

Thursday, June 1, 2006

CITY RESTAURANTS MIX IT UP IN COMPETITION FOR THE SIDEWALK CAFÉ DRINK OF 2006

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), the New York State Restaurant Association, and the Institute for Culinary Education today sponsored a "Mix-Off" among finalists for the contest to pick the 2006 Sidewalk Café Drink. To tout the City's booming sidewalk cafés, an experienced panel of judges today sampled the best in café sipping – both non-alcoholic and alcoholic entries – just in time for the summer outdoor dining season. All legally operating cafés were invited to submit drink recipes. The official announcement will be made early next week at the winning restaurant's location.

Mixologists from the finalist restaurants prepared their concoctions for Rick Smilow, president of New York's Institute of Culinary Education, and Jared Brown and Anistatia Miller, co-authors of *Shaken Not Stirred: A Celebration of the Martini and Champagne Cocktails*, as well as founders of the Museum of the American Cocktail.

"New York's nearly-900 sidewalk cafés are a summer icon, so an official café drink is definitely in order. The entries are as diverse as the cafés, themselves – but we'll leave it to the experts to choose the best!" said DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "We look forward to toasting the winner next week." Mintz also thanked the contest's judges and co-sponsors at the New York State Restaurant Association and the Institute for Culinary Education.

The DCA licenses sidewalk cafés, and New York City restaurants with outdoor dining are at an all-time high. With nearly 900 legally operating citywide, and more than 100 other applications filed, it's now faster and easier than ever for owners to go through the process.

The DCA works to ensure that consumers are protected and businesses thrive in New York City's vibrant marketplace. Licensing more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories, the DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related laws at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. For complete license applications and sidewalk café design guidelines, call 311 (or 212-NEW-YORK outside New York City) or go online to the DCA website at www.nyc.gov/consumers.