

The Judges

Martin Cate

Martin Cate is one of the more revered bartenders in one of the premier cocktail cities of the world, San Francisco, where he founded Smuggler's Cove and Whitechapel cocktail bars. Cate is a rum and exotic cocktail expert, a passionate rum collector and a world authority on all things tiki. He conducts educational seminars and judges rum and cocktail competitions across the United States, Europe and the Caribbean.

Wayne Curtis

Wayne Curtis is a freelance journalist and contributing editor at *The Atlantic*. He has written hundreds of articles for dozens of magazines and newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Bon Appétit*, *Men's Journal*, *American Archaeology*, *American Scholar*, *Canadian Geographic*, *Islands*, *AARP The Magazine*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Down East*, *Preservation* and *Yankee*. Curtis wrote the book *And a Bottle of Rum: A History of the World in Ten Cocktails*. He has presented at the Tales of the Cocktail, American Distilling Institute, Manhattan Cocktail Classic, Atlanta Food and Wine Festival, the American Museum of Natural History in New York and other venues.

Paul Clarke

Paul Clarke is *Imbibe Magazine's* Executive Editor and the author of *The Cocktail Chronicles: Navigating the Cocktail Renaissance with Jigger, Shaker & Glass*. He believes in the importance of a diverse liquid diet. While his heart belongs to spirits and cocktails—his inclinations often lean to bourbon and Boulevardiers—his days (and nights) are peppered with pour-overs and cold-brew, cab franc and cremant, and pilsners and gose—because balance is so important.

David Dafoe

Flavorman and Distilled Spirits Epicenter founder David Dafoe is one of the country's foremost authorities on flavor. Recognizing the need for technical innovation in the beverage industry, Dafoe created a company that specializes in the technical side of beverage development. Dafoe champions high quality standards in research and client support.

Bryan Davis

Bryan Davis is best known as the cofounder of Lost Spirits and is an expert in distilled spirits chemistry. He holds numerous active patent applications related to the industry and is a frequent speaker at conferences ranging from university chemical societies to TED Talks. Davis's book *How to Make Whiskey* (Create Space, 2012) has been on

Amazon.com's best-seller list. His lab has active research contracts with many of the world's largest distilleries.

Philip M. Dobard

Philip Dobard serves as Director of the Museum of the American Cocktail, and President of Pacific Food & Beverage Museum. He publishes *SoFAB Magazine* and produces "Farm to Table International," the "Culinaria Query & Lecture Series" and "Touring the Cocktail," a multi-city series of spirits education seminars. He produces several web series, among them "Drinking Heads," "Eating Heads," "Touring the Cocktail" and "World Eats." Dobard contributes to several publications, including *The Tasting Panel Magazine* and *Eater Drinks*, and is a frequent judge at food and drink competitions across the United States.

Flavien Desoblin

A native of Burgundy, Flavien Desoblin owns two bars in Manhattan: Brandy Library in Tribeca and Copper & Oak on the Lower East Side, which have one of the most comprehensive collections of brandies and whiskeys in the world. He began with a general education (baccalauréat and Sciences-Po degrees) before completing a master's in the wines and spirits business in Dijon, followed by a diploma in distilling from Heriot-Watt University. Desoblin is a true expert in distilled spirits. He was named Cognac Personality of the Year in 2010, honored in 2013 by the Compagnie des Mousquetaires d'Armagnac and named Keeper of the Quaich in spring 2014.

Elana Effrat

Elana Effrat is Spirits Brand Manager for New York-based Martin Scott Wines, a division of Winebow Group. Previously Effrat has been an ambassador for Rhum Clément and worked with WiskyLive. She served as the buyer for Dry Dock Wine and Spirits.

Rick Dobbs

Rick is the founder of CocktailGoGo.com. Rick's expertise in cocktails was founded from a successful career as a cocktail writer and bartender. Dobbs is the co-owner of Drink Eat Gather in Livermore, CA.

Daniel Farber

Distiller Dan Farber has been involved in brandy production since the mid-1980s, studying in Cognac and other brandy-producing regions around the world and finally settling near Santa Cruz, CA, to found the Osocalis Distillery. A lover of all spirits, Farber founded Osocalis to produce classically styled brandies. After three decades, he professes to still be a student and continues to study distillation and fermentation around the world. An aficionado of fruit- and grain-based ferments, his real passion is well-aged spirits of all categories. Farber is most definitely a member of and advocate for the Slow Distillation Movement.

