

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



CALEDONIA'S CAN-DO SPIRIT RESULTS IN CLEANER HANDS

BY LINDA LABAN | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Caledonia Spirits moved into a new solar-powered, sustainably designed facility in Montpelier, Vt., last summer.

Caledonia Spirits president and head distiller, Ryan Christiansen, and his team are always trying out new recipes for the Vermont company's prize-winning Barr Hill Gin, aged Tom Cat Gin, and Barr Hill Vodka. This month, however, the recipe was for hand sanitizer.

It is a serious production shift to help stem coronavirus spread.

It's incredibly simple to make. It's basically high-grade alcohol, which we have plenty of," said Christiansen. "We used the World Health Organization's recommendations. We haven't strayed from that recipe: It's ethanol and glycerol. Ethanol we had, our factory is built for producing that. Glycerol we had to secure."

Ethanol is a natural disinfectant and glycerol, a more pure form of glycerin, which is derived from vegetable oil or an animal's fat, is antimicrobial. Glycerol mostly acts as a lubricant and moisturizer, though. It's the ethanol that does the heavy lifting.

Urged by the federal government when hand sanitizer shortage became a dangerous reality in combating COVID-19, Caledonia and Boston's Bully Boy Distillery joined a nationwide movement of distilleries now mak-

ing hand sanitizer.

"We thought about a team-building exercise making hand sanitizer," said Christiansen. "Then, the local food bank asked if we could make some for them. They were like, 'We need it badly; can you help us?' Instead of waiting for a government or corporate response, it was something we could handle."

Christiansen finds some irony in this situation.

"During Prohibition the government was against the distillers," he said. "Now they're saying we need something and we need it now, and they are asking the gin mills down the street to produce it."

Founded in 2011 in nearby Hardwick, Caledonia Spirits moved into a new solar-powered, sustainably designed 27,000-square-foot facility in Montpelier last summer. The move added 10 times more space, which has proved useful to mobilize this additional, new production.

Gin and vodka making continue in the distillery area, but the adjacent Gin Lane bar and store, Montpelier's



undoubted hottest spot, are closed.

"We made the very hard decision to close the bar and the store. We're taking up the whole of the retail space for production. To truly make a difference, we have to be efficient," Christiansen insisted.

Speaking last week, Christiansen sounded as lost and flabbergasted as the rest of us at the sudden switch in work routines and daily life. Being proactive, however, has the added bonus of boosting staff morale.

"We have not laid off anybody," he said, "but a lot of people were stuck at home. It became this empowering moment when we set up in our lab and began the process. It was a unifying experience."

Still, this is no feel-good exercise; it is a serious production shift to help stem coronavirus spread.

"We are not a hand sanitizer company. It's totally new terrain," said Christiansen. "We made enough to supply the food bank. Now we are supplying first responders. We will make 1,500 bottles for them, so it's all hands on deck. If that doesn't feel like meaningful work, then I don't know what does."

HERE

GET NEXT YEAR'S SKI PASS NOW
Buy a Northeast Value Pass — one of Vail Resort's new Epic Pass offerings for 2020-21 — and ski at 16 resorts in New England, Ohio, and Michigan next year. Passholders get unlimited and unrestricted access to Wildcat, Attitash, Mount Sunapee, and Crotched Mountain; unlimited, restricted access to Okemo and Mount Snow; and 10 restricted days at Stowe (plus access to several other resorts in Pennsylvania). Or choose the new Northeast Midweek Pass for similar access Mondays through Fridays (including five restricted midweek days at Stowe). Epic Pass holders also get 20 percent off food and drinks, lodging, group ski and ride lessons, and rentals at Vail Resorts' North American-owned-and-operated resorts, as part of the new Epic Mountain Rewards program. Buy your pass this spring and get 10 Buddy and six Ski with a Friend tickets. Passes on sale now: value pass \$49-\$599, midweek pass \$339-\$449. 970-754-0005, www.epicpass.com.

