

imbibe

LIQUID CULTURE

*Balmy
& Bright*

ADD A TASTE OF THE
TROPICS TO YOUR
HOLIDAY COCKTAILS.



Plus:

TASTE TEST: PROSECCO | 'IMBIBE-APPROVED GIFTS
CHAMPAGNE COCKTAILS | WHERE TO DRINK IN VAIL
THE NEW AMERICAN TEAHOUSE | EARL GREY CAKE

The Best of the Great
KENTUCKY BOURBONS.

EXTRA AGED.
AWARD-WINNING.

New York
International
Spirits Competition

Double
Gold

2023

SF World
Spirits Competition

Double
Gold

2023

International
Spirits Competition

Gold

2023



HEAVEN HILL DISTILLERY

BOTTLED-IN-BOND

UNDER U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION

HEAVEN HILL

Family Owned Since 1935

100
PROOF



50%
ALC/VOL

**KENTUCKY STRAIGHT
BOURBON WHISKEY**

THIS BOURBON IS 7 YEARS OLD

DISTILLED BY
Heaven Hill Distillery
D.S.P.-KY-1 LOUISVILLE, KY



BOTTLED BY
Heaven Hill Distillery
D.S.P.-KY-31 BARBOSTOWN, KY

imbibe

NUMBER 106 - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023



Clockwise from center: John Valls, courtesy of SUNCLIFFE; Tim Robison; Jon Hwang; Maty Newton

features

- 42 Local Flavor** Craft gins get a boost from native juniper.
- 46 Balmy and Bright** Cocktails that bring a tropical touch to holiday celebrations.
- 54 Homeward Bound** After going big, many breweries are now returning to their roots.
- 62 Feast Mode** At the holiday table, wines from Georgia pair with pretty much everything.
- 68 Top Pots** North American teahouses usher in a new wave of tea culture.

Cover Photo: John Valls
On the Cover: Merry Spritzmas, page 51

Imbibe Magazine (ISSN 1557-7082) is published bi-monthly by Imbibe Media, Inc., 1001 SE Water Ave., Ste. 285, Portland, OR, 97214.

Imbibe is a registered trademark of Imbibe Media, Inc. Subscription price for U.S. residents is \$30 for one year (6 issues). Canadian subscriptions are \$40 for 6 issues and all other countries are \$50 for 6 issues. Call 503-595-0144 to order back issues for \$6 plus shipping in the U.S.; additional shipping costs apply for foreign orders. Copyright 2023. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from *Imbibe*. *Imbibe* is not responsible for the loss or damage of unsolicited materials. Proudly printed in the USA. Number 106, November/December 2023. *Imbibe* encourages the responsible enjoyment of alcohol.

AWARD-WINNING WHISKEY

FOR THOSE WHO BLAZE THEIR OWN TRACE



PERFECTLY UNTAMED

BUFFALO TRACE BOURBON PRODUCED AT BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY FRANKFORT, KY. 45% ABV. PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY



78



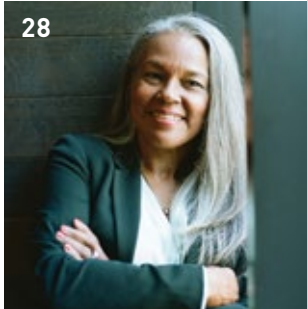
30



24



36



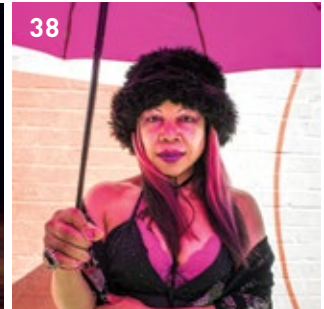
28



80



20



38

departments

8 Editor's Note

14 Uncorked A new yuzu curaao, turmeric cocktails, three twists on the traditional Champagne Cocktail, five African coffee origins explained by Q Grader Candice Madison, the anatomy of the Blue Blazer, a day with One Stripe Chai Co. founder Farah Jesani, a special gift guide edition of Favorite Things, and a Q&A with food journalist and author Toni Tipton-Martin about the history of Black mixology, what she discovered trying her hand behind the bar, and the equalizing power of food and drink.

30 Mixopedia The evolution of the holiday cocktail.

32 Taste Test Elegant and accessible, Prosecco is a stunner in its own right.

34 Gear Keep the party going with the best glasses for your bubbles.

36 Elements Sorel adds a new—and timeless—touch to cocktails.

38 Characters Bartender and educator ms. franky marshall takes center stage.

76 Drinks Atlas Basque Country, Spain.

78 Scene Scout Where to drink in Vail, Colorado.

80 Cravings A simple cake that bursts with the flavor of bergamot.

82 Quench Curing a bout of ennui by going back to basics.



48

recipe index

Drinks

- 14 Spicy Turmeric Gimlet
- 20 Blue Blazer
- 22 This is Not an Apple
- 22 Regina George
- 22 Champagne Cobbler
- 36 Troublemaker
- 36 Fantastic Voyage
- 36 Paradise Punch
- 47 Dead to Port
- 48 Winter Cup
- 49 Snowbird
- 50 You Don't Gnome Me
- 51 Merry Spritzmas
- 52 Royal Fizz
- 53 Tropical Lion's Tale

Food

- 80 Earl Grey Loaf Cake

**Isn't it time
you raised the bar?**

Shop today at collinsandcoupe.com
Curated bartending supplies for amateur and expert alike
Treat yourself to 15% off your order with code **IMBIBE15**

**LET US
BOTTLE
Spirits
FOR YOU**

Contract Bottling Services
WE CAN BOTTLE, LABEL & CASE PACK FOR YOU
Fully automated bottling lines for your spirits
Any quantity from 10 cases to 10,000 plus
50ml glass or PET to 1.75ml
All types of spirits

Quick Turnaround

OTHER SERVICES :
formula/labeling/permit applications
arrangement of shipping of bulk product
from ANYWHERE in the U.S.A. to our facility

We can also source bottles, caps, labels
and spirits for your brand
email for quote: office@sunliquor.com

Editor's Note

Surf, Sand, & Santa

Every December, I tell myself the same thing. “Nothing against this holiday season,” I’ll note, surveying the festive decorations in my home as I pull on my heavy coat and gloves before heading outside. “But next year, we’re doing this on a beach somewhere.”

I’m probably not going to make it to Mexico or Hawai’i for the holidays this year, either. But I’ll still be yearning to dig my feet into a warm stretch of sand rather than my winter boots, and longing for a gentle sear of sunshine in place of the December damp.

Chances are many of you are right there with me on this one. I’ve got good news, though: While I can’t promise that a surf-and-sun vacation is in your future, we can bring the taste of a tropical getaway to your holiday celebrations. Check out our annual holiday drinks recommendations (page 46) for recipes that spin great tropical cocktails in a seasonally appropriate direction.

Whether you’re hosting holiday gatherings this year or attending as a guest, you’re going to need to have plenty of wine on hand to accompany all the feasting. For this issue, Betsy Andrews finds the perfect wine pairing for every holiday occasion by looking to the nation of Georgia, where the ancient wine traditions are today turning out bottles ideal for the season (page 62).

Winter’s approach means many of us are spending more of our days indoors, often in the

company of a favorite beverage. Tea houses may still be relative rarities in coffee-fueled North America, but that’s changing, and Max Falkowitz brings us some of the best on page 68. And the beer world has seen its share of ebbs and flows in recent years; Josh Bernstein explores how many favorite breweries are now retrenching, and focusing their attention on communities close to home (page 54).

We’ve also got Yolanda Evans’ recommendations for mixing cocktails with Sorel liqueur (page 36), an introduction to the force of nature known as ms. franky marshall (page 38), Kate Bernot’s meditation on falling back in love with favorite drinks (page 82), and ideas on where to drink should a trip to Vail, Colorado, be in your future (page 78). And do we have holiday gift suggestions this year? Of course we do ... head to page 16 for a few choice selections, then click over to imbibemagazine.com to peruse our extended gift guide.

Happy holidays,



Paul Clarke
Editor in Chief



Connect With Us

Sign up for our free e-newsletter and get recipes, event announcements, and special giveaways delivered straight to your inbox: imbibemagazine.com

Subscribe to our podcast: imbibemagazine.com/podcast

Become an *Imbibe* fan on Facebook: facebook.com/imbibe

Follow our latest posts on Threads: threads.net/@imbibe

Check us out on Pinterest: pinterest.com/imbibe

Follow us on Instagram: instagram.com/imbibe

A NEW LUSTAU
VERMOUTH ARRIVES
TO STIR UP THE
WORLD OF CRAFT &
CLASSIC COCKTAILS.

BRINE
IT!



@vermutlustau
lustau.es

Enjoy Lustau responsibly. Lustau vermouths, 15% ABV. Imported by Europvin USA, Van Nuys, CA.

SHAKE UP
THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT.

Dorda Espresso Martini

1 ounce Chopin Rye Vodka
1 ounce Dorda Coffee Liqueur
1 ounce espresso
1/3 ounce simple syrup
Garnish: 3 coffee beans

Pour all ingredients into a shaker with ice. Shake well and pour into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with coffee beans.



Please Drink Responsibly. 25% Alc. by Vol., Product of Poland, Imported by Chopin Imports, Wilmington, DE

imbibe

NUMBER 106 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

Karen Foley

Founder/Publisher

Paul Clarke

Editor in Chief

Penelope Bass

Managing Editor

Katrina Yentch

Associate Editor

Caroline Pardilla

Digital Content Editor

Molly Henty

Art Director

Sarah Thornton

Production & Circulation Manager

Olga Semoukhina

Events & Partnerships Director

Cobble Hill Digital

Digital Marketing

Dawn Cresser

Newsstand Sales, Disticor

Michael Schuler

Proofreader

Contributing Editors

Joshua M. Bernstein, Wayne Curtis,
Robert Simonson, Amy Zavatto

Contributing Writers

Betsy Andrews, Susannah Skiver Barton, Kate Bernot, Joshua M. Bernstein,
Wayne Curtis, Yolanda Evans, Max Falkowitz, Robert Simonson

Contributing Artists

Cristi Brinkman, Abby Dykes, Max Falkowitz, Johnny Fogg, Matt Furman,
Evan Gilman, Tracy L. Hurst, Jon Hwang, Mackenzie Smith Kelley,
Jake Knapp, Eric Medsker, Cathy Miller, Johnny Miller, Ginger Moseley,
Joe Newton, Matty Newton, Bryan Redniss, Andrew Renfro, Tim Robison,
Matt Russell, Andy Sewell, John Valis, Clay Williams, Allie Yazel

Advertising Inquiries

advertising@imbibemagazine.com

Editorial and Media Inquiries

editorial@imbibemagazine.com

Retail Inquiries

info@imbibemagazine.com

Subscription Inquiries

For renewals, address changes, billing and account status,
visit imbibemagazine.com/cs, call 800-392-4100,
or email subscriptions@imbibemagazine.com.

Mailing Address

Imbibe Magazine
1001 SE Water Ave., Ste. 285
Portland, OR 97214

Social Media

facebook.com/imbibe
instagram.com/imbibe
pinterest.com/imbibe
threads.net/@imbibe

COCKTAIL KINGDOM

BROMLEY™ BARWARE

NEW BARSPOON AND COCKTAIL PICK DESIGNS

Heavyweight Art Deco
topper provides a
better balance

Smooth, tight coil
for improved comfort



VISIT OUR NYC SHOWROOM!

31 W. 8TH ST. FLOOR 2, NYC
OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY, 10AM-6PM

www.CocktailKingdom.com

imbibemagazine.com

@imbibe Still thirsty? Find us online for even more of the best of liquid culture.

GIFT GUIDE!

Visit imbibemagazine.com for our full holiday gift guide filled with *Imbibe*-approved ideas.



CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

Lean in to those festive, tropical vibes with even more holiday drink recipes, like the rum-forward Frostbite from Strong Water Anaheim.



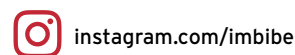
GIVE A GIFT THAT LASTS ALL YEAR!

Save extra during the holidays with this special offer: Give UNLIMITED 1-year subscriptions to *Imbibe* for only \$25 each. Head to imbibemagazine.com/holiday2023 to start gifting!



GET COOKING

Whip up a batch of this Faygo Orange Chicken from the new book *Kung Food* by Jon Kung.



Clockwise from top: @istockphoto.com/Vadym Petrochenko, John Valls, Johnny Miller, John Valls

Elijah Craig®

**FIRST TO CHAR.
FIRST IN CLASS.**

THAT'S THE *Greatness* WITHIN.®



uncorked

Compiled by Penelope Bass
and Katrina Yentch

What We're Drinking Now Ferrand Dry Curaçao Yuzu Late Harvest

When Maison Ferrand introduced their dry curaçao in 2012, their 19th-century approach to the liqueur made it a 21st-century staple. Today, Ferrand is taking a similar tack with yuzu for a new curaçao filled with the fruit's character. The liqueur is made using Mediterranean-grown yuzu that are left on the tree until late in the harvest season, which concentrates the aromas and flavors of the citrus. The harvested yuzu are steeped in grape spirits for a week and distilled, and this distillate is then mixed with touches of yuzu-infused grape spirit, bourbon vanilla, sugar, brandy, and Cognac. With a bright, floral aroma, the liqueur is rich and robust in the glass, its flavor full of candied citrus, tea, and nutmeg. Break it out at cocktail hour for a fresh spin on familiar Sidecars and Margaritas, or use it to add a vivacious character to a holiday punch. ferrandcognac.com, \$35.99



At the Market: Turmeric



A historic element in Eastern medicine and longtime culinary staple in South Asian and Middle Eastern cuisine, turmeric began to take on stateside trend status as it made appearances in beverages like warming (and photogenic) golden lattes. The herbaceous perennial, which is part of the ginger family and similarly harvested for its rhizomes, imparts an unmistakable flavor and vibrant color to cocktails, functioning particularly well in infusions. At Twin Spirits Distillery in Minneapolis, their Spicy Turmeric Gimlet takes on a warming, wintry vibe with earthy, peppery flavors from a turmeric-infused vodka kicked up a notch with ginger syrup and just a dash of cayenne.

SPICY TURMERIC GIMLET

2 oz. turmeric-infused vodka
¾ oz. ginger syrup
½ oz. fresh lemon juice
½ oz. fresh lime juice
Dash of cayenne pepper

Tools: shaker, strainer
Glass: coupe
Garnish: lime wheel

Shake all of the ingredients with ice, then strain into a coupe and garnish with a lime wheel.

Turmeric-Infused Vodka: Combine 50 grams of chopped, fresh turmeric with 375 ml vodka and infuse for 6 days. Strain and rebottle for use within 1 year.

Ginger Syrup: In a small saucepan, combine 8 grams of thinly sliced ginger with 1 cup of water and let sit until the water begins to look murky. Add 1 cup of sugar and bring mixture to just below a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Allow to cool, then strain and bottle for use within 2 weeks.

Jordan Peterson
Twin Spirits Distillery
Minneapolis

THIS SEASON, YOUR CONSUMERS CAN
**LET IT POUR LET IT POUR
LET IT POUR**
WITH THEIR FAVORITE HOLIDAY SPIRIT.



TITO'S **ESPRESSO** **MARTINI**

2 OZ TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA
1 OZ COFFEE LIQUEUR
1 OZ ESPRESSO
½ OZ SIMPLE SYRUP
½ OZ CREAMER, OPTIONAL
3 ESPRESSO BEANS, GARNISH

Add all ingredients to a shaker with ice.
Shake and strain into a martini glass.
Garnish with espresso beans.

A Few of Our Favorite Things: Gift Guide Edition

Signature Cocktails by Amanda Schuster

In her new book, *Signature Cocktails*, veteran drinks writer Amanda Schuster explores 200 iconic cocktails—complete with recipes and gorgeous photos—and what makes each of them a signature drink. For a sneak peek, check out our Anatomy of the Blue Blazer on page 20. [\\$39.95, indiebound.org](#)



Timemore Manual Coffee Grinder C3 Pro

Nix the noise and bulk of an electric coffee grinder for the smooth precision of a manual. With an aluminum alloy body, steel conical burrs, and a foldable handle, the Timemore grinder is a lightweight but durable option, perfect for taking on the go or using every day at home. [\\$105.99, us.timemore.com](#)



Mas Peyre 'Le Démon de Midi' Rancio Sec

The Bourrel family in Languedoc-Roussillon first started a solera system for their overripe, old-vine Macabeu grapes in 2005. This rancio sec ages six years on average in the oxidative environment, lending flavors of almond, honey, and leather, with a hint of salinity on the finish—perfect as an aperitif. [\\$18.95, uptownspirits.com](#)



Aurora Double-Walled Colored Glass Tumblers

Sip in style and keep beverages chilled longer in these double-walled glass tumblers from barware brand Viski. Perfect for cocktails, wine, or iced coffee, the tumblers come in midcentury-chic shades of green, amber, and smoke. [\\$27.99/set of 2, viski.com](#)

Dot & Army Classic Cocktail Napkins

Add a dash of charm to cocktail hour with these linen blend, hand embroidered napkins, made exclusively for *Imbibe* by Georgia maker Dot & Army. Each set includes four cocktail napkins that call out a classic drink. [\\$35, shop.imbibemagazine.com](#)



Heimat New York Barrel-Finished Bosc Pear Liqueur

Crafted in small batches with produce sourced from neighboring farms in upstate New York, Heimat's liqueurs encapsulate the flavors of the season. Made from ripe Bosc pears, the liqueur spends 12 months in spent whiskey barrels, adding notes of vanilla and spice. [\\$45, newyorkcraftspirits.com](#)



DRINK BETTER BOURBON.



UNCOMPROMISING QUALITY, ENDLESS PURSUIT OF PERFECTION.

At Garrison Brothers, we're not just making bourbon, we're meticulously crafting an experience. Our unwavering dedication means selecting the finest, gourmet-grade ingredients and honoring tried-and-true distilling traditions. Every day we strive to push the boundaries of what bourbon can be, crafting an experience that's truly distinctive.

Our award-winning bourbon is smooth and silky. Darker, richer, and fuller than any bourbon out there. It's heat-forged in the scorching Texas sun, extracting all the flavor and color possible from our new American white oak barrels. Here's to elevating standards and enjoying better bourbon.

Don't just take our word for it, try it for yourself. And if you happen to be near Hye, Texas, come pay us a visit.

Witness our process and sample our unmistakable, unapologetically good Garrison Brothers bourbon. Salud!

