

Francesco Lafranconi

Founder and Director of Southern Wine and Spirits of Nevada's Academy of Spirits and Fine Service

As Director of Southern Wine and Spirits of Nevada's Academy of Spirits and Fine Service, Mr.



Francesco Lafranconi presides over a unique educational program in the United States. Prior to joining Southern Wine and Spirits of Nevada, Mr. Lafranconi worked at many of the world's leading hotels and bars, including the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland, The

Gstaadt, Switzerland, the Intercontinental Hotel in Cologne, Germany, Harry's Bar and Hotel Cipriani in Venice, Italy - with staves in Singapore and Australia as well. Mr. Lafranconi is also the Chairman and Co-founder of the United States Bartenders Guild (U.S.B.G.)-Nevada Chapter- and an active member of the International Bartenders Association (I.B.A.), recognized in more than 50 countries worldwide.

Mr. Lafranconi won several prestigious international cocktail competitions including the most famous in the world: The Bacardi-Martini Grand Prix World Final in 1998, the J.White Course in Singapore and 2 Italian national finals just to name a few.

Becoming a part of Southern Wine and Spirits of Nevada, Mr. Lafranconi created a 12-week Academy of Spirits and Fine Service educational program, including the resurgence of classic cocktails and the image of the professional bartender and his/her fine art and craftsmanship as a respected profession.

According to Lafranconi, the aim of the Academy of Spirits and Fine Service program is

to provide product and category knowledge to each individual class member, create brand awareness with assistance from visiting brand ambassadors and master distillers.

He offers appropriate instruction so each individual is more confident behind the bar. He trains students in the fine points of cocktails, mixology and service. Last but not least, he underlines the quality of all the brands carried by Southern Wine and Spirits of Nevada. His cocktails are often featured in trade publications and he has also appeared in the Sunday Edition of the New York Times (Feb 1st, 2004).

Mr. Lafranconi shares his professional knowledge and talented creativity promoting supplier's new brands and developing cocktail programs for world renowned celebrity chefs like D. Boulud from Daniel Restaurant in New York City, T. Keller's Per Se in NYC and Bouchon at The Venetian in Las Vegas. He created the cocktail program for Chef Emeril Lagasse's new Pan-Pacific concept in Orlando, Florida and also contributes to celebrity Chefs like W. Puck's Spago Group, Bradley Ogden at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas (winner of the James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant in the U.S.) and Hubert Keller's new restaurant Fleur de Lys in Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas.

Mr. Lafranconi's latest involvement with Wynn Las Vegas Resort & Casino, the newest addition to the Las Vegas strip was to put together 75 signature drinks for the property. He was also responsible for training approximately 700 members of their staff that make up this world-class food and beverage department.

Currently, Mr. Lafranconi is involved in developing beverage programs for different national accounts consisting of more than one hundred restaurants and bars throughout the country.

He is constantly researching and studying this fascinating industry. *"We're not drinking...we're learning"*, says Lafranconi.