GEAR UP FOR YOUR ADVENTURES
Here's a cool service for when life gets back to normal: A library in northern Maine that lends gear so people can explore the great outdoors. The Millinocket Memorial Library in Penobscot County houses the Katahdin Gear Library, where visitors can borrow backpacks, bikes, boats, skis, and snowshoes for free, and gather information on local adventures. Check out an L.L. Bean backpack and go hike Mount Katahdin or explore Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monu-



ment, a new national park. Or borrow a mountain or fat bike, a boat (kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards available), Nordic skis for adults and kids, or snowshoes. Borrow gear for a week at a time, with some extensions possible and \$1-per-day late fees. You must be 18 or older (or with someone 18 or older) and have a valid Millinocket Memorial Library card (sign up online), which is free to Mainers and \$20 per year for nonresidents. Although the library is temporarily closed for health precautions, keep this service in mind for future adventures. 207-723-7020, www.millinocketmemorial-library.org.

THERE

BOOST YOUR MOUNTAIN BIKE SKILLS
Gain new mountain biking skills from pro instructors, learn about bike maintenance, and make like-minded friends during the Trek Dirt Series Mountain Bike Camps, which take place from Mammoth, Calif., to Whistler, British Columbia. Mornings include three



hours of on-bike progressive skill-development sessions and then afternoon rides that put those new skills to the test and build confidence. The camp includes a Saturday night social, a raffle, and sessions to learn about bike maintenance and setup. Participants can demo gear for free, including Trek bikes with Fox suspension and Maxxis tires, Five Ten shoes, Crankbrothers pedals, Race Face protection, and Smith helmets. Camps take place in Calgary, Alberta; Mammoth, Calif.; Fernie and Whistler, British Columbia; Park City, Utah; Crested Butte and Fruita, Colo.; Hood River,

Ore.; Sedona, Ariz.; Angel Fire, N.M.; Bellingham, Wash.; and Waterloo, Wis. Rates per person: \$170 (one-day camp) to \$435 (two-day camp). 604-484-6238, www.dirtseries.com.

GYM WORKOUTS IN YOUR HOTEL ROOM
A Silicon Valley hotel now helps guests get their workouts in without having to visit the gym. Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley at East Palo Alto has teamed up with Tonal, a home gym and personal trainer system, to offer travelers on-demand yoga, strength training, cardio, and other fitness classes in their hotel rooms. Several rooms come with a Tonal unit (make sure you ask), a fitness system on the wall that comes with a screen and two metal arms. Attach handles or a bar to those arms, for instance, select a workout, and an on-screen instructor then guides you through each step of your workout. The unit can be used for hundreds of different moves and offers 200 pounds of resistance. The built-in artificial intelligence technology monitors the quality of each rep and adjusts the resistance, so you never overdo it. Hotel guests can also request a Peloton bike, Streamline treadmill, stretch ball, yoga mat, or weight bench. Tonal rooms start at \$315. 650-566-1200, www.fourseasons.com/siliconvalley.

EVERYWHERE

A BAG FOR EVERYDAY ADVENTURES
Cotopaxi's colorful Allpa 35-liter Del Dia travel backpack can hold enough for a weekend away, and it's helping save the planet: Cotopaxi pieces to-



gether remnant fabric from other products to create each one-of-a-kind bag, part of its (Re)Purpose Collection. The carry-on-size pack fully unzips in the middle so you can open it like a suitcase and access the four main zippered compartments (one large, one medium, and two small). Or access those compartments through a side zipper, which comes in handy in tight quarters. A padded pocket on the back fits large laptops and includes a padded tablet sleeve. A big pocket on the top front — with a separate zippered mesh pocket — keeps travel documents, sunglasses, earphones, and other smaller items within easy reach, while small strips of webbing at the zipper ends help fend off pickpockets. The pack, which weighs about 3.5 pounds, has multiple grab handles, a removable hip belt, and an adjustable sternum strap. It also comes with a detached rain cover. \$180. www.cotopaxi.com.

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