

## Des Moines Register

Estimated printed pages: 2

July 20, 2005

**Section:** Juice

**Page:** 31J

### Martini-maker banks on an Absolut success

*Vannoy Patti*

*Staff*

BY PATTI VANNOY  
patti@dmJuice.com

Eric Kataoka's record is 4-2, and he's got his eye on another win.

"We're in the process of building a new shelf for the trophy," boasted Rene Giudicessi, operations manager at Christopher's Restaurant, where Kataoka is a bartender and manager.

Filling that shelf won't be a breeze. Christopher's is one of 17 restaurants vying for votes in this weekend's Absolut Martini Tasting, which benefits Variety, the Children's Charity of Iowa.

A \$40 ticket buys small samples of the 17 martini selections (the only requirement is that each concoction must include Absolut vodka) as well as a full spread of snacks furnished by the Sheraton hotel and Loffredo Fresh Produce and plenty of soda for those who get a little too eager about their judging responsibilities. Every ticket-holder gets one vote for their favorite martini.

Organizer Nicholas Van Patten said the fundraiser was organized because of today's martini madness.

"It's a craze right now where people talk about different martinis that they like drinking," he said. "People treat their martinis like they do wine."

Kataoka, 30, is certainly serious about his. The recent transplant from Memphis said he has won several contests similar to this one and has competed in other bartending competitions.

But he wants this new notch on his belt bad enough that he won't even reveal the name of his concoction. To avoid tipping off the other contenders, he'll say only that his required ingredient is Absolut Raspberri.

"From my research and what I know about what the other restaurants are bringing, this is something nobody around here has even heard of before," he said.

Eric Kataoka, 30, a bartender and manager at Christopher's Restaurant, will participate enter a Asbolut Raspberri martini, below, in the Absolut Martini Tasting competition, a benefit for Variety. Arturo Fernandez/Juice photos

#### Absolut Martini Tasting

What:A benefit for Variety, the Children's Charity of Iowa. Vote for your favorite martini from: Bistro 43, Centro, Christopher's, Fire Creek Grill, Fratello's, Jesse's Embers Restaurants, Jimmy's American Cafe, Legends American Bar & Grill, Mezzodi's, Mosaix Restaurant and Wine bar, Nick's Bar and Grill, Splash, Suites of 800 Locust, Trostel's Greenbriar, Trostel's Dish, Tursi's Latin King and 801 Steak & Chop House.

When:6-9 p.m. Friday.

Where:Sheraton Hotel, 50th Street and University Avenue, West Des Moines.

9/21/2008

Des Moines Register: Document Displ...

Tickets:\$40, with a limited quantity available at the door. To purchase in advance, call Variety at 243-4660.

---

Copyright (c) The Des Moines Register. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.