GARRISONBROS.COM



DRINK LIKE AN ADULT™

**GARRISON
BROTHERS**

Distillery



uncorked Favorite Things: Gift Guide Edition, continued

Futagami Brass Bottle Opener

When it comes to popping bottle caps, this artfully designed solid brass opener by historic Japanese brass casting company Futagami is the epitome of chic minimalism.

\$45, kirikomade.com



Garrison Brothers Single Barrel Bourbon

A pioneer in bourbon beyond Kentucky, Garrison Brothers has been making whiskey in the Texas Hill Country since 2006, and their single barrel expressions offer a delicious snapshot of what happens inside an American oak barrel in the searing Texas heat.

\$110, garrisonbros.com



Leopold Weighted Shaking Tins

For the burgeoning bartender or at-home pro, these weighted shaking tins from Cocktail Kingdom's Leopold line make shaking up your faves a breeze. The weighted base gives added stability, and the 18- and 28-ounce tins create a two-drink capacity.

\$51.98, cocktailkingdom.com



Jigsaw Puzzle and Rose Chai Bundle

Read our Day Trip article with One Stripe Chai founder Farah Jesani on page 26, then gift (or enjoy) their Rose Chai Blend, perfect for sipping while leisurely assembling this puzzle from Ordinary Habit featuring the artwork *Troublemakers* by Manuja Waldia. *\$45, onestripechai.com*

Hedonistas De La Fe Cuishe

Newly available outside of Mexico, the Hedonistas mezcal is produced in Matatlan, Oaxaca, by fourth-generation distiller Gerardo "Kaín" Santiago Hernandez using artisanal methods at his family's *palenque*. The Cuishe, made from 100 percent *karwinskii* agave, is a notable expression. The spirit's aromas of brown sugar are complemented by a roasted coffee-like smokiness and balanced by floral and fruity flavors. *\$134.99, hedonistasdelafe.com*



Moroccan Beldi Ceramic Cups

Made from the red clay soils in Morocco's Wadi Lan pottery center, these handmade cups are dipped in colorful glaze and come in 8- and 10-ounce sizes—perfect for everything from tea and coffee to wine and cocktails. *\$16-20 each, verveculture.com*



L'APERITIVO
ITALIANO REBORN



ITALICUS MARGARITA

1oz ITALICUS Rosolio di Bergamotto,
1oz Tequila Blanco, 0.5oz lime juice,
1 bar spoon agave syrup, 3 green olives

PLEASE ENJOY RESPONSIBLY



#ITALICUS #ARTOFITALICUS
ROSOLIOITALICUS.COM

ITALICUS® LIQUEUR. 20% ALC./VOL.
IMPORTED BY PERNOUD RICARD USA
NEW YORK, NY | ©2023

Anatomy of a Drink: Blue Blazer

Even if legendary 19th-century bartender Jerry Thomas wasn't the actual creator of the Blue Blazer cocktail—essentially a scotch hot toddy set aflame—at this point, the origin is irrelevant. Thomas will forever be associated with the drink thanks to the famous illustration depicting him, stern and mustachioed, pouring a waterfall of flames between two mugs. “He was known for these pyrotechnical theatrics,” says Amanda Schuster, drinks writer and author of the new book *Signature Cocktails*. “That’s kind of his signature—I mean, if you had a Jerry Thomas T-shirt, it would be that image.”

The Blue Blazer dates to the 1850s and later appeared in Thomas’ 1862 book *How To Mix Drinks*. But the cocktail’s initial popularity may have been short lived. Citing drinks historian David Wondrich, Schuster notes that flair bartending was already becoming passé by the 1880s, as were the inherently flammable high-proof whiskeys. But with the cocktail renaissance of the 21st century and its adoration for the antiquated (and the prevalence of barrel-strength spirits), flaming drinks are being reignited behind bars everywhere.

With a simple but showstopping build, the Blue Blazer is tailor-made for the holidays and companionable sipping on a cold winter night because, as Schuster notes, “When you make one, you have to make two.”

INGREDIENTS

4 oz. high-proof (50 percent ABV or higher) Scotch whisky
2 barspoons Demerara or raw sugar
3 oz. boiling water, plus extra to heat mugs

GLASS: heatproof mug

GARNISH: lemon twist

TO MAKE: Preheat two glass toddy mugs, or other nonceramic heatproof mugs, with boiling water, then discard before proceeding. Add the whisky, sugar, and 3 oz. boiling water to one of the mugs, then carefully light the liquid within. Pass the flaming liquid between the mugs at least four or five times. Divide the liquid evenly between the mugs and, if necessary, extinguish the liquid using the bottom of the opposite mug. Garnish each with a lemon twist.

NOTE

It is important to clear the prep area of anything flammable before proceeding, and, as an added precaution, have a damp towel and perhaps a fire extinguisher at hand. Use flameproof mugs with ample handles.

Recipe excerpted from Signature Cocktails © 2023 by Amanda Schuster. Photography © 2023 by Andy Sewell. Reproduced by permission of Phaidon. All rights reserved.



**LET'S CHANGE OUR FOOD
AND BEVERAGE SYSTEMS,
ONE SIP AT A TIME!**

**THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT DURING
NEGRONI WEEK 2023**

Over 12,000 bars, restaurants and retailers participated in Negroni Week 2023 from Sept. 18 - 24. These generous venues celebrated this iconic cocktail and supported Slow Food, which works around the globe to advance good, clean and fair food and beverage systems.

We've got big plans for supporting innovative, community-based Slow Food programs and Negroni Week Fund grantees in 2024, all thanks to you.





HISTORICALLY SMOOTH

A 14-YEAR-OLD RUM,
AGED IN AMERICAN OAK
WHISKEY BARRELS



drinkdumas.com

uncorked

Three Ways: Champagne Cocktail

As elegant as it is simple, the Champagne Cocktail is an opulent twist on the classic cocktail framework—spirit, sugar, bitters—that swaps the spirit for bubbles. “The first evolved Cocktail on record,” writes David Wondrich in *Imbibe!*, his seminal 2007 tome on drinks history. However, he adds, “The record is silent as to who came up with the idea of replacing the spirits in a Cocktail with Champagne, but whoever it was, he knew how to step high, wide, and handsome.” Just as endless experimentation with parameters has created the cocktail canon we know today, so, too, has the Champagne Cocktail taken many forms. Whether you’re toasting in celebration or simply feeling fancy, here are three versions that play with flavor and format.

This is Not an Apple. At Bar Marilou in New Orleans, this seasonal riff by head bartender Lindsey Hawes and former general manager Ryan Wilkins pays homage to surrealist painter René Magritte. And while it is not, in fact, an apple, the drink is dosed with its essence in the form of Calvados, complemented by the sweet, herbal notes of a chamomile-infused honey syrup. “The apple and honey are a classic pairing, and chamomile gives the drink a savory, lingering flavor,” says Hawes. To make the chamomile-infused honey syrup, mix 2 parts honey with 1 part brewed chamomile tea. To make the cocktail, add 1 oz. of Calvados, ½ oz. of chamomile honey syrup, and ½ oz. of fresh lemon juice to an ice-filled shaker and shake to chill. Strain into a Champagne flute and top with chilled brut Champagne. Garnish with a fresh green apple slice.

Regina George. Like the queen of *Mean Girls* herself, this Champagne Cocktail from Bowen House in Dallas is both pretty and unexpected. Created by bartender Pedro Tapia, the drink starts with a base of French aperitif Lillet, complemented by fresh grapefruit juice. Herbal liqueur adds complexity with notes of anise, while the bubbles lift and marry the flavors together. “Lillet Rosé isn’t something you usually see on cocktail menus, so I took it as a personal challenge to introduce people to its bright, floral profile,” says Tapia. “As soon as I saw that bright pink cocktail hit the glass, there was only one thing I could call it ... I’m a sucker for a good movie reference.” To mix the cocktail, add 1½ oz. of Lillet Rosé, ¾ oz. of fresh grapefruit juice, and ½ oz. of herbal liqueur (Bowen House uses Heirloom Genepey) to an ice-filled shaker and shake to chill. Strain into a large, chilled coupe and top with chilled brut Champagne or Prosecco. Garnish with a grapefruit twist.

Champagne Cobbler. At Goodnight Sonny in New York City, head bartender Tui Te Kaaho combines two classics with sparkling results. “The inspiration came from one of my favorite cocktails from Jerry Thomas, the Sherry Cobbler. However, I wanted to give it a little sass and make it a bit more bougie, ultimately bringing something light, crisp, citrusy, and refreshing to the table,” says Kaaho. “Let’s face it, Champagne makes everything better.” Kaaho combines the oil from two types of citrus with a splash of simple syrup and builds the drink like a cobbler, with Champagne stepping in for the sherry, and the bitters moving to the top. To make the drink, in a highball glass express the oils from 1 lemon twist and 1 orange twist, then drop the peels into the glass. Add ½ oz. of simple syrup and 5 oz. of chilled brut Champagne (Kaaho uses Perrier-Jouët), then top with pebble ice and swizzle gently. Dash the top with Peychaud’s bitters and garnish with a sprig of mint.

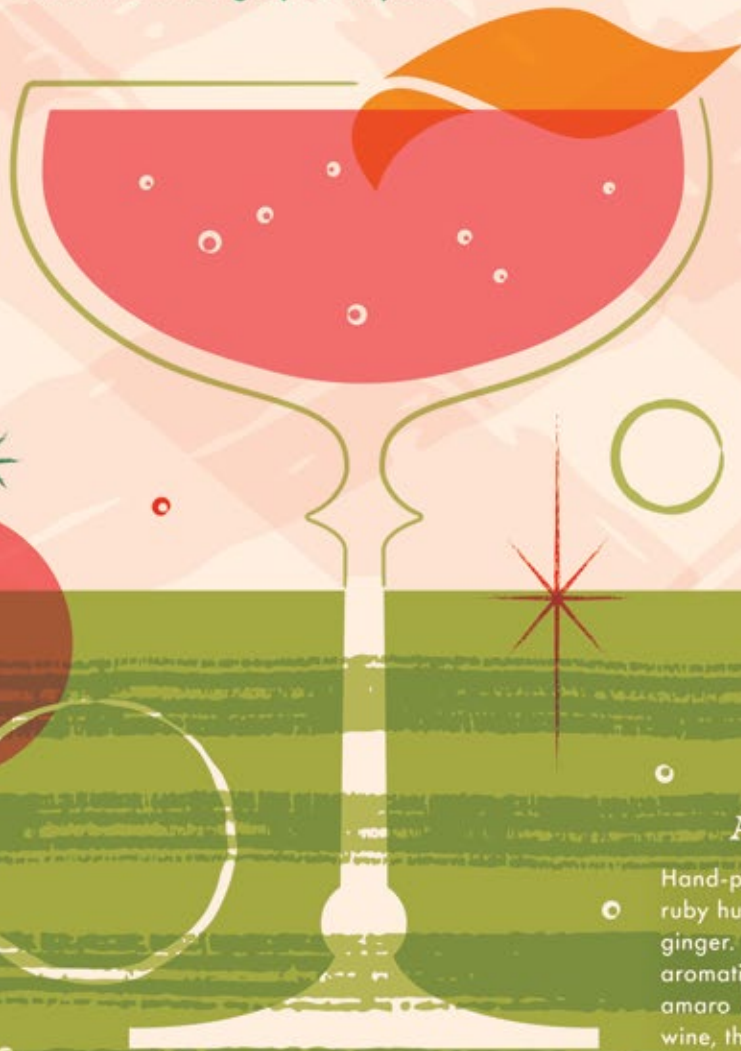


Merry Berries

Stir with ice:

0.5 oz Hayman's Sloe Gin
0.5 oz Pasubio Vino Amaro

Strain into a coupe or flute.
Fill with sparkling wine.
Garnish with a grapefruit peel.



A festive marriage of berries and bubbles.

Hand-picked Sloe berries from England give Hayman's Sloe Gin a rich ruby hue, with bittersweet berry flavors and hints of cinnamon, clove and ginger. Wild blueberries from Italy's Dolomite mountains mingle with aromatic mugo pine to create Pasubio Vino Amaro, a rich wine-based amaro that dates from the early 20th century. Together with sparkling wine, these "merry berries" compose an elegant, crowd-pleasing cocktail perfect for any holiday gathering. Cheers!

5 to Try: African Coffee

Coffee can be as terroir-driven as wine, with factors like elevation, climate, and soil pH heavily influencing the flavor profile of a cup. The equatorial belt runs through the birthplace of coffee, where the plants thrive in the higher altitudes and cooler temperatures of East African countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. “Coffees from East Africa are highly prized for a rainbow of diverse, surprising, and excellently curated and impeccably processed beans,” says Candice Madison, a Q Grader, coffee quality control expert, and founder of Kandake Boutique Coffees. “There are many different ways to talk about the origin of a particular coffee, other than country,” Madison notes. “You can find coffees identified by departments, regions, washing stations, and even local geography, such as mountains or lakes.” Here, Madison explores the profiles and distinguishable qualities of coffees from several African countries, and recommends roasters with notable examples.

1 Kenya

Madison praises Kenyan coffees for their consistency, as well as their deep and compelling attributes. “I love coffees from Kamwangi, in Kiambu County, and from areas such as Nyeri and Kirinyanga. They speak to my preferred profile of phosphoric acid brightness (think that ineffable bubbly brightness of sodas such as Coca-Cola).” Given the country’s long-standing history of coffee production, plenty of diversity has evolved within the region alone. However, coffees from Madison’s favored areas of Kenya typically exude deeper notes of dark purple berries like fresh currants, raisins, and blackberries, plus a brown sugar sweetness. *For availability, see cambercoffee.com*

2 Ethiopia

Africa’s first coffee plants were discovered in Ethiopia, which has since grown to become one of the most beloved coffee origins today for its recognizable floral traits. Not only does the famed Gesha coffee hail from this country; other regions like Yirgacheffe and Guji also punch above their weight for coffees with intoxicating aromas, silky-bodied brews, and clearly articulated flavors that Madison claims “any semiserious coffee lover has a yen for. Their flavors announce themselves from the first sniff of the aroma, and the notes lead all the way into the cup.” *For availability, see parlorcoffee.com*

3 Rwanda

A once lesser-known coffee origin, Rwanda has progressed significantly in its specialty-coffee production in recent years thanks to the industrialization of the region, as well as the work of the female coffee producers and co-ops there. “[It’s] prized by roasters and consumers alike for producing chuggable, delicious, and distinctly flavored coffees; [notes] from Rwanda



Evan Gilman Photography

include cherry, grape, lime, chocolate, mandarin, nectarine, and plum,” says Madison. “But this all depends on processing.” Wet-processed coffees are common in Rwanda, along with anaerobic fermentation—an emerging style that mimics the flavors of natural wine in coffee form. *For availability, see madcapcoffee.com*

4 Uganda

Historically, Uganda has opted for robusta in its coffee-growing practices. However, a recent foray into specialty arabica has resulted in favorable outcomes. Madison fondly recalls their first taste of coffee from the Sipi Falls region, where a mix of traditional and innovative processing techniques contributes to luscious brews with diverse characteristics. “Chocolate and toffee notes are met with a delightful florality, and are surprisingly complementary in washed-process offerings—think black cherry and mandarin confections. Naturally processed coffees are rich, unctuous, and full-bodied,” says Madison. “I remember one year I was able to roast flavors such as strawberry compote and balsamic reduction, softened by pastry crust. It was delicious!” *For availability, see huckleberryroasters.com*

5 Tanzania

“Lucky you if this is your first hello,” says Madison of Tanzanian coffee, the fourth-largest coffee producer in Africa. “Tanzania has a unique flavor profile—one I’d never encountered in a coffee from East Africa—and one I now thoroughly delight in.” Coffees grown in regions like Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru produce cups with notes of cedar, sage, blackcurrant, and chocolate with citrus. The coffees are complex yet rich and mellow, constantly surprising Madison with every roast. *For availability, see beannbean.com*

tickets *on sale* Oct. 19 chswf.com



WE ARE A COLLECTIVE

— OF ARTISTS, CULINARY VISIONARIES, ARTISANS, PURVEY-
ORS, DELIVERY DRIVERS, FARMERS, EVENTS STAFF, WINE PROS,
SANITATION ASSISTANTS, SECURITY GUARDS, SOMMELIERS, MIX-
OLOGISTS, WRITERS, MUSICIANS, BARTENDERS, BREWERS, PREP
CHEFS, SERVERS, RESTAURATEURS —

and Charlestonians.



Charleston Wine + Food
2024 *festival*



Day Trip: Farah Jesani One Stripe Chai Co.

Tech-consultant-turned-chai-purveyor Farah Jesani embarked on a research expedition to Portland, Oregon, in 2015, in pursuit of café ownership. But she realized that the chai she was brewing as a barista was unlike what she had growing up. “There’s so much intention behind [specialty coffee], but next to really good coffee in these shops, there was really subpar chai,” explains Jesani. “It was very apparent that a lot of the chai options out there weren’t using the right type of tea, or it was bland, or it was like a cup of sugar. It wasn’t true to the nature of chai.” Instead of opening a café, Jesani soft-launched One Stripe Chai Co., a café-centric chai brand, and went full time with One Stripe in 2018, eventually expanding into DIY tea blends. We follow along on a day of research and development for the brand’s new Chai Coffee, a tea-coffee blend inspired by the flavors of popular café order dirty chai. *As told to Katrina Yentch*

6:30 a.m. When my mornings typically start depends on when my daughter, Yara, wakes up. I’ll have breakfast with her, drop her off at school, then come back and make either a cup of coffee or a cup of chai. I love our rose chai blend Gulab City on most days because it’s so light, but I also love the really good, hearty, and bold Chai Me at Home with a little bit of sugar. And then if it’s coffee, I just do a classic French press.

8:30 a.m. I typically try to work a 15-minute walk in to get my day started. I’ve also started to take a very quick, five-minute cold shower to focus. Today, I’ll take some calls before I head over to the coffee-roasting facility of Yes Plz, who I’m collaborating with for the Chai Coffee blend.

10 a.m. The first thing we do is cup some coffees with the Yes Plz team to see what stands out. We’re thinking: Could this be used in a blend? Can this be accentuated by another coffee? I’m looking for something a little more nutty, anything that wouldn’t be so sharp and overpower the black tea in the chai. The final coffee we land on is a medium-roast blend—something that doesn’t overpower the chai, but also vice versa.

11 a.m. We sample a ton of coffee, get extremely caffeinated, and then work with a bunch of tea and spices that we’d want to use in the product. We focus on incorporating ginger, cardamom, and black pepper as a priority. Chai Coffee tastes like chai and coffee, but you don’t at any point feel like it’s one or the other. The layering of actual tea and spices is very complex and elevated. We’ve been calling it a dirty chai blend, but we try to shift, referring to it as a masala coffee blend, since we’re not trying to emulate the overly sweet dirty chais people are used to at cafés.

