

THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

A truly American doubleheader—baseball and bourbon—from the Cooperstown Distillery

WHEN THE average baseball fan picks up a beverage for the big game, it's most often an ice-cold beer. But this season, fans may want to take a drinking cue from one of the game's legends.

"Babe Ruth was a big whiskey drinker," says Gene Marra, who co-founded the Cooperstown Distillery with his wife, Montell, in 2009. "I don't think he drank anything but brown liquor."

In a development the Sultan of Swat would have savored, last October Marra's distillery released its BeanBall Bourbon (\$45). While named for a pitch thrown at a batter's head, the whiskey is anything but harsh. Even the initial 100-proof batch is smooth, with notes of butterscotch and toffee.

In many ways, the Cooperstown Distillery is the natural place to marry America's national pastime and its native spirit. Its tasting room is in the same upstate New York village where Abner Doubleday was once said to have invented the game, and it's just a few blocks from the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. As for Marra, he's seen some baseball history himself: As a kid in the Bronx, he hawked hot dogs and peanuts at Yankee Stadium.

So how would he serve BeanBall in the stands at The House That Ruth Built?

"Neat," Marra says. "I'd never mix whiskey with a soft drink."

In case you're not feeling loyal to the Babe (hello, Red Sox fans), Cooperstown Distillery has other options, including Abner Doubleday's "Double Play" Vodka (\$45), which comes in a hand-blown, baseball-shaped glass bottle (complete with 108 glass "stitches," just like a regulation Major League ball); and, due out this summer, Pinch-hitter Rum. Sounds like a perfect lineup for the thirsty fan.

—JUSTIN GOLDMAN



the trees. "And it wasn't all that long ago that we saw the International Space Station go across the property, as well as numerous shooting stars," Cook says. "It's just you and the stars and the moon." —HRS

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