

# fashion forward

STYLIST TODD HANSHAW HAILS THE CHIC VERBENA COCKTAIL AS THE PERFECT ACCESSORY.

BY CHELSEA STONE

Stylist and retail consultant Todd Hanshaw outfits top models and celebs, not to mention his helping to introduce Sin City to the national September shopping initiative Fashion's Night Out, which he'll be heavily involved in again this month. So it only makes sense that Hanshaw's favorite cocktail—the off-menu Verbena at the Cosmopolitan's Chandelier Bar—would have as much fabulous flair as the man himself.

“The Verbena is not so much a cocktail as it is an experience,” says the former fashion director for Wynn Las Vegas, where he spent seven years developing much of its all-star retail roster. “There's a formality to it and it's fun to try, so when you also actually like the taste, it's spectacular.”

The Verbena, only available on the Chandelier Bar's level 1.5, features Milagro Silver tequila, house-made ginger syrup, Yuzu Sour, lemon verbena leaves, and a garnish of Szechuan button, a unique edible flower. Hanshaw isn't exaggerating when he calls the cocktail an “experience,” either. Chewing the bud before taking the first sip activates the salivary glands and causes what Hanshaw describes as “a weird kind of numbness” on the tongue for about 15 minutes—a tantalizing addition to the tangy drink. He first tried the aromatic Verbena last summer when a persistent mixologist convinced him that it was worth deviating from his usual favorite, a Grey Goose dirty martini. Just days later he was back at the hotel with friends, and the Verbena ended up being Hanshaw's, and everyone else's, drink of choice. “I turned about 20 people on to it,” he recalls.

Since beginning branding and merchandising work with SLS Hotels last year, including on a new Vegas location opening where the shuttered Sahara still stands, Hanshaw has been balancing his time between projects that include designing merchandise for Hyde Bellagio and creating music video costumes for the up-and-coming band Black Boots. The busy style guru says that the Verbena is now reserved for special visits to the famous jeweled bar when he feels the need to mix it up a bit.

“It's a treat, not an everyday thing for me,” he says. “But when I'm at Cosmo, I find my way up there, especially with somebody who is new to town or visiting. Variety is the spice of life.” We'll drink to that. **V**

## • THE VERBENA

- 6–8 lemon verbena leaves
- 2 oz. ginger syrup
- 2 oz. Yuzu Sour
- 1½ oz. Milagro Silver tequila
- Muddle verbena leaves with ginger syrup. Add remaining ingredients and shake. Strain into a tumbler glass over fresh ice.
- Garnish with Szechuan buttons.



Broughton double old-fashioned glass, **Ralph Lauren Home** (\$95). [ralphlauren.com](http://ralphlauren.com)