

Mojito libre™ is the extreme dream when it comes to conjuring this trendy cocktail

Making a Mint in the Limelight

Jack Barsoumian hits the bulls-eye when it comes to flavor perfection. The Armenian-born organic chemist is more artist than scientist, devising spectrums of flavor for the palate.

Patterson's met up with Jack and his wife and business partner Maral at Villa Piacere in Woodland Hills, where he introduced Editor-in-Chief Meridith May and Villa Piacere General Manager Victor Hugo to Mojito libre™, a delicious blend of mint, lime and simple sugar. "This is the world's first all-inclusive Mojito mix in a bottle," states Jack, who enthusiastically took us through the steps of how this magnificent mix is made.

"The minute you snap off the mint in the garden is a critical time. That's when we gather it for Mojito libre™." Only the freshest, juiciest limes are used and the fresh aroma of concentrated lime and mint is a perfumed dream that ethereally wafts out of the bottle.

Mojito libre™ is unlike any Mojito mix we've ever tasted. Engineered to a level of such uncanny freshness, Jack recommends "racking" the bottle once a day, to augment the integrity

of the ingredients in the bottle, as you would a bottle of wine.

Mojito libre's™ sexy label features a couple dancing on a lime wedge, surrounded by the blue waters of the Caribbean. "Each 16-ounce drink delivers 10 percent of your daily recommended Vitamin C," adds Jack, who also notes that one bottle holds the capability of making "17.1 16-ounce drinks."

Jack and Maral's pastry ingredient manufacturing company, Amoretti, was the official pastry ingredient supplier and proud Gold Sponsor of Team USA that won, for the first time in U.S. history, the highly coveted World Pastry Championship in 2002 and 2004. In 2005, the Competition was renamed "The Amoretti National Pastry Team Championship," held last month in Arizona.

Jack has independently created over 1500 products, including mixes, syrups, pastry pastes, nut flours, dessert sauces, extracts, whole fruit smoothie bases and liqueurs. "I've gone from 0 to 1000 in less than 10 years," points out Jack Barsoumian, the maestro of flavor perfection.



At Villa Piacere, General Manager Victor Hugo has also mastered an art and science of his own. The restaurant, which translates to "house of pleasure," has become one of the more site-specific dining destinations in Woodland Hills. The restaurant rivals a Tuscan estate in décor. The sunlight works its way into the gleaming tile and woodwork inside, while the outdoor patio is a hidden garden of vines and ivy.

Hugo admits he loves the challenge of the business and surrounds himself with talented

chefs, knowledgeable wait staff and enthusiastic managers, combining an appealing team to greet customers night after night.

The picturesque bar is a focal point, and Hugo has a keen sense of what items to stock and which drink trends to follow. "Rum is the hottest thing going. Most cuisine is swerving towards southwest or Pacific Rim. We are able to grasp at both, offering a versatile menu (and their own Sushi Chef) and serving fresh drinks that integrate with a food and cocktail culture."