

# Poor? Pour!

BEHIND THE BAR AT BARTENDING SCHOOL.

BY BOBBIE WILLIS

**E**ight students sit around a huge conference table in the lecture area of Premium Pour Bartending School, downtown at 10th Avenue and Oak Street. While school isn't required for employment as a bartender here in town, school director/owner, instructor and veteran bartender Zorah Rose believes formal instruction instills "management mindset and work behavior" that make the students better qualified candidates in today's competitive job market.

Rose stands before the students explaining issues of legality and liability in the bartending business. "When you're serving people," says Rose, "and you've got a VIP — Visibly Intoxicated Person — you are accountable for them. It's called third party liability." The students nod earnestly and Rose moves on to tactics for cutting off the VIP and giveaways of the fake ID.

After the lecture part of class, the students go through some hands-on practice in an actual bar set up in the front part of the school — "The bottles are filled with colored water, of course," says Rose. But the layout of liquor bottles, glasses, bar equipment and drink garnishes is pretty

much like anything you'd see at a club or watering hole around town. Half the group gets behind the bar to make drinks, and half the group sits around the bar to order and act as customers. Students focus on measuring and mixing accuracy, as well as on juggling a variety of orders coming in at once. As you might guess, everyone seems to be having fun. At one point, Rose picks up a couple of empty bottles, and begins juggling them in what's called "flair bartending," just like Tom Cruise in *Cocktail*.

For Rose, the aspect of fun is only part of what keeps her in the business. "I love working with people. Anyone who loves working with people will thrive in this business. And there's a lot of freedom — if you want to work and travel, bartending is the perfect way to do that." Rose realizes that bartending is "a very transitional career," but she also believes that there is room for achievement and progress. "It's all in how you approach it," she says with a grin.

Premium Pour offers day, evening and weekend classes. For schedule and information, call 485-4695 or visit [www.premium-pour.com](http://www.premium-pour.com) **ew**



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