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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MixBurgh will bring global cocktail leaders to Pittsburgh Nov. 8-10
Conference will close with Taste of MixBurgh, a public tasting gala at Heinz Hall

PITTSBURGH, PA - OCTOBER 6, 2026 – MixBurgh, an industry conference for bartenders, bar owners and distillers, will bring globally known cocktail talent to Pittsburgh's Cultural District Nov. 8-10 and close with Taste of MixBurgh, a public event at Heinz Hall on Tuesday, Nov. 10, from 6-8 p.m.

The MixBurgh Foundation will host the conference with support from Visit Pittsburgh and the City of Pittsburgh. Iron City's new branded spirit, Bessemer, will present the conference's opening night reception on Sunday, Nov. 8, from 6-9 p.m.

Confirmed speakers include David Kaplan of Death & Co, Tato Giovannoni of Florería Atlántico, Lance Winters of St. George Spirits, Camper English of Alcademics, longtime New York Times cocktail writer Robert Simonson and Mary Kate Murray of The Mix. More than 20 additional speakers from Pittsburgh and across North America will also present.

Kaplan co-founded Death & Co in New York's East Village and co-wrote "Cocktail Codex," the 2019 James Beard Foundation Book of the Year. Now CEO of Gin & Luck, the company behind Death & Co, he will give the closing keynote.

Giovannoni's Florería Atlántico in Buenos Aires ranked No. 3 on The World's 50 Best Bars in 2019 and opened a Georgetown location in Washington, D.C., in 2025. In 2020, his peers voted him the winner of the Altos Bartenders' Bartender Award. He will lead a session on storytelling through drinks and host a guest shift at Pittsburgh's own Balvanera, in the Strip District.

Winters, master distiller at St. George Spirits in Alameda, California, and a former U.S. Navy nuclear engineer, is a member of the Whisky Magazine Hall of Fame, and a five-time James Beard Foundation nominee for Outstanding Wine, Spirits, or Beer Producer.

English, a San Francisco writer and educator, popularized directional freezing, the technique behind crystal-clear cocktail ice. "The Ice Book," his guide to the subject, won the 2024 Spirited Award for Best New Cocktail or Bartending Book. He will teach a Behind the Bar session and join Murray for a fireside conversation.

Simonson, author of "A Proper Drink," a history of the craft cocktail revival, will lead a panel on the evolution of whiskey. He and Murray, managing editor and photographer of his newsletter,

The Mix, will stop at MixBurgh on their fall tour for "Bourbon and Rye Cocktails," Simonson's eighth cocktail book.

Visiting bartenders will work guest shifts at Pittsburgh bars on all three nights of the conference, with a MixBurgh Night Out in the Strip District on Monday. Bar Botanico will host Massimo Zitti, from Toronto's Mother, No. 22 on North America's 50 Best Bars 2026. At Pittsburgh's own Hidden Harbor, Garret Richard, VinePair's 2024 Next Wave Bartender of the Year, will lead a guest shift for Brooklyn's Sunken Harbor Club, one of New York City's best bars. In the Strip District, Sea Monkey will host Stefan Was from Cleveland's Porco Lounge & Tiki Room, a seven-time Spirited Awards regional Top 10 honoree. And Space Bar in Market Square will host The Portland Hunt + Alpine Club of Portland, Maine, a two-time James Beard Award semifinalist for Outstanding Bar Program.

Pittsburgh-born Phil Ward, who created the Oaxaca Old-Fashioned at Death & Co in 2007 and opened Mayahuel, winner of the 2010 Spirited Award for World's Best New Cocktail Bar, will come home to pour with The Long Island Bar of Brooklyn.

Additional sponsors include OpenTable. Sessions will take place in four downtown venues within 0.3 miles of each other: Space Bar, Expansive, Liberty Magic and Peirce Studio. The Fairmont Pittsburgh will serve as the official hotel.

The program will run on four tracks: Business of Bars, Distillers & Spirits, Behind the Bar, and Culture & the Future. A dedicated distiller tasting room will stay open throughout the conference.

The 2026 program will focus on three issues: the gap between Pittsburgh's cocktail talent and its national visibility, peer learning for bartenders, and the funding gap between culinary and bar craft recognition. National Geographic took notice of Pittsburgh last year, naming it the only U.S. city on its Best of the World 2026 list.

"This city has become a hot spot for the craft cocktail industry, following in the footsteps of our renowned brewing scene and hot on the heels of the burgeoning culinary community," said Dale Vaughn, Executive Director of the MixBurgh Foundation and co-owner of Space Bar. "Pittsburgh is the geographical center of half of the continent's best talent: from Chicago to New York, Toronto to Nashville and everything in between. We've reached out to the hundreds of craft cocktail bars within a day's drive because we intend to build a new center of gravity in the craft spirits and cocktail industry. It's a chance for us to come together and learn from each other while raising the floor and the ceiling for everyone in Pittsburgh."

Conference passes are on sale now through Eventbrite, starting at \$149. Bar teams can buy four conference passes for \$447, the price of three, with the code BARTEAM.

At the Taste of MixBurgh Gala, bars and distilleries from across the region will pour for the public and the trade inside Heinz Hall. Tickets are on sale separately on Eventbrite for \$50, so cocktail fans can attend without registering for the conference. Guests must be 21 or older.

For media

MixBurgh invites journalists, photographers and producers to cover the conference, its visiting speakers and guest shifts, and Taste of MixBurgh. Media can request credentials, interviews, logos and approved speaker headshots from Dale Vaughn at Dale@MixBurgh.com.

About MixBurgh

The MixBurgh Foundation was founded in 2026 with support from Visit Pittsburgh and the City of Pittsburgh. The foundation works to raise the floor for hospitality workers and small businesses while raising the ceiling of education and recognition across the industry. Learn more at mixburgh.org or on Instagram at [@mixburgh](https://www.instagram.com/mixburgh).

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