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Art of Mixology returns to Theatre Square, live, on Oct. 16

By Sora O'Doherty



Portia Battistini from The Coop, who is competing this year, serves her winning cocktail at An Arts Affair in 2018. Photo Sora O'Doherty

The major fundraiser for the Lamorinda Arts Council, the Art of Mixology will be live in Theatre Square from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 16, with over 16 bartenders creating signature drinks and sampling them to the crowd of ticketholders. Five food sponsors, Batch and Brine, The 4th Bore, The Cooperage, Republic of Cake and Town Bakery will be offering bites to go with the sips.

Tickets are \$75 in advance or \$85 at the door and include craft cocktail tasting, bites from five local restaurants, 17 tasting tickets, a shot glass, a wrist band, and program, music and fun. Tickets will be available at either of the two entrances to the event, one by the fountain on Moraga Way and one as you come up the stairs from the garage. In order to maintain safety, a decreased number of tickets have been made available, designed to result in a less crowded event. All COVID-19 precautions will be observed. Masks will be required between sips and bites. Proof of vaccination is required to enter.

The competition occurs on two levels, professional bartenders and amateur mixologists. Professionals compete for the title of Mixologist of the Year, a cash award of \$500 and a trophy. The title of Mixologist of the Year is highly sought after by area professionals. A panel of judges will also select second and third place winners, who will win certificates of \$350 and \$300 respectively.

There will also be an audience vote for favorite among the amateurs and professionals.

The mixologist receiving the highest audience votes will win the Audience Award, with a trophy and \$200,

and the best amateur will win the Home Craft Cocktail Award, with a trophy and \$100. In addition, there is an Art of Table Staging trophy.

Among those competing are bartenders from The 4th Bore in Orinda; Canyon Club, Moraga; Forge and Parlour in Oakland; Barranco, Tiki Tom's, Benvenuti, and Bounty Hunter in Walnut Creek. Portia Battistini, The Cooperage, Lafayette, 2016 Mixologist of the Year, will also be competing.

This year's competition is sponsored by Tahoe Blue Vodka, but competitors may use any spirit they choose.

Last year's competition was not in person, but via Zoom. The audience could purchase cocktail kits containing everything needed for each cocktail except for the alcohol. The kits, presented by Saloonbox Curated Cocktails, proved to be a huge hit, and some who purchased them asked if the kits could be available later in the year, as they would make excellent holiday gifts. In response, this year the cocktail kits will be available in November. Kits can be ordered at the event or online during October. Each kit makes up to six drinks and contain recipes and ingredients for two different cocktails. Kits do not contain the alcohol. Any alcohol must be purchased separately. There will be five kits. All five may be purchased for \$200 or each kit for \$50. Pre-ordered kits may be picked up on Nov. 6, 13 or 20 from 10 a.m. to noon at Theatre Square. Delivery for a fee will be provided in the Lamorinda area, or kits can be shipped.

Denise Nomura and Stacy Giglio co-chaired the Art of Mixology Committee and everybody from the Lamorinda Arts Council helped. This major fundraiser for the year, helps support all of the Lamorinda Arts Council's programs, including Lamorinda idol, the high school visual arts competition, Art Embraces Words, the super-short film festival, Art in place, and the two art galleries curated by the Council, one at the Orinda Library and the other at Wilder.

The Art of Mixology received support from Morrison Jewelers, Republic Services, Tahoe Blue Vodka, Saloonbox; and Morgan Stanley Theatre Square. In addition, three companies sponsored bartender tables for this eighth annual competition.

Following Art of Mixology, there will be a post party at the 4th Bore in aid of Notes 4 Hope, a breast cancer awareness and research fundraiser. On offer will be a live band, and a signature beer made by Canyon Club: the FU Cancer Brew. Part of the proceeds goes to its research fund.

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