

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Diageo Reserve taps bartender as cocktail, craftsmanship advocate

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Johnnie Walker Blue Label is part of Diageo Reserve

By STAFF REPORTS

Spirits distributor Diageo is looking to forge a more emotional connection with consumers over its upscale Reserve portfolio through the creation of a new position.

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Canadian mixologist Lauren Mote has been named the company's first global cocktailian, a role that will involve creating a deeper appeal for the brand's spirits by storytelling. Diageo has based what it claims is an industry-first move on other sectors of the luxury industry, bringing the experiential marketing approach to spirits.

Emotional engagement

Diageo, whose Reserve portfolio includes Johnnie Walker Blue Label, Croc, Don Julio, Bulleit, Tanqueray No. Ten, Ketel One, Zacapa and an array of single malts, conducted research with The Future Laboratory to uncover the direction of cocktails.

Part of the findings of the report released last fall included that bartenders are taking more control, not as easily giving into consumers' whims, much like a top chef might retain the integrity of a menu.

Bartending is also a naturally social and emotional field, allowing beverage producers to reach consumers on a personal level. In addition to being used to reflect a drinker's mood, cocktails hold the power to tell and transport consumers.



Lauren Mote. Image courtesy of Diageo

"From our 2016 World Class: Future of Cocktails report we know that people now value experiences over possessions and we are seeing the rise of the emotional economy with people looking for deeper connections to brands," said Cristina Diezhandino, managing director of Diageo Reserve, in a statement. "Therefore we are very excited to appoint Lauren - a hugely respected contributor to the global drinks industry with an exceptional mix of passion, skills and experience - as a storyteller and trendsetter who will help us bring these deeper connections to life."

Ms. Mote will work with influencers and the media to tell Diageo Reserve's story. She will also serve as a face of Diageo's World Class program, which aims to inspire consumers to craft cocktails themselves.

She will also work with the distributor on development and innovation.

Education has become a key component of spirits marketing, whether provided by a human or a digital touchpoint.

For instance, Mot Hennessy USA teaches its consumers to think, taste and serve Champagne like a master through its Champagne Masters Web site.

The mobile-optimized Web site includes tips and thoughts of top sommeliers and producers, recommended reading, background materials and descriptions of taste. The convenience of a mobile-optimized Web site, as well as the curated content the site hosts, should help make Mot Hennessy a top choice of consumers, who will now learn to better appreciate its product ([see story](#)).