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beyond.

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Clockwise from top: Austen Diamond, Nico Schinco, Kelly Puleio, Andrew Hyslop

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Cover Photo: Kelly Puleio
On the Cover: Trevin Hutchins, page 36

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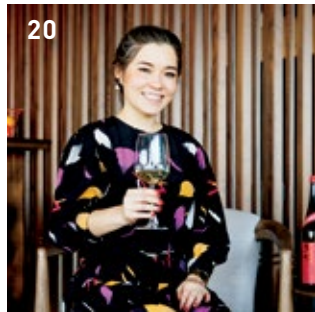
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An advertisement for 'Spirits Bottling' services. It features a large graphic of a bottle. Text includes 'LET US BOTTLE FOR YOU', 'Contract Bottling Services', 'WE CAN BOTTLE, LABEL & CASE PACK FOR YOU', 'Fully automated bottling lines for your spirits', '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', and 'email for quote: office@sunliquor.com'.

Editor's Note

Big Plans

A brand-new year may just be getting started, but I've been filling up my 2024 calendar and wish lists for months already. High among my priorities this year (and every year, to be honest)? Checking out some great new places, and getting together with new and familiar faces, as I make my way around the country in the months ahead.

Our annual Imbibe 75 list of people and places shaping the way we drink makes planning out the new year a little easier. Is San Francisco high on your travel itinerary this year? Then be sure to stop in at Stoa (page 73), a new Haight Street bar that already feels like a classic, and make time in the schedule for a cocktail tasting-menu experience at Aphotic with Trevin Hutchins (page 36) and his house-distilled spirits. Or if life takes you to the East Village in New York City, grab a meal and dive deep into the wine list at Foxface Natural (page 74), then take a tasting tour of Mexico via the mezcals selected by Noah Arenstein (page 53) at The Cabinet.

You don't need to venture far from home to experience some of the best of this year's list. The canned cannabis beverages from Luke Anderson and Jake Bullock (page 48) are available in multiple markets, as are the Bar Diver line of ready-to-serve bottled cocktails from Minnesota-based maker Joe Heron (page 69). And from the comfort of your own home, you can discover the world of Vietnamese tea from importer and retailer Anna Ye (page 49), and listen in on the exploration of agave spirits from Chava Peribán (page 44), host of the *Heritage Mezcal* podcast.

These are just a few of the people and places worth getting to know this year. We've got plenty more for you (including recipes) at imbibemagazine.com, and tune in to the *Radio Imbibe* podcast in the weeks ahead to hear full interviews with some of this year's Imbibe 75.

Happy new year,



Paul Clarke
Editor in Chief



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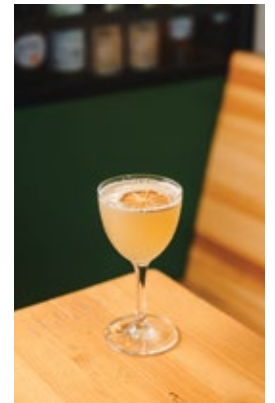
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For extended interviews from this year's Imbibe 75, tune in to *Radio Imbibe*: imbibemagazine.com/podcast. We'll continue our conversations with some of the drink world's most fascinating people, including Baylee Hopings (above).



Clockwise from top: Gregory Miller, Austen Diamond, Leah Nash

Mix up more drinks from this year's Imbibe 75, like the Café Ireland from Stoa in San Francisco, and Daddy's Daiq (above right) by Daddy Long Legs in Salt Lake City. Plus, Sam and Nick Purvis (above left) share the origin story of Good Coffee. You'll find all that and more at imbibemagazine.com.

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- 1 oz. club soda

Combine ingredients in a shaker, in the order listed, except prosecco and club soda. Cap, shake, and strain into an ice-filled wine glass. Top with prosecco and club soda.



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Compiled by Penelope Bass

What We're Drinking Now Spirit Works Distillery Sloe Amaro

When Sonoma County distillery Spirit Works first released their sloe gin (based on the family recipe of co-owner Timo Marshall) in 2012, it was rather a boon for the historic spirit style. Now one of the more popular—and awarded—sloe gins on the market, the spirit served as inspiration for the distillery's newest release, Sloe Amaro. Delivering precisely what it promises, the Sloe Amaro begins with Spirit Works' own neutral grain spirit, which is then distilled and macerated with more than a dozen bitter herbs and spices, tart sloe berries, and just enough cane sugar to bring it all into balance. The result is a brightly bittersweet amaro punctuated with the juicy punch of the berries for a spirit both complex and cohesive. Sip it straight as an after-dinner digestif or, better yet, swap it in as the replacement for sweet vermouth in a Manhattan or Negroni. \$48, spiritworksdistillery.com



At the Market: Tangerine



Fresh citrus is as crucial a component behind the bar as ice. And while lemons and limes tend to see most of the action, winter is the perfect time to experiment, when a spectrum of seasonal citrus is at its juicy peak. Tangerines are one of several varieties of mandarin oranges (*Citrus reticulata*), offering a flavor that manages to be both sweeter and more brightly acidic than that of a standard orange. Brandon Ristaino, co-founder of Good Lion Hospitality, which operates several cocktail bars in Santa Barbara, utilizes the vibrant fruit in a tangerine syrup for a complex and colorful Gimlet riff. “Tangerine syrup adds a more concise and concentrated sweet orange flavor than ‘regular’ orange syrups, which can be a bit flabby or, when acid adjusted, too artificial tasting,” says Ristaino. “A tangerine syrup threads this needle in a great way on taste, sweetness, and acid balance.” And while you’ve got the fruit on hand, Ristaino recommends experimenting with equally complementary pairings like agave spirits, French brandies, and bourbon. “Tangerine can easily sing the high notes in a fresh sour, or be a zippy punch in a dark and brooding stirred winter cocktail.”

TANGERINE GIMLET

1½ oz. London dry gin
1 oz. fresh lime juice
½ oz. tangerine syrup
¼ oz. mezcal (Ristaino uses a tobala or espadín)
¼ oz. Campari

Tools: shaker, strainer
Glass: coupe

Add all of the ingredients to a shaker, add ice, and shake vigorously. Strain into a chilled coupe.

Tangerine Syrup: Combine 1 part fresh-squeezed and strained tangerine juice to 1 part granulated sugar. Blend or whisk thoroughly to dissolve. Add 1 oz. of vodka for every quart of syrup. Keeps refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.

Brandon Ristaino
Good Lion Hospitality
Santa Barbara, California




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A Few of Our Favorite Things

Aperitivo Set

Add a little Italian flair to your next aperitivo hour with this serving set perfect for garnishes or bite-size nibbles. Hand-carved in Umbria, the Olivewood bowls will each display the unique characteristics of the wood grain, alongside six matching forks.

Saluti! \$62, verveculture.com



Opus Conical Burr Grinder

Compact, quiet, and clocking in at less than 200 bucks, the Opus grinder from the coffee-tool wizards at Fellow is another winner. With 41 grind settings for the conical burrs and thoughtful touches like a magnetic catch cup and anti-static technology, this all-purpose grinder is perfect for everyday use no matter how you like your coffee. *\$195, fellowproducts.com*



Citrus Tool Set

Make quick work of winter citrus (like tangerines, page 12) with a set of two of the most popular tools from Aussie gadget makers Dreamfarm—the Ozest concave micro zester with pop-clean button, and the Fluicer, a fold-flat citrus juicer with built-in seed strainer. *\$29.95, dreamfarm.com*



Onyx Coffee Lab Extractions

Aiming to make delicious coffee even easier to access, the folks at Onyx Coffee Lab have released their newest experiment with these bottled extractions. The two blends of concentrated brews are shelf stable and mix instantly with either hot or iced water for a surprisingly fresh-tasting cup. The concentrate can also be used as a replacement for espresso in coffee drinks or cocktails. *\$25 each, onyxcoffeelab.com*



NUDE Glass Dusty Rose Collection

Istanbul-based artisan glassmaker NUDE has added a charming new colorway to their Round Up line of wine glasses, recognizable for their elegant minimalism. With ribbed facets on the bowl and a barely there shade of pink, the lead-free crystal glasses serve up midcentury glamour. *\$102 each, us.nudeglass.com*



Mustipher Cocktail Stencils

Add a whisper of the tropics to the surface of your cocktails with these new stencils. Made in collaboration with bartender, spirits educator, and tropical drink enthusiast Shannon Mustipher, the trio of stencils from Cocktail Kingdom add a playful topper to drinks with a stable foam head, whether using a sprinkle of cinnamon or a spritz of bitters. *\$24.99/3-pack, cocktailkingdom.com*



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BOOMERANG

Stir with ice:

- 1 oz KRONAN Swedish Punsch
- 1 oz rye whiskey
- 1 oz Dolin Dry Vermouth de Chambéry
- 1 bar spoon lemon juice
- 1 dash Angostura Bitters
- 1 dash orange bitters

Strain into a coupe.
Garnish with a lemon peel.

—Savoy Cocktail Book

Coming Around Again

Beyond the realm of sport and hunt, a boomerang can be a symbol of reciprocity – an exchange with others for mutual benefit. In the world of hospitality, the "Boomerang" has two meanings: Any cocktail slyly messengered between bartenders; and a classic drink featuring the once-lost rum liqueur Swedish Punsch. Made with rums from the West and East Indies, KRONAN Swedish Punsch has exceptional depth and complexity. It enabled the rebirth of more than fifty classic drinks and has inspired numerous contemporary ones. Easy to mix with, your efforts will be well rewarded.

Anatomy of a Drink: Blinker

It's been nearly a century since the Blinker cocktail recipe was first published, and bartenders still can't agree on how to make it. The earliest recorded version appears in Patrick Gavin Duffy's 1934 *The Official Mixer's Manual* and calls for a shot of rye whiskey, one or more ounces of grapefruit juice, and a half-jigger of grenadine. But as the 20th century progressed, and commercialized grenadine became increasingly artificial in both flavor and color, drinkers and bartenders mostly passed the Blinker by. But the drink once again found a fan base when historian Ted Haigh published an updated variation in his 2004 book, *Vintage Spirits & Forgotten Cocktails*. Haigh upped the amount of rye and swapped the grenadine for homemade raspberry syrup to revive the drink's bright kick. Other bartenders followed suit, and raspberry syrup became de rigueur in 21st century Blinkers.

Yet, there are still those who make the case for the original build. Jeff Knott, owner of Tartan House in Louisville, Kentucky (one of this year's Imbibe 75ers, page 42), says that he usually finds the flavor of raspberries too dominant in the Blinker, and prefers to use a house-made grenadine of pomegranate juice, sugar, pomegranate molasses, and rose water. "Our grenadine is on the floral side, so it mixes well in this drink."

Cocktails may be constantly evolving, but the Blinker is poised to endure—appealing to different palates and even inspiring a little debate. Besides, after a drink or two, who can even remember why we were fighting?

By Emily Saladino

INGREDIENTS

2 oz. rye whiskey
1 oz. fresh grapefruit juice
½ oz. grenadine

TOOLS: shaker, strainer

GLASS: cocktail

TO MAKE: Shake all of the ingredients with ice, then strain into a chilled glass.



*Recipe adapted by Jeff Knott
Tartan House, Louisville, Kentucky*

NOTE

To shake up a raspberry version of the cocktail, follow the same mixing instructions but use 2 oz. of rye whiskey, ½ oz. of grapefruit juice, and 1 barspoon of raspberry syrup. Garnish with a grapefruit twist or some raspberries.

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Three Ways: Winter Sangria

Few drinks are as endlessly customizable as sangria. Exact origins of the wine-based punch are disputed, but Europeans have been mixing wines with fruit and spirits since the Middle Ages. Sangria made its U.S. debut at the Spanish Pavilion of the 1964 World's Fair in New York City, and Americans have been turning their red, white, and rosé wines into fruit-studded punches ever since. Recent years have seen more U.S. bartenders experimenting with combinations of quality wine, spirits, and seasonal ingredients to give the centuries-old punch its due. These winter sangrias prove that thoughtfully made drinks shine in all seasons. *By Emily Saladino*

Atelier's Winter Sangria. "It's about the juniper notes," says owner Tim Lacey of the gin-spiked white wine sangria at Atelier, a fine dining destination in Chicago's Lincoln Square. Not only does the spirit offset the diced fruit in the sangria, but "juniper is reminiscent of spruce, evergreen, and all those lovely, green, wintry aromas." For wine, Atelier opts for Rueda Verdejo, a dry Spanish white wine that Lacey likes for its lightly floral, herbal, and fruity flavors. To make a batch, combine 4 oz. of London dry gin with a 750 ml bottle of white wine. Stir a cored and diced apple and pear into the mixture, then refrigerate overnight so the fruit macerates. Serve over ice in a large wine glass, and top each serving with dry pear cider, such as Eric Bordelet Poiré Granit. Lacey likes to make sure each glass has a few pieces of boozy fruit, too: "It just adds even more flavor."

Neeloo's Winter Sangria. An easy spiced syrup creates nuanced flavors in the cold-weather sangria at French-accented restaurant Neeloo in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood. "The sweetness contrasts with the tartness of the wine and fruit," says Christophe Moser, Neeloo's managing partner. "In spite of the flavor complexity, it's easy to pair with foods." It all comes together in about 15 minutes, followed by an overnight rest. Start with the spiced syrup: Simmer 2½ oz. of simple syrup (1:1) with 1 cinnamon stick, 4 black peppercorns, 2 whole cloves, and 1 star anise for 3-5 minutes, partially covered, then strain out the solids (save the cinnamon stick) and cool. Mix the syrup with a 750 ml bottle of dry, fruit-forward red wine (Moser likes Tempranillo or Grenache), 2½ oz. of brandy, and the fresh juice of two oranges. Stir in a sliced apple, pear, orange, and the cinnamon stick reserved from making the syrup, then refrigerate overnight. Let the mixture come to room temperature, then serve over ice in a large wine glass.

The North StarGria (pictured). At The Apparatus Room, a chic bar and restaurant in a former fire station in downtown Detroit, lead bartender Petr Balcarovsky makes seasonal sangria with sparkling rosé wine from a cult producer. "The Franck Besson [Rosé Granit] has such pretty red fruit and acidity, balanced with that soft roundness from the Gamay grape," Balcarovsky says of his bottle of choice. An oleo saccharum emphasizes the fruit flavors and sweetens the mix. "In my opinion, the oleo is truly an expression of natural beauty," he says of his lemon-lime version. Combine 2 oz. of superfine sugar with the peels of 2 lemons and 2 limes, mash together, then let macerate for at least six hours before straining off the syrup. To make the drink, pour 2 oz. of raspberry liqueur, ½ oz. of Lillet Blanc, and ½ oz. of lemon-lime oleo into a mixing glass. Add ice and stir for 20 seconds, then strain into a large wine glass filled with fresh ice. Top with a dry sparkling rosé. Balcarovsky garnishes each glass with crystallized raspberries and rosemary that he coats in simple syrup and air-dries, but alternatively, simply skewer frozen raspberries on rosemary sprigs, or skip the garnish entirely.

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5 to Try: Sakes to Serve Hot

As an international *kikisake-shi* (sake sommelier) and the first to receive the title of Miss Sake USA in 2016, Jessica Joly, marketing director at Sake Discoveries, appreciates how premium sake can be served at an array of temperatures: “On the rocks, cold, room temperature, warm, lukewarm, hot, extremely hot—it is unlike any other alcoholic beverage,” Joly explains. Some styles are better suited to be served as *kanzake*, or warm sake: Styles like Junmai and Taru are bold and more classic in flavor, so they’re ideal for warm or hot sake, says Joly. “Sake that is clean and crisp is also ideal for hot sake—especially styles that are from Niigata Prefecture. These styles of sake are not as aromatic, and are suitable for warm or hot sake.” Heat things up with these five bottle recs from Joly.
By Jillian Dara

1 Tengumai Yamahai Junmai “Dancing Goblin”

“This sake is great warm because it is a Yamahai style—one of the older ways of brewing, which lets natural lactic acid develop,” says Joly about this Junmai from Ishikawa Prefecture. “In this region they focus a lot of the cuisine on fermented fish, the most famous one being *kaburazushi*—yellowtail and turnip that is fermented. These dishes have a distinct flavor and are quite fishy. It is often you find the locals and people enjoying *kanzake* with these types of dishes,” Joly says. “Notes of mushroom shine through the pale amber color, and the palate has a buttery mouthfeel with earthy notes and a long, smooth finish.” \$30, [tippsysake.com](#)

2 Daishichi Kimoto Honjozo

“Daishichi is unlike any other producer. They were the first brewery to develop the super flat rice polishing machine, which is highly efficient for rice milling,” says Joly. The Fukushima-based producer only brews kimoto styles, another traditional way of brewing that also allows the lactic acid to develop, and all their sake is aged. “Honjozo also has a bit of brewers alcohol added and therefore, when warmed, it creates this creamy mouthfeel,” says Joly. “The lactic acid on this sake gives it a nice texture once warmed, and is a perfect pairing for the winter season.” \$27, [sunflowersake.com](#)

3 Nanbu Bijin Umeshu “No Added Sugar” Plum Sake

“This plum sake is made with no addition of sugar and is made solely from 100 percent koji rice and young green plums—*kishu nankobai*,” says Joly, noting that it’s a great option for sake newbies or those who prefer lower alcohol with a bit of



Courtesy of Jessica Joly

sweetness. “When you warm this up, the nuttiness and flavor of the tart ume plum becomes softer on the palate. This sake from Iwate is a great dessert pairing for dark chocolate, and a very food-friendly umeshu, but also an excellent mixer with Japanese whisky.” \$38.99, [unclefossil.com](#)

4 Hakkaisan Yukimuro 3 Year “Snow Aged” Junmai Daiginjo

This sake from Niigata prefecture is aged for three years in a *yukimuro*, an eco-friendly snow storage facility, at about 37 degrees Fahrenheit. “By aging this sake it allows the sake to mellow out,” says Joly. “It has layered flavors that become very round with aging, and is extremely smooth. No water is added, making it a *genshu* (undiluted sake) with very limited aroma, and subtle steamed rice notes.” Joly recommends serving this Junmai Daiginjo at 160 degrees Fahrenheit: “The biggest point for doing this is because of the aging and because the aroma is very subdued. When you have a floral and fragrant sake and warm it up, the aromas will dissipate.” \$70, [umamimart.com](#)

5 Kenbishi “Kuromatsu” Honjozo

“They say that samurai drank this sake before military battles,” says Joly of the sake from this Hyogo producer, which has been operating since 1505 and is one of the oldest producers still making sake. “It has such a long history and is loved by many old-school sake fans. They use the famous rice strain Yamada Nishiki along with Aiyama rice, which is quite rare.” Joly describes its tasting profile as “interesting, umami aromas and flavors of marinated mushrooms, cocoa nibs, and rice cake with salinity—it’s deep and rich, with balanced acidity.” \$52, [tippsysake.com](#)

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Day Trip: Daniel Singer Filthy Mixers & Garnishes

A proper cocktail deserves an equally excellent garnish. That's where Filthy Mixers & Garnishes come in. After growing tired of seeing dessert cherries served in cocktails, founder Daniel Singer sought to offer high-quality and origin-sourced garnishes to give bar patrons a better drinking experience. Filthy Mixers & Garnishes, which launched in 2009 and makes products like Wisconsin blue cheese-stuffed olives and Amarena cherries, are now served with drinks from Soho House to Delta Airlines. Singer gives us an inside look at how Filthy operates at its Miami headquarters. **As told to Carissa Chesanek**

4:30 a.m. I start most of my days taking the dog for a walk while my wife goes out for a run. We have three children so when we get back in, it's breakfast with the kids and then we get them ready for school. I get a huge amount of strength from Kim and the kids. If I can start every day from that place of feeling connected and loved, that sets me up for whatever the day brings.

7 a.m. I drop off our youngest at school and then head to the office. Every day is completely different, and I'm deeply connected to all areas of the business. When I first get in, I meet with Charlie Hart, our COO, and we walk the production floor. Everybody's in early, blending the mixes, stuffing the olives, and putting everything in jars. I scope out the setup for the day, see what's being produced, learn of any new challenges, and say hi to everyone. Back in my office, I spend the next hour catching up on emails, then I dive into a massive to-do list. I am highly dyslexic. I have to create order for my own chaos, so I'm really disciplined about making sure that I'm clear on my to-do list and getting everything done.

10 a.m. We often host potential partners in our space, and since we're in the cocktail business, we serve our guests a Bloody Mary or Margarita made with our mix, depending on the time of day. The beautiful thing about the Filthy headquarters is that everything is under one roof. Our guests can put on hairnets and head into production to see how we make and prepare everything. We naturally cure all our olives. I've been going to the north of Greece since 2006, and every year, I travel back to the region to connect with the growers and spend time amongst the trees. Our guests can try the olives right out of the barrel.

