

Summertime Selling



Brightly colored packaging and eye-catching displays make it easy to highlight summer beverages and accessories to promote “staycations” and summer entertaining.

By Stephanie Hunsberger

Summer is the season for having fun — families get to spend more time together, the lure of foreign lands sends people wandering the globe, and the weather is perfect for getting out of the house and inviting friends over for a barbecue in the backyard. In times of economic uncertainty and tightened wallets, international travel may no longer be on the itinerary, but that doesn't mean your shoppers can't live like they're on vacation. Staycations, or vacations in one's own hometown, may not seem like the highlight of the year when compared to pricier escapes, but with the right internationally inspired beverages and a few easy, exotic accents, staycationers will find an international delight — without having to foot the bill.

Trend-focused flavors

Sangria, a wine-based beverage hailing from Spain, is traditionally made with red wine fortified with brandy and enhanced with fruit. While some aficionados make their own Sangria from scratch, there are many great Sangria mixes on the market today to make the summer drink easier than ever to whip up for a barbecue with friends or unexpected company. They are also great as add-on sales for tabletop items including pitchers and glassware. International drinks such as Sangria are hitting on some big trends, according to the manufacturers we spoke with.

“A trend you can't ignore is [due

Simple Red Sangria from **Stirrings LLC** (508/324-9800 or www.stirrings.com)

contains juice from strawberries, peaches and blood oranges, and it is flavorful enough to serve simply with club soda. The mix makes a great impulse buy and would be just at home displayed by fruit in the produce department as it would be in the drink mixers aisle.

to] the economy,” says Kristine Ford, marketing director at Stirrings LLC (508/324-9800). “People are looking for ways to cut costs, and Sangria is a pretty inexpensive cocktail; you can use a less-expensive wine, and cost-wise it has a great appeal.” Ford also sees a rise in ethnic cuisines and cocktails. “I think there's a general surge in ethnic drinks like Mojitos, and Sangria is a nice classic.”

From the tabletop standpoint, Artland Inc.'s (604/395-1500) Bill Flaherty also sees Spanish-origin themes rising in popularity. “The Spanish trend is definitely happening with bright colors — red, orange, yellow, cobalt and green,” he says. “There are a lot of new dinnerware in these colors, and glassware follows dinnerware.” Artland's Iris collection contains a variety of pieces including goblets, pitchers and serving bowls in colors such as Cobalt Blue, Amber, Ruby and Sage.

Michael Fedonchik, vice president of marketing for Myson Products LLC (631/435-0200) also

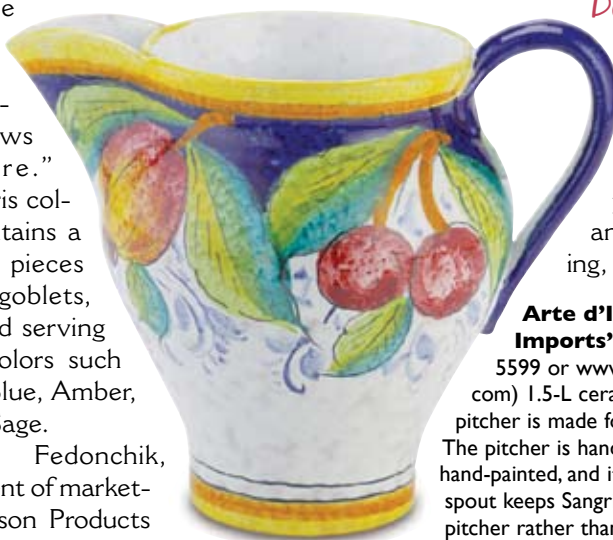


The new Cosmorita is the latest addition to the line of wine-based frozen cocktail mixes from **Wine Glacé** (903/832-7309 or www.wineGlacé.com). The Cosmorita is a refreshing twist on a classic martini for a girls' night in or any summer gathering. Other frozen cocktails from Wine Glacé include the original introduction, Wine-A-Rita, and the newer Peach Bellini.

sees vibrant, bold, rustic becoming popular. Myson's lines of serveware includes Spanish- and Portuguese-made paella pans, terra cotta cookware and a line of Spanish ceramic tableware. The handcrafted ceramic tableware features lines that include the brightly colored Cordoba, a more sophisticated pattern for Sevilla, the vibrant Hacienda and more.

