

Portland Bar Scene: Between the Sheets with Sean Hoard and Brooke Arthur

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Between the Sheets by Sean Hoard
Photo Hoke Harden/Cocktail Sean Hoard

No, wait! That headline doesn't sound right, does it?

It was the *cocktail* "Between the Sheets" *made by* Sean Hoard and Brooke Arthur. I'm glad we got that cleared up.

The occasion was a special tasting at the [Multnomah Whisk\(e\)y Library](#) during [Portland Cocktail Week](#) (#PDXCW), hosted by [Aviation Gin](#) and [Cognac Park](#).

It was a most convenient convergence of two excellent spirits, with the brands working together through guest bartenders [Brooke Arthur](#) from [House Spirits Distillery](#) and [Sean Hoard](#) from [The Commissary](#) putting out four libations to allow the gin and brandy to strut their rather impressive attributes, sometimes alone, sometimes together.

No Name Punch

A tasty, mouth tingling, spicy combination of the [Krogstad Akvavit](#), Portland's homage to the Scandinavian national spirit, laden with caraway and dill, combined with [The Commissary Honey-Ginger Syrup](#), grapefruit, and sparkling wine. Light, crisp, herbal and spicy and just slightly exotic from the Akvavit, it was delicious.

Park Julep

A simple but elegant combination of [Park Cognac VS](#) and [The Commissary Mint Syrup](#) over fine-crushed ice and garnished with mint—then properly served up in an icy, beaded silver mint julep cup---showcased the fruitiness of the cognac with the freshness of mint. Some things are so natural in their simplicity they need no further adornment or alteration.

Between The Sheets

A classic cocktail, surprisingly easy to make with only four ingredients---but the rub there is the bartender has to have a fine hand and a good feel for the precise, perfect balance of those four ingredients, the proper dilution, and the perfect serving temperature. Sean Hoard does, and he makes a perfect [Between The Sheets](#) with [Aviation Gin](#), [Park Cognac](#), [Pierre Ferrand Dry Curacao](#), and fresh lemon

The interaction of the ingredients is what makes this particular version of the cocktail superb, with the light, complex and floral [Aviation Gin](#), an avatar of the “West Coast Style” of gin, combining with the fruity, bold richness of the [Park Cognac](#), lifted up with the bitter orange and spice of the [Ferrand Dry Curacao](#) and jolted with the brisk acidity of the lemon

Everything is perfectly balanced, with each spirit given its voice, and neither overwhelming the other, and the cocktail maintains a nervy intensity in each sip. It is one of the most attractive of the gin sour family.

Spruce Goose

Another combination of two vital spirits, this time with [Volstead Vodka](#) and [Park VSOP Cognac](#) mixed with [Angostura](#) and orange bitters and [Demerara sugar](#). Again, the combination and balance of ingredients, the harmony of bitter and sweet, played beautifully. The highly aromatic [Park Cognac VSOP](#), carrying much more nuance of fruit, spice and complexities of extended oak maturation, positively shined in this cocktail.

Befitting a great cocktail venue in the midst of Portland Cocktail Week, both brands, the [Aviation Gin](#) and [Cognac Park](#), showed their impressive versatility, separately and together. These offerings prove that good [cocktails](#) need not be intricate or gussied up when good quality spirits are the focus of the drink.