

PLUS: BOOZY HOT COCOA WHISKEY-SPIKED BANANA PUDDING ORGEAT TASTE TEST

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LIQUID CULTURE



The
IMBIBE
75
People, places and
flavors that will shape
the way you drink
in 2014.





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We've set an annual January tradition here at *Imbibe*. Every year at this time, we survey the drinkscape, look ahead to what the coming year has in store and highlight the 75 people, places and flavors we're most looking forward to watching in the year ahead. Like last year, we've named our picks for Bartender(s) of the Year, Wine Person of the Year, Coffee Person of the Year and Beer Person of the Year, and we've highlighted our top cocktail, beer, wine and coffee bars of the year. You'll also find our picks for people and places to watch, and the destinations we're excited about visiting. And the celebration doesn't stop here. Be sure to visit us online (imbibemagazine.com) for more on the 2014 Imbibe 75, plus updates from our Class of 2013.

SLOE GIN

Sipped sloe gin recently? If not, now's the time to get reacquainted. A requisite in the classic Sloe Gin Fizz, this fruit-forward, spirited liqueur is made by infusing sloe berries from the blackthorn tree into gin. A sipping staple throughout the English countryside, where brambly blackthorns grow with abandon (and most households possess their own coveted recipe), sloe gin had all but fallen by the wayside here in the U.S. until Plymouth began exporting its 19th-century formula back in 2008. Germany's The Bitter Truth followed suit in 2009, and recently, a crop of domestic distillers has offered up newer interpretations. A recent favorite, from Northern California's Spirit Works Distillery, combines house-distilled, wheat-based gin with sloe berries into a low-proof, cranberry-colored cordial that exudes fresh-fruit flavors, notes of citrus and cardamom, and a hint of spice. "The recipe has been made by owner Timo Marshall's family in Devon, England, for generations," says distiller Romy Colombatto. "We just brought it to the U.S. and figured out how to make it on a larger scale." Sip it neat as a digestif, in a classic Sloe Gin Fizz, or in The Dorstone from Denver bartender Jason Patz, which combines the ruby-hued sipper with traditional gin and dry Curaçao.

THE DORSTONE >>>

Slow berries flavor and color this gem of a cocktail.

2 oz. gin
¾ oz. sloe gin
¼ oz. dry Curaçao

Tools: mixing glass,
barspoon, strainer
Glass: double Old Fashioned
Garnish: orange twist

Combine all ingredients and stir with ice. Strain over one large ice cube and garnish.

JASON PATZ
Williams & Graham, Denver

GRAPE-DISTILLED SPIRITS

Grapes have long been used for more than wine production—Cognac, grappa and pisco all rely on the mighty grape—but in the U.S., grains are the go-to for most spirits. Distillers like California's Germain-Robin and Oregon's Clear Creek have been champions of distilling

grape skins and juice, but it wasn't until recently that others followed suit. In Seattle, Glass Distillery relies solely on Pacific Northwest-grown wine grapes for its vodka, while Re:Find in Paso Robles, California, uses free-run juice from its estate-grown wine grapes (the company also produces wine under its Villicana label) to produce vodka, gin and seasonally flavored

brandies. Elsewhere in California, Napa Valley Distillery is gearing up to launch its latest in a line of grape-based spirits—Hollywood gin—later this year, while PasoPort recently installed its own copper pot still and is already experimenting with spirited grapey goodness.