Displays & Demos

Bright, vibrant colors are great for products and packaging, but smart



Arte d'Italia Imports' (877/496-5599 or www.arteditalia.com) 1.5-L ceramic Frutta pitcher is made for Sangria. The pitcher is handmade and hand-painted, and its specialized spout keeps Sangria fruit in the pitcher rather than sliding into drinks and splashing party guests.

displays are what really make the products shine. Fedonchik suggests creating a table setting with Myson's ceramic serving pieces by adding table linens, wooden kitchen tools and dishware in bold, solid colors.

Part of what makes Sangria an appealing summer beverage is it allows consumers to take advantage of seasonal bounty. “I believe that Sangria has definitely become more of an American mainstay, especially with the growing popularity of farmers' markets and shopping for local and organic fruit,” says Laura Perez of Arte d'Italia (877/496-5599). “I think people enjoy that they can use these fresh ingredients and actually make something for themselves and guests, rather than purchasing it. Sangria is a beverage that is simple, refreshing and looks as good as it tastes.”

Ford recommends finding a secondary display location for the Stirrings Sangria mix. “It's a great impulse item,” she says, and she recommends adding it into the pro-

Secrets



duce section. As the temperatures outside go up, consumers get excited about pitcher drinks and sitting out on the deck.

One of the best ways to draw attention to a product is by sampling it. "Sampling is huge," says Pelican Bay's (800/826-8982) CEO Mary O'Donnell. "It creates a nice experience for the customer."

Stirrings' Ford agrees. "Sangria is great to sample," she says. "You can just add club soda [to our Sangria mix] and taste all the different fruits in it." Ford suggests setting up a sampling station that includes a variety of Spanish cheeses to complement the Sangria mix and easily promote both categories.

Party, party, party

The bright packaging and products on summer-related merchandise make it easy to create an eye-catching display. All you need is a few products that go well together; a couple drink mixes, a wine tote or two and some colorful glassware to make a quick, easy display. Take it a step further by choosing a theme; there are many trends to focus on.

Some trends, such as the 'staycation,' are influenced by the economy. "History's shown that alcohol consumption goes up when the economy's bad, and people are traveling less," says O'Donnell. "You've heard of a staycation — people still want to treat themselves at home and entertain, so things they'd drink when traveling, like Sangria, Mojitos and Margaritas, are perfect to drink at home."

Create a staycation station by creating a one-stop-



For shoppers looking for an authentic, Spanish-inspired Sangria pitcher, **Myson Products LLC** (631/435-0200 or www.mysonproducts.com) offers bold, rustic pitchers and serving pieces. Each piece is ceramic and hand-painted by Spanish artists.

shop for everything a shopper would need for an at-home getaway. Choose a popular travel destination such as Spain, for example, and start with a variety of Sangria and Mojito mixes. Include some traditional, regional glassware, such as Arte d'Italia's Frutta Pitcher from the company's Umbria Frutta collection. This pitcher may be Italian-made, but with holes in the spout to filter out the beverage without letting the fruit through to splash the pourer or guests, the pitcher is specifically made for serving Sangria. With its cobalt blue, yellow and orange accents, the pitcher is just at home in an Italian-themed display as it is in a Spanish-themed display.

Help shoppers incorporate a Spanish feel into their next summer gathering by selecting a collection of festive products for your display. Pelican Bay's Cabana collection includes mixes for a Key Lime Margarita, Mojito, Sangria and Piña Colada. Each mix gets its own colorful tote and is accented

The **Pelican Bay Ltd.** (800/826-8982 or www.pelicanbayltd.com) Cabana collection includes Mojito Mix, Sangria Mix, Pina Colada Mix and Key Lime Margarita Mix. Each mix comes in a decorative mini-tote with festive umbrella straw accents and makes enough to fill a pitcher.

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with paper umbrella straws. They are ideal for consumers to bring as part of a hostess gift or to buy as a gift for themselves.

