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If you've never seen flair bartending, you've come to one of its capitals, and it's definitely a must-see. Many of Las Vegas' top bars feature talented bartenders who can spin, throw, juggle and do other impressive tricks with bottles, shakers and straws while they make your drink.

Flair bartending is both a skill and an art.

"There's three types of flair bartending," says Scott Young, one of flair bartending's pioneers, as well as president and founder of extremebartending.com. "Flipping flair—things that are rotating; style and movement flair—literally just moving the objects around your body in an interesting way; and style with service—waterfall pours, for example."

Young has traveled the country for 15 years, training bartenders and introducing bar owners to flair bartending as a marketing tool for increasing clientele. He teaches what is called "intelligent working flair," which incorporates customer service, showmanship, product knowledge and salesmanship. Young got into flair bartending simply because he wanted to make more money.

"I thought there had to be more than just making a rum and Coke, or pouring a beer," he says. "I

saw the movie *Cocktail*, and I was like, 'I gotta do that—it looks so cool.' So I ended up taking an advanced bartending course...which taught me three moves."

The Canada native developed his style by practicing on a homemade bar he built in his backyard. He and a partner began entering competitions, and eventually Young was hired to work at one of Vancouver's busiest locales, the Roxy. These experiences taught him the essentials for being a flair bartender.

"I think [what a flair bartender needs] is confidence and wanting to play with people," he says. "Hopefully, it's not arrogance, because there's a fine line there. ...Some people might have the physical ability to do flair bartending, but they don't have the personality, and then it comes across really cold."

Young notes that the most challenging part of flair bartending is just starting out.

"It's a lot of new skills and new muscles," he says, "and a lot of people think they ought to be able to do it perfectly right away. There's some basic foundations that if you create you're going to go much faster, but if you ignore them, you're going to have a lot of problems."

One also has to be willing to goof up from time to time.

"Being any kind of performer, you have to know you're going to fail, so you have to be able to deal with failure in a fun way," Young says. "Sometimes, you just walk away from it—a lot of times people never saw it so don't act like it's a big deal. Other times, take credit for it, 'Yeah, that was me.' Take a bow, be involved in it in a positive way and people enjoy it more because they want to see you crash."

Of course, Young is an advocate of making cocktails in a fun and entertaining way for customers, but he's also interested in making sure the recovery process is easier on them as well. One of his sponsors is a hangover defense tablet, called *Drinkin' Mate* (drinkinmate.com).

"It's the coolest thing out there," Young says. "You can mix it with water no problem, but I like mixing it with vodka and Red Bull...and also with vodka and Mountain Dew."

For finding flair bars in Las Vegas, Young highly recommends *Noir* at Luxor, *Shadow Bar* at Caesars Palace and *Carnaval Court* at Harrah's, shown above, which features some of the top names in flair bartending in the world. —MR