Hubert Germain-Robin

Master Distiller and Master Blender Hubert Germain-Robin is the creator of world-renowned brandies and author of *Traditional Distillation: Art & Passion*. Germain-Robin's family history goes back centuries in Cognac, where his family had been producing brandies under the name Jules Robin and Company since the 18th century. He came to California in the 1980s and single-handedly changed the way brandy is produced and perceived by using Cognac techniques with California grape varieties. Germain-Robin's second book, *Maturation of Distilled Spirits*, (White Mule Press) was released in spring 2016.

H. Joseph Ehrmann

H. Joseph Ehrmann, better known as H., spent several years traveling, working and studying agriculture, traditions and flavors, as well as distilleries, wineries and breweries, throughout Europe. In January 2003, Ehrmann purchased Elixir, San Francisco's second-oldest operating bar, and now the city's first Certified Green bar. In 2006, Ehrmann founded Cocktail Ambassadors, a consultancy for the bar and restaurant industry. He is a cofounder of San Francisco Cocktail Week, the Vice President of the United States Bartenders Guild, San Francisco Chapter and a member of The Museum of the American Cocktail.

Nancy Fraley

Nancy Fraley is a whiskey and rum blender and consultant. She runs a firm called Nosing Services in Berkeley, CA, where she provides custom blending, product formulation services, creation of maturation programs, and sensory analysis for distilleries worldwide. She is also the Director of Research & instructor of blending with ADI. Nancy is creator of the American Craft Whiskey Aroma Wheel, a sensory tool for distillers and whiskey connoisseurs.

Andrew Friedman

Andrew Friedman, owner of both Liberty and Good Citizen in Seattle, being a great proponent of quality spirits, is looking forward to years of great spirits to come. So much so that he has started Scout Spirits, a distribution company in Seattle featuring craft spirits.

Monique Huston

Monique entered the beverage/hospitality industry waiting tables at the age of 14. She spent 10 years curating the whiskey collection at the Dundee Dell, in her hometown of Omaha, NE, and countless hours at whiskey distilleries. Huston shifted to distribution, working for Stoller Wholesale in Chicago before becoming Director of Spirits for the Winebow Group.

Ryan Magarian

Based in the serene and creative environs of Portland,

OR, Ryan Magarian continues to help redefine the role of the American bartender, with over 17 years of industry experience and involvement in the development and training of hundreds of bars and thousands of bartenders worldwide. Considered a purist by his industry peers, Magarian is dedicated to the extreme details of his craft. He is the cofounder of Aviation American Gin with the craft pioneer House Spirits Distillery.

Henry Preiss

After his father's wine-importing business changed hands, Henry Preiss founded Preiss Imports, bringing some of the best small liqueurs and wines from Europe into the United States, introducing such iconic brands to the U.S. market as Luxardo and Darroze Armagnacs. Henry retired in 2008, only to find that retirement didn't agree with him. So he founded HPS Epicurean in 2012. With more than 42 years in the business, Henry has one of the most-educated palates in the business.

John David Jeffery

Originally from Chicago, John David Jeffery studied food chemistry at Michigan State University, performing research and development in their Artisan Distilled Spirits program. He has been the head distiller at Death's Door Distillery and Santa Fe Spirits, and is now with Bently Heritage Distillery in Nevada.

Amy Murray

Spirits specialist Amy Murray is one of the best palates in the San Francisco Bay Area. For the past eight years, Amy has worked for some of the best spirits establishments in SF; including D&M Liquors, Alembic and Lolinda. Murray was Manager and Spirits Buyer for Cask, a spirits boutique, and represented craft-spirit producers for Pacific Edge Distribution, has written a booze column, taught classes and led many tastings and pairings with a myriad of foods.

Aaron Knoll

Aaron Knoll is the author of the spirits blog "the Gin is in" and co-author of *The Craft of Gin* (White Mule Press, 2013). Knoll's latest book is *Gin: The Art and Craft of the Artisan Revival* (London: Jacqui Small, 2015).

Virginia Miller

Virginia Miller has traveled the world in pursuit of her love of good food and drink. She is Vice President of Content/Senior Managing Editor at Table8 and former editor for Zagat. Miller releases a biweekly newsletter, "The Perfect Spot," on food and drink around the world. Miller freelances for Food Republic, Liquor.com, *Whisky Magazine UK*, *Drink Me Magazine*, *7x7 Magazine*, *The London Times*, *Eater*, *Blackboard Eats* and beyond. Virginia has judged countless cocktail contests and sat on spirits panels (including Tales of the Cocktail's Spirited Awards and craft spirits for the Good Food Awards).

