

The Innovator: Corbin Estate Vodka

(SRP \$34.99—39.99)

When David John Souza, fourth-generation sweet potato farmer, stepped up to the reins in the family business, he decided to take it in a brand new direction. “He was looking for a new way for people to enjoy sweet potatoes,” explains Bruno Laclotte, National Marketing Director of Sweet Potato Spirits. About five years and a whole lot of experimenting



Bruno Laclotte, National Marketing Director, with Corbin Estate Vodka.

later, Souza came out with Corbin Estate Vodka.

Just to be clear: Sweet potatoes aren't any easier to make vodka with—in fact, quite the opposite. It takes more than ten pounds of hand-selected sweet potatoes to make just one bottle. In addition, Souza found that the sweet potatoes need to age for about 16 months to raise the sugar content before the distillation can begin. Then, he does something virtually unheard of

in the vodka world today: He only distills once. “The texture in this vodka is amazing,” explains Laclotte. “We would completely lose that unique quality if we distilled it anymore.”

So what can people expect? Laclotte says, “This is a product with fantastic texture that represents its terroir wonderfully. The sweet potato doesn't necessarily make it sweeter, but it does create a fruitier note.” The texture makes this vodka ideally sipped neat, but Laclotte also suggests adding a slice of kumquat. “The acidity rounds out the fruitiness,” he explains.

Named after Souza's three-year-old son, Corbin Cash Souza, the vodka is 100 percent artisanal, estate-grown, gluten-free and made completely in California. The only vodka made from sweet potatoes, Corbin Estate has just been released in California (through Hillside Wines & Spirits) and Nevada (through Regency Wines) and is hitting other major markets soon. “This is truly a farmer's market item,” says Laclotte. “People can expect complete consistency and care from the farm to the bar.” —*B. D.*

“Sweet potato, slightly sweet, great mouthfeel, lingers in mouth, full-bodied.” —*Rosie Ruiz*

“Great silky mouthfeel; full, long finish without being overly sweet for a sweet potato vodka.” —*Cole Apodaca*