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Ohio: Clouds and sun. A shower or thunderstorm south. Highs 70s to the lower 80s. A shower or thunderstorm across the southeast tonight. Details, SportsSunday, Page 12.

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HEADS UP | LOUISVILLE

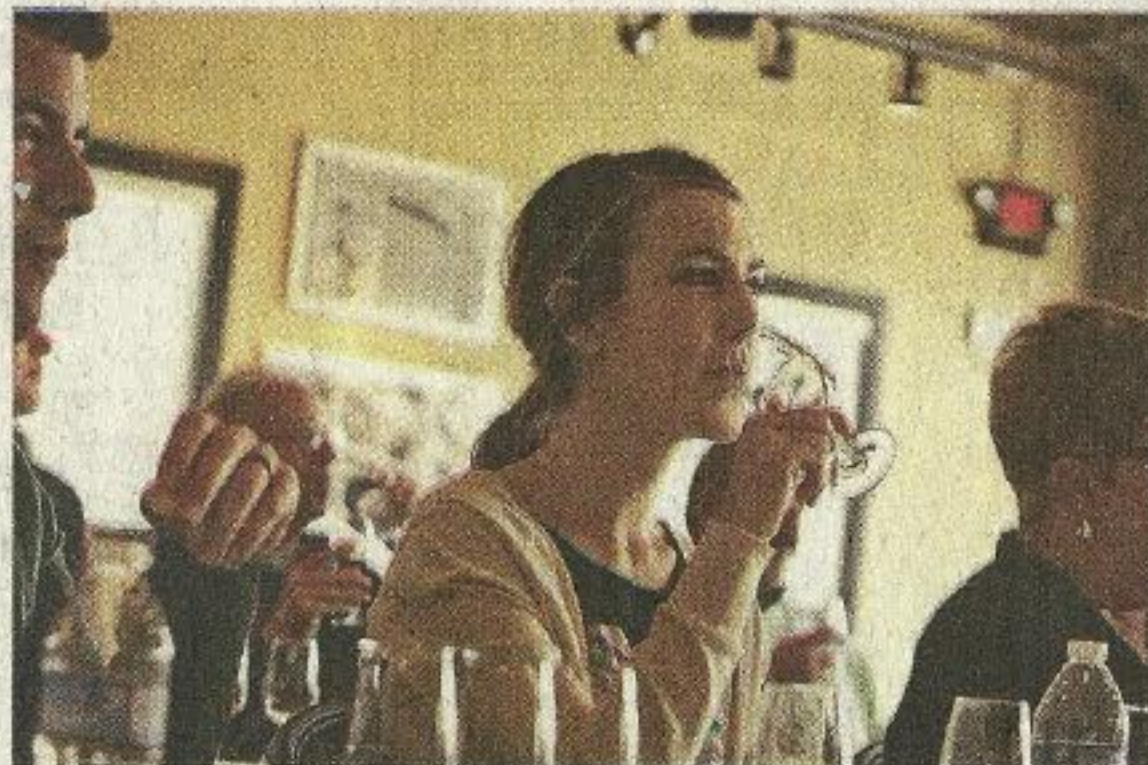
Learning to Distill Liquor in Small Batches

Call it moonshine or artisanal spirits, discovering the appeal of doing it yourself.

By ELAINE GLUSAC

It's been a long time since scofflaw drinkers were forced to resort to bathtub gin. But after whipping up a batch of diluted grain alcohol flavored with juniper berry concentrate for about 40 curious students at a Moonshine University class in Louisville this winter, Colin Blake celebrated the end of Prohibition. "Happy Repeal Day, everybody!" he said.

Whether its products are called moonshine or artisanal spirits, the small-batch distilling movement has expanded in recent years, bringing to market whiskey from Brooklyn, vodka born in Wisconsin and brandy made in Portland, Ore. Now Louisville, the gateway to Kentucky's bourbon country, is ensuring that it maintains a reputation as a prime player in the spirits world with Moonshine University, an educational program from the grandly named Distilled Spirits Epicenter (ds-epicenter.com) where Mr. Blake is cre-



GEOFF OLIVER BUGBEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ative director. The institution is meant to instill liquor appreciation as well as the craft of booze-making, bottling and marketing.

Housed in a 4,000-square-foot former auto garage, the downtown complex is the brainchild of David Dafoe, who also runs

Sampling bourbon at the Distilled Spirits Epicenter in Louisville, Ky.

Flavorman, a beverage consultancy in the center that has helped make brands like Jones Soda. The complex also includes the Grease Monkey Distillery, used to create and test formulations.

The Distilled Spirits Epicenter's Moonshine University classes, which began in December, revisit homemade Prohibition-era bathtub gin and whiskey — and such cocktails as the aptly named Scofflaw, created from them — that were ubiquitous before the 1933 repeal of the 18th Amendment. In addition, since February the center has held monthly one-night bourbon-focused classes (\$50) meant to explore food pairings, the aging process and bourbon cocktails, among other themes.

There are also five-day distilling courses (\$5,500), covering everything from how to mill grain and make spirits to finding a distributor for the finished product. Presenters include professionals from some of the biggest distillers in the area, including Maker's Mark, Wild Turkey and Brown-Forman. The next one, titled "So You Want to Build a Distillery?" starts in mid-June.

"Within 50 to 75 miles of Louisville is every major resource imaginable in distilled

spirits," Mr. Dafoe said. "There are distillers, places to buy labels, cooperages, grains, glassmakers and more."

The center isn't the first to capitalize on Louisville's connection to bourbon, which has been made in the area since the 18th century (seven major distilleries including Jim Beam and Heaven Hill are members of the regional Kentucky Bourbon Trail). The city's convention and visitors bureau has devised an Urban Bourbon Trail, highlighting 19 restaurants and bars with over 50 bourbons in stock, from classics like the Old Seelbach Bar in the hotel of the same name to modern cocktail innovators like Proof on Main. A passport guides visitors to each establishment; six distinct stamps in it get you a free T-shirt.

One trail member, Doc Crow's Southern Smokehouse & Raw Bar, stocks 105 bourbons, not counting other whiskeys from Ireland, Canada, Japan and elsewhere.

"People here are more interested in examining what they're drinking rather than getting drunk," said Jacquelyn Zykan, bar director for Doc Crow's. "There's so much history, and people love to have a story to go with what they're drinking."