



LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL SPIRITS COMPETITION



Dana Chandler
Spirits Competition, Honorary Chairman

A second-generation Southern Californian and graduate of the University of Southern California, I have spent over 30 years in the wine and spirits industry. Beginning in the wine business with Gallo and Kendall Jackson I have held a succession of wholesaler and supplier positions managing all channels of business. In 1997 I embarked on my first spirits dedicated position for Millennium Import Company owned by Edward Phillips. At Millennium I had the honor of participating in the introduction the luxury vodka category in the US with the launch of Belvedere and Chopin vodkas. In 2006 I moved to the startup company Russian Standard Vodka. As Vice President of Sales, I hired the national sales force and directed all commercial sales operations. Reuniting with Chopin Vodka in 2010, I established Chopin Imports in the US with a dedicated team and a strategic route to market with Southern Glazers Wine and Spirits. Besides managing Chopin Vodka sales, I implemented a strategy of signing up best of class agency partners. Clase Azul Spirits was the first agency that signed on with our team. In the summer of 2018, I was offered and accepted the Chief Sales Officer role at Clase Azul Spirits. Here I am currently managing US sales and commercial strategy. In my eight year as Honorary Chairman of the Los Angeles International Spirits Competition, I am very proud about bringing together the finest most knowledgeable and diverse group of judges to the LAISC panel. Led by industry veterans from retail, wholesaler, supplier, restaurant and mixology, each judge brings their own expertise and passion for fine spirits to this great event.

Married to Sally for 25 years, I have two children Jay 24 and Ellie 20. In my spare time, I enjoy playing guitar in my classic rock band, Everyday Housewives and driving my restored 71 VW bus... maximum speed of 60 mph or less.



Chris Braun
Advinture, Wine Import Consultancy

Chris Braun was born and raised in California. After playing professional volleyball for three years, he received an MS in Wine and Spirits from ESC in Dijon. Chris then started working in Bordeaux and later moved to the Languedoc region in southern France where he was Managing Director of Ciatti Europe in Montpellier. He received the Chevalier de l'Ordre de Merite Agricole medal for his service to the French wine industry. Chris now runs Advinture, a wine import consultancy, and is based in Southern California.



Kristin Burley
Zonin Wines, Divisional Manager

Kristin Burley has been in the beverage business for over a decade. She worked in event planning, promotions, marketing, public relations, and bartending before beginning her career on the supplier side. She previously worked for Anheuser-Busch and the wine and spirits portfolios at Palm Bay International, and is currently a Divisional Manager for Zonin Wines. Originally from Pennsylvania, she moved to Arizona to receive her undergraduate degree from Arizona State University. She then earned her Master's Degree from Gonzaga University and wrote her thesis on Corporate Social Responsibility in Alcohol Beverage Companies. As a member of the Phoenix USBG and participant in Arizona Cocktail Week, Kristin is passionate about the cocktail culture in Arizona and across the country. She bartended while studying abroad in Australia, and has been traveling to wineries and distilleries locally and abroad in Italy, Austria, Chile and Argentina while increasing her knowledge and appreciation of the industry



Ricardo Cestero
Partner at Greenberg Glusker

Ricardo Cestero, a litigation partner at Greenberg Glusker, is best known for developing creative strategies and winning arguments for his clients—celebrities, athletes, and sports and entertainment companies—in a wide range of entertainment related disputes and lawsuits. Ricardo's practice also extends beyond the entertainment industry to complex commercial litigation involving partnership, contract, and real estate disputes. Many of Ricardo's client relationships start with litigation, but evolve into more general legal

advice. They call on him to review and advise on a variety of business matters, including reviewing or drafting contracts and counseling on business deals.

Ricardo has significant experience in the beverage and liquor space. His representative clients include Chopin Vodka and Clase Azul Tequila. Greenberg Glusker's Restaurant, Food and Beverage group provides legal counsel for the full range of operations, growth, and business issues encountered in the food and beverage industry. This includes employment and litigation issues, real estate sales and leasing, asset purchases, mergers, acquisitions, and trademark applications.



Cliff Coglietti
The Heights Restaurant and The Village Grille, Owner

BS in Business from University of Riverside.
Opened 20 plus restaurants as Bar Manager, General Manager
Restaurant Owner for 20 years with multiple locations.
Current owner of The Heights Restaurant and The Village Grille.



