

PUNCH

Bringing It Back Bar: What to Do with G n py

Every bar sports marginal bottles that elude even the most seasoned drink-makers. That is, until someone dusts them off and uses them in a new way. In "Bringing It Back Bar," we shine a light on overlooked bottles and devise recipes to take them from back bar to front shelf. Up now: the

herbal alpine liqueur, g n py.

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In the midst of the current platinum age of cocktails, wherein rabid discovery has become the norm, there are still, miraculously, many regional spirits and liqueurs that remain marginal outside the pocket of the world where they act as a staple of everyday life.

That is still relatively true of the herbal liqueur g n py—as it is typically known as in France and Switzerland, or g n pi, as it is more commonly known in Italy—a longtime apr s-ski go-to in much of alpine Europe.

Light green in color and more delicately floral than both of its cousins, absinthe and Chartreuse, g n py is made from an herb (of the *Artemesia* genus, which also includes wormwood) of the same name, which grows throughout mountainous regions of Europe in addition to the Savoy region, where the liqueur was first created.

It flowers just once per year during the late summer, when its aromatic tops are harvested, dried and then steeped in pure grain alcohol or vodka, with added sugar, for an average of 40 days. As it's relatively easy to make at home (provided you live where the plant grows), many families in the area have their own recipes and forage plots, passed down through generations.

Commercially, g n py has remained largely unknown outside of Europe until recent years, when importer Haus Alpenz started bringing Dolin G n py des Alpes to the U.S. While traditionally drunk as an ap ritif or digestif—either straight-up or with a dash of water or cube of ice—the liqueur is becoming a more common presence in cocktails, where it is typically used as a mellower alternative to green Chartreuse.

“For me, it splits the difference between green and yellow Chartreuse,” says Ryan Maybee of Kansas City’s Manifesto. “Not quite as sweet as yellow, and with the herbal grip of the green without dominating everything else.”

Maybee mixes Dolin G n py des Alpes with chamomile-infused rye, vanilla syrup and Champagne in his In The Pines, which is at once bracing, refreshing and cold-weather appropriate. In his G n py Suisse, he again doubles down on winter drinking, incorporating g n py into a riff on the classic Absinthe Suisse cocktail, which sees cr me de menthe swapped out for cr me de cacao, plus the addition of coffee liqueur, heavy cream and grated nutmeg, for what drinks like an adult mocha.

Former Pouring Ribbons and Violet Hour bartender Troy Sidle (who now owns consulting and design group Canvas Bar Design) also preaches the merits of mixing g n py and cream, highlighting the duo in his Strong Start, a slightly bitter riff on the classic Irish Coffee.

“I encountered Dolin G n py as I have most booze, while working behind the bar,” says Matthew Ross, the head bartender at Whisler’s in Austin. “Like Chartreuse, it has an herbacious, piney sweetness... I’ve used it in boozy stirred drinks and, as in the case of the Greenbelt, citrusy refreshing ones.”

Ross’s The Greenbelt calls on tequila, which echoes the herbal notes of g n py, and combines it with velvet falernum, lime, and housemade verdita, a spicy green juice typically shot with tequila, for a sour that offers both the intox and the detox.

Similarly, Ryan Fitzgerald of San Francisco's ABV turns to it in his Piña Verde, a bright blend of blanco tequila, pineapple and citrus that gets necessary aromatics and bitterness from its dose of génepy. Or, he'll combine it with Hakushu Japanese whiskey ("Hakushu and génepy come from mountain areas and both are influenced by the region they come from") and seltzer in his High Altitude Highball, an herbal riff on the classic Scotch and soda.

Alternatively, when it comes to a good thing, less is often more. At ABV, Fitzgerald says, "We like to drink it frozen ([though it] doesn't actually freeze) in a one-ounce shot glass, with 3 dashes of Angostura on top."

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