

The Tippling Bros. on Cocktail Consulting, Mock Tequila and The Wise Old Sage

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Paul Tanguay and Tad Carducci channel their love of the romance, traditions and hospitality that surround the art of the drink into Tippling Bros., their NYC-based beverage consulting business. From developing innovative wine and beer-based cocktails to running cocktail competitions and educational seminars they're focused on fulfilling a common goal--to help the world drink better. Laren Spirer sat down with Tanguay and Carducci recently to find out how they got started, the story behind their "mock tequila" and what they eat and drink when they're off the clock.

LS: How did the two of you meet and decide to create the Tippling Brothers?

Tad Carducci: We took a class about three years ago - the first ever [BAR \(Beverage Alcohol Resource\)](#) class - and we met there and instantly kind of clicked. We have similar sensibilities, and we realized that we had a very good friend in common. Since that class, we immediately started talking about this idea - wouldn't it be great if we could take the passion and the knowledge and start our own thing?

Paul Tanguay: Start educating, start teaching, start spreading our knowledge.

TC: A few months later, we both quit our jobs and did it. Obviously we had lined up a few clients, and since then we've been going at it. Tippling Brothers has its own life now; it has grown faster than we anticipated it would.

You mentioned your sensibilities were similar, how so?

TC: For me, it boils down to one word - passion. We are both insanely passionate about what we do and sharing our knowledge, and that translates to service.

PT: And hospitality is the other thing. Some people are about teaching the knowledge, but not a lot of people are talking about the hospitality. They're talking about how vodka is made, how to make a cocktail. If somebody is coming into your home, how do you treat them? That's one thing we really clicked on - treating people very nicely.

TC: The fact that we have a passion for hospitality probably sets us apart from other people. It's part of our mission.

What does being a beverage consultant entail? Do you have any particular specialties?



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TC: Being a consultant has morphed into so many more things than we bargained for. Originally we thought we would be working with brands, making cocktails for them, doing educational seminars, and then working with restaurants building beverage programs. We are realizing now how much more vast it really is. We now host competitions, and orchestrate them from start to finish, and events as well. We provide education for the home consumer but also for distributors, for salespeople...

PT: For restaurant workers...

TC: As far as specialties go, one of our strongest is that we do have the knowledge base with cocktails and spirits, but unlike some others, we are both certified sommeliers, we've both been on the wine side, and then Paul has the Japanese spirits.

You created an entire cocktail list at [Mercadito Cantina](#) without using hard alcohol. Explain.

PT: It came from the idea of going beyond what other places are doing with just a beer and wine license. We started thinking, "how can we do cocktails in a place that only has beer and wine?" Most people just have a beer list and a wine list - we were trying to get creative around the idea of serving cocktails within our means. What can we use to make cocktails?

TC: And additionally when we started, there were going to be a lot of things that were sherry-based or vermouth-based, and then, I remember one day, Paul said, sort of jokingly, "we should create our own mock tequila." He said it in passing, but all of a sudden I could see the light bulb go off. A couple of months later we emerged from my laboratory at home, using everything we knew about tequila and about sake. It came from a silly idea and turned into something really functional.

PT: And now we can create an entire list of agave spirit-esque cocktails.

Tell us a little about your upcoming cocktail event at the Beard House on June 27th.

PT: It's pretty exciting. First and foremost it's not something that the Beard House has done before, so they're kind of changing their model. We're honored to have been approached. It's a celebration during gay pride week, celebrating the anniversary of Stonewall, and James Beard, who was gay. We're very proud to be involved.

TC: There are going to be five chefs. It's a new format for them - a cocktail party, walk-around style. It's more casual, more spirits and cocktails driven. We can push the envelope a bit, make it really exciting and intensely flavorful.

What are some of your favorite cocktails that you have created over the years?

PT: The Wise Old Sage.

TC: Yeah, that's one of mine. It'll be in the James Beard dinner. It's a cocktail that won me a trip to Martinique - it was created for a competition. It's summery, yet deep; it's got a lot going on and has been on menus all over the country. At one point it was picked up by Walt Disney World - there was a name change there - but it's a cocktail that people really appreciate, and it's one of my go-to's.

When you're not working, where in the city do you like to go for a drink? Any particular cocktails? Other favorite food/drink spots?

TC: Honestly I think when we're not working, we drink 90% beer and eat burgers. Very simple stuff. We're both big beer geeks.

PT: And also when we're not working, we're family men, and we cherish the time at home. I love to cook and it's something I don't get to do very often because of traveling. Going out to dinner and to a bar, that's working to me.

TC: That being said, we go out and drink plenty, but often times it is work-related. Cocktail bars - the usual suspects - [PDT](#), [Death & Co.](#) I love the Flatiron Lounge. They get it right. They do cocktails but it's still a bit of a bar and they can really pump drinks out.

PT: Sometimes we look for simplicity, too - a little Irish pub, great beer selection, a burger.

TC: Last great burger we had was at [DuMont Burger](#) in Williamsburg.

PT: And pizza - had great pizza at [Luzzo's](#) and went to [Keste](#) recently.

TC: Also like Joe's, John's.

PT: And in Williamsburg, Fornino's.

If you could only have one cocktail for the rest of your life, what would it be?

TC: A well-made rye Manhattan. It's not the most fancy drink in the world, but when it's done well, it'll never let you down. If it were one spirits category, it would be rum, because I was a pirate in a prior life.

PT: For me, it would be more about the company. I think the saying is "drink alone, die alone." It's about the toasting, and looking into people's eyes. Even though I love drinking alone!

Wise Old Sage Sour by Tad Carducci

- 1.5 ounces Rhum Clément Première Canne
- 0.5 ounce Rhum Clément Créole Shrub
- 3.0 ounces fresh grapefruit juice
- Dash Regan's Orange Bitters
- 6 leaves very fresh sage
- 0.5 ounces agave nectar

Rub the sage leaves between your palms to lightly bruise the leaves, and drop the leaves into a mixing glass. Stop and sniff your palms and let a good-looking customer do the same. Add agave nectar to the glass and muddle with sage. Add ice, Rhum Clément Première Canne, Rhum Clément Créole Shrub, grapefruit juice, and dash of Regan's Orange Bitters. Serve in a martini glass.

Find out more about the Tippling Brothers on their [website](#).

Learn more about the The Gay Soiree event being held this Saturday, June 27th at the [James Beard House](#).

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