to work with, from light to golden to dark. There are also many flavored rums on the market. When selecting rum, look for rums that have been aged. These will be smoother and more balanced. These make great



The age of the rum should determine how it's used, from mixing it in fruity cocktails to enjoying it like a fine cognac.

rums for mixing or for drinking straight."

According to Naveira, light rums, aged a minimum of one year, mix best with fresh juices. Gold rums, aged two to three years, are best with cola drinks and ginger ale. Dark rums, aged five to 15 years, should be enjoyed like a fine cognac, straight in a snifter.

Many rum-producing countries offer aged rums. By law, all Puerto Rican rums are required to be aged at least one year for a white rum and anywhere from five to 15 years for a dark rum.

"Puerto Rico is proud of its 450-year-old rum-making tradition," says Naveira. "What many people may not know is that 70 percent of all rum consumed in the U.S. is from Puerto Rico, including popular brands such as Bacardi, Captain Morgan, Don Q and Ron del Barrilito."

For more information on Rums of Puerto Rico, visit the Web site at www.rumcapital.com.