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AN UNDER-THE-RADAR NEW YORK WHISKEY—FROM THE HOME OF WOODSTOCK

Contributed by SipSavorSwallow on Mar 31, 2017

An Under-The-Radar New York Whiskey—from the home of Woodstock by EC Gladstone

Review: Catskill Distillery Whiskies

With the sale of Hudson Distillery to the William Grant company (a family business, but a huge one) it was only a matter of time before other craft spirits operations in New York State started emerging, using local grains to intriguing results. In fact there are more than 70 at present, though the greater world isn't seeing the output of very many.

One of the most intriguing I came across this past year is Catskill Distilling Company, run by a veterinary doctor, Monte Sachs, in Bethel, NY (a town most famous as the original site of the Woodstock festival). Sachs managed to consult with Lincoln Henderson (Brown & Forman distiller) before his passing, and it surely played a part in the results.

In its desire for distinction, Catskill seems unafraid to try nearly anything, from a classic Rye and "righteous" Bourbon to Straight Wheat Whiskey, white spirits and an intriguing spirit based on Buckwheat. Interestingly, they bottle everything at 85 proof. Sachs first learned distilling from an Italian farmworker who made grappa, so they do that too.

But I chose to focus on the cask spirits, which seem to have the most potential.



Though packaged with a remarkably uninspired label, the Straight Rye is solid. A sweet caramel nose and antique brass color are the entrée to a palate that is corny-sweet, herbaceous, vanilla, maple, spicy, just a bit bitter, solid and likeable.



The Fearless Straight Wheat has a nearly identical antique brass color but a more yeasty nose, with a spicy savory mouth, light caramel notes, silky texture and just a bit peppery.



The Most Righteous Bourbon (no pressure with that name!) is a fearless blend of 70% corn, 20% rye and 10% malt that has a darker bronze color with a nose of bananas flambee and a nutty, woody mouth.



Last but perhaps most intriguing is their unusual Buckwheat spirit, gold with a nose of sprouted grains and a very spicy, peppery savory mouth. This spirit might need some tweaking (or more cask time) but could be a really interesting new category.

Right now, Catskill's bottles are only available in five Eastern states and Texas, but hopefully they will broaden their reach soon.

Catskill Distilling Co.

Sip Savor Swallow - Wine Spirits and Drinks Articles By E.C. Gladstone