

PENTHOUSE

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THE POUR HOUSE

The Jack Rose

We know we're picking a fight by making the case that the definitive American liquor is the long-forgotten Applejack. So be it.

By Jonathan Ages • Photograph by Nicholas Eveleigh

The Laird family has been producing Applejack in New Jersey since the 1600s, making it the nation's oldest native distilled beverage.

It arguably helped fuel our country's inception, given that it was a staple of our Founding Fathers' drink diets. Our first four presidents are even rumored to have regularly kicked off their day by sipping it with breakfast, and George Washington liked the bonded liquor so much that he used the Laird family's recipe to distill and sell the spirit himself.

Applejack (aka Jersey Lightning) is an apple brandy derived from the freeze distillation ("jacking") of hard cider. Laird & Company, America's only apple-brand producer, ages its liquor in used bourbon barrels for a period of six to eight years, then blends it with neutral grain spirits to make it 100 proof. The drink subsequently straddles the taste-bud line between fruity brandy and dry whisky.

Applejack is most popular as a mixer, and it is the main ingredient in a once wildly common drink, the Jack Rose, a supple, tangy libation of Laird's Applejack, lemon or lime juice, and grenadine. It was a staple of the fedora-wearing forties, and a drink that typified the American man of the early twentieth century. Today it's experiencing a resurgence, becoming a staple cocktail on the menu of the nation's top mixology bars.

This resurgence took even the Laird family by surprise. (They ran out of stock earlier this year and had to ramp up production.) Now you, too, can throw back some liquid patriotism and savor the drink your grandfather knew and loved. It tastes like America, but with a little extra kick. **OTW**



THE RECIPE

2 ounces Laird's Applejack

$\frac{3}{4}$ ounce freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce grenadine

Shake ingredients well with cracked ice, then strain into a chilled cocktail glass.