Brett Pontoni

Brett Pontoni is Spirits Buyer for Binny's Beverage Depot, in Chicago, the largest liquor retailer in the Midwest. He has been a supporter of craft spirits ever since North Shore Distillery opened, becoming the first craft distillery in the Chicago area. Pontoni has made Binny's a destination for craft spirits by dedicating shelving for artisan spirits and by stocking as many craft brands as is possible.

Keli Rivers

Keli Rivers started bartending in Tokyo's Roppongi nightclub district and has lived on every continent except Antarctica. A veteran of some of San Francisco's best cocktail bars, including Hard Water and Devil's Acre, Rivers is currently the "Ginnoisseur" of the gin-centric bar Whitechapel

Michael Sherwood

As Sherwood's family owned a beer and wine distributorship in southern Oregon, alcohol is in his blood. At a tender age, he ascended to the role of bartender at family parties, learning to make a mean Manhattan at lightning speed. While helping make wine at Sineann Winery, he was recruited to manage Rogue Spirits' rum distillery and design a new distillery/bar/restaurant. Sherwood created his own spirits brand, producing two infused vodkas under the Sub Rosa label.

Richard Wolf

Richard Wolf, Managing Principal of Wolf Consulting LLC, specializes in the beverage alcohol and allied industries as consultant and international broker of bulk bourbon and fine spirits. He is an Advisory Board Member of ADI, and served as Chairman of the Kentucky Distillers' Association. As the former VP General Manager at Sazerac Co. (Buffalo Trace Distillery), he was responsible for distillery/bottling operations, organizational transformation, strategic sourcing, and corporate development, leading to exponential growth.

Francis Schott

Francis Schott is an owner and the beverage director of Stage Left and Catherine Lombardi Restaurants in New Brunswick. Stage Left established New Jersey's first Craft Cocktail program in 1993. Food & Wine Magazine called Catherine Lombardi one of the top 100 Cocktail Bars in America in 2010. Schott is also cohost of the popular Restaurant Guys Radio Program, podcast on www.restaurantguysradio.com. He has been teaching wine and spirits classes to both consumers and to the trade for more than 20 years.

Alex Velez

Alex Velez got his start in the hospitality industry at age 15 in his homeland: Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. Velez won several cocktail competitions before moving to Chi-

cago, in 2005, where he developed cocktail menus for the downtown Hyatt Regency. In late 2006, Velez moved to Las Vegas, developing innovative bartending methods at the Mayan Latin Dance Club, the Spirit of Cuba and the Foundation Room of The House of Blues. He won the Blueies Award for Best Bartender in Las Vegas in 2009. A year later, Velez moved to develop cocktail programs for a hotel chain in Santa Fe, NM. He is a founding member and former Vice President of the United States Bartenders' Guild, New Mexico chapter.

Matthew Rowley

Historian and former museum curator Matthew Rowley is author of *Moonshine!* (2007). He is on the editorial board of the forthcoming *Oxford Companion to Spirits and Cocktails*, contributes to books and magazines and writes at WhiskeyForge.com. His latest book, *Lost Recipes of Prohibition*, was released in October 2015 and was a finalist for the 2016 James Beard Awards. Find him on Twitter as [@mbrowley](https://twitter.com/mbrowley).

Molly Wellmann

Molly is a self-taught mixologist in Cincinnati, owning several bars and restaurants there, including Japp's, The Famous Neons Unplugged, The Old Kentucky Bourbon Bar and Myrtle's Punch House. She is the author of *Handcrafted Cocktails: The Mixologist's Guide to Classic Drinks for Morning, Noon & Night* (Betterway Home, 2013). Wellmann has been featured in *Food & Wine*, *People*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *Sauce*, and many more. She was voted best mixologist/bartender by Cincinnati's CityBeat for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Sean Venus

Sean Venus began homebrewing 20 years ago, when he was introduced to the art by his high school science teacher. Venus honed his craft working for a half dozen breweries in Eugene, OR, before taking a job with Gordon Biersch Brewing in San Jose, CA. His love of beer evolved into a love of whiskey, and, with his wife, he founded Venus Spirits in 2014.