3 p.m. I'm in a senior leadership team meeting with my CFO, the head of sales and marketing, and the head of human resources. We look at the business through each department, and I'll add perspective or support. Sometimes I'm there just to be a sounding board and to understand where everybody's prioritizing their time. Jennifer Hughes, who runs sales and marketing, will also discuss any upcoming trips or meetings. She might say, "You're going to be in California—you're doing a statewide meeting," or, "You're standing up in front of 700 people." This allows me to prepare and consider who my audience might be, and what they know about our products. I want to make them feel emotionally connected to our brand—communicate what we do and how we do it. Filthy produces more than 100 million olives and cherries each year!

7 p.m. I get home around 7 or 7:30 p.m. and love cooking outside on my wood pellet grill. Miami has a wonderful bar and restaurant scene, so you might also find me enjoying a Martini with Filthy Blue Cheese stuffed olives at Sweet Liberty, Café La Trova, Doya, Medium Cool, or any of the dozens of great spots.



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Marius Haugan

Q&A

with Leandro DiMonriva, aka The Educated Barfly

If you've ever run an internet search for a cocktail recipe, there's a good chance you've come across one from The Educated Barfly. What started as a YouTube series from actor-turned-bartender Leandro DiMonriva on the history and craft behind classic cocktails has transformed into an ever-expanding encyclopedia of bartending expertise. Since publishing his first video in 2017 (on the quintessential Gimlet, of course), DiMonriva's passion for cocktail culture and scholarship have helped turn The Educated Barfly into a fountain of behind-the-bar knowledge, helping home bartenders and professionals alike learn the ins and outs of everything from their favorite bars' proprietary recipes to choosing the right glassware. We spoke with DiMonriva about his experience behind the bar, translating it into a trustworthy source of cocktail know-how, and what he'd like to see more of in the year to come. **By Alex Testere**

Imbibe: You started your career in the film industry—how did you end up getting into bartending?

Leandro DiMonriva: That is a very long story, but essentially, I was working as a production assistant, and as an art department coordinator for a few years—and that’s actually where I met my current producing partner, Marius Haugan—but I was getting really sick of it. I was spending 20-hour days on set, mainly working commercials, and I thought maybe I could be an actor instead—it seemed like anybody could be a commercial actor. And when I started getting some gigs for that, I couldn’t keep up with the PA work, and I was lucky enough to find a barback job at a place called King King on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. At the time [around 2007], it was really difficult to get a bar job, and you really had to know somebody—you could make a lot of money in a short period of time, so those jobs were in high demand. I was working two nights a week there, but it was a nightclub mostly, so we weren’t making craft cocktails really, we were churning out vodka Red Bulls to folks lined up 10 deep at the bar. But it was great training for where I finally landed.

And where was that?

Cole’s French Dip, which was probably one of the best bars to land in, because in the back was a bar called The Varnish, which was sort of ground zero for a lot of the most important bartending going on in LA at the time. The Varnish was owned by Eric Alperin, who came from Little Branch in New York City, and he was working with Sasha Petraske and Cedd Moses to really bring some glamour back to downtown. So I was lucky enough to land at Cole’s, where I had access to a lot of great mentors, and I got a real education on cocktails, yes, but also their history, and how it connected to the larger history of the world. That’s what really fascinated me.

Is that what you were thinking about when you launched The Educated Barfly?

Yeah, eventually, after working at Cole’s French Dip for about 10 years—running the bar for four of them—I was thinking a lot about where I wanted this career to go. I couldn’t see myself behind the bar for much longer; I had a young daughter at home, and what I really loved about bartending was talking to people, providing that hospitality element, which was always more important to me than my own reputation as a cocktail maker. We tried to make a TV show, produced a whole trailer and everything, and there was a lot of interest in the idea, but they just wanted to buy it off me—I wouldn’t actually get to be involved. So I decided I’d just do it myself, and we put it on YouTube.

So you’ve been in the bar business for nearly two decades, and producing videos for more than six years now (with quite the impressive following, no less). How has the cocktail landscape changed since then?

You know, we never set out to be the most popular channel, or even to get the most “views.” We never wanted to be one of those channels that was, like, melting Jolly Ranchers into watermelons, or dumping vodka and schnapps into a bathtub—and those videos do get a *lot* of views. But we did want to be the most *comprehensive* cocktail channel on YouTube. We wanted to be the most well-informed, and we wanted to look at it from a historical perspective, and a

technique perspective, which wasn’t necessarily happening in 2017 when we started. Now, I think especially with the pandemic, so many bartenders were stuck at home and starting YouTube channels—which is honestly incredibly inspiring to me, it’s a wonderful thing—but it did have me thinking about how to shift my approach since there was such a huge influx of cocktail content from other accounts.

At this point, though, you’ve built up an almost encyclopedic collection of cocktail recipes, history, and technique. Does that change how you think about what comes next?

I’ve been wrestling with this question. Like, I wanted to be the IMDb of cocktails. Even now, on our website, people can go there and basically submit me their cocktail recipes, and if it’s not completely ridiculous or a joke, I’ll actually make it. I’ll publish it on our website, because I do want to have the world’s largest collection of cocktails. So even if I’m not filming a video for every one [of the cocktails], I want to document them. I’d also like to start expanding into e-commerce, and providing access to some really good-quality bartending equipment, and I want to start bringing in some other voices, to further integrate other people in the industry into the videos on our channel.

Where do you draw your inspiration from? How do you decide what topic to cover next?

The thing about The Educated Barfly that nobody really knows is that it was never really a reference to myself. The whole idea was that we’re helping educate the person on the other side of the bar. I saw so much talent around me as a bartender, and I was so inspired, I always want to highlight what those people are doing. I make an effort to travel around, I visit a lot of bars, I meet people. I exhausted my own knowledge probably two years into doing this, so to look at the larger cocktail culture, and the history of cocktails, and choose what I want to learn to become better and more well-versed in—I love that I get to explore and share all of that. I really do this because I have an insatiable appetite for knowledge.

What do you think is on the horizon for this year in the cocktail world?

I can’t say what will happen, but I can say what I’d like to see more of. I’d like to see the interest in tequila continue to grow, and I’d love to see spirits like charanda become more normalized. It’s a rum that actually sort of predates rum. It’s been made in Michoacán, Mexico, since the 1500s, and can only be made there, where the sugarcane is grown in this red clay soil that only occurs at this particular elevation. A lot of producers are making it locally, but they’re not exporting, and many of them are pivoting to more lucrative industries like growing avocados. I would hate to see this spirit go extinct because it’s truly incredible. I’d also love to see rum more broadly gain attention and understanding; I think it’s the most diverse category of spirit on the planet.

Is there a drink you reach for once the cameras stop rolling?

Yes, Malört and a pilsner! As far as cocktails go, Old Fashioneds always have a special place in my heart. It’s such an easy template to customize and play with. I once calculated that in my 10 years at Cole’s French Dip I had made something like 350,000 Old Fashioneds. I’d say I’m pretty good at it by now. ■

Bitter Pill

If you were alive and even mildly sentient in the late 1860s, you would have been familiar with Drake's Plantation Bitters. Starting from nowhere, these bitters suddenly seemed to be everywhere.

"The rapidity with which Plantation Bitters have become a household necessity throughout the civilized nations is without parallel in the history of the world," noted a news article in the *New Orleans Crescent* in 1869. (It was actually *not* a news article. It was an advertisement masquerading as journalism.) "Over five million bottles were sold in 12 months, and the demand is daily increasing." These bitters were favored by the "rich and poor, young and old, ladies, physicians and clergymen."

This was an era in which bitters were in a liminal state—part medicine, part flavoring agent for delicious cocktails. Hundreds of bitter brands were being hawked, with most promoting not only exotic ingredients—Plantation was made from the "choicest roots and herbs" along with the "celebrated Calisaya" bark from Peru—but also an exhaustive list of maladies they could cure.

In the case of Drake's Plantation bitters, claims for its benefits included a cure for "morning lassitude and depression of spirits," along with "headache and languor;" it lent "strength, vigor and a cheerful and contented disposition," and "puts dyspepsia to flight." One alleged customer claimed to have gained 16 pounds in eight weeks, and now eats meals "with a good relish."

But it wasn't so much for health reasons that people swilled bitters each morning. It was for the buzz. Plantation Bitters boasted that it was made from the best rum imported from St. Croix. It was also bottled at a revivifying 100 proof, with a recommended dosage of three full wineglasses daily.

Drinking straight bitters was more wholesome and reputable than just knocking back a shot of whiskey each morning—it was, after all, for your health. It was also cheaper. Spirits were taxed more heavily because they were a product of choice; bitters were not, as they were medicine and thus an article of necessity. A 100-proof medicine, but medicine nonetheless. Even some temperance societies nodded approvingly at the taking of one's morning bitters.

Plantation Bitters took root in the 1850s, when a Col. Patrick H. Drake launched a product called Catawba Bitters. In 1860 he reinvented and rebranded his product, tweaking the ingredients, changing to bottles shaped like log cabins, and renaming it Drake's Plantation Bitters.

How did it go from zero to five million bottles seemingly overnight? Drake turned his bitters into a sensation with two strategies: Ubiquity. And mystery.

The ubiquity came in advertising. Drake ran large ads in dozens of papers, in which the name Plantation Bitters was repeated 20 or more times, interspersed with testimonials as to the superiority of his product. ("The value of such an antidote cannot be expressed in words," read one). In 1862, an entire column on the front page of the *New York Times* touted the glories of Plantation Bitters; the rest of the page was given over to a detailed account of Gen. George B. McClellan and Gen. Joseph Hooker in the Battle of Richmond.

Drake also was an aggressive user of outdoor advertising. He painted massive ads on the sides of barns, houses, and

rock outcroppings. An 1865 article in *Harper's Magazine* about the perniciousness of such advertising showed "Drake's Plantation Bitters" painted in exceedingly large letters on the Palisades across the Hudson River from New York City, visible just behind a woman applying her cosmetics. He also splashed his company name on the side of the White Mountains in New Hampshire, an act that led to the state banning advertising that defaced any natural setting of scenic beauty—the first such law in the nation.

The mystery arose in the content of Drake's ads. The first ads blanketing the countryside featured only baffling text: "S.T. 1860 X." Where people gathered they debated what this unusual cypher meant. Only after Drake got the nation conversing about this inscrutable code did he finally append the name "Plantation Bitters" to the ads, partially clarifying

the enigma. (What did it actually mean? He insisted that the words and letters were just nonsense designed to incite curiosity, but that didn't stop the theorizing. Among the more popular notions was that it was code for "St. Croix," the source of the rum.)

Drake's Plantation Bitters went from everywhere to nowhere almost as fast as they arose—and before the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 largely put a stop to quackery and left only a few bitters standing as condiments for cocktails. But let us pause and recognize a brand that was well ahead of its time: in exploiting tax loopholes, in wielding advertising like a truncheon, in confusing readers with advertorials made to look like journalism, in creating a social media–like buzz by being vague and mysterious.

It was all enough to provoke sadness and despair. Conveniently, that was exactly what it cured. **By Wayne Curtis**



Matty Newton

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taste test Modern or traditional, Earl Grey brews up winter comfort.

Shades of Grey

A historic style of tea with a devoted modern fan base, Earl Grey takes its name from Charles Grey, the second Earl of Grey and the British prime minister from 1830 to 1834. Though mostly conjecture, the story goes that Grey was either gifted the tea by a man from China whose life he'd saved, or that his own household concocted the flavorful blend as a means of masking the mineral-rich water supply. A blend of black tea leaves and the floral-forward Italian citrus bergamot, the tea can be found in a myriad of styles today, whether aiming traditional or getting creative with complementary ingredients.

By Penelope Bass

Smith Teamaker Lord Bergamot

\$12.99/15 bags, smithtea.com

Among the multitude of single origins and tea blends on offer from Portland, Oregon's Smith Teamaker, the Lord Bergamot remains a longtime customer fave. Beginning with a flavorful base of Assam and Ceylon black teas, the blend is infused with bergamot essential oil

from Calabria, creating a heady aroma from the start, and delivering a bold but well-balanced flavor.



Harney & Sons Earl Grey Supreme

\$11/20 bags, harney.com

Family owned and operated in New York for four decades, Harney & Sons began when founder John Harney ran an inn and offered his own tea blends to guests. The Earl Grey Supreme creates an extra-smooth blend of high-grade black and oolong tea with white silver tips.

Mixed with bergamot oil, the tea has an aroma that's earthy and herbaceous, and drinks without a hint of bitter tannins.



Palais des Thés Thé Des Lords

\$20/3.5 oz., us.palaisdesthes.com

Founded as a French teahouse in 1986, Palais des Thés also founded a tea school in Paris, and expanded to the U.S. in 2010. Their Thé Des Lords aims traditionally English in style, with a bold black-tea blend from India and China infused with bergamot and just a sprinkling of safflower petals. The result is a tea that smells fresh and earthy, with vibrant bergamot undertones.



Adagio Teas Earl Grey Moonlight

\$9/15 bags, adagio.com

Redolent with aromas of creamy vanilla and sweet almond, the Earl Grey Moonlight from Adagio was created to meet customer demand for a crème version of the classic tea. Dried orange and cornflower complement a black-tea base, while the bergamot provides a solid backbone to the aromatic blend. This one works especially well with milk and sugar.



August Metropolitan

\$27.49/100 grams, august.la

Dressed up with a hint of stone fruit and spice, the Metropolitan blend from LA-based tea blender August is a tasty, modern take on the style. Complementing the bergamot, an Assam base is blended with plum, lemon peel, mallow flower, nutmeg, and clove, resulting in extra-fruity aromatics that lead into earthier flavors, with a bit of tingling clove on the finish.



Camellia Sinensis Organic Earl Grey

\$12.49/100 grams, camellia-sinensis.com

Using certified organic and fair-trade black tea from India for their Earl Grey, Camellia Sinensis (which takes its name from the species of tea plant) offers a rich, earthy version with a bright, floral bergamot character. Bold and balanced, this one would be delightful with either honey or a squeeze of lemon, depending on which flavors you want to highlight.



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Short and Stout

The only thing that can improve upon the soothing comfort of a cup of tea is the aesthetic joy of pouring it from a beautiful teapot. So why not upgrade your tea-drinking experience with a pot that delivers on both form and function? Whether adorning the table for afternoon tea or simply used as a brew for one, these six teapots offer contemporary interpretations of the classic, English style. **By Carissa Chesaneck**

Vienna Glass Teapot with Removable Infuser

\$29.95/37-ounce, teabloom.com

Why we like it: The delicate appearance and lightweight build of the Vienna Glass Teapot belies its durability; crafted with heatproof, lead-free borosilicate glass, the pot is safe for both stovetop and microwave. The removable stainless-steel infuser makes brewing loose-leaf teas a snap, and the extra-wide handle makes for comfortable pouring. Plus, there are three capacity sizes to



choose from, whether making a single steep or brewing for a group.

Olio Black Teapot by Barber Osgerby

\$110/37-ounce, royaldoulton.com

Why we like it: This pot from the Olio Collection, an award-winning collaboration between London's Royal Doulton and designers Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby, is a staple for both form and function. Made from stoneware to offer a durable design that is dishwasher, oven, and microwave safe, the teapot has a sleek exterior with black matte glaze, keeping this one looking modern and fresh.



Sue Pryke Two-Cup Teapot

\$120/18.6-ounce, bellocqtea.com

Why we like it: Originally a shape designer from historic porcelain makers Wedgwood, British ceramicist Sue Pryke now looks to the simple objects of everyday life for her creative inspiration. Her porcelain Two-Cup Teapot gives a minimalist makeover to the classic British style. With a glazed interior and perforated spout for catching leaves, the teapot's unglazed, hand-polished exterior creates a modern, matte finish.



Degrenne Salam Insulated Teapot

\$173-\$195/34-ounce, food52.com

Why we like it: France-based Degrenne first released the Bedouin-inspired Salam teapot in 1953, and the style remains a favorite today, with a contemporary vibe and eight colors and styles. The felt-lined stainless steel cover nests over the porcelain pot to keep your tea toasty, and an aluminum filter basket makes for easy cleanup.



Dew Teapot with Basket Infuser

\$48/32-ounce, forlifedesignusa.com

Why we like it: Los Angeles-based designer Masa Fujii launched For Life in 1994 to feature simple yet contemporary designs for the everyday. As functional as it is adorable, the Dew Teapot fits that bill. The ceramic pot comes in a range of pastel hues and offers a drip-free pour from its silicone gasket lid, while the stainless-steel infuser allows for easy steeping no matter the tea leaves.



Kinto LT Teapot

\$72/20.4-ounce, artoftea.com

Why we like it: This porcelain teapot from Japanese tableware maker Kinto brings a traditional, Japanese-inspired style to the English teapot aesthetic. With a glossy finish and subtly rich texture, steel handle, and recessed porcelain topper, this pot (in classic black or white) keeps the look sleek and modern.



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A historic staple of Levantine cuisine, tahini—a creamy mixture of ground sesame seeds—has been used in savory and sweet dishes for centuries. And while you may be more accustomed to mixing it into your hummus, there's a good argument for mixing it into your cocktails as well. Tahini's mellow, nutty flavor and luxurious texture can be used in various cocktail applications, from fat washing and syrups to stepping in as an orgeat substitute.

For newly minted cookbook author Rose Previte, owner of *Maydān* in Washington, D.C., tahini is a part of her Lebanese heritage, and the inspiration for the Halwa, a Margarita riff. "Our bar manager Nari Kim had the brilliant idea of making tahini the star of the Halwa by using it in a syrup with sugar, vanilla, and orange blossom water," says Previte. "It's her version of a drinkable Snickers bar, but it reminds me of the halva I ate growing up."

At Homer, a Middle Eastern–Mediterranean restaurant in Seattle, bar manager Ginny Edwards was asked to create a tahini-based cocktail that would feel cohesive with the food menu. The result was Hey Jude, an herbaceous, savory cocktail made with caraway-forward aquavit and a salted lemon-cilantro syrup. "The

savory spice notes and subtle sweetness in the aquavit work well with tahini's nutty and bitter notes, and those flavors are amplified by the citrus and salty syrup," says Edwards.

Chris Ainsworth, chef and co-owner of *Saffron Mediterranean Kitchen* in Walla Walla, Washington, also approaches cocktails from a culinary perspective. "I look for ways to incorporate the ingredients we already use into drinks, which is how I hit on fat-washing vodka with tahini," he says. "The neutral spirit takes on the toasty elements and slightly bitter finish of the tahini and provides a rounded mouthfeel." For his Pinky Swear, Ainsworth combines the tahini vodka with an Italian aperitif, maraschino liqueur, and walnut bitters; the final touch is a spritz of Lebanese anise liqueur inside the glass. "Tahini plays well with the syrupy sweetness of the aperitif and cherry liqueur, and walnut bitters amplifies its tannic notes," says Ainsworth, noting that the tahini vodka would also work in a dirty Martini or Lemon Drop.

For Edwards, tahini's texture is just as appealing as its flavor, imparting a frothy body and a velvety consistency. "It's the hero ingredient we never knew we needed," she says.

By Laurel Miller

Pinky Swear

Tahini-washed vodka adds richness and toasty flavors to this bittersweet sipper. If arak is unavailable, substitute another anise spirit such as ouzo, sambuca, or pastis.

1½ oz. tahini-washed vodka
1½ oz. Cocchi Americano Rosa
1 oz. maraschino liqueur
1 dash walnut bitters
2 spritzes arak (or other anise-forward spirit)

Tools: barspoon

Glass: rocks

Garnish: maraschino cherry, orange twist and candied ginger

Spritz or lightly rinse a chilled rocks glass with the anise spirit. Add a large ice cube and the remaining ingredients, and stir briefly. Garnish.

Tahini Vodka: Whisk together 1 liter of vodka and 1 cup of tahini, then pour into a sealable container and place in the freezer overnight. Strain the mixture through cheesecloth to remove the bulk of the tahini, then strain again through a coffee filter [changing the filter once or twice, as needed]. Repeat the filtration until the vodka is almost clear, then bottle and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Chris Ainsworth
Saffron Mediterranean Kitchen
Walla Walla, Washington

Hey Jude

Savory and smoky with a bright, herbal punch, this drink gets a silky texture from a barspoon of tahini.

