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Whiskey Sheets

GOOD EATS pulse staff | FEBRUARY 23, 2013



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Lately, you've been stealing nervous glances at the rich amber cocktails around you at the bar. You've been noticing you are the only one hoisting a dainty, candy-colored libation and you're wondering what you're missing. It's time to find out. We introduce your break from the flavorless to the world of the textured and distilled. The whiskey renaissance.

Vodka is a means to an end, whiskey is the journey. Wine is a vista in the mind's eye, but whiskey is the road there. Beer is a place to go, whiskey is the reason you stay. Whiskey actually begins its life as beer—a brew of humble cereal grains, water and yeast—and now it's taking its turn on the trail blazed by its craft brew brothers. Small-batch producers are creating artisanal spirits that are enjoying a fashionable (cultish) ubiquity. Because whiskey is about whiskey.—the editors

TASTING NOTES



The GlenRothes Select Reserve

(Scotland) The Speyside region is know for enticing vanilla, citrus and rich fruit flavors. No peat smoke is used to dry the barley during the

malting process in this Scotch, so these qualities shine through. The spicy finish is loved by connoisseurs and beginners alike.

theglenrothes.com

Balcones Brimstone Blue Corn Smoked Whisky

(Texas) Hopi Indian blue corn is the base and the distillate is smoked with Texas Scrub Oak. Unique is not descriptor enough. Barbecue in a glass, buttery corn bread, burnt ends and campfire all come to mind. balconesdistilling.com

Nikka Yoichi 15 Year Old Single Malt

(Japan) Peat aromatics and a creamy, palate-covering dram delivers great fruit, nut and spice flavors with a sneaky, smoky finish. Considered one of the great whiskies out right now, it's new to the US. nikka.com

Smooth Ambler Old Scout Rye

(West Virginia) Smooth Ambler distills "wheat-ed" style bourbon. This is 95% rye and 5% malted barley and is blended from seven- and eight-year-old barrels. A honeyed and minty nose has touches of black tea, which are revisited in the sweet creamy palate that finishes with baking spices and mint. smoothambler.com



Breckenridge Bourbon

(Colorado) This high-rye content bourbon is produced in Breckenridge, Colorado, basically on top of the world. The velvety texture carries flavors of caramel, corn and cinnamon spice (like Red Hots candy) in a dangerously drinkable balance. Mineral-laden water from the mountain's melting snowpack gives it distinct character.

breckenridgedistillery.com

Hudson Baby Bourbon

(Gardiner, NY) Distilled by a pioneer in the craft whiskey movement, the sweet flavor comes from 100% corn fermentation. It fills the nose with cereal aromatics and the mouth with caramel corn. This is the bourbon to try if you think you

don't like bourbon—or if you think only decent ones are made in Kentucky. tuthilltown.com

Redbreast 12 Year Old Pure Pot Irish Whiskey

(Ireland) Take 12 year old Jameson before it's watered down with grain whiskey and you have something similar to this pure pot whiskey. Lighter in style thanks to triple distillation, citrus and gooseberry aromatics, notes of butterscotch, nuts and spicy coriander all come through on the palate—a quintessential Irish whiskey. singlepotstill.com

Rough Rider Bourbon

(Baiting Hollow, NY) On the heels of the well-received Pine Barrens single malt whisky comes this high-rye, straight bourbon. American oak barrels, which once held the Island's finest cabernet and merlot, are rinsed with high-proof brandy before being filled with the bourbon and aged. The result is an added layer of dark red fruit and honey notes. lispirits.com

True or False: Rocks are bad.

False: Aromatics are not sullied by ice (or a splash of water). It dilutes or “opens up” the whiskey, creating a moving target of texture and concentration.

Bourbon is a recipe and can be produced anywhere in the US. **Not just Kentucky.**

It doesn't really matter how you enjoy your whiskey, just that you do so in the spirit of adventure.

Whiskey offers a world of variation, it's all about the multitude of flavors and



textures each one brings to the table. When mixing drinks, always use the best ingredients in your cocktails. The quality of the whiskey makes a big difference. So too does the shaking. Shake hard until the shaker is very cold to ensure proper mixing, chilling and diluting of the drink. Don't be afraid to use liqueurs in the cocktails, either.

