

MICRO BOOZE

THANKS TO THE CRAFT-BEER BOOM, U.S. MOONSHINERS (THEY PREFER "ARTISAN DISTILLERS") ARE FOLLOWING SUIT. THEY'RE HERE, THEY HAVE BEARDS, AND THEY MAKE DAMN FINE HOOCH! CHECK OUT OUR FIVE FAVORITE SMALL-BATCH POTABLES. GET TO SIPPING.

BY MIKE DAWSON



Our preferred way to hydrate after a good workout

RANSOM OLD TOM GIN

Sheridan, Oregon
\$36, ransomsprits.com
Based on a gin with the same name that was popular in the 1800s but died out after Prohibition, OTG is slightly sweet and aged in oak barrels, giving it its amber color and complex flavor. The taste starts like Beefeater but finishes with a mild kick of ginger and orange. It's built for G&Ts and Tom Collinses, but—caution!—OTG blends so well, it's easy to forget you're imbibing an 88-proof word-slurring, girl-scaring mind-bomb. Take it slow.

HUDSON WHISKEY NEW YORK CORN

Gardiner, New York
\$50, tuthilltown.com
The Tuthilltown Spirits boys have been making their mouthwatering Hudson whiskeys (legally) since '05. Our favorite of late is their moonshine. This corn whiskey is simply unaged bourbon. It never clocks time in oak barrels, so it remains crystal-clear, earning its "white lightning" nickname. The nose has hints of Corn Pops and fiddle playing. Down it Appalachian-style: straight, with a few drops of branch water.

ST. GEORGE SINGLE MALT WHISKEY

Alameda, California
\$60, stgeorgesprits.com
Since this 100 percent barley water was born in Cali—not the rain-soaked isle of depression that is Scotland—it technically can't be called scotch. But that's what it is, laddie. Aged for four years, this stiff stuff has notes of pipe tobacco and a welcome caramel-corn sweetness that most scotches miss. Its sugary finish makes it perfect for a Rusty Nail: Mix 1½ oz. scotch, ½ oz. Drambuie, and a twist of lemon. Pour on ice, stir, fall down.

DEATH'S DOOR VODKA

Washington Island, Wisconsin
\$34, deathsdooorspirits.com
Velvety, with hints of vanilla, this triple-distilled Midwest liver juice is made from a strain of Wisconsin native wheat that sounds like an Eskimo porn title: Hard Red Winter. This crazy-smooth vodka can go head-to-head with the best Polish punch. Savor ice-cold or guzzle in an ultra-dry martini before besting a colorfully named archvillain.

RAGGED MOUNTAIN RUM

Sheffield, Massachusetts
\$30, berkshirerummountaindistillers.com
You don't need white-sand beaches and postcolonial poverty to make rum. All you need is molasses, water, yeast, heat, and a big-ass kettle. Because rum is so easy (and cheap) to whip up, many small distillers include it in their liquor lineups. Our favorite is this Massachusetts mash, because it tends more toward Maker's Mark than Bacardi. Creamy and sweet, it'll warm your chest (and nuts) in a hurry.

THREE OTHER SMALL THINGS THAT PACK A PUNCH

+ SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL



+ BHUT JOLOKIA



WORLD'S HOTTEST PEPPER

+ GARY COLEMAN