1½ oz. aquavit
¾ oz. fresh lemon juice
¾ oz. savory lemon-cilantro syrup
1 barspoon tahini
Mezcal, for rinsing

Tools: shaker, strainer, fine strainer

Glass: rocks

Garnish: fennel blossom, cilantro sprig, or lemon wheel (optional)

Rinse a rocks glass with a small splash of mezcal, discarding the excess. Combine the remaining ingredients in a shaker and shake well without ice until the mixture is foamy, then add ice and shake again until chilled. Double strain over a large ice cube in the prepared glass, then garnish.

Savory Lemon-Cilantro Syrup: In a small saucepan, bring 1 cup of water to a boil, then add 1 tsp. of kosher or sea salt, half a lemon cut into quarters, and 5-6 sprigs of cilantro with stems, maintaining a rolling boil. Slowly add 1 cup of sugar, stirring to dissolve, then remove from heat. Allow the syrup to cool before double straining out the solids. Store in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Ginny Edwards
Homer, Seattle

Halwa

Previte describes this cocktail, which appears in her new cookbook, *Maydān*, as a "creamy sesame Margarita" that replicates the flavors of nougat or halva, accented by the caramel notes in the aged tequila.

1½ oz. reposado tequila
1 oz. tahini syrup
½ oz. orange liqueur
½ oz. fresh lime juice

Tools: shaker, strainer

Glass: coupe

Garnish: ground pistachios

Shake all of the ingredients with ice until very cold, then strain into a chilled coupe and garnish.

Tahini Syrup: In a blender, combine 1 cup of tahini (stirred smooth before measuring), 1 cup of hot water, ¾ cup of granulated sugar, ¼ tsp. of kosher salt, ¼ tsp. of vanilla extract, and ¼ tsp. of orange blossom water. Blend until smooth and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Rose Previte and Nari Kim
Maydān, Washington, D.C.



THE IMBIBE



By Betsy Andrews, Penelope Bass, Kate Bernot, Joshua M. Bernstein, Carissa Chesaneck, Paul Clarke, Shana Clarke, Amy Bess Cook, Jillian Dara, Max Falkowitz, Jennifer Fiedler, Chala June, Maggie Kimberl, Laurel Miller, Caroline Pardilla, Emily Saladino, Robert Simonson, Christine Sismondo, and Alex Testere

PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT WILL SHAPE
THE WAY WE DRINK IN 2024 AND BEYOND.



Katherine Boushel
at Bon D elire
in Montreal.



e're cruising into 2024 with a thirst for adventure, and we've got plenty of ideas for where the year will take us. Following is our annual list of 75 people and places we think will help shape the drinks world this year and beyond. There are new cocktail and wine bars to check out and cafés and breweries to make a part of your days ahead, along with plenty of talented drinks pros doing impressive work in their establishments, and their communities. And this list is just the start—head to imbibemagazine.com to learn more about the 2024 Imbibe 75.

MARTIN KASTNER

When designer Martin Kastner introduced the Porthole infusion vessel in 2010, it was just one of many bespoke objects he helped create for Grant Achatz's Aviary cocktail bar. But something about it—the enchanting window into the infusion process—caught the public's attention, and more than 4,000 patrons contributed to his Kickstarter to have one in their own home bar. His latest design—available through his shop Crucial Detail—is all about crafting a perfect cup of coffee. The Orb One is a coffee maker in the vein of a moka pot, a stovetop device designed to use steam pressure to push water through a basket of ground beans. "I'd been obsessing about coffee for a long time," says Kastner, "using every imaginable device, tinkering with them, playing with filtration. And I felt like I could improve upon the moka pot. That was the beginning of the Orb." By expanding the size of

the base to match modern burners, he increased the device's thermal efficiency, transferring the heat to the right places, rather than overcooking the coffee. "With a moka pot," he says, "you end up boiling the grounds, which results in overextraction, which isn't ideal." His clever addition of a stainless steel heat sink keeps the water just below boiling as it passes through the grounds—and an extremely fine filter—creating an even, balanced brew, which can be made short like an espresso, or long for a drip-style. Kastner and his wife have been enjoying using their prototype every day for the past few years: "She says it's the first useful thing I've ever designed." —Alex Testere

TREVIN HUTCHINS

Cocktail recipes typically start with instruction to, for example, measure a certain quantity of gin. Rarely, if ever, do they begin: "Make gin." But for Trevin Hutchins,

beverage manager at Aphotic in San Francisco, composing drinks for the ocean-oriented restaurant sometimes starts with creating the base spirits and taking cocktail construction from there. Hutchins, whose résumé includes a chain restaurant, a tiki bar, and nightclubs as well as fine dining, says the white tablecloth environment naturally appeals to him. "I'm a food-motivated person, and the high-technique thought and care for ingredients is a huge part of what drew me in to fine dining," he says. In an environment such as that at Aphotic, the cocktail approach needs to closely track what's going on in the kitchen—which has presented its own set of challenges and surprises. "I never thought I'd be using something like smoked fishbone in a cocktail, or fish sauce or garum," he says. "We use nori and other seaweeds, and it's been really cool to see how these ocean ingredients work." Translating such ingredients into cocktail-ready form

sometimes involves vacuum distillation, which required a year of trial and error on Hutchins' part, and a distillery license from the state of California for the restaurant's tiny two-and-a-half-liter still. But the learning and regulatory headaches are balanced by the positives, such as the opportunity to focus on locally farmed and foraged ingredients, and the ability to create bespoke spirits for the bar. Today, Hutchins works with a range of 27 house distillates, liqueurs, and a gin created from five botanicals. These ingredients make their way into house drinks, including those designed for a cocktail tasting menu built around a central theme, such as a recent one focused on bodies of water. Hutchins finds the R&D part of the job particularly appealing, and his plans for 2024 include taking bar guests on one breathtaking flavor experience after another. "Pertaining to the program, we're pushing right now, honestly, to just get weird." —Paul Clarke

Trevin Hutchins at
Aphotic in San Francisco.



THE RUBY FRUIT

One of Los Angeles' buzziest new openings only *happens* to be a restaurant and wine bar; it has another agenda first. "People come in first and foremost because it's a lesbian bar," says Emily Bielagus, co-owner of Silver Lake's The Ruby Fruit, "but they return again and again because the wine list is unfussy and the food is so good." Bielagus and her business partner Mara Herbkersman, both restaurant industry veterans, opened the small, brightly colored spot, tucked in an unassuming strip mall, last year with the intention of putting their money where their values are. The concisely edited all-natural wine list rotates frequently to feature bottles made by women, queer, trans, and non-binary people—all with an emphasis on sustainability, too. "I love highlighting women running the show," she says, with names including Rosalind Reynolds of Emme Wines, Vivianne Kennedy of RAM cellars, and dry-farming advocate Megan Bell of Margins Wine. Of special note: the Cortese that's always on the menu from Roni Ganach of Roni Selects. "It's an orange wine that's refreshing, fun, chuggable, and also very elegant, kinda like us." —*Jennifer Fiedler*



Emily Bielagus (left) and Mara Herbkersman at The Ruby Fruit in Los Angeles.

Jesse Salter

HECK BREWING

Andy McMillan was seeking a collaborator for a new nonalcoholic brew when he found an unexpected partner in Justin Miller, the former head brewer of Hopworks Brewery. After closing Suckerpunch—a Portland, Oregon, bar dedicated entirely to nonalcoholic drinks—McMillan was hoping to craft a one-off

NA beer for a pop-up, and ended up starting a business instead. The two were so impressed by what they created (an IPA and a lager, both brewed traditionally with modern strains of brewer's yeast that produce only trace amounts of alcohol), they decided to launch Heck: a dedicated nonalcoholic craft brewery. "A lot of NA beer at the

moment is just parroting classic styles," says McMillan, "but there's this emergent science around it, and we're excited to do a lot of experimentation with it." And they're keen on hearing from the community, with a pilot program that allows an exclusive group of members to receive and sample the beers while they're finalizing the recipes. —AT



DADDY LONG LEGS

Is this Imbibe 75er a pastry chef or a bartender? And is he Michael George or (his preferred name) Daddy Long Legs? For George/Long Legs, it's all one and the same. A Chicago native and Le Cordon Bleu graduate, he headed straight out after graduation for the kitchens at an Alaskan resort, turning out trays of desserts for hungry visitors to Denali. He followed the seasonal work circuit to a ski resort in Park City, Utah, and bounced around the service industry until a manager offered him a way to expand his expertise. "He said, 'I want to make you my lead bartender, because you have a culinary background and a palate, and you know how to build flavors,'" he says. "And he took me under his wing, and taught me about bartending." Now in Salt Lake City, George/Long Legs is working at two bars, Water Witch and ACME, and has moved from developing his bartending

skills to showcasing them. Last year, he won the Black Bourbon Society's Black Manhattan competition with a Manhattan riff inspired by a Black Forest gateau. He dubbed his cocktail the Blackest in the Forest, because, he says, "the Black Forest gateau was one of the first things I learned to make in culinary school. And pulling from my experience of being Black in Utah, and Black in Alaska, I was literally the blackest in the forest all the time, one of the only people of color in these spaces. I wanted to translate those flavors into something that told my story, and told where I'm at and where I want to go, and how I create." His career may have started with pastries and led to cocktails,

but now he sees the two as inseparable. "I fell in love with pastries in high school, and with spirits in my adult life. I could never see myself doing one without the other. They completely inform each other without me even having to think about it." —PC

RICHMOND WINE COLLECTIVE

"I don't know that I would want to make wine in a space that's just us," says Noel Diaz, who along with his wife, Barrie Quan, runs the Richmond Wine Collective in California's Bay Area. After creating and growing their own label, Purity Wine, in 2013, they moved into a bigger facility in 2017. To offset costs, they invited

other winemakers to work in the space, and soon the collective took shape. It's not just about communal equipment: Sharing knowledge and resources—even grape sources—contributes to the group's dynamics. Diaz and Quan especially see RWC as a place for BIPOC winemakers to find their place in the industry. To date, approximately 12 brands operate out of the space. To further create a dialogue around natural wines in California—a unifying thread among winemakers—Diaz and Quan opened The Study wine bar and bottle shop and host regular events, both of which feature members' wines. —Shana Clarke

Daddy Long Legs with a Daddy's Daig at Water Witch in Salt Lake City. Head to imbibemagazine.com for the recipe.



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Alexandra Snope working behind the bar at The End in Portland, Oregon.



Photos this spread: Aubrie Legault

THE END

Demonstrating adaptive reuse at its finest, The End—a new cocktail bar in Portland, Oregon’s trendy Richmond neighborhood—is housed in a historic building that for four decades functioned as an adult movie theater. Following a serious facelift of the building in 2020, the Portland Art Museum took over the theater space, and the lux build-out of the bar is helmed by Emily Mistell (also an owner of Hey Love) and business partner Nicholas Musso. “The opportunity to create a space inside a piece of Portland history was a no-brainer,” says Mistell. “I wanted the cocktails to be elevated but also throw a cheeky twist on everything, so there’s always a little nod to the theater.” That includes an Old Fashioned infused with the flavors of buttered popcorn, and a slushie called If These Walls Could Talk. Plus, adds Mistell, “the vibe is sexy as hell.”

—Penelope Bass

DANTE BEVERLY HILLS

Dante (and its precursor, Caffe Dante) have been a Greenwich Village institution since 1915. The team behind the bar’s modern renaissance, husband-and-wife Linden Pride and Nathalie Hudson, proved the concept had legs with the launch of the auxiliary Dante West Village in 2020. But what had heretofore been a quintessentially New York bar, Dante recently made its West Coast debut, proving that demand for Negronis knows no bounds. Installing their Italian-inflected vibe on the recently renovated rooftop of The Maybourne

Beverly Hills, Dante Beverly Hills will integrate a bit of California culture and style. A selection of agave-forward cocktails, like the Celery Paloma (tequila, Brucato Amaro Chaparral, elderflower, celery soda, lime, verjus), will hold court among the Dante classics. And while their famed Garibaldi (Campari and fluffy OJ) still holds top billing, you can also order the new Supergreen made with gin, elderflower, basil, and fluffy cucumber juice ... because LA. —PB

FINCA TO FILTER/ SIDE SADDLE WINE SALOON

Launched mid-pandemic by Kayla Bellman, Atlanta coffee company Finca to Filter (self-described as “enthusiastic queer coffee professionals”) functions more like a mission statement in action than a standard café. Bellman, researching the macroeconomics of the coffee sector in grad school, wanted to put her knowledge to practice. “Our goal became two-prong: Do what we can at origin, and do what we can in our own local economy,” says Bellman. Finca to Filter creates what they call “partnership coffees” by sourcing beans from like-minded partners at origin, then tapping regional coffee roasters run by women, people of color, and queer folks (such as Little Waves and Portrait Coffee) to roast their beans. Finca’s third location, opening this spring, will be a dual concept featuring an adjacent standalone natural wine bar, the Side Saddle Wine Saloon. “Our aim is to bring the same intentionality and purpose to our wine program,” Bellman says. —PB



THIEF OF HEARTS

Emily Mistell describes this cocktail, named for a 1984 erotic drama, as an elegant Manhattan riff with seductive aromatics.

1 oz. Scotch whisky
1 oz. dry vermouth
½ oz. apple brandy
¼ oz. maraschino liqueur
¼ oz. pear liqueur
1 barspoon honey
1 dash orange bitters
3 drops peaty scotch

Tools: barspoon, strainer
Glass: coupe or Nick & Nora
Garnish: cucumber slice

Stir all of the ingredients (except the peaty scotch) with ice, then strain into a chilled coupe. Float a cucumber slice on top of the drink, and top with 3 drops of the peaty scotch.

Emily Mistell
The End
Portland, Oregon



JESS BAUM

When Jess Baum joined Bonterra Organic Vineyards in 2020, it wasn't because she was especially passionate about its Cabernet. "I'm sober," she says. "I'm not a wine industry person. Impact is my industry, and wine is the platform I've chosen." As the company's senior director of impact, Baum has ushered in a new era of ecological responsibility for the sustainability-minded brand, helping it achieve Regenerative Organic and Climate Neutral certification. For Baum, wine is the ideal medium to pursue systemic change at such a crucial time in the climate crisis. "It's rare in an industry to be both grower and manufacturer," she says. "Instead of a suite of products, we just have grapes." She finds terroir, or the notion of how and where wine grapes are grown directly impact what's in the glass, similarly inspiring. "The connection to time and place is an amazing nexus to talk about climate, our collective history, and our collective future," she says. Some of those conversations happen on *Soil to Soul*, a new podcast where she and a fleet of guests discuss everything from the relevance of sustainability certifications to labor rights to whether or not they like the smell of soil (spoiler: Baum does). It's all part of Baum's mission to look at

systemic issues—the carbon footprint of glass bottles, say, or the impact of soil health on the climate—and enact change. "Wine is a vehicle for hope, for transformation, for advocacy." —*Emily Saladino*

DARWIN ONIYX ACOSTA

"The future of wine is opening up opportunities, focusing on sustainability for the land but also for people, and realizing that everybody has a different journey to wine," Darwin Oniyx Acosta says. "The focus on community is going to be the future of wine, one thousand percent." That's a clarity of vision unusual in someone who's not yet 30 years old, and who's spent all of four years in the wine industry. But Acosta doesn't operate under run-of-the-mill assumptions. As a queer BIPOC scholarship student hailing from Queens, their differences from dominant Napa culture made their experiences, as a 2020 fellow with the diversity initiative the Roots Fund, unique and sometimes challenging. "Being in a winery cellar can be intimidating," they say. "When I moved to Napa, I had to navigate my identity a lot in those spaces." Their response was Co-Fermented, an organization for queer inclusion in the wine industry, hosting events on Instagram Live and in person, including a Cheers for Queers gala that is likely the planet's largest gathering of LGBTQIA+ winemakers and supporting wineries. "Oniyx is a natural-born community builder, a leader creating awareness and representation for the queer community in wine," says Maryam Ahmed, founder of the Diversity in Wine

Leadership Forum. Now back in New York working in wine service at the queer Manhattan restaurant HAGS and the Brooklyn natural wine bar Lise & Vito, Acosta is diving into their latest project: being a part of Virginia's Common Wealth Crush's incubator project "to provide opportunity to queer wine professionals in sales and service to get hands-on knowledge of everything we speak of on the floor." The recipient will help design, make, and market a Co-Fermented wine. But "making wine isn't the main priority," says Acosta. "It's about reinforcing and rooting community in the industry. When the wine hits the market, it's a tangible representation of what I enjoy about wine, which is that wine brings people together," says Acosta. "I want to bring queer people together." —*Betsy Andrews*

TARTAN HOUSE

Jeff Knott is perfectly aware that his Louisville bar, which opened in August, is located in bourbon's home territory. But that didn't keep him from looking further afield for the bar's whisky influences. "I've always had a fondness for scotch," Knott says. "So much of the way we distill in Kentucky is deeply rooted in Scotland. It just made sense to tie those two worlds together." The bar's enthusiasm for Scotch whisky (Knott says the young bar may already have the largest selection in the state, along with a sturdy range of bourbon) is gently echoed in its tartan-and-oak décor, and drinkers of all types can find satisfaction in the selection. Located at the nexus of the NuLu and Butchertown neighborhoods,

Tartan House supplements its ample whisky (and whiskey) offerings with a menu featuring classic and modern-classic cocktails, served in liquid nitrogen-chilled glassware. So whether a guest's tastes lead them to a Bobby Burns or a neat pour of Bruichladdich, there's still the option to sip locally with a glass of Bourbon Country's finest. —*PC*

SUPERBUENO

Ignacio "Nacho" Jimenez swears he doesn't know who starts the conga lines at his new bar, Superbueno. But they happen at least twice a week. The spontaneous dance parties are just the level of infectious fun and over-the-top hospitality Jimenez was hoping for when the longtime bartender and barfly favorite (Ghost Donkey) opened his "Mexican American cocktail bar," as he calls it, in spring of last year in Manhattan's East Village. Since then, staple cocktails like the Green Mango Martini, made with tequila, and the Dashi Papi—a creative boilermaker composed of raicilla, birria broth, Mexican beer, and hot sauce—have become local classics. In 2024, Jimenez plans to expand the Mexican spirit selection and the food offerings, which are served late into the night. And the bar has established itself as an industry hang. Recently the crew from Salmon Guru in Madrid stopped by. But Jimenez wants to extend VIP treatment to all comers. "I try to give everybody that experience," he says. "I'm proud to say our crowd is very, very diverse." Thankfully, everyone knows how to do the conga. —*Robert Simonson*



Ignacio "Nacho" Jimenez (top) and a Chamoy Soda (this photo) at Superbueno in New York City.





