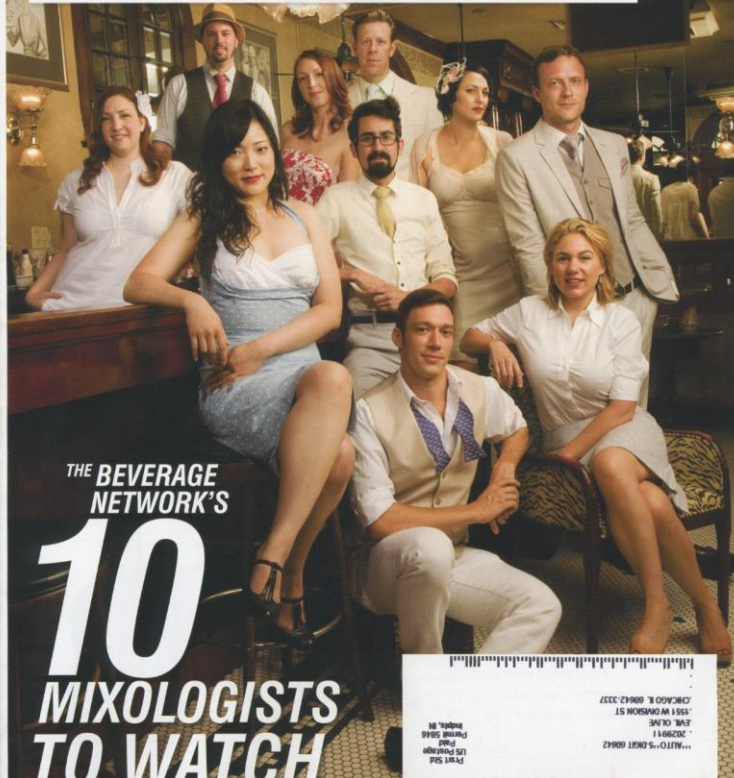


ILLINOIS BEVERAGEGUIDE



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THE BEVERAGE NETWORK'S 10 MIXOLOGISTS TO WATCH

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10 CRISTIANA DELUCCA Chicago, Illinois

Tales of the Cocktail attendees may have met Cristiana DeLuca at the Grand Marnier Bar Room Brawl, where her bar, The Drawing Room in Chicago, competed against a handful of fellow lauded cocktail establishments from across the country. "I would love to see another competition like that where you pit bar against bar, and not just individual bartender against individual bartender. It's such a great twist on a bartender competition," she says. DeLuca, a graduate of Beverage Alcohol Resources' BARSmarts program and The Academy of Spirits and Fine Service taught by Bridget Albert, has been a fixture at the Charles Joly-helmed Drawing Room bar for two years, where she's seen her clientele grow more ambitious with their drink selections. She says

of Albert: "I admire her so much for her ever-growing wealth of knowledge, diplomacy, talent and leadership; she put Chicago on the cocktail world map." On any given night at Drawing Room, you'll find her right beside Joly, experimenting with Rittenhouse 100, or Dimmi liqueur. One of her recent creations, the "Anthurium," with blackberry puree, basil, lime, Aperol and Right Gin, currently off the menu, still garners requests.

◆ HOW SHE HANDLES CRITICISM

"I have thick skin and I'll never let it show, but sometimes it can get to me if someone doesn't like something I've created for them. On the other hand, understanding why someone doesn't like a cocktail makes me a better bartender, so I do appreciate the challenge."

"Charles is one of my closest friends and confidants, a brother and a mentor. He leads by example and he's set the bar really high for me to keep learning, growing and succeeding in the industry," DeLuca reveals. "We have so much fun here; there are five of us behind a bar that spans maybe 10 feet, so we've learned our own rhythm with each other."