"I think with merchandising, it's important to keep things really cheery," says O'Donnell. "By making the Pelican Bay line really gifty with decorations on the packaging, we've created what we think people are looking for. They want cheery and bright; it's like a mood enhancer when you're out shopping."

"Cocktails in general are great because there are so many themes you can tap into," says Ford of Stirrings. "A great place to display Sangria mix is in the housewares or glasswares section, and it would be ideal next to pitchers or glasses."

Myson Products' Spanish-inspired cookware and serveware would easily complement Spanish-inspired beverages or colorful party themes. The company's hand-painted ceramic glassware comes in a variety of colors shapes and sizes, including tapas plates, platters, wine bottle holders and pitchers.

WiltonArmetale(800/553-2048) also recently introduced a new line of products. Mexican mouth-blown glass makes up three separate collections within the BelloVaso line; first was the Reggae pattern to complement existing metal serving pieces. Based on the success of that line, Wilton Armetale then expanded with the Flutes and Pearls design and most recently introduced a line that was simply the mouth-blown glass with no design. Aside from being beautiful, high-quality pieces, the BelloVaso line has a unique spin on it. Because Wilton Armetale's metal serving pieces are made from recycled metal, the decision mak-

The eye-catching Iris collection from **Artland Inc.** (609/395-1500 or www.artlandinc.com) contains small bubbles in the mouth-blown glass that make each piece unique. The collection is available in a number of rich, rustic colors and contains a variety of glasses and a pitcher perfectly suited for entertaining.

ers at Wilton Armetale wanted to continue introducing products made from recycled material. The glass used in each of the company's pieces is made from recycled Coca-Cola bottles. "The idea started when our president, the chairman of the board and our vice president of operations returned from a business trip to Mexico," says Richard Reisinger, Wilton Armetale's independent and specialty sales manager. "They toured the factory where the glass was made and were taken in by its beauty."

Wine Glacé's (903/832-7309) Judy Smith offers a trendy twist on old classics with her Wine-A-Rita and Peach Bellini mixes. Simply combine a mix with ice and a favorite wine in a blender for a frozen beverage that is perfect for summer parties, open houses or ladies' night out. Parties (both in your store after-hours and mocked up on a display table) provide an excellent opportunity for you to cross-merchandise drink mixes with other products in your store. If you don't carry a lot of tabletop lines or glassware, create a display featuring drink mixes, party snacks, bar tools and entertaining accessories for evening entertaining.

"In addition to merchandising cocktail mixes with gourmet food, our mixes merchandise



Tutto Mio's (877/503-4321 or www.tuttomio.biz) imported handmade Italian ceramics offerings include a variety of serving pieces, such as this Follia pitcher and serving bowls, which are available in blue, eggplant, green, honey, ivory, persimmon and red.

perfectly with wine-related gifts such as wine glasses, bottle toppers and wine totes," says Smith.

The newest introduction from Wine Glacé is the CosmoRita mix, a refreshing combination of the cosmopolitan and a frozen cocktail. The CosmoRita is meant for white wine, and Smith prefers Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio. "A lot of



retailers have told us they are promoting in-store events to build excitement [for the product]," says Smith. "With many customers going out less, a free evening event at their favorite store is a welcome invitation."

Smith brings up a good point. While not everybody may be planning a huge party this summer, there are plenty of low-key opportunities for consumers to indulge in a special beverage, and hosting an event in your store to highlight fun summer products can show them just how simple and inexpensive it can be to treat themselves. "[If] you're staying home, you can still treat yourself," says Pelican Bay's O'Donnell. "Buy Mojito or Margarita mixes, bring them home and have some fun with them. Crack it open and have a couple of friends over." O'Donnell also sees an increase in the popularity of bar-



Wilton Armetale's (800/553-2048 or www.armetale.com) BelloVaso collection includes three different patterns of free-blown Mexican glassware handmade by skilled artisans in the same way it has been done for more than 400 years. The glass used for the BelloVaso collection comes from recycled Coca-Cola bottles, so it's as earth-friendly as it is beautiful.

ware, which she attributes to the tighter economy and people staying in rather than going out.

At-home entertaining and ethnic flavors and colors are on the upswing, so take advantage of colorful collections and eye-catching products to bring cause to celebrate to shoppers near you. ☺





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