

# MAZZA MAKES WAVES WITH SANDY BOTTOM SPARKLING RUM COCKTAILS

By Teddy Durgin

**S**andy Mazza is certainly excited about her new product, Sandy Bottom Sparkling Rum Cocktails. Interviewing her recently, she would often start answers to my questions with, "Oooh, now please make sure you get this in the article!" and "This is one of the best things about Sandy Bottom, and I hope you can include it." Well, we do have a word limit. But the most important thing to make sure readers know is Mazza has come up with a product that Marylanders will want to drink and Maryland-based establishments will want to serve.

Sandy Bottom Sparkling Rum Cocktails is a premium, pre-mixed, sparkling rum-based cocktail brand with natural flavors of coconut, lemonade, and lime. The company's history is rooted in the nautical culture of the Chesapeake Bay. As an entrepreneur from the Annapolis area, Mazza would serve her homemade cocktails to friends while

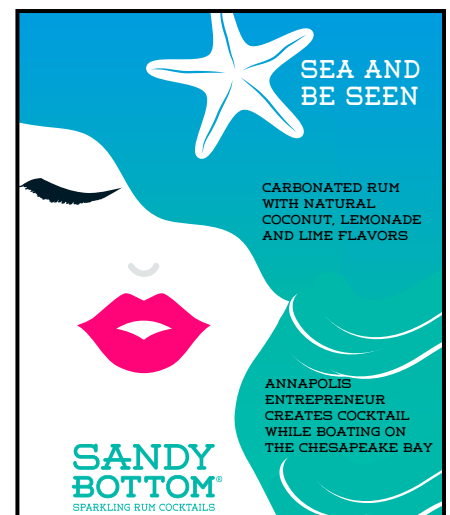


cruising the Bay. Those closest to her loved it so much that they encouraged her to provide for a broader audience.

She chose to self-distribute, obtaining a wholesaler's license, and was able to start selling on June 23rd of this year. "I'm happy with that decision," she stated, "because I wanted to have the contact with the customers myself first." As of press time, the single-serve product was available in 28 retailers across Maryland, as well as such hotels as the MGM National Harbor, the Hollywood Casino Perryville, and the Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore.

Mazza actually started selling her first rum-based cocktail in 2010, getting it in stores in Maryland and five other states. The founder and CEO of Sandy Bottom Enterprises LLC concedes she was a "wide-eyed entrepreneur" back then. For her latest concoction, she's narrowed the focus greatly and is selling just in Maryland to begin with. She remarked, "Our target market is mostly women, later-age Millennials through early Baby Boomers."

Mazza tries to do a dozen or more tastings a month. "I just need to get the brand out there!" she said. "When I started, I went back to accounts previously, and they either said, 'We wondered where you were!' or 'So good to see you back!' We've tried to do consistent tastings, and one of the most common responses we get is: 'Very refreshing!' And because it is coconut with citrus, which is a sweet and a tart, they also say, 'Ooh, I wasn't expecting that! I like it!' They also like the pink color."



In addition, the bottle itself has gotten high marks. The aluminum container makes the drink portable, lightweight, and unbreakable. "There's also the chill factor," she added. "It stays colder longer. And people love the screw-off cap."

In addition to tastings, Mazza is hoping to reach customers via technology. At the time of this interview in early October, she was in the process of launching a website. Sandy Bottom Sparking Rum Cocktails also has a presence on Facebook and Instagram. "Social media is how we live now," she noted. "You have to be on it."

So, where would Mazza like to be with the product if we were to revisit her a year from now. Ever ambitious, she said she definitely wants to double sales by next fall. "That would probably mean doubling the number of accounts. I would like to tap into more on-premise, particularly waterfront bars and restaurants. I want to also get into more golf [settings] with the tagline: 'Get Trapped by This Sandy Bottom.'"

She concluded, "What I really need to do is keep summer alive. People that do enjoy coconut with their rum, I think they'll drink it all year round. Like at Christmas, we'll have the tagline: 'Put a Little Sandy at the Bottom of Your Stocking!'" ■



SANDY MAZZA IS THE FOUNDER AND CEO OF SANDY BOTTOM ENTERPRISES LLC. SHE'S PICTURED ABOVE RIGHT AT WINE WORLD IN BEL AIR.

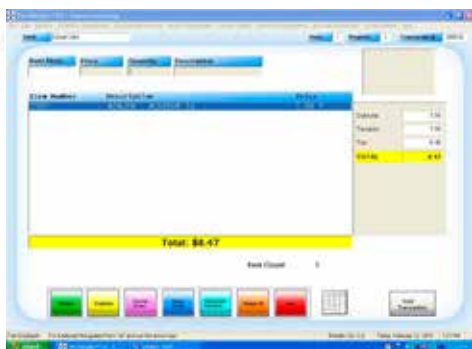


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