

The Buzz / Shop / Go / Home / Do / Eat Sections {Plus MARTHA STEWART's Entertaining Tips}

# STAMFORD

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# 10 TEENS

WHO WILL  
CONQUER  
THE WORLD

# SELFIE EXPRESSION!

**COVER GIRL**  
ARYA BHALLA • Westhill High School

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

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## 2015 BEST BARTENDER

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# Bar Brawl

Erik Zeiss of Sign of the Whale named this year's Best Bartender



**E**rik Zeiss, the winner of STAMFORD magazine's 2015 Best Bartender contest, concocted the Strawberry Mule as a tribute to the Moscow Mule, using Leblon cachaça rum (Brazilian sugar cane rum) instead of vodka. Its sweetness is offset by the tang of ginger beer. "We were working on summer drinks when we found Leblon," Zeiss says.

"People thought I was crazy for wanting to use this drink in the competition, because of the spiciness of ginger beer. But it's summer. When you're outside with Caribbean music, it's a no-brainer."

#### What's your favorite thing about Sign of the Whale?

We're on the rooftop the majority of the time so the scene is beautiful;

it's a good crowd and we are [always busy.]

#### What do people underestimate about your job?

Some people think that it's not a 'real' job, that it's not a career. It's not for everyone, but I've been doing it for a long time and I like it a lot.

#### What's the strangest tip you've ever received?

When I bartended at Barcelona in South Norwalk, a guy told a girl to write in a tip amount. She wrote \$100, looked up at him, and he said, 'That's it?' and added another zero. That was pretty interesting.

#### At the end of my shift, I pour myself a... Pacific Cooler Capri Sun.

**I can't do my job without...** the people I work with. I've always been blessed to work with friends, or become friends with the people I work with.

#### What's your go-to drink to make for friends?

Everyone my age is health-conscious so they drink vodka sodas. My go-to is Jameson. If friends visit while I'm bartending, we're doing a shot of Jameson.

#### What do you recommend for a hangover?

The best cure for a hangover is to bite the bullet and drink a beer. My girlfriend just had a four-day birthday weekend. I didn't want to, but I had friends over to finish drinking the beers we had. The only thing that helped was to shotgun that first beer.

#### When I'm not bartending, I'm...

hanging out with my girlfriend of five years and my buddies; I like entertaining, whether at work or at home.

#### It's a good night when I don't have to mix...

a million Long Island Iced Teas.

**If I didn't work at a bar, I'd be...** teaching. I'm going back to school for teaching.

**The perfect cocktail should be...** mixed without using a jigger. —Dan Hajducky

## STIFF COMPETITION

While Mr. Zeiss took home the hardware, Harbor Point was filled to the brim with quality fare. Here are a few other fan favorites:



### DELOREAN

BAR: Eclipse  
BARTENDER:

Lorena San Martin  
DRINK: Muddled jalapeño and cilantro, mango purée, pineapple juice, simple syrup, cucumber-infused vodka and fresh lime juice



### BEEES & HONEY

BAR: Paloma  
BARTENDER:

Marrisa Gilbertie  
DRINK: Maker's Mark, El Buco mezcal, lemon juice, ginger tumeric syrup and ginger sticks, cut with honey



### SMOKY PASSION

BAR: Harlan Social  
BARTENDER: William Lin  
DRINK: mezcal, passion fruit and citrus-chili infused simple syrup **S**

## WINNING DRINK: STRAWBERRY MULE

Brazil's national drink is the caipirinha, comprised of limes and cachaça, or sugar cane rum. Zeiss' award-winning drink kicks vodka to the curb for Leblon cachaça. "Leblon has only been around for about ten years," Zeiss says. "It's made with sugar cane, grown at a 1,000 meter altitude, and it's aged six months in cognac barrels. It's a really well-made, high-end spirit."

THE RIGHT MIX: Leblon cachaça, fresh strawberries, fresh lime juice and agave nectar, shaken over ice and topped with ginger beer

