

Our Bartending Courses Teach More than Just How to Pour – Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

An accredited bar unit is assessed on evidence, and the evidence required is specific enough to settle the question. SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails requires cocktails made across at least three separate service periods, using every one of six preparation methods, with two different cocktails per method. That is a minimum of twelve preparations, produced to commercial timeframes. Pouring is the least of it.

This post first appeared on our news page in June 2022. The unit requirements described here are those of the current training package. The full course page is at the bartending course; this is the shorter answer to what the assessment actually covers.

The other work behind a bar shift

Our original article makes a simple point: pouring is only one part of bartending. A capable bartender welcomes guests, manages time, suggests drinks appropriately and follows opening and closing routines, including cleaning, stock checks and safe storage. Ask which of these skills a particular course actually teaches and assesses. The unit-by-unit guide below explains the formal training outcomes without assuming every workshop carries them all.

What SITHFAB030 requires you to demonstrate

The performance evidence sets a floor that a weekend of pouring cannot meet. You must prepare and present at least two different cocktails to meet customer requirements using each of the following methods:

blended
built
floated
muddled
shaken
stirred

Across at least three service periods, using organisational-specific and traditional recipes, and with all of the following holding at once:

accompaniments and garnishes used decoratively
consistent quality, volume and appearance
in line with organisational procedures
using the correct equipment, ingredients and standard measures
working to commercial timeframes

Two cocktails by six methods is a minimum of twelve distinct preparations , each produced under service conditions. The assessor is looking at method, sequence, presentation and consistency across the three periods, which is why the unit sits at the practical end of a bar course rather than in a classroom.

Skills must be demonstrated in an operational commercial bar — either an industry workplace or a simulated industry environment set up for assessment. There is no paper-only route through this unit.

SITHFAB030 is an elective within SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality , so a learner who completes it as part of a bar course can carry it into the full qualification later. It is not, however, a unit anyone starts with. It carries three prerequisites — SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005 — so the sequence runs SITXFSA005 → SITHFAB023 Operate a bar → SITHFAB030 , with RSA alongside. Cocktails sits three deep and cannot be a first unit.

The six methods are a syllabus, not a list

It is worth noticing what the six methods actually cover between them, because they are not six versions of the same action.

Built and floated are about layering and density, and they are unforgiving of a rushed hand. Stirred and shaken are two different answers to dilution and aeration, and using the wrong one on a given drink is a technique error rather than a preference. Muddled is about extraction without pulverising. Blended brings in equipment operation, consistency and ice ratio.

A bar course built around the unit has to teach all six properly, because the assessment requires two different cocktails by each, not two cocktails overall.

SITHFAB023 Operate a bar — the unit that covers the actual job

Cocktails are one unit. Running a bar is another, and it is the more demanding of the two on breadth.

Performance evidence requires you to:

Safely and efficiently set up, operate and close down a bar over at least three service periods, including at least one peak service period

Prepare alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages to customer request within required timeframes during those periods

Use the correct equipment, ingredients and standard measures

Interact with a diverse range of customers , determine their preferences and offer suitable products clearly and professionally

Knowledge evidence is where the range of the job becomes visible. It spans, among other things:

Area	What the unit requires you to know
Bar types and service	Different types of bar and bar service across industry sectors, and those relevant to events and functions
Mise en place	The meaning and role of mise en place for the service of alcoholic beverages
Ordering systems	Electronic and non-electronic ordering systems and procedures
Bar set-up	Beers, spirits, wines, fortified drinks, edible and non-edible garnishes and accompaniments,

	manual or electronic registers and EFTPOS, non-alcoholic beverages
Beverage types	Mixed drinks, basic and popular cocktails, beers, fortified drinks, non-alcoholic, spirits, wines
Types of bar service	Cash drinks, dry till , inclusive packages, open bar , pre-set drinks , set limits
Customer preferences	Brand, garnish, glassware, ice, mixers, strength, temperature
Equipment	Operational features, safety and hygiene for dispensing systems, glass-washers and dishwashers, ice machines, refrigeration
Handover	Current customer information including drink preferences and customer problems , beverage quality issues, stock requirements

That row on types of bar service is the one most self-taught bartenders have never seen written down. A dry till, an open bar with a set limit, and pre-set drinks at a function are three different commercial arrangements with three different ways of going wrong, and knowing which you are working under changes how you take an order.

