

Drinking Habits—IV

Alcoholic Beverage Promoters Take Advertising Aim on Feminine Drinkers

Editor's note: This is the fourth of five dispatches on America's drinking habits. It deals with what we drink; the rush toward soft whiskey.

By HARRY FERGUSON
WASHINGTON, (UPI)—One day the men in charge of promoting and selling alcoholic beverages took dead aim on the

American woman. They decided her likes and dislikes control what kind and brand of alcohol more than 50 per cent of Americans consume.

The result was furious activity inside the industry, a fierce advertising battle that still goes on and the quick rise of "soft" and "light" whiskey. The whiskey men were painfully aware of the sky-rocket increase in popular-

ity of vodka among both women and men. In 1952 vodka had one per cent of the American liquor market. Last year it had nine per cent.

An inspired advertising man told Americans they should drink vodka because "it leaves you breathless," a statement that immediately was interpreted to mean you could lurch it up as much as you wanted to on

vodka at lunch and nobody would ever know. Skeptics agreed that vodka had less odor than whiskey or gin, but they pointed out it did have a faint smell, some of which might linger on the breath.

Mixed With Anything

The second thing vodka had going for it was that it mixed easily with anything because of its near-neutral taste. People started pouring vodka into all sorts of things and the day of the bloody mary, the screwdriver and the bullshot had dawned.

The whiskey men proceeded on the theory that most people—and especially women—didn't like the taste of a highball or cocktail and would welcome lighter whiskey. This was easy. They started to lower the proof of the whiskey. If whiskey is 100 proof, it has 50 per cent of alcohol by volume. You can lower the proof to 86 or 80 and come out with a milder whiskey.

Most of the bourbon distillers plunged into this joust. They continued to produce 100 proof whiskey, but their advertising emphasized that they also had a little brother who was lighter.

But not all of them. Julian P. Van Winkle, president of the distillery that makes Old Fitzgerald, elected to hold the line in behalf of 100 proof bourbon. His advertising hammers away at the idea that you can have a light drink by using a smaller jigger of 100 proof whiskey.

"You are not tempted to over-pour and defeat your purpose of moderation," he says. Only time will tell whether Van Winkle is a King Canute, vainly commanding the tide of light whiskey to subside.

Spreads To Scotch

The battle over "lightness" has spread to scotch. Almost all scotch consumed in the United States is 86 proof, meaning it is 43 per cent alcohol. So advertising men decided to attack from a different angle. A scotch called Vat 69 had been selling in a dark green bottle, which seemed to give American drinkers the impression it was heavy whiskey. So now it also is sold in a plain glass bottle and called "Vat 69 gold." One of the biggest scotch sellers in the United States is Cutty Sark, and merchandising experts are convinced that the reason is that the whiskey is of an extremely light color and not because it is any less potent than other scotches.

The fighting rages hard and heavy on the blended whiskey front. Blended whiskey is a combination of neutral spirits and whiskey, usually 36 per cent whiskey and 65 per cent neutral

spirits. Here, too, the battle is to convince the drinker that he can have the "lightest" possible whiskey if he buys the right brand.

But not long ago, out of the smoke and turmoil of the competitive battle emerged something entirely new—"soft whiskey." This is a product of the Calvert Distillers' Co., and this correspondent made contact with its New York headquarters for an explanation of the new technique. He was told:

Installs Clear Bottle

The company had been producing a blended whiskey called

Calvert Reserve which was sold in a dark amber bottle. It was decided to abandon that and get into the light whiskey race, and the first step was to change to a clear bottle and call the whiskey Calvert Extra. It will cost the company \$300,000 more a year because both the glass and the label are more expensive.

The whiskey is still a blend of 35 per cent whiskey and 65 per cent neutral spirits and the proof is still 86. The change that was made was the neutral spirits now is placed in barrels in which whiskey has been aged.

All of this was explained to the advertising agency in charge of the product which promptly dubbed it "soft whiskey." The man said everybody at Calvert Distillers was happy.

Most Americans are convinced the words "bottled in bond" on a whiskey bottle mean the United States government guarantees the quality. Not so. All it means is that the whiskey is 100 proof and has been aged in barrels for four years. This enables the distiller to defer paying his federal taxes on the whiskey until he is ready to bottle and sell it. Bottled in bond

whiskey can be good or bad depending on its original quality.

