

# Cocktails to Go

Canned “cocktails” have been on store shelves for a while now. But don’t mistake those old offerings for a new wave of perfectly mixed, delicious drinks that are doing something never done before: using real booze. **by ST. JOHN FRIZELL**

**T**HE SUREST SIGN yet that the craft cocktail craze has reached the mainstream? You can now buy your caipirinhas by the case. Sure, there have been cocktail-esque options in your grocer’s fridge for some time now—Smirnoff Ice, anyone?—but the current crop is different. These cocktails have real booze in them.

For years, beer-friendly tax codes have led

to the proliferation of “malternatives,” which use a kind of light beer as a base. “They strip out the beer color and beer flavor,” says Yuseff Cherney, founder of San Diego’s Cutwater Spirits (and former brewmaster of Ballast Point). “They then add their flavors on top of that, but there’s always some residual flavor left behind.”

Which explains why they never quite tasted like anything you would order in a bar. Now these canners are saying to hell with the extra

tax burden, let’s make some real drinks. And they’re basing their products on what people actually order—from simple vodka sodas to high-proof whiskey old-fashioneds. For drinks like Cutwater’s Spicy Bloody Mary, convenience is the obvious appeal.

“I was sick of lugging bottles of 10 different ingredients to my friend’s house for brunch,” says Cherney.

In other words: Where cocktails can’t go, canned cocktails can.



**HOCHSTADTER'S SLOW & LOW ROCK & RYE**

Mellow, balanced, and deceptively drinkable, this is a better old-fashioned than many bartenders make at even the fanciest establishments. At 84 proof, the four-ounce can has the potential to knock your day sideways, so share with a friend. \$5 each.

**NOVO FOGO SPARKLING CAIPIRINHA**

Novo Fogo’s organic cachaca has long been a cult favorite, and this canned caipirinha only adds to its sterling reputation. The full, grassy funk of cachaca punches right through the fine bubbles and tart, fresh lime flavor. \$20 for a four-pack.

**INTERBORO GIN & TONIC**

This New York City brewery-distillery, in East Williamsburg, is best known for its cult IPA cans. But this G&T, made with house Goodwin Hill gin, is sure to make some cocktail converts out of beer lovers. For now, it’s available only at the brewery. \$24 for a four-pack.

**PAMPELONNE BLOOD ORANGE SPRITZ**

Named for the most famous beach in St-Tropez, in the French Riviera, this wine-based cocktail is as casually sophisticated and Continental as its nautical stripes suggest. It’s refreshingly bitter, bone-dry, and bubbly. \$17 for a four-pack.

**CUTWATER SPIRITS SPICY BLOODY MARY**

Cutwater makes 12 different canned cocktails (with plans for more), but the Bloody Mary was “the hardest to get right,” says founder Yuseff Cherney. The result is a bar-worthy Bloody with tons of flavor and just the right amount of spicy kick. \$15 for a four-pack.

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