SITHFAB023 has two prerequisites : SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol and SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety . You cannot be assessed for it until both are done. Any bar programme that includes it has to sequence those first.

The safety content nobody expects

The knowledge evidence for SITHFAB023 includes a standard most people outside the trade have never heard of: AS5034 Installation and use of inert gases for beverage dispensing .

The unit requires you to know the specific dangers of the inert gases used in beer and post-mix systems, how access to restricted areas containing inert gas equipment is controlled, the chemicals used in bar operations and the appropriate signage where gases and chemicals are used, the scope of your responsibilities for bar equipment, safe manual handling, and the environmentally sound disposal of bar waste — hazardous substances, recyclable glass, plastic bottles and containers.

This is a real hazard, not a box-ticking topic. A cellar or gas cupboard is a confined-space and asphyxiation risk, and it is precisely the part of the job a venue is most likely to leave to whoever happens to be on shift.

Assessment conditions also require access to safety data sheets for the cleaning agents and chemicals in use, or plain-English workplace documents interpreting their content. See health and safety best practice in hospitality .

Bar staff are food handlers

This is the second thing bar courses get quietly wrong by omission.

If you handle ice, cut fruit, or unpackaged garnishes , you are a food handler. That is why SITXFSA005 gates the bar units, and why the assessment conditions for SITHFAB023 require a separate hand basin with an antiseptic liquid soap dispenser , alongside cloths, commercial sanitising agents, a dishwasher or glasswasher, and cleaning schedules.

SITXFSA005 is the gateway unit for the whole food-and-beverage stream. It is a prerequisite to nine units in it — SITHFAB022 , SITHFAB023 , SITHFAB024 , SITHFAB025 , SITHFAB026 , SITHFAB027 , SITHFAB030 , SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 — and it is one of the two prerequisites to SITHFAB023 and one of the three to SITHFAB030 . The units carrying no prerequisite at all are SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB028 , SITHFAB036 and SITHFAB038 .

Food handler training under Standard 3.2.2A does not have to be accredited, mandates no refresher period, and the business is not required to keep records of it. The accredited unit buys portability and proof, not permission . The five-year clock people associate with food safety belongs to the separate Food Safety Supervisor certificate, not to food handler training. See the food handling course and what food safety certificate do I need .

The companion units

Unit	Title	Note
SITHFAB021	Provide responsible service of alcohol	No prerequisite. Itself a prerequisite to nine units in the stream, and a separate legal requirement
SITHFAB022	Clean and tidy bar areas	Prerequisite: SITXFSA005 . Opening, closing and in-service routine
SITHFAB023	Operate a bar	Prerequisites: SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005 . 3 service periods, one a peak
SITHFAB024	Prepare and serve non-alcoholic beverages	Prerequisite: SITXFSA005
SITHFAB025	Prepare and serve espresso coffee	Prerequisite: SITXFSA005 . Ten specified beverages, on three occasions each
SITHFAB027	Serve food and beverage	Prerequisite: SITXFSA005 . 5 service periods, including one peak
SITHFAB030	Prepare and serve cocktails	Prerequisites: SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005 — three in all. 3 service periods, twelve preparations
SITHFAB031	Provide advice on beers, spirits and liqueurs	Prerequisite: SITHFAB021 . Product knowledge
SITHFAB032	Provide advice on Australian wines	Prerequisite: SITHFAB021 . Product knowledge
SITHFAB034	Provide table service of food and beverage	Prerequisites: SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005 . 12 service periods, with full menu advice in every one

All of these appear among the electives of SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality , which is the qualification a bar career usually builds toward. See the Certificate III in Hospitality .