Nor does great age necessarily mean a whiskey is better. Sometimes it means just the opposite because the whiskey can pick up harsh wood flavors from being too long in the barrel. Whiskey does not improve once it is in the bottle. You may be treasuring some bourbon bottle before Pearl Harbor, but you are kidding yourself. It's still only four-year-old whiskey.

Next: The alcoholic and how he gets that way.



COOL SPOT FOUND—After several sweltering days of a southern California heat wave the only thing you can do about the weather is to ignore it. This fine example of unconcern is Woolfy the Walrus at Marineland of the Pacific at Palos Verdes, Calif., who takes a nap beside his pool. (UPI)

Religion in America

Church Magazine Sees Football Becoming American Religion

By ROBERT M. ANDREWS
UPI Correspondent

With tongue planted firmly in cheek, the highly respected religious magazine, the Christian Century, suggested today that professional football has eclipsed baseball as the "old religion" of Americans.

"All the earmarks of high religion are here," said the non-denominational weekly.

"It has universalistic pretensions; every metropolis wants a team. It has missionary zeal; television spreads its saving word. With the annual extension of pre- and post-season activities, it will soon have a full church year."

"It has tragic heroes like Big Daddy Lipscomb, sages like Y. A. Tittle, betrayers like Paul Hornung, patriarchs like George Halas and priests like Byron 'Whizzer' White—the Supreme Court Justice who was once an All-American collegiate football star."

"The Green Bay Packers 'spontaneously' pray the Lord's Prayer before games (they petition most intensely, we understand, when they face Sam Huff of the Giants). All winter long pro football players visit the church banquet circuit to tell how faith undergirds them on the grid."

"The sport does not lack its following of 'Voluntaries or sacrificial sufferers,' said Christian Century, pointing to fans who spend Sunday afternoon in front of the television set or a bitterly cold December day in the snow-swept stands of a pro football stadium."

"The magazine said baseball can blame the New York Yankees, 'secure on Olympus,' for much of its loss of the surprise and suspense that once attracted droves of worshippers."

"And today's pitchers, on whom the game's pace depends, tend to dilly-dally the day away," it said.

"They indulge in Zen reverie, contemplate their navels, whirl the resin bag like a prayer wheel, and in general conform more to the norms of a post-

Buddhist society than to a post-Christian one."

Perhaps the surest sign of pro football's emergence was the recent dedication of a 500,000 football Hall of Fame at Canton, Ohio.

It is, the magazine said, "a pilgrimage chapel for those who wish to pay homage to pro football's Pantheon."

And, appropriately, the shrine's roof and tower are shaped like a halved football pointing skyward.

Sukkoth, ancient Biblical fire-runner of the American Thanksgiving, was celebrated by Jews around the world beginning at sundown Wednesday with prayers thanking God for a plentiful harvest.

The festival, also known as Sukos after the Hebrew word for booths, will see booths installed in homes and synagogues and richly decorated with fruits and vegetables. They will symbolize the temporary dwellings used by the Israelites in their flight from Egypt into the desert.

The major symbols of Sukkoth are the lulav, a palm branch pinned with myrtle and willow twigs, and the esrog, a fragrant citron a little bigger than a lemon. These remind Jews of man's dependence on nature, especially the water that was so scarce in ancient Canaan.

Reform Jews celebrate Sukkoth for eight days. Orthodox and Conservative Jews for nine. Children, "the fruits of our love," are especially blessed during the festival.

Teodoro Moscoso, U.S. coordinator of the Alliance for Progress program of economic and social aid to Latin-America, has won the 1963 peace award of the Association for International Peace.

Moscoso received the award in Washington for having "the responsibility of carrying out one of the world's most impor-

tant projects in these critical times."

Southern Baptists in Texas report that their churches are slowly and quietly moving toward a policy of permitting Negroes to attend worship services or to join the church.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas quoted the replies of 1,259 churches to its survey on racial opinion. Of these, 747 churches said they were willing to admit Negroes to services, and 224 said they would accept them as members.

The convention said twice as many churches surveyed took some kind of stand on the issue during 1963—the peak of the racial crisis—in all other previous years.



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