Lisa Copenhaver
Chase's Restaurant, Mixologist

Lisa is a 27 year veteran in the art of mixology. From dive bars to fine dining, Lisa can make it happen. For 17 years she worked for Tutti Mangia Italian Grill in the Claremont Village. In 2013, she took a leap and accepted a position as F&B Director for The Claremont Club. Her leadership skills flourished, yet her skills were very limited and Lisa gave it 5 years before she decided to go back to her roots of mixology. 2 years in a row her cocktails were featured at the Elton John Aids Foundation Oscar party. She also had the opportunity to mix for 2017 SAG Awards. Both of these events she represented her favorite tequila Clase Azul, as well as Chopin Vodka. Lisa is a return judge to spirits competition. She also is the mixologist for the Cheers event that occurs in June featuring the winning spirits from LAISC as well as the speaker/educator for selected spirit classes for the LA County Fair. Currently, you will find Lisa batching up and mixing at Chase's restaurant in La Verne. She is also getting ready to help launch Claremont's first and only Distillery called Citrus Grove Distillers. Stay tuned for that! Lisa has a 16 year old daughter named Danyele, a beautiful kitty named Bijoux, an emotional loving chihuahua terrier named Uno and a husband named Harry who loves and begs for her whiskey sours! Lisa also teaches fitness classes on the side and works small catering gigs in Los Angeles, like The Governor's Ball for The OSCARS! Yea, she likes movies.



Matt Fraser

Young's Market Company, Branch Manager Central Coast

I am 36 years old and I live in Santa Barbara. I am married to my wife Stephanie Fraser and I have 2 children - Harper age 5 and Willow age 7. I have been in the industry for the past 15 plus years working in restaurants and bars. I used to own a bar in Santa Barbara. I have held 4 positions within Youngs Market Company. I started with the Alliance Group (Bacardi, Brown Foreman, Remy Cointreau), was then a Division Wine Manager, Division Manager and I am now the branch manager for the Central Coast.

I am passionate about both wine and spirits. I have experience behind the bar creating beverage programs for the past 15 years (10 of that as a bartender/bar owner). I am looking forward to being a part of the tasting panel.



Alfredo S. Gama

Wine Warehouse, Spirit Specialist

Alfredo Gama brings to the trade, thirty years of product development experience, organizing and directing distribution and sales efforts through all industry trade channels. Following his graduation from the University of San Francisco with a Bachelor's degree in International Business Administration, Alfredo began achieving his career goals at Miller Brewing Corporate as an Account Executive, at Young's Market Company as the First Hispanic V.P. Division Manager, and at Pernod Ricard as the First Multicultural Manager in charge of Hispanic, Asian and African American business. Alfredo joined Wine Warehouse in Southern California in 2008 as their Spirits Manager for Southern California to help further the development of the WW Spirits Portfolio and is currently a Spirits Specialist. Mr. Gama has also participated 5 times as a Judge at the Spirits of Mexico in San Diego, California and as Judge Three times at the International Spirits Competition in Los Angeles, California.



Bernie Garcia

Owner of Moctezuma's Mexican Restaurant & Tequila Bar

Bernie Garcia is the owner of Moctezuma's Mexican Restaurant & Tequila Bar chain based in Seattle, Washington and is also the founder of Grandeza Spirits Company. After graduating from the University of San Diego with a BA in

Business Administration, Bernie took over the leadership of his family restaurant business and has expanded to various locations. Moctezuma's has been recognized in Washington as the premier dining destination for Mexican cuisine, earning accolades including "Best Mexican Restaurant" in various media outlets. Bernie recently launched Grandeza Spirits Company that is packaged in a unique and innovative bottle design that he patented in 2015. Within a few months of launching, Grandeza has established itself as a leading and popular premium orange liqueur in the market.



Jack Glass
Young's Market Company, Key Account Manager

I grew up in Socal and started in the Restaurant Industry when I was 15 and worked in various concepts from nightclubs to Four Diamond Steakhouses.

I graduated from UCR with an accounting degree and was a senior accountant for 6 years before joining Young's Market Company as a key account manager.

In my 9 years at YMCO I developed a love for fine wines and spirits acquiring certifications such as the CSW, CSS, WSET Levels 1&2 and CMS Level 1.

I am currently working toward my FWS.



Lenny Gotter
Portland Whisky Club

Lenny Gotter founded Eastside Distilling and was the CEO from 2008 to 2014 when the company was the first craft distillery to go public on NASDAQ symbol EAST. During his tenure, he created more than a dozen award-winning brands and flavor profiles all the while aggressively driving business growth. He stayed on as director until 2016 when he started working as an independent consultant. Since then he has judged in a number of spirits competitions, runs his own tasting group, Portland Whisky Club, and has written several freelance articles and updates his own blog and Instagram The Liquorist Blog with his own creations as well as reviews of craft spirits.



