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Just published...

THE BAR: A Spirited Guide to Cocktail Alchemy

November 14, 2005 – Los Angeles – It took two veteran bartenders (one of them also a successful restaurateur) to distill the arcane science of mixology for home entertainers and discerning cocktail lovers scrambling to decipher the difference between drinks like a Greyhound and a Grasshopper.

In their just-published book from Ten Speed Press – **THE BAR: A Spirited Guide to Cocktail Alchemy** – **Olivier Said** and **James Mellgren** take readers on an erudite romp through the surprising history of liquors, unmask the secrets behind how they're produced, serve up 96 cocktail recipes culled from their best-of collections, share insider tips on how to make cocktails that can turn ordinary parties into talked-about events – and much more.

Designed to be read a chapter at a time, **THE BAR** is organized by liquors and published in a portable softcover format that readers can cart anywhere.

Olivier Said and James Mellgren previously wrote the critically-acclaimed **CÉSAR: Recipes from a Tapas Bar** (Ten Speed Press) – which was named one of the Top 10 Cookbooks of 2003 by *Food & Wine* magazine.

Said is a working partner in CÉSAR, the Berkeley tapas restaurant that has become one of the Bay Area's most popular watering holes with a bar inventory of some 500 liquors from around the world. Hailed both regionally and nationally, it was called "one of the greatest bars in the world in terms of quality of spirits, selection, and mixology" by the *San Francisco Food Lover's Guide* and named one of the Bay Area's best restaurants by the *San Francisco Chronicle* five years in a row.

He began bartending at Ken Frank's renowned LaTogue Restaurant in Los Angeles (now located in the Napa Valley) in the early 1980s. In 1987, he returned to his native Paris and opened Texas Coyote, a hugely successful Tex Mex restaurant with three bars and a late night club. The descendent of at least five generations of restaurateurs in France, Said began his career at the age of 15, working in his mother's restaurant kitchen in Paris.

Mellgren is the senior editor at *The Gourmet Retailer* and a part-time bartender at CÉSAR. He began his career in New York as a store manager for the high-end housewares retailer Turpan Sanders, then spent a decade as a buyer for Dean & Luca, allowing him to travel the world in search of the finest culinary ingredients.

THE BAR: A Spirited Guide to Cocktail Alchemy is currently available in bookstores or through Amazon.com. Ten Speed Press. \$16.95. Softcover 112 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". ISBN 1-58008-682-9. November 2005.

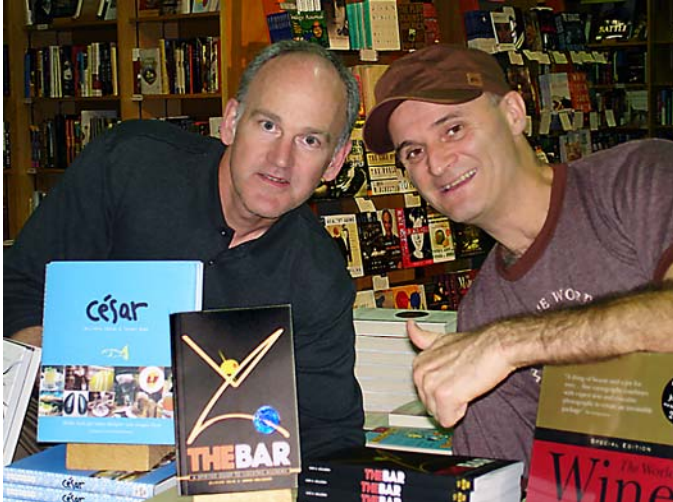
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MEDIA:

Cocktail recipes for reprinting, author's bios, and thumbnails of available JPEGs are available at: <http://www.kitchenonfire.com/thebarmediakit/>

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THE BAR co-authors James Mellgren (left) and Olivier Said

Olivier Said

Biography

The co-author of **THE BAR** and **CÉSAR: RECIPES FROM A TAPAS BAR** – as well as founder of a highly-successful restaurant in Paris and partner in Berkeley’s famed César – Olivier Said is a descendant of at least five generations of restaurateurs in France, going back to the early 1800s.

Growing up, he often heard stories about his great-grandfather’s country inn, the Hotel Restaurant Des Chasseurs in central France, founded by his great-great-grandfather around the turn of the 19th century. His great-grandmother ran the cafe/boucherie (butcher shop) next door. Besides its regular menu, the hotel specialized in preparing the wild game that weekend hunters brought in to dine on.

Though never formally schooled in the culinary arts, Said was introduced into the profession at an early age. After a two-month journey throughout Europe with a classmate, he began working as a dishwasher in the kitchen of his mother’s successful Paris restaurant, Les Halles, at the age of 15. Before long, he was also preparing desserts and appetizers.

At the age of 18, he enrolled in a flight school in the south of France and spent the next two years working a grueling schedule of double shifts, seven days a week, in a pizzeria to pay for lessons.

