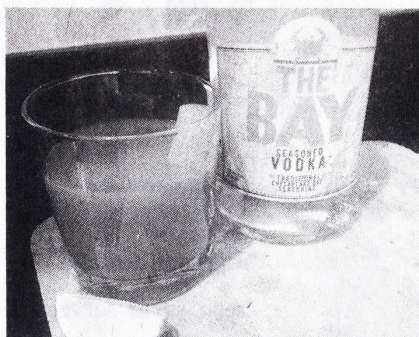




Bottoms up, Old Bay

Seasoned vodka offers the spicy taste Marylanders love on crabs and everything else



MEEKAH HOPKINS/FOR THE BALTIMORE SUN
The Bloody Marylander cocktail, using Bay Seasoned Vodka.

BY MEEKAH HOPKINS
For The Baltimore Sun

Ask a Marylander to write a love letter extolling the many virtues of the state, and Old Bay will surely be mentioned.

We are fiercely proud about the quirky bits of living in our state that encompass the saying, "It's just a Maryland thing." We relish the exclusivity of a select few oddities that make our state great. At the same time, we love introducing outsiders to our traditions and lifestyles. On the short list of items that make a person feel at home here is Old Bay.

Like a song that transports you to a specific moment in your life, Old Bay transports us to a bushel of steamed crabs on the Shore, or to a table with friends over at Captain James, mallets and a pitcher of Natty Boh at your side.

So imagine our collective delight when Philadelphia Distilling dropped some of its brotherly love this spring all along the East Coast, unveiling its tribute to our culture

Bloody Marylander

- 1 1/2 ounces, Bay Seasoned Vodka
- 4 ounces tomato juice
- 1 dash Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice
- Celery stalk

Add vodka, tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice. Pour back and forth between two mixing glasses; strain into an ice-filled highball glass. Garnish with celery stalk.

Pineapple Baytini

- 2 ounces, Bay Seasoned Vodka
 - 1 ounce pineapple juice
 - 1/2 ounce agave nectar
 - 3/4 ounce lime juice
 - Garnish: lime wheel
- Shake vodka, pineapple juice, lime juice, and agave with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass.

Chesapeake Bay shooter

- 1 raw oyster
- 1 ounce Bay Seasoned Vodka
- 3/4 ounce fresh celery juice
- Lemon juice

Old Bay seasoning
Rim a shot glass with Old Bay; pour vodka and celery juice over raw oyster, top with fresh squeezed lemon juice.

with Bay Seasoned Vodka, a savory infusion of "traditional spices" and sea salt in a quadruple distilled vodka. Now you can finally shoot, sip, and slather yourself in Old Bay-ish vodka at home or at local bars, such as Bad Decisions or Looney's.

The drink is the brainchild of Andrew Auwerda, a Cecil County resident, University of Maryland alumnus and proprietor of Philadelphia Distilling, a small craft distillery most famous for its Bluecoat Gin.

Alone, it tastes exactly as you hoped it would: It's salty and spicy, with notes of celery seed, pepper, a little cardamom — even a dash of nutmeg. It sets you up with everything you'd need for a great day by

the water: Each bottle comes tagged with a signature cocktail recipe, the Bloody Marylander.

If you're gaga for any Old Bay-related novelty, the \$26 price for a liter will be worth it. But if you're like me, you want to be able to slap the ingredient on just about anything and make it taste good.

I've never spent time behind bars, but I do spend a lot of time in front of them. So I felt comfortable playing around with a few recipes at home. Surprisingly, the Bay vodka is pretty versatile, like the seasoning itself. If crabs and football are what Maryland does, this vodka is what Maryland should drink.