Luxardo Maraschino, cherry brandy liqueur and Amer Picon, as well as the different Vermouths and Benedictine are delicious and essential to good drinks. Keep Vermouth in the refrigerator and don't buy a full-sized bottle unless you will use it within a month. Vermouth is wine so it does go bad. Whiskey is whiskey and if stored properly, it will not go bad. Sláinte.

ORIGINS

The beauty of unmixed whiskey does not preclude the existence of serious mixed drinks. Cocktails were invented in the United States and whiskey was an important part of that development.

Decades of bad quenchers have led drinkers to associate them with sweet, unbalanced or ill-conceived concoctions. But great cocktails are the opposite—they balance the sweet with the acid or bitterness to yield a sum that is greater than its parts.

The Old Fashioned is the most basic and, some argue, the original cocktail. It also shows off the quality of the whiskey. Don't be afraid to use the good stuff.

Ingredients

1 Sugar Cube, preferably a dark,
flavorful sugar like demerara

3 dashes Angostura Bitters

Club Soda

2 oz Rye Whiskey

Glass Type: Old-fashioned

Place the sugar cube (or ½ teaspoon loose sugar) in an old-fashioned glass. Wet it down with 2 or 3 dashes of Angostura bitters and a short splash of water or club soda. Crush the sugar with a wooden muddler. Rotate the glass so the sugar grains and bitters give it a lining. Add a large ice cube. Pour in

the rye (or bourbon). The Classic doesn't use the orange wedge and cherry, though you can. A modified Old Fashioned adds just an orange peel to the sugar for muddling. The oils from the peel add a lovely taste to the drink.

The Manhattan, the most iconic whiskey cocktail is made with rye. Using bourbon has become very common and makes a sweeter drink. However, a good rye makes a Manhattan amongst the best cocktails out there.

Ingredients

2 oz Rye Whiskey

1 oz Italian Vermouth

2 dashes Angostura Bitters

Glass Type: Cocktail

Stir the rye, vermouth and bitters well with cracked ice. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass and garnish with twist or, of course, a cherry. The original Luxardo Marasca cherries are the perfect choice. "The Brooklyn," a variant of The Manhattan, uses the same 2:1 ratio, but substitutes French vermouth for Italian and adds a dash of Amer Picon and one of Luxardo Maraschino liqueur.

Beggars Banquet, created by Aisha Sharpe, co-owner of Contemporary Cocktails Inc., starts life like a whiskey sour with maple syrup and then gets topped with beer.

Ingredients

2 oz Bourbon

1 oz Freshly Squeezed Lemon Juice

¾ oz Maple Syrup

2 dash Angostura Bitters

Orange Slice

Top with British Cask-conditioned Ale

Glass Type: Highball or Collins

Shake first four ingredients with ice and strain into ice-filled glass. Top with beer. Garnish with orange slice. It also works topped with hard dry apple cider.

Show me the way to the next whiskey bar...

Corry's Ale House, Wantagh

50 bottles of whiskey, mostly from the Emerald Isle.

George Martin's Strip Steak, Great River

A Scotch and bourbon heaven with dozens of selections for sippin' neat or as a specialty mixed drink.

Rothmann's Steakhouse, East Norwich

30-plus single malt Scotches and a dozen small-batch bourbons from the steakhouse that dates back to 1907.

Tellers, Islip

More than 45 whiskies on hand, including

Scotches from Highlands, Islay and Speyside.

LONG DISTANCE APPLAUSE

Òran Mór, Nantucket

An untouchable spirits program. It's worth the trip as much for the food and ambiance as for the bar's whiskies and handcrafted cocktails.

EVENTS & TASTINGS

Irish Whiskey Tasting

March 13

Vitae, Huntington

A specialist will take you through four kinds of Jameson, including a limited 18 year old.

vitaeli.com

Whiskey Live

April 3

Chelsea Piers

A great chance to sample and learn about 250 of the world's greatest whiskies. whiskylive.com

Whiskey Dinner with Mora's Fine Wine & Spirits

April 14

eatMosaic, St. James

Taste a wide range of whiskey, tequila and brandy with dinner.