2 p.m. After a few hours at their warehouse, I come back home for lunch, which is usually a poké bowl from Sweetfin or something quick at home that’s fresh and healthy. Then I’ll typically have a call to check in with our operations manager in Portland to check on inventory and any updates, or my weekly PR call to brainstorm what we’re going to email our customers and what kind of content we’re going to do. An example of something we shared was an educational piece on South Asian Heritage Month. South Asia is more than just India and Pakistan—it includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka as well. We also highlighted four South Asian food and beverage businesses that we really love, like Paro and Peepal People.

4 p.m. We shoot a lot of photos for our social media nowadays at my house. Today I shot a lot of content of myself trying the blend sample we made earlier in a French press, so I could not only try it again, but also have some behind-the-scenes content for when we launch the product.

6 p.m. From now till 7:30, we’re focused on Yara. When she finally goes to sleep, I’ll usually try to answer more emails or finish up anything time sensitive. I’m not much of a night person, so I try to get as much done as I can during the work day. We’ll end the night with a little bit of TV sometimes, but mostly I’m just trying to get as much sleep as I can.

**BOLD AND COMPLEX.
LIKE THOSE WHO ENJOY IT.**



**JACK DANIEL'S
BONDED SERIES**

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

TENNESSEE WHISKEY, TENNESSEE RYE WHISKEY AND BLEND OF STRAIGHT WHISKEYS, 50% ALC. BY VOL. (100 PROOF), DISTILLED AND BOTTLED BY JACK DANIEL DISTILLERY, LYNCHBURG, TN. JACK DANIEL'S IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK. ©2023 JACK DANIEL'S. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



Exploring the intersections of food, history, and culture, Toni Tipton-Martin has spent years shining a light on the impact and legacy of Black people in American foodways. A longtime food and nutrition journalist, and the current editor in chief of *Cook's Country* magazine and its TV show, Tipton-Martin has earned heaps of accolades for her work, including three James Beard book awards, the Julia Child Foundation Award, the Trailblazer Award (and multiple others) from the International Association of Culinary Professionals, and two invites to the Obama White House for her family nutrition outreach work. Her newest book, *Juke Joints, Jazz Clubs & Juice* (Penguin Random House, November 2023) turns the spotlight on the history of Black mixology, including modern recipes inspired by two centuries of Black cookbooks. We sat down with Tipton-Martin to discuss the inspiration behind the book, what she learned trying her hand at mixology, and the equalizing power of food and drink. **By Penelope Bass**

Imbibe: What inspired you to take your research, historically exploring food, into the realm of drinks?

Toni Tipton-Martin: The plan has always been that this content would reveal itself through a series of single-subject books. The approach to start with *The Jemima Code* was to introduce the public to the idea that there was Black expertise. And then *Jubilee* followed by showing exactly what that means in terms of recipe development and our understanding of kitchen skill, not as some magical quotient but as something that was practiced with intentionality. So it only made sense then to go deeper into single subjects, and bar culture was a particularly unexplored area. But it's also an area that is getting more attention lately—all of these interesting mixology techniques, people doing a lot more exploring on their own, and social media creating outlets for people that didn't formerly have a place to be heard or seen has meant that there is a new interest.

You've been doing research into similar or parallel topics for decades; did you learn anything that surprised you when you began digging into beverages?

I learned so much. I invited Tiffanie Barriere [the Drinking Coach] to consult with me because at the beginning I was certain that I needed that tutelage

Clay Williams

Q&A with Toni Tipton-Martin

in terms of what it takes to be proficient in bar culture. But what I realized was there was a rich history within the African American cookbook canon to explore the topic and give voice to the past in a way that surprised me. We all knew about Tom Bullock, for example—he's the poster child for Black mixology. And thanks to so much of the recent exposure of the Black Mixologists Club in D.C., we are learning more of their names. But there were some hidden gems that really stuck out for me. And thanks to [journalist and *Imbibe* contributing editor] Robert Simonson, I learned about a book called *Julian's Recipes*, and that was the trigger moment for me. That book was published just two years after Bullock's book [in 1919].

How did you decide which recipes ultimately went into the book?

As a food editor, I'm familiar with the process that at America's Test Kitchen we called the "five recipes test." It involves the comparison of like recipes to determine what their similarities are in structure, so that you can arrive at a working recipe of your own. That's just standard recipe adaptation. I want to be talking about that more and more as people of color find new ways to express themselves and not feel confined to a particular canon like soul food or sweet, syrupy drinks. So we interpret the recipes of those around us. Let's say I'm in my community and I get my mom's recipe and my aunt's recipe and an uncle's recipe—I have all these people around me who are making this thing that they tweak, and from them I tweak it and make my own version. The problem becomes financial—when you start making money off my idea, then we have a financial problem. But as long as we are just sharing ideas, it's standard recipe development, so that's how I arrived at my ultimate working recipes. You can see that in the headnote—I'm intentional about sharing the sources as a way of giving credit where credit is due. I also love being able to tie in modern interpretations; I'm thinking about T-Pain's book in particular, or *Black Mixcellence*, which are the most recent books to address the topic full-on, to be exclusive cocktail books. It was interesting to me to realize that modern interpretations are rooted in a formula, and to be able to expose that people of color have been working with those formulas from the very beginning.

You also took it upon yourself to improve your own skills in modern mixology with the help of your son Brandon, who is a bartender, and Tiffanie Barriere. How did that process of getting hands-on impact your appreciation for the subject?

Hands-on was a really critical part of my education. I could have just read about these recipes and tried to interpret them based on an imagined palate. But you really have to get in there and try it and determine if a quarter ounce is to your liking or if a half ounce is better, for example. And that's what I like about the exchange between a bartender and their guest. The bartender will ask you things like, do you like a sweet drink or more dry? You have the ability to modify based on your taste, but you do need some basis of understanding from which to experiment. So having the

old master recipes, then having Tiffanie and Brandon as the modern interpreters, helped me develop my own palate. Once I started getting into it, I couldn't figure out what to order when I'd be out in restaurants and bars! I went through a phase in the beginning where I was just overwhelmed when I would look at bar menus—maybe because I just wanted to try them all. I was really grateful to have the cookbooks as the bumper guards for me because it allowed me to talk about the importance of a legacy, but not to at all pretend that I am the modern expert and have that level of creativity.

You bring the book chronologically up to today's modern bartenders like Shannon Mustipher; coming from your perspective as a researcher, what do you think is defining or exemplifying Black mixology today?

I think what is exemplifying Black mixology today is the same thing that is exemplifying modern culinary [culture]. People are now free, as the title *Jubilee* intended, to be as creative as they wish. There are no longer formal boundaries that say people have to operate within this one lane to be taken seriously, to be promoting of the culture. It's cultural because it's being created by cultural hands, with a cultural imagination and creativity. The most exciting thing to me now is to see where they are going to go. I've done my work—my work is to say that these people existed, we should honor them, and let's use their information as a structural basis. Now the next phase, to me, is exactly what has happened in food. We have all these chefs who are reaching back into their cultural heritage and pulling on the threads. And there is more conversation about how we pair wine and spirits with food as opposed to thinking somehow African American cooking isn't conducive to some of the same drink choices that have been true for other foods. Whatever your tastes are, people are now free to explore them.

What do you think we gain when we learn more about the history behind our food and drink?

As is true of all my work, we learn that we are more alike than we are different. And that there are barriers that have been erected socially to divide us. But food and drink and commensality and the truth of what took place can be great equalizers, if we are willing to embrace that truth and not take it personally. When you read through the intro and it talks about the misrepresentation of people enjoying themselves at a juke joint in terms of "wasting their money," we have to think about "wasting" as a value. Buying a fancy car is a waste of money. Or buying a designer purse is a waste of money. It all just depends on your perspective. And those descriptions were crafted for a reason, and that reason was disparagement. There were people of other communities having fun, and doing the jitterbug, and dancing and drinking too. All of my work is a race tolerance project, ultimately. I don't speak about that very often, but ultimately that is the intent behind what I do. It's certainly to liberate African Americans and to restore the work to its rightful owners who've been erased. But it's also a way for us to understand how stereotypes can be broken and the need to break them. ■

Yuletide Sippings

Sharkey's First Christmas, a new holiday drink, rolls out this month at the four dozen or so bars hosting Sippin' Santa, a seasonal bar pop-up created by Cocktail Kingdom. This drink is served in a custom mug featuring a shark that has clearly been overfed, and which has fearsome chompers and wears a Santa hat on its dorsal fin. The hat curls back to form a convenient handle. You know, standard holiday fare.

Christmas drinks have come and gone, but in the last decade they've entered a 3.0 phase—imbued with more creativity, more kitsch, a more impressive range of flavors. And holiday drinks have become a more immersive experience.

The very first holiday drinks were likely intertwined with drinks to mark the lengthening of days following the winter solstice. Eggnog evolved from posset, a monastic drink with origins in the 14th century, which morphed into a European Christmas favorite around the early 18th century. The use of fancy ingredients like eggs and cream for the holiday was said to open the doors to good fortune the following year.

When Europeans sailed west for America, they brought with them their holidays drinks and traditions; these thrived throughout the 19th century. In bars, wassail and hot whiskey punch cropped up around the “holiday trade,” as it was called in 1895 when *The New York Sun* reported on the scene. Amid “doors and windows of saloons ... draped with holly,” customers headed for the huge china punch bowl at the far end of the bar that, the reporter noted, “attracted convivial spirits as a beehive attracts flies.”

The same reporter followed with a lament: “through the falling off of foreign immigration,” the celebration of old traditions had begun to fade. “Nowadays holiday drinks are no longer very popular in New York,” he wrote. “The American partiality for straight whiskey withstands any ... allurements of holiday drinks.”

Two decades later came Prohibition. This did no favors for the holiday trade in drink. But with Repeal a dozen years later, America saw a refilling of the flowing bowl and a revived interest in Christmas spirits. Call this the 2.0 phase. Drinks of yore were celebrated and even fetishized.

Santa mugs modeled after the classic British Toby mugs proliferated, as did faux antique china punch bowls and sets of Tom & Jerry mugs. “What could be more appropriate as a decorative decor for Christmas glassware than the well-known Currier and Ives print of gaily costumed skaters?” asked a newspaper writer in 1950.

The predominant holiday drinks that went into the vessels were typically revivals, recalling olde-tyme holiday gatherings. “Nothing like egg nog to put any gathering in a holiday mood,”

read one California account in 1955. “The wassail bowl is a convivial contribution to the holiday season,” noted *The Baltimore Sun* in 1960. Liquor producers sought to capitalize on the renewed thirst for adult holiday fare; “only Myers's Rum can give that distinctive flavour to special holiday drinks,” insisted one ad.

These seasonal drinks held on in feral fashion in suburban houses and country clubs through the 1970s and '80s, but declined with the general demise of sophisticated cocktail culture. Then came the cocktail-friendly 2000s, and it wasn't long until holiday drinks were cranked up to “11.”

Miracle started in 2014, when Cocktail Kingdom founder and New York bar owner Greg Boehm opted to host a Christmas-themed pop-up in a partially renovated East Village cocktail lounge. New Yorkers swarmed in, and other bar owners inquired how they might replicate it. Miracle returned the following year, rolling out at four bars (it's now featured at more than 150 worldwide). Sippin' Santa—a tropical-themed Christmas pop-up—launched in 2015. In 2018 Boehm partnered with Jeff “Beachbum” Berry, the noted tiki archaeologist and proprietor of Latitude 29 in New Orleans, to craft a roster of holiday drinks each year.

“The whole idea is to come up with original drinks, using combinations of flavors that are new and interesting,” says

Berry. “Fortunately, half the work is already done because a lot of the flavors and aromas of the holidays are already ingredients in tiki drinks—like nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, and allspice.” Sharkey's Last Christmas is one of the new potions Berry and his team devised this year. It's made with vodka, aquavit, melon and walnut liqueurs, and lime and pineapple juices.

Other bars are also chasing after the Yuletide spirit. The Dead Rabbit in New York last year launched Jingle Jangle, “the first Irish Christmas bar pop-up.” Drinks include Reindeer Games, made with carrot, mascarpone, baking spices, egg white, lemon, and Keeper's Heart Irish/rye whiskey.

Future generations will certainly look back on this era as one of the golden ages of holidays drinks. A prediction: Sippin' Santa mugs will fetch a steep premium on the eBay of the future.

Enjoy it while you can this holiday season. It's the most wonderful time of the year. **By Wayne Curtis**



Matty Newton



TASTE THE FLAVOR OF THE SEASON

CRISP NIGHTS & OLE SMOKY. THE RECIPE FOR A PERFECT FALL.

SALTY CARAMEL APPLE MARTINI

2 oz. Ole Smoky® Salty Caramel Whiskey
2 oz. Ole Smoky® Apple Pie Moonshine
.5 oz. Lemon Juice
.5 oz. Lemon-Lime Soda




SCAN FOR



COCKTAIL RECIPES

Drink Responsibly

Ole Smoky Salty Caramel Whiskey, 30% Alc./Vol. © 2023 Ole Smoky Distillery, LLC, Gatlinburg, TN
All Rights Reserved. OLE SMOKY is registered trademark of Ole Smoky Distillery, LLC.

 @OLESMOKY

taste test Elegant and accessible, Prosecco is a stunner in its own right.

Prime Time

Prosecco suffers from a problem of perception. Up until 2009, the name could refer to either the grape or the wine, allowing producers outside of the wine's historic northern Italian home to use Prosecco grapes and bottle it as such. The grape was officially renamed Glera to help differentiate and protect the Prosecco DOC, which is further divided into smaller regions representing higher tiers of quality. Today, even top expressions can be found for around \$40, and many quality, historically minded producers offer their fruit-forward, food-friendly wines for \$20 or less. **By Penelope Bass**

Case Paolin Col Fondo

\$26.99, wine.com

The *col fondo* method sees secondary fermentation in the bottle without disgorging the lees, creating a slightly cloudy wine, often with slightly sour, earthier flavors. Case Paolin's organic Col Fondo is made in the Asolo Prosecco DOCG with Glera grapes from 30-year-old vines. The wine opens with pleasant aromas of hay and is very dry on the palate, carrying the tart bitterness of citrus rind with a clean and refreshing finish.



Miotto "Fedéra" Extra Dry

\$18.96, astorwines.com

Started as a small family farm in the '70s, Azienda Agricola Miotto has gradually expanded their hilly hectares within the Valdobbiadene DOCG. Miotto works mostly with older vines, and their most-prized grapes come from their two-hectare Fedéra vineyard. The Extra Dry is a gorgeous expression—redolent with aromas of orchard fruit and notes of creamy lemon curd, with a hint of truffle on the finish—and a true stunner for the price tag.



Cinzano Prosecco DOC

\$13.99, wine.com

Easy to find, easy to drink, and a steal for the price, the Prosecco from historic Italian winemakers

Cinzano (better known for their vermouths) is a textbook representation of the wine. Perfectly fizzy, fruit-forward with flavors of pear and green apple, and noticeably sweet but with a dry finish, the Prosecco is delightful sipped solo but would also make an ideal Mimosa.



Col Vetoraz Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze

\$41.96, astorwines.com

The Superiore di Cartizze DOCG is a small, sub-region of the Valdobbiadene and is commonly considered to produce the finest, and most highly valued, Prosecco. Col Vetoraz is situated at the highest point of the area, nearly 400 meters above sea level, where the vines have found supremely favorable conditions since being planted in the 1830s. With aromas of sweet orange and orchard fruit, the wine carries flavors of tart, crisp fruit on silky, pinpoint bubbles.



Bisoll "Jeio" Prosecco Superiore Brut

\$15.95, empirewine.com

Made from Glera grapes harvested from the steep slopes of Bisoll's 35 plots in the Valdobbiadene Superiore DOCG, the "Jeio" (Desiderio Bisoll's nickname bestowed by his wife) is brightly aromatic with stone fruit and green apple. The wine's superfine effervescence carries flavors reminiscent of sweet, lemon pastry and creamy vanilla, yet remains crisp and dry on the palate.



Bedin Asolo Prosecco Superiore Extra Dry

\$17.96, astorwines.com

The Bedin family planted their first vines in 1948 on the Colli Asolani hill chain in the Asolo Prosecco Superiore DOCG. Their easy-drinking Extra Dry expression has a round and creamy effervescence that carries a nice balance of tart and sweet flavors, like stewed pears with lemon peel, and a dry minerality on the finish.



shakerandspoon.com/imbibe
for **\$10 off the perfect gift**



gear Keep the party going with the best glasses for your bubbles.

Toastmasters

A Champagne flute's signature slim shape is more than just an aesthetic choice. A glass's style will highlight different characteristics in the wine—a tapered rim keeps more bubbles in the glass, a wider bowl emphasizes aromatics, and a pointed base creates an alluring stream of bubbles.

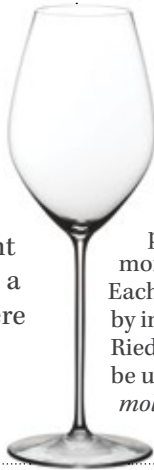
Whether it's for a casually festive function or an elegant affair, a Champagne glass is a signal of the celebratory. Here are six options to keep the bubbles on point.

By **Katrina Yentch**

Riedel Superleggero Champagne Wine Glass

\$139, riedel.com

Why we like it: Riedel steps outside the flute mold with this thoughtfully crafted egg-shaped glass from their Superleggero ("extra light") line. The wide-bodied diameter allows for more aeration of aromas, while the tapered sparkling point at the base releases more consistent bubbles. Each glass is mouth-blown by in-house artisans from Riedel's signature crystal to be ultrathin, lightweight, and *molto* chic.



Corkcicle Stemless Flute Set

\$44.95/set of 2, corkcicle.com

Why we like it: Corkcicle merges flair and function with this iridescent flute. A stemless base and lightweight, durable glass prioritize convenience, while a flat-sided design makes the glass comfortable to hold. The brand's signature double-walled insulation promotes a condensation-free drinking experience, and a glass of bubbly that keeps its cool.



FUUM Champagne Flute Set

\$73.99/set of 4, blomus.us

Why we like it: Crafted with lead-free Italian crystal, the one-piece construction of these flutes results in an impeccably smooth and seam-free—not to mention extra durable—glass. Designed by Copenhagen-based artist Theresa Rand, the glasses are tinted in Germany with stunning yet subtle smoky shades.



