

Batalla de los Bartenders II

A *Chopped*-Style Cocktail Competition

Presented by Blue Door Cocktail Bar

Sponsored by Herradura Tequila

Eight bartenders. Three rounds. One champion.

In each round, bartenders will go head-to-head in a fast-paced test of creativity, technique, and composure. A mystery ingredient will be revealed, the pantry will open, and competitors must create an original Herradura cocktail before time runs out.

There are no recipes and no advance preparation—only quick thinking, strong technique, and whatever competitors can find in the Blue Door pantry.

Competition Format

The competition begins with a maximum of eight bartenders and follows a single-elimination bracket:

- Preliminary Round
- Semi-Finals
- Final Round

Two bartenders will compete head-to-head during each matchup. The bartender with the highest score advances, while the other is eliminated.

At the beginning of every round:

1. A mystery ingredient is revealed.
2. Competitors have five minutes to explore the pantry and select their ingredients.
3. Competitors have 10 minutes to create three identical cocktails.
4. Each competitor has one minute to present their cocktail to the judges.

After judging, one bartender will advance and one bartender will be eliminated.

How to Enter

The deadline for all entries is September 5.

Applicants must submit an original cocktail inspired by or celebrating Mexican Heritage Month.

Each submission must include:

- At least one featured Herradura expression:
 - Herradura Blanco 46
 - Herradura Reposado
 - Herradura Añejo
 - Herradura Ultra
- Cocktail name
- Complete recipe with exact measurements
- Preparation method
- Glassware
- Garnish

Entries must be emailed to mike@bluedoorclt.com.

The submitted cocktail will be used only to select the eight competitors. Bartenders will not prepare their submitted cocktail during the live competition.

Once the competition begins, there are no prepared recipes. Every cocktail must be created on the spot using the revealed mystery ingredient and the ingredients available in the Blue Door pantry.

The Challenge

Step One: Reveal the Mystery Ingredient

At the beginning of each round, competitors will be presented with a mystery ingredient.

Mystery ingredients may include:

- Fresh produce
- Herbs and spices
- Savory ingredients

- Specialty products
- Unexpected pantry items

The mystery ingredient must play a clear and intentional role in the finished cocktail. Simply placing it on the rim or using it as an afterthought will not be enough.

Step Two: Shop the Pantry — 5 Minutes

Once the mystery ingredient is revealed, the Blue Door pantry will open.

A large pantry table will be stocked with fresh produce, herbs, spices, juices, syrups, bitters, mixers, garnishes, and specialty ingredients—similar to the pantry featured on *Chopped*.

Competitors may also select ingredients from the Blue Door back bar and standard cocktail well.

The pantry may include:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Fresh herbs
- Spices and dry ingredients
- Fresh and prepared juices
- House-made and specialty syrups
- Bitters and tinctures
- Sodas and mixers
- Fortified wines, liqueurs, and modifiers
- Garnishes, salts, sugars, and rims
- Unexpected specialty ingredients

The specific items available will not be announced in advance.

Competitors may take only what they reasonably need to create three cocktails. Ingredients are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Hoarding ingredients or interfering with another competitor's selection is prohibited.

Step Three: Beat the Clock — 10 Minutes

When the clock begins, each bartender will have 10 minutes to create three identical cocktails—one for each judge.

Every cocktail must:

- Feature one of the approved Herradura expressions as its base spirit
- Incorporate the mystery ingredient in a meaningful way
- Be completed before time is called
- Include an appropriate garnish
- Be presented as three consistent servings

Competitors will be judged not only on the finished cocktail, but also on how they work under pressure.

When time expires, hands must be off the cocktails. Anything not completed or placed in front of the judges may not be considered.

Step Four: Face the Judges — 1 Minute

Each competitor will have one minute to present their cocktail and explain:

- The cocktail's name
- The concept and inspiration
- Why they selected their Herradura expression
- How the tequila is showcased
- How the mystery ingredient was transformed and incorporated

After tasting both cocktails, the judges will score each competitor. The bartender with the higher score advances to the next round.

The other bartender will be eliminated.

Competition Rules

- One approved Herradura expression must serve as the cocktail's featured base spirit.
- The mystery ingredient must be included and clearly represented in the finished cocktail.
- Competitors must prepare three identical cocktails.
- Only ingredients from the Blue Door back bar, cocktail well, and competition pantry may be used.

- No outside ingredients, tools, prepared components, or garnishes are permitted unless approved in advance.
 - Competitors may not begin preparing ingredients until the official clock starts.
 - All cocktails must be completed before time is called.
 - Excessive waste, unsafe practices, unsanitary conditions, or intentional interference may result in point deductions or disqualification.
 - Judges' decisions are final.
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Judging Criteria

Each category will be scored from 1–10 points, for a maximum of 50 points per round.

1. Flavor & Balance

- Is the cocktail balanced, complete, and enjoyable?
- Are sweetness, acidity, bitterness, alcohol, and dilution properly controlled?
- Does the mystery ingredient complement the cocktail?

2. Herradura Expression

- Is the selected Herradura expression identifiable?
- Does the cocktail showcase the tequila's individual character?
- Do the supporting ingredients enhance the spirit rather than cover it?

3. Mystery Ingredient Integration

- Is the mystery ingredient essential to the cocktail?
- Was it used creatively and intentionally?
- Was the ingredient transformed or presented in an interesting way?
- Does it feel like part of the drink rather than an afterthought?

4. Technique & Execution

- Did the competitor demonstrate professional skill and composure?
- Were the preparation method, proportions, and dilution appropriate?
- Were all three cocktails consistent?
- Was the workstation kept clean, safe, and organized?
- Was the cocktail completed within the time limit?

5. Presentation & Storytelling

- Was the presentation clear and confident?
 - Did the concept connect to the cocktail's flavors and ingredients?
 - Did the garnish and glassware support the drink?
 - Did the competitor demonstrate hospitality and professionalism?
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Prizes

The champion of Batalla de los Bartenders II will receive:

- Herradura Sponsor Prize Pack
 - \$100 Blue Door Cocktail Bar gift card
 - The title of Batalla de los Bartenders II Champion
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Competitor Notes

Expect the unexpected.

Mystery ingredients may be sweet, savory, familiar, or completely outside the traditional cocktail pantry. The judges will reward bartenders who remain composed, make smart decisions, minimize waste, and create a cocktail that feels intentional and complete.

Creativity matters—but flavor comes first.