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Brazilian Contender Aims for Top Shelf of Spirits

By ELVA RAMIREZ

From rooftop bars to neighborhoods pubs, many of New York's restaurants and bars are taking a spirited approach to the World Cup.

At Casa, a Brazilian restaurant in the Village, owner Jupira Lee has set up televisions for the first time. Casa will open for lunch during the tournament and will broadcast all the games.

"We're not really a TV restaurant thing, but because Brazil is going to host the games we decided to do that," Ms. Lee said.

The James Hotel's Jimmy rooftop bar will project evening games on the walls for outdoor viewing. The Archer Hotel's Spylight rooftop bar, set to open June 18, will debut with televisions tuned to soccer matches.

Amid the fevered predictions over soccer showdowns, a Brazilian staple is set to take center stage and could potentially make itself at home in New York.



Cachaça, Brazil's national distilled spirit, is showing up at bars across the city. Many bars will be featuring the caipirinha, a breezy concoction of cachaça, muddled limes and sugar. The Fogo de Chao, a Brazilian steakhouse in Midtown, will be offering five versions of the drink.

Like a rum, cachaça has cane notes, and grassy, vegetal notes, similar to a tequila. "A good artisanal cachaça should taste somewhere between a rum and a tequila," said Nathan Whitehouse, co-founder of Avuá Cachaça.

Cachaça has been making inroads in the mixology world,



showing up in cocktails in places such as Le Bernardin, Milk & Honey and Wallflower. But now, even pubs like Nevada Smiths are stocking up on the spirit made from sugar cane juice.

"The thing that's interesting is that it's now crossing over into the general market," said Steve Luttmann, founder and chief executive of cachaça brand Leblon. "A lot of places that are



From left to right: Caipirinhas at the Rum House in Midtown; Casa's Hexa with cachaça; mixing up cachaça cocktails at the Rum House.

showing the games, like the Irish pubs, we're now in there."

As World Cup fever hits its stride, bartenders are strategizing how to handle what's expected to be a landslide of caipirinha orders.

"I've been working all week on trying to get my perfect caipirinha down," said Johnny Swet, owner of the Jimmy and Rogue & Canon bars.

Mr. Swet is planning to pre-fill rows of glasses with lime wedges and sugar. "You line them up so all the bartender has to do is muddle, muddle, muddle," he said. "And then shake out, shake out, shake out. You can get them out really quickly." Summer 2014 is seen as just the first wave of cachaça's U.S. popularity campaign. Next up: the 2016 Summer Games in Brazil.