

trend alert! hotels that brew their own booze!

The bartenders at these hotels are so wholehearted about hooch, **they're mixing their own blends.** Pull up a stool!



English-Style Ales in Vermont

Vermont's Norwich Inn has been brewing beers in the English style since 1797. But until recently, they were only equipped to make three 5-gallon jugs at a time. After adding on a four-barrel brewhouse, they now turn out 125-gallon batches of English ale and 15 other brews. In tradition's name, some hops still come from the motherland; the rest are grown on-site. All are pumped into the house pub from beer cellars. (325 Main St., norwichinn.com, 802-649-1143; \$5.50 for an imperial pint, \$5.50 for a 22-ounce bottle)

Japanese-Style Sakes in Las Vegas

Wanting to give guests a transporting experience, the **Shibuya restaurant at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino** teamed up with the famous Northern Japanese distiller Oomuraya Shuzo to produce three exclusive sakes. The nuanced blends run the gamut from fruity to light to dry, and come in fancy bottles (\$59 and up) and single-serving cans (\$17). (3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S., mgmgrand.com, 877-880-0880)

Kentucky-Style Bourbon in California

After their first bourbon-themed dinner got rave reviews, the chef de cuisine and head bartender at the **Grange Restaurant in Sacramento's Citizen Hotel** headed to the Bluegrass State to sample the best barrel-aged bourbons and blend their own. After rounds of tastings with Kentucky master distiller Chris Morris, they devised the hotel's exclusive Grange Special Blend Woodford Reserve Bourbon. Spicy, caramelly and citrusy, it now stocks the bar's top shelf. (926 J St., citizenhotel.com, 916-447-2700; \$11 for a house Manhattan, \$65 by the bottle)

—KAREN CATCHPOLE

nibble on this
The characteristic holes of swiss cheese have a quirky origin: **Gas expands in the cheese while it ripens, causing air bubbles to form.**

GOOD THINGS COME IN ECO-PACKAGES

Now you can spot them at the supermarket!

IN THE DAIRY AND SNACK AISLES

It looks like plastic and keeps food just as fresh, but a greener version known as corn-based PLA is made from kernels. Unlike oil-based plastic, the corn-derived kind is biodegradable—which means it will eventually break down into harmless natural compounds and take some pressure off our landfills:

SPOT IT! Snyder's of Hanover's organic pretzel thins bags; Stonyfield multipack yogurt cups

IN THE BOTTLED-DRINK AISLE

Companies are replacing plastic packaging with a sugar-derived version made from molasses and sugar cane. One version from the Coca-Cola Company, known as PlantBottle, is 30 percent plant-based and fully recyclable, so it cuts the company's use of petroleum (a nonrenewable ingredient) and reduces its greenhouse gas emissions.

SPOT IT! Dasani bottles; single-serve Odwalla bottles

IN THE COFFEE AND CEREAL AISLES

Not only does repurposed paperboard save trees, but it's also less expensive to produce than the fresh stuff. Today, companies are using the material in unexpected ways, like as replacements for steel coffee canisters.

SPOT IT! Maxwell House coffee canisters; Kellogg's cereal boxes

—ELIZABETH BARKER