

Interview

Disrupting the Cocktail Industry

An Interview with Ryan Close,
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Bartesian Corp.



Bartesian creates bar-quality cocktails on demand

EDITORS' NOTE Ryan Close has built and led successful sales and marketing teams for over a decade and is set to deliver his greatest accomplishment yet—disrupting the cocktail world by bringing the first premium capsule-based cocktail machine to market. His persistent drive and keen strategic insight along with a mindful and modern leadership approach has helped him to orchestrate the recruitment and growth of top tier talent. Close identifies and executes creative win-win partnerships with key players to effect intrinsic value for stakeholders. His intricate decisions and directives over the past five years developing Bartesian have led to explosive sales from the home consumer, hotels and stadiums across North America.



Ryan Close

COMPANY BRIEF Bartesian (bartesian.com) is elevating the cocktail experience by offering premium cocktails without the hassle through its unique single-server cocktail maker. Bartesian creates bar-quality cocktails on demand, providing an effortless way to serve and enjoy premium cocktails at home.

Will you discuss your vision for creating Bartesian and how the business has evolved?

Bartesian evolved out of hearing complaints about the limiting experiences in hotel bar fridges from friends back in the day when I was a bartender (and not a very good one I might add). The inspiration to give people an alternative and create something new and fun that would evolve the cocktail experience for grownups which hadn't really progressed from placing a selection of sugary mixes or pop and spirits on the party table for people to fend for themselves. People who were really into making premium cocktails for guests would risk missing out on the actual party, spending all of their time mixing drinks in the kitchen. Bartesian was created to solve these problems. We wanted to develop a machine that would disrupt the cocktail industry by allowing people the option of having an innovative, clean, and fun machine that would make premium cocktails at the touch of a button. They would no longer have to find space for rare or obscure ingredients in their cupboard and worry about having everything stocked to enjoy their favorite cocktails. They could enjoy a variety of cocktails for themselves and their guests with minimal cost, kitchen space, and clean up.

As one of the highest grossing Kickstarter campaigns, Bartesian has grown quickly, and continues to, with rapidly growing demand. Like many start-ups,

our growth in demand means expanding our team, so we're looking for key talent that can join in building out the business and meet the needs of the swift expansion of Bartesian as we build out into the market and obtain greater brand awareness.

Bartesian recently sold its millionth cocktail to home users. Will you highlight this milestone for the business?

It's a big deal to us because not only does it show that people are excited about the product and the novelty and fun of the experience, but we can feel confident in those numbers that the quality of the

cocktails we've created are rivaling the best bars in the world. Customers wouldn't continue to buy in the numbers they are if they weren't loving the quality of the product. We feel confident from this milestone that continues to grow that we're not ending up collecting dust in someone's storage space like past novelty appliances. Bartesian has changed people's purview of how to entertain, it's energizing their after dinner experience and their social routines, and created excitement where maybe before making the drinks was a task and now it's fun. Instead of who has to make the pre-dinner cocktail, we like to think that now it's who gets to?

How has the pandemic impacted Bartesian's business?

To be honest, the only adapting we've had to do is to make more product. Bartesian is a perfect solution now that bars and restaurants are closed and people are looking for ways to have cocktails in a controlled and safe environment. Bartesian solves that problem for our customer. Offering a solution for people has led to accelerating our growth and we need to ready ourselves to be able to effectively meet the increasing demand. We understand that since the pandemic, people's drinking consumption of alcohol products across the board has seen a rise in all categories of alcohol, so we're working hard to increase production and keep up with demand.

Bartesian was built with an entrepreneurial spirit and culture. How critical is it for Bartesian to remain nimble and entrepreneurial in order to meet the needs of its customers during these uncertain times?

We have a very small team which allows us to take ownership of all levels and tasks of the business so we can quickly respond and take action to ensure a high level of service for the customer. I personally respond to Facebook posts, Instagram comments and phone calls, which in the beginning was out of necessity, but we've learned so much from it that it's

become a badge of honor within our team that all levels are connecting directly with customers to meet their needs.

Are there brand extensions that you feel provide an opportunity for Bartesian as you look to the future?

We have a very exciting road map of expertly curated cocktails rolling out over the next twelve months for all taste profiles. We're obsessed with our customer feedback and work daily on taking requested cocktails and crafting them and bringing them to the customer's kitchen. We stay on the cutting edge of cocktail trends. We work with experts, bartenders and mixologists on identifying future trends and ensuring that we have cocktails people want ready to go for customers' homes. As an example, we recently released two variations of a shrub cocktail, which are infused vinegar that pair smoothly with tequila (e.g., the Jalapeño Lime Shrub) and with rum (the Rhubarb Spice Shrub).

Where do you see the greatest opportunities for growth for Bartesian?

We're just out of the starting gate having launched in September 2019. We were named Oprah's favorite things in November, most innovative product from Good Housekeeping in January, and we won best home appliance innovation award at CES in January 2020. Most recently, The Knot has named us as the "best new entertaining essential" in the Knot Registry Awards. Right now we're focused on meeting consumer demand, going into retail stores for Q4 2020, like Williams Sonoma and 500 locations of Bed Bath & Beyond. This is to say we're focused on continuing to expand our reach and generate product awareness.

Will you highlight Bartesian's commitment to quality and consistency?

Quality and consistency has always been essential for us. In fact, we held off going to market for months because we insisted on ensuring that customers would love the taste and quality of our cocktails. We need to know with certainty that when we say "premium" we stand by it with integrity.

Are you able to take moments to reflect on Bartesian's impact and success and to appreciate what you have built?

To be honest, not often. My wife is often pointing this out to me – to stop and savor the wins, but for me, there's so much to do and it's exciting. I guess that's the driver in me that has pushed me this far and keeps me moving forward. But, of course, I know it's also important to stop and enjoy the fruits of our labor and I try to take the time to express that to my team, but I need to do it more. Then, it's back to business and the next bull's-eye that demands our laser focus. ●