Upon obtaining his pilot's license, Said headed to the U.S., landing in Los Angeles, where he worked for two of the city's top restaurants, among other stints.

The first was Ken Frank's LaToque Restaurant, a popular celebrity hang-out that was one of the first to feature California nouvelle cuisine in the country.

Even though Said had never mixed drinks professionally and barely spoke English, Frank made him the bartender. Said had just one week to learn the essentials on how to make everything from gimlets, whiskey sours and margaritas to Mai Tais and Hurricanes. "That's basically what people were drinking then, the classics. They were also discovering wine," he says.

Several years later he became a bartender at the L.A. jazz club, the Nucleus Nuance, then spent a year as a waiter at Le Dome, where he regularly waited on Hollywood icons like Elizabeth Taylor, Elton John and California's now governor when he was just the "Terminator."

In 1987, Said returned to Paris and opened his first restaurant, Texas Coyote. It was such a success that he had to move the operation to bigger quarters to house its three bars and late night club.

In 1994, after several years trying to fight the city's then-corrupt legal system, he was forced to close it. Left with nothing, he went to work for a friend in a Taqueria stand for \$40 a day until he could earn the \$800 necessary to return to the U.S.

"It was interesting to go from owning two well-known restaurants in Paris to a taco stand cook," he reflects with a laugh. "The hardest part was when a old client would recognize me and ask what are you going to do next. I had to tell them they shouldn't worry, I have a plan. I just didn't know what it was!"

Once back in Los Angeles, he got a call from his old friend, Richard Mazzera, the former manager at LaToque who had gone on to become the business manager at Chez Panisse for 13 years.

Mazzera invited Said to become a partner in an innovative new tapas bar – to be called César – that he was starting with two other Chez Panisse alumni. Said leaped at the chance and headed up to Berkeley. To his surprise, the place had yet to be built. Indeed, he would spend the next four months helping convert a former dry cleaning shop into the Mediterranean-style tapas bar that would become one of the Bay Area’s celebrated restaurants.

Located next door to Alice Waters’ culinary landmark, the tiny 60-seat restaurant was an instant hit with both Berkeley foodies and food critics who loved its truly unique Spanish-style menu and world-class wine-and-spirits list. The *San Francisco Food Lover’s Guide* hailed it as “one of the greatest bars in the world in terms of quality of spirits, selection, and mixology.” Among other accolades, it was voted one of the best restaurants in the Bay Area by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for five years in a row, and featured in such national publications, as *Gourmet* magazine.

In September 2003, CÉSAR: RECIPES FROM A TAPAS BAR was published, written by Said and James Mellgren with César chef Maggie Pond. Among other accolades, it was named one of the Top 10 Cookbooks of the year by *Food & Wine* magazine. The popular cookbook features more than 50 tapas recipes and 50 mixed drinks (including the restaurant’s signature cocktails, the Lucky 13, the Marius, and the Three-Citrus Margarita).

Always on a quest to perfect the César experience for its legion of devout fans, Said began working on a definitive handbook for its bartenders and waiters to help answer customers’ questions about the over 500 liquors from around the world served by the bar.

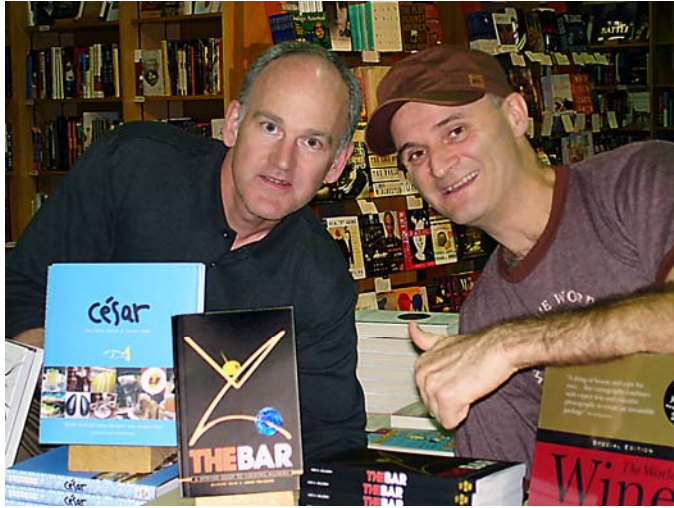
The result is the just-published book, THE BAR, co-written by Said and James Mellgren, released in November 2005 by Ten Speed Press.

Said's next project is a cutting-edge new cooking school for home chefs, called Kitchen on Fire, scheduled to open in January 2006. For more information, please visit www.kitchenonfire.com.

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For JPEGs or more information, please contact:

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THE BAR co-authors James Mellgren (left) and Olivier Said

James Mellgren

Biography

A 20-year veteran of the specialty food business, James Mellgren is the co-author with Olivier Said of the new book, ***The Bar: A Spirited Guide to Cocktail Alchemy***, as well as the celebrated cookbook, ***César: Recipes From a Tapas Bar*** – selected by *Food & Wine* magazine as one of the 10 Best Cookbooks of 2003.

