

Tea Cocktails Create Buzz

By April Corbin

After the Top Tea Cocktail competition concluded, one thing was certain: You'll never ask for a long island iced tea again.

The special event brought together the top tea cocktail entries from a pool of more than 50 submissions and named Las Vegas-local Max Solano's Genevrier Verte the overall champion.

Solano, a mixologist for Emeril's Table 10 and Delmonico Steakhouse, crafted a cocktail using China Mist Pure Blackberry Jasmine Iced Tea with Lemonade, Hendricks Gin, Agwa Coco Leaf, lime juice, vanilla and egg white.

Imbibe Magazine's Karen Foley, one of the three judges at the event, said that Solano's beverage was the best combination of each aspect the judges looked for in drinks. These included presentation, taste and how easily bars and restaurants could incorporate the drink into their existing lineups.

Contestants had two minutes to create their signature drink on stage as the crowd cheered them on. Several members shouted for samples to be given out to the audiences. While only one winner was announced, the crowd and contestants were pleased to see two age-old industries – tea and alcohol – combine for a fun and flavorful event.

The head mixologist at Lavender Tea Lounge's Matcha Ginger MargariTea, which made it to the final five drinks, said she hadn't entered the contest expecting to win but simply because she thought it would be fun to share her creation.

"I'm going to have to come up with something new for next year," she said.

For winning the Top Tea Cocktail, Solano will be featured in a center spread in Food & Beverage Magazine and Imbibe Magazine, as well as published in Cynthia Gold's book, "Culinary Tea."