The prerequisite pattern matters in practice: a bar programme that includes the non-alcoholic beverage or espresso units has to deliver the food hygiene unit first, and one that includes Operate a bar has to deliver RSA first as well. That makes RSA an academic prerequisite as much as a licensing one — SITHFAB021 gates nine units in the stream, SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 among them, regardless of the venue's licence status or which state regime you work under. The register explains the logic when it separates the two service units: SITHFAB034 covers higher-order service techniques for senior food and beverage attendants while SITHFAB027 covers fundamental technical skills for casual dining, a difference "reflected in the additional prerequisite requirement for alcohol service in SITHFAB034".

Espresso is also available as a standalone skill set. SITSS00080 Espresso Machine Operation is on our scope of registration and packages SITHFAB025 with SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers, SITXFIN007 Process financial transactions and SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety. It is aimed at espresso machine operators in cafes, restaurants, bars, clubs, and function and event venues — which is to say, it is a sensible companion to a bar qualification rather than a separate career. Bar staff who can also work the machine are more useful to any venue running daytime trade. See the barista coffee course.

The wine and beverage specialisms have their own skill sets too: SITSS00075 Beverage Advice and SITSS00094 Sommelier, both also on scope, and both built on SITHFAB021.

RSA is a separate unit and a separate law

Responsible Service of Alcohol is SITHFAB021, a distinct unit of competency, and a distinct legal requirement in every state. Completing the cocktail unit — or a whole bar course — does not satisfy RSA, and the statutory obligation attaches to the individual serving.

Jurisdiction	RSA position
Victoria	Use a current Victorian RSA certificate. Eligible interstate holders can apply for free bridging: approved original training within three years, with the online-course residence condition. Specific exemptions apply at qualifying producer events. Victorian RSA Refresher every three years.
New South Wales	Eligible temporary interstate workers can use approved interstate RSA. Permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements; eligible holders can use bridging instead of the full NSW RSA course. NSW competency card: five years. Interstate concessions have separate eligibility and certificate-age requirements.
Queensland	Accepted where the evidence is a Statement of Attainment for the nationally accredited Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol course. An attendance certificate is insufficient. Valid RSA training generally has no expiry; training completed before 2002 must be replaced.
Western Australia	Provide the RSA certificate showing completion of the nationally accredited course. An interstate RSA card alone is not accepted as evidence. Keep the RSA certificate as training evidence;

	approved-manager cards have separate renewal requirements.
South Australia	Check provider approval and training date. Training from 1 November 2020 must be through a Commissioner-approved RTO. Earlier RSA training need not be repeated solely because of that approval change. No routine RSA renewal period stated in the cited CBS guidance; check applicable licence conditions.
Tasmania	Interstate certificates can be accepted under the Commissioner's conditions. Requirements differ for employees and liquor licence holders; check the appropriate role. No RSA expiry date in the regulator's FAQ; an employer may request updated training.
Northern Territory	Certificates from an RTO registered to deliver RSA are accepted, including interstate certificates. Check certificate age and the NT refresher requirements. NT guidance gives a three-year limit for interstate certificates and directs holders to a refresher; check current renewal guidance.
Australian Capital Territory	Valid interstate RSA certificates are recognised, subject to the ACT's three-year currency limit and ACT-approved refresher requirements. Three years from course completion, then an ACT-approved refresher.

Current regulator guidance: NSW , VIC , SA , QLD , WA , NT , ACT , TAS .

Timing is not uniform either. Victoria allows completion before you start supplying alcohol or within one month of first supplying it; Queensland allows 30 days from starting employment; Western Australia allows 28 days and requires you to give your employer a copy. Most venues want evidence at hiring regardless, so the practical advice is still to have it in hand.