J Mattingly
Saint Marc USA, Bar Manager

J began his bar career in San Francisco and moved to the food-centric, rural Northern California coast in 2007. Working at a roadhouse under a sommelier, he learned to bring together his love of detail in spirits with live music and a sense of improvisation. After 3 years, he moved to fine-dining at some of the most exotic locations on the northern coast. J has opened 6 bars from Mendocino to Huntington Beach, and held numerous off-site and pop-up events before finally taking a corporate gig as general manager for Saint Marc USA. He has been in the service industry for 13 years and loves teaching classes in spirits production, legal standards, cocktails, and trends in the industry. He has also been featured in *The Tasting Panel*, *Orange Coast*, and *Nobleman Magazine*.



Tim McDonald
Wine & Spirits Spoken Here

Tim has forty years of proven success in spirits & wine industry public relations, trade relations, marketing and sales, event management and wine education. His experience includes positions at adult beverage companies like E&J Gallo where he served as Marketing Director/Fine Wine Communications, Jim Beam's Peak Wines as V.P. of Marketing and Communications, Trincherro Family Estates as Director of Trade Relations, Heublein Wines as Director of Trade & Public Relations, and National Accounts sales assignments with both Seagram and Heublein. Tim has experience with all types of media, national accounts, wholesale distributors, restaurant, and retail segments. He has judged at The San Francisco International Wine & World Spirits Competitions the past 2 decades. Chief Judge Spirits San Diego Wine & Spirits Challenge, Chief Judge at The Central Coast Wine & Spirits Show & has served as a judge at over 100 wine and spirits competitions.



Caterina Miltenberger
Corporate Mixologist

Caterina Miltenberger Founder of Caterina Creative Culinary LLC. Continues to be the sweetheart and preferred mixologist for many national accounts. Caterina is a member of the prestigious Les Dames D'Esoffier Monterey, California Chapter. As an award winning Culinary Bar Chef/Mixologist Dallas, TX 25 years' experience in the Alcohol Beverage Industry and is acknowledged as one of United States premier mixologist's. Her talent and ability to drive cocktail creations on a very approachable level has deemed her opportunities to work with the largest restaurant accounts in the world. Caterina has worked with Stephan Pyle's "The Father of Southwest Cuisine", Celebrity Chef's Mario Batali and Guy Fieri and her friend Chef Todd Erickson of Haven South Beach Caterina helped create The NOW famous Jalapeño Margarita in 2006 that has

influenced many bars and restaurants in the USA. A member of the Dallas Honey Guild she promotes the use of “Local” honey and the benefits.

Best Margarita in Dallas 3 years in a row

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2019 – Los Angeles International Spirits Competition Judging Panel

2018 – Los Angeles International Spirits Competition Judging Panel

2017 – Los Angeles International Spirits Competition Judging Panel

2019 – WSWA Judging Panel for Iron Mixologist Competition

2017 – WSWA Judging Panel for Iron Mixologist Competition

2017 – WSWA Judging Panel “Call for Cocktails” Competition

2018 – AIR (Arts Incubator of Richardson) PODCAST – Titanic The Movie

2019 – PF CHANGS Year Of The Pig Trio of Cocktails to Celebrate Chinese New Years

2019 – Forbes Magazine (Digital) Featured Valentines Cocktail Casa Dragones Tequila

2018 – Food In Fashion Event Featuring Tito’s Handmade Vodka – Non-For Profit Benefits Texas Restaurant Association Education Foundation ProStart Program

2017 - Caterina created cocktail pairings with Network Celebrity Chef Bobby Flay Non-for profit Event Trinity Groves 3015 Dallas, TX

2017 – A Dame Good Party – Les Dames Escoffier Dallas Chapter Non for Profit helping create scholarships for women in the culinary arts.

2016 – Les Dames Escoffier Raiser Grazer Non for Profit helping create awareness in the culinary arts for women.

2015 – WSWA Women’s Leadership Council – Opening Cocktail Party

2015 WSWA Iron Mixologist winner for Best Long Drink.

2011 WSWA Iron Mixologist winner for Best of Show, Best Long Drink and Best Dessert Drink.

Presented the Toast to Congress in Washington, DC Caterina has many of her cocktails published in the Famed Neiman Marcus Cookbook.

Caterina has been published in Meatless In Cowtown – Vegan Cocktail Book.

Featured in Tasting Panel Magazine for her Farm to Table cocktail programs.

