



HAVE AVERNA

a new winner!

FIRST-EVER AVERNA COCKTAIL COMPETITION NAMES DON LEE WINNER

After a grueling competition in picturesque Taormina, Sicily, wounded New York based mixologist takes home the grand prize with 'La Cola Nostra'

Sept. 16, NEW YORK, NY — After months of anticipation, meticulous planning and stiff competition amongst some of the best bartenders in the nation, Don Lee was named the winner of the first-ever Averna HAVE A NEW LOOK Cocktail Competition.

"On the day that I was scheduled to fly to Sicily, I got into a severe bicycle accident and was rushed to a local emergency room. Doctors confirmed that I had fractured my left wrist. Unfazed I boarded the last flight to Sicily on standby and arrived in Taormina just hours before the faceoff," said Don Lee who emerged victorious with only one good hand. Lee took home the winning title and the grand prize of \$1,500, courtesy of Averna.



On Friday, September 12th, five mixologists from around the United States battled for the grand prize on the beautiful terrace of Hotel Capo Taormina, overlooking the Sicilian Ionian Sea. The contestants' recipes were all original, with the only requirement being that the cocktail HAVE Averna Amaro as the base ingredient. Each contestant was given five minutes to create his or her cocktail. Points were awarded based on presentation, technique, originality, taste and ease of preparation. The judges came from Italy and England and included Charles Venexat, Izzie Knolles, Steve Manketelow, Giles Looker, Umberto Caselli, and Francesco Rosario Averna.

"I am very pleased to see the quality of our product enhanced by the expert hands of the mixologists who took part in the competition.

Thanks to Averna's mixability, they've created an art form that has opened new frontiers for our traditional Averna Amaro," said Maria Luisa Averna, the fourth-generation President of Averna and one of the judges in the competition. Averna Amaro, Italy's favorite digestivo and Sicily's oldest licensed spirit, has been discovered as of late by American and international mixologists as a great mixing tool and versatile spirit for cocktails. This is the first cocktail competition that Averna has ever done and the result was an artful blend of the cocktail trend in the United States paired with Sicilian history.



This final round was a culmination of a nine month long competition process and anticipation that involved bar chefs throughout the U.S. Over two hundred original recipes were submitted through Averna's USA website (www.avernausa.com) from January 1st-March 31st. Out of 30 semi finalists from across the country, a total of five finalists were chosen during three regional competitions that took place in San Francisco, Miami and New York this past April. Finalists included Jeff Hollinger of Absinthe Brasserie and Bar and Thomas Waugh of Alembic Bar in San Francisco; Debbi Peek of the Drawing Room at Le Passage in Chicago and Damon Dyer of Flatiron Lounge and Don Lee of Please Don't Tell (PDT) in New York. The group traveled to Sicily and was given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit spectacular Taormina and Caltanissetta. While Sicily as a backdrop was breath taking, the opportunity to visit the Averna distillery was also an awe-inspiring experience. The Finalists experienced first hand the flavors and natural ingredients that are basis for the traditional Amaro.

"The outcome could not have been written any more poetically. These five talented mixologists enjoyed a decadent weekend, and the Averna family genuinely loved welcoming them into their home and distillery," said DSWE founder and CEO Paolo Domeneghetti. "Don Lee's drink, La Cola Nostra, is a delicious treat that we are proud to include in our Averna cocktail repertoire. Our congratulations go out to Don Lee and all of the Averna HAVE A NEW LOOK competition finalists."

