

# What's Hot Now

## Move Over Mojito; There's A New Drink In Town

(NAPSA)—In 2006, the wine and spirits industry witnessed the mainstream appeal of the Cuban root cocktail, the Mojito. From Miami Beach to Los Angeles, the minty beverage became as familiar to consumers as the Margarita and the Cosmopolitan. But with the New Year quickly approaching, industry experts and trendsetters are once again on the search for the next big thing, and it appears that another Latin-inspired cocktail is shaping to be the top drink for 2007: the Caipirinha (kai-pur-EEN-ya).

The national cocktail of Brazil, this exotic libation is essentially a “Brazilian Mojito” made with a Brazilian rum called Cachaça (ka-SHAH-sa) and without any mint. Just as the Margarita was often an introduction to Tequila, the Caipirinha is likely to be America’s first taste of the Cachaça rumlike spirit, a 80-proof distillate of fresh sugarcane.

The Caipirinha appears to have emerged in Miami in early 2006, but has since taken hold in New York, Los Angeles and influential bars in cities “in between.” The recent popularity of “everything Brazilian” in fashion, sports and music circles has certainly fueled the popularity of the drink. Overseas, the Caipirinha is the most popular cocktail in Germany, selling over 500,000 cases per year, and it’s the hit cocktail in many European and Asian cities.

Leading the Caipirinha trend is Leblon Cachaça, the gold-medal-winning spirit, at the San Francisco World Spirit Awards, made from fresh-pressed Brazilian sugarcane that uses the middle and best part of the stalk. After the distillation and fermentation



**The national cocktail of Brazil, the Caipirinha, is shaping up to be the “it” drink of the New Year. This exotic libation is made with a Brazilian rum-like spirit called Cachaça.**

process in Brazil, it’s shipped to the south of France, where it’s rested up to three months in vintage French oak casks used for storing Cognac. The result is a premium Cachaça that is smooth and complex with a lively, fruity nose and rounded silky taste.

Junior Merino, bartender at the Modern at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, says that the traditional Brazilian Cachaça brands are like Mezcal and Tequilas in the 1970s. “They tend to have a real bite,” says Merino. “Leblon is like the Champagne of Cachaça. It has a lively fruity nose and a natural smooth taste, and makes a wonderful Caipirinha.”

You don’t have to go out to try a Caipirinha. Visit [www.liveloveleblon.com](http://www.liveloveleblon.com) for cocktail recipes and more information.