Faceted Crystal Stemless Flutes

\$32.99/set of 2, viski.com

Why we like it: Made with lead-free crystal, this stemless set from Seattle barware brand Viski starts with a star-shaped base for a unique twist on an otherwise classic flute. The trigonal sides

create sleek prismatic angles that allow light rays to cut through the wine for added dazzle.



Vintage Etched Toasting Flutes

\$19.95, williams-sonoma.com

Why we like it: Embrace the return of etched glassware with this vintage-inspired flute.

Made in Turkey, the glasses are patterned with a delicate floral motif, creating a classic look reminiscent of your grandmother's curio cabinet.

It's a style fitting for both formal occasions and a casual weekend brunch.



Tossware Champagne Set

\$25.99/set of 4, tossware.com

Why we like it: Toasting with a group? Tossware transforms plastic glasses into an aesthetically pleasing endeavor, producing reusable, dishwasher-safe glasses made with BPA-free shatterproof Tritan

plastic. Perfect for larger gatherings, the stemless, multicolor Champagne flutes each hold 9 ounces and add a splash of color to the midnight countdown.



IMMATURE AGENCY

WWW.ALTAMURADISTILLERIES.COM

LET'S ROAR



ALTAMURA
DISTILLERIES



Seeing Red

Sorel (hibiscus) has a cultural and celebratory significance among the African diaspora. The plant was used for medicinal purposes in West Africa since at least the 1600s, and was brought to the Caribbean by enslaved Africans during the transatlantic slave trade. Eventually, they turned hibiscus into a tasty beverage made with native spices like nutmeg, cinnamon, bay leaves, sugar, and other ingredients that were available on the island.

The original “red drink” continues to evolve and gain in popularity, thanks in part to Juneteenth celebrations rising from a regional festivity to become a federal holiday. Drawing from the history and flavors of the hibiscus drink, as well as his Caribbean roots, Brooklyn-based distiller Jackie Summers created Sorel, a shelf-stable liqueur that represents more than 500 years of joy and perseverance in a bottle. Since its relaunch in October 2021, with the support of spirits entrepreneur Fawn Weaver and the Uncle Nearest Venture, Sorel has earned top honors at major spirits awards. “As a modifier, Sorel is a cheat code,” Summers says, in that it has advanced capabilities as a cocktail ingredient. “It pushes flavor forward, and the taste—if not the effect—of alcohol back.”

Low in alcohol, at 15 percent, and with notes of clove, cinnamon, and ginger, Sorel is perfect for drinking all year long, alone or in a rising tide of cocktails. Due to its versatility, the liqueur is becoming increasingly popular with bartenders. At Nosh in Rochester, New York, bar manager Ben Converse loves how Sorel can stand on its own, but also act as a delicious modifier, as seen in his Troublemaker cocktail, which blends Scotch whisky with Jamaican rum and Sorel’s Caribbean character. “Sorel is probably one of the few spirits that I’ve come to love and rely on, as it’s perfect for all seasons, year-round.”

Atlanta-based drinks historian and bar educator Tiffanie Barriere likes Sorel because it brings color, flavor, and relatable comfort to cocktails such as her Fantastic Voyage, made with rum and lime’s juice and zest. Keyatta Mincey Parker, bartender and founder of Sips of Paradise in Atlanta, loves how Sorel sparks her creativity when she uses it in cocktails such as her Paradise Punch, mixed with an array of favorite fresh herbs. “I love Sorel,” Parker says. “It doesn’t taste the way you think it will. It’s so rich in layers of spice and flavor.” *By Yolanda Evans*

Troublemaker

1 oz. blended Scotch whisky
(Nosh uses Monkey Shoulder or Famous Grouse)
1 oz. Jamaican rum (Appleton Estate)
¾ oz. Sorel
¾ oz. fresh lime juice
½ oz. demerara syrup (1:1)

Tools: shaker, strainer, fine strainer
Glass: coupe
Garnish: nutmeg

Shake all of the ingredients with ice, then double strain into a chilled glass, and garnish with fresh-grated nutmeg.

Ben Converse
Nosh
Rochester, New York

Paradise Punch

2 oz. garden tisane
¾ oz. Sorel
½ oz. fresh lemon juice
¼ oz. simple syrup (1:1)

Tools: shaker, strainer
Glass: rocks
Garnish: edible flower or fresh herbs
(mint, lemon balm, lavender, or whatever type you prefer)

Shake all of the ingredients with ice, strain into a glass filled with fresh ice, then garnish.

Garden Tisane: Bring 2 cups of water to a boil, then remove from heat and add ¼ cup of fresh herbs (use any herb or combination you prefer—lemon balm, mint, shiso, lavender, basil, and lemongrass all work well). Cover the pot and let steep for 30 minutes, then strain and let cool. Keeps refrigerated for up to 1 week.

Keyatta Mincey Parker
Atlanta

Fantastic Voyage

1 oz. Sorel
¾ oz. white rum (Barriere uses Ten to One)
½ oz. fresh lime juice
½ oz. lime oleo-saccharum
½ oz. pure cane syrup
Chilled sparkling wine

Tools: shaker, strainer, fine strainer
Glass: Champagne flute or coupe
Garnish: dehydrated lime wheel (optional)

Add all of the ingredients except the sparkling wine to an ice-filled shaker and shake well to chill. Double strain into a chilled glass, top with sparkling wine, then garnish.

Lime Oleo-Saccharum: Wash 6 fresh limes and use a vegetable peeler or paring knife to remove the zest. Combine the zest with 1 cup of granulated sugar in a sturdy bowl or container, and mash with a muddler or wooden spoon. Cover the mixture and set aside for at least 5 hours (and up to 24), mashing occasionally with a muddler. Using a sieve, strain out the peels and press to extract as much of the oil as possible. Store the mix in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Tiffanie Barriere
Atlanta



SOREL

The Marvelous ms. marshall

Bartender and educator
ms. franky marshall
takes center stage.

On May 4, ms. franky marshall—and that is how you write her name (more on that later)—stepped onto the stage at Hacienda Los Picachos in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, to count down North America’s 50 Best Bars, an annual list of high-profile cocktail bars compiled by the 50 Best awards organization. She had on white pants and a knee-length white brocade jacket. Her long blonde hair matched, though it was not her own, but a wig. She found her broad white hat, topped with a gifted flower crown, at a Salvation Army the day before she boarded a plane to host the event. Pink—marshall’s signature color, along with purple, fuchsia, and various shades in that vicinity—was nowhere to be seen, until she undid the jacket.

“I came out with my jacket buttoned up and I kind of slowly unbuttoned it with a little chest thrust.” Beneath was a fluorescent pink bustier. The crowd whooped. She spoke a few words of greeting in Spanish. (She is proficient in that language, as well as French.) She then sang a bit, setting the name of the ceremony briefly to melody. (She has had vocal training.) She called everyone *dahlings*.

Story by ROBERT SIMONSON

Photo by ERIC MEDSKER

Styling, Hair, Makeup by ms. franky marshall



ms. franky marshall continued

marshall is a career bartender, familiar to anyone who patronized such notable New York cocktail bars as Clover Club, The Dead Rabbit, and Holiday Cocktail Lounge. She's also known within the industry as a spirits educator, particularly if you show even the slightest interest in Cognac or Pineau des Charentes. And if you happened to judge a cocktail competition in the early 2010s, chances are you met her; she has taken home multiple prizes.

But lately she's been occupying stages far larger than the ones found behind the stick. marshall's second year hosting North America's 50 Best Bars was 2023. Prior to that, in 2021, she hosted a virtual, Covid-era version of the Spirited Awards for the Tales of the Cocktail convention in New Orleans. On each occasion, she's displayed a preternatural talent for banter, quips, and general panache. "ms. franky's energy is infectious," says Mark Sansom, until recently the director of content for 50 Best. "You can't help but be enthralled by her in her day-to-day demeanor, but put her on stage and she takes it up through the gears."

It's been an unexpected new chapter in marshall's professional career. Those who knew of her various bar-world talents were surprised to find she had an additional skill up her sleeve. "People didn't realize I could do that," she says. "I think a lot of people were quite surprised."

Perhaps the first person to spot how marshall shined in front of a camera was filmmaker Doug Tirola, whose company, 4th Row Films, does regular film work for Tales. marshall had a cameo in *Hey Bartender!*, 4th Row's 2013 documentary about the cocktail revival. That turn made an impression on Tirola and, when the Spirited Awards needed someone to interview winners on the red carpet in 2018, he suggested marshall hold the mic.

"She is someone that you immediately realize is someone special," says Tirola. "She's great on film, she comes prepared, and she delivers. Working the red carpet at Tales as a host is dealing with people who are so serious, because they're so appreciative of the moment of winning. But there's this other element where it's like dealing with people in a locker room who have just won the Super Bowl. The energy can change at any moment. She can navigate that."

marshall accepted the gig, even though she knew that meant she had no chance of mounting the awards stage despite it being her second year in the top 10 nominees for American Bartender of the Year. "If you're emceeing, you're not winning," she says with a laugh. "And *dahling*, I'd rather be winning!"

By the time she had a meeting with Sansom at Grand Central Terminal, however, marshall had come to regard hosting as one of the arrows in her quiver. Sansom was there to see if she might be the right candidate for the North America's 50 Best Bars gig. But, before he could even make the offer, marshall volunteered. "We were having a little tea," says marshall. "I said, 'Who's hosting it?' He said, 'We don't know yet.' I literally went like this." marshall demonstrated slowing raising her hand, like a student in class who wants to be called on. "It was a forthright move and one that only made me admire her more," Sansom recalls.

marshall was born in New York and has spent most of her life there. Early aspirations included becoming a French teacher (she spent a year in France early on) or a singer. While pursuing those dreams, she supported herself waitressing. Eventually, she noticed the bartenders at the places she worked were having more fun and netting more money, so she pivoted. Over the years she worked in clubs, neighborhood bars, restaurant bars, and every sort of watering hole in between. She received her first big break in the craft cocktail world when Julie Reiner hired her

as a server on the opening team at Clover Club in 2008. While marshall didn't yet have the chops to go behind the bar, Reiner spotted a certain *joie de vivre* in her new hire.

"She was the server we received the most written comments for, on credit card slips," Reiner says. "She would take her tables on a journey, choosing their drinks for them, and making sure that they had an incredible experience. Her level of hospitality was something I haven't seen very often in my career."

After less than a year, marshall graduated to bartender. Around the same time, she applied for the CAP intern program, beginning a long and fruitful relationship with Tales of the Cocktail. She won a CAP Cognac cocktail competition in 2012, which led to a trip to Cognac and, eventually, her certification as an official Cognac Educator for the BNIC (the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac).

Whatever she has done, marshall has stood out because, well, she stands out. Award organizations don't have to worry that marshall won't arrive looking the part of an awards emcee. Even in an industry crowded with peacocks, her plumage is eye-catching. Her colors of choice are black, purple, and pink. The latter two shades often find their way into her hair and onto her eyelids. For the most recent Tales, she packed eight pairs of shoes in her 29-inch suitcase. She spoke at four different events and had a different outfit for each one. Even when at the airport or alone at home, she tries to cut a *bella figura*. "I like looking a certain way," she says. "I never wear just jeans and a T-shirt. If I did, they'd have to be a special kind of jeans, a special kind of T-shirt. The look has to be intentional, not just thrown together."

Michael Neff hired marshall at the Holiday Cocktail Lounge partly because of this abundance of personality. When he was approached by a friend who was looking for someone to create a cocktail program at his new Brooklyn bar, a romantic basement *boîte* called *Le Boudoir*, Neff instantly thought of marshall. "When he told me he was opening a bar themed on Marie Antoinette, I told him there was only one person who should lead it," Neff says. "Which was, of course, the only francophone cocktail aficionado who was known to cosplay as the doomed last queen of France."

The second thing one notices about marshall, after her look, is her unusually written name, with its e. e. cummings-like lack of capitalization and the adamant honorific "ms." Her favoring of lowercase is simply practical: She got tired of capitalizing her name in emails. "And then it became a thing," she says. She added the "ms." to her name after a job interview went south because the employer assumed the "franky" coming in was a man.

Despite her success in various corners of her profession, it's fair to say that marshall has never before enjoyed the level of visibility she does now. "She is somebody who lights up the room," says Tirola. "There are people who, when they enter a room, bring an energy to it. But sometimes that doesn't translate to film or being broadcast. She just translates."

marshall is happy about this new bullet point on her résumé, but doesn't want anyone to forget about the ones that led up to it. "If people meet me as that person, as this emcee, they don't realize that I'm all these other things," she says. "That I am a bartender, that I've created cocktails, that I've won competitions, that I'm an educator. People want to put you in a box and categorize you. They don't want to believe that you can be good at more than one thing."

"I call myself a modern bartender," she continues. "It's not to be pretentious. Bartenders these days, we're required to do so many different things—we wear so many different hats." *Dahling.* ■



CAMPARI®

Davide Campari
MILANO

GET READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS



#1 BEST SELLING LIQUEUR
#1 TOP TRENDING LIQUEUR

*Drinks International - 2023 Brands Report

Campari® Liqueur. 24% alc./vol. (48 Proof). 2023 Campari America, New York, NY. Please enjoy responsibly.



Local Flavor

Craft gins get a boost from native juniper.

Story by SUSANNAH SKIVER BARTON



Left: Jack Johnson (in hat) and Paul Vonk foraging for juniper in western North Carolina. This page: Fresh juniper berries destined for making gin.

This photo: Ginger Moseley; facing page: Andrew Renfro

Cold rain drips down my neck as I bend over an unremarkable brownish shrub, my eyes scanning its needles for a flash of blue-black. It's early March in far western North Carolina, and I've hiked to a protected bald with retired botanist and emeritus executive director Gary Wein from the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and Debbie Word of Chemist Spirits to search for native *Juniperus communis*. Word plans to use the berries in a new gin, made in collaboration with local hospitality mainstay Old Edwards Inn, that supports the Trust's conservation efforts.

There aren't many berries to be found; Wein explains that this area, the southernmost part of the United States where this juniper grows, is a harsh environment with shallow, nutrient-poor soils, cold temperatures, and high annual rainfall. But the plant is hardy, and it has adaptations that help it survive: In years with plenty of nourishment, juniper expresses as female, and fruits. But when conditions are tough, it can change its sex and give off pollen instead. "[These plants are] not very productive, but they're going to be around for 100 years," Wein says.

Juniperus communis is the same species as the juniper grown in Europe, used for hundreds of years to make gin there and in most of the world. But in the Appalachian Mountains, the plant is a different variety, one that evolved over a period of 200 million years, after Pangaea broke up into what is now Africa, Europe, and North America. And it's only one of several types of juniper that American distillers are incorporating into a new class of gins that place terroir front and center.

For Word, who co-founded Chemist with her daughter, Danielle Donaldson, in 2018, this gin—which includes other foraged and farmed native botanicals—has been years in the making, part of a driving passion for the area's natural resources. "Those mountains are full of amazing plants that just blend in and people don't know are there," she says. "What we're doing is harvesting these things and taking their flavor profiles and turning this into a very localized expression of the area."

Pursuit of native flavors also drove the creation of Four Corners Gin, a collaboration between the team who founded Glendalough Distillery and House Spirits co-founder and distiller Christian Krogstad—though in this case, the area covered includes all corners of the country. Four Corners uses solely American botanicals, including *Juniperus occidentalis* sourced from the northwest, and whose growing area stretches from Washington state and Idaho down to Nevada and California.

"There hasn't been a lot of gin made from American juniper, because it can be challenging," Krogstad says. "The reputation it had was that it was really difficult to work with; it could be harsh, astringent, and so forth." But he discovered that the key to working with Western juniper is using the entire plant, both berries and needles. "The berries themselves have that characteristic juniper flavor, but they also have a real Sauvignon Blanc [aspect]—a little bit of grapefruit," he explains, noting that the needles add a floral element.

The deserts of the American Southwest are a rich source of native juniper for brands like Sigil, made at Santa Fe's As Above So Below Distillery (formerly Altar Spirits) with local *Juniperus communis*, and Arizona-based Suncliff. At Suncliff, co-founders Thomas Giddings and Ryan Lawrence stumbled into the local botanical focus by happenstance, as they hiked near Sedona and wondered whether the juniper bushes that surrounded them were any good for making gin. They were a couple of experimental batches in when they realized

that it wasn't just one juniper species they were using but three: alligator (*Juniperus deppeana*), shaggy bark (*Juniperus osteosperma*), and single-seed (*Juniperus monosperma*).

"Single-seed and shaggy bark—the berries themselves are almost impossible to tell apart on their own," says Lawrence, noting that single-seed is a bit of a misnomer, as the plant can sometimes have two seeds. "The flavor is a lot more earthy, and kind of breadly and sweet. It's less floral, less spiky [than common juniper]; it feels more Arizona. It has a warm depth to it." The alligator juniper, Giddings adds, is "a little meatier."

Giddings and Lawrence got a permit from the USDA Forest Service to forage the necessary juniper for Suncliff from Coconino National Forest, while Four Corners engages a professional wildcrafter to supply its needs. David Matthews, master distiller at Colorado's Woody Creek, forages local Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) himself each fall for the distillery's gin. "Copious amounts of juniper trees grow wild in the mountains surrounding Woody Creek Distillers," he says. Compared to *Juniperus communis*, "the local juniper has a slightly milder, less piney aroma with more fruit and citrus."

The necessity of foraging raises the question of sustainability. Luckily for most of these distillers, the juniper they're using grows in abundance, so they don't have to worry about plundering a scarce resource. Krogstad even notes that after decades of fire suppression in Oregon, which once kept the Western juniper population in check, the plant now is crowding out its peers. The exception is in North Carolina, where Word is supplementing her locally sourced common juniper with additional berries from Europe. "We don't want to overharvest," she says.

These American distillers aren't alone in pursuing novel juniper in their gins. International brands, like Kenya's Procera and India's Hapusā, are doing the same thing, broadening the range of flavor profiles in an already-diverse category. Behind the bar, these gins are getting play in traditional Martinis and G&Ts, as well as in cocktails designed to show off their unique attributes. Maxwell Berlin, mixologist at the Cave at Quartz in Phoenix, showcases Suncliff in the Dreamtime, which also includes Bosscal Conejo pechuga mezcal, Varnelli dell'Erborista amaro, sour lemon-myrtle tea, tamarillo-blood orange syrup, manuka honey, and eucalyptus honeycomb, sprinkled with a house-made herbal "dream dust."

