



Shaun Stewart:

The Methodology of Mixology

by Doug Mace

After attending college at The Art Institute of Philadelphia for video production and graphic design, Shaun Stewart then began the journey that eventually led him to Edinburgh and back. The trip had nothing to do with film, but everything to do with his creative direction.

Shaun started off around food and beverage and continues today to find ways to stay interested. He's worked up and down the I-95 corridor creating new cocktails and honing his skills.

Shaun came to Maryland from New Jersey looking for a new challenge and a new adventure. Initially it was a beer centric background that landed him a job helping to open up the Arundel Mills Buffalo Wild Wings, but he would come much further.

What Kind of Bartender Do You Want to Be?

Shaun first helped to open the House of Blues in Atlantic City where he was asked a question by his trainer that would shape his future. "The guy who trained me asked me what kind of a bartender I wanted to be. And I didn't know the answer to that. It ended up being that I needed to know why I'm doing what I'm doing."

By that, Shaun wants to know why two particular spirits work well together or how come one style of beer is brewed a particular way. "If I'm doing cocktails I need to know why is this classic done this way? If we have a beer program let's make it the best beer program it can be."

That's when he began doing more research and learning to go into different style bars and restaurants and learn techniques and spirits and more that he hadn't known of before.

"I grew up going through beer and shot, just turn and burn, then slowly coming into this area now that I'm in."

That "area" is the world of craft cocktails, far from the kind you would see at your chain restaurant down the street. Looking up to bartenders who use the creativity, knowledge, and history of bartending, inspired him to answer that trainer's question. He wants to have fun by sharing and learning constantly.

"It went back to finding those cocktail bars that I wanted to go to and watching them have fun doing what they're doing. I felt that to be a different kind of fun. Not just pouring beers and having good fun with friends. It was more of giving an education to someone. I can have a conversation with somebody and have them

learn something."

What happens when someone doesn't want the education? His answer is simple and nonchalant. Read the guest, if they're curious, dive in. If not, it almost seems as if it's his goal to make them curious without ever impeding on the guests experience. His approach is that of a professor rather than a showman.

"If you can get that one person to listen to you, or learn that one thing, or pronounce that word properly; little things like that are things I love when people get it."

Continuing the Journey

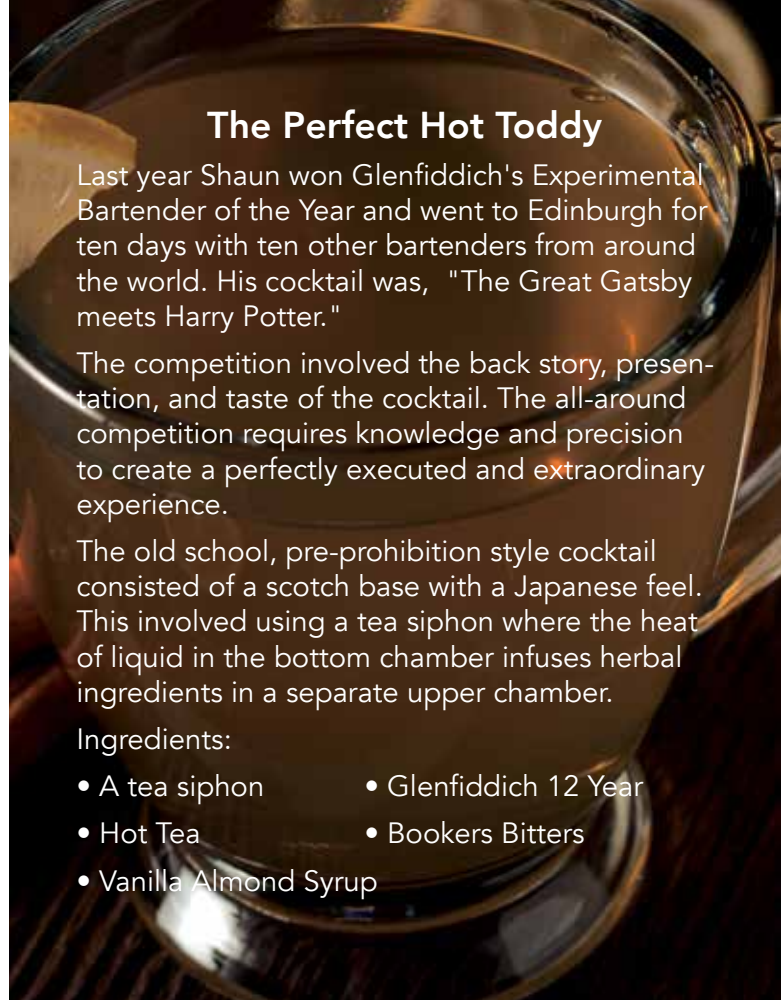
One of Shaun's current projects gives him the chance to take a step back and help a friend with an equally impressive knowledge of spirits at Gravitas in Washington, D.C. That friend, Mary Kelly, heads up the spirit program for the soon to open restaurant and bar.

Staying busy, and staying more local to Baltimore, Shaun now works behind the bar a few days a week at The Outpost in Federal Hill after friend and Executive Chef Jessie Sandlin reached out.

"When I go home to Philly all I want is a Kenzinger. That's our local beer and that's just all I want. Having something super approachable that you can get into, but also that you've found an appreciation for something that you've branched out to."

Shaun continued by explaining his way of staying knowledgeable and educated on the trends and direction of the beverage industry. Reading about and tasting, even what may not be applicable now, may be in the future.

"Even when someone tastes me on something and I know it's not going to be something for the bar, I still want to taste it, because I may be able to use it for something else, or for an event." ■



The Perfect Hot Toddy

Last year Shaun won Glenfiddich's Experimental Bartender of the Year and went to Edinburgh for ten days with ten other bartenders from around the world. His cocktail was, "The Great Gatsby meets Harry Potter."

The competition involved the back story, presentation, and taste of the cocktail. The all-around competition requires knowledge and precision to create a perfectly executed and extraordinary experience.

The old school, pre-prohibition style cocktail consisted of a scotch base with a Japanese feel. This involved using a tea siphon where the heat of liquid in the bottom chamber infuses herbal ingredients in a separate upper chamber.

Ingredients:

- A tea siphon
- Hot Tea
- Vanilla Almond Syrup
- Glenfiddich 12 Year
- Bookers Bitters

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