

# RIPE WITH OPPORTUNITY

With the launch of its newest flavor, Tangerine Fusion, Finlandia looks to build upon its past success.

By Daina Paulin

It may be difficult to upstage Finlandia's Grapefruit Fusion, the flavor that first grabbed consumers' attention when it launched in 2006, but Finlandia Tangerine Fusion is willing to try. "Our Grapefruit Fusion really set the bar for delivering on natural, fresh flavors of fruit," explains Nick Nelson, Finlandia's U.S. brand manager. "And we think our Tangerine Fusion will draw the same attention."

Wanting to add another flavor to its portfolio, Finlandia saw a unique opportunity with tangerine. "We looked into what was next and we saw that the orange category was ripe with opportunity," explains Nelson. "Just as we did with our cranberry, lime, mango, wild berries and grapefruit fusions, we wanted to offer a flavor that the market had never tasted before." The tangerine flavor itself is a new take on the fruit, sourcing flavors from the juicy pulp and the zesty peel. The result? A well-integrated vodka bursting with creamy citrus notes and crisp tangerine aromas.

## A FRESH APPROACH

To further its commitment to fresh ingredients and all-natural flavors, Finlandia has enlisted the skills of renowned mixologist Tony Abou-Ganim, who has been at the forefront of the all-natural cocktail movement. Involved with the brand for several years now, Abou-Ganim helped develop "Finnishing School," a one-day course offered around the world teaching bartenders and consumers how

to craft the perfect cocktail with the freshest ingredients.

Working with Finlandia for the launch of Tangerine Fusion, Abou-Ganim developed 10 unique cocktails that feature fresh ingredients and express the versatility of tangerine. "Sunburst", the flavor's new signature cocktail, is the ideal summer sipper, combining a refreshing mixture of citrus and pomegranate flavors; the "Tangerine Hot Toddy" proves that fruit can weather the cold winter months.

## TANGERINE SUNBURST

- 2 oz. Finlandia Tangerine Fusion
- 1/2 oz. Cointreau orange liqueur
- 1 oz. Fresh lemon sour mix\*\*
- 1 1/2 oz. Fresh orange/tangerine juice
- 1 1/2 oz. POM Wonderful pomegranate

Shake all ingredients and place into a highball glass. Garnish with slices of lemon and orange zest

\*\* Fresh lemon sour mix recipe: Mix two parts fresh squeezed lemon juice with one part simple syrup.



## GRASSROOTS GROWTH

In addition to its all-natural ingredients, Finlandia has adopted a grassroots approach to introduce consumers to Tangerine Fusion. Its *Tasting is Believing* message invites consumers to "Enjoy a Fresh Slice of Finlandia" and taste the new flavor for themselves. On- and off- premise tastings will be at the center of the campaign, as well as creative POS materials such as "Peel & Taste" strips that capture tangerine's flavor and aroma.

On-premise, Finlandia has developed a program called "Bartenders are Gods" that encourages bartenders to get creative. "We are going to introduce them to our recipe book with contributions from Tony, but we also will encourage them to be innovative on their own; that's what bartenders want to do," explains Nelson. "We want them to create their own unique cocktails and then promote them as their own, while still having confidence with what Finlandia delivers in that cocktail."

This word-of-mouth approach to promotion, first implemented with Grapefruit Fusion, has been a key to the brand's expansion. "We saw the power of grassroots endorsements with our Grapefruit Fusion," attests Nelson. "We plan to mirror that with Tangerine Fusion and we can only hope to surpass its success." ■