Tune in to *Radio Imbibe* in February to listen to an extended interview with Chava Peribán: imbibemagazine.com/podcast



Azuena San Martín

CHAVA PERIBÁN

Distilled spirits can be thought of as a perfect convergence of agriculture, art, and engineering. For mezcal expert Chava Peribán, life has taken him through each of those stations. “I studied industrial design, but I realized early on that I didn’t want to spend my life making models of chairs, cars, or jewelry,” Peribán says. “I was more interested in the manufacturing side of things.” Having grown up on an avocado farm in Michoacán, Peribán (whose formal first name is Salvador, but, he says, “Salvador means ‘savior’ and that’s a lot of responsibility”) took a circuitous route after college, through glasswork and ceramics in Oaxaca

for six years and, almost by accident, into designing combustion systems for the process of distilling mezcal. A knack for the work and enthusiasm for the spirit led to a career shift, first as a distiller for Sombra mezcal for a year and later as a designer and consultant on, he says, “everything related to mezcal except selling it.” Now based in Mexico City, Peribán is continuing his work with agave spirits, traveling to consult on *palenques*, and

bottling small batches of agave spirits from different producers to showcase the category’s depth and breadth. Along the way, he’s also sharing his experiences on the digital airwaves, first as a co-host (with Imbibe 75 alum Lou Bank) of the *Agave Road Show* podcast, and more recently as solo host of the *Heritage Mezcal* podcast. The goal, he says, is to explain the depths and nuances of the agave world with a wider audience, while also giving insight into what

mezcal means for Mexico. “I like to say Mexico isn’t a country, it’s a continent,” he says. “I made an episode about baseball, because if you don’t understand the relationship of Mexicans with baseball, you may not actually understand our relationship with mezcal. It’s how we celebrate, how we spend our weekends, how families come together while watching this sport that you think is mostly American. For me, actually, it’s almost like I’m doing it for myself.” —PC



Averie Swanson

AVERIE SWANSON

Averie Swanson is one of the most respected brewers of mixed-fermentation beer in the country, yet she's never had a brick-and-mortar location to call her own. That's about to change later this year when her brewery, Keeping Together, opens a taproom on the south side of Santa Fe. It's the next phase in a professional arc for Swanson, whose star began to rise when she became head brewer at Austin's Jester King Brewery in 2016, and continued when she launched Keeping Together in 2019 from borrowed space inside Chicago's Half Acre Beer Co. Fans have been able to find Swanson's creations in Chicago and at various festivals and events, but Keeping Together beers demand a dedicated place. Swanson is a conjurer of worlds: Her beers invite drinkers into her memories and associations,

incorporating ingredients like pears, chaat masala, wine grapes, peach leaves, and roasted chestnuts to evoke particular moments and draw associations. Not being able to present those beers to guests in an intentional space that she's designed, Swanson says, has felt incomplete. "My brewing is about trying to synthesize my memories to communicate that to another person," Swanson says. "So if this space could create dialogue, that's the hope." Swanson is working with Denver-based architect Kaci Taylor to convert the greenhouse of a former plant nursery into an indoor-outdoor, four-season beer garden. She promises lots of light, air, and mirrors to help create "introspective and reflective moments" for

guests. "I want the space to be comfortable and inclusive and open. I want people to be able to really see themselves in the space," Swanson says. Keeping Together makes beers under the tagline: "Thoughtful beers for an ecstatic reality." Finally, Swanson will be able to share her vision of reality with the people who love her beer, face to face, over a bottle, as she's always intended. —*Kate Bernot*

ORIGAMI SAKE

Ben Bell and Matt Bell (no relation) didn't start Origami Sake in Hot Springs, Arkansas, with the intention of just building a brewery; they want to turn the area into what they call "the Napa Valley of sake." Currently, Arkansas grows 48 percent of the

United States' rice crop and, outside of California, is the only state to cultivate varieties needed for sake production. Coupled with the water of Hot Springs—it lacks iron and manganese, which produce off-aromas and flavors in sake—the area is prime for a sake boom. Further supporting a burgeoning industry, nearby Isbell Farms, which supplies Origami with its rice, purchased two rice mills. Prior, sake rice needed to be sent to Minnesota for milling, but keeping the process local saves time and money—and reduces a nasty carbon footprint. With resources right at their fingertips, Origami, which had their grand opening in May 2023, hopes to start a domestic sake revolution. —*SC*

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BAYLEE HOPINGS

Baylee Hopings is part champion and part cheerleader. While spending much of the past decade bartending in Atlanta, working at places including Empire State South and Carmel, Hopings dedicated time to amping up her professional skills, from completing the rigorous WSET Level 3 Spirits certification to earning the top spot at a Speed Rack competition in Charleston, South Carolina. But Hopings hasn't done this alone; she shares her commitment to her bar colleagues via regular fitness-oriented "sweat checks" on Instagram, and through a Tales of the Cocktail wellness seminar last summer that aimed to extend the message to a wider audience. Now, Hopings is heading to new adventures in New Orleans, where she aims to continue spreading good drinks, and good vibes, around another Southern town. —PC

Baylee Hopings at
Kimball House in Atlanta.



Tune in to *Radio Imbibe* starting
January 16 for an extended
interview with Baylee Hopings:
imbibemagazine.com/podcast

TIGRE

If there's one thing you could say about the team behind beloved Williamsburg bar and restaurant Maison Premiere, it's that they know how to curate a vibe. But guests should expect an atmosphere that's a world away from the NOLA-inspired, absinthe-and-oysters vibe of MP. Built out in a windowless, repurposed nightlife spot in Manhattan's Lower East Side, Tigre aims mainly sensorial, with a modern-leaning cocktail program from William Elliot categorized largely by flavor (think guanabana, honeydew, yuzu), and a room lush with the textures of velvet and ultrasuede. "We call it a cocktail lounge, but our objective was creating a space that feels residential and luxurious," says co-founder Joshua Boissy. "It's like an after-party at someone's house who has great taste." —PB

BITTER MONK

Harlem cocktail bar Sugar Monk, owned by partners Ektoras Binikos and Simon Jutras, is known for crafting its elaborate drinks with many of Binikos' own botanical infusions. Their new bar, opening this winter, is a distillation of the concept, as it were. Bitter Monk, located in Brooklyn's Industry City, focuses solely on their house-made bitters, amari, and herbal liqueurs, alongside a selection of spirits and ingredients produced exclusively in New York state. The result is cocktails such as the Marie Laveau, a black Manhattan crafted with local whiskey and Bitter Monk's Palatine Amaro and Hoja Santa Bitters before being smoked

with palo santo. And while the 18-seat tasting room and bar encapsulates the same moody vibes of its Harlem parent, there's also a 12-by-7-foot window into the adjacent production laboratory where patrons can witness the real-time herbology. "We aspire to have our guests taste our products by themselves while we explain to them the process involved in the production of each," says Binikos. —PB

TÖV

On the main drag in Portland, Oregon's Hawthorne neighborhood, it's virtually impossible to miss coffee shop Töv, seeing as it's located within a repurposed, bright red, double-decker British bus. "A lot of people have an attachment to it," says Töv owner Joe Nazir, who opened the Egyptian-style coffee shop in 2015. "But honestly it's the worst place to do what I want to do. I knew that the time was coming to an end for the bus." Nazir found Töv its first brick-and-mortar home just up the road, taking over the location of a shuttered Starbucks. Resplendent in the cafe's signature shades of purple and gold, the new location, opened in October, offers the space and capabilities to bake their pastries on-site and experiment with new drinks to join longtime favorites like their cardamom-infused espresso drinks and traditionally made Egyptian coffees. But fret not, as the bus will still be used seasonally and for special events. "I want it to still be functional for people," says Nazir. "It is lovable." —PB



TULUM TOMORROW

Originally developed as a Speed Rack competition cocktail in 2022 (which Hopings won to become Southeast regional champ), Tulum Tomorrow turned into a menu favorite during her most recent bar gig in Atlanta.

1½ oz. blanco tequila
1 oz. pineapple juice
¾ oz. fresh lime juice
½ oz. green Chartreuse
¼ oz. passion fruit liqueur (Hopings uses Chinola)
¼ oz. simple syrup (1:1)

Tools: shaker, strainer
Glass: Collins
Garnish: mint bouquet, dehydrated lime wheel, paper parasol (optional)

Shake all of the ingredients with ice, strain into an ice-filled glass, then garnish.

Baylee Hopings
Atlanta / New Orleans

LUKE ANDERSON & JAKE BULLOCK

Before becoming the brains behind the best-selling cannabis beverage in North America, Luke Anderson and Jake Bullock were simply two longtime friends trying to cut back on booze while staying socially engaged. “For Luke and I, alcohol didn’t make us our best selves,” Bullock says. “But what we found with cannabis is it actually made us more ourselves.” Seeking to harness that feeling in a familiar, sharable format, the pair launched Cann, a line of all-natural weed-infused soft drinks, in 2019. Cannabis drinks have been a tough sell for the average consumer due to unpredictable and sometimes high potencies that, according to Bullock, “thwarted the social potential of the product.” Cann is formulated with a micro-dose of THC and CBD, allowing folks to have multiple drinks in a sitting. “[With] other intoxicants like alcohol and caffeine, we drink them in a micro-dose,” Bullock says. “We didn’t want to change the heuristics people had around drinking. We just wanted to change the [active] ingredient.” Despite the hurdles of online censorship, enduring stigma, and ever-shifting



Luke Anderson (left)
and Jake Bullock of Cann.

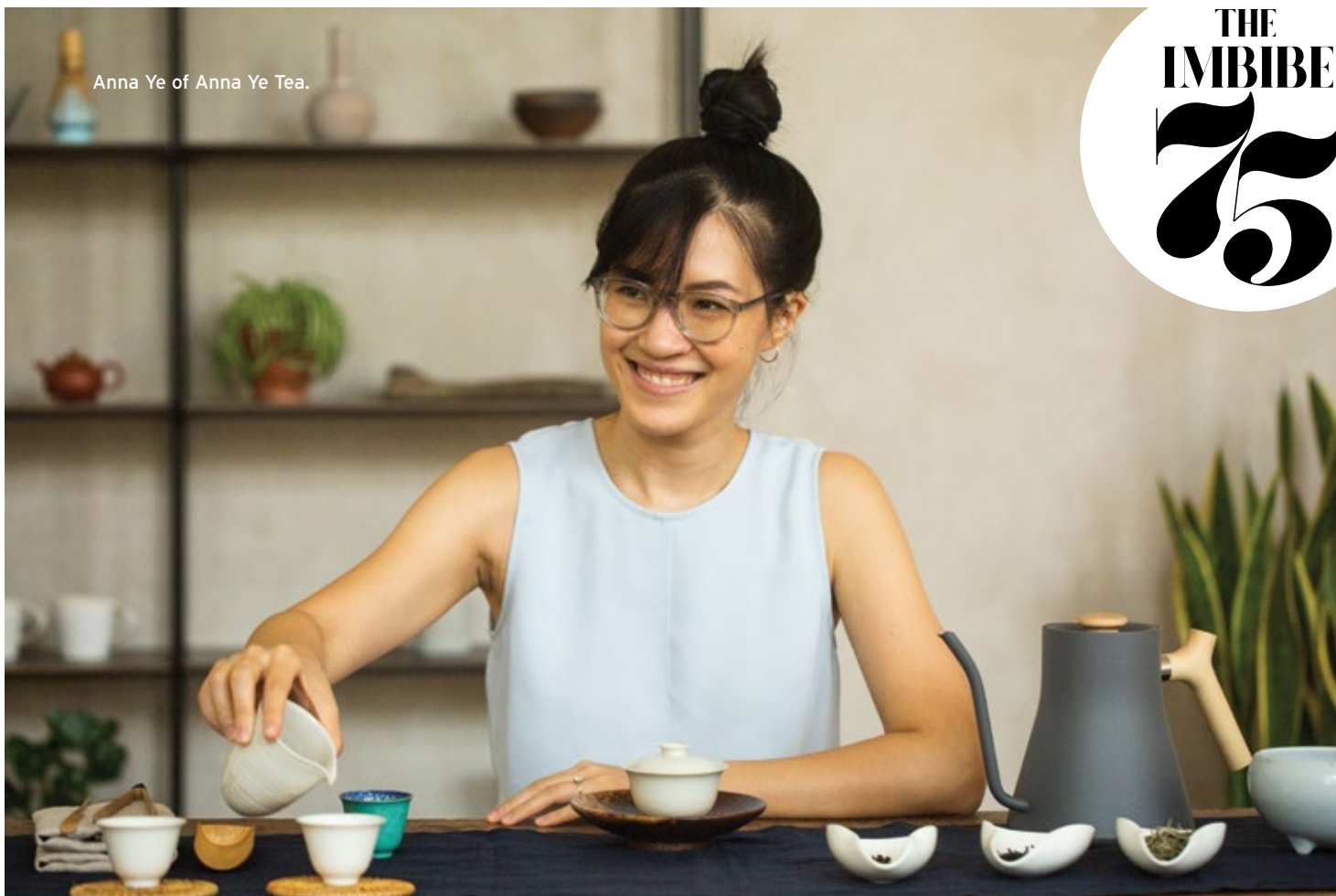
Maxwell Poth and Luke Fontana

legislation, Cann’s growth from small California brand into a multimillion dollar company has allowed Bullock and Anderson to create a new dialogue in both the beverage and cannabis industries. “There’s a bunch of steps that make this really challenging,

[but] we wouldn’t be doing this if consumers weren’t screaming and yelling for these products,” Bullock says. Ultimately, as entrepreneurs in the LGBTQIA+ community, Anderson and Bullock created Cann to help usher in a new age where every kind of drinker has

a place at the party. “We want inclusivity to really be something that folks take to heart as they think about our products,” Bullock says. “We’re evolving from a system where it’s binary—do you drink alcohol or be sober?—to a spectrum of all sorts of opportunities.”
—Chala June

Anna Ye of Anna Ye Tea.



Phoebé Cheong

ANNA YE

If someone asked you to name a nation famous for its tea, you probably wouldn't start with Vietnam. Yet every year, smugglers move thousands of pounds of quality Vietnamese teas into China and Taiwan, where they fetch top dollar as relabeled lots from those more renowned regions. Tea educator Anna Ye wanted the world to recognize Vietnam for its own contributions to the tea canon, rather than counterfeit commodities sold under the table. So in November of 2021, she launched Anna Ye Tea (annayetea.com), a company exclusively devoted to small-batch Vietnamese teas, many of which rarely make it to the global market. Her Misty Highland Green, for instance, is made from

elder tea trees that grow naturally in forests tended by local H'mong families. They process leaves the traditional way, by hand in a wok over a wood fire, which adds a subtle sultry smokiness to the brew. At nearby factories that cater to foreign tastes, that smokiness is seen as a defect. Ye views it as an extension of the region's terroir, where tea is a cultural practice as much as an industry, and well worth preserving. "I think it speaks to the culture," she says. "To strip that away is to strip away part of the life of the tea at origin." In 2022, Ye spoke at a Vietnamese tea trade show about marketing Vietnamese tea on its own terms. "The specialty market in Vietnam is dictated by large international buyers,"

she explains, who regard the country as a source of inexpensive land and labor. But "ethnic minority communities in Vietnam have been growing and making tea for hundreds of years," she continues, "and their cultural backgrounds and heritage are often left behind. If we look 20 years into the future, what kind of agency does that leave Vietnamese tea producers?"
—Max Falkowitz

ORIGIN STUDIO HOUSE

Located in historic east Austin, in a former residential home on a quarter acre, Origin Studio House is more than a bar or café, aiming to serve its guests on a deeper level. "The idea of Origin was established

around rootedness; we're building for something we recognize is missing in our community," says Dante Clemmons, co-founder of Origin along with Brittney Williams, who both come from backgrounds in business and design. With a heavy emphasis on art, Origin Studio House is specifically intended to foster creative space for Austin's Black community, as well as offer refuge for rest and celebration. Origin's fully equipped bar will highlight Black-owned spirits, beer, and wine brands, and cocktails created by Black bartenders. With pop-up events last summer and regular hours that began in the fall, Origin is beginning to cultivate the central element of a third place—community. —PB



MARIA SHIRTS

Formerly working as a journalist in her native Brazil, Maria Shirts discovered that her passion for brewing could also be her vehicle to help empower historically excluded communities, beginning with her own homebrewers club. “We were more than a club, we were a feminist collective that would brew beer and participate in festivals that were not very women-friendly, and our project grew as a kind of resistance toward that scene,” says Shirts. Buoyed by the response, Shirts spent three months in Europe in 2019 to start a writing project about women in the industry, then relocated to New York City to do the same. She worked a variety of jobs along the way, from bartender to cellar hand, keeping her focus aimed on gaining—and sharing—knowledge. “I met amazing people along my journey that were super kind, and generous, and very patient when it came to teaching me, because I’m always asking a lot of questions,” says Shirts. Within the last year, Shirts relocated to Louisiana, where she’s serving as the lead of education for the New Orleans chapter of Pink Boots, was appointed head brewer at Tin Roof Brewing in Baton Rouge, and was awarded a Michael James Jackson Foundation

scholarship, which she will use to further her education. “The emphasis on education comes from my journalistic roots—information is power, and sharing information empowers people, especially minorities,” says Shirts. “Gatekeeping is a very old and perverse strategy that excludes BIPOCs, and unfortunately it happens in every industry. One of the only ways of empowering people and trying to change the patriarchy and white narrative is to share information—teaching, teaching, teaching as much as possible.” —PB

MARIANNE EAVES

When Marianne Eaves began studying chemical engineering at the University of Louisville, her initial plan was to work in biofuels. An internship with Brown-Forman changed the trajectory of her life, leading her to become Kentucky’s first female master distiller since Prohibition, instead. “My career trajectory has been unique,” Eaves says, starting with her time at Brown-Forman. “I raised my hand for every assignment and gained a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience in a short amount of time, as well as the reputation of a voracious learner.” Following that Brown-Forman internship, Eaves rose up the ranks to become a process research and development engineer, master taster, and eventually protégé to Woodford Reserve master distiller Chris Morris. She then made a bold move away from the corporate world to become Kentucky’s first female master distiller, taking the helm at reviving the Old Taylor Distillery into

Castle & Key. “In a short two years, the historic bourbon icon was producing spirits again—and a short two years after that, I left to pursue more opportunity, to diversify bourbon, and to help promote values that more closely matched mine.” She headed out for a life on the road, visiting distilleries, working as a consultant, and creating a project called Eaves Blind, which showcases smaller distilleries through blind tasting boxes. Now, she’s onto something new: “And here we are another couple years later and I’ve launched my own brand, Forbidden!” Forbidden debuted last summer, and Eaves oversaw the bourbon’s distillation, initially at Castle & Key as master distiller and then at Bardstown Bourbon Company under her supervision. Venturing in a novel direction, Eaves made Forbidden using a low-temperature fermentation process, and a mash bill featuring winter wheat and Silver Queen corn, a white corn varietal that brings the flavor of Southern cooking to the finished bourbon.

—Maggie Kimberl

LAUREN HOEY

“I love accessible wine lists,” says Lauren Hoey, wine director at New York’s Jupiter, about one of her main considerations when assembling a wine program. “I, myself, am driven by value when I go out to buy, and I want to be able to offer that to everyone else.” New York’s Midtown may not be the first place that you’d think “value,” but at the Rockefeller Center–area follow-up to King, the beloved SoHo restaurant from chefs Jess Shadbolt

and Clare de Boer, and beverage director Annie Shi, Hoey delivers on just that: an expansive, free-wheeling tour through Italy, France, and a smattering of California that mixes modern classics with up-and-comers, at a range of reasonable price points. Before this stint, the Los Angeles native rapidly climbed the ladder through some of New York’s top wine destinations in her nine years in the industry, including Pearl & Ash, Pasquale Jones, and NoMad. She modestly credits pandemic-related turnover for creating openings along the way—but that belies her steady hand at fluently wrangling a mix of bottles that would appeal to wine nerds and newbies alike. The list at Jupiter weighs in at a hefty (for this day and age) 700 bottles. Hoey singles out bottles from Amève in Santa Barbara, Mee Godard from Beaujolais, and Domaine de L’Horizon in the Rousillon as current personal favorites. “Their entry-level red and white, ‘L’Esprit de l’Horizon,’ offer great value, and their flagship bottlings are my go-to wines for special occasions,” she says of the latter. With the breadth of wine on the list comes the responsibility of making sure her colleagues are equally empowered to talk about their favorite wines, and she places a big emphasis on once-weekly staff trainings. “We want to be able to encourage confidence in our servers and the whole team,” she says. “I think it just makes wine service really fun and accessible.” —JF

Lauren Hoey at Jupiter
in New York City.



THE
IMBIBE
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Jeanne and John Douglass
(bottom right) and Elliot Root
(below) at Pretty Decent in
Louisville, Kentucky.



PRETTY DECENT

John Douglass would like to gently remind everyone that there's more to Louisville, Kentucky, than bourbon and barbecue. "We have a large Cuban American population here, with a great diversity of ideas to offer," he says. "And there are a lot of great Vietnamese spots and Mediterranean spots that also deserve attention." A career bar and hospitality professional who—along with his wife, Jeanne—moved to Louisville from Chicago in 2021, Douglass decided to take their shared enthusiasms and put them into action. The result is Pretty Decent, which opened last spring with a mullet-like model: Business in the front, party in the back. The business, in this case, is a plant shop, operated by Jeanne (a certified Kentucky master gardener) and making the most of the building's high ceilings and ample natural light. The bar in back leans into the botanical theme, with a selection dedicated to clear, agriculturally rooted spirits like mezcal, pisco, tequila, and sugarcane spirits. Douglass, whose bar experience includes time at Billy Sunday in Chicago and Jim Beam's in-house restaurant, aims to expand the diversity of bar experiences that can be enjoyed in Louisville, just as the city's Cuban, Vietnamese, and other restaurants are doing with the city's cuisine. "Louisville is growing as a food city, and we're proud to be a part of it." —PC

NOAH ARENSTEIN

When Noah Arenstein closed his bar and restaurant, Madre, in 2019, New York agave nerds lost a living archive of some of Mexico's best spirits. Now, after two years running the bar

programs at Elio and Casa Playa in Las Vegas, he's returned to oversee what may be the world's largest mezcal collection at The Cabinet, a mezcal bar from Cocktail Kingdom, with more than 1,000 bottles in their cellar. The newly appointed general manager is responsible for sourcing and education; Arenstein wants to use his position to show how elusive and ephemeral great agave can be. "My goal with building a mezcal program is to present someone with an experience they can't get anywhere else," he says. "It may have taken 20 years for the agave in a bottle to mature, and it could come from a 25-liter batch that you'll never be able to try again." Arenstein heads to Mexico several times a year in search of exceptional *palenques* across the nation's 31 states. The Cabinet has bottles from 21 of them and counting; one of Arenstein's projects is to turn their hundreds of spirits into a coherent database that tracks makers, agave varieties, production methods, and regional terroir. Guests will be able to dive as deep into that data as they like, and Arenstein will use it to introduce mezcals that have never been brought to the United States before. "My job is to maintain a sense of wonder, and I love being the one who starts people on their mezcal journey," Arenstein says. In free classes and behind the bar, he shares stories about fifth-generation maestros and the incredible labor that goes into making this ancestral spirit, "so even if you don't like the drink, you're fascinated by the process and the people and think, 'I want to do this again.'" —MF



EL GIBSON

"In the spring, we went hard on spring onions at the farmers market, and pickled them," says John Douglass. "The brine became the dirty in this Gibson riff from our second menu." Douglass notes that if spring onions aren't in season, the recipe still works perfectly well using small yellow onions.

