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Cheers

SPECIALTY INFORMATION MEDIA

THE BEVERAGE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS AND BARS

JUNE 2014

WWW.CHEERSONLINE.COM

RUM

Enthusiasts believe this versatile spirit will be the next big thing

Larissa Wocher, bar manager for the Ronería Caracas bar in Brooklyn





Park Restaurant & Bar Sees a Need for Mead

Most people consider mead as a sickly sweet beverage best left to medieval-themed banquets and renaissance fairs; many think it's beer. Park Restaurant & Bar in Cambridge, MA, hopes to change the negative perceptions of the ancient honey wine with a mead program.

What exactly is mead? Created by the fermentation of water and honey, mead can be dry, semi-sweet, or sweet; it can be brewed with fruits, spices, grains or hops.

For its mead offering, which launched last spring, Park partnered with Center Ossipee, NH-based Sap House Meadery, which uses pure maple syrup for several of its meads.

The meads available at Park include the off-dry Hopped Blueberry, made with Willamette hops and native lowbush blueberries, and Ossipioja, a semi-sweet mead that uses Spanish

red wine grapes and local wildflower honey. Park offered two seasonal mead flavors for spring: strawberry and elderberry.

Park prices the meads at \$8 a glass or \$12 for a flight of three small pours. Park's bar manager Chris Balchum says the most guests that order mead will opt for the flights to sample the different kinds.

Customers also tend to enjoy the meads after dinner vs. with a meal. The meads pair well with some desserts and cheese boards, Balchum says, "but they don't stand up well to heavy meat dishes" or fare such as mussels.

Mead drinkers at Park tend to be women, Balchum says, but men do order the honey wine as well. The male guests probably expect it to be served in a heavy stein or goblet, he notes, "so they're surprised to get a delicate wine glass of mead."—MD

Leading Brands Of Sake

While sake is still largely consumed in Japanese concepts, the fermented rice beverage is becoming more popular in more mainstream bars and restaurants. Mixologists have discovered that sake is an excellent base for cocktails, while consumers are becoming more sophisticated about the different varieties and grades of sake. New sake products have been coming onto the market in recent years, but these are the top-five brands in the U.S.

Brand	Supplier	2012	2013p	% Change '12/'13
Takara sake	Takara Sake USA	705	710	0.7%
Gekkeikan sake	Sidney Frank	436	450	3.2%
Numano Shoji sake	Numano Shoji Sake	370	380	2.7%
Ozeki sake	Ozeki Sake USA Inc.	355	355	0.0%
Fuki sake	Monsieur Henri Wine	35	40	14.3%
Total leading brands		1,901	1,935	1.8%

SOURCE: Beverage Information Group 2014 Handbook Advance. To learn more, visit www.bevinfostore.com. (000 9-Liter Cases)