As gin makers and drinkers have known for years, the spirit has a vast canvas to express itself. Up to now, most of that expression has come about by incorporating non-juniper botanicals—an important and fruitful trend in recent years, as local-flavored gins have proliferated. But nearly all have relied on European-sourced common juniper for the key botanical. Yet with more than 60 juniper species scattered around the world, and just a handful currently in use, there's plenty of opportunity for creators to push the boundaries even further—even if it means staying close to home. ■



Clockwise from this photo: Debbie Word foraging for juniper in North Carolina to make Chemist Gin; Suncitfe Gin co-founder Ryan Lawrence picking juniper in Sedona, Arizona; a Gin & Tonic at Old Edwards Inn in Highland, North Carolina; David Matthews, master distiller at Woody Creek in Colorado, with Rocky Mountain juniper for the distillery's gin; juniper in North Carolina.





Balmy & Bright

COCKTAILS THAT BRING A TROPICAL TOUCH TO HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS.

The holidays have their familiar beverage tropes: eggnog, hot toddies, drams of whisky sipped fireside. These are all delightful, to be sure, but no one wants to open the same pair of wool socks year after year. Whether you're longing for warmer locales this year or just looking to shake things up, the bright, playful flavors of tropical cocktails can offer an antidote to the winter doldrums. So break out the candles, the tinsel, *and* the paper umbrellas, and mix up a liquid tropical escape.

Photos by JOHN VALLS



Dead to Port

Aiming to craft an unexpected holiday cocktail for Strong Water Anaheim's annual Hula Days, co-owner and beverage director Ying Chang started with a base of bourbon and overproof Jamaican rum. "The seamless fusion of Smith & Cross' captivating funk with bourbon introduces a lively tropical essence that forms a splendid cornerstone for this cocktail," says Chang. A richly spiced cranberry syrup lends a wintry vibe.

1 oz. bourbon
1 oz. overproof Jamaican rum
(Strong Water uses Smith & Cross)
¾ oz. spiced cranberry syrup
½ oz. demerara syrup (2:1)
½ oz. fresh lime juice

Tools: shaker, strainer
Glass: rocks
Garnish: marigold

Shake all of the ingredients with ice, then strain into a rocks glass filled with a single large ice cube. Garnish with a marigold.

Spiced Cranberry Syrup: Blend 7 oz. (about half a can) of jellied cranberry sauce (not whole berry) with 16 oz. of unsweetened 100 percent cranberry juice until smooth. In a skillet, dry toast 5 grams of ground cinnamon, 2½ grams of ground allspice, 1½ grams of ground nutmeg, and 1 gram of ground cloves just until aromatic. Add the spices and blended sauce to a saucepan with 10 oz. of water, 300 grams of light brown sugar, 150 grams of granulated sugar, 2½ grams of kosher salt, 2 oz. of orange juice, and the peel of half an orange. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Remove from heat and cool, then strain through a fine strainer and bottle for use. Keeps refrigerated for up to 1 month.

Ying Chang
Strong Water
Anaheim, California

Winter Cup

Traditionally associated with tennis and other warm-weather activities, the Pimm's Cup gets a wintry makeover at San Francisco's Pacific Cocktail Haven. "By incorporating apple, baking spices, and warming flavors, we make the Pimm's Cup perfect for fall and winter," says owner Kevin Diedrich.

2 oz. Pimm's No. 1
1 oz. apple juice
¾ oz. Don's Mix (2:1 grapefruit juice and cinnamon syrup)
½ oz. fresh lemon juice
½ oz. ginger syrup
1 dash Angostura bitters
Chilled soda water

Tools: shaker, strainer, fine strainer
Glass: snifter
Garnish: apple slices, cucumber ribbon, pomegranate seeds, fresh mint

Add all ingredients except soda to an ice-filled shaker and shake to chill. Double strain into a glass filled with fresh ice, and top with chilled soda. Garnish festively with apple slices, pomegranate seeds, fresh mint, and a cucumber ribbon.

Kevin Diedrich
Pacific Cocktail Haven
San Francisco



The image features two glasses of a frothy, light-colored cocktail, identified as 'Snowbird'. The glasses are stemmed pilsner glasses, filled with a thick, creamy foam topped with a dusting of brown powder, likely grated nutmeg. Each glass has a gold and white striped paper straw. The glasses are set on a vibrant blue tablecloth with a repeating pattern of stylized, dark brown leaves. In the background, there are festive holiday decorations, including a gold bell ornament and a red Christmas ball. The lighting is soft and focused on the drinks, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

Snowbird

Danielle Crouch and Allan Katz, proprietors at music-centric Jammyland in Las Vegas, reimagine a classic Painkiller by way of Mexico, swapping in mezcal for the rum to add an earthy complexity to the drink's sweet, fruity profile. "The nutmeg, richness of coconut cream, and vegetal punch of mezcal will always conjure the holidays to me," says Katz. "The Snowbird is kinda like a love child that Coquito sired in a tiki bar during winter break."

1½ oz. mezcal
1½ oz. fresh pineapple juice
1 oz. coconut cream
½ oz. fresh orange juice
1 barspoon Cointreau

Tools: blender
Glass: stemmed pilsner glass
Garnish: grated nutmeg

Add all ingredients to a blender with 2 cups of crushed ice (or use a stick blender) and blend until smooth. Pour into the glass and top with freshly grated nutmeg.

Danielle Crouch and Allan Katz
Jammyland, Las Vegas

You Don't Gnome Me

The holiday season is made for sharing, and this large-format drink will keep a handful of friends in good spirits. The gnome mug pictured here is a repurposed cookie jar; other (nonbearded) containers will work just as well.

6 oz. blanco tequila
4 oz. apple brandy (such as Laird's bonded)
4 oz. fresh lime juice
4 oz. fresh pineapple juice
4 oz. guava purée
4 oz. orgeat
1 oz. cinnamon syrup (1:1)

Tools: shaker

Glass: gnome mug or similar
large vessel

Garnish: pineapple crescent,
3 pineapple fronds, 3 lime wheels,
3 starfruit slices, orchids

Combine all of the ingredients and briefly shake with crushed ice. (You may need to do this in several batches, depending on the size of your shaker.) Pour unstrained into an oversize mug, and garnish.

Three Dots & a Dash, Chicago



Merry Spritzmas

As a longtime cocktail historian, writer, and now owner of Beachbum Berry's Latitude 29 in New Orleans, Jeff "Beachbum" Berry knows his way around tropical drinks, but creating a wintry spritz with island vibes for the annual Sippin' Santa's Surf Shack pop-up was a different challenge altogether. "How do you do a mashup of Christmas vacation and a tropical island vacation by using flavors that remind people of each but still harmonize in a glass?" says Berry. "In this case, fig jam and port wine fill the winter holiday bill, with falernum and cardamom lending a tropical touch. The Christmas-y flavors and the tropical spices complement one another surprisingly well, especially with the festive spritz of sparkling wine to tie it all together."

¾ oz. Aperol
¾ oz. fresh lemon juice
½ oz. tawny port
½ oz. Cognac (Berry uses Ansac VS)
½ oz. falernum
2 rounded barspoons of fig preserves
1 dash cardamom bitters
2½ oz. chilled Prosecco

Tools: shaker, strainer, fine strainer, barspoon
Glass: Pearl Diver (from viski.com)
Garnish: lemon wedge, paper parasol

Add the fig preserves and lemon juice to a shaker and stir until the preserves are at least partially dissolved. Add the Aperol, port, Cognac, falernum, and bitters, and shake with ice. Double strain into the glass, then gently stir in the Prosecco and add fresh ice cubes to fill. Garnish with a lemon wedge on the rim stuck with a cocktail parasol.

Jeff "Beachbum" Berry
Created for Sippin' Santa's Surf Shack
(see sippinsantapopup.com for locations)



Royal Fizz

Reminiscent of the sweet, spiced flavors of eggnog but minus the dairy, the Royal Fizz at Palomar in Portland, Oregon, incorporates the juicy tang of pineapple and lightens the whole drink by preparing it as a fizz. “Technically a Royal Fizz is any drink with a whole egg and soda water,” says Palomar owner Ricky Gomez. “The idea behind this drink was to create a tropical twist on a hand shaken eggnog.”

1½ oz. bourbon
¾ oz. fresh lemon juice
½ oz. amontillado sherry
½ oz. pineapple liqueur
(Palomar uses Giffard)
½ oz. demerara syrup (2:1)
2 dashes of Tiki Bitters
(or sub ½ tsp. allspice liqueur)
1 whole egg, pasteurized if
you prefer
2 oz. chilled soda water, to top

Tools: shaker, strainer,
fine strainer
Glass: Collins

Add all ingredients except soda to an ice-filled shaker and shake vigorously, then double-strain into a Collins glass filled with a single long ice column. Slowly top with chilled soda water to create a foamy, lifted head.

Ricky Gomez
Palomar
Portland, Oregon





Tropical Lion's Tail

"Allspice tastes like the holiday season," says Brandon Ristaino, co-founder and beverage director at Good Lion Hospitality. "We wanted to emphasize that flavor in what we hoped would be a rad, wintertime tropical sour." Test Pilot riffs on a classic Lion's Tail and ups the tropical vibes with pineapple syrup and two Jamaican rums. "The result is a dry, balanced, and comforting fruit-forward winter sipper."

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. bourbon
 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. fresh lime juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Jamaican rum (Test Pilot uses Appleton Estate Reserve)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. pineapple syrup
 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. overproof Jamaican rum (Test Pilot uses Smith & Cross)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. allspice liqueur
1 dash Angostura bitters

Tools: shaker, strainer
Glass: double Old Fashioned
Garnish: lime wheel

Shake all of the ingredients with ice, then strain into a glass filled with a single large ice cube, and garnish.

Brandon Ristaino
Test Pilot
Santa Barbara, California

Chris Zieber (left) and Nathan Keliscek, owners of Appalachian Mountain Brewery in Boone, North Carolina.



HOMeward BOUND

After going big, many breweries are now returning to their roots.

Story by JOSHUA M. BERNSTEIN





Over the last decade, Nathan Kelischek has ridden the dizzying roller coaster that is modern American craft brewing. In 2013, Kelischek and cousin Chris Zieber opened Appalachian Mountain in Boone, North Carolina. The college town's first brewery became a regional dynamo selling Long Leaf IPA and Boone Creek Blonde across the Carolinas. Maybe with a larger company's sales, production, and distribution support, Appalachian Mountain could reach new heights?

Craft Brew Alliance, which also owned Widmer Brothers and Kona, bought Appalachian Mountain in 2018 for around \$8 million. Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB Inbev) then acquired Craft Brew Alliance in 2020. Within seven years, the scrappy start-up became a cog in a global conglomerate driven by a fundamental directive: growth. By then, though, craft brewing had become highly localized. Crowded shelves and tap lines left little room for interlopers' IPAs. "We could read the tea leaves," Kelischek says. "The expectations of what we were expected to grow into didn't really align with our intentions."

Last December, Appalachian Mountain approached AB Inbev about buying itself back, finalizing the purchase in May. Appalachian Mountain assumed ownership of its brand, the Boone facility, and an under-construction taproom in Mills River, North Carolina, which it finished in June. The twisting trip led Appalachian Mountain back to its starting line, greeted by cheers. "We didn't expect the overwhelming positive response that we've had from our local community," says Kelischek, the brewery's president.

Craft breweries of the mid-2010s existed in an exuberant era where the potential for double-digit growth seemed infinite. Brewing conglomerates regarded craft breweries like winning lottery tickets, no price too high. AB Inbev started the buying spree, in 2011, by purchasing Goose Island for around \$39 million. This pivotal purchase splintered the storyline that little breweries were battling multinational behemoths with bitter IPAs. AB Inbev later bought Elysian, 10 Barrel, and Blue Point, among other breweries, while Constellation Brands—known for importing the Mexican lagers Modelo and Corona—snapped up Dallas-based Four Corners and Florida's Funky Buddha, plus Ballast Point in San Diego for an astronomical \$1 billion. That 2015 purchase proved to be the high-dollar mark; by 2019, underperforming sales led Constellation to offload Ballast Point. Corporate capital wasn't a cheat code for moving mountains of craft beer nationwide.

Once-sold breweries are now reversing course and repurchasing autonomy, returning to their hometown roots. In 2021, Three Weavers of Inglewood, California, pulled out of the CANarchy Craft Brewing Collective, now owned by Monster Energy. This past May, Constellation sold Four Corners and Funky Buddha back to their founders. Independent breweries are

also reining in distribution, focusing on selling beer in fewer states, and reviving bygone beers that resonate with local communities. In Washington, D.C., that means toasting with Right Proper Brewing's Senate Beer, a historic corn lager first created in the 1890s. "We want to be a brand for the people who call the District of Columbia their home," says co-founder Thor Cheston.



Brewing colossi like AB Inbev, Constellation, and Molson Coors Beverage Company saturate America with scores of beverages, the same lagers sold cold from coast to coast. The independent-brewery spike of the 2010s, both in sales and brewery count, led to some fanciful C-suite thinking: Somewhere out there, a rising-star brewery could conceivably sell its IPAs and other fantastical ferments in 50 states.

The idea "was that there still could be another Dogfish Head or Sam Adams—someone that could be national," says Ryan Sentz, a co-founder of Funky Buddha in Oakland Park, Florida, just north of Fort Lauderdale. The brewery opened in 2013, and Sentz's prolific stream of culinary beers like Maple Bacon Coffee Porter earned the brewery a buzz that echoed far beyond its strip mall home. Constellation bought Funky Buddha in 2017 and soon prioritized a handful of brands like the Floridian hefeweizen. Constellation also moved at a more deliberate pace, hamstringing Funky Buddha's breakneck pace of beverage innovation. "Sometimes that's a good thing," Sentz says. But with craft breweries debuting new beers daily, "you have to be faster."

Constellation's attention on its craft division wavered as Modelo grew into a juggernaut, supplanting Bud Light as America's best-selling beer earlier this year. In late May, Constellation announced a "strategic decision to bring our dedicated craft and specialty efforts to a close." Funky Buddha repurchased its independence and purchased a distillery, a canning line, and is on the hunt for a pizza oven for its taproom, where guests can order a Coconut Cream Pie IPA and watermelon cocktail made with feta-washed gin. "We're trying to do all the things that have been cooking in our brain for six years," Sentz says.

Four Corners is rekindling its founding objective. The brewery opened in 2012 with a goal of "building a craft beer culture that didn't exist in north Texas," says co-founder George Esquivel. The brewery hosted events like TacoCon (Cerveza), a nighttime taco-truck festival, and created colorful, *lotería*-inspired branding for beers like El Chingón IPA that tied into Esquivel's Mexican American heritage. "Connectivity was really at the center," he says. The brewery grew quickly, leading to Constellation's acquisition in 2018 and a short-lived Southern California expansion ... right before the 2020 Covid crisis. "It was game off," Esquivel

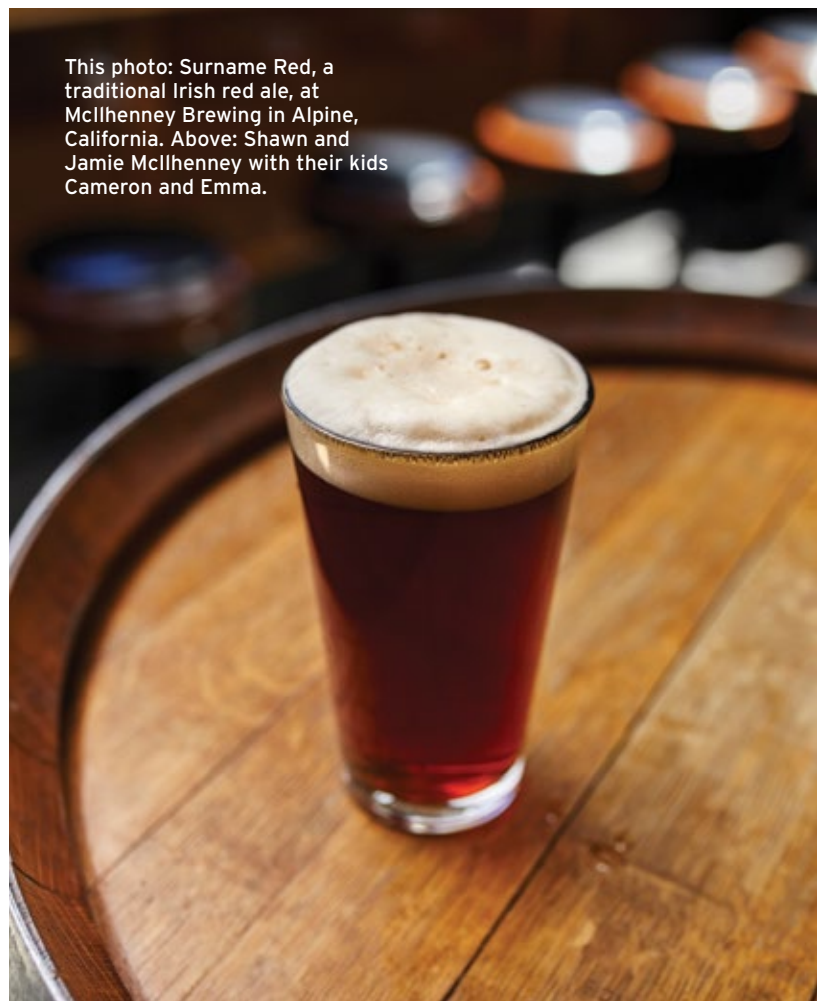


Appalachian Mountain Brewery.





This photo: Surname Red, a traditional Irish red ale, at Milhenney Brewing in Alpine, California. Above: Shawn and Jamie McIlhenney with their kids Cameron and Emma.



says. The brewery retrenched in Texas, a massive market home to more than 30 million people. Now-independent Four Corners is revamping its lineup and reconnecting with local drinkers, using lessons learned over the last half decade. “We’ve been to beer business school,” Esquivel says.

Brewing’s business side can be cold and clinical. In 1999, the McIlhenney family founded Alpine Beer in Alpine, California, about 30 miles northeast of San Diego. The family-run brewery produced popular IPAs like Nelson, made with Nelson Sauvin hops. To meet demand, Green Flash began contract-producing Alpine beers in 2013 before purchasing Alpine in 2014. The sale polarized fans, but Alpine wanted to ensure employee health benefits and retirement plans. “We felt like we couldn’t accomplish that if we remained independent,” says Shawn McIlhenney, then the head brewer.

The partnership never found its footing, and an investment group bought Green Flash and Alpine in 2018. Two years later, the Covid crisis caused widespread layoffs at Alpine, and Shawn lost his job. He didn’t flounder. “It became crystal clear what we needed to do when the landlord told us that the space”—Alpine’s original home—“would be available,” McIlhenney says.

