

Chapter 1

Just for Openers: The Right Tools and Glasses

In This Chapter

- ▶ Assembling the tools of the bartending trade
 - ▶ Collecting more glasses than you can shake a drink at
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To bartend, you need a few essentials: good people skills, knowledge about the products you're pouring, a collection of cocktail recipes, and the proper equipment. This chapter covers the equipment part of the equation. (Part II can help you with product knowledge, and Part III gives you the recipes. As for people skills, you're on your own.)

Breaking out the Basic Tools

The most important assets for any profession are the right tools. You need basic bar tools to mix, serve, and store your drinks. Whether you're stocking a home bar or working as a professional, your basic tools are a wine opener, cocktail shaker, and strainer.

Wine opener

The best wine opener is a *waiter's wine opener* (shown in Figure 1-1). It has a sharp blade, a corkscrew (also known as a *worm*), and a bottle opener. You can find this opener in most liquor stores and bar supply houses.

Another nifty wine opener is called a *Rabbit*. It's also shown in Figure 1-1. It's ergonomic and automatically lets go of the cork.

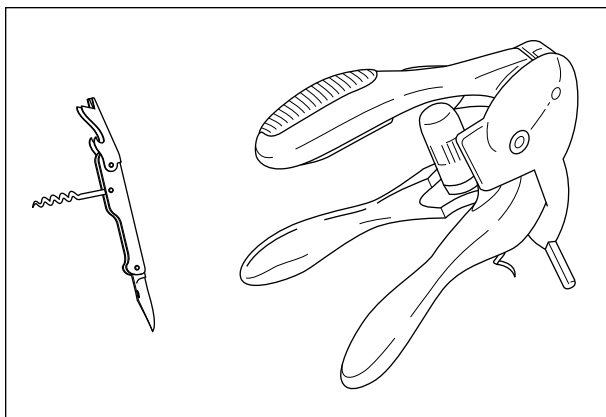


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Figure 1-1: A waiter's wine opener (left) and a Rabbit.

Cocktail shaker

Figure 1-2 shows two types of shakers. The *Boston shaker* is the one that most professional bartenders use. It consists of a mixing glass and a stainless steel core that overlaps the glass. The *Standard shaker* usually consists of two or more stainless steel or glass parts and can be found in department stores or antique stores. Many of these shakers come in different shapes and designs.

Strainer

A couple of different types of strainers are available, but the most popular is the *Hawthorn*, shown in Figure 1-3. The Hawthorn is a flat, spoon-shaped utensil with a spring coil around its head. You can use it on top of a steel shaker or a bar glass to strain cocktails.

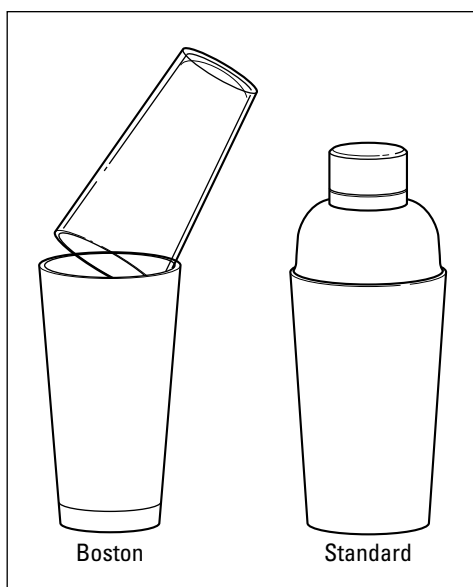


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Figure 1-2: A Boston shaker and a Standard shaker.

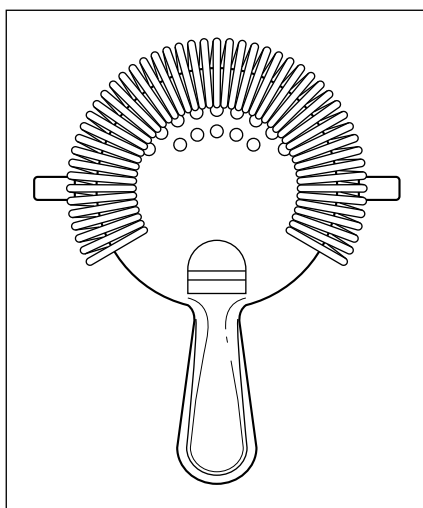


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Figure 1-3: The Hawthorn strainer.

Other tools

Many of the following tools are shown in Figure 1-4:

- ✓ **Bar Rags:** Keeping bar rags or towels behind the bar is always smart to wipe up spills, overpours, or sweat from glasses.
- ✓ **Bar spoon:** A long spoon for stirring cocktails.
- ✓ **Blender:** Many types of commercial or home blenders with various speeds are available. When making a drink, always put liquid in the blender before switching it on; doing so will save your blade. Some blenders (but not all) can be used to make crushed ice. Check with the manufacturer or buy an ice crusher.
- ✓ **Coasters or bar napkins:** Coasters prevent rings from developing on your bar and tables. Napkins also help your guests hold their drinks.
- ✓ **Grater:** Use a grater for dusting drinks with grated nutmeg, chocolate, and so forth.
- ✓ **Ice bucket:** Pick one that's large enough to hold at least three trays of ice.
- ✓ **Ice scoop or tongs:** A must for every bar. Never use your hands to scoop ice.
- ✓ **Jigger or measuring glass:** A *jigger* is a small glass or metal measuring container that usually has a ½-oz. measurer on one side and a 2-oz. measurer on the other.
- ✓ **Knife and cutting board:** You need a small, sharp paring knife to cut fruit.
- ✓ **Large cups or bowls:** You need something to hold garnishes like cherries, olives, onions, and so on.
- ✓ **Large water pitcher:** Someone always wants water.
- ✓ **The Lewis Ice Bag:** It's made of heavy grade natural canvas, so you can use it with your muddler to make flawless crushed ice.
- ✓ **Muddler:** A small wooden bat or pestle used to crush fruit or herbs.
- ✓ **Pourer:** This device gives greater control to your pouring. Many different types are available, including some with a lidded spout that prevents insects and undesirables from entering the pourer.
- ✓ **Stirrers and straws:** Used for stirring and sipping drinks.



