

By Bill Burke

Explore the Orchard

8 Apple Spirits That Perfectly Capture Autumn Flavors

As the days begin to grow shorter and the temperatures start to cool, the Vermont countryside puts on its most colorful show of the year.

Greens turn to golds and reds, painting the rolling landscape in vivid colors. With the arrival of what is perhaps the state's most beautiful season, farm-fresh flavors infuse our palates as fresh and locally sourced ingredients become a welcome mainstay on menus, including a seasonal favorite: apples.

Because there are so many varieties coming from the environment, they're a great way to experience the terroir of Vermont.

According to the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association, Vermont farmers grow more than 150 different varieties of apples, with more than 1 million bushels — about 40 million pounds — grown each year. The question, then, is: What to do with all of this wonderful fruit? We'll likely have plenty of apple pie next month, and applesauce can be tricky. Sounds like a cocktail might do the trick.

Open a bottle of locally produced, apple-infused spirits and experience what Vermont tastes like.

Absolut Juice Apple is a celebration of the season — cold, brisk walks and falling leaves. This flavored vodka, produced in Aho, Sweden, with Absolut as its base, has a freshness in aroma and taste. Flavors of ripe apples are followed by soft floral notes and a touch of vanilla. It offers a balance of natural flavors and a welcome sweetness that lends itself well to a variety of cocktails.

Absolut Juice Apple Mule

courtesy absolutdrinks.com

- 1 ½ ounces Absolut Juice Apple
- 1 ounce ginger ale
- 1 ounce lemonade
- 2 dashes bitters
- 1 wedge lime

Fill a mule mug with ice. Add all ingredients and garnish with a lime wedge.

Vermont Ice Apple Creme is produced by the Boyden Valley Winery, in Cambridge, which is renowned for its grape and fruit wines. It's a fermented liqueur made from the frozen juice of apples, apple brandy and real cream. Complex, and with hints of apple and oak, it's lighter and more delicate than most cream liquors. Serve it over ice or try it with coffee or blended with vodka or light rum.



Vermont Spirits also produces **Vermont Crimson Vodka**, which perfectly captures the flavor of Vermont in the autumn. This vodka, bottled at 80 proof, is distilled from Champlain Valley apple varieties, offering delicate apple aromas on the nose in a classic vodka profile. It's fermented and then run through Vermont Spirits' copper pot still, and finally finished in a small glass column still.

Golden Apple

courtesy vermontspirits.com

- ¾ ounce Vermont Crimson Vodka
- 1 ounce Eden Ice Cider
- ¼ ounce Goldschlager
- ¾ ounces sparkling apple cider

Combine ingredients and serve on the rocks with an apple slice for garnish.



Mad Apple, crafted by Mad River Distillery (who describes its entry in the category as “a wicked Vermont apple brandy”) in Waitsfield, is a European-style, dry apple brandy distilled from 100% Vermont apples. It is aromatic, with fresh apple notes on the nose, oak spice and vanilla on the palate, leading to a crisp apple finish. Enjoy it over ice or in a cocktail like the classic Sidecar or a Jack Rose.

Jack Rose

- 1 ½ ounces Mad Apple
- ¾ ounce fresh lime or lemon juice
- ½ ounce Grenadine
- Lime or lemon twist for garnish

Combine all ingredients into a shaker with ice and shake until chilled. Fine strain into a coupe glass and garnish with a lime or lemon twist.

Crown Royal Regal Apple is an apple-flavored Canadian whisky blend. Crown Royal hand-selects and infuses its whisky with Regal Gala Apple flavors, resulting in a blend of bright apple balanced with the signature Crown Royal spice on the nose, followed by slightly tart, crisp apple flavors and an apple-sweetened, full-bodied finish. Try it in a classic warming autumn sipper like a Hot Toddy.

Apple Hot Toddy

courtesy crownroyal.com

- 1 ½ ounces Crown Royal Regal Apple
- 2 ounces boiling water
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 lemon wedge
- 1 cinnamon stick

Add the water, honey, whisky, cinnamon stick and lemon wedge to a cup. Let it sit for two minutes and stir with the cinnamon stick until the