The family reacquired its first home, bought back its brewing equipment at auction, and opened McIlhenney Brewing in 2021. “We welcomed people back with open arms, and they’ve done the same,” says McIlhenney, once more head brewer and co-founder. (His wife, Jamie, is general manager.) He’s brewing helles lagers, well-hopped IPAs, and whatever strikes his fancy. “It’s good to be back on the brew deck making beer and not having anybody to answer to,” he says. The brewery mostly sells its beer in its family-focused taproom, a locals-first approach that feels more sustainable. “I’m not going to force anything on the kids”—they have two young children—“but growing up in and around the brewery and tasting room will hopefully spark an interest and we can continue this family tradition,” he says.



Staying local can give a brewery staying power, a conclusion that Dan Carey came to more than two decades ago. Carey and his wife, Deb, founded New Glarus Brewing in Wisconsin in 1993, and sent Spotted Cow to states like New York, Oregon, and Illinois. “We were following the model for craft beer at that time, but it soon dawned on Deb that it was a mistake,” Carey says.

As demand for New Glarus beer in Wisconsin increased, so did the effort and time required to sell beer elsewhere. New Glarus left Illinois in 2003, and “all hell broke loose,” Carey says. Chicago wholesalers “called up Deb, yelled at her, and said, ‘If you leave now,

you’re never going to sell beer in this city again,’” he recalls. So be it. Since then, New Glarus has only sold in Wisconsin, a staple at supper clubs, dive bars, grocery stores, and anywhere that beer might be bought in the Badger State. “Beer becomes part of the fabric of an area,” Carey says.

Building a beloved local brand takes years, if not decades. For breweries, resurrecting historic beers can rekindle a regional affinity. Conrad Seipp was one of Chicago’s biggest 19th-century beer barons. The German immigrant’s lager brewery survived the Great Chicago Fire and thrived, producing more than 250,000 barrels of beer at the height of its production, before closing in 1933. Several years ago, Seipp’s great-great-great-granddaughter Laurin Mack began researching her family’s heritage. How did history taste?

Mack, who works in healthcare education, collaborated with Chicago lager specialist Metropolitan to brew the beer to restart Conrad Seipp Brewing. Beer historian Liz Garibay helped the group mine archival records to create Seipp’s Extra Pale, a pre-Prohibition pilsner released in 2020. “Seipp is about connecting with the past while enjoying the present,” Mack says. She spends about six months researching each old-new Seipp beer, now including a hefeweizen and a bock from Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair. The blend of Chicago history, quality, and provenance has led to placements at high-end restaurants and time-seasoned neighborhood taverns like the Chipp Inn that probably poured Seipp’s original lagers. “It’s a logical connection and means a lot to me,” Mack says.

A historic beer can help a brewery chart a new future. Several years ago, the Heurich House Museum in Washington, D.C., approached Right Proper about making Senate Beer, a lager produced by the capital’s Chr. Heurich Brewing until the mid-1950s. “Our brewery was set up to produce pale ale,” Cheston says of his flagship beer, Raised By Wolves. “We couldn’t risk introducing that beer and being successful. We wouldn’t be able to keep up with demand.”

Right Proper agreed to produce a single batch, the kegs earmarked for Nationals Park, home to the Washington Nationals baseball team. That was spring 2020, another Covid-scuttled plan. The brewery instead canned 400 cases of Senate to sell online. The lot lasted less than a week, leading to a lasting change. Right Proper signed a 10-year licensing deal with the museum to produce Senate and overhauled its production facility, adding fermentation tanks to produce lager. Senate is now Right Proper’s number two brand, and the brewery has since tightened its distribution around the capital. “It’s a mile deep, rather than countryside and an inch deep,” Cheston says.

On the grounds of Carillon Historical Park, a 65-acre open-air museum in Dayton, Ohio, Carillon Brewing is rooted not just in place but time. America’s only production brewery inside a museum re-creates Dayton circa 1850, including historical recipes

produced with low-tech, high-labor methods. Visit the spacious, brick-walled taproom during a brew day, and you'll find brewers dressed in mid-19th-century garb, chopping local ash wood, tending a fire, boiling water, and brewing cream ale, porter, squash beer, spruce ale, and other old-timey ales that are fermented in barrels.

"These misconceptions that historic beer had to be sour and gross and super-high alcohol aren't true," says former head brewer Dan Lauro, a professional trained historian. Each batch of beer, which takes around seven to eight hours to produce, yields just 45 gallons of finished beer. The historical ales are so limited that they're primarily sold in the taproom, where the ambiance is another ingredient. "The environment dictates the way you view and enjoy your beer," Lauro says. "You can smell the fire, see us splitting wood and the sweat on our brow."



The idea of sweat equity is appealing in the abstract. Work hard for a brewery, and you too can earn a percentage of the company. Several breweries do offer employee stock ownership plans, including Oregon's Deschutes and Colorado's Odell. But most employees are unvested. When a brewery closes down or brewers move on, they might only keep recipes for future success.

Folksbier Brauerei in Brooklyn shuttered in fall 2021, and brewer Joey Pepper-Mellusi retained his developing recipes for his helles lager, IPAs, and Glow Up line of fruited Berliner weisses. "That was my baby as a homebrew recipe," he says of Glow Up. Pepper-Mellusi considered taking over Folksbier or finding another brewing location, but raising requisite funds meant relinquishing too much equity, a nonstarter. Instead he partnered with Twelve Percent Beer Project, a brewery incubator and distributor in North Haven, Connecticut, and spent a year working with a graphic designer on developing labels and a brand identity. This spring, he debuted his Schenker Beer line that references a family name, the lagers and fruited sour ales building on a proven track record. "I want everything to be a hit," he says.

During the (sales) chart-topping era in the 2010s, craft breweries believed that homegrown smashes could potentially go viral elsewhere. Breweries expanded distribution into new states, sometimes crisscrossing the country. In 2017, 21st Amendment Brewery in San Leandro, California—known for its Hell or High Watermelon wheat beer and Brew Free! Or Die IPAs—partnered with lager-focused Brooklyn Brewery and saison specialist Funkwerks of Fort Collins, Colorado, to

create a national sales platform. The impetus was to be "stronger together," says 21st Amendment co-founder Nico Freccia, the COO.

New York state was one of 21st Amendment's biggest markets outside California, and Brooklyn Brewery wanted to enter the West Coast. The breweries would also share brewing services on their respective coasts. The reality is that it became "much harder to sell beer farther away from home," Freccia says. By 2020, the platform's fissures were fractured by the pandemic; the breweries dissolved their alliance later that year. "A partnership that made sense as early as five years ago doesn't make any sense anymore."

Josh Landan remains a believer in a combined sales platform, though one with a tighter regional focus. Landan is the founder of Saint Archer Brewing, which he sold in 2015, and Wings & Arrow, which makes beyond-beer beverages including Mucho Aloha Hard Lemonade and Villager Spirits canned cocktails. This spring, Wings & Arrow united with Ninkasi Brewing of Eugene, Oregon, to create Great Frontier Holdings. Ninkasi serves as Great Frontier's central brewery, and the brands are chiefly sold on the West Coast and in the southwest. "It doesn't make sense for me to send product that we're making in Oregon to Florida," says Landan, the CEO.

Craft beer is no longer the cool new kid on the block. The maturing industry experienced zero growth last year, according to the Brewers Association trade group, and conglomerates are continuing to cut their craft losses. In August, Canadian cannabis company Tilray purchased eight beer and beverage brands from AB Inbev, including Blue Point, Widmer Brothers, and Breckenridge for a combined \$85 million, a fraction of their original cost. "There's a massive difference between managing massive brands versus building smaller ones," says Esquivel of Four Corners.

Decoupling from rigid corporate ownership gives breweries hands-on control, exciting and nerve-jangling in equal measure. "I'm the one that's accountable," McIlhenney says. "If anything goes wrong, it's not hard to trace back to where the problem started." Appalachian Mountain must leave the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, brewery making its beer by the year's end. That's not enough time to build a production facility, so the brewery partnered with Green Man Brewing in Asheville, North Carolina, to contract-brew its packaged beer.

"We're definitely not out of the woods," Kelischek says. Nonetheless, he's confident about the brewery's sovereign advance, building a sturdy North Carolina base camp for Appalachian Mountain. "We're getting back to the nuts and bolts of what breweries represent, and that means speaking to their local community," he says. ■



Clockwise from this photo: Kentucky Common, a historical beer, at Carillon Brewing Company in Dayton, Ohio; Carillon Brewing; Colton Gaby, Carillon's head brewer; Laurin Mack at Conrad Seipp Brewing in Chicago; an El Chingón IPA at Four Corners Brewing in Dallas; Four Corners' *loteria*-inspired branding.





FEAST MODE

At the holiday table,
wines from Georgia pair with
pretty much everything.

Story by BETSY ANDREWS
Illustrations by MATTY NEWTON





An anyone who's visited the country of Georgia and attended the traditional dinner, called a *supra*, understands that no one eats like Georgians do. "Lots of food, people, sharing, merriment, toasts—that's the classic Georgian table. They feast," says Christy Canterbury, the U.S. ambassador for Wines of Georgia. "Every time you sit down, it's like the holidays."

Fueling it all is Georgian wine, poured liberally at each poetic cheers. Good thing the wines go so well with hearty foods. With their appetite for celebrating and their oenological tradition, Georgians have much to teach Americans about holiday pairings. Given 150 producers export more than 1 million annual bottles to the United States nowadays—at retail prices often under \$30—there's never been a better time to learn those lessons. That's why knowledgeable pros suggest that, this season, you do something unique, and uniquely fitting, and pour from the world's most ancient wine region.

"Georgia has an amazing range of wines for American holidays," says Lasha Tsatava, consulting wine director of New York's Chama Mama restaurants. "It's a perfect opportunity to bring these two cultures together."



Located on the Black Sea's eastern shore, Georgia boasts a winemaking tradition dating to 6000 BCE. It's the planet's oldest producer, and one of the most prolific. In an area smaller than Maine, there are more than 500 indigenous grape varieties and over 100,000 family wineries, nearly 2,400 of which can produce commercially.

Since before written history, Georgians have made wines in giant, egg-shaped terra-cotta vessels called *qvevri*, which are buried in the ground to maintain a constant temperature. Especially in Kakheti—the mountainous, eastern region responsible for 95 percent of Georgia's output—producers ferment grapes on their skins in *qvevri* for months, yielding tannic, textured wines layered with rich flavors and, in white varieties, tinted amber from polyphenols. "You could be talking about anything from bruised quince and pear, candied and blood orange—they have an oxidative quality but also great depth," explains Christopher Struck, beverage director at Manhattan's *ilili* restaurant and the trade ambassador for Wines of Georgia.

Though Americans have come to equate Georgian wine with *qvevri*, "there's something for everyone: tank-fermented whites, barrel-fermented whites, stainless steel-into-French oak reds—things that the typical American palate is more accustomed to," says Canterbury. Ten growing regions divided into 29 protected designations of origin (PDOs) encompass the diversity. In subtropical western Georgia, for instance, even *qvevri* styles are lighter and brighter.

We knew little of these wines until recently. During 70 years of occupation, the Soviets forsook Georgian biodiversity and tradition for a handful of industrially produced varietals. Russia remained the biggest buyer until 2006, when the Putin regime, responding to Georgia's increasing political estrangement, accused producers there of falsifying labels and banned its wines. During the seven-year embargo, Georgians looked for other markets, improving quality to garner European and American customers. American-artist-turned-Georgian-winemaker John Wurdeman organized stateside events to introduce the organic *qvevri* wines that his Pheasant's Tears label, among

others, specialized in, and Georgia garnered a following among natural wine aficionados.

Back then, wines were rustic. Since that time, "Georgian wines have improved drastically," says Pavel Sirotin, owner of the Bay Area Georgian restaurant *Bevri*. "The flavors and smells have become more prominent and complex, and the wines have become more elegant." Georgians are revitalizing indigenous grapes while experimenting with modern technologies like underground glycol jackets for colder fermentation.

"We have this massive opening of possibilities," says Canterbury. Producers tend to be small with limited production, so "you might need to look around for the wines," she notes. "But then it's all the better to have them for the holidays, because they're special."



None are better suited to Thanksgiving than amber wines. "That holiday without amber is incomplete for me," says Tsatava. He prefers robust ones from Kakheti, where wines sit on skins for four to six months. "Roasted turkey, gravy, and potatoes is a hearty meal with many flavors. A full-bodied amber with tannins and dried fruit character enhances those flavors."

"Unlike crisp whites or plummy reds, amber goes with everything. It's lighter on fruit than red wine, but it has the tannins and structure to hold up to holiday meats," says Jonathan Nelms, co-owner with his wife, Laura, of the Washington, D.C., Georgian restaurant *Supra*. Made in Kakheti from Georgia's most widely planted grape, *Orgo* *Rkatsiteli* offers dried apricot, almond, and honey notes. "If you want to show people what Georgians drink the most, this is an excellent example."

With his own bird this year, though, Nelms plans to pour a rose-colored mutation called *Vardisperi Rkatsiteli*, which yields a more grapefruity amber wine. "I do my turkey with apricot preserves under the skin, so it will be fantastic," he says. Pheasant's Tears' version arrives in October, just in time for the holiday.

For another take on *Rkatsiteli*, *Napheri*—from the central Georgian region of *Kartli*, where producer *Levan Kbitlsetsklashvili* is reviving the *qvevri* tradition in his native village—is "clean and precise," and also "relatively expressive," says Canterbury, with potpourri notes that boost the aromatics in Thanksgiving's herb-enriched dishes. "Rkatsiteli blends can be fun, too," she notes. *Casreli Erekle's* Wine combines *Rkatsiteli* with *Kisi*, *Khikvi*, and *Mtsvane* for a Riesling-like wine with "awesome concentration" that meets the meal's richness yet cleanses the palate. While the *Kisi* lends acidity, *Mtsvane* brings body. "With the texture of the stuffing, the creaminess of mashed potatoes, and the sweetness of casseroles made with cheese, cream, or mushroom soup, a glycerol, rounded wine is helpful," she adds. *Ethno Wines' Rkatsiteli-Mtsvane-Kakhuri* blend has a nutty, baked apple flavor and firm tannins. Its *Mtsvane* weight makes it drinkable throughout the meal.

Tsatava's amber pick is from *Uzanishvili Mukuzani Cellar*, where 11th-generation winemaker *Vazha Uzanishvili* produces a figgy, cinnamon-edged *Mtsvane* that also pairs with Christmas fare. Just treat the wines correctly, he cautions. "I drink amber at room temperature. In the restaurant, we recommend it lightly chilled, from 50 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit. If it warms up during the meal, you can observe its evolution."

In fact, Georgians are fastidious about serving temperatures, often noting them in Celsius on labels, at degrees similar to Tsatava's suggestion. Why not drink ambers colder, like other wines from white grapes? "Pulled straight from the fridge, the tannins hurt," says Canterbury. Decanting ambers for a couple of hours opens them up, and displayed on the table, their hue adds panache.



For hors d'oeuvres, western Georgia offers light, bright bottles. Some are even from qvevri. Made with biodynamically farmed grapes, the qvevri Mtsvane that Andrias Gvino makes is floral with underripe mango notes. "I could think of a million salads to pair with it," Struck says.

On its own in qvevri, Kisi can yield a clean aperitif wine that matches fresher cheeses like a chèvre. Schuchmann Vinoterra Kisi, Struck's favorite, has a green apple snap and long-lasting structure. Western Georgian producers tank-ferment various white grapes, too. Teliani Valley Tsolikouri exhibits floral and petrol aromas, lemon-lime acidity, and lusciousness akin to a Mosel Riesling.

Holidays also call for bubbles. For *pétillant naturel*, bottled during primary fermentation, "Georgia is the Wild West right now," says Tsatava. "There is range and energy around the style." Canterbury declares bright, pretty Mtsvane Estate Pèt-Nat "great to start and finish Thanksgiving, and for turkey sandwiches the next day." With its herbal, pear, and white flower notes, Gotsa Pèt-Nat Chinuri, from the high-acid Chinuri grape, is Struck's choice for a "transition from standing and noshing to sitting down to starters." For a unique version of *méthode champenoise*, Sirotin suggests Orgo Sparkling Wine, fermented sans skins in qvevri and then in bottle.

To prime the palate for the meal, Canterbury also pours Bibineishvili Chkhaveri Rosé. Produced in Adjara on the Black Sea coast, it has the "massive acidity and dried herbal notes" that mimic a mouthwatering vermouth.

Then there are Georgia's red wines. "We know what good Cabs and Merlots cost if they're from France or California. I like spice, and Syrah is being more widely embraced," says Struck. "But I think that someone looking to move onto their next big red should look at Saperavi." Georgia's second-most-planted variety is medium-bodied but delivers big on fruit, acid, tannins, and spice. Struck is a fan of Château Mukhrani, located in a Loire-style château built by Ivane Mukhranbatoni, a 19th-century general, who brought French winemaking techniques to Kartli. Entrepreneurs revived the defunct estate, recruiting winemaker Patrick Honnef from Bordeaux.

"I knew nothing about Georgian wine," says Honnef. "When I first tasted a qvevri wine, I thought, 'What is this?' It took me three years to find the qvevri style that I wanted to create." Ripe but not jammy, his savory Saperavi sees time in French oak, giving it aromas and structure familiar to Cab drinkers. It's ideal for Christmas' or Hannukah's roast or braised beef or lamb.

"You get cracked black pepper, forest floor, potting soil, and yummy funkiness with Saperavi in qvevri, and the tannins can do away with some of the fattiness of the meat," explains Canterbury. Additional time in barrel brings elegance. Aged one year in oak, Marani Reserve Saperavi, from Kakheti's large Telavi Wine Cellar, has "rounder, sophisticated tannins" and enough acidity to balance its prune notes. Oak-aged eight months, Silk Road SapeRavi Reserve offers humidior spice and the dark cherry and espresso flavors to carry the meal through to a chocolate dessert.

For unoaked qvevri Saperavis, Artevani's version is "intense and thick, which works with lamb in particular," says Sirotin. Nelms likes Tchotiashvili Saperavi Reserve, whose five-year rest in terracotta help the tannins settle, while the wine stays weighty with dark chocolate and tobacco notes. Whether it's oaked or not, you should decant Saperavi for an hour or two to soften its tannins, then pour it at cellar temperature.



Not all the reds are as ponderous as Saperavi. Winemakers in the Caucasus Mountains in the western region of Racha grow the fruit-forward Aleksandrouli variety, producing wines using tanks and barrels, which Georgians call the "classic" method. With its ripe, red fruit, "it's like a village-level Grenache," says Tsatava. "Braised brisket's softness and flavors enhance the wine's red-berry character, and the wine will harmonize with the meal."

