

The Lighter Side

Master of Mixes Introduces Low-Calorie Cocktail Mixers

BY CARA McILWAINE



For years, Americans have been eating low-calorie versions of their favorite foods, but it's only recently their desire for lighter cocktails has been quenched. American Beverage Marketers (ABM), known for its liquid cocktail mixes for bartenders and at-home cocktail enthusiasts alike, has tapped into the growing health-conscious trend by launching Master of Mixes Lite cocktail mixers. With only 20 or fewer calories, they are perfect for summer get-togethers.

"As a company focused exclusively on the cocktail mix category, we realized that a low-calorie cocktail mix offering could expand the category to consumers who would shy away from cocktails in general for reasons like concern over sugar content and calorie content," says William Hinkebein, VP of marketing at ABM.

Few Calories, Full Flavor

Chain restaurants required to show calorie counts on their menus was ABM's inspiration for Master of Mixes Lite. At an on-premise trade conference, Theresa Martin, marketing manager for ABM, says there was quite a buzz over low-calorie cocktail options. "Cocktails, which are traditionally high in calories, were a real point of concern for chain

restaurants," she recalls. The company responded by introducing Finest Call Lites for the on-premise in three flavors: Margarita, Sweet 'n Sour and Bar Syrup.

Quality flavor, of course, was key. "If we were going to offer a low-calorie option we wanted to be sure it tasted good," points out Hinkebein. All three flavors—Margarita Lite and Sweet 'n Sour Lite have just 10 calories, Strawberry Lite, 20—are made with real fruit juice, reducing calories by 89-93%. "The juices are the sole source of calories for each flavor," says Martin, yet to ensure the taste would live up to its full-calorie version, "our technical team developed a proprietary blend of ingredients that enhances mouth feel and flavor delivery. We feel very confident that consumers will be delighted with each product."

Taste Of Summer

Master of Mixes Margarita Lite was the first flavor introduced in March, 2010, and "its immediate and continued success really validated our feeling that there was a viable market for low-calorie cocktails," says Hinkebein; Sweet 'n Sour and Strawberry round out the flavors based on the company's top three categories. While there are no immediate plans to add new flavors to the trio, Hinkebein says they are watching

the market and "always listening to our consumer requests."

ABM knows firsthand that sales of cocktail mixes peak during the summer, and makes sure product is in retail stores before Memorial Day to take advantage of the entire selling season, supplying in-store POS that includes a shelf talker, bottle necker and case card to boot.

A spike in summer sales dovetails nicely with the growing trend of home entertaining, as consumers throw cost-effective pool parties, picnics and barbecues where cocktails like the "Lynchburg Lite" are simple to whip up.

"All of the Master of Mixes cocktail mixes are formulated to be very easy to use, usually only requiring the addition of your spirit of choice to make a great cocktail at home," Hinkebein notes. "Master of Mixes is centered on making at-home entertaining easier." ■

LYNCBURG LITE



1 oz. Jack Daniels Whiskey
 ½ oz. Triple Sec
 4 oz. Master of Mixes Sweet and Sour Lite

 Top with Diet Sprite