For a new Victorian RSA course, use an LCV-approved provider for the delivery mode and complete the required LCV Learning Hub surveys and sexual harassment and assault module as well as the national unit. Victorian certificate holders must complete the free RSA Refresher every three years. In Victoria, an interstate RSA certificate generally cannot be used on its own. Eligible holders can apply for the free RSA Refresher bridging course to obtain a Victorian certificate. LCV requires approved original RSA training completed within the last three years and, for an online course, residence interstate or overseas at the time. Allow about ten working days for the application. LCV lists a specific exemption for interstate liquor producers at qualifying temporary or major events. Check the Victorian eligibility and event rules before relying on a certificate.

Anyone offered a bar course that claims RSA is "included" should check which unit is being assessed and by whom — see beware of RSA course scams and who needs an RSA course .

What the RSA unit actually assesses

The part of SITHFAB021 least visible from outside is how specific the judgement work is. The second element of the unit is titled Assist customers to drink within appropriate limits — assisting, not only refusing.

Performance criterion 2.3 asks you to identify erratic drinking patterns as an early sign of possible intoxication, and the unit names them:

mixing a wide range of drink types

drinking quickly and in quick succession

ordering more than one drink for their own consumption

consistently returning to request more samples

ordering multiple or large samples

ordering "triple shots" or extra-large drinks

These are behaviours you read before anyone looks drunk, which is the whole point of the criterion. They are also invisible to a bartender who has only been taught to pour.

The unit then names three means of assistance, all to be applied in accordance with house policy: connect the customer with their designated driver or companions ; offer alternatives to alcohol, including food or non-alcoholic drinks ; and organise or provide transport information for a customer who wants to leave.

Two further requirements are easy to miss. Performance criterion 2.1 requires you to use knowledge of industry requirements and professional standards to determine the volume for standard drinks or samples — which is the same standard-measures discipline the cocktail and bar units assess, applied to a harm-minimisation purpose. And the unit requires you to source and explain two organisational or house policies and procedures for the responsible sale or service of alcohol. Not one, and not a generic description of the law: two real documents from a real venue. See managing intoxicated patrons .

Victorian course content adds its own layer on top of the unit: Victorian liquor laws, drink spiking , ID checks and preventing secondary supply, the use of prone restraint , harm minimisation, and compliance and enforcement.

What the learner walks away with

A Statement of Attainment records the units successfully completed, including their codes. For nationally recognised training, a USI is generally required before a qualification or Statement of Attainment can be issued, unless an applicable exemption applies. See the official USI exemption guidance . A USI is free; recover an existing one rather than creating another. Your USI must not be printed on the credential. Keep your certificate as well as your USI details. A transcript records reported training; reporting timing and exemptions can affect what appears. A missing entry does not automatically invalidate a credential. Ask the issuing RTO about a missing result or replacement certificate. See official reporting guidance .

Where you are assessed as competent, the certification documentation must be issued within 30 calendar days of the completion of the assessment , provided you finished the training product and paid all agreed fees.

Statements of Attainment do not expire as records, and partial completion of a set of units still yields one for the units you passed. Nothing is wasted if you stop part-way and come back.

What the qualification is worth in pay

This is the part most course pages leave out, and it is the strongest practical argument for finishing a qualification rather than collecting single units.

Under three of the four awards that cover this industry — the Hospitality Industry (General) Award MA000009 , the Restaurant Industry Award MA000119 and the Registered and Licensed Clubs Award MA000058 — a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher, used at work, sets a minimum classification of

Level 4 . In MA000009 and MA000119 , Level 4 is the reference point for the whole classification structure. The Fast Food Industry Award MA000003 has no equivalent provision.

So a completed Certificate III that you actually use at work is not a nice-to-have on a CV. In a pub, a standalone restaurant or a registered club alike, it carries a classification floor.

Three distinctions worth keeping straight, because this is a pay entitlement rather than a courtesy:

MA000009 and MA000119 (both at clause 18.1 , adult rates) require you to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from those Certificate III competencies. It is not automatic on completion.

