

Danilo Oribe

Prize-winning flair bartender shakes up Rock & Rita's

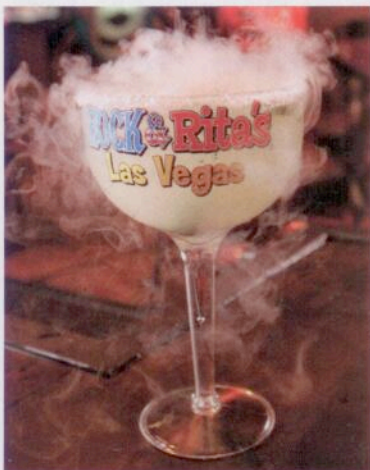
It was only a few months ago that Danilo Oribe was cheering on his native Uruguay to a fourth-place finish in the World Cup. Now, the cheers are directed toward Oribe as he balances bottles on his chin and sends them flying through the air as a flair bartender at Rock & Rita's inside Circus Circus.

Oribe has traveled the world competing in flair contests, winning the IBA World Flairtending Competition three times and besting the field in this year's Legends of Bartending XII, held here in Las Vegas. The reaction to having such a team of international talents (Oribe's co-workers are all top flair bartenders as well) in such an intimate space has been positive, to say the least.

"Most of them, they like it. They find time to stop and watch us and cheer for the show, and get free shots at the end," Oribe said. "We try to do a clean show, but sometimes we have mistakes, which is normal. If we don't have mistakes, that means we didn't try hard enough."

Prior to opening Rock & Rita's, Oribe worked at another flair bartending hot spot, Treasure Island's Kahunaville. But the opportunity to work alongside some of the best flair bartenders in the world, from Bulgaria to Argentina and everywhere in between, has made coming to work every day almost like an unofficial competition.

"Of course, everybody wants to win," Oribe said of competing against his bartending friends. "But after the contest, we are all having a drink and having fun." —Jack Houston



The Rockin' Rita

The best margaritas are served big, cold and often, and Rock & Rita's signature margarita certainly fits that prototype. The mammoth 42-ounce cocktail features a standard mix of Sauza tequila, orange liqueur and fresh lime and lemon juices, but throw in some dry ice or additional lime, mango, strawberry, banana, melon, peach or blue flavors, and you've got yourself a ride home courtesy of Las Vegas' finest cab drivers. —JH