



For the Love of Cocktails: Vegas' First Real Cocktail Fest

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Back and bigger than ever, February's annual [For the Love of Cocktails](#) festival of all things mixology has morphed into a full-fledged multi-day extravaganza.

What started as a charity cocktail tasting has undergone a blossoming of epic proportions. Three whole days of spirits, cigars, cocktails and, most importantly, education (February 12-14). Vegas has become something of a beacon in the cocktail world. Many elements have been driving forces in Vegas becoming a true "cocktail city," from local legends like [Herbs & Rye](#) taking

titles in [Tales of the Cocktail](#) (the New Orleans spirits industry pilgrimage) to several bars making the tops of national lists. Now, we can add yet another fanciful feather in our boozy cap: a big ol' honkin' cocktail fest.

The schedule of events is no joke. For example, on Thursday, February 12 at 6 p.m. is the **Meet The Masters wine dinner**. This is definitely the most high-profile event. For those who love the finest things about dining and drinking, you can do that alongside local legends like Tony Abou-Ganim, Dale DeGroff and Francesco Lafranconi, before tucking into a five-course meal at [Mandalay Bay's Aureole](#) with Master Sommelier wine pairings. The event is \$150 per person, and the menu can be found [here](#).



One decidedly interesting event is the **Life of a Bartender** after-hours party at Herbs & Rye. At midnight, shuttles take patrons from [Delano Las Vegas](#) (formerly THEhotel at Mandalay Bay) to the venue down Sahara Avenue where they will receive insight into the post-shift lives at what is commonly known as "the Clubhouse." Details are murky, but anyone who knows proprietor Nectaly Mendoza will gird themselves for one *very* wild night.

The main show, the **For The Love Of Cocktails Gala** (\$75 per person), will be held at [miX](#) at the top of Delano Friday night (February 13, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.). There will be 30 mixology stations, each featuring a different brand/casino/bar. Passed hors d'oeuvres and gourmet food stations will line the space, handled by the deft mind of miX Executive Chef Bruno Riou in the signature French Riviera cuisine. For the connoisseurs, there will be VIP experiences, rare spirits tastings and cigar samplings. Proceeds will be donated to the Helen David Relief Fund, a charity to assist those in the bar industry affected by breast cancer.



Della's Kitchen at Delano Las Vegas.

The next day at noon (February 14), a **Bloody Mary brunch** will be held at [Della's Kitchen](#) inside Delano. Patrons will need ample time to recoup after the activities of the preceding days.

There are even more seminars, classes and various opportunities to get up close and personal with some of the greatest minds of spirits Vegas has to offer. Go [here](#) for additional info.

[Photo: *Delano Las Vegas* on Facebook, [Shannon L.](#) on Foursquare and VegasChatter]