1½ oz. mezcal (Pretty Decent uses Legendario Domingo espadín)
¾ oz. blanc vermouth (such as Dolin)
½ oz. pickled onion brine

Tools: barspoon, strainer

Glass: Nick & Nora

Garnish: small wedge of pickled onion

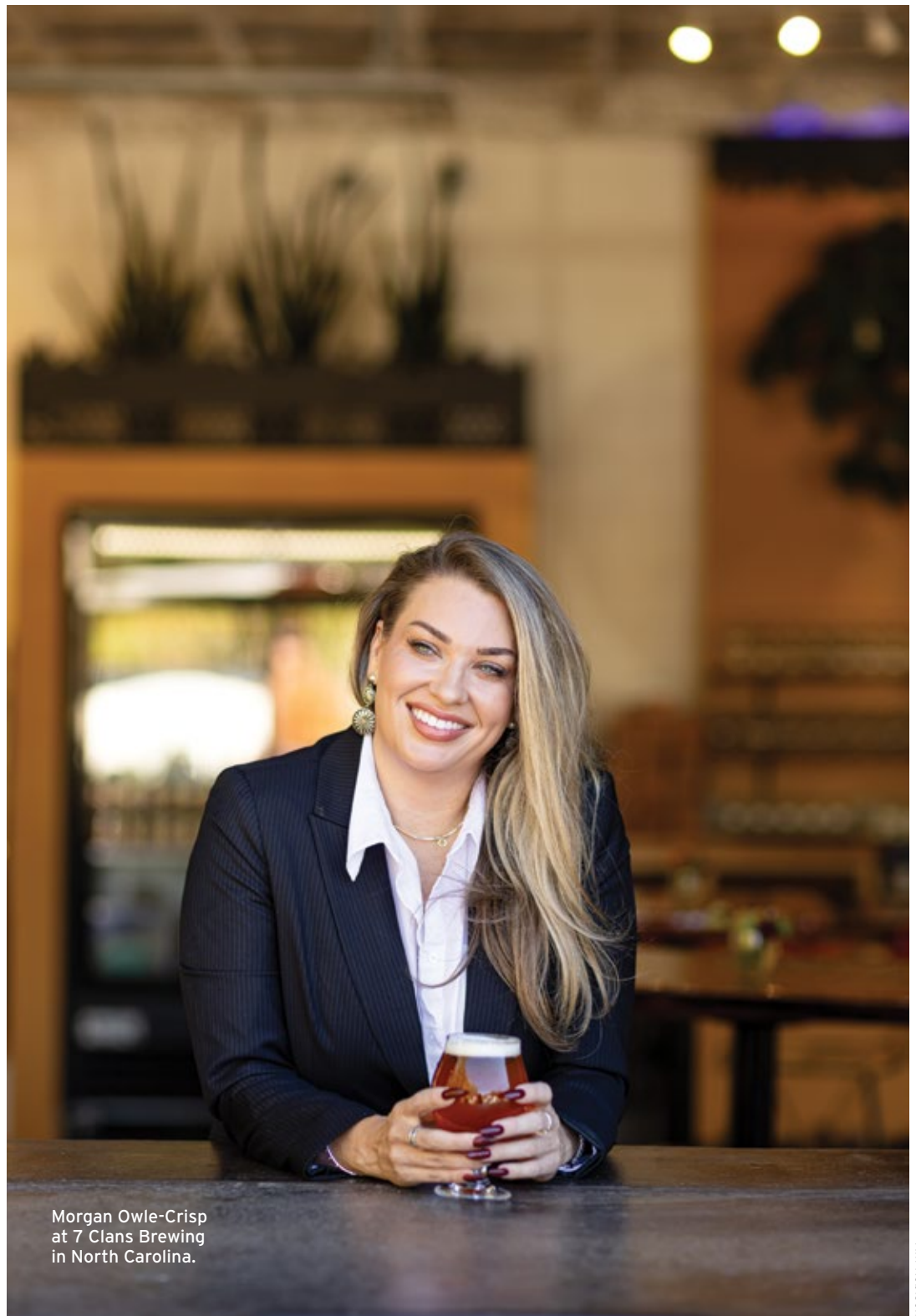
Place the pickled onion wedge in a chilled Nick & Nora glass. In a mixing glass, stir all of the ingredients with ice, then strain into the prepared glass.

Pickled Spring Onions: Thoroughly wash a bunch of spring onions, and use a knife to remove all of the green parts. Cut the onions into wedges, maintaining the root end (to hold the onion together). Pack the onions into a sanitized canning jar or a large food-safe plastic storage container. In a pot, combine a mixture of 60 percent water and 40 percent champagne vinegar (the quantity will depend on the size of the batch you're preparing). Weigh this liquid mixture and add 5 percent of its weight in sugar, and 3 percent of its weight in salt. Add several bay leaves, 1 Tbsp. of black peppercorns, and 1 Tbsp. of coriander seeds, and bring the mixture to a boil, whisking to dissolve the sugar. Once the mixture is boiling, remove it from the heat and pour it over the onions, to cover. Cover the container and let it cool; will keep refrigerated for up to 1 month.

John Douglass
Pretty Decent
Louisville, Kentucky

**MORGAN
OWLE-CRISP**

As a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee living in Haywood County in the North Carolina mountains just west of Asheville, Morgan Owle-Crisp long held caution around beer. “Many people in my culture are not proponents of alcohol,” she explains. “Liquor was historically used to manipulate Native people into contracts and negotiations when they were not of sound mind.” To her own surprise, Owle-Crisp not only reframed her relationship with alcohol, but became one of the few Native women brewery owners in the country. She names the craft beer scene in Asheville as inspiration: With fewer than 100,000 people, the town has welcomed more than 50 breweries over the past two decades. As Owle-Crisp tasted and explored, she discovered a new way to connect with familiar botanical ingredients. “Thanks to my heritage, I have a background in agriculture and foraging,” she says. “I used to dig for ginseng and bloodroot with my dad and granddad.” Craft beer, she realized, offers inventive ways to use natural ingredients. Importantly, beer need not be a poison. “Everything is medicine,” she says. “When



Morgan Owle-Crisp at 7 Clans Brewing in North Carolina.

Tim Robison

you start using that lens, it changes everything.” Everything is also, it turns out, a story. Previously, Owle-Crisp worked in book publishing, sharing the art, legends, and recipes of

the Cherokee. “Often our people are represented as relics of the past,” she says. With 7 Clans Brewing, she aims to change that perception, ensuring a place for her endangered

culture, educating beer lovers, and spawning new conversations with every sip. “Storytelling and craft beer fit together synergistically,” she says. —Amy Bess Cook

Ron Acierto at ōkta in McMinnville, Oregon.



Leah Nash

RON ACIERTO

A retirement home dining room isn't the usual starting point for a wine career, but for Ron Acierto, wine and beverage director at ōkta in McMinnville, Oregon, the unlikely fine-dining ethos in this establishment piqued his interest. The retirement home gig came shortly after Acierto emigrated from the Philippines to the U.S. at age 15, and from there, he found a home in the world of hospitality. Crediting many mentors along the way, Acierto was a quick study when it came to wine, particularly Champagne and Burgundy. During his first trip to Oregon, he became enamored with the region's wines. A job at Cherry Hill winery led to roles in several lauded Oregon restaurants including Bluehour, Jory at The Allison Inn, and Departure. In 2015, he opened the Champagne-focused Muselet to much acclaim. At the James

Beard-nominated ōkta, he synthesizes his passions into a wine list that asks diners to reexamine the concept of luxury. Along with Grand Cru Burgundies, the list runs deep with back vintages and rare single-vineyard offerings from Oregon wineries—comprising more than half of the menu. To understand the depth of his knowledge, put yourself in his hands with pairings for the tasting menu, often poured on the fly. Luxury aside, he also wants wine to be fun and accessible, and spotlights lesser-known varieties from around the world. "I am fortunate and thankful that I get to discover old and new varietals and producers," he says. "My passion for wine, food, and hospitality is continually growing and evolving." —SC

ERINA YOSHIDA

In 2022, the trailblazing Manhattan cocktail bar Angel's Share left its longtime home in a hidden space on the second floor of a building on Stuyvesant Street in the East Village. Last June, it reopened in a hidden space on the ground floor of a building on Grove Street in the West Village. But that's not all that changed: Management during the bar's first 30 years was secretive. Many people didn't even know who owned it. Today, it is public and press friendly. The difference is Erina Yoshida, who last year took over running Angel's Share from her father, Tony Yoshida, the little-seen New York hospitality legend who founded the bar in 1993. She has since become a familiar

sight at the new location. "I pretty much live here," she jokes. "I don't really go out of my way to be the representation of Angel's Share. I'm just happy to be able to continue the legacy that my father built with the bar." Yoshida traces Angel's Share's personality shift to the pandemic, when outdoor dining and to-go cocktails compelled her to become more hands-on and meet people in the bar industry. Now, she's taking that a step further. She plans to invite outside bartenders to do guest shifts behind the bar, and have Angel's Share mixologists do more guest shifts abroad. "Times have changed, and I think it's the right time for us to do something new as well," she says. —RS

Amelia Armstrong
(bottom left) at
Considered Coffee
in Santa Barbara,
California.



Bottom row, middle: KaSandra Mitchell/The Humble Lion; all other photos: EB Combs/The Deep Well

CONSIDERED COFFEE

A mobile coffee shop operating out of a 1965 VW Microbus isn't completely out of the ordinary. But closer inspection reveals the solar panels on the roof and the La Marzocco Linea Classic two-group head espresso machine. Santa Barbara's Considered Coffee, launched last January by Pia Beck, is about more than just selling quality coffee drinks on the go. "We're trying to set a new expectation of how we—consumers and business owners—show up in the world, interact with each other, human to human, and what we can be for each other," says Beck. For Considered Coffee, that means a basic raising of the bar, like paying its staff a living wage and giving all their used coffee grounds to farms, gardens, and local compost programs. And, as an exercise in inclusivity, there's no extra charge for nondairy. "Often, it's a dietary limitation or an allergy. You shouldn't have to pay more for that, even if it's personal preference," says Beck. "We're doing what we can to invite people into the process to rehumanize this thing we all do every day that has become automated and anonymous: drink a cup of coffee." —*Caroline Pardilla*

OLD LOG CABIN DISTILLERY

Old Log Cabin is a new distillery making old whiskey. Kind of, that is—things can get convoluted when bourbon's involved. In 2022, John Fisk and Andy Heily purchased a Seattle distillery and its inventory from the

original owner. Among that inventory were barrels of bourbon, some ranging up to 10 years old. Noticing the drinking public's seemingly inexhaustible thirst for bourbon, the new owners rebranded the place as Old Log Cabin Distillery, rolling out the first bottles late last year, made by blending the distillery's original stock with sourced whiskey from Indiana. Steering into the future, the team hired Ben Capdevielle (formerly of Big Gin) as distiller, and created a relatively esoteric mash bill of 66 percent corn, 20 percent malted barley, and 14 percent rye for its own bourbon, which began production in the fall. And to tie in to whiskey heritage, the owners are paying homage to the original name, Old Cabin, used in the 1860s by founder E.G. Booz (yes, really), and which grew to great prominence in its day before eventually fading from view. "I feel like we're the stewards of Old Log Cabin for this stretch of time," Fisk says. "We're doing our best to revive it and bring it back out to market, and do justice for everybody that's been in it before." —*PC*

MADRE SANTA CLARITA

When Ivan Vasquez opened Madre Oaxacan Restaurant & Mezcaleria on LA's Westside in 2013, he was bringing the food and drink of his native Oaxaca to his adopted city. "Back then, people weren't giving mezcal a chance because they were sticking to multinational and celebrity tequilas, or they were convinced all mezcal tastes like smoke or gasoline," says Vasquez, who opened Madre's fourth location, which includes a retail shop,

in Santa Clarita last October. "Mexican food and drink aren't well-represented there, and we're the only craft cocktail bar," says Vasquez. Like its siblings, Madre Santa Clarita boasts one of the nation's largest curations of mezcal—500 bottles in all. He's also amassed a collection of exclusive private batch mezcals, other agave spirits, sotol, and mezcals from non-DO states like Nuevo Leon and Jalisco. "Mezcal represents community, and I want people to understand its cultural importance," says Vasquez. "There are centuries of history and generations who are part of that heritage."

—*Laurel Miller*

JESSE EPSTEIN

Jesse Epstein's story sounds like a setup for a Borscht Belt routine. Did you hear the one about the rabbi and the brewery? In 2022, a rabbinical student at New York City's Hebrew Union College bought the rights to Jewish-themed Shmaltz Brewing, which closed in 2021, to help Jewish communities reach beyond the pews and share an IPA or two. Be they cultural or religious Jews, "we want to be able to create beer that speaks to all kinds of Jews," Epstein says. The project's genesis began after he started homebrewing during the pandemic. Interest was declining in conservative and reform Judaism, which makes ancient religious traditions applicable to modern life. (Epstein is learning within the reform movement.) Maybe craft beer, a contemporary social lubricant, could help. The opportunity to test his hypothesis came after

Shmaltz founder Jeremy Cowan agreed to sell Epstein the brand rights and recipes for shticky beers like Babka Loves Rugelach stout and Bittersweet Lenny's R.I.P.A. Relaunching the brand while enrolled in rabbinical studies—he'll hopefully be ordained in 2025—Epstein spent the last year running pilot events around NYC. He poured beer on a synagogue's rooftop, hosted a raucous Purim party, and homebrewed with synagogue congregations. "We were able to get our hands dirty and not just say a blessing, but really understand and take part in it," Epstein says. "Rather than sitting down in the pews with a prayer, we were engaging in the sacred act of creation." Epstein is currently revamping branding and solidifying brewing partners with the hopes of debuting the rebooted Shmaltz in time for Purim this March. Inspired by the reform tradition, Epstein will modernize old Shmaltz recipes and transform the brand and its mission to incorporate Jewish values and history into every aspect of the company, a link to the past and a future to communing with Jews far and wide. "How can I be a rabbi for all of those Jews who don't like coming to synagogue?" Epstein says. "I'm hoping Shmaltz will be a good answer to that question." —*Joshua M. Bernstein*

THE IMBIBE



DEVIN WAGNER

Beer is not infrequently a precursor to whiskey, but usually that's more about an evening's progression than an actual career path. Alaska distiller Devin Wagner is familiar with winding paths. Born and raised in Montana and a descendant of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation, Wagner originally studied photojournalism and followed the newspaper route while nurturing a homebrewing hobby on the side. Projects from the American Indian Journalism Institute and the Chip Quinn Scholars Program for Diversity in Journalism led him to develop a close friendship with an Alaska Native who encouraged him to move north, and a career change wasn't far behind. "A lot of things were happening in the print journalism business that I wasn't super thrilled about, and I'd seen a lot of friends get laid off," Wagner says. He convinced the owner of Kenai River Brewing Company in Soldotna to give him a chance as a brewer, and he parlayed that opportunity into a new career in beer. But the beer industry isn't without its drawbacks, especially during a global pandemic, and while working at Glacier Brewhouse in Anchorage, Wagner saw an opening at Anchorage Distillery. After starting as an apprentice, he quickly moved to the stills, and now, as a recent recipient

of a Michael Jackson Foundation Uncle Nearest Scholarship in Distilling, he's able to get formal training in his latest passion. "I've never had any technical education in any kind of alcohol production, beer or spirits," Wagner says. The scholarship is giving him the opportunity to study in the James Beam program at the University of Kentucky, followed possibly by an internship at a major distillery. "I'll take that knowledge, and help grow the whiskey program here [at the distillery], because it's pretty small and limited," he says. "We don't have much of a structure for a whiskey program, and I'd really like to help be a part of it." —PC

JAHDE MARLEY

"Monoculture depletes soils and weakens populations through disease. Diversity is good for health, soil, and flavor," says Jahde Marley. Her mission is to decentralize every aspect of wine: the grapes, personnel, production, and consumers. It's rooted in the understanding that *Vitis vinifera*, and the Anglo-European culture that developed it, is just one narrow—and inequitable—lens on fermentation. "My father is Jamaican. I have fermented components to my ancestry: cashew wine, roots, bitters, mauby," she explains. "But my heritage hadn't been presented to me [in the beverage industry], so I carved it out myself." When she came to wine from bartending in 2018, Marley launched By the Hand, an event series pairing wines with diasporic foods. Today, as a portfolio manager under the umbrella of natural wine importer-distributor Zev Rovine Selections, Marley

has evolved By the Hand into a portfolio of radically innovative producers, including Sonoma's Ashanta Wines, co-owned by Chenoa Ashton-Lewis, who "comes from both Sicilian grape-growing family on one side and Black-American Oaklandites steeped in the Black Panther Party on the other," and is bringing her lineage together in co-ferments like wild elderberry with French Colombard; Philadelphia's Camuna Cellars, where Eli Silins vinifies grapes grown in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for wines designated Kosher; Asheville's biodynamic Plëb Urban Winery, solera-aging hybrids and native American grapes in Appalachian-clay amphorae; and others. In 2022, Marley launched the educational platform ABV Ferments. Its biannual summit, Anything But Vinifera, gathers diverse producers to pour for the public; share resources on the production and stewardship of hybrid and native grapes and regional fruit and grain; and promote social, economic, and environmental justice in and beyond the industry. Marley's next move? Making her own wine, a Petit Manseng and pawpaw co-ferment and an oxidative expression of Petit Manseng and Vidal Blanc, with a percentage of sales supporting Black farmers. The wine consultant Lee Campbell is facilitating the project at the Virginia incubator she co-founded, Common Wealth Crush. "Jahde is looking to make wine more inclusive, expansive, and relevant," says Campbell, "to drive American viticulture forward." —BA

JAMES PARK AND WAN DI

James Park and Wan Di come from vastly different backgrounds: Park is a hospitality vet with a slew of wine and spirit certifications and multiple restaurants under his belt, while Di is a former high energy nuclear physicist who worked at NASA in Maryland and a lab in Sweden before falling head over heels for tea and opening a tea shop in Manhattan's West Village. It was a simple twist of fate that Park's restaurant, Windrose, was right around the corner. The pair met and discovered a mutual interest, and their newest project was born. "Wan was originally experimenting with tea and beer, and I was toying around with tea and spirits," explains Park. "After we found out about our shared passion, we started working on our experiments together." They launched Guilder's Gin last July with three expressions: the complex and floral Red Oolong Gin, light and citrusy Green Tea Gin, and the Canton Dry Gin infused with goji berries. "It took us about a year to lock down our tea selection for Guilder's because we were looking for specific flavor qualities and consistency," says Park. The teas are all tournament-grade leaves sourced from Taiwan (Di has a particular affinity for Taiwanese oolong), and the gin is distilled by a partner in North Carolina. As the brand grows, Park and Di are hoping to move production to New York, but for now, bottles can be purchased directly from their website, and bars like Double Chicken Please and Cafe Salmagundi are already experimenting with the gin in cocktails. —PB



James Park (left) and Wan Di at
Ye's Apothecary in New York City.

THE
IMBIBE

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Katherine Boushel at
Bon Délire in Montreal.