MA000058 (clause 18.3) omits the words "or higher", and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise the relevant skills.

If it is disputed, the routes differ: MA000009 clause 40 , MA000119 clause 34 , and for MA000058 referral to the Fair Work Commission .

There is also more than one way to reach the "appropriate level of training" that Level 4 rests on. It has three limbs: completing a training program that meets the training and assessment requirements of a qualification or one or more appropriate units of competency from a training package; or being assessed by a qualified skills assessor as having skills at least equivalent; or , as at a specified date, having been doing the work of that classification for at least three months . The units limb is why a bar-weighted set of units is not only a stepping stone to a qualification.

Which award applies is decided by the premises, not the job title , and each covers its industry to the exclusion of any other modern award: MA000009 for hotels, pubs, taverns, wine bars, resorts, casinos and caterers; MA000058 for not-for-profit registered clubs such as RSL, bowls and golf clubs, which the hospitality award expressly excludes at clause 4.4(d)(i); MA000119 for standalone restaurants, cafes, bistros and night clubs ; and MA000003 for takeaway and food courts.

Note that the Introductory level cap — three months, extendable by mutual agreement for up to a further three — and clause 13.5 , which requires a junior employee working as a liquor service employee to be paid as an adult at the classification rate for the work performed, are provisions of MA000009 specifically. Each award has its own Schedule A, so establish the award first. Check your own rate against the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool rather than a figure on a web page, because award rates re-set every 1 July. This page does not state casual loading, penalty rates, minimum engagement, casual conversion or the flexible-working request process — take those to the Fair Work Ombudsman with your award code.

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554 .

We appear on Liquor Control Victoria's in-person list of approved RSA course providers, under one-day RSA course providers; LCV maintains a separate self-paced online list, and we are not on that one. No approval by any liquor regulator outside Victoria is claimed here — we are not approved by Liquor and Gaming NSW.

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

Source records and further guidance

We link the unit records and regulator guidance relevant to this page below. Check the current source before making an enrolment, licensing or employment decision.

SITHFAB023 Operate a bar
SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol
SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety
SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails
SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Victoria)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (New South Wales)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Queensland)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Western Australia)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (South Australia)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Tasmania)
Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Australian Capital Territory)
Food Standards Code — Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.2A (food safety practices and food safety management tools)
Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 (MA000009)
Restaurant Industry Award 2020 (MA000119)
Unique Student Identifier (USI) requirements for RTOs

Does the bartending course include RSA?

RSA is SITHFAB021, a separate unit and a separate legal requirement. Completing SITHFAB030 does not satisfy it. Note also that SITHFAB021 is a prerequisite to SITHFAB023 Operate a bar — one of nine units it gates — so on a full bar programme it comes first rather than as an add-on.

How many cocktails does the assessment require?

At least two different cocktails using each of six methods — blended, built, floated, muddled, shaken and stirred — across at least three service periods. That is twelve preparations minimum, with accompaniments and garnishes used decoratively, to consistent quality, volume and appearance, and to commercial timeframes.

Can the cocktail unit count towards a qualification?

Yes. SITHFAB030 is an elective in SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality.

Is a food hygiene unit needed for a bar course?

Yes, for most of the units. SITXFSA005 is a prerequisite for nine of them — SITHFAB022, SITHFAB023, SITHFAB024, SITHFAB025, SITHFAB026, SITHFAB027, SITHFAB030, SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 — so any programme including those has to deliver it first. And if you handle ice, cut fruit or unpackaged garnishes, you are a food handler regardless of what your job title says.

Which bar units have no prerequisite at all?

Four: SITHFAB021, SITHFAB028, SITHFAB036 and SITHFAB038. Nine units sit behind SITXFSA005 and nine behind SITHFAB021 RSA, and four carry two or more prerequisites — SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 carry two each, while SITHFAB030 and SITHFAB039 carry three.

Can I add coffee to a bar qualification?