She has been featured in Cosmopolitan, Cheers Magazine, Chilled Magazine, FD Luxe Magazine, and D Magazine.



Mark Nureddine

Bull BBQ, Owner

For most people, tinkering with and testing an open flame grill in your garage is not a good idea. But Mark Nureddine is not most people. And his efforts with a grill in a closed environment were the genesis to a company that would become one of the leading manufacturers of grill islands in the world. Under Nureddine’s direction and leadership, Bull Outdoor Products now provides grills, islands and grilling components to over 900 dealers and distributors within North America, reaching 15 countries and growing.

Nureddine attributes the gourmet cooking of his mother, and her Italian heritage, with helping develop his palate for great tasting food at an early age. In recent years, Nureddine has further embraced food and wine culture, including growing his own vineyard in Lodi, Calif., and as a hobbyist winemaker. Additionally, much of his personal time is

spent exploring both local and international culinary endeavors, visiting well-known culinary schools and enjoying area vineyards.

To complement his appreciation for great tasting food, Nureddine has maintained several positions as a judge in the food sport arena. Nureddine is a Certified Barbeque Judge for the Kansas City Barbeque Society and has served as a judge for Bull Outdoor Product's own Bull Burger Battle series of nationwide burger cook-offs. The inaugural Bull Burger Battle series, with events held at Bull Outdoor distributors throughout the country, served to qualify six competitors into the World Food Championships, the world's highest stakes food competition, of which Bull Outdoor is an integrated partner.

Nureddine's passion for food and his dedication to building a better cooking medium remains just as strong today as it did when he first began 20 years ago. Bull Outdoor Products continues to focus on expanding consumers' love of outdoor cooking and entertainment by teaching them more about their grills and how to best use them. Nureddine maintains a commitment to integrating the finest grill material available with innovative cooking techniques, as shared by the Bull Outdoor corporate chef and complemented by Bull Outdoor's repertoire of recipes and cookbooks.

To learn more about Bull Outdoor Products, visit www.bullbbq.com



Colin Pflugradt
SOL, Beverage Director

I was born and raised in San Francisco with a small stint in Scottsdale, AZ before arriving to So Cal just over 10 years ago. I currently live in San Clemente. I am the Beverage Director for a small chain of Mexican Restaurants, SOL and Solita. I have been working in restaurants since I was 16 and bartending since I was 19. I only really like working with Tequila and Mezcal and my entire restaurant career has been in places that feature agave and agave cocktails.



Shawn Richcreek
Total Wine & More, Area Market Manager

Shawn is passionate about spirits. He is passionate about people, passionate about training and most importantly, he is passionate about providing amazing customer experiences! He is currently the Chief Wine and Spirits Educator and Store Director for Total Wine & More at their Flagship Store in Palm Desert. Prior to joining Total Wine & More, Shawn worked for 13 years for Beverages & More where he was the Director of Training for their retail stores. Prior to that Shawn was the Southern California wine buyer for Cost Plus World Market and has worked on the retail side of the Wine and Spirits business in Southern California for more than 20 years. Shawn is a Certified Sommelier and a Certified Specialist of Spirits.



Jaun Sanchez
Clase Azul Spirits, Partner and President

Born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico, Juan Sanchez is a partner and President of Clase Azul Spirits and a 16 year veteran of the financial services industry. Mr. Sanchez and his partner Arturo Lomeli started Clase Azul Tequila and La Pinta in Mr. Lomeli's mother's kitchen and self-distributing in San Francisco twenty years ago. Today, Clase Azul Spirits sells over 50,000 cases annually and is in distribution in 47 states in the US, Mexico, Canada, Europe and Australia. Juan holds a BBA in Finance and International Business from Baylor University and a double MBA from Monterrey Tech in Mexico (ITESM) and The University of Texas at Austin. He lives with his wife and eight year old son in San Francisco, CA and is currently pursuing a Certification with the Court of Master Sommeliers. Clase Azul Spirits vision statement is to *Share happiness and captivate the world through the magic of Tequila and Mezcal.*

Scott Saul
MHW, Executive Vice President

Since 1997, Scott Saul has been Executive Vice President of MHW, Ltd, the leading service provider to the beverage alcohol industry. From 1987 through 1996, Mr. Saul served as the General Manager of Proprietary Brands, a New York based importer/wholesaler and compliance service provider. Prior to joining Proprietary Brands, Mr. Saul was Traffic Manager at Monarch Wine Company, manufacturer of Manischewitz wines and importer of Tsingtao Beers. From 1979-1986 worked for ILLVA Saronno, S.p.A., manufacturer of DiSaronno Originale Amaretto. During this period, Mr. Saul held positions at their US distilled spirits plant such as import manager, traffic manager and government reports manager. Mr. Saul sits on various committees of the National Association of Beverage Importers in Washington, DC.



