

Joe Schofield on his unique, multi-sensory Sensorium menus

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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During a masterclass held on Saturday, 29 June at Cause & Effect Cocktail Kitchen in Cape Town, International Bartender of the Year (Spirited Awards), Joe Schofield took us on a flavour-filled journey, as he discussed the unique and innovative multi-sensory Sensorium menus he and his business partner, Ryan Clift created for Singapore restaurant, the Tippling Club.



Joe Schofield at the Cape Town leg of his masterclass presentations in SA. Image supplied.

Schofield started by describing the cocktail menus they created as "very progressive and one-of-a-kind". He showed us their Sensorium logo and explained that it perfectly depicts the relationship between bartender and chef (not Harry Potter and Voldemort, he joked.)

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[@sensorium.group's website is now up and running. Watch this space for exciting projects to come! @chefryanclift](#)

A post shared by [JOE SCHOFIELD](#) (@joe_schofield) on Apr 8, 2019 at 11:41am PDT

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Schofield first met Clift when he was in Singapore. With a wine and spirits knowledge that can rival that of a sommelier and a bartender, Clift, same as Schofield, started his career when he was 16 years old and spent a lot of time working in Michelin-star restaurants across Europe.

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[The leader of the pack, @chefryanclift. #tipplingclub](#)

A post shared by [Tippling Club](#) (@tipplingclub) on Feb 27, 2017 at 3:50am PST

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When they initially came together, they sat down to discuss what direction Schofield wanted to take with the beverage programme. It turned out that they had the exact same idea written down and that was exploring multi-sensory experiences and in particular, aroma.

Schofield talked a little about the history of the Tippling Club and explained that what they are selling is about the relationship between food and drink. In 2008, it was Singapore's first avant-garde cocktail bar. It was also the first progressive restaurant in Singapore. "It's always been about innovation and pushing boundaries," he said.

The Tippling Club is known for being the first restaurant to do the cocktail pairing concept in Singapore. "This was a reciprocal process where the bar team works with the kitchen to create unique combinations. It was never about us creating a drink and them creating a dish. It's about us all working together," Schofield said.

Triggering memories

He spoke about the first cocktail menu they created for the Tippling Club. It was a long process from conceptualisation to the launch of the menu. He said that it took about 10 months in total. "It was the most challenging and one of the most rewarding projects I have ever worked on," he said.



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The whole menu itself is about aroma. However, projects evolved; it moved from being just about aroma to comprising memory triggers as well. "This menu isn't about perfume. It isn't about fragrance. It's about triggering memory."

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[Carefully arranged to create the finest flavours from fragrances.](#)
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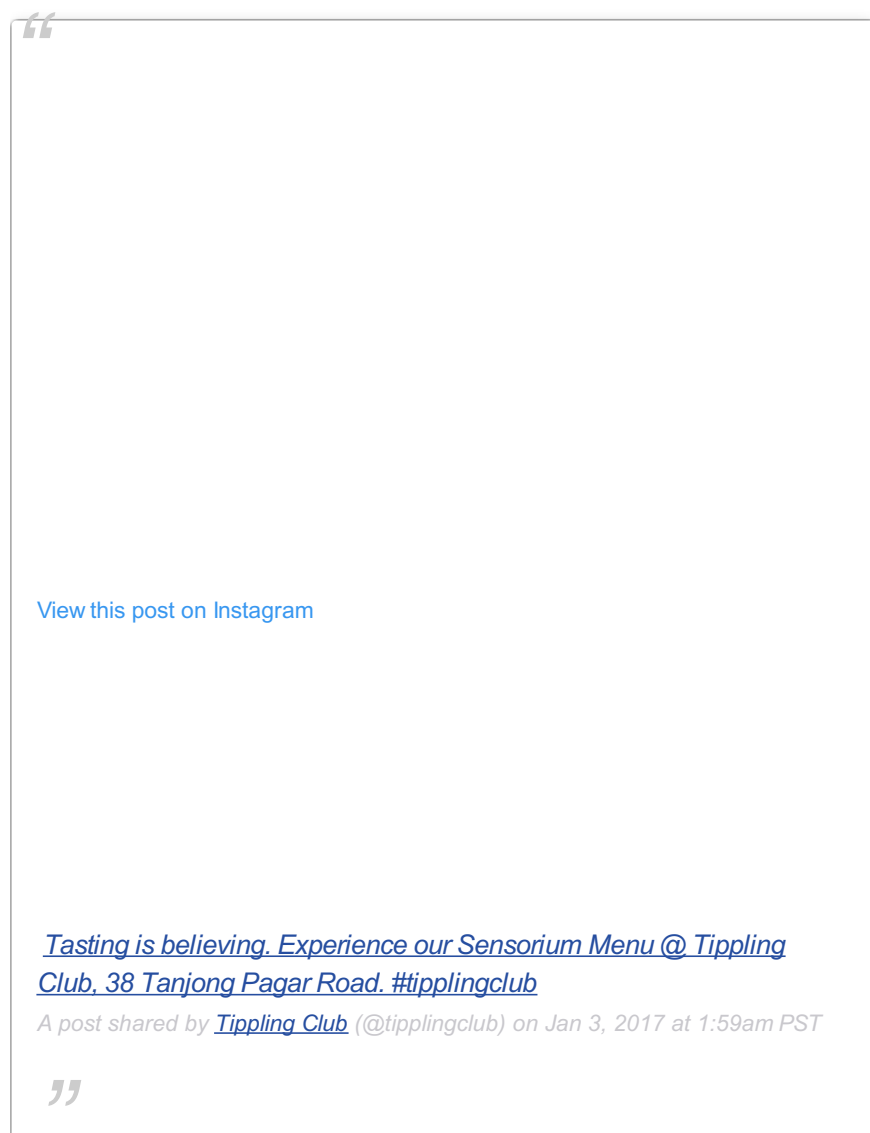
complete multi-sensory menu. Schofield explained a bit about how memory sensors work and said that the part of the brain responsible for sensory information is next to the part of the brain that is responsible for memory and learning.

