

INQUIRE | DRINK

### THREE OF THE BEST BOURBON

As eyes turn to Kentucky for the Ryder Cup this month, we're getting into the spirit of the event with our favourite bourbons. It's the cheeky younger sibling to straight-laced grown-up whiskies, and is an excellent base for cocktails (especially a Manhattan). The best bottles, though, merit more attention: serve over ice to bring out the sweet flavours.



**BUFFALO TRACE** HAND-CRAFTED, FAMILY OWNED AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, DELICIOUS. WE THINK IT IS ONE OF THE BEST VALUE BOURBONS. VANILLA, MUSCOVADO SUGAR, SPICE AND OAK MELD TO GIVE A HEADY BLEND. (£21 AT WWW.THEDRINKSHOP.COM)



**WOODFORD RESERVE** STYLISH PACKAGING IS MATCHED BY AN EXCELLENT BOURBON, WITH FLAVOURS AND AROMAS INCLUDING TOFFEE, COCOA AND PEPPER. TRY IT WITH GINGER ALE, ICE AND A SQUEEZE OF LIME FOR A BRILLIANTLY SIMPLE LONG DRINK. (£26 AT WAITROSE WWW.WAITROSE.COM)



**POPPY VAN WINKLE** THE GODFATHER OF BOURBONS. THIS IS AGED FAR LONGER THAN MOST. THE RESULT IS A SMOOTH, RICH WHISKEY (THINK TOAST, BUTTER AND OAK), WORTHY OF HIS REPUTATION AND WORTH THE DAUNTING PRICE. (£98 AT WWW.DRINKON.COM)

### THE BAR MERKABAR

Brighton's buzzing scene gets an excellent addition in the shape of the sleek Merkabar, just off the North Laine. Although entering its Karim Rashid-designed space feels like walking into a CGI image, settle in at the 10m bar and you'll enjoy some stunning drinks. One designed for sharing is NyPunch, a blend of 42 Below Manuka Honey vodka, blueberries, açai, lemon and pink champagne (with so many superfoods, it's almost good for you). If you get peckish, just head next door to Aldo Zilli's brilliant new restaurant. *Jubilee Street, Brighton* (+44 1273 900 300 [www.merchotels.com](http://www.merchotels.com))



### CAUSING A STIR THE SWIZZLE

Esther Medina, the mixologist behind the bar at new members' club Bureau, is our current First Lady of cocktails. Forget thumbing through a drinks list — instead, simply tell her your favourite ingredients, take a seat and watch as she uses this inspiration to create something entirely bespoke. (For members, recipes are kept on file, so ordering "the usual" couldn't be easier.) When Esquire visited Bureau, Esther created the sharp, sophisticated and spicy Swizzle for us — if you can't get down to Bureau to have your own drink designed, feel free to borrow our recipe:

**INGREDIENTS** — 50ml Akvinta vodka, ginger beer, 2 lemon wedges, 2 lime wedges, 2 orange wedges, 10ml honey, 1 clove, grated nutmeg, grated cinnamon, extra wedges to garnish  
**METHOD** — Muddle 1 wedge of each fruit, the honey and clove at the base of a tall glass. Add the vodka and stir well. Add some cracked/crushed ice and start swizzling. Squeeze in the juice of the remaining wedges. Add some grated nutmeg. Add more ice, swizzle again, then repeat with more ice. Top up with ginger beer then garnish with extra citrus wedges and grated cinnamon. *Bureau, 13 Kingly Court, London W1* (+44 20 7496 4386)

### THE PERFECT PAIR GUINNESS AND OYSTERS

Old wives' tales about Guinness abound — that it's good for you (depends how much you drink); that the bubbles go down (it's complicated); and that oysters go with it. To mark the start of the native oyster season, we put the latter claim to the test at Fishworks ([www.fishworks.co.uk](http://www.fishworks.co.uk)).

First up were the Fin de Claire, a Rolls-Royce French variety that tasted smooth and creamy with a mineral edge. Guinness intensified the dairy flavours and brought out a sweet, salty tang. Next, the Colchester variety, which were plump and appetitely-piquing savoury — a drop of the black stuff brought this lip-smacking tastiness to the fore. Finally, the Maldon. These had plenty of algae on their shells (a good sign) and Guinness enhanced their smooth and creamy flavour. The verdict? A fervent thumbs-up for the combination. Try it for yourself at Ireland's Galway Oyster Festival, 25-28 September ([www.galwayoysterfest.com](http://www.galwayoysterfest.com))

### THE BOTTLE TOKIWA SHOCHU

This traditional rice shochu (the national spirit of Japan) has a subtle, sweet fragrance and delicate flavour. Serve over ice or mixed with hot water for a stylish partner to sushi, sashimi or delicate seafood dishes. £17 for 720ml at Selfridges (+44 800 123 400 [www.selfridges.com](http://www.selfridges.com))