Photos this spread: Two Food Photographers

KATHERINE BOUSHEL

Almost exactly halfway between the Atwater Cocktail Club and the Milky Way Cocktail Bar—the first two bars Katherine Boushel had a partnership stake in—is the site of the *Taverne Magnan*, a now-shuttered Montreal tavern that, infamously, refused to serve women until 1989. Although *Magnan* was out of step with the zeitgeist of the continent, gender segregation wasn't so odd in Quebec, where taverns were, by law, men-only until the late 1970s, when the law was changed so that proprietors could opt to admit female patrons—if they wanted to. The *Magnan* (and many others), however, absolutely did not want to give up their male preserves. Given this culture, it's hardly surprising that women behind the bar weren't taken seriously when Boushel started in the industry roughly 20 years ago. "When I started, women behind the bar were mostly barmaids, and were always treated as such," she says, recalling that, during her first visit to a Quebec tavern, she and two friends were made to feel it was improper for her to be in that setting. Little did she know that, two decades later, she'd be welcomed into bars for guest shifts in Cartageña, Mexico City, and Singapore, where people seek out one of Canada's best-known cocktail bartenders and authority on everything from rum agricole to mezcal and Cognac to the burgeoning category of Quebecois whisky. Along with her partners at *Groupe Barroco*, Boushel recently opened a third venue, *Bon Délire* (good delirium), an

homage to Montreal's lost dives, which—unlike the city's taverns—always made her feel welcome back in the day. She points out, though, that the almost indiscernible slow change has continued over the past five years, since she started running *Atwater*. "I almost never hear people talk about the femininity of certain styles of glassware or ask if I even know how to make a real drink," she says. "I believe that, overall, this is becoming more a thing of the past." —Christine Sismondo

HEX COFFEE, KITCHEN & NATURAL WINES

Since launching in 2015, Charlotte's beloved HEX Coffee has operated in many iterations, from mobile pop-ups to partner installations, all in the name of sharing great coffee with a focus on provenance. "When we began, we knew we had pretty lofty goals," says co-owner Tanner Morita. "Those goals can be hard to realize when you're a couple of 20-somethings with no money trying to work in a market that has pretty much no clue how to contextualize what you do." Now, eight years later, HEX finally has a brick-and-mortar home that embodies all of those goals, with the opening last summer of *Hex Coffee, Kitchen & Natural Wines*. Operating in a middle ground of avant-garde coffee house, conceptual restaurant, and forward-thinking ("sometimes challenging") wine bar, Morita says, "this is the first space we've been able to move into to set down permanent roots and fully expand the program to be exactly what we want." —PB



GOLDEN CROWN

"I enjoy traveling with this recipe, as it showcases the versatility of Canadian whisky and how it stands up to such strong competing spirits as mezcal and Chartreuse," Boushel says.

¾ oz. Canadian rye whisky
¾ oz. mezcal (Boushel uses espadín joven)
¼ oz. green Chartreuse
¼ oz. roasted pineapple syrup
3 dashes Bittermens Xocolatl Mole bitters

Tools: barspoon, strainer
Glass: rocks
Garnish: orange twist

Stir all of the ingredients with ice, and strain into an ice-filled glass, then garnish.

Roasted Pineapple Syrup: Cut ½ kilogram (about 18 oz.) of fresh pineapple into 1-inch cubes. Add the pineapple to a large pot over high heat, and stir occasionally until the fruit's sugar starts to caramelize and the cubes turn brown. Add 250 grams of sugar and lightly mash in the pot. Remove the pot from the heat, and add the contents to a blender. Add another 750 grams of sugar and 1 liter of water, and blend well. Let the mixture cool, then strain through a fine-mesh strainer. Keeps refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.

Katherine Boushel
Montreal



TODD OLANDER

For five years, Loveland, Colorado, farmer Todd Olander kept a big secret bottled up. Back in 2018, the founder of Root Shoot Malting, which turns his family's homegrown barley into malt for the brewing and distilling industries, had extra malt on hand. Farmers have historically transformed excess crops into spirits such as whiskey, a value-add that won't mold or go bad. So Olander partnered with Vapor Distillery, makers of Boulder Spirits, to distill his malt into whiskey that was rested in barrels. "It seemed like the perfect opportunity to express our malting and growing abilities," says Olander, the fifth-generation farmer at Olander Farms. Each year, Olander roughly doubled the amount of distilled whiskey featuring his homegrown Genie barley, tweaking the recipe annually. The project remained hush-hush until last August, when Olander unveiled Root Shoot Spirits and its first bottled-in-bond single malt whiskey. "Our mantra is vertically integrating the farm, creating our own market, and getting extra value," Olander says. Raw materials are typically worth less than end products, especially when it comes to alcohol—apples to cider, grapes

to wine, barley to beer or whiskey. Olander originally founded Root Shoot Malting in 2016 to wrest more value from his family's farm, facing encroaching commercial and residential development. "I watched it get divided up over my lifetime, and that's what I don't want to see happen to all the farmland around here," says Olander, whose family farm dwindled from around 300 acres to 112 acres. Firm financial footing is just one safeguard. In late 2022, Olander Farms finalized a conservation easement with Colorado Open Lands to limit the use of the land, ensuring it's used for agriculture purposes for generations to come. It's a story that goes great with a ground-to-glass single malt. "It's Colorado in a bottle," Olander says. —JMB

DEVON TREVATHAN & COLTON WEINSTEIN

Traditionally, distillers have always turned to the ingredients in abundance around them, translating the work of farmers and foragers into local flavor. But what happens if a distiller has a passport and a chronic case of wanderlust? Devon Trevathan and Colton Weinstein, the founders of Nashville-based Liba Spirits, may have an answer. The duo first planned to open a distillery the conventional way, and make spirits that intrigued them. But the business plan resulted in sticker shock at the level of investment required, and instead they decided to follow a course more typical in beer and wine.

"We realized there's a huge world of flavor out there, and rather than replicate traditional models and spirits categories, we could make them unique with the regionality of the ingredients we're using," Trevathan says. "We also realized the value of what we could do if we were to distill like nomad brewers, and it seemed like the best option." An initial spirit, a gin distilled in the Austrian alps, kicked off the project in 2020. A temporary move to New Orleans followed, along with a second spirit, a botanical rum, distilled using molasses from Louisiana sugarcane and accented with regionally inspired flavors. Last year, Liba introduced its third spirit: Terrativo, a red aperitif-style spirit made using a base of bourbon, a hat tip to their current Nashville home (and distilled at Corsair Spirits, where Weinstein formerly worked as a distiller). Working on borrowed equipment means lots of the distilling takes place on evenings and weekends, but it also means developing a close collegiality with others in the trade. "Part of the reason we started this nomadic company is that we really love the distilling community, and we get to be a part of it," Weinstein says. "It builds not just community between our fellow distillers, but a community of spirits around us." —PC

HAMZAH NASSER

Opening multiple locations across five states in less than three years is the kind of growth you typically only see among coffee shops of the Starbucks variety. But Hamzah Nasser likes to think big. He opened

the first location of Haraz Coffee House in Dearborn, Michigan, in April 2021, highlighting Yemeni coffee and its culture. Nasser was born in Yemen but emigrated to the U.S. at age 5 in 1993, during one of Yemen's ongoing periods of civil war, and is now the fourth generation of his family making his home in the States. He says his appreciation for coffee was an evolution. "I've always loved coffee, and anywhere I travel, the first thing I do is look for a coffee shop to go try," says Nasser. "After learning that Yemen is the birthplace of [commercial] coffee, I was inspired." Haraz serves both traditional drinks like delah pots of coffee and spiced Adeni tea as well as Western-inspired lattes. More locations in Michigan followed the flagship, and less than a year after the launch, Nasser converted an old Ford Motor Company building into Haraz HQ, complete with roasting facility (all beans are sourced directly from Yemen from the Al-Hamdani farmers collective), a bakery, and a barista academy. As a young entrepreneur, Nasser also points to the responsibility of creating jobs and opportunities within his local economy and beyond. With Haraz locations now also found in Illinois, Kentucky, Texas, and recently the San Francisco Bay Area, Nasser has no intention of slowing down, with a second roasting facility and school also planned for Oakland or Santa Monica. "We're not like any other café—we bring a new experience and new taste to coffee," Nasser says. "Some wouldn't understand until they come into a Haraz and see for themselves." —PB

ALEX JUMP

The Covid pandemic forced a reckoning in the hospitality industry, in part relating to how well (or how poorly) bar and restaurant staff were equipped to deal with life's challenges. Alex Jump—a bartender at Death & Co Denver at the time—was slightly ahead of the curve, having made health and wellness a central part of her message at a cocktail competition in late 2019. When the shutdown struck, Jump quickly pivoted and co-founded Focus on Health (with LP O'Brien) to aid colleagues in need. Several years later, Jump is now director of operations for Focus on Health, an organizer of a professional development scholarship program, and an advocate for low- and no-alcohol drinks. "Making non-alcoholic drinks has pushed me to be a more thoughtful and creative bartender," Jump says. "It's turned on a new light for me." —PC



Tune in to *Radio Imbibe* starting January 2 to hear an extended interview with Alex Jump: imbibemagazine.com/podcast

Alex Jump at the Yacht Club in Denver.

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Ayla Kapahi at the Borderlands Brewing taproom in Tucson, Arizona.

AYLA KAPAHI

Consulate generals don't regularly ask brewers to speak at foreign embassies. But last year, Ayla Kapahi, the director of operations for Borderlands Brewing in Tucson, Arizona, traveled to the U.S. embassy in Nogales, Mexico, to discuss *Las Hermanas* ("the sisters"), her project that unites Mexican and American female brewers to brew a collaborative beer, sharpen technical skill sets, and broaden cultural apertures. "It showcases beer diplomacy," says Kapahi, who has mixed Mexican and East Indian heritage. "There has to be a deeper level of connection to beer." At Borderlands, Kapahi leads an all-women production team that draws on local ingredients and traditions to make beers like *Viejo Pueblo*, a blonde ale featuring Native American-grown corn. "Our brand is conscious of the fact that we're 45 minutes north of the border," says Kapahi, who came to brewing through passion, not her alma mater's prestigious brewing program. She graduated from the University of California, Davis with a degree in human development and psychology; homebrewing was a hobby. "I never thought it would turn into a career." After graduating, she moved to Tucson to work at the University of Arizona. A burgeoning interest in local beer led to bartending at a brewery, where she began brewing professionally, before joining Borderlands in 2018 and becoming head brewer the following year. "I was hungry to make my mark in beer," says Kapahi,

which meant linking her social justice work with brewing. This sparked the education-driven *Las Hermanas* project, which paused during the pandemic before resuming in 2022. The latest edition was a Vienna lager, a style that honors the 200th anniversary of U.S.-Mexico relations. (The lager is enmeshed with Mexican brewing history.) The Borderlands edition debuted in September, with proceeds defraying costs for *Las Hermanas* brewers, and Kapahi traveled to Guadalajara, Mexico, in November to reprise the recipe at *Cervecería Cielito Lindo*—also an all-female brewery. "Women drive for a couple of days just to go to the brew day," Kapahi says. "We're already planning for next year." —JMB

KEVIN ASATO

Before the launch of the National Black Brewers Association, no such trade organization for Black-owned alcohol producers existed—not in beer, not in spirits, not in wine. The responsibility of leading a first-of-its-kind group isn't lost on Kevin Asato, the NB2A's inaugural executive director, who says he's been in "head-down mode" since the group publicly launched in spring 2022. The work has paid off: Early confidence in the group has been resounding. "The support and the outcry of love is far greater than I expected," Asato says. "There are so many people who aren't even brewers who are coming out, whether it be allied trade or just your average John Q Public." The NB2A's mission is to promote appreciation for the legacy of African-American

brewing in the U.S. with a goal of increasing the number of Black brewery owners and brewmasters. The group has received buy-in from executives at major companies including Diageo, Molson Coors, and Boston Beer Company—the latter of which donated \$75,000 for the next three years to the NB2A. Beer drinkers have also enthusiastically raised their glasses in support: Multiple Black-owned breweries pouring beer within the NB2A Pavilion at last year's Great American Beer Festival told Asato they should have brought more beer to meet the overwhelming level of demand. This year, garnering federal recognition for a National Black Brewers Day is a priority. Eighteen jurisdictions, including the states of California, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, already mark the day on October 10. (That's the date that Ted Mack and his all-Black consortium officially became owners of the U.S.'s first Black-owned brewery, Peoples Brewing Company in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in 1970.) Despite how much he's already accomplished at the helm of the NB2A, Asato only keeps his eyes looking forward. "We still have so much work to do that I don't feel like we're anywhere near the mountaintop." —KB

DALE DEGROFF

Dale DeGross is the most famous cocktail bartender in the world. He kicked off the American cocktail revival when he began mixing up classics at The Rainbow Room in 1987 and wrote *The Craft of the Cocktail*, one of the most influential mixology

manuals of the past quarter-century. His protégés include Audrey Saunders and the late Sasha Petraske, who in turn inspired hundreds of other bartenders. He popularized the flamed orange twist and gave us the Nick and Nora coupe glass. The man could easily rest on his laurels and do nothing from here on in but sip Negronis on his Connecticut front porch. Instead, DeGross is busier than ever. Last year, he launched his own namesake aperitivo and amaro in collaboration with distiller Ted Breaux. He has been on the road ever since, mixing up DeGross cocktail creations with DeGross ingredients everywhere from Oregon to Colorado. Texas is on the calendar for 2024. And Hendrick's Gin has partnered with him on a series of small dinners called "Spritz on the Ritz." He also made a guest appearance on Netflix's popular mixology reality series, *Drink Masters*. Did he expect to be this busy, and making the *Imbibe 75* at age 75? "No, not really," DeGross says with a laugh. "The thought in the back of my mind is everything I'm doing right now is for my sons, Leo and Blake, not for me. Their names are on the brand, after all." And that brand may expand. There's another product in the pipeline. But, for now, DeGross isn't talking. "I can't talk about it, or Ted will kill me," he says. —RS



HOT SAUCE COMMITTEE

Demonstrating Death & Co's penchant for playful flavor profiles grounded in solid technique, this cocktail takes the spicy Margarita to a whole new dimension.

1½ oz. blanco tequila
 ¾ oz. hot sauce syrup
 ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
 ½ oz. raspberry brandy (Death & Co uses St. George)
 ¼ oz. Campari

Tools: shaker
 Glass: pilsner
 Garnish: lime wheel, sweet drop pepper

Add all of the ingredients to a shaker with crushed ice, shake well, and dump into a pilsner glass. Top with more crushed ice, then garnish.

Hot Sauce Syrup: Measure out by weight 150 grams of red bell pepper juice (either run through a juicer or blended and strained), 50 grams of orange bell pepper juice, 100 grams of white wine vinegar, 300 grams of granulated sugar, and 1 chopped habanero pepper. Add all of the ingredients to a blender and blend until the sugar is dissolved. Strain through a chinois or mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth, then stir in ¼ tsp. of salt and bottle for use within 3 months.

Matthew Belanger
 Death & Co D.C.

ANNA BRITTAİN

"We're trying to set the highest bar for sustainability and climate action in the wine industry," says Anna Brittain. "If not here, where?" The executive director of Napa Green, Brittain has spent more than eight years evolving a sustainability certification for the nation's most powerful wine region. A Napa native, Brittain worked on environmental policy in Washington, D.C., climate negotiations with a policy group in Geneva, and climate change mitigation in Vietnam. She headed home in 2015 to grow Napa Green, having consulted with the Napa Valley Vintners to develop the wine program years earlier, and ultimately transformed it into an independent non-profit providing consultation, third-party certification, and ongoing support for wineries looking to reduce their impact. With Brittain's help, 90 wineries and 25 vineyards have saved more than \$5 million in energy costs and 28 million gallons of water in Napa. Her biennial conference, Napa RISE, has gathered more than 750 attendees in the valley and beyond, providing "a roadmap of what sustainable winemaking looks like" and eliciting commitments to action: Opus One trialing water=eliminating UV tank sanitation; Dominus Estate launching a no-till farming pilot project. Tod Mostero, Dominus' director of viticulture and winemaking, says, "Anna has been fearless at taking on the task of moving the wine industry toward proactivity in the rebuilding of our physical and social landscapes, locally and internationally." Now, she's taking it further. In her

quest for a "soil-to-bottle, whole-systems approach" to sustainability, Brittain is developing a calculator to measure emissions in packaging and distribution. And she's overhauled Napa Green's vineyard certification to focus on climate action, regenerative farming, and social justice, tracking carbon sequestration in vineyard soils and equity in workforces. In all her work, she never forgets the opportunity that her region's clout affords. "Napa has an incredibly powerful platform, and we can motivate change," she says. "We really need to be leaders." —BA

DEATH & CO D.C.

Think of it as rebirth rather than death. This past summer, the Death & Co empire opened their first D.C. location in the former home of local cocktail institution the Columbia Room, originally helmed by beloved industry figure Derek Brown. "We knew that no matter where we went in D.C. that we'd be living in Derek's very long shadow," says Death & Co founder David Kaplan, noting their aim to preserve the spirit of the bar. Implementing their signature catalog of elevated-yet-playful cocktails like the Hot Sauce Committee (tequila, raspberry brandy, Campari, hot sauce), Death & Co also reimaged the space to create a new expression of the bar's aesthetic while honoring the nostalgic elements of the Columbia Room, including its signature mosaic. "It represents an important piece of cocktail bar history in D.C.," says co-owner Alex Day. "We wanted to celebrate that as we take the physical space into its next chapter." —PB



Bar manager Joshua White
(bottom right) at Death &
Co Washington, D.C.



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Paradise Lost in New York City.



PARADISE LOST

When Kavé Pourzanjani and Ray Sakover were both working at the Manhattan bar The Polynesian, pre-pandemic, they began talking about opening their own tropical bar. But they wanted to avoid the usual South Seas clichés and imagery that have made tiki a controversial topic in recent years. They needed a new theme. Their counterintuitive alternative? Demonology, the occult, and “otherized gods from other cultures.” Additional influences on the design-heavy bar were roadside America, B movies, and DC comics. The lengthy drinks list is a mix of classic tropical cocktails and signature drinks with names like Beelz’ Road Soda and Damnboo—several of them appropriately lit on fire. There are also rum flights and a Ti’ Punch service where the bottle of rum agricole is left with you. The overall tone is set at the East Village bar’s dramatic entrance, which takes you down a verdant passage to a midcentury, Holiday Inn–like neon sign, and a door with a snake-shaped handle. “The front door is the portal into the abyss,” says Pourzanjani. “The bar is the neutral zone between the earthly realm and eternal realm.” Which is just another way of saying it is a classic third place. —RS

THE MIDNIGHT WHISTLER

Necromancer Brewing is known for resurrecting departed beer styles like Germany’s smoky Lichtenhainer and low-alcohol Pennsylvania Swankey. The Pittsburgh brewery’s latest revival is Hough’s Taproom, a neighborhood pub where local drinkers “cut their

teeth on craft beer,” says owner Ben Butler. After Hough’s closed last spring, the Necromancer team took over the tin-ceilinged bar, its woody bones evoking an English pub, and turned it into Midnight Whistler, a convivial spot where morning coffee gives way to bangers and mash and pints of British-inspired dark mild and medal-winning ESB. It took bronze at last year’s World Beer Cup. “We get really good at making British beers and enjoy drinking them,” says head brewer Lauren Hughes, who hopes to install two traditional cask-ale engines. Transforming Hough’s into Midnight Whistler, which opened last fall, took plenty of elbow grease and paint. The draft system and kitchen were overhauled, and the hospital-white walls were painted black. “Instead of brightening it up, we darkened it up,” says Butler, who also incorporated quirky design touches. Butler commissioned a Hollywood special effects artist to create a mounted Bigfoot head, and area artist Alternate Histories created a portrait of a local drag queen posing as Queen Elizabeth. It channels the past to create a welcoming future for the modern pub. —JMB

KAREN TARTT

San Francisco–based bartender Karen Tartt has always been curious about what people like to drink. But it wasn’t until she began experiencing chronic migraines, and quit drinking entirely for 18 months, that she started wondering what someone with this condition would be able to drink. “This became the driving force,” Tartt says. “People with migraines still have great success stories, and I wondered what they

drink when they want to celebrate.” Tartt set off on a unique cocktail journey following the Johns Hopkins Migraine Prevention Diet to learn what foods to avoid and how to manipulate ingredients without the side effects. “Everything I’m doing is common cocktail preparation techniques,” says Tartt. “There are plenty of people out there doing acid testing and who are making their own house-made ingredients. I’m just tweaking them in a different way to fit this diet.” During quarantine, Tartt started experimenting for her own blog and, later, worked with her mentor Dana Cowin, former editor in chief at *Food & Wine* and creator of the *Speaking Broadly* podcast, to determine the next career move. “I had no clear direction on what I wanted to do with these drinks,” Tartt says. “Under Dana’s guidance, we decided consulting was where I wanted to be.” Today, her hospitality-focused consulting firm, Clear Spirit & Mind, specializes in cocktails for those with migraines, as well as overlap with autoimmune and inflammatory disorders. Tartt works with major fundraising groups, such as Miles for Migraine, to teach cocktail classes and build awareness so everyone has the option to celebrate with a good drink. —Carissa Chesaneck

