



ACQUIRED TASTES

Hard Times Distillery Vodka BY ANDY VALENTINE

Vodka. It's an old standard – the Russians down it with breakfast, the rich housewives of West Chester, Pa., slop it in their martinis with lunch, and the alco-jocks chase it down with Red Bull and alco-pops on the weekends.

Out in Monroe, Ore., the fellas at **Hard Times Distillery, LLC** have been concocting some spirits that might just pull vodka back from the brink of typecast.

Take for instance their unique blend of vodka and wasabi, aptly named "Green Geisha"; it's an acquired taste for sure, though not as spicy as one would think. Personally, I'm not a fan – but knocking something before you've tried it is for fools. Pure wasabi root, neutral grain spirits and Quail Ridge spring water go into the stuff, and it *can* be thrown back straight, but it's recommended as a spike for martinis and Bloody Marys.

Next comes Hard Times' basic vodka – though not so basic, as reality would have it. "Sugar Momma" is naturally sweet vodka designed to be hucked in a glass over rocks and sipped delicately. She can be thrown into any sweet vodka drink quite easily, too: lemon drops, caipirinhas, vodka alexanders, you name it.

Hard Times Distillery is attempting to revamp the old school moonshining aesthetic while creating unique, acquired tastes within their product – they've triumphed in both fields. ■

Hard Times spirits hit shelves this month; for more information on tastings and products visit www.hardtimesdistillery.com

petits sweets

wedding cakes

S & P
pâtisserie
755 Monroe St.

cakes, tortes, cheesecakes

sweet and savory pastries

Granary Pizza Co.

MOOD AREA 52

FANCY TANGO MUSIC, LOUNGE, CHAMBER AMERICANA

AND
Tara Stonecipher

SATURDAY MARCH 17TH 10PM, \$5

259 E. 5th Ave. Eugene, OR 541-343-8488 Open 7 Days a Week 5pm until close