

Bartender, There's a Duck in My Drink

Grab your Lipitor. The fat-washed cocktail trend is taking hold and coming to your local bar.

Bartenders at Manhattan's mixology meccas have long debated who decided to infuse Bourbon with a touch of bacon fat. (For cocktail geeks scoring at home, many credit Eben Freeman at now-shuttered Tailor, or Don Lee at PDT, both in NYC.) But whoever dreamed up the arguably unorthodox (if not downright gross-sounding) concoction, imbibers the world over are happy the bacon craze came to the cocktail menu. To wit: PDT's Benton's Old-Fashioned, a mixture of bacon-infused Bourbon, maple syrup and Angostura Bitters, has become the bar's signature drink in just five years.

And bacon was just the start. Justice Snow's in Aspen, Colorado, has its Good Morning Manhattan (right), made with bone-marrow-washed Old Forester Bourbon. And at Seattle's Sazerac, Jason McGrady infuses Grand Marnier with duck fat, which he mixes with vodka, Campari and Aperol for his aptly named Duck à l'Orange cocktail.

While flavor is certainly paramount, the true appeal of adding fat is about exploring texture and mouthfeel, relatively uncharted frontiers in mixology.

"The fat adds a whole new dimension," says Jeff Faile, bar manager at Washington D.C.'s Fiola, which boasts its Deer in the Headlights cocktail made with venison-washed rye, Averna and bitters. "It's like a Manhattan," he says, "but because of the wash, the flavors actually coat the mouth and sustain the finish."

For vegetarians who feel slighted by the fashionable craze, not to worry, you still have a chance to up your cholesterol count with a fat-based cocktail. Butter, it turns out, definitely has its place in the washed-drink movement. PDT just introduced its take on hot buttered rum, mixing butter-infused rum with lemon and pineapple juice, Frangelico, Senior Curaçao of Curaçao Blue Liqueur, cane syrup and bitters, topped with yet another artery enemy: heavy cream.

BACON, NOT STIRRED
Lard-laced libations are all the rage.



See how to bring the fat-washed trend home by visiting, winemag.com/fatwashed

KARA'S *pick*

This Month: Armagnac
I sampled Armagnacs that ranged in price from \$50–\$500. My pick proves that excellence can exist at any price point. —KARA NEWMAN, SPIRITS EDITOR



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Delord X.O. (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). This family-owned house has been making Armagnac since the 1800s, and it shows. The X.O. is enticing, complex and velvety, with fruity flavors leading to a substantial crème brûlée note—an affordable luxury. —K.N.

abv: 40%

Price: \$55

Visit the Ratings page on winemag.com or turn to page 189 of this issue for more spirit reviews.



Hillrock Estate Distillery

LAUNCHED: 2012
WHERE: ANCRAM, NEW YORK
SPECIALTY: SOLERA BOURBON

Hillrock Estate Distillery, a newcomer to the vibrant Hudson Valley small-batch distilling scene, stands out in a number of ways. It grows its own rye and barley, has its own malt house, and does its own malting—all rare feats in America.

But it's the outfit's whiskey that will raise the most eyebrows. It's a solera Bourbon, and, according to Master Distiller Dave Pickerell, it's the first of its kind, since the solera system typically is only used in Sherry making. A gradual blending process, it involves topping off a few select older barrels with younger whiskey.

Pickerell says he uses the Spanish technique to achieve both blending consistency and depth of flavor. "It will just continue to get deeper in character," he says.

—ROBERT SIMONSON

