Under the Silvery Moon: Moonshine Tasting Led by Harriet and Bill Lembeck for the 40th Annual Society of Wine Educators Conference (August, 2016)

Our tasting began with a trio of Moonshines outside of the mainstream. We like to refer to these as “Liquid Americana” — a term coined by publisher Bill Rosenberg.

**Colorado Clear Mountain Moonshine**
- 80°
- 100% corn
- $25
- Notes: Skiers in Vail were inspired to use those hills for other purposes. Has a fruity and honeyed nose, with some minerals in the aftertaste.

**Platte Valley Moonshine, Missouri**
- 80°
- 100% corn
- Aged 3 years in used Bourbon barrels
- $20
- Notes: Has a nose of caramel, vanilla, peaches and corn, with the taste showing some wood and cedar.

**Grandpa’s Likker XXX, Washington State**
- 90°
- 80% corn, 20% barley
- $26.25.
- Notes: won ‘Best of Northwest’ competition recently, has a nose of cotton candy. The finish has a “clean burn”.

Our tasting continued with a selection of Moonshines Appalachia (“ap-pe-LA-cha”) and vicinity (Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Tennessee, S. Carolina, Carolina). These selections were tasted in order of proof.
Stillhouse Moonshine, Kentucky
- 80˚
- 100% estate-grown corn, distilled 4X, charcoal filtered
- $29.99
- Packaged in a steel can (for quick chilling)
- Slight sweetness balanced with a touch of acidity. Very smooth.

Heart Cut Moonshine, Brooklyn, NY
- 90˚
- NY state corn and “wormwood” rye 50/50
- Fresh grain added during distillation
- $34.99
- Notes: Grain nose and taste makes this distinctive.

J. Potts Whiskey, Pennsylvania
- 94˚
- 40% 2-row pale malt, 40% wheat malt, 15% oats, 5% rye (no corn!)
- $27.99.
- Notes: Distiller says this is really an unaged ‘whiskey’, since it is ‘kissed with oak.’ This kiss is very quick, and leaves a scent of vanilla and pear.

Manhattan Moonshine Prohibition Style, New York
- 95˚
- Oats, rye, spelt, malted barley (no corn)
- $32.99.
- Notes: This is aged less than 1 hour, and is not trying to be a Bourbon. Art Deco glass bottle. The nose shows plums, cherries and ginger, with a slight wood and peat finish

Sugarlands Shine ‘Silver Cloud’ Moonshine, Tennessee
- 100˚
- 51% corn, 49% cane sugar, sour mash
- $25.
- Notes: Nose of butterscotch and vanilla, with a finish of toffee, almond and cloves.
Jim Tom Hendrick’s Unaged Rye, Tennessee
- 100°
- Rye (no corn)
- $25.
- Notes: Floral, rosewater, herbs, with citrus notes, with toast, and an ‘exotic’ aftertaste.

The World’s Best Moonshine, S. Carolina
- 100°
- Corn, red wheat and barley
- $31.95.
- Notes: Distilled 2 times in an old aircraft hangar, has the nose and taste of fresh corn, with a touch of corn husks. Nicely balanced. Named for winning the most awards.

Virginia Sweetwater Moonshine
- 101°
- “shiners’ gold” local corn
- $27.99
- Notes: Has a nose of stone fruits, porridge, with a taste of salt and vinegar chips and some peanut brittle.

Sun Dog 130 Moonshine, N. Carolina
- 130°
- Corn 88%, barley 12%
- $29.99 (profits go to help dog causes)
- Notes: Nose of honey, marzipan and cream, with a touch of jalapeño pepper and allspice on the palate.

Our tasting concluded with a duet of flavored Moonshines:

Kentucky Mist Moonshine, Infused Blackberry
- 80°
- $20
- Notes: Colin Fultz, President, landed on the front page of the NY Times after being sued by the U. of Kentucky for creating a T-shirt “Appalachia Proud”, which had the U’s colors. The University said that a state University had sovereign immunity over the trademark, and won the suit. Colin countered with a new, limited edition T-shirt “Nobody Owns Kentucky”. The Blackberry Moonshine, however, is red, very fruity, delicious, and Colin has filtered out the seeds.
Platte Valley “Fireshine”, Missouri

- 70°
- $19.99
- Notes: Is technically a liqueur (35% alcohol), made with corn whiskey and cinnamon liqueur. The flavor is brisk, and is very good with apple cocktails and apple desserts.

Original map graphics created by Bill Lembeck, CWE.