

R H A P S O D Y

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A Green-Fairy Tale

Celebrate 10 years of absinthe's legal status in the U.S.
with one of these creative cocktails

Absinthe's history is almost as intoxicating as the spirit itself. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, no self-respecting artist would be caught *without* a glass of the green liqueur, made from fennel, anise, and the bitter leaves of *Artemisia absinthium* (wormwood). Baudelaire and Oscar Wilde waxed rhapsodic about its glories, Edward Degas painted *L'Absinthe*, and Picasso even made a statue, *Glass of Absinthe*, to honor it. But then in 1912, the "green fairy" was banned in the U.S. (and most European countries) allegedly for being a hallucinogen that caused fits and ruined lives.

Ten years ago, absinthe made its way back onto American soil—thanks, primarily, to Ted Breaux, a New Orleans chemist who dispelled the myth that the drink made people crazy. Now, absinthe has become a home-grown affair here, with producers in Kentucky, Washington, New York, and Texas. And bars across the country are getting creative with the spirit, too. Here are the 10 best places to toast 10 years of freedom.

The Sazerac Bar

New Orleans

• Slip into a booth at the Roosevelt Hotel's elegant, historic Sazerac Bar and order a Corpse Reviver #2. This late-1800s New Orleans favorite is made up of gin, Cointreau, lemon, Lillet, and three drops of Nouvelle Orleans, one of Ted Breaux's absinthe brands.

Japp's Since 1879

Cincinnati

• Owner Molly Wellman stirs another Ted Breaux brand, Lucid

absinthe, into her Mollytov cocktail alongside gin, lime, and simple syrup. A spoon is placed on the rim of the flute glass, and a Chartreuse-soaked sugar cube is set ablaze. It caramelizes and falls into a drink that's then topped with Champagne.

The Absinthe Bar at the Haven

Breckenridge, Colorado

• The menu at this basement den offers 50 different absinthes from five countries. Go for the Chronic Bomb shot—a mix of Lucid absinthe, Bailey's, chocolate vodka, and crème de menthe.

Raven & Rose

Portland, Oregon

• The crackling fire, billiard tables, and deep leather couches are best appreciated with an icy Absinthe Frappé, composed of Washington state's Pacificque absinthe, pisco, lemon, orgeat, bitters, egg whites, and crushed ice.

Slowly Shirley

New York City

• This dreamy basement speakeasy mixes a drink called the Dr. Funk, which has a whopping ounce of absinthe shaken with lime, lemon, grenadine, cane sugar, guava, and rum. The tiki tippie's garnish? A float of 151-proof rum squirted from a syringe.

L'Eiffel Bistrot & Creperie

South Barrington, Illinois

• Manager Luis Cubillos likes to introduce first-timers to Kübler or Pernod, using the classic preparation with an absinthe fountain, spoon, and sugar. He also recommends a Kentucky label, Copper Kings, which produces a citrus and a lavender absinthe.



Clockwise from left: Maison Premiere's absinthe fountain; the Absinthe Cobbler at Waypoint; Juniper Tar's stylish digs

Waypoint

Cambridge, Massachusetts

• This Harvard Square spot uses Tenneyson, a Texas-produced blanc-style, in its highly creative Absinthe Cobbler, with grilled blood orange, black pepper, lemon, smoked maple syrup, and Suze.

Maison Premiere

Brooklyn

• Williamsburg's New Orleans-style oyster house and cocktail bar stocks 32 absinthes. Try Meadow of Love by New York's Delaware Phoenix Distillery, created with locally grown wormwood.

Juniper Tar

San Antonio

• At this handsome bar, beverage director Benjamin Krick recommends the Shoot the Piano Player, which includes cognac, Amaro Nonino, Pernod, and oleo-saccharum, which lends the drink deep candied lemon notes.

The Grass Skirt

San Diego

• Absinthe rinses are the thing at this tiki bar, which swirls the green fairy into its classic mai tai and its signature Oaxaca Dead cocktail, with mezcal and house rum, pineapple, passionfruit, and pomegranate.

