

**David Rios, Diageo World Class Champion 2013 enthralls with his Tanqueray 10 summer creations**

In the hospitality industry for 18 years David Rios hails from Bilbao, Spain. As Maitre D' and Sommelier in hotels and restaurants such as Res. Aizian (formerly Sheraton Bilbao) and 3-Michelin Star Mugaritz (3rd best restaurant in the world). Today, he is co-owner of Café Kobuk, Kobuk Events and Jigger Bar together with his brother.

Since 2001, he has been awarded the title of Cocktail Champion and Best Bartender many times at cocktail competitions held in Spain.

He told Bar Talk, "Most of these competitions were on gin cocktails. It seems that all Spain is talking about gin. There is one bar in Valencia that has 450 different gins, 200 botanicals and 45 tonic waters, and most bars in Spain have 70 to 150 types of gin. It is like 20 years ago when they all focused on rum.

"When one gin started using cucumber and rose petals in gin & tonic in Spain, it changed the whole cocktail scene. Bartenders started to use different garnishes.

"After I won the World Class, people would come into my bar and ask me to make them a gin & tonic! So, I tell them we don't sell gin & tonics - we only sell cocktails. And, they would ask, what is this thing called cocktails?

"Now, I hold a masterclass everyday in my bar not only for the staff but also customers! It's very hard work but we are slowly getting there. Perhaps another 3 to 5 years to change their drinking styles.

"It's different in Madrid or Barcelona the international cities. Smaller towns especially in the Basque country tend to focus mainly on food gastronomy which is some of the best in the world."

In 2013 David reached the finals of Diageo World Class competition competing against 43 others on board the Azamara Journey cruise ship.

"My winning cocktail for the national semi-final was the 'Dream Hunter', an aged cocktail inspired by Scotland, made with Cardhu Special Cask Reserve, Talisker 10yo and Green Chartreuse. First I put Pedro Ximenez into new American oak barrel for one month to season the barrel. I then add the Cardhu, Talisker and Chartreuse and aged them in the barrel for 1½ months before bottling.

"For the cocktail, in a mixing glass I add 60ml of the barrel aged concoction, 10ml Pedro Ximenez, 2 drops of Angostura Bitters. Chill, stir and strain into a bottle and smoke with wood and coffee beans. Then serve in a Quaich (ancient Scots serving cup) with an orange twist.



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"To create an atmosphere, I play Scottish music and burn a piece of peat behind the bar. It is important to create an atmosphere - the minute customers walk in, they can smell the ingredients.

"A bartender can create amazing cocktails but unless he also creates an ambience with sounds, smells, etc. to go with the cocktails then the whole drinking experience is flat.

"After winning the title, I spent one year on a global tour as an ambassador for Diageo Reserve acting as the standard-bearer for fine-drinking experiences while inspiring new talents - which I still do today and am most fortunate to be Hong Kong. It was also an opportunity for me to widen my knowledge and hone my skills and techniques."

As guest Bar Star at Aqua Spirit for a few days, David showed four of his summer signature cocktails.

The selection included 'Smell' a creative and aromatic take on the martini using Tanqueray 10, dry vermouth, bianco vermouth, lime bitters and twist of lime, served in a lavender fog.

The 'Eastern Martini' combined fruits of the Orient

with Tanqueray 10, manzanilla sherry, lychee liqueur, lime twist, olive and almonds.

Another Asian inspired drink the 'Sake' cocktail used Tanqueray 10, sake, ginger liqueur with a twist of pink grapefruit, this drink was born in Gleneagles, not far from the Tanqueray distillery.

The fourth cocktail recalls Spanish tea time - 'Vermouthcito Time'. It is made with Tanqueray 10, dry vermouth, red vermouth, orange liqueur, orange bitters with a twist and an olive served with a hand carved ice ball.

David currently teaches master classes, lectures and courses around the world as well as working as a consultant and adviser on new hospitality projects. He is part of the jury for international cocktail competitions and the 'best bars in the world' awards.

"I create ideas for drinks from the things around me: the sea, the mountains, my family." He tries, when possible, to work with regional ingredients, 'because they are part of our essence', and focuses on quality rather than quantity in his venues. That said, his main focus is on relaxation and hospitality, and his mantra reads: 'Enjoy and Smile.'