JOE HERON

When Joe and Lesley Heron sold Copper & Kings in 2000, it was a good bet that that was the last the liquor industry was going to hear from them. The Louisville brandy distillery was, after all, the third beverage start-up the Herons had cycled through, after Nutrisoda

(sold to PepsiAmericas in 2006) and Crispin Cider (sold to MillerCoors in 2012). But you can’t keep a couple of restless entrepreneurs down. Last year, they launched Bar Diver, a line of RTD bottled cocktails. “In another feat of stupidity, we decided to start a fourth business in Minneapolis,” says Joe Heron. “Who doesn’t want to try catching lightning in a bottle four times?” The line comes in three categories: Classic, Sparkling, and Cream, the latter being rare examples of RTD cocktails made with dairy, such as the Brandy Alexander. Looking to set the brand apart from a sea of canned cocktails, Bar Diver drinks come in green glass bottles with red caps. Heron sees a big difference between ready-to-drink cocktails and ready-to-serve cocktails, which is how he thinks of Bar Diver. “I see the market bifurcating along RTD and RTS,” he says, noting RTS reflects a spirits-type drinking occasion, while RTD follows more of a beer-drinking model. “Ready to serve is more considered, time taken to do something well, less harried, and more elevated in terms of setting the stage for good conversation, good company, good food. Higher proof levels that reflect both the full-bodied depth of flavor, as well as alcohol levels similar to what you receive in a scratch cocktail made in a bar.” —RS



DASSAI BLUE

Sake is inseparable from Japan, but Japanese brand Dassai is breaking that geographic link with Dassai Blue, a 55,000-square-foot sake production facility that opened in New York State's Hudson Valley last fall. The company came to the region due to overtures from the Culinary Institute of America, in nearby Hyde Park, which sought a small sake brewery near its campus; instead, Dassai Blue took over a former supermarket and built a gleaming \$80 million complex including a rice-polishing facility and brewery, Dassai Blue. It's also the name of the domestic Junmai Daiginjo sakes, which differ from the company's import line. Dassai brought over sake makers from Japan to train staff, and the inaugural release was the rich, fruity Dassai Blue 50 (the number references the percentage of rice remaining post-polishing). It will be complemented by the cleaner, lighter 35 and 23, plus a sparkling nigori. Going forward, Dassai plans to partner with a local distillery to distill leftover rice lees into shochu, as well as introduce an immersive tour experience to complement the tasting room. The aims are to demystify sake and, just like breweries and wineries do, instill a sense of place. —JMB

EMPIRICAL

Spirits are centered around ironclad rules. Gin must contain juniper, and bourbon need be mostly corn. Empirical distillery co-founder Lars Williams flouts orthodoxy by creating spirits inspired by his grandma's frangipane tarts or hiking through Oaxaca's Sierra Norte mountains. Founded in Copenhagen and now based in Brooklyn, the company explores "a space that we're calling 'uncategorized,'" Williams says. The unconventional spirits are best explained over a tasting, which is why Williams and Empirical are heading across the Atlantic Ocean to open an experimental distillery and tasting room in Brooklyn's industrial Bushwick neighborhood this winter. "We can invite guests into our home and walk them through the Empirical experience," Williams says. The company's first customer-facing U.S. location will seat 80 guests that can sample the distillery's core range of self-described "free-form" spirits and cocktails, plus one-off distillations and fermentations that lean on local ingredients. Empirical is turning New York State apples into a vermouth base, and it's planning to turn spent grains into provisions and condiments and repurpose leftover botanicals for flavoring kombucha. "We're trying to get 100 percent usage of everything," says Williams, who is excited to collaborate with local Brooklyn breweries and beverage companies such as Hana Makgeolli. "Empirical is just an R&D lab wrapped in a business." —JMB

MEETINGHOUSE

Bars can paralyze customers with dozens of IPAs, sour ales, and lagers. Customers at Philadelphia's Meetinghouse have five choices: Guinness, Trappist ale Orval, and three house beers described as dark, hoppy, and pale. "We make simple beers that speak to what I think they are," says co-founder and brewer Colin McFadden, who brews at New Jersey's nearby Tonewood. Meetinghouse, which opened last summer in the former Memphis Taproom beer bar, is a course correction to last decade's excess. McFadden, one of four founders, worked as head brewer at Tired Hands, while partner Keith Shore served as art director for Mikkeller. "We saw the creation of thousands of different beers," McFadden says. Many were poured at Memphis Taproom, but "Where is the beer bar in 2023?" McFadden asks. Tap takeovers have fizzled, and rare beers rarely generate excitement. The Meetinghouse location has been a bar in working-class Kensington since 1935, and the latest iteration prices no one out. The tight food menu includes a \$10 hot roast beef sandwich, while beers begin at \$5.25. The careful editing also extends to the quartet of wines (one white, red, sparkling, and "mystery") and cocktails including a Negroni and Long Island Iced Tea. Why complicate things? "Everyone's reaction is like, 'Oh, good. I don't have to think that hard about what I want.'" —JMB

GREATER GOOD IMPERIAL BREWING COMPANY

Having a strong focus helps Greater Good stand out. The Worcester, Massachusetts, brewery is America's first to specialize in beers with a baseline 8 percent ABV and above, ranging from hazy IPAs like Pulp Daddy to blonde ales, fruited sour ales, and Mexican lagers with lime. "We're taking styles that are traditionally lower ABV and adding our own twist," says CEO Colleen Quinn. Greater Good founder Paul Wengender created the brand in 2016 to make easy-drinking brawny beers, no alcohol burn included. The founding directive proved prescient. Today's best-selling craft beers are potent IPAs that dampen bitterness and dial up flavor. "There's the notion of fewer but better," Quinn says, adding that imperial beers appeal to drinkers looking for more bang for their buck. The term "imperial" can be confusing, so Greater Good eases linguistic roadblocks by describing its beers as bigger, bolder, and smoother. "Those are terms that consumers can understand without having to geek out," Quinn says. Greater Good celebrates the term in an annual all-imperial beer festival, and it's doubling down on innovation by installing a two-barrel pilot system to create taproom-only experiments, such as cream ales or jalapeño-infused lagers. Everything can climb the ABV ladder. "Our long-term ambition is to be the authority on imperial beers," Quinn says. —JMB

SAM AND NICK PURVIS

For brothers Sam (pictured, left) and Nick (pictured, right) Purvis, the aim of their growing Portland-based coffee empire is right there in the name: Good Coffee. Founded in 2014 and today encompassing seven locations and a roastery, the company aims to demonstrate the inherent value that can be found in the industry, from its farmer partners to its philanthropic arm, Common Good. "Good Coffee's story is really the story of a team of people who came together with a deep desire to use hospitality to communicate to each other and to our guests that every single human being is incredibly valuable, incredibly beautiful, and worth being delighted in," says Sam Purvis. "Our greatest privilege is using coffee to serve others." Expect 2024 to bring even more good things. —PB

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Head to imbibemagazine.com to find out how Good Coffee got its start.

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Clockwise (all photos at
Stoa in San Francisco):
Ericka Schell and Eric
Davis; Yanni Kehagiaras.



Photos this spread: Kelly Puleio

STOA

Some places feel like an institution while the paint is still fresh on the walls. In San Francisco's Lower Haight neighborhood, Stoa—which opened in August—moved into a space formerly occupied by a laundromat, and quickly made itself at home. Stained-glass lamps and a golden tin ceiling give the new bar a timeless touch, while the nearly 40-foot-long wooden bar (and smaller companion bar in the back) ensure that a good chunk of the neighborhood can fit into the budding institution. Opened by a team including Yanni Kehagiaras at the bar and Joji Sumi in the kitchen, and who all know each other previously from their roles at other SF institutions (Nopa, Nopalito, Liholiho Yacht Club), Stoa keeps things unfussy with a simple, focused cocktail menu that leans into high-quality ingredients lightly accented with other flavors. "It's one of those things where less is more," says Kehagiaras of drinks on the menu like the sherry-based Holy Smoke (and companion cocktail, the Eucharist) and the Café Ireland, with Irish whiskey, dry vermouth, and coffee liqueur. "When a cocktail is lean like that, it mimics the experience of wine," he says, noting the food-friendly nature of the drink. "It has a singular texture to it—it can be cleansing, weighty, or whatever the case may be." —PC

REVINO

"When you're at a restaurant, you don't throw out your water glass after using it. It goes into and comes out of the dishwasher many times," says Keenan O'Hern, CEO and sustainability

steward at Revino. It's with this mindset that Revino hopes to galvanize the beverage industry to create an ecosystem for recycling and reusing glass bottles, beginning with wine. As Oregon boasts an 88 percent redemption rate on recyclable bottles, it seemed the natural place for founders O'Hern and Adam Rack to start the project. But it's far from a solo effort: Revino needed statewide legislative support—not to mention wineries' buy-in. Bottles can be returned via several recycling streams for a redemption value, just like other recyclables. Working with AI technology, Revino bottles instantly get recognized and pulled during the sorting process at the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative. They then go to a washing, processing, and inspection facility, and ultimately, back to a winery. And not just any bottles will do: Vessels need to be standardized in order for the process to work. O'Hern and Rack held town halls with winemakers for their design input, ultimately creating a bespoke bottle that accommodates multiple brands. Seventy wineries voted on the design and 50 wineries have so far signed on for the inaugural run of 2.4 million bottles in spring 2024. Compared to single-use bottles, Revino claims an 85 percent reduced emissions rate, and based on existing programs in Germany, each bottle has a potential lifespan of up to 50 uses, though O'Hern anticipates a more likely average of 10-25 uses. With interest already coming in from other states, excitement for Revino can't be bottled up. —SC



HOLY SMOKE

As with other drinks at Stoa, small amounts of accent ingredients serve to highlight the flavor of the cocktail's base (the crisp dryness of manzanilla sherry, in this case). At home, remember that 2 ml is just shy of 1/2 teaspoon.

2 oz. manzanilla sherry
1/4 oz. Bénédictine
2 ml peated single malt Scotch whisky
(Stoa uses Ardbeg Wee Beastie)

Tools: barspoon, strainer
Glass: wine glass

Stir all of the ingredients with ice, then strain into a chilled glass.

Yanni Kehagiaras
Stoa, San Francisco



NICK KENNEDY

One of very few Canadian bars to be named in the World's 50 Best Bars' long list (at No. 73), Civil Liberties—established in 2014 in the west end of Toronto—isn't exactly what you'd call an overnight success. What did happen lightning fast, though, was owner Nick Kennedy's swift and energetic response to the Covid shutdown, which in Toronto lasted far longer than most places in North America. "The first Friday we were closed, we did an online trivia night that just literally came from the idea of, what does a bartender do on a Friday night if they're not working?," says Kennedy. Since it was "insanely well-attended," he kept it up for months, in part, so he and his partner, David Huynh, could keep tabs on who in the bar community *wasn't* showing up, on the grounds that some out-of-work bartenders might need an occasional check-in. Civil was also one of the first out of the gate to get a bottle shop up and running and, in the winter, when bars were closed yet again, Kennedy hatched a Hail Mary plan, open to any bar that wanted to jump into the collective, and hired a distiller to make signature bottled ready-to-pour cocktails to sell during the second shutdown. After the reopening, Civil's fortunes seemed to rise quickly. The enterprise now

has four venues, and the original bar was named Canada's top bar at both North America's 50 Best Bars and Canada's Best Bars. Karma? Maybe. It is striking that, after years of slow and steady growth, everything accelerated after his extraordinary efforts to keep Toronto's bar scene alive and well. Kennedy modestly claims that he was always acting out of enlightened self-interest. "The best bars in the world aren't operating alone but are part of a community," he says. "So, if something can move the whole community forward, that's what we have to do." —CS

FOXFACE NATURAL

"It feels like a labor of love from all of us," says Raquel Vo, wine director at Foxface Natural, a tiny, free-wheeling East Village restaurant that has been turning heads with a vibrant, avant-garde (ish) menu since its opening last summer. A nighttime evolution of a well-loved sandwich operation from owners Sivan Lahat and Ori Kushnir, the menu from chef David Santos changes twice or three times a week, and can include anything from kangaroo tartare with charred eggplant to smoked goat with a saffron tomato sauce. To match, Vo, who has credentials from Racines and Tonchin Brooklyn, built a nimble food-friendly list starting out with a baseline of natural wines with good environmental credentials. Some of their current favorites include Juan Francisco Fariña Perez La Bota de Mateo 2021 from the Canary Islands, Les Vignes de Paradis Un P'tit Coin de Paradis 2020 from Savoie,

and Konni & Evi Silvaner 2020 from Saale-Unstrut. "I'm constantly talking with the chef and the owners. They'll show me a dish they're working on, and then I start thinking a week ahead of what I can pair," Vo says about assembling a suitable stash of wine that can match the tone of the often-wild menu. "It's an ongoing collaboration." —JF

SPUTNIK COFFEE COMPANY

Six years ago, Vova Kagan started Sputnik Coffee Company in Chicago with his brother Greasha Kagan with the goal to make specialty coffee more accessible. "We wanted to remove some of that pretension that follows any specialty product and make it affordable and attainable," Vova says. Attainable, indeed: Sputnik Roasters is now available in roughly 350 grocery stores in 10 states. This winter, after more than two years in the works, the company's sprawling new location opens in the Brighton Park neighborhood. A former warehouse that was on the brink of demolition now showcases Sputnik's thoughtfully designed café, production roastery (on display behind glass), and even an event space, dubbed The Roastery, for its guests. "In the back half of the space, we'll open the 'Roastery' to host more affordable, coffee-themed weddings," Vova says. "Our goal will be to keep wedding guests adequately caffeinated." —CC

MAUREEN ROBINSON

When Maureen Robinson took a yearlong sabbatical from her pharmacist school studies at Strathclyde in

Glasgow, Scotland, more than four decades ago, she quickly found her attention turning to the Scotch whisky industry. She worked first in a laboratory and later as a blender, then in 1977, as a scientist, joined Distillers Company (which later became Diageo), where she worked on brands including Johnnie Walker and managed special releases. In 2022, Robinson retired after 45 years in the distilled spirits industry. Her tenure was filled with accolades—she became Keeper of the Quaich in 2012, and was inducted into the World Whiskies Hall of Fame in 2019. But something about the spirit kept calling her back—and for her next chapter, she turned to American whiskey. This past September, she became Kentucky Owl's first female master blender, working with bourbon to create something that would pay homage to Scotch whisky. Kentucky Owl Maighstir Edition is a blend of four bourbons: a 4-year, 5-year, 8-year, and 9-year-old Kentucky bourbon, with mash bills containing corn, rye, wheat, and malted barley. The idea, Robinson says, is to pique bourbon fans' interest in single malt scotch, her forte. "I worked in the Scotch whisky industry for 45 years," Robinson says. "When I was asked if I was interested in becoming the Kentucky Owl master blender, I felt that I had the credentials to do the job. The spirit platform may be different, but the approach with regard to blending, maintaining spirit quality, and innovation is very similar. I'm looking forward to transferring my skill set from scotch into bourbon." —MK

Robert Simonson in
McSorley's Old Ale House
in New York City.

ROBERT SIMONSON

Astute readers may recognize Robert Simonson's name from his frequent bylines in *Imbibe* as a contributing editor. (Or, possibly, from one of his other regular cocktail-writing roles, such as at *The New York Times*.) This past fall, he published the latest in his expanding range of books on the subject, *The Encyclopedia of Cocktails*, which continues his quest to document the contemporary cocktail renaissance and put it in a larger historical context. "I don't think there's been any other period in cocktails—except in the late 19th century leading up to Prohibition—that's been as important as the last 25 or 30 years," Simonson says. "I think [the subject is] enormous, and that's why I continue to write about it, and why I think the subject is fairly inexhaustible."
—PC



Listen to the full interview with Robert Simonson starting January 16 on *Radio Imbibe*: imbibemagazine.com/podcast.

THE
IMBIBE
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Kira Ballotta.

KIRA BALLOTTA

For Kira Ballotta, winemaking and advocacy go hand in hand. “I’m interested in telling stories of impactful but unsung women,” Ballotta says. Every bottle from her new label, Cantadora Wines, does just that. Cantadora showcases female leaders creating impact in extraordinary ways. To date, the six-bottle lineup includes a Tempranillo honoring Sonia Melara, founder of California’s first domestic violence shelter, and a Rhône blend saluting Marianne Page, an economics researcher working to reduce child poverty. “These are people fighting for solutions,” says Ballotta. Ten percent of wine sales go to a social cause led by the women on the label. Raised by a single working mother, Ballotta observed socioeconomic disparity at play from an early age. After she studied business at the University of Washington, a financial consulting gig in Napa Valley sparked Ballotta’s interest in wine and she segued into the business, first in finances before landing in the field. She made her mark with Olivia Brion Wines, using the fictitious character “Olivia” to share tales of real-life adventurers like Effie Hotchkiss, the first woman to ride cross-country on a motorcycle. While inspired by historical figures, Ballotta says, “I’m also passionate about telling stories of women today.” This is the aim of Cantadora Wines. Expressing the gravity of current events while maintaining the levity that wine lovers expect is no easy feat. “It’s a hard line to walk. I want to bring attention to the issues,” she says, “but I also want to focus on joy and community.” —ABC

DAVID KONG

When David Kong first sipped wine out of a handblown glass, he knew he “couldn’t go back to what I was using before,” he says. But as Kong began collecting, he quickly realized a “personal pain point,” as handblown glasses are an investment (about \$80 per glass) and exceptionally fragile. The solution was to start his own brand. Kong debuted Glasvin, an artisanal, hand-blown stemware company, in 2020 with the Universal Glass, priced at \$85 for a set of two. The all-purpose vessel weighs in at 100 grams (compared to the average wine glass at 150–200 grams), which, Kong says, “sets it apart in terms of elevating the drinking experience.” In the last three years, Glasvin has expanded their portfolio—designed in New York, crafted in Asia and Europe—to include seven different glasses, plus a decanter. A new line that Kong refers to as “entry level but still premium,” GV Home, launched in August 2023 with multiple cocktail and wine glasses, all for an average of \$20 each. But it’s the Universal that remains their best-selling glass, not just for wine connoisseurs but for more than 150 restaurants, including more than a dozen Michelin-starred venues like Gabriel Kreuther in New York and Kato in LA. Though Glasvin’s popularity in restaurants was unexpected, Kong says that it’s now an accelerator for them. He’s even been dining and heard guests ask, “What are these glasses? They’re so light!” “Wine glasses are the number one investment you can make to drink better wine,” says Kong.

—Jillian Dara

SIP & GUZZLE

Steve Schneider has a vision of the ideal visit to Sip & Guzzle, his and Shingo Gokan’s new bi-level New York bar. First you enter Guzzle, a high-energy, loose-limbed, ground-floor bar that Schneider commands, and try one of his fun-loving mash-up creations—say, a Miami Vice Negroni or Porn Star Mojito. Then you descend the stairs to the posh, hushed, 19th-century atmosphere of Sip, run by Gokan. There, you can get your shoes shined while you wait for one of the 30 seats to come free and finally enjoy a Japanese-influenced libation like a Wagyu fat-washed Old-Fashioned. At night’s end, you pass through Guzzle again to get a nightcap from Schneider. “Some customers are going to have their preference,” says Schneider. “But I would like people to experience the whole thing.” This is the second collaboration for Schneider, an alumnus of Employees Only, and Gokan, a cocktail bar mogul in Asia whose career began in New York at Angel’s Share. (His Speak Low in Shanghai also has multiple floors, each a different experience.) They previously opened the Shanghai bar Odd Couple. For both men, Sip & Guzzle feels like a homecoming. “I’ve always wanted to have a bar in New York City,” says Schneider. “This circles back to EO and Angel’s Share from a decade ago.” —RS

DONNA

When beloved Brooklyn bar Donna closed in the winter of 2020 after a decade of being a neighborhood standby, owner Leif Huckman decided to resurrect the bar

in a new location—with a decidedly different approach. Huckman initially transferred majority ownership to four of the employees and, last May, Donna reopened in Manhattan’s West Village as a wholly worker-owned cooperative. “Every employee we hire has the opportunity to become a worker-owner and have a voice in our policies, as well as big-picture decision-making,” explains Lauren Ruiz, the general manager and one of the worker-owners. What regulars loved about Donna remains unchanged—the bar is still crafting creative, original cocktails like the boozy, tropical Professor Eyebrows (Japanese whisky, rye, rum, pineapple, amaro, Angostura), and plating up fresh, pan-Latin dishes. But the vibe shift, explains Ruiz, is evident to guests—that every employee has a vested interest in offering the best experience possible. “Cooperatives foster transparency across all roles and emphasize how important it is to work as a cohesive unit. Issues like wage theft, unpredictable schedules, and inequity in work and pay all become less prevalent when everyone is equally invested,” says Ruiz. “We wanted to break the mold of what was typical in the industry and desired to use a model of hospitality that fosters a community of collaboration.” —PB



HAYMAKER

A bottled-in-bond rye whiskey gives a bold and spicy base to the rich combo of espresso and cream in this cocktail that drinks like a boozy iced latte.

