

Story and photos by
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FOR COAST WEEKEND

On a recent visit to Ilwaco's Salt Hotel & Pub, the staff was bracing for the arrival of the Rod Run to the End of the World. Car enthusiasts were expected to congregate on the peninsula en masse over the next few hours and keep the kitchen and the bar plenty busy over the following days.

This was to be the last major summer event to conquer before the staff could take a breath and settle into

COLUMBIA BAR Salt Hotel & Pub's Starvation Alley duo



the off season.

But at that early afternoon hour, the bar and dining room were as calm as the harbor water outside.

Fishermen, commercial and pleasure-seekers alike sipped pints and nibbled on smoked tuna melts and fried

oysters, discussing the tide and a very different type of run. Albacore was in the air, on the plate and on the mind. A few day-trippers sat in the tall chairs by the harbor-view windows, quietly sipping up chowder against the backdrop of a rare blue sky.



Corpse Drifter No. 1.



Starvation Alley Sour.

And while the conversations and menu revolved around the longfin, the house cocktail list paid homage to one of the peninsula's other treasures: the cranberry — specifically, local organic farm Starvation Alley's unfiltered cranberry juice.

With cranberry season fast approaching at the end of September, with U-picks and fresh crops popping up like so many mushrooms after a fresh rain, what better way to usher in a new autumn than to slip some of this potent elixir into your booze?

Starvation Alley's cranberry juice is unsweetened and unpasteurized, with each 16 oz. bottle containing 1 1/2 pounds of cold-pressed berries. These two variations on the Salt Hotel & Pub's menu — one simple, the other more complex — prove at each sip that this is not your average concentrated Oceanspray cocktail, and, like nuclear power, this juice should be treated with reverence and caution. In other words, a little bit goes a long way.

First up, in the Starvation Alley Sour, the cran packs a wallop that no sweet-and-sour mix can achieve, delivering a tangy, lip-smacking variation on the whiskey sour. With the Corpse Drifter No. 1 — a playful take on the famous Corpse Reviver No. 2, which is rumored to have originally been invented as a hangover cure — replacing mere lemon juice with the

tart cran is sure to wake even the dead while delivering them a Vitamin C bomb as well.

Starvation Alley's operation continues to grow (no pun intended), and they are now partnering with other local bogs to meet demand. Their product is available at the Astoria Co-op or direct from their website.

Word, though, is Starvation Alley isn't the only game blowing up on the peninsula. Quaint little Ilwaco is about to get the leading lady treatment. A new Netflix series, "Battlefish," debuting on the platform on Friday, Sept. 21, follows fishing fleets seeking out prized albacore along the Oregon Coast, including boats from the Ilwaco Tuna Club.

The reality show even shot footage in the Salt Hotel & Pub's kitchen as they prepped and prepared the day-boat tuna they received from their supplier Tre-Fin Foods, one of the operations the production was following, though it is yet to be seen if the kitchen made the cut, so to speak.

So go ahead and celebrate the coming of fall colors and Ilwaco's 15 minutes of fame as you sip and binge.

SALT HOTEL'S STARVATION ALLEY DUO

Starvation Alley Sour
• 1 1/2 – 2 ounces Bull

Run American Whiskey, or another light whiskey

- 1/2 ounce Starvation Alley Farms 100% Pure Cranberry Juice
- 1/2 ounce fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 3/4 ounce simple syrup
- Fresh cranberries for garnish
- Slice of lemon for garnish
- Ice
- Cocktail toothpick

Fill an old fashioned glass with ice. Pour in the liquid ingredients and stir. Run the cranberries and lemon slice through with the toothpick and place across the rim of the glass.

Corpse Drifter No. 1

- 1 ounce Adrift Distillers Gin
- 1 ounce Starvation Alley Farms 100% Pure Cranberry Juice
- 1 ounce Lillet Blanc
- 1 ounce Triple Sec
- A few drops of Absinthe*, to taste
- Ice
- A fat slab of lemon peel, pith removed

*Astoria's Pilot House Distilling makes a nice one, the Columbia Absinthe Verte

Pour all liquid ingredients into a cocktail shaker, then fill with ice. Shake until cold, then strain into a cocktail glass. Slip in the peel to garnish.

—Recipes courtesy of Aaron Byerly, bar manager, Salt Hotel & Pub, Ilwaco, Washington

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