

## WINE & SPIRITS

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### *Vermont Spirits: Showing Craft Distilleries How It's Done*

*Tucked in in the Village of Quechee, Vermont Spirits distills its spirits from local crops and spring water. Master Distiller & Vice President of Product Development, Joe Buswell and Distiller & Vice President of Operations, Harry Gorman talk to FOUR...*



#### **What was the concept behind Vermont Spirits?**

**Harry:** The idea has always been to distil spirits of exceptional quality that feature Vermont ingredients, be it maple sap, corn, apples, berries or the hand-picked wild Juniper berries we use for our gin.

#### **Where has your passion for distilling come from?**

**Joe:** I like producing something that people can enjoy whether they are having a great day and want to celebrate, or maybe they are having a not-so-great day and need a little time to console themselves.

**Harry:** My interest in distilling comes from the enjoyment I get from making something from scratch. We have built our own stills, which are unique in the US



craft spirits industry, and we distil all of our spirits the same way.

**Why did you choose this location (Vermont Spirits are located near White River Junction, which is on the Connecticut River, splitting Vermont and New Hampshire and half way up the state, from south to north)?**

**Harry:** The Village of Quechee is centrally located in Vermont, easily accessible to our suppliers and distributors and is a popular stop for tourists. We were able to open a retail store and offer tours to visitors, which has been a huge hit.



**What do you want your clients to take away from each spirit?**

**Harry:** A sense of the hand-made approach to our distilling processes and also some education that spirits are not all the same. Each of our spirits is different and the base ingredients are all grown in Vermont. We want everyone to enjoy our spirits, of course, but also hope they will begin to appreciate the variety of complexity of small-batch distilled spirits in general.

**Which are your favourite Vermont spirits?**

**Joe:** [No. 14 Bourbon](#)

**Harry:** [Vermont Gold vodka](#)

**We hear you steer clear of all additives and preservatives. How does it affect the spirits?**

**Joe:** I find spirits with additives tend to taste artificial. As our business has grown, we haven't had to make sacrifices, like using preservatives, to keep up with our growth.

**How do you know when each spirit is ready to be bottled?**

**Joe:** By smell and taste. We always let the entire distilling team sample a spirit before bottling, to make sure it's right. Sometimes we even take a fresh batch into our retail store and offer it to the tourists, to get a very candid opinion; ultimately, these are the people who will judge whether our spirits make the grade.

## **What can we expect to see from Vermont Spirits in the next five years?**

**Joe:** Our President, Steve Johnson, is always pushing me to experiment and to develop new spirits. While my primary mandate is to expand our bourbon program, I am developing several barrel-aged cocktails, which should be available in late 2014 and most recently we announced that we would be releasing an aged brandy distilled from maple sap. This last one, which is called No. 14 Maple Spirit, is a perfect example of how we work with Vermont's indigenous sugar sources to take a traditional and well-known spirit and develop something entirely different.

## **What foods would you pair with your spirits?**

**Joe:** I like slow-cooked meats and chocolate (What can I say? My wife, Michelle, was trained as a Pastry Chef at the Culinary Institute of America...).

## **After a long week at work, what would be your tipples of choice?**

**Joe:** A rather large glass of bourbon

**Harry:** A Martini straight up with a twist of lemon and shaken very well. My wife, Ann and I will make a Martini and sit on our deck during the summer evenings and let Vermont's natural beauty sink in.

Find out more about Vermont Spirits at [vermontspirits.com](http://vermontspirits.com).

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## *Cocktail Recipes*

### **Green Gold**

1.5 oz Vermont Gold Vodka  
0.5 oz Elderflower Liqueur  
0.75 oz Passion Fruit juice (from Ceres or Looza)  
0.25 oz fresh lemon juice  
1/2 tsp maple syrup  
8-10 mint leaves  
Sparkling Wine or Champagne

Slap the mint leaves in between your palms and drop into mixing glass. Add remaining ingredients (except for sparkling/champagne) with ice and shake well. Strain into chilled cocktail glass. Top with the sparkling wine/champagne and garnish with a short mint sprig

## **Hotel Vermont**

1.5 oz Vermont Gold Vodka  
0.5 oz St Germain Elderflower Liqueur  
0.5 oz Cointreau  
0.5 oz Fresh Lemon Juice

Combine all the ingredients + 1 orange slice in a shaker and shake until frosty. Strain into a chilled sugar rimmed martini glass.

## **Vermont Ginger**

1 oz No. 14 Bourbon  
0.5 oz Domaine de Canton Ginger Liqueur  
1 tsp. Agave Nectar  
1/2 oz fresh lemon  
Handful of rosemary leaves

In the bottom of a mixing glass, muddle the rosemary with the lemon and agave. Add remaining ingredients with ice and shake well. Strain over new ice into a rocks glass. Garnish with candied ginger and a rosemary sprig.

## **No. 14 Manhattan**

2 oz No. 14 Bourbon  
1 oz Carpano Antica Vermouth  
5 drops Angostura bitters

Add all the ingredients to a mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir well. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a cherry.

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