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NEAT OR NOT: A SPEED-TASTING PANEL EXPLORES THE VIRTUES AND VERSATILITY OF TEN SPIRITS AT WEST HOLLYWOOD'S BABETTE

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Uncle Val's Restorative Gin

The Uncle Val's line of gin combines the passion its namesake, Zio Valerio, had for gardening and traditional Italian botanicals with a distinctly American approach to distilling. The Restorative expression, which features a delicate mix of juniper, cucumber, coriander, and rose, brims with bright rays of Meyer lemon and citrus oil. Softened by juniper pine and a hint of eucalyptus, the spirit possesses a complex, floral character that makes it approachable despite its slightly-above

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average proof of 90. Ryan Silva, Bar Lead at downtown L.A.'s Otium, chose to show off exactly how versatile the Restorative gin can be with his inventive take on an industry classic, the Gin & Tonic. Made with Silva's hazelnut aigre-doux—a shrub-like compound usually created by reducing vinegar and fruit, but in this case made orgeat-style with toasted hazelnuts and Sherry—salted-cacao “air” (foam), and a hint of bubbles, it's probably unlike any gin-based cocktail you've tried before. Despite the perfumed and verdant nature of Uncle Val's Restorative, Silva's cocktail uses its light foam, nutty warmth, and jammy fruit notes from the Sherry to play up the subtler hints of dark spice that can be overwhelmed by the bright botanicals. Although the drink oozes rich flavors of chocolate, vanilla, dates, and hazelnut, the technique behind it keeps the mouthfeel light while ensuring the gin itself isn't lost or overpowered.

Tasting Notes

“This is a really gorgeous gin that exists between fresh and masculine and yields both botanical and dry properties.” —C.J.

“Lightly juniper-styled gin that allows both herbaceous sweetness and floral notes to come through.” —J.H.

“Almost gives off citrus blossom as well as coriander and black pepper. Very perfumed and elegant.” —A.P.

“With the edible hibiscus and the salted cacao, this drink is a standout for a gin that offers up a beautiful, concentrated perfume of inspired botanicals.” —Meridith May

UNCLE VAL'S / RESTORATIVE GIN