

Hot 'Tails

EW's take on wintertime drinks BY ANDREW HITZ

Winter drinks need to be hot and steamy, just like those holiday loins — of pork and beef, of course. As the breathiness of vaporized ethanol invades and invigorates your nostrils and you sip down a cup of glühwein or warm up with a hot toddy, there's nothing quite like the sensual rejuvenation one experiences when warmth, spice, the numbing of faculties and a cozy buzz combine and conquer the body's capability to detect outside cold.

There are certainly dynamics that would suggest alcoholic beverages could warm you up without being heated themselves — 100-proof white lightning can do the trick. But even a big-bodied, robust wintertime beer can suffice as a nice fireside digestif, given a higher ABV and the right flavor profile. Oakshire's Ill Tempered Gnome, HUB's Abominable Winter Ale and Deschutes' Jubelale all serve as prime examples.

But when you're not looking to kickstart the fires down below with the corn whiskey and haven't a hearth of your own to offset the coldness of that beer, perhaps there's a middle ground.

"I think it's a little sexier than a hot toddy," says Davis' bartender Rachel Pietila of their warm "Hot Body" drink. A twist on the conventional Scottish winter warmer and not one for subtleties, Pietila stirs lemon juice, honey, nutmeg and cinnamon into pear cognac and hot water — a concoction that ignites the palate and pleasantly

dulls the sharpness of the hot alcoholic vapors. It's not quite the same as sitting at a marble-topped bar in the North side of Chicago, the snow silently falling outside on Lake Michigan while you take a moment to warm up on a walk home. No, you're probably cold, drenched and in dire need of an alcoholic beverage, so you've made a much more deliberate stop to downtown Eugene. The Hot Body still serves the purpose and by the time you see the bottom of the glass you'll be feeling bone dry.

If your deliberations have directed you towards the Whiteaker and an ice-cold Ninkasi just sounds hypothermic, then hit up the neighborhood whiskey bar. Izakaya Meiji has a house hot toddy that changes depending on the bartender, giving you ample reason to have one per shift. Bartender and local folk musician Ryan Rounkles whipped up his interpretation using a more formal recipe, but sweetened it with a vanilla-infused, honey-based simple syrup garnished with lemon peel and a cinnamon stick. Rounkles' take was much closer to my recollection of a toddy, with a much thinner, drier mouth-feel than the Hot Body — and equally satiating.

It doesn't really get too cold in Eugene. The misery of the damp and wet while riding your bike to and fro is what's cause for getting one down. So have yours hot, have it cold, have it lukewarm or have it straight from the teat of the still, but Christ Almighty have it with some goddamn alcohol. HH



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