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ForbesLife

JON BON JOVI
HIS BIGGEST PASSION

WHEN I WAS 25
BY T. BOONE PICKENS

BOMBS AWAY!
INSIDE THE WORLD'S BEST
COLLECTION OF VINTAGE WARBIKES

HITTING THE LINKS
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A GRAIN OF TRUTH

WHITE WHISKEY—NOW BOTTLED IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

→ Here's a lesson about moonshine whiskey I took from youthful indiscretions in the South: A fellow could develop a serious hankering for the stuff. Sure, bourbon and scotch distillers tout the mellow refinement that comes from careful blending and barrel aging, and they aren't wrong as far as they go. It's just that, to some tastes, that's too damn far.

For those contrarian drinkers, who currently comprise a subcult of foodies and artisan-spirits lovers, the rise of premium white whiskeys, cut and bottled with minimal aging—essentially upgraded moonshine—has been an eye-opener. The contrary point isn't that blending and aging whiskey doesn't work; it's that it does exactly what it's supposed to do: smooth out rough edges and meld distinctive, outlier flavors and aromas into a uniform house style. What's lost along the way are the vivid, spicy, opulent, perfumed characteristics unlocked during distillation, the essential original flavors of the grain.

So: the uncaramels—five white whiskeys from artisan distilleries founded since 2000 that capture those fleeting, primary traits in a bottle. Each one, based on a single grain, puts you back in touch with whiskey's roots in agriculture. Tip one into your next Manhattan or sip it neat, an all-American, down-home digestif.—RICHARD NALLEY

OATS
HIGH WEST
SILVER WHISKEY
WESTERN OAT

From "the world's only ski-in gastro-distillery," in Park City, Utah, a plump-bodied crowd-pleaser with a flower-herbal character and an overlay of just-baked biscuits.

BARLEY
HOUSE SPIRITS
WHITE DOG

From Portland, Oregon, this is a whiskey with brightness and lift, and a back palate with characters of custard, cinnamon, and earthy whetstone that tastes way better than it sounds.

