Central Oregon DISTILLERIES

Bendistillery
19330 Pinehurst Rd., Bend
541-318-0200
www.bendistillery.com

Oregon Spirit Distillers
490 NE Butler Market Rd., Ste. 110, Bend
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RECIPES

Cocoa Puff Martini
Made with Cofia Hazelnut Espresso Vodka and Crater Lake Vodka / Created by the Bendistillery Sampling Room

2 oz Crater Lake Vodka
2 oz Cofia Hazelnut Espresso Vodka
1 oz chocolate syrup
1 oz half & half
splash vanilla syrup

Mix ingredients over ice in a cocktail shaker and shake well. Strain into a chocolate graham cracker rimmed martini glass. No garnish needed.

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Black Mariah Bramble
Created by Oregon Spirit Distillers

Black Mariah
Merrylegs Gin
Lime Juice
Simple Syrup (to taste)

Shake Merrylegs Gin, lime juice and simple syrup with ice, strain into glass filled with crush ice. Top with Black Mariah float.

LOCAVORE'S CORNER:

STILL keeping it LOCAL



Area distilleries are creating spirits using local products, local know-how.

by Chef Bette Fraser / for The Bulletin Special Projects

Man can't live by beer alone. Neither can woman.

Bend's fabulous water, juniper berries and brilliant sunshine got a couple of visionaries thinking about gin and vodka. When we order a martini or a bloody mary, we can appreciate their hard work and vision.

Bendistillery

Jim Bendis was the trailblazer in 1996 when he started Bendistillery. He was aware of the delicious water flowing down from the Cascades but also looked around at all of those juniper berries growing seemingly everywhere.

Jim set out to make an all-natural gin using what resources Central Oregon provided. The result was Cascade Mountain Gin.

Following the gin came Crater Lake Vodka, made from corn, which is filtered 10 times over native lava rocks. Over one Thanksgiving weekend, the filters were left running and the vodka was filtered 100 times. The vodka was so smooth, a new product was born. Diamond 100 Vodka hit the shelves in 2006.

Cofia, the hazelnut espresso-infused vodka, is made with the Crater Lake Vodka and blended with real Oregon hazelnuts, brown sugar and DuLusso coffee. Excellent in hot drinks such as Cocoa Puff Martini, it also adds a subtle flavor in baking and cooking.

If you love a great bloody mary, try some Mazama Infused Pepper Vodka next time. Infused with a combination of hot and sweet peppers, this all-natural vodka — named for the mountain the blew and became Crater Lake — will add some punch to your mary.

All of Bendistillery's products are made using all-natural ingredients. Consider that perhaps one of the reasons Bendistillery has been awarded gold medals for all of their products. In fact, Cofia was honored as the best flavored vodka in the world.

Bendistillery moved to their current location in September, 2010. While they currently get their peppers for the infused pepper vodka in Oregon, they plan to build a hoop house or greenhouse to grow their own peppers and botanicals. They plan, in essence to become a distiller that is truly a ground-to-bottle operation.

The distillery, tasting room and gift shop is located on a 24-acre farm off Highway 20 between Bend and Sisters. It is open for tours and tastings. Check their web site for hours and days: www.bendistillery.com.



Oregon Spirit Distillers

Meanwhile, spirit enthusiast, Brad Irwin, was busy crafting ideas of his own. In September, 2010, Brad and his wife, Kathy, launched Oregon Spirit Distillers.

Brad's first spirit is the smooth, 80-proof vodka made from Pendleton wheat. While vodka is, in theory, a flavorless, odorless, colorless spirit, every vodka drinker will attest to the fact that his or her favorite vodka has a distinct flavor profile.

Brad's vodka has a subtle sweetness with vanilla notes that can be attributed to the fact that it is made from wheat. It is a different flavor profile than that of some vodkas that are made from grains such as rye.

With success have come more products. Oregon Spirit Distillers recently released their Distillers Choice line, available only at the tasting room for "in the know" locals. The Distillers Choice Line will release selections of 25 to 100 bottle spirits from time to time.

Their bourbon, aged in American oak barrels for two years, is made from barley. The inside of the barrels have some char, similar to wine barrels, to achieve a certain flavor profile depending on the desire of the distiller. Brad wanted his bourbon to be smooth enough for drinking neat, but not too bold to participate in a cocktail. The result was worth the wait.

Black Mariah, a Marionberry cordial, is liquid sunshine and tastes just like Oregon's famous berry. Delicious on its own, it can also be enjoyed with champagne, mixed with a margarita or topped with ice cream. It is a Marionberry gone to heaven.

In 2007, the first Absinthe was imported into this country legally since it was banned in 1912. Oregon Spirit Distillers makes an Absinthe from a variety of botanicals and herbs, including fennel and anise. While there is much written about absinthe, most of it is folklore.

Absinthe or a form of it was consumed by the ancient Greeks and others through history. Stop by the distillery and Brad will show you how to enjoy this popular and delicious drink. It has been part of our drinking culture for centuries because it is an all-natural product that can be enjoyed as an aperitif when mixed with water.

Coming soon is their Merrylegs Gin, named for their beloved Corgi Merrylegs. The gin, available in a few weeks, will be a non-traditional, oude jenever style, or known as Dutch or Holland gin.

When touring the distillery and tasting room, you can see the copper still imported from Germany and the casks where the bourbon is aged. The tasting room is open on Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. or by appointment. For further information, visit their web site at www.oregonspiritdistillers.com.

Chef Bette Fraser is the proprietor of The Well Traveled Fork, hosting cooking classes, culinary tours and providing catering services. She can be reached at WellTraveledFork.com or 541-312-0097.