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The Bootleggers Class of 2016: Best of The Midwest's Craft Distilleries

MINNEAPOLIS – (June 3, 2016) The Commodore Bar & Restaurant salutes the best in regionally distilled craft spirits with its first-ever 2016 Bootleggers Awards. Five different branded spirits -- two bourbons, one gin, and two flavored liqueurs -- tallied the most votes from a seasoned crew of craft spirits researchers.

The Bootleggers Awards presentation – open to the public – takes place Wednesday, June 8, 5:30-8 p.m. at the Commodore Bar & Restaurant, 79 Western Ave., St. Paul, Minn. The festive event will include an update on craft distillery trends from a representative of Wisconsin's 45th Parallel Distillery, and attendees will be invited to sample dishes from the Commodore's refreshed menu. Tickets cost \$30, but just \$20 for members of the Commodore's Bootlegger's Club (club members should have their Bootlegger's passport with them). Bootlegger's Club memberships may be purchased that evening.

Meet the five swarthy spirits singled out for 2016 Bootleggers Awards, along with their featured cocktail at the Commodore:

- Start with the hometown favorite, St. Paul's own Eleven Wells Spirits, whose aromatic Cherry Liqueur plants an erotically-tinged, bleeding-edge charge into the Commodore's take on a true 1920s-era classic cocktail, the Blood and Sand. Bloody well done, Eleven Wells!

- Minneapolis-based Du Nord Craft Spirits distillery earns Bootleggers respect for its Fitzgerald Gin. F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose convivial self found sanctuary at the Commodore for a spell back in the early 1920s, advocated drinking gin because it left no tell-tale aroma on the drinker's breath. Du Nord succeeds in making a breathtakingly good gin. It's the featured ingredient in one of the Commodore's most popular cocktails – called, what else? The Fitzgerald, of course.
- There's nothing watered down about the bourbon that gushes forth from Minneapolis-based Crooked Waters Distillery, as anyone who's sampled the distillery's Kings Point Port Cask Finished bourbon – best served in the Commodore's own inspired take on the classic Manhattan. Crooked Waters cops a 2016 Bootleggers crown for its breakthrough bourbon.
- The 45th Parallel Distillery, based in New Richmond, Wisc. – a very short day's drive across the Packers State line east of the Twin Cities – demonstrates a smooth touch with its 45th Parallel Border Bourbon. Commodore mixologists like this 2016 Bootleggers award winning for the mainstay ingredient in the house's flagship libation, The Commodore cocktail.
- The Mississippi River Distilling Company rolls out of LeClaire, Iowa, a small town some 250 scenic by-way miles southeast of the Twin Cities. It makes a mean Coffee Liqueur. How mean? The Commodore dares feature it in a cocktail named after one of history's meanest mamas: the Ma Barker Nightcap. It's a swell liqueur, and a sip-down winner of a Bootleggers Award.

Membership in the Commodore's Bootlegger's Club is open to everyone. For more information, visit www.theCommodoreBar.com or call 651-330-5999. Tickets to the awards banquet at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-bootlegger-awards-tickets-25517581774>. The Commodore Bar and Restaurant is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 4 p.m. to midnight, and is additionally available for private rentals, with seating in the private banquet area for as many as 200 people. Commonwealth Properties is a St. Paul-based real estate and hospitality company, specializing in preserving and rejuvenating historic properties. Its portfolio of hospitality-related businesses also includes W.A. Frost & Company, The University Club of St. Paul, The St. Paul Athletic Club, Hotel 340 – a boutique hotel in the heart of downtown St. Paul, and Stout's Island Lodge in Birchwood, Wisc.

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