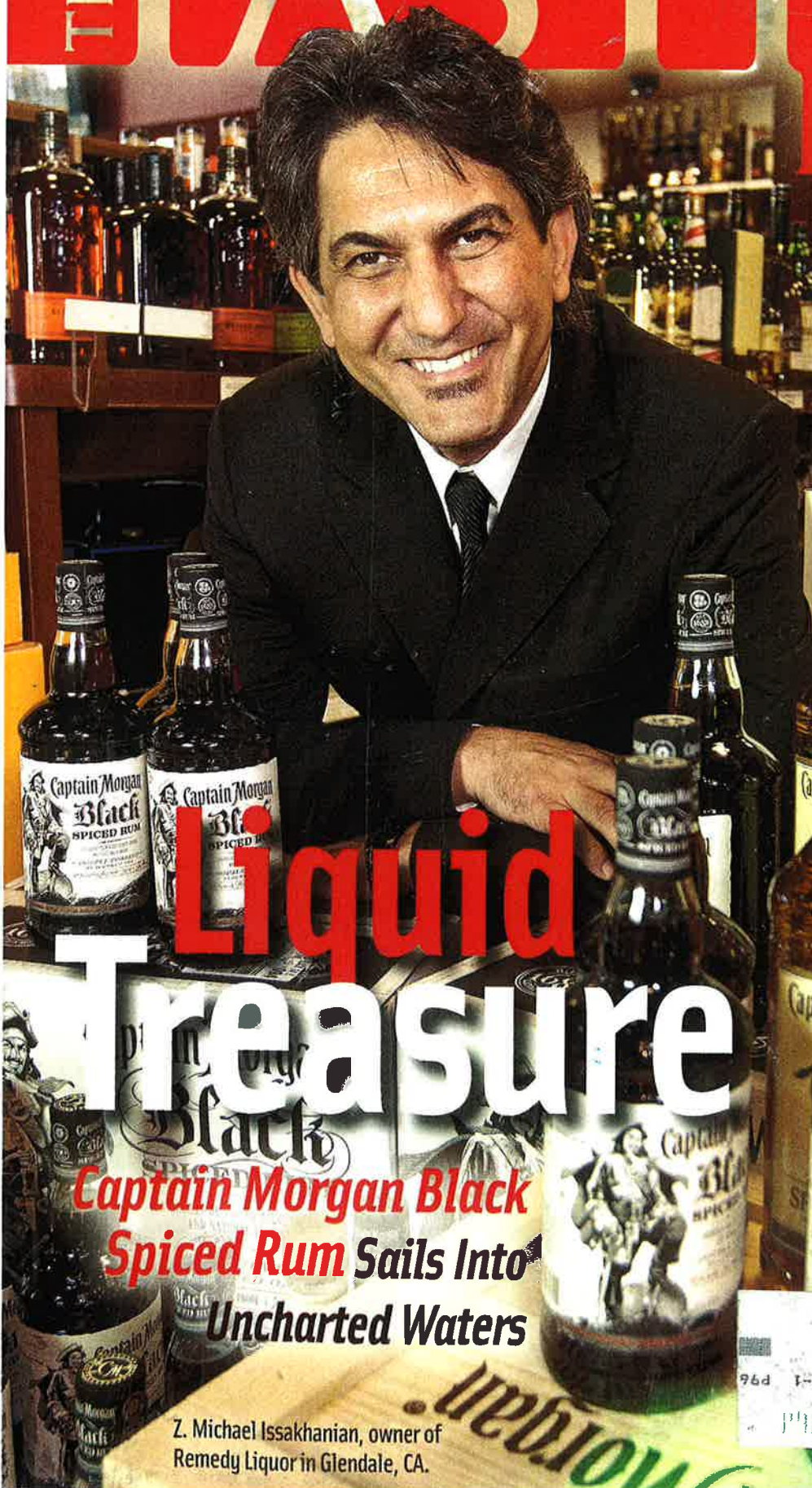


THE WASHINGTON PANEL

JUNE 2012 • 3.95



Liquid Treasure

Captain Morgan Black Spiced Rum Sails Into Uncharted Waters

Z. Michael Issakhanian, owner of Remedy Liquor in Glendale, CA.

*****CAR-RT LDT#C109
ODLV GALER-NOEL
AP/R DIRECTOR
FREDERICK WILDMAN AND SONS
307 E 33RD ST FL 3
NEW YORK, NY 10022-4965

PHOTO: ROB BROWN

The Life of the Party



PHOTO: DEBORAH PARKER WONG

Claire Smith of Belvedere Vodka.

by Deborah Parker Wong

San Francisco sees its share of charming brand ambassadors and original mixologists, but Belvedere's **Claire Smith** in her role as Head of Spirit Creation and Mixology for Môt Hennessy's rye-based **Belvedere Vodka** is a winning combination of both disciplines. In addition to directing the brand's image from the creation of new flavors and cocktails to designing the sets for her launch parties, New York-based Smith tracks mixology trends while she simultaneously starts a few of her own.

Since 2003, this barrister-turned-mixologist has extended Belvedere's popular Macerated Collection with flavors that include Pink Grapefruit and the drink-inspired Bloody Mary, which in turn led to her newest flavor Lemon Tea, a riff on one of the world's most popular beverage flavors, iced tea. "The beauty of drink-based flavors is that the consumer gets it immediately," said Smith, "there is no education required."

After experimenting at length with green tea, Smith settled on a blend of black Assam and green Sencha teas, chamomile, ginger, lemon-grass, multi-flower honey and lemon for a flavor profile that "diminishes the impression of the attack without being sweet." Smith sees vodka flavor extensions as being increasingly about the best expression of the raw materials, "Once consumers reach a point of palate fatigue from synthetic flavors, they move on to more complex and authentic products."

Claire Smith's Belvedere Lemon Tea

- ▶ 1½ oz. Belvedere Lemon Tea
- ▶ 1 oz. Perfect Purée Thyme & Citrus
- ▶ Dash of lemon
- ▶ Dash of simple syrup
- ▶ Shake and pour into a highball glass with fresh thyme. Top with Fever-Tree Tonic Water.

In celebration of their partnership with importer Frederick Wildman & Sons, fifth- and sixth-generation members of the **Abbona** family of **Marchesi di Barolo** hosted a rare retrospective tasting of their library wines and current portfolio spanning 40 years. Highlights included a vertical tasting of Barolo Riserva with vintages from 1970 through 2003 and a horizontal tasting of their 2007 cru single-vineyard Barolos during an evening at restaurant **Acquerello** in San Francisco.

The Riservas illustrated the longevity and profound beauty of the more oxidative styles from the '70s and '80s and the shift in style marked by the adoption of temperature-controlled fermentations and shorter maceration times in the early '90s. "The only thing that has not changed at Marchesi di Barolo is the soil," observed Dr. Ernesto in his summation of the vertical tasting.

Of the three 2007 cru wines presented, each clearly demonstrated the terroirs found on the estate from sites that are within 200 meters of each other. The sandy Cannubi, noted as the "best" site, showed deeper, intense fruit; Coste di Rose was fresher and leaner; and Sarmassa's compact, stony soils and steep exposition offered lavish floral aromas and bright cherry fruit.



PHOTO: DEBORAH PARKER WONG

Dr. Ernesto Abbona of Marchesi di Barolo with daughter Valentina, who served as translator for her father, son Davide and wife Anna at restaurant Acquerello.

Acquerello **Chef Suzette Gresham-Tognetti's** refined courses ideally mirrored nuances in the wines with a tortellini of veal and black truffles finding a soul mate in the heady aromas of the 2000 Barolo Riserva. ■■