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DISPLAY

BACARDI

LEGACY WILD CARD

the Portland Regional Finals

By Thom Meintel
Photos courtesy Jeff Greif and Bacardi, USA



Junior Ryan

AT EXACTLY 9:25 PM ON A WET MONDAY EVENING, A DRIVING, THUMPING PERCUSSION BROUGHT THE TALL, SLEEK PAIR OF 6 FT. VERTICAL SPEAKERS TO LIFE. I WAS SIPPING A BACARDI MILK PUNCH, ONE OF SIX INGENUOUS COCKTAILS BEING SERVED AT THE USBG LEGACY COCKTAIL COMPETITION REGIONALS SPONSORED BY BACARDI AND BEING HELD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PORTLAND, OREGON. THINGS WERE JUST GETTING UNDERWAY AS THE CROWD BEGAN TO POUR IN.



Juan Coronado,
Brand Ambassador Extraordinaire



David Cid,
Legacy Brandmaster with Finalists

The Pacific Northwest city had emerged as the perfect locus for what was being termed Legacy's "Wild Card," the first stop on a three-city search (including Los Angeles and New York), to procure the next nine finalists for Bacardi Legacy's global competition, now in its fifth year. Not known for bright and cheery sunshiny days but more for its counter culture and offbeat locals, the event coincided with Portland Cocktail Week, a yearly celebration of the art of the drink. While a steady drizzle had dampened spirits outdoors, inside that was not the case, nor would it be for the next two hours. We were two of 300 guests anxiously anticipating the kick-off of this Legacy regional competition, billed as "Wild Card" because talent from all over the country could enter. Out of 53 qualified entries, eight finalists had been selected, four of them from Portland.

So, as a trio of anti-gravity aerialists jumped into position on their perches suspended high above the crowd at The Left Bank @ The Annex, a former factory manufacturing World War II airplane parts, the stage was set for mixology excellence. A circus marquee topped by the BACARDI name in lights and framed by two digital clocks each registering 9:00, the time in minutes allotted for each contestant's mixing session, became a fitting proscenium for the spectacle at the custom Bacardi bar, bathed in bright lights, its racks stocked with Bacardi Superior. An

interesting alteration had been made to the stringent recipe requirements for 2015 - the addition of Bacardi Gold Rum as a possible ingredient. Of the eight finalists', three opted to explore the new freedom foregoing Superior for Gold.

How does it all work? Each recipe's evaluation is based on a point system of 120: 10 for name, 15 for technical skill and presentation flair, 10 for appearance, 40 for aroma and balance of flavors, 20 for innovation, 10 for inspiration and story behind it, 5 for refreshment and 10 for product knowledge. Clearly a barman has to have earned his chops to make it to these finals.

Kudos to all eight of the lucky gentlemen that made the cut, many with a devout following in the audience cheering them on. The winning trio included Miami bar star Trevor Alberts with his tiki-inspired International Expansion Swizzle; Portland based Junior Ryan, whose Rose Parade provided a little insight into Portland's lifestyle while reminding us how healthy a cocktail can sometimes be; and fellow Portlander Joe Frade, whose good looks and patriotic inspiration along with a phenomenal combination of ingredients in his Rum Pleasure! (hint: he chose Bacardi Gold) won the judges over. All three will be moving on to the Finals round in Miami taking place next February, giving them just a few months to tighten their presentations and sharpen their performances.

SIDE BAR

Last years Bacardi Legacy winner and Chilled 100 Ambassador, Naomi Levy mentored the competition hopefuls, offering tips and tricks to her peers during The Legacy Showcase. The world-renowned event, kicking off in Portland during Cocktail Week, hosts nearly 40 bartenders representing countries across the globe including the United States, United Kingdom, Africa, European Union and Asia. The global winner receives year-long support to further his/her career as a bartender while the global winning cocktail is served by the winning bartender at some of the finest bars in the world, alongside other iconic classics including the original Bacardi Mojito, Daiquiri, and Cuba Libre.

The Portland finalists, including Junior Ryan of Portland, Joe Frade of Portland and Trevor Alberts of Miami were awarded spots in the National Finals taking place in Miami, Florida in February 2015. Bartenders based on the east and west coasts can submit to participate in the showcases taking place in New York and Los Angeles at chilledmagazine.com/legacy.



Joe Frade



Trevor Alberts



Naomi Levy,
Legacy 2014 U.S. Winner