

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

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NEW YORK CITY'S TOP RESTAURANTS STIR IT UP TO WIN DCA'S 3RD ANNUAL SIDEWALK CAFÉ DRINK MIX-OFF

BLT Market's Wild Blossom Named 2008's Best Summer Sidewalk Café Concoction

To celebrate the booming sidewalk café industry, the City's top mixologists competed for the winning title in the Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA's) 3rd Annual Sidewalk Café Drink Mix-Off. DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz was on hand to emcee the event and announce BLT Market's *Wild Blossom* as the 2008 winning drink recipe.

The event was sponsored by the DCA in collaboration with the New York State Restaurant Association (NYSRA) and the Institute of Culinary Education (ICE). A distinguished panel of judges, including "The Food Maven" Arthur Schwartz, watched and tasted the finalists' submissions at the Institute of Culinary Education in Manhattan, where the mix-off was held. Unanimously, they crowned the *Wild Blossom*, prepared by BLT Market (50 Central Park South, Manhattan), as the must-have drink for summer sidewalk café dining in the Big Apple.

"Enjoying a winning drink at one of the City's nearly 1,000 sidewalk cafés has got to be one of the truly great ways to kick off the summer season," said Jonathan Mintz, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. "It's never been easier to enjoy a sidewalk café, or to open up a new one of your own." Mintz also thanked the judges Michael Cecconi, Julie Reiner, Audrey Saunders and Arthur Schwartz.

"Once again, the New York State Restaurant Association is delighted to team up with the Department of Consumer Affairs in this annual event to highlight the City's sidewalk cafés," said Chuck Hunt, Executive Vice President of the New York State Restaurant Association. "The mixologists and participating restaurateurs have outdone themselves with their creative and outstanding recipes."

"ICE was pleased to once again host the annual New York City Sidewalk Café Drink contest. The mixologists showed great creativity and spirit, combining both exotic and traditional ingredients, to mix new and unique summer drinks," said Rick Smilow, President and CEO of The Institute of Culinary Education. "It's great to see restaurant beverage lists mark calendar changes with seasonal ingredients, the same way that chefs do with restaurant menus."

All restaurants with legally operating sidewalk cafés were invited to submit recipes. Chosen finalists were asked to prepare their drinks at the event. Judges used three criteria to select the winning beverages: appearance, taste, and overall presentation/technique.

First runner-up in this year's mix-off was the *Agave Cosmo*, prepared by Agave (140 7th Ave. South). Second runner-up was the *The Golden Sunset*, prepared by Cowgirl (519 Hudson St.) Other restaurants participating in the final mix-off included Josie's,

Haru Sushi, The Noho Star, Via Brasil Restaurant and Hi-Life Bar & Grill.

Restaurants with sidewalk cafés are at an all-time high. DCA currently licenses approximately 1,000 legally operating sidewalk cafés in New York City – a more than 50 percent increase in the past five years alone. DCA has streamlined the application process to secure a sidewalk café license and works closely with the restaurant industry and neighborhood organizations to promote sidewalk cafes that operate legally.

New Yorkers and visitors alike can find an updated list of all sidewalk cafés in their neighborhood at www.nyc.gov/consumers. The winning mix-off recipes are posted there, as well.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses alike, DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at www.nyc.gov/consumers

About the judges: Michael Cecconi is the bar manager at Chef Peter Hoffman's restaurants Savoy and Back Forty. Julie Reiner is a leading New York City mixologist and co-owner of Flatiron Lounge and Clover Club. Audrey Saunders is a cocktail purist and owner of the Pegu Club. Arthur Schwartz, best known as "The Food Maven," has written five award-winning cookbooks, including his latest, "*Arthur Schwartz's New York City Food: An Opinionated History with Legendary Recipes.*"

[View event photos and get sidewalk café drink recipes](#)