



Jess Graber and Jake Norris, founders of Stranahan's Colorado Whiskey (above left); Norris in the distillery (above center); Death's Door marketer Ben Webb (middle) and president Brian Ellison (bottom left).

food and service in the city. Stranahan's is a personal favorite for Kenyon, who has passed the Beverage Alcohol Research exam at the highest level. "My ingredients should be made with the same care I put into my drinks," he notes. "I know these folks are out there on the floor of the distillery, not sitting in an office, keeping the logs, pumping the wash, watching over the process every step of the way."

Kenyon infuses the whiskey with figs for a Manhattan-style cocktail. His Cowboy Coffee features Stranahan's in combination with muddled and strained coffee beans, agave nectar, and a dash of bitters. "Interest in craft bartending has exploded in the past three years," he says, "and with it, an enthusiasm for craft spirits."

company began as a project to help bring agriculture back to Washington Island, 6 miles off the mainland in Lake Michigan, and to protect the rural landscape. Beer was one value-added line of goods that could utilize the island's organic, hard winter wheat; Death's Door vodka, gin, and white (unaged) whiskey, produced by Yahara Bay Distillers, a small craft spiritmaker in Madison, was another.

The community-minded mission of the business, its message of integrity, and some savvy salesmanship—not to mention the quality of the spirits—have garnered an impressive amount of publicity in regional and national publications. "We created a product, then we worked hard to create a market for it," says Webb. "In the process, we're supporting farmers and their families, and that's something our customers value. They're the same people who dine at independent, chef-driven restaurants serving fresh, local, natural foods."

Those are the guiding principles at Madison's Nostrano, where bar manager Chad Vogel infuses Death's Door Vodka with pears and vanilla and adds lemon and lavender to produce a signature drink called the Nostrano Tipple. "I'm from right here in Door County where this is made," he says, "and it's meaningful to me that I can work with something local behind the bar." The brand is now distributed in 26 states.



Death's Door Spirits Madison, Wis.

Spirits are taking their rightful place in the locavore movement, becoming another expression of the farm-to-table ethos, according to Ben Webb, who provides sales and marketing support for Death's Door Spirits. Founded in 2005 by Brian Ellison, the



Templeton Rye Templeton, Iowa

Bush, a former banker, grew up hearing about the rye whiskey made during Prohibition by area farmers, among them his great-grandfather. He partnered with Keith Kerkhoff, who contributed a family recipe, to produce what the townspeople had long called "The Good Stuff." Together, they've turned a bootleg brand into a cult sensation, twice winning the gold at the San