

YESTERDAY'S TRICKS OF THE TRADE

By
Bob Johnson
aka “BobTheBarGuy”

Every day is a school day in the bar business. Here are a few “tricks of the trade” I’ve picked up along the way. Hope you enjoy them.

Glass in the ice bin: Did you break a glass in the ice bin? When did you break the glass in the ice? When it’s very busy. If so, rather than melt down the ice right away with hot water, simply get a large clean cloth (or a couple of fresh bar rags) and lay it over the “bad ice”, then dump fresh ice on top of the cloth. This technique might help you get through the immediate rush, giving you time later to melt down the ice when it’s not too busy. Or just work out of the ice bucket, or one of those gray bus tubs filled with ice. Point is – don’t stop making drinks! It would be foolish for everything to come to a halt simply to melt down ice during a busy time.

Table salt on the napkin: Are customers complaining about the napkin or coaster sticking to the bottom of the beer bottle, glass, or mug? Simply sprinkle a little table salt on the napkin.

The “show” martini: Do you make a lot of martinis at your bar? Here are a couple of presentation ideas for you to try.

1) Take out the top of a spray bottle. Put the top and stem into a bottle of dry vermouth (clean them first, of course). When the customer orders an “extra dry martini”, pick up the spray bottle of dry vermouth in the left hand and the mixing glass in the right hand.

Spray a little cloud of dry vermouth. As it falls, sweep the mixing glass under the falling mist of dry vermouth. Proceed with the recipe.

2) Prepare the martini in its entirety, to customer request, except for the dry vermouth (vodka or gin, “up” or “on the rocks”, twist or olive). The completed drink is left in the mixing glass or tin container taken to the table or to the customer sitting at the bar, along with an eyedropper containing dry vermouth. The service person then asks, “One, two, or three drops in your martini?” The amount of vermouth is then put into the mixing glass/tin container; hand swirled and strained in front of the customer. The garnish should already be in the chilled cocktail glass. Several eyedroppers are kept behind the bar in a rocks glass filled with dry vermouth, changed twice nightly to ensure freshness.

Layering drinks: Four ways I know of:

1) Use the back of the bar teaspoon, pour slowly, one ingredient on top of the other. Know the weights of the ingredients you are pouring, otherwise they might go through each other.

2) Use a cherry with the stem still in it. Pour the ingredient directly over the top of the cherry, which you hold directly over the center of the liquor/liqueur you are pouring onto. This causes the “fan” over the top of the liquor/liqueur

YESTERDAY'S TRICKS OF THE TRADE

By
Bob Johnson
aka "BobTheBarGuy"

3) Use a French crumber. Pour slowly, layering one ingredient on top of the other.

4) Pour ingredients on top of one another randomly, such as in a B-52. Refrigerate for about 45 minutes. They will come out perfectly layered. If you sell a lot of B-52's every night, why not make them up ahead of time using this technique? Put a bunch of shot or pony glasses on a small tray, and then put the tray in the beer cooler, or somewhere out of the way.

Strawberry daiquiri: A variation on the traditional recipe for a strawberry daiquiri (for a blender: 1 scoop of ice, 1 shot of rum, 4 ounces daiquiri mix, 2 ounces Sweet and Sour mix - blend) is to substitute ginger ale for the Sweet and Sour mix. Cut back on the rum to ½ shot. If you happen to have strawberry liqueur, float about ¼ oz. on top of the whipped topping. Stick a fresh strawberry on the side of the glass.

Lemon twists: I never could understand bartenders who leave the lemon twist on the lemon instead of individually slicing them. Many bartenders feel that the twists, sliced but kept on the fruit of the lemon until ready to use, don't dry out. Probably. But what's the big deal about conserving the twists? Lemons are cheap. So, after the fruit is separated from the rind, cut the lemon ring into one-quarter inch twists and put them on top of a napkin into a dry container, like a rocks glass, or into

your fruit tray. Throw away the unused at night's end.

A bartender's speed can be affected if he has to "fight" getting the twist that has to be peeled off of the lemon. Many times, the twist breaks off halfway down the lemon. Individual twists, if kept dry, stay fresh for at least a day.

Fermented cherries: Stopped off at a club in eastern Pennsylvania and discovered a gallon jar of cherries sitting on the bar top with a small sign that read "Rum cherries - \$.50 each". Take a gallon jar of cherries, dump out 2/3 of the cherry juice and put in rum to the top. Turn upside down a couple of times, and then let the jar ferment for 2 - 3 days, turning occasionally. Soon you'll hear orders such as "Whiskey sour with 4 cherries". This club claims it sells at least \$150 worth of cherries a week – sometimes more. (Let me see. – times 52 weeks a year; that's \$7,800 + a year!). Interesting!

Match sticks inserted into stir stiks that become birthday candles. (Another cute way to celebrate someone's birthday.) Don't have any birthday candles? Simply pull out a few stir stiks and stick the end of the matches into the stir stiks. Put in a cupcake or a rocks/hiball glass type of drink. Get the customer to blow out the flame – quick!