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Figure 1-4: A collection of bar tools: (1) bar spoon, (2) blender, (3) tongs, (4) ice scoop, (5) ice bucket, (6) jigger or measuring glass, (7) knife and cutting board, (8) muddler, and (9) pourer.

Giving Some Thought to Glassware

People generally expect certain drinks to be served in certain kinds of glasses. The problem is that there are more standard bar glasses than most people (and many bars) care to purchase. In any event, Figure 1-5 shows most of the glasses that you're ever likely to use to serve drinks.

I have a few things to say about some of the glasses shown in Figure 1-5:

- ✓ **Brandy or cognac snifter:** These are available in a wide range of sizes; the large, short-stemmed bowl should be cupped in the hand to warm the brandy or cognac.
- ✓ **Champagne flute:** The bowl is tapered to prevent bubbles from escaping.
- ✓ **Cocktail or martini glass:** Perfect for Martinis, Manhattans, Stingers, and many other classic drinks, this glass is available in 3- to 6-oz. sizes.
- ✓ **Cordial glass:** In addition to cordials, you can use this glass to serve straight-up drinks.
- ✓ **Highball and Collins glasses:** These glasses are the most versatile. Sizes range from 8 to 12 oz.
- ✓ **Red wine glass:** This glass is available in 5- to 10-oz. sizes. Note that the bowl is wider than the bowl of a white wine glass, allowing the wine to breathe.
- ✓ **Rocks glass:** Also known as an *old fashioned glass*, sizes of this glass vary from 5 to 10 oz. Use the 5- or 6-oz. variety and add plenty of ice.
- ✓ **Shot glass:** You can also use the shot glass as a measuring tool. It's a must for every bar.
- ✓ **Stemless glasses:** These glasses have become popular in recent years, probably because they look elegant, even if they aren't as practical as the stemmed versions.
- ✓ **White wine glass:** This glass is available in 5- to 10-oz. sizes. I advise you to stick with the smaller wine glass.



If you're planning on creating a bar at home or serving cocktails at a party, keep your glass selection small. You can simplify by using two types of glasses: a white wine glass and a red wine glass. Both are shown in Figure 1-5. You can use these two glasses for every type of cocktail (including shots, even though a shot glass is essential for every bar), plus beer and wine. Also, if you use these two glass shapes, cleaning and storing your glasses is less complicated.

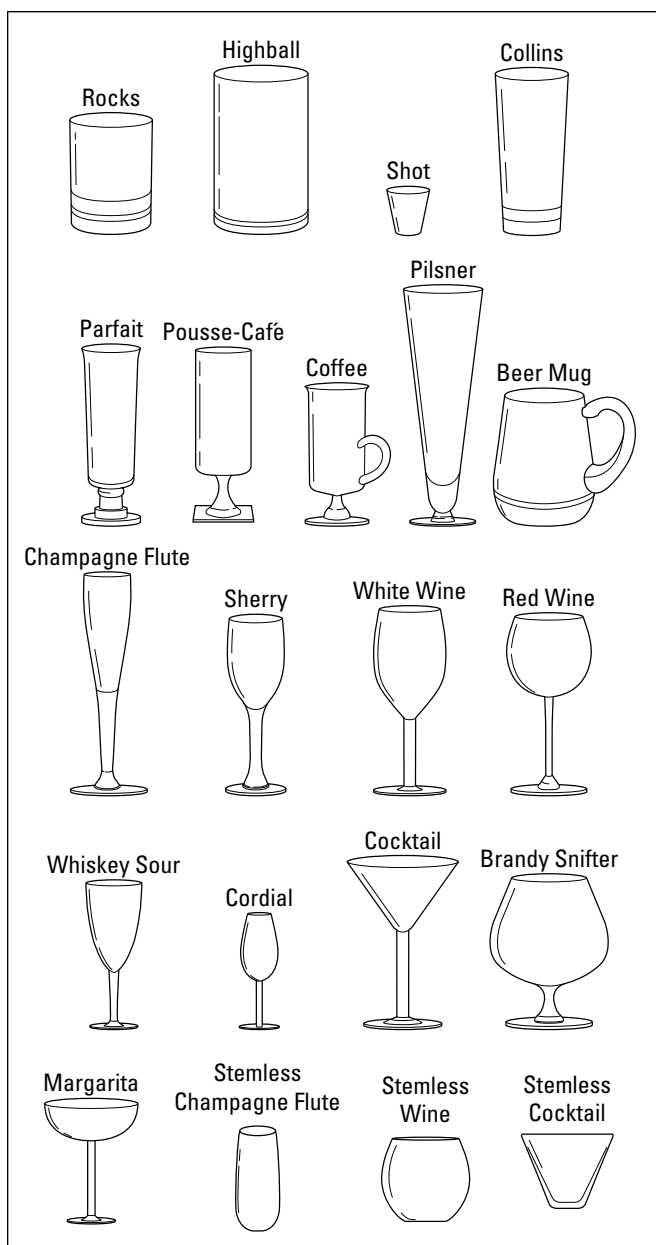


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Figure 1-5: Glasses, glasses, glasses.