J.R. Starkus
Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, Director of Mixology Trade Development

J.R. Starkus has been a key player in Las Vegas' cocktail industry for the last decade, currently in the role of Director of Mixology Trade Development at Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits of Nevada. Growing up in Southern California, Starkus set his sights on Sin City at an early age, developing a keen interest in the culinary industry and the opportunities the city had to offer.

Eager to explore the industry, Starkus landed his first position as a server, working at Chinois in The Forum Shops at

Caesars Palace in 1999. Shortly thereafter, he began his bartending career, after a co-worker didn't show up for his shift, which ultimately changed his career path forever. From there he went on to work high above the Strip at the Eiffel Tower Restaurant at Paris Las Vegas, where he spent seven years working as a co-lead bartender. In 2009, Starkus moved to Aria Resort & Casino in City Center, where he worked as a casino floor bartender, and later to Todd English P.U.B. at Crystals at City Center. His final bartending location was Rick Moonen's rm Seafood as Lead Bartender where he and his team gained recognition as one of the best bars in the city. In 2012, Starkus began work with the (then) Southern Wine & Spirits as part of the Mixology Team.

Starkus is an advocate of Las Vegas' cocktail culture. He draws much of his inspiration from his mentor, renowned mixologist Francesco Lafranconi and believes in utilizing seasonal and sustainable ingredients. Focused on crafting fresh, great-tasting and approachable cocktails, Starkus provides guests with a memorable experience, while also opening up their palettes to new flavors. In addition, Starkus is a seasoned competitor in the mixology competition circuit. In 2012, he took first place in several competitions in conjunction with the United States Bartenders' Guild, including the Campari Best Aperitivo Competition, Don Q Mix It Up Ultimate Mixology Challenge, the Ultimate Las Vegas Cocktail Competition and the Angostura Bitters National Competition. Starkus was also named "Best Mixology Ambassador" in Vegas Seven's 2012 "Best of the City" issue as well as being nominated for "Bartender of the Year" on three separate occasions. In 2015 Starkus won the "Best Aperitif" cocktail in the Iron Mixologist competition at WSWA and in 2016 took top honors in Caesars Palace 50th anniversary cocktail competition.

Starkus has passed the U.S.B.G. Master Mixologist curriculum, one of two people in the country to accomplish this. Starkus is a graduate of the B.A.R.5 Day with the highest level of certification, the Sake Professional course put on by John Gautner and most recently has become WSET L3 Sake Certified. He is also the co-host of "What's on Tap", a spirits and mixology show on ESPN radio, weekly.

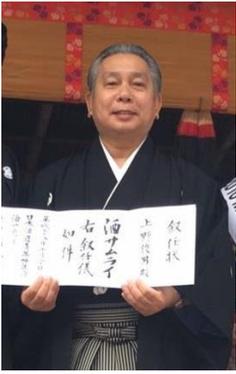
When Starkus is not working, he can be found spending time with his wife Brianne and their son J.T. He also enjoys being outdoors, playing golf and baseball, and studying spirits production and history.



Ryan Steely
SOA32 Creative, Owner

Ryan Steely is a Creative Director and designer from Southern California, where his family has been planted for over 5 generations. Ryan owns SOA32 Creative and is no stranger to working with leading brands in the alcohol industry. Creating more than just marketing campaigns, he has found himself heavily involved in building new brands and developing many exciting new products.

Ryan's taste for spirits has landed him a dual-role as he heads up the packaging design competition and has a seat on the tasting panel for his fourth year.



Toshio Ueno

Mutual Trading Company, Manager of the Business Development Department

Master of Sake, Master Sake Sommelier, WSET Sake Educator and Shochu Sommelier. Born in Japan where his family has grown wine grapes for generations, Toshio grew up helping the business from a young age. Following his education in the US and employment at an international trading company in Tokyo, he joined Chateraise, a pastry and wine company as Director of Sales. In 2002 he joined Mutual Trading Company where he is Manager of the Business Development Department in marketing Japanese foods, Jizake and Shochu to the mainstream American trade. With his passion and expertise he aims to further promote Japanese food and Sake cultures to new international audiences. He is executive instructor at Sake School of America. And in 2016 he has received one of the industry's highest honors: the title of "Sake Samurai" awarded by Japan Sake & Shochu Makers Association.