The Senior Editor of one of the industry's leading trade publications, *The Gourmet Retailer*, Mellgren was actually headed into a stage career when he got detoured into the culinary arena.

Born and raised in the Midwest, he graduated from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with a degree in theater, then moved to New York to try his luck as a performer and director. At the same time, he served as the manager of one of the first retail stores to introduce high-end lifestyle and housewares products into the U.S. – Turpan Turpan Sanders – during the early 1980s.

From there he went on to spend a decade as a buyer for the renowned gourmet retailer, Dean & DeLuca – which allowed him to travel throughout Europe and the United States while surveying markets and international trade fairs. In that position, he also developed importing programs for the company, helped open several new stores and

cafes, and was instrumental in launching the landmark *Dean & DeLuca Cookbook* in 1996.

Mellgren began writing professionally about food and drink in the late 1980s. He left New York for Berkeley in 1994, and has since founded a wholesale cheese company and served as the official spokesperson for Olive Oils From Spain. He is currently working on another book, as well as a series of short stories and a comic novel about two bartenders.

Answers to some common questions from...

THE BAR: A Spirited Guide to Cocktail Alchemy

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...

...Bourbon and Scotch?

Both are whiskies, but Scotch is made in Scotland from malted barley. It is characterized by a distinctive smoky flavor. Bourbon is American whiskey and is made predominantly from corn. It generally has a much sweeter flavor than its Scottish counterpart, with hints of vanilla.

...Scotch whisky and Irish whiskey?

The most substantial difference is that in Ireland the malted grains never come into contact with smoke, so Irish whiskey lacks that smoky character found in Scotch.

...Tequila and Mezcal?

All tequila is mescal, but not all mescal is tequila. Tequila must be grown in and distilled within specifically delineated areas in the state of Jalisco and must be made from at least 51 percent blue agave (the finest are 100 percent). Mezcal can be made anywhere in Mexico from any type of agave (usually one of eight varieties out of the possible four hundred known).

...Cognac and Armagnac?

Both are named for the regions in which the grapes are grown and the brandy is made. The differences are many: Cognac is double distilled in pot stills, Armagnac in continuous stills. Cognac is almost never a vintage brandy, and Armagnac often is. Cognac is aged in oak barrels, first new wood and then used barrels; the Armagnacais prefer black oak barrels, but increasingly they use Cognac-style barrels. Armagnac has also been around almost 200 years longer than Cognac.

What are the ingredients used to make whisky?

Whisky is essentially distilled beer, or fermented grains such as barley, oats, rye, wheat, and corn.

What is rum made from?

Rum is distilled either from molasses left over from processing sugar or, in some cases, directly from the fermented juice, or sap, of the sugarcane.

Why does gin taste the way it does?

When first distilled, gin is exactly like vodka, a clear, relatively tasteless alcohol. Gin, however, is then infused with an assortment of botanical flavorings, most prominently juniper berry, that give it its distinctive flavor.

FOUR COCKTAIL RECIPES FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Source: **THE BAR: A Spirited Guide to Cocktail Alchemy**

by Olivier Said & James Mellgren (Ten Speed Press, November 2005)

EDITORS:

Reprint permission is granted for use of the following recipes from THE BAR with attribution. A Word version of this document and high resolution JPEG of all four drinks is also available by contacting Lyla Foggia at lyla@foggiapr.com or (661) 259-6561.

Berry Caipirinha

1 lime, cut into 8 wedges
½ teaspoon sugar
1 ounce Chambord
1 ½ ounces cachaça or light rum
Crushed ice

Place the lime pieces, sugar, and Chambord in an old-fashioned glass and muddle thoroughly. Add the cachaça and stir to mix. Fill with crushed ice.

Note: A muddler is a wooden pestle that looks like a miniature baseball bat and is used for crushing mint in a Mojito, fruit in an Old-Fashioned, and so on. You can do the same thing with the back of your bar spoon, but a muddler works better and they are inexpensive.

Grand Mimosa

1 ounce Grand Marnier
2 ounces freshly squeezed orange juice
Champagne, or other good quality sparkling wine to fill

Pour the Grand Marnier and orange juice into a champagne flute. Fill with good quality Champagne.

Toasted Almond

1 ½ oz. amaretto

1 oz. Kahlúa

2 oz. heavy cream

Unsweetened cocoa powder, for garnish

Toasted slivered almond, for garnish (optional)

Combine the amaretto, Kahlúa, and cream in a shaker with ice. Shake well and strain into a chilled martini glass. Sprinkle with the cocoa and almonds.

Brandy Alexander

1 ½ ounces brandy (preferably VSOP Cognac)

½ ounce crème de cacao or other chocolate liqueur

1 ounce heavy cream

Freshly ground nutmeg, for garnish

Combine the brandy, liqueur, and cream in a shaker with a chilled martini glass and sprinkle with the nutmeg.