¾ oz. rye whiskey (100-proof such as Rittenhouse)
¾ oz. espresso (freshly brewed, or sub a coffee concentrate)
¾ oz. coffee liqueur
1 oz. orgeat

Tools: shaker, strainer, fine strainer
Glass: rocks
Garnish: whipped cream, sea salt, instant coffee powder

Add all of the ingredients to a shaker, fill with ice, and shake well. Double strain into a rocks glass filled with fresh ice. Garnish with a large dollop of fresh whipped cream (or Enswell's Coffee Vanilla Cream), a sprinkle of Maldon salt, and instant coffee powder.

Coffee Vanilla Cream: In a cold bowl, combine 1 cup heavy whipping cream, 1 tsp. of instant espresso, and half of a scraped vanilla bean (or sub 1 tsp. vanilla extract). Whisk by hand or with a mixer until soft peaks form. Use immediately.

Vince Stipo for Enswell, Philadelphia

ALEX VALENCIA

When Alex Valencia immigrated to New York from Guadalajara at 19, he had no aspirations of tending bar, but he brought with him childhood memories of pre-Columbian beverages like tepache and *tejuino*. His first restaurant job was washing dishes at an Italian restaurant, and when opportunity arose to work behind the bar, Valencia eagerly accepted. Valencia went on to work at several bars, but it wasn't until he opened La Contenta (with chef-business partner Luis Arce Mota) on the Lower East Side in 2015 that he found his calling: integrating education with what he calls "Mexican mixology." Incorporating indigenous Mexican ingredients into cocktails is Valencia's way of reconnecting with his cultural heritage and sharing it with guests. One of the first American bars to offer alternative Mexican spirits like sotol, raicilla, and bacanora, La Contenta laid the groundwork for other seminal Mexican bar programs like Manhattan's Ghost Donkey, Pulqueria, and Superbuono (page 42). "At the time, everyone was doing tacos and Margaritas," says Valencia. "I asked myself, how could I do something different?" The answer lay in the beverages of Valencia's youth. One of his earliest cocktails incorporated a family recipe for tepache, virtually unknown outside of immigrant enclaves at the time. His Pulque de Guayaba cocktail (pulque, rum, guava puree, lemon, vanilla) was another immediate hit. He and Mota opened La Contenta Oeste in the West Village in 2017, and this winter, Valencia will open a

new venture with a program built around tropical Mexican cocktails and coastal seafood dishes. "It's become my mission to be an educator and bridge a connection for my community by making these indigenous ingredients accessible," he says. "Many of our customers are second or third generation Mexican American, unfamiliar with them, and they're always excited to learn about their culture." —LM

ENSWELL

"There's a looseness and flow to European café culture that we wanted to have," explains Jonathan Adams, co-founder of Philadelphia's Enswell. Adams and his business partner Damien Pileggi (also co-founders of Rival Bros. Coffee) opened Enswell this past August as a way to further highlight the coffee they already work with daily and reestablish integrity in the coffee-infused cocktail category. Frequently, bars list one coffee drink, explains Adams, alluding to the omnipresent Espresso Martini, but beyond this classic offering, "coffee is surprisingly versatile." Enswell offers original espresso and cold brew-based drinks (as well as tea cocktails), designed by bar consultant Vince Stipo. The Haymaker's build resembles a latte with espresso, rye whiskey, house orgeat, and coffee-flavored cream, while the Old Fashioned No. Two uses brown butter-washed scotch, Enswell's house bitters blend, and demerara sugar. "We're going to take it as far as we can," says Adams in reference to creating a coffee-infused or inspired version of all the classics. —JD



Damien Pileggi (bottom left, on left) and Jonathan Adams, and a Good Hope Gimlet (bottom right) at Enswell in Philadelphia.



Ireland

The simple edicts surrounding Irish whiskey stand in contrast to the spirit's long and tumultuous history. The first written acknowledgement of Irish whiskey dates to 1324, and by the 1500s it was mentioned in medical journals for its supposed ability to cure paralysis and strengthen eyesight. In the late 1800s, there were more than two dozen distilleries across Ireland. A century later, there were four.

"The island changed, and the liquids reflect this history," says Fionnán O'Connor, Irish whiskey writer and author of *A Glass Apart*, in reference to the turbulent slew of events that threatened Irish whiskey's existence. The introduction of the column still in the 19th century led to the rise of inexpensive blended Scotch whisky, a major competitor; Ireland's independence from the U.K. in the 1920s disrupted trade (and coincided with Prohibition in the U.S.); and finally, World War II left the industry nearly decimated.

A successful merger among three of the legacy brands—Jameson, Powers, and Paddy—and the creation of Irish Distillers Ltd. in 1966 pulled Irish whiskey back from the brink. Today, there are nearly 50 distilleries across the island. And although the majority of the market is dominated by household names of blended whiskey—Jameson, Tullamore Dew, and Bushmills—"there is a renaissance in offerings in Irish whiskey," says O'Connor.

One of the most prolific revival genres is single pot still whiskey. "Though whiskey can globally be made in a pot still, the Irish pot still [whiskey category] is more specifically regulated than Irish whiskey in general," explains O'Connor, noting the mash must be at least 30 percent malted barley and 30 percent unmalted barley. "It produces a very oily spirit and a gingery crackliness that the Irish refer to as 'pot still spice,'" he says.

As Irish whiskey's story continues to be written, the spirit defies many global spirits' specificities like denomination of origin. Irish whiskey is protected by the European Union's Geographical Indications, but O'Connor offers an explanation as to why regionality doesn't matter as much. The world of Irish whiskey has "tectonically changed," he says. "The whole map is being rewritten because there's so many newcomers; we sort of don't know ourselves." But that's not necessarily a negative. "There's a sense of reclamation and enthusiasm," says O'Connor. "People are doing things that have never been done before, but also reviving old mash bills and old procedures."

Story by Jillian Dara

Illustrations by Matty Newton



During Irish whiskey's 20th century downturn, the government didn't have the money to tear down abandoned distilleries, and the shuttered or repurposed buildings can still be found across Ireland, including sites like the National College of Art and Design in Dublin.





The Irish Whiskey Act of 1980 defined the basic production requirements, and the spirit falls into four main styles today: malt, pot still, grain, and blended.

Irish whiskey is typically unpeated, but there's a deep history of making peated whiskey in Ireland. The practice faded out in the early 1900s, but it's in niche production today.

5 to Try

Bushmills Black Bush

"Irish whiskey's Olympic candidate for best value blend on earth," enthuses O'Connor for Bushmills blend of high-malt whiskey matured in oloroso sherry casks, and batch-distilled grain whiskey. "It's a larger, more generous blend from a more civilized age." \$39.99, totalwine.com

Powers John's Lane Single Pot Still

"An old-school single pot still whiskey, with old leather on the nose, plenty of banana bread and gingery crackle on the palate, and enough viscous oils to sink a boat ... or a pint," says O'Connor, adding it's "the purist's drop." \$67.99, caskers.com

Redbreast 12-Year Cask Strength

This annual batch of sherry cask-aged single pot still whiskey is what O'Connor describes as "the old testament of Irish whiskey." Rich in character and high in proof, this whiskey offers notes of brown sugar, dried figs, and gingerbread, all lingering for ages. \$104.99, totalwine.com

Dunville's PX Single Malt 10 Year

"An absolute cracker from Irish distilling's new guard," says O'Connor. This single malt is "a decadent, viscous, after-dinner sherry bomb kept on its toes by the crackling ferns and grasses still making themselves heard under gooey layers of Pedro Ximénez goodness." \$69.99, totalwine.com

Killowen Barántúil

"Distilled in small, direct-flame pots from a mixed mash of peated malt, raw barley, peated oats, wheat, and rye, this is possibly the most cult-adored new release among whiskey fans in Ireland," says O'Connor. "Long fermentations and wide back cuts all contribute to this viscous, smoky, multi-granular slant on Irish distilling's raw barley oils and spices." See killowendistillery.com for limited releases

San Antonio, Texas

Despite its long-proffered prompt to “remember the Alamo,” San Antonio often still slips into the shadow of other Texas cities—this, despite being the second-most-populous and oldest chartered civil settlement in the state. “I think people underestimate San Antonio in all aspects of food and drink,” laments Diego Galicia, the chef and co-owner (with Rico Torres) of the locally beloved restaurant Mixtli. “There is still a misconception that we are all about bean-and-cheese enchiladas, Margaritas, and horses.” But the city’s centuries of cultural evolution have today coalesced into a thriving and dynamic hub, particularly on the culinary front. “SA is a rapidly growing city with a very diverse hospitality scene. You can get world-class cocktails in beautiful settings that would break the idea of San Antonio being some stagnant Texas city,” says Galicia. “We are so much more than the Alamo and the River Walk.” Having called the city home for more than two decades, Galicia offers a tour of some of his current favorite establishments for a quality drink and some welcoming hospitality. **By Penelope Bass**



La Ruina

Modus operandi: Built out in the historic (and long neglected) Robitzsch Brothers Building in San Antonio’s east side, this cocktail spot from local bar veterans opened in the fall of 2022 and leans into its namesake vibes reminiscent of places like Old Havana and Colón, Panama. “The bar is fashioned with dimly lit booths and floral accents,” says Galicia. “La Ruina’s cocktail menu highlights ‘revitalized’ staple cocktails made with specialty tequila, rum, wine, and mezcal.” The pan-Latin American offerings range from simple highballs like a Cuba Libre or sotol with house-made tepache, to classics like the El Presidente and a Piña Colada with a house rum blend.

Coordinates: 410 Austin St. // 210-627-7846 // la-ruina.com

Mixtli

Modus operandi: For more than a decade, Mixtli has been preparing progressive Mexican cuisine ranging from pre-Hispanic to modern, avant-garde techniques. The restaurant’s bar and accompanying wine cellar offer equally impressive programs. “Adjacent to the dining room, The Cellar holds more than 1,200 wines from around the world,” says Galicia. “Curated by certified sommelier Hailey Pruitt, the collection pays special homage to wines from Mexico.” The bar, which is managed by seasoned mixologist Lauren Beckman, “offers a variety of cocktails rooted in the history and romance of Mexican lore,” says Galicia. A modern twist on foundational flavors can be seen in cocktails like the Ponche de Leche, a clarified punch with Mexican whiskey, rum, fernet, clarified coconut cream, mole bitters, and *mazapán* candy.

Coordinates: 812 S. Alamo St. Suite 103 // 210-338-0746 // restaurantmixtli.com

Little Death

Modus operandi: Even amongst the hustle and bustle of San Antonio’s midtown entertainment district, it would be difficult to miss Little Death. “Little Death is housed in a 90-year-old gas station on the legendary St. Mary’s strip,” explains Galicia. Every inch of the building’s exterior is covered in technicolor graffiti murals. But inside the wine bar and bottle shop, the vibe is minimalist with the focus put on the product itself. “Shelving around the shop displays an eclectic selection of wines, mostly from small producers, representing just about every corner of the world where grapes grow,” Galicia says. Recent offerings have included Kindeli Wines from New Zealand, and a lineup from Scythian Wine Co., a new project from sommelier-turned-vigneron Rajat Parr.

Coordinates: 2327 N. St. Mary’s St. // 210-264-6472 // littledethwine.com

Ladino

Modus operandi: The Ladino language (also called Judeo-Spanish) is a mix of Castellano, French, Italian, Greek, Turkish, and Hebrew. It’s the language that chef and Ladino partner Berty Richter grew up speaking at home. “Ladino celebrates the cultures and cuisines of the Mediterranean region,” notes Galicia of the restaurant nestled in San Antonio’s Pearl district. Freshly made sourdough pita emerges from a wood-fired oven alongside regional specialties like beef and lamb dumplings. “The beverage program highlights the area’s wines and spirits—in particular arak, raki, and ouzo,” says Galicia, pointing to a menu of playful cocktails like the Matkot & Chill with mezcal, arak, grapefruit, basil, coconut, and lime, or the spirit-forward Sazeraki.

Coordinates: 200 E. Grayson St. #100 // 210-325-6007 // ladinosatx.com



Clockwise from left: Künstler Brewing's Cold School West Coast Pilsner; sangria and a taco at La Ruina; a Mai Tai at La Ruina; burger and a Nulli Secundus Baltic Porter at Künstler Brewing; cod wrapped in hoja santa and squash blossoms with herb oil at Mixtli.

Clockwise from left: Rey Duque, Jason Chetwood, Jason Chetwood, Rey Duque, Alexana Cabrera



Künstler Brewing

Modus operandi: “German for ‘artist,’ Künstler takes one part Bavarian tradition, one part Texas pride, and brews it all in the multicultural barrel that is San Antonio,” says Galicia. German-born head brewer Vera Deckard, who co-owns Künstler with her husband, Brent, crafts a rotating lineup of playful yet traditionally inspired beers like the Texas Chainsaw Triple and The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Märzen. Enjoy a brew alongside an order of currywurst fries or the spaetzle mac and cheese. “It’s a one-of-a-kind brewery experience alongside German-Texan fusion fare in a warm and welcoming neighborhood environment,” enthuses Galicia.

Coordinates: 302 E. Lachapelle // 210-688-4519 // kuenstlerbrewing.com

“You can get world-class cocktails in beautiful settings that would break the idea of San Antonio being some stagnant Texas city.”

—DIEGO GALICIA

cravings The secret to these flavorful pancakes is a glug of beer.

Make Yourself Comfortable

Scandinavians know a thing or two about comforting foods and cozy vibes, as American chef Nichole Accettola discovered while living in Copenhagen. What was supposed to be one year abroad turned into 15 as the chef found herself enamored with Danish culture. Wanting to share her favorite breads, cookies, and pastries upon her return to the States, Accettola opened Kantine, the beloved bakery café in San Francisco. With her debut cookbook, *Scandinavian From Scratch* (written with co-author Malena Watrous), Accettola brings the hygge home with 75 recipes ideal for slow winter mornings, like these Rye and Beer Pancakes. “Scandinavian pancakes look similar to French crepes, but they are lighter and chewier thanks to more eggs and less flour,” notes Accettola. “Beer gives the batter a malted earthiness.” Prep the whipped cream and some berry compote in advance, advises Accettola, so that everything can be enjoyed together while the pancakes are hot. And maybe put on a second pot of coffee for good measure.

By Penelope Bass

Rye and Beer Pancakes *Rug Pandekager*

$\frac{3}{8}$ cup (70 g) cake flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (85 g) rye flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
4 eggs
1 cup (240 g) whole milk
2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing
1 cup (237 g) beer (pilsner or pale ale)
1 cup (226 g) heavy cream
3 Tbsp. powdered sugar
Berry compote or fresh fruit, for serving



Anders Schønnemann

In a medium bowl, whisk the cake flour, rye flour, and salt until well combined. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the eggs, milk, and melted butter on medium until frothy. Add the flour mixture and beat on low until well incorporated and no floury lumps remain. Add the beer and whisk on low for 1 minute more. Set aside while you whip the cream.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment or in a large bowl with a handheld mixer, whip the cream on medium until soft peaks form. Add the powdered sugar and whip again.

Lightly butter a medium nonstick skillet or crepe pan and set it over medium heat. The batter is buttery enough that you may not need to butter the pan again for the remaining pancakes. Using a ladle, drop about $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of the batter onto the pan, lifting and swirling the pan to cover the surface thinly. Let the pancake cook for about 2 minutes, until the surface looks fairly dry and the edges are browned and lifting slightly away from the pan. Flip it with a spatula and let it cook on the other side for 1 minute more. Place the pancake on a plate and repeat with the remaining batter, stacking the pancakes as you go.

Serve immediately with bowls of sweetened whipped cream and berry compote. Makes 8-10 pancakes.

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Time & Circumstance

Editor's note: Over the course of this year, we're asking drinks-world professionals to look back and share the stories of drinks that changed their lives and careers. Inaugurating the series is Thad Vogler, owner of Bar Agricole in San Francisco.

In 2008, I was hired to develop the bar program for a restaurant called Beretta, in San Francisco's Mission District, that featured the now-ubiquitous combination of destination cocktails and pizza. Like many Bay Area bartenders, I'd spent the early years of the aughts going to New York City, where drinks made by the likes of Sam Ross, Julie Reiner, Jim Meehan, Audrey Saunders, and Phil Ward changed how I thought about our work. Bartending had always had its own beautiful choreography, even when we were just shaking Cosmopolitans, but now what was in the glass had gravitas. My favorites were prepared by the acolytes of Milk & Honey's Sasha Petraske, whose drinks were concise flavor machines. The cocktails were traditional and simple, begging the details of temperature and dilution.

These influences were at play as I developed drinks for Beretta. Fortunately, I wasn't alone. Todd Smith and Ryan Fitzgerald, who went on to open ABV; Jon Santer, co-founder of Prizefighter; Lane Ford, who later headed to Death & Co; my eventual Bar Agricole partner, Eric Johnson; and Erik Adkins from Slanted Door—the best in San Francisco, they comprised a supergroup who helped me launch the program. We mined reprints of old bar books—Waldorf, Stork Club, Boothby—keen to make swizzles, smashes, rickies, anything with that vintage redolence.

Missing from the old books, and what the neighborhood demanded, were agave spirits. What could we do with mezcal, a relative newcomer that was upending the cocktail world? A classic fix was a simple sour, often made with pineapple. In addition to a physical resemblance to the fruit, the agave *piña* has a filigree of acidity and sweetness that merges well with pineapple, and has certain savory qualities (agave is a relative of asparagus).

Mezcal honored agriculture, which had been important for me since I fell in love with rum agricole, conveying us back to a point when the spirit originated as a seed. Del Maguery founder Ron Cooper had mezcals that were named for the villages of their provenance—*perfect*. So was spawned the Single Village Fix: a simple, three-ingredient cocktail that was old and new at the same time.

How many bartenders does it take to work out a recipe for a three-ingredient drink? In 2008, quite a few. We vetted more ratios than I can recall, finally arriving at 2 ounces of mezcal with $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce each of lime juice and pineapple syrup (the latter made by Jen Colliau, with whom many of us had worked, for her company Small Hand Foods). Today, I see the recipe as very San Francisco—lush, even licentious—compared to those found at more restrained New York bars. (I later learned that Milk & Honey used a $1\frac{1}{2}:\frac{1}{2}:\frac{1}{2}$ matrix for sours, making them leaner and tighter.)

Why has this drink's significance endured in my life? Recently, we hosted a party at Bar Agricole with writer (and *Imbibe* contributing editor) Robert Simonson, who had included

the Single Village Fix in a couple of his books. We wanted to make it for him that evening, and I must concede it was tasty. Nostalgia plays a part here, too. As with the reflection of the gunslingers in the epilogue of *The Wild Bunch*, I recall the faces of the bartenders who started Beretta with me when Valencia Street held so much promise, just as I remember a time in my own life when I felt a pure excitement about the work, unmitigated by business headaches and mortgage payments.

More than this, though, is the realization that all of this was determined. I understand now that my tastes and decisions are ordained; drinks are the same. Though we'd like them to be the brainchildren of bar visionaries, great cocktails are the products of a collision of time and circumstance. In 2008, the agriculturally rooted character of mezcal collided with a nascent cocktail revival in San Francisco, just as other ingredients

and cultural movements will intersect in the future.

I never wanted to be a bartender, but the universe made me one. Similarly, anything attributed to me feels like the work of greater forces: the time, the people around me, markets, politics, and maybe something more mystical. But this could also just be a bartender approaching the end of middle age, trying to make sense of his career and his life. Like singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell with her clouds, I look at drinks from both sides now. **By Thad Vogler**



Matty Newton



Listen to an extended conversation with Thad Vogler about the Single Village Fix on *Radio Imbibe*, starting January 30: imbibemagazine.com/podcast

A man with glasses and a brown jacket is holding a glass of amber liquid up to the light in a distillery setting. The background shows various pieces of distillation equipment and pipes.

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