Yes, and it is a common combination. SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee is an elective in the Certificate III, and SITSS00080 Espresso Machine Operation packages it as a standalone skill set with customer service, transactions and food hygiene. Both routes need SITXFSA005 first.

Can I do a bar course entirely online?

Not the practical units. SITHFAB030 and SITHFAB023 must be demonstrated in an operational commercial bar, either a workplace or a simulated industry environment with the required fixtures, stock and glassware. Theory can be delivered flexibly; twelve cocktail preparations across three service periods cannot.

What equipment does the assessment environment have to have?

For SITHFAB023: a bar service area, cashiering facilities, refrigeration, storage for glassware and drinks, water supply, utensils, a range of glassware and service-ware; edible and non-edible garnishes, ice, and a wide commercial range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages; full cleaning equipment including a separate hand basin; and organisational specifications including bar and cocktail menus, standard recipes and presentation standards, wine lists, price lists and safety data sheets.

Who is allowed to assess me?

Assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations' requirements for assessors and have worked in industry for at least three years applying the skills and knowledge of the unit. That is a meaningful filter and it is worth asking about.

Do I need to already work in a bar?

No. A simulated industry environment is expressly permitted, provided it has the required fixtures, equipment, stock and an industry-realistic staffing ratio — real customers in a workplace, or participants in role plays in a simulated environment.

What is "mise en place" doing in a bar unit?

It is knowledge evidence in SITHFAB023: the meaning and role of mise en place for the service of alcoholic beverages. In practice it is the difference between a bar that survives a peak service period and one that does not, which is why the unit requires at least one peak period in the assessment.

What are the signs of intoxication the RSA unit expects me to spot first?

Erratic drinking patterns, under performance criterion 2.3 — mixing a wide range of drink types, drinking quickly and in quick succession, ordering more than one drink for their own consumption, consistently returning to request more samples, ordering multiple or large samples, or ordering "triple shots" or extra-large drinks. They are early signs, read before anyone looks drunk.

What am I supposed to do about it?

The unit names three means of assistance, all applied in accordance with house policy: connect the customer with their designated driver or companions; offer alternatives to alcohol including food or non-alcoholic drinks; and organise or provide transport information for a customer who wants to leave. The element is titled Assist customers to drink within appropriate limits — assistance is the first response, not refusal.

Does the RSA unit involve my venue's own paperwork?

Yes. You have to source and explain two organisational or house policies and procedures for the responsible sale or service of alcohol, and use industry requirements and professional standards to determine the volume for standard drinks or samples.

Will finishing the qualification change my pay?

It can. Under MA000009, MA000119 and MA000058, a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher that you use at work sets a minimum classification of Level 4. The fast food award has no equivalent provision. MA000009 and MA000119 require you to make use of the skills derived from those competencies; MA000058 adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise them. For the figure, use the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool with your award code.

Is there a mixologist qualification?

No. There is no mixologist unit or qualification on the national register, and no licence or protected title. The accredited outcomes are SITHFAB030, SITHFAB023 and a Certificate III carrying them. See how long it takes to become a certified mixologist ([/news/how-long-does-it-take-to-become-a-certified-mixologist/](#)).

Why does a bar unit cover gas safety?

Because beer and post-mix systems use inert gases with real asphyxiation risk, and SITHFAB023 names AS5034 and the specific dangers of those gases in its knowledge evidence. It is one of the clearest examples of the gap between learning to pour and being trained.

What comes after the Certificate III?

SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality for supervision — three of its nine core units are HR units — and SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management for venue management, whose core includes SITXGLC002 Identify and manage legal risks and comply with law. See why you should complete bartender education and training ([/news/why-you-should-complete-bartender-education-and-training/](#)).

What should I actually own before I start?

See the essential bartender's toolkit ([/news/essential-bartenders-toolkit/](#)). The short version is that the venue supplies the bar; you supply the things that make your own hands faster.