



Bully For Us

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Bully for us. The future of New England distilling may be its past.

Paula Marcoux

Things are looking up for Massachusetts locavores, or locabibers more specifically. It's been nearly a century since we've been able to buy locally made distillates legally, but now they are popping up in almost every corner of the state. This week I got to meet Will and Dave Willis, founders of **Bully Boy Distillery** in Roxbury. Coming from a farm family as they do, and evincing a strong respect for our region's ancient distilling tradition, the Willis brothers seem poised to unlock some bygone flavors, quintessences of apple, cane and grain that once were the drinks of our region. Already, they have some impressive offerings: aged and white rums, a vodka distilled from Maine grain, and an un-aged white whiskey (as close to New England moonshine—albeit pretty smoothed-out—as you're apt to find in your neighborhood packy). Their small-batch approach allows them to be adventurous. Five minutes chatting with them tells you that their fun lies in creating products with plenty of character.



The launch of their fresh-out-of-the barrel aged whiskey—**Bully Boy American Straight Whiskey**—created Wednesday’s occasion, which was ably hosted at the bar of **The Blue Room** in Cambridge. Bartenders from **The Blue Room** and **Belly Wine Bar** went mano a mano to create the most fitting BBASW cocktail: it was shaken v. stirred as Matt and Fanny contended with their fresh and winsome spins on a sour and an old fashioned. Chef Robert Grant sent round smoky and savory bites—ham and hot pepper jelly on teeny biscuits, melt-in-your-mouth pork belly nestled in sumptuous cheddar grits, slices of tender tongue in rich mole—perfect complements to the debutante whiskey. The crowd in the bar swirled their glasses—hand-chipped ice!—and enjoyed.

Bully Boy can be found in a growing number of locations in *edible South Shore* territory—from [Cardoza’s](#) in Fairhaven to [Bradford’s](#) in Plymouth to [1666 Liquors](#) in Brockton.

The Willis brothers revealed that they are working on a very exciting cider-brandy project—potentially restoring to us a spirit once so common in our countryside, but utterly neglected for ages now. When that comes out, substitute it for the calvados in this inspired Old Fashioned from **The Blue Room**:

- 2 ounces Bully Boy American Straight Whiskey
- 1 ounce Calvados
- .25 ounce Demerara Syrup
- 2 dashes Boston Bitters
- 2 dashes Peychaud Bitters

Could it be that someday a Roxbury distillery might make a spirit from our oldest named American apple variety, the Roxbury Russet? A locabiber can only dream...

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