He used Crayola crayons as an example of a memory trigger. "The crayons have such a unique aroma and we all have used the crayons at one time in our lives. When I smell the crayons it takes me back to primary school. You see, because

we were so young when we used the crayons, our brains were so absorbent and susceptible to sensory information," he explained.

All 12 aromas on the menu were extremely unique. They had some aromas that were very conceptual, such as grass, forest, the smell of rain. And they also had some that were a little bit more approachable like pear and orange aromas. They actually managed to create the smell of sparkling orange, which smells like Fanta.

But they needed the right vessel to make sure all the aromas could be showcased at their best. They decided to use scent strips, similar to the ones you'd find at a perfume shop. On the back of the menu strips, they had all of their business information; website, address, phone number, but they also listed the ingredients. So it formed part of their marketing toolkit.



So much so, they actually actively encouraged their guests to steal the menu. "We wanted you to go for coffee with your friends the next day and pull the smell of rain or sparkling orange out of your pocket and say, 'We went to this place last night called Tipling Club. Smell this, this is the smell of rain.'" So it was a huge part of our marketing as well," said Schofield.

Collaborating with the IFF

Schofield and his partner collaborated with the IFF to create all the unique smells. IFF stands for International Flavours and Fragrances. For the first menu, they helped them create the aromas and for the second menu, they helped them create the flavours.

They have had a relationship with the IFF for about seven years now but it was only in the last few years that the

organisation assisted them with their menus and in return, Schofield and his team have helped them with some of their projects with regards to flavour combinations.

Schofield says the best way to explain what the IFF does is to look at a convenient store. "When you walk into a convenient store, anything you see in the store would have been handled by one of six companies in the world and IFF is one of the largest. Think about your confectionery, your crisps, your soft drinks, your perfumes, your aftershaves and antiperspirants have all been created by a company like IFF," he explains.

They once asked the company if they had the chemical smell of outer space and they said that they don't have it but that they can make it. Two weeks later they had the chemical smell of outer space, which is currently being served next to a dish called Mandarin Madras Asteroid on their menu.

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Dreams and desires

Schofield said that with the restaurant's first menu they looked at the past with memory triggers and fragrance, but with their second menu, they wanted to look to the future, dreams and desires; an edible menu.

The menu took a year to develop. To create it they made 1,200 gummy bears by hand every single day. From start to finish, they made 500,000 by hand. Every single one of the gummy bears were flavoured with the main flavours of the cocktail and also the flavours that are synonymous with different dreams and desires.

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The flavours Schofield and Clift created (with direction from the IFF) never existed before. Every single guest who came to the Tippling Club were given the opportunity to have a menu and taste. They also had a few links with the last menu to this new one. For example, the presentation with the little green bag (you'll see it in the video below) is very nostalgic, again, a play on memories.

Schofield ended the presentation off by saying that at the Tippling Club, it's always been about innovation and creating something truly unique. "It's also a representation of who we are and what we're about." He said that everybody usually likes posting stuff on social media and that is why they have photogenic menus and photogenic drinks to really capitalise on that.

"All of our menus are created to inspire and inform our guests. It communicates our bar and our staff identity." He said that what they are really trying to do, is to make their guests feel that they are doing something a little bit extra for them.

And I'm sure they have achieved that! For more, you can follow Schofield on [Instagram](#) and the Tippling Club on [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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