



MEET THE MAKER: CHRIS MAGGIOLO

ABOUT: Chris grew up in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, amidst the same mountain range which SILO calls home. He attended college in Williamsburg, VA and studied Archaeology and Environmental Policy. His mentor, archaeologist Fred Smith, wrote a book on the history of Caribbean Rum, which is where Chris's interest in spirits began. He lived in Barbados doing fieldwork on a sugar cane plantation and studied the local food and beverage scene. To pursue his passion for spirits, Chris studied at Boston University in their Masters of Gastronomy program with a concentration on craft beer and spirits. Chris began his career at GrandTen Distilling in South Boston before accepting the position of head distiller at SILO in 2015.

WHY IS DISTILLING IN VERMONT UNIQUE? WHAT ARE ITS CHALLENGES, ITS PERKS?

As many people know, Vermont is an amazing state for artisanal food production. It has a fairly supportive infrastructure and an extremely supportive local consumer base, while Vermont tourism really champions the cause to visitors. We are lucky to operate in a state that prides itself on possessing a large percentage of independent businesses and a strong agricultural economy. Our fellow producers are typically kind and creative, and they really enjoy collaborative discussions and projects. As much as Vermont-based artisans such as SILO thrive on this environment, it also yields a very competitive scene. We all vie for shelf space at stores and in on-premise accounts and this really drives Vermont producers to be creative and on the cutting edge of the industry. *It's exciting!*

HOW IS SILO DIFFERENT THAN OTHER DISTILLERIES IN THE STATE AND IN THE COUNTRY?

We here at SILO really focus on local and regional production. Our products begin their lives at Grembowicz Farm in North Clarendon, VT (about an hour west of the distillery) and our spent grain goes to feed pastured pigs and poultry at Springmore Farm in Baltimore, VT (about 30 minutes south). When seasonally appropriate, Springmore Farm also grows our cucumbers for the SILO Cucumber Vodka. The cacao shells we use for SILO Cacao Vodka aren't Vermont-Grown, but they are upcycled from Lake Champlain Chocolate's directly sourced Blue Bandana chocolate production.

I would never say that our dedication to Vermont-made grain-to-glass spirits is supremely different than some of the other distilleries in the state who champion similar ideals, but I do think we approach it with a certain zeal that is difficult to ignore. People and places are more connected than ever, and we at SILO understand that - striving to produce a mindful product in a meaningful and transparent manner.

HOW DID THE CONCEPT OF A FULL CIRCLE DINNER COME ABOUT? WHAT IS THE MAIN TAKEAWAY YOU WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER FROM THE DINNER?

As I mentioned earlier, SILO is a grain-to-glass operation where even our spent grain finds a home in the local agricultural economy. We have one of the few operations where you can have a slice of bread made from a VT grain - the same grain used in the spirit you are sipping - alongside a delicious piece of pork or chicken which was again fed from the same harvest of VT grain. It's really cool.

Spirits - alcohol in general - are foods like any other, the production of which influences small-scale and conventional agriculture; carbon footprints; and local, regional, national and international economies. By choosing to drink local and artisanal products, consumers choose a path which invigorates the lives of local businesses, neighbors, and friends. We are passionate about SILO because we are passionate about delivering quality spirits which showcase Vermont and New England culture, and we are thrilled to be able to share our passion with so many people.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE FUTURE OF SILO GO? CAN YOU KEEP THE FARM TO BARN TO BOTTLE CONCEPT WHILE EXPANDING (IF THAT IS IN THE CARDS)?

SILO has a bright future ahead of it, and I have no doubt that we will be able to maintain a farm-to-barn-to-bottle concept while growing. We are rooted in Vermont and have tapped into some truly amazing farms, which are growing in production and potential alongside, and frequently even above, the distillery. We are looking to expand our offerings of aged spirits and have several exciting projects in the pipeline, all of which showcase more of Vermont and New England.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEWEST PRODUCT LAUNCH, SILO MAPLE WHISKEY. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH A NATURAL SWEETENER?

It's hard to think of Vermont without thinking of maple syrup. We take our 100 Proof Whiskey and add pure maple syrup from Sugar Moon Hill Farm in Woodstock, VT, resulting in a sweetened, maple flavored whiskey that retains the warmth and spice of a full strength product. The maple really juxtaposes well against the graham cracker and rye notes of the parent whiskey. We've never before produced a sweetened product. I actually have a personal mantra that it's always easy to add sweetener to a spirit or cocktail, but you can't take it away. I prefer to produce a product without sweetener that focuses on the raw ingredients used in the distillation, but in this case the focus is on the maple itself.

WHAT IS YOUR SILO COCKTAIL OF CHOICE?

With a background in historical anthropology, I've always been a fan of the classics. I really enjoy The Last Word, either with SILO Gin or a riff with SILO Cucumber Vodka. I enjoy the Negroni and its cousin the Boulevardier, most frequently as a hybrid between the two using SILO Reserve Gin.

Speaking of Reserve Gin, my favorite original creation is **The Cellist**, which sees SILO Reserve Gin paired with Aperol and blood orange liqueur, served on a large cube in an absinthe rinsed glass and garnished with a sprig of rosemary and an orange peel.

WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF THE PERFECT VERMONT DAY?

Early summer spent hiking to one of Vermont's numerous cascades, followed by dinner featuring local meat, seasonal produce, and a thoughtfully crafted beer or cocktail.



THE CELLIST

1 1/2 oz Reserve gin

1 oz Aperol

1/2 oz Blood Orange Liqueur

1/2 oz Absinthe Rinse

Stir the first three with ice. Rinse rocks glass with Absinthe. Then discard. Strain over large ice cube. Orange peel garnish.