"If I had only one bottle to open, it would be something made from Aleksandrouli. Soft tannins, beautiful aromatics, and brightness make it a people pleaser," Canterbury enthuses. But she's more apt to serve Naberauli Aleksandrouli and others with a glazed Christmas ham or at Thanksgiving, where it meshes with fruity sides like yams and cranberry sauce. Bimbili Aleksandrouli is so juicy and refreshing, it's terrific the following day with the holiday leftovers.

Nelms serves other light, red varieties. Baia's Wines 'Gvantsa's Aladasturi'—from sisters Baia and Gvantsa Abuladze, young winemaking stars in sub-tropical Imereti—offers smoky notes atop stewed strawberries. Macerated on the skins, pips, and stems for three and a half months, then finished in neutral oak, Tchotiashvili Tavkeri SB, from Kartli, has the tartness and baking spice notes to pair with ham.

For sweeter palates, Georgians have long made wines containing 35 or 40 grams of sugar per liter. Vinified in stainless steel, chilled to stop fermentation, and sterile-filtered for stability, their semisweet whites are fresh, balanced, and "good for in-your-face Thanksgiving flavors," says Canterbury. Marani Tvishi, made from Tsolikouri grapes in the central-western region of Lechkhumi, is "a tropical, aromatic treat, especially if you're putting marshmallows on your sweet potatoes."

Semisweet reds, says Tsatava, are interesting with Christmas goose. Kindzmarauli, a semisweet expression of Saperavi, shows cooked plum and raspberry flavors. Nelms likes Artevani's organic version for its complexity. Canterbury suggests Silk Road Wines' AlaZani, named for Kakheti's river. Gently priced, with cherry, blueberry, and brown spice notes, it complements ham, pumpkin pie, and the Roquefort on an after-dinner cheese tray. For richer desserts, try Khvanchkara. Nikita Khrushchev's favorite sip during the Soviet era, it is made from a blend of Aleksandrouli and Mujuretuli grapes. Telavi Wine Cellar imports one full of blackberry and blossom notes.

To mark the celebration's finale, it's not wine you want; it's *chacha*. "Georgia's answer to grappa," as Nelms describes it, this grape-based brandy is typically unaged, though some producers barrel-rest it for a rye-like profile. Telavi Wine Cellar imports several of its single-varietal Marani chachas.

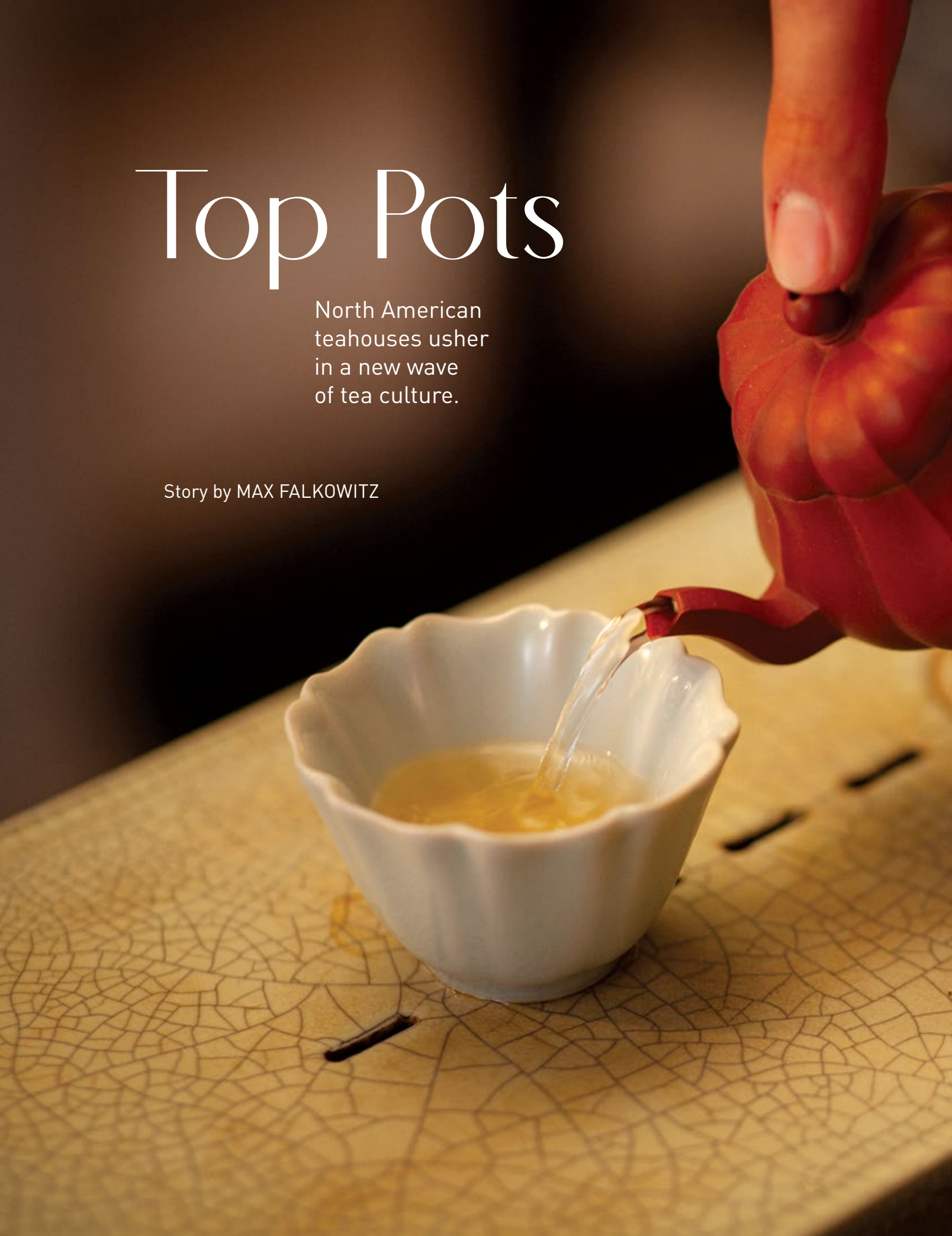
"A shot to complete the meal is great for digestion and encourages dancing and storytelling," Struck advises. But, *chacha* or no, he says, "I'd suggest people elect a *tamada*, or toastmaster, to lead the celebration, and have people propose themes around the table. It's like Thanksgiving when I was a kid, and my grandmother would have us say what we're thankful for. A Georgian supra is a great opportunity to acknowledge that gratitude." After all, he notes, "the most important part of enjoying Georgian wine is the context of the food and the people." ■



Top Pots

North American
teahouses usher
in a new wave
of tea culture.

Story by MAX FALKOWITZ



Tea Habitat in
Alhambra, California.



A dozen years ago when I was first learning about good tea. I was a regular drinker at Fang Gourmet, a Taiwanese tea shop in Flushing, Queens, that resided in the back of a little mall between a hardware store and an herbalist. You had to search past halogen-lit cell phone and tchotchke vendors to find it, and the whole shop was the size of a dorm room, but for appreciators of fine tea—the kind that expands your palate and maybe even your consciousness—there was no place like it in New York. My first visit was during Fang’s annual month-long tea expo, when collectors from all over the Northeast descend on their tea tables to sip rare brews and meet other drinkers. One group was reconvening a year after divvying up a batch of leaves among themselves, to compare how their individual aging methods affected the tea’s flavor. I knew I’d found my people.

It was at Fang that I first practiced *gong fu cha*: “making tea with skill,” where short, successive steepings of leaves, concentrated like espresso, turn a pot of tea into a journey, each thimble-sized cup telling part of an evolving story. More importantly, Fang offered an opportunity to drink with—and learn from—similarly committed tea nerds. Drinking tea is predominantly a solo endeavor in North America. It’s a small hobby, and when drinkers interact, it tends to be online. Yet here was a chance to participate in the kind of teahouse that’s common across many parts of Asia: social, like a bar, but with a vibe all its own.

Teahouses like Fang Gourmet are less of a rarity these days. We have a whole ecosystem of them in New York City now, with specialists in Japanese tea, uncommon Korean herbal brews, and masala chai. In Manhattan, a former Fang Gourmet staffer named Theresa Wong opened a teahouse of her own, with a similar selection and quality, but in a space that caters to newer drinkers just journeying into serious tea. Those who want a different take on Taiwanese oolong can find it all of 20 minutes away at Té Company in the West Village. Never before has the discerning tea nerd been faced with such an embarrassment of choice.

New York may be the most developed market in this regard, but tea shops devoted to specialty tea with a social setting are increasingly common in cities across the United States and Canada. Many of their owners specialize in specific styles and cultural niches, just like their contemporaries in Asia. Most of them source leaves by direct trade at origin—smaller batches of better tea than was previously available to large distributors. They’re teahouses with a point of view, where tea is a pursuit instead of a commodity, and where tea drinkers can at last enjoy what bar and coffee shop goers take for granted: to catch up with someone over a cup.



Tea seller Paul Murray remembers when the world of tea appeared very small to most Westerners. “Most of my early tea experience was in a vacuum. When I started drinking tea in the early 2000s, nobody I knew was into it,” he says. “I didn’t have a reference point that tea could be a communal activity.” Worldwide adoption of the internet changed that. “It wasn’t until years later that I found tea forums online where I could interact with other obsessives. Now, people are sharing their tea setups every day. It doesn’t feel



At tea shops like Fang Gourmet Tea (below and middle left) and Tea Habitat in Alhambra, California (top and bottom left), drinkers can taste expertly brewed Chinese teas for a small fee before buying, as with many tea retailers in Asia.



Té Company in New York City offers teas brewed gong fu style, in small pots with many steepings, where the flavor evolves from cup to cup. Top left: Té Company owner Elena Liao.



like a fringe experience anymore.” Murray moved to China full-time in 2005 and launched an online tea company called white2tea (white2tea.com) in 2012. He’s one of hundreds of sellers that have used the internet to point the tea firehose toward North America and turn the nozzle to full blast. Be it through online stores or PayPal transactions negotiated in private Discord servers, longtime tea drinkers and the newly tea-curious enjoy unparalleled access to what the world’s tea economy can offer. What they lack is a place to drink with each other.

Tea shops where you can freely sit and sample are common in China, especially in cities famous for tea production or consumption, like Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Kunming. “The big benefit is that you can sit down and try teas before purchasing them, which in a best case scenario allows for education and exposure,” Murray explains. “The big pitfall is that the shop owners range from knowledgeable tea veterans to outright hucksters, with the latter comprising an unfortunate number.”

Even with a risky gamble, there are clear social benefits to drinking tea with others this way. Personal experience at the tea table—in China, Taiwan, Japan, and the U.S.—has shown me that you meet strangers there you couldn’t encounter anywhere else. People brag about vintage teapot purchases and gossip over who’s selling tea with faked labels. You may just buy someone a cup of something special so they have a chance to try it. If you’re lucky, you might even learn something from another customer who just happened to travel to the village you’re talking about 10 years ago, and who can show you photos of fresh tea being processed in a famous factory. In her book *Puer Tea: Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic*, anthropologist Jinghong Zhang likens this jocular, jousting dynamic of tea commerce and chatter to the Chinese genre trope of *jianghu*, which literally translates as “rivers and lakes” but figuratively refers to the idea of lawless, romantic waystations between established spaces, where knights-errant and bandits cross paths to secret ends. (If that description reminds you of the alien cantina in *Star Wars*, now you know one of George Lucas’ inspirations.)

Alongside commercial tea shops are more relaxed teahouses, where the selection may be less specialized, but the atmosphere is tailored to languorous conversation. Many popular teahouses in China are decades old, and as Murray puts it, “you don’t just see tea, you see community. Elders treat it like a town square. There’s gathering, gossip, games. It’s the polar opposite of slamming a high-octane to-go cup while speeding to the office. It’s an opportunity to slow down and just be.”

Elena Liao was born in Taiwan but spent her formative years in the U.S. When she opened a storefront for her three-year-old brand Té Company in 2015, she knew she wanted to honor this teahouse tradition while attracting curious New Yorkers. “The most intentional thing I did was to present the tea in a way that if a maker saw me do it, they wouldn’t be mortified,” she says. “I didn’t want to change the way it was meant to be served.”

Té Company fits into the West Village so well, it seems like it’s been there forever. They offer individually brewed cups to go, but most customers choose to linger in the sunlit, shoebox-size space. Staff make gong fu tea in traditional small clay pots, allowing guests to focus on the interplay of flavor and aroma from steep to steep. A menu of tea sweets, like Taiwanese pineapple cakes, made by Liao’s husband and business partner, the chef Frederico Ribeiro, certainly encourages folks to stick around, but it’s the Taiwanese tea and serene atmosphere that encourage them to come back. “I think what Taiwanese teas do is unique,” she says. “You go to scenic teahouses out of the city to see mountains and oceans. They give you a space to ruminate and contemplate. It’s not meditation, but it’s an emotional place outside of the need for sustenance. You go through your thoughts and maybe come out of it a better person—we hope!”



My favorite tea sellers imbue their personalities into the teas they decide to sell. I can count on Liao’s oolongs to taste immediately friendly and engaging. They’re aromatic, sweet, and soothing, and take well to many brewing methods. Over at T Shop, Theresa Wong carries many of the same styles of tea, but her selections tend to have an iron fist, velvet glove character: deceptively soft and gentle until you reveal a core that packs a wallop, but never overwhelms. I notice a certain sparkle and polish in the Darjeeling teas sourced by Kevin Gascoyne, one of the owners of *Camellia Sinensis* in Canada; a quality he describes as “flavor experiences that send my clients on a journey to a new place.” In Rochester, New York, Happy Earth Tea owners Niraj Lama and Mary Boland specialize in traditionally made teas that challenge your expectations for how those teas

TOP TEA HOUSES



AUSTIN

West China Tea Company,
westchinatea.com

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Teance Fine Teas, teance.com

CHICAGO

Living Water Tea House,
livingwaterteahouse.com

LOS ANGELES

Denong Tea (by appointment only),
denongtea.com

Tea Habitat (by appointment only),
teahabitat.com

MADISON, WISCONSIN

Teasider, teasider.com

NEW YORK CITY

Fang Gourmet Tea, fangtea.com

Té Company, tecompanytea.com

T Shop, tshopny.com

Kettl, kettl.co

29b Teahouse, teadealers.com

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Happy Earth Tea, happyearthtea.com

SAN FRANCISCO

Song Tea, songtea.com

SEATTLE

Floating Leaves Tea, floatingleaves.com

SEDONA, ARIZONA

The Chai Spot, thechaispot.com

CANADA

MONTREAL & QUEBEC

Camellia Sinensis, camellia-sinensis.com

VANCOUVER

Best Tea House, bestteasonline.com

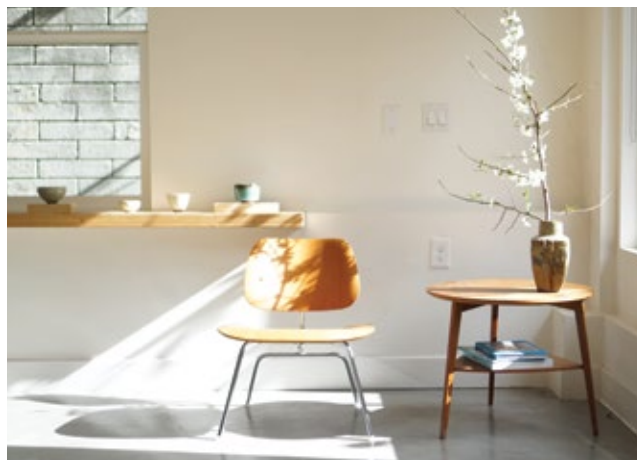
The Chinese Tea Shop,
thechineseteashop.com

usually taste. And in San Francisco, Peter Luong, the founder of Song Tea, has a knack for finding teas with striking, unusual aspects that hold your attention, like an extra long finish or a brew that tastes just like cotton candy. Luong takes a meticulous approach to his idea of curation. Each tea in his collection acts like a rune. Understand it, and you'll understand a little more about Luong's view of what tea can do.

Rarely do we get to talk with the people who import our wine or roast our coffee, but at many of these teahouses there's a good chance you'll be across the counter from someone directly involved in the sourcing of your brew. Shiuwen Tai of Floating Leaves has offered tea tastings and classes at her Seattle shop for more than 20 years—a veteran of Taiwanese oolong education. In Alhambra, California, Imen Shan runs Tea Habitat as a one-person operation. Visits and tastings are by appointment only; it's worth planning ahead to experience Shan's whirlwind tour of her specialty, deeply perfumed dancong oolongs from China's Phoenix mountain. Tea names like "honey orchid fragrance" and "night jasmine fragrance" give you a preview of what to expect; when I leave her tea table, I find myself vibrating with a deeper appreciation for the alchemy of coaxing such precise flavors from the leaves of a camellia bush.

What's behind this flush of growth in the brick and mortar tea landscape? North American demand for tea has risen steadily for decades, with specialty tea seeing the greatest growth of all. Demographics play a role, too: Growing Asian populations—and those populations' growing prosperity—have created demand for high-quality, culturally specific tea experiences in cities including Los Angeles, New York, and Vancouver. The latter is a particular hotbed for Chinese tea culture, with both homegrown teahouses like the Chinese Tea Shop and imports of famous brands from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan such as Best Tea House, which is owned by one of the biggest names in pu-erh tea, Vesper Chan.

A tea newcomer may wonder if such hallowed halls of looseleaf are too high and mighty for their tastes. In 12 years of drinking and writing about tea, one sticking point comes up again and again: The tea community is surprisingly light on pretension, and most nerds are just grateful for the chance to share with someone new. "I think human needs aren't so different," Elena Liao muses. "You go to a teahouse because you want to take time. It could be for yourself, a friend, your mom, or a date, but the idea of tea time is to make time for something slowly. It's not a coffee that you grab to-go on your way to something else." ■



Peter Luong of Song Tea in San Francisco (top) and Shiuwen Tai (left, with co-owner Noah Abbott) of Floating Leaves Tea in Seattle emphasize tea education at their shops through regular guided tastings. All other photos: Song Tea.

Basque Country, Spain



Before you challenge cider's historic credentials compared to beer and wine, consider this: At a time in history when alcoholic beverages were safer than water, humans were keen to ferment anything they could get their hands on; apples were simply another ingredient in that spectrum of fermentation.

For regions ill-suited to wine grapes, this “anything goes” approach was one of necessity. Take Euskadi, or Basque Country, whose ships launched from the ports of Bilbao and Bermeo with barrels of cider on board—only to be refilled with whale oil. “Sailors would drink liters of cider a day instead of water, and as the barrels were emptied, they would kill a whale and fill the barrel with whale oil,” says Jasper Smith, co-founder of the Basque-inspired Son of Man cidery in Cascade Locks, Oregon. “Drinking cider was safer than water, and fended off scurvy at sea.”

Basque Country's cider production has since become a representation of identity and culture, marked with a history that spans generations of family-owned *sagardotegi*, or cider houses. Apples from the Basque Country have pronounced acidity, and a brininess that sets them apart from apples anywhere else in the world. The resulting cider has a distinctive sourness, which Smith emphasizes mustn't be confused with the funk of natural wines. “I think Basque cider was natty wine before natty wine got cool,” he says. The apples may be fermented with wild yeasts, but “producers are not trying to make funky things.” Basque Country ciders have a vast spectrum of complex flavors that range from olive brine to lychee and pineapple. “They're trying to make something that's really fresh and vibrant,” he says, “tropical, yet salty and high-acid.”

Basque ciders also offer plenty of opportunities for pairing. “Cider is always consumed with food in Spain. People drink it on its own too, and that's normal. But it really shines with the meal,” Smith says. “It has a lower ABV than wine, but it also has this palate-cleansing ability to keep you ready for the next bite.”

Story by Katrina Yentch
Illustrations by Matty Newton

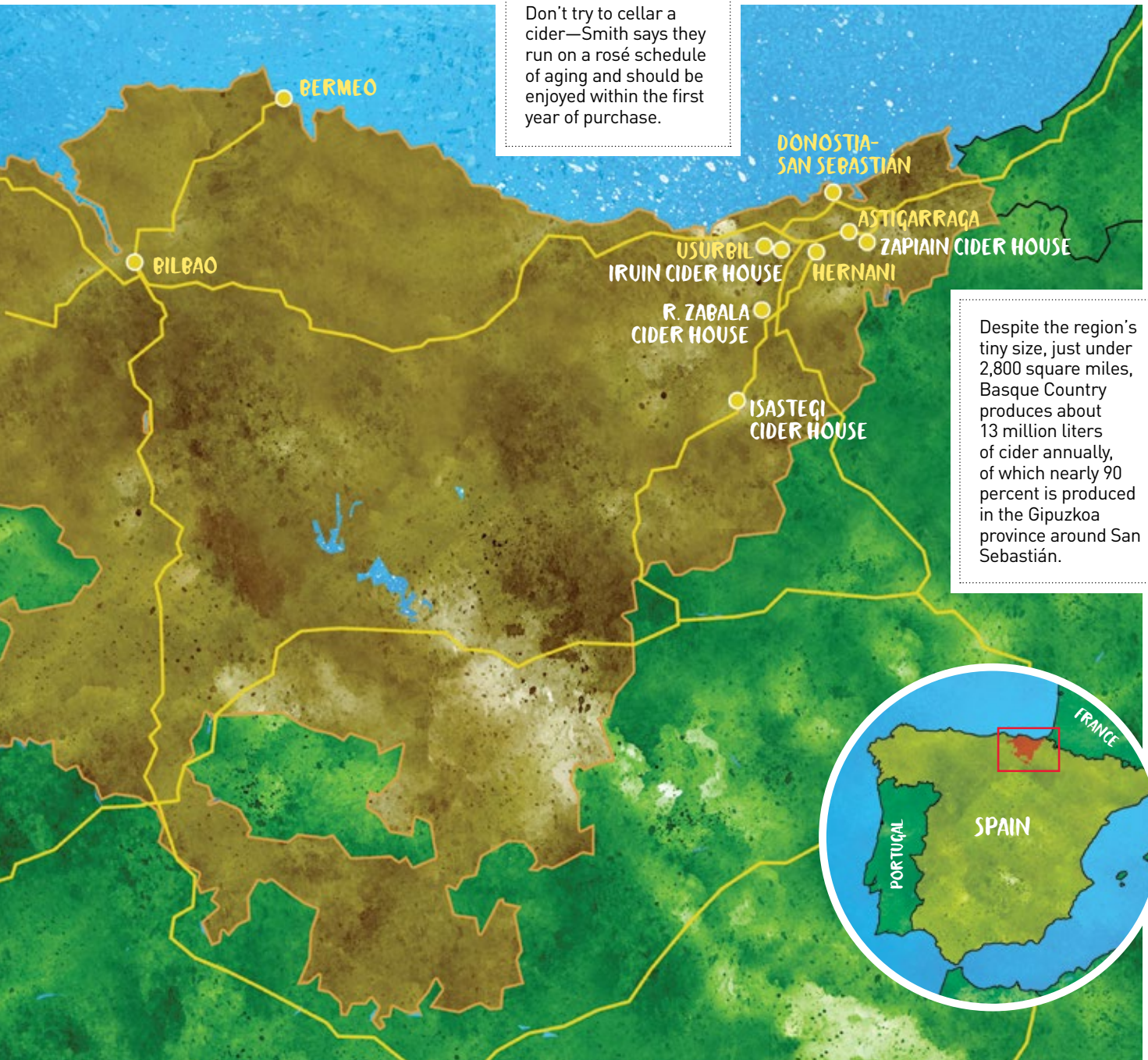


The Gipuzkoa Natural Cider Association estimates there are more than 1,000 varieties of apples grown in Basque Country, but currently only about 114 varieties have been approved by the Euskal Sagardoa Designation of Origin, including Moko, Errezila, and Urdin.

5 TO TRY

Son of Man's Club Sagardo

Son of Man's Club Sagardo membership brings a curated selection of lesser-known, small-batch Basque ciders to the States, plus their own limited releases. “Not only do members get to enjoy cider no one else in the country has tasted, they get to experience the full breadth of flavor the style has to offer,” Smith says. \$50-\$160, sonofman.co



Don't try to cellar a cider—Smith says they run on a rosé schedule of aging and should be enjoyed within the first year of purchase.

Despite the region's tiny size, just under 2,800 square miles, Basque Country produces about 13 million liters of cider annually, of which nearly 90 percent is produced in the Gipuzkoa province around San Sebastián.

Isastegi Sagardo Naturala

"This was the first Basque cider we ever tasted, and our gateway into obsession," says Smith of Isastegi. Located in the town of Tolosa, the family-run estate has been producing cider since the 17th century. Produced using traditional methods, it's simply dry and refreshing. \$15/750 ml, despanafinewines.com

Barrika

The Astiazaran family has been making cider since 1880, and their Barrika is a recent export available in the States. "David Cascione has been working with the Iruin Cider House in Basque Country to produce this import label," says Smith. Tart and dry with a saline finish, "it's clean, delicious, and a great entry-point Basque cider." \$12/750 ml, dukesliquorbox.com

Zapiain Premium Sidra Basque Cider

Despite Zapiain's status as one of the largest producers in the region, Smith notes that "Zapiain consistently pumps out award-winning product." Made exclusively with indigenous apple varieties, the cider has a fresh green apple flavor and a lingering, pleasant acidity. \$15.50/700 ml, pressthenpress.com

R. Zabala Basque Sidra

Produced in the foothills above San Sebastián, R. Zabala ciders are made with estate-grown apples and spontaneous fermentation. Smith fondly recalls magical dinners at the cider house. "Depending on the year, it can be a little funky, but it's always fun and delicious." \$17.49/750 ml, pressthenpress.com

Vail, Colorado

Romantic notions of après-ski aside, at bars in isolated mountain towns, the occasion usually calls for a shot-and-a-beer after a day on the slopes. “Ski bars tend to be rowdy party places, where people are ripping shots and having a wild time,” explains Jeremy Campbell, co-owner and beverage director of Root & Flower in Vail, Colorado. “When I first moved here [in 2003], Grand Marnier was the shot of choice, or Tuaca brandy.” The Portland, Oregon, native journeyed to Colorado’s winter resorts in search of larger-than-life mountains, and stayed for the community. “What we like so much about Vail is that it’s the best of both worlds,” says Campbell. “There’s more to explore and less to get bored with.” **By Katrina Yentch**



Clockwise from this photo: A latte at Two Arrows Coffee | Bar; Campfire Story at Root & Flower; The Rose; iced coffee and pastries at Color Coffee Roasters; sweetbreads with pickled Palisade cherries and mustard aioli, at The Rose.

Two Arrows Coffee | Bar

Modus Operandi: “Two Arrows is a great place to get coffee in the AM, or a drink in the afternoon or night,” says Campbell of the café and cocktail bar helmed by Root & Flower co-owner Samantha Bizsantz. The café’s tiny quarters, which previously housed Root & Flower’s original location, function as a morning hub for outdoor enthusiasts gathering for bites of lox bagels and house-baked quiche, with coffee beans sourced from neighboring Color Coffee Roasters. By night, it transforms to a post-slopes center for rotating beers, frozen matcha cocktails, and signature creations like the Bougie Beet (beet-infused tequila, Cognac, cacao, falernum, lemon). “In the wintertime, everyone’s in there in their ski boots and pants. During the summertime, everybody’s got their bike clothes,” describes Campbell. “That small space creates a strong sense of community.” **Coordinates:** 225 Wall St., #103A // 970-763-5101 // twoarrowscoffee.com

Color Coffee Roasters

Modus Operandi: When the baristas at Color Coffee Roasters aren’t grinding espresso shots, they’re pouring lesser-known varieties of natural wine and craft beers. “Charlie is a natural wine fanatic and really goes out of his way to find interesting wines,” says Campbell of Charlie Gundlach, Color’s founder. On visits to the airy flagship café in Eagle, Campbell has sampled wines such as Spanish Verdejo from MicroBio. “I love going there after a long bike ride and getting some cool natty wine I’ve never heard of, chatting with Charlie, and hanging on the deck.” An intentional tea program by Song Tea & Ceramics matches the roaster’s coffee, along with a robust menu of breakfast sandwiches, wraps, and avocado toast with heirloom-grain bread baked in their in-house bakery, Amaza. **Coordinates:** 717 Sylvan Lake Rd. // 970-390-0437 // colorroasters.com

Root & Flower

Modus Operandi: Root & Flower has been mixing high-quality cocktails in Vail Village since 2015. Originating more as a wine bar, Root & Flower has since evolved to include a menu of inventive beverages and globally inspired small plates. Chef and co-owner Matt Limbaugh flexes his creative muscles at Root & Flower, where he tops pork belly with a sweet tea glaze and stuffs quesadillas with queso birria that accompany approachable, if lesser-known, wine labels. Co-owners Jeremy Campbell and Samantha Bizsantz often make R&D trips to other cities or wine regions, with the goal of making their own drink menu comparable to those found in major cities. At Root & Flower, a day on the slopes can now be followed by a dirty Martini with olive oil-washed vodka and clarified salt-and-pepper tomato water, or a zero-proof butterfly tea horchata shaken with sunflower orgeat, pineapple, and orange blossom water. **Coordinates:** 288 Bridge St., Unit C4 // 970-470-4189 // rootandflowervail.com

The Rose

Modus Operandi: Campbell credits The Rose in Edwards, just 15 minutes west, as his source of inspiration for Root & Flower, and points to it as one of the first establishments to bring craft cocktails to Vail Valley. “They were using really cool ingredients and meticulous touches and builds, plus doing all this crazy back prep to make these cocktails,” he recalls, noting their attention to glassware (sourced from neighborhood garage sales) and presentation. Today, The Rose pairs wines and bespoke cocktails (like the playful Tea’s Knees, with jasmine green tea gin, lemon, and matcha honey) with fusion-centric provisions like *elote*-seasoned vegetables topped with Tajín aioli, and spare ribs dusted with five spice. **Coordinates:** 97 Main St., Ste. W1028 // 970-855-0141 // therosedwards.com



Clockwise from left: Joe Newton, Abby Dykes, Bryan Redniss, Allie Yazel, Bryan Redniss

Bad Kitty Lounge

Modus Operandi: Campbell advises not to overlook basement bar Bad Kitty Lounge, where the kitschy patterned wallpaper, midcentury vibes, and ski boot-shaped mirror ball epitomize a mountain-town dive. Opened in fall of 2020, the bar eschews a proper cocktail menu in favor of custom-crafted drinks from a back bar that often includes single barrel releases and other special one-offs. “Everyone there is highly knowledgeable, definitely knows their stuff, and can elevate [a drink] if need be,” says Campbell. Get chummy with other snowboarders in the 24-seat capacity space, and let a conversation with the bartender guide you to the cocktail you were seeking.

Coordinates: 227 Bridge St. // 970-393-5077 // @badkittylounge

“What we like so much about Vail is that it’s the best of both worlds. There’s more to explore and less to get bored with.”

—JEREMY CAMPBELL

cravings A simple cake that bursts with the flavor of bergamot.



Sweet Tea

“Tea-flavored tea cake has a ring to it,” writes Philip Khoury, the Australian-born pastry chef currently at the helm of Harrods in London. Khoury’s personal mission is to reimagine desserts from a plant-based perspective, and his new book, *A New Way to Bake*, does exactly that. His deceptively simple Earl Grey Loaf Cake is redolent with the earthy, citrus flavors of the tea, making for an ideal snack with an afternoon pot of tea, or for breakfast on slow winter mornings. “This little loaf celebrates the incredible perfume of bergamot (an Italian citrus fruit) essential oil which flavors Earl Grey tea—one of my first flavor loves,” Khoury writes. “It awakened my taste buds and started an infatuation with Earl Grey tea.” **By Penelope Bass**

Earl Grey Loaf Cake

For the cake:

6.3 oz. (180 g) superfine caster sugar
7 oz. (200 g) all-purpose flour (gluten-free flour will also work)
2 tsp. (8 g) Earl Grey tea leaves
1½ tsp. (6 g) baking powder
2 oz. (60 g) extra virgin olive oil
7 oz. (200 g) plant-based milk

For the icing:

5.6 oz. (160 g) confectioners’ sugar
1.6 oz. (45 g) water
Pinch of dried blue cornflower petals, to decorate

To make the cake:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) with an oven shelf in the middle of the oven. Line a small (about 16 oz. or 450 g) loaf pan with baking parchment.

Add the sugar, flour, and tea leaves to a high-powered blender and blitz briefly to extract the bergamot flavor. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in the baking powder. Add the olive oil and plant-based milk and use a whisk to mix all the ingredients together until fully combined.

Pour the batter into the lined loaf pan and bake for 30-35 minutes until golden and the top of the loaf is set and springs back when gently pressed with your fingertips, or a skewer inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.

With the help of the baking parchment, remove the loaf from the tin and leave to cool on a wire rack with a rimmed baking sheet underneath.

To make the icing:

Slowly mix the confectioners’ sugar and water together in a small bowl or measuring jug until it is fully combined and smooth.

Drizzle the icing on top of the cooled cake (still on the wire rack with the baking sheet underneath to catch the drips) and leave to set for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Decorate with the blue cornflower petals.

This cake keeps at room temperature, well-wrapped in plastic wrap or in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Excerpted with permission from A New Way to Bake by Philip Khoury, published by Hardie Grant Publishing, September 2023, RRP \$42.00 hardcover. Photographs by Matt Russell.

GIVE THE **GIFT** OF
imbibe

Unlimited 1-year gift subscriptions are just \$25 each—that's 45% off the cover price!



PLUS Get a **FREE** instant download of holiday cocktail recipes!

START GIFTING:
imbibemagazine.com/holiday2023



Old Friends

The clichéd advice for tired marriages is to rediscover why you fell in love with your partner in the first place. I tried this, but not with my husband—I did it with drinks.

Earlier this year—gradually, then all at once—I lost my spark with the beer, wine, coffee, and cocktails universe that used to hold me in its thrall. In the decade-long process of making drinks—writing my career, I came to overintellectualize and overanalyze experiences that once were purely sensory. I vacillated between two extremes with my drinks choices: lazily choosing familiar, inoffensive standbys that neither delighted nor satisfied me, or treating every purchase like a research project to find the most ahead-of-trend, conceptually interesting cocktail or beer. Neither felt right. Drinks and I had lost our mojo.

So I took the cheesy advice and I sought out the spark. I cast my mind back to excavate the feelings of intrigue, curiosity, and animation that I used to feel for a special bottle of wine or a road trip to an out-of-the-way brewery. What underpinned them all, it turned out, was a concept that drinks—both with alcohol and without—have been synonymous with for centuries: indulgence.

Indulgence doesn't have to be related purely to overconsumption or to the physical effects of alcohol. (I'm not talking about getting drunk for the sake of it.) I missed indulging in lushness, in huge flavors, in exquisiteness, in the romantic and special and sometimes hedonistic panoply of drinks. Indulgence can shape-shift, taking the form of the most expensive by-the-glass Champagne on the menu just as easily as a Creamsicle-flavored seltzer that I don't want to pretend not to like. It's a bottle of red wine that wraps me up like a weighted blanket, or it's pouring a mushroom cloud of half-and-half into my coffee. It's drinking what sounds good and not having to justify it.

An indulgent mindset is an exhale from the drumbeat of “control, control, control” so baked into contemporary life that it's become background noise. Every day, I'm monitoring my screen time. I'm tracking my steps. I'm setting my thermostat from an app on my phone and worrying about whether my multivitamin provides me with sufficient calcium levels or whether I should add

an additional supplement. Indulgence rejects that. It's sipping a drink for no other reason than because I want to.

Winter begs me to lean into this. In Missoula, Montana, where I live, the winter is long, cold, and implacably gray. We snuggle into our heaviest flannels, pile on our thickest down blankets, and wave to our neighbors from the windows of our insulated homes where the space heaters work overtime. Everything about the winter is already austere; the antidote is to inject excess where possible. Use the high-grade chocolate bar to make cocoa. Add a marshmallow. Make it three. Buy the bottle of explosively tannic and raisin-y Cabernet Sauvignon, if that's your thing. Have a nightcap on a Tuesday. Drink the beer you and your friends loved 10 years ago. Find the magic again.

I did find the magic again.

I mixed cocktails with the flavors I like. At a divey burger joint, I drank a Twisted Tea with my bacon cheeseburger and the simple interplay of sweetness and salt tickled me. I ordered a cocktail because I liked the glass it came in, and I bought a special bottle of Champagne to celebrate a relatively minor work accomplishment.

I came back to drinks, and I came back to myself. I'd been separating the two, holding the former at arm's length like a butterfly pinned under glass. I let myself want things again, and I fell back in love. **By Kate Bernot**



Matty Newton



CINZANO[®]

*Celebrate
the Best of
the Holidays
with Cinzano*

VISIT WWW.CINZANO.COM

Cinzano[®] Prosecco D.O.C. ©2023 Campari America,
New York, NY. Please enjoy responsibly.



CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO
EU REGULATION NO. 1308/2013



EXPERIENCE
THE
SPIRIT *of* **GALLO**



DISCOVER OUR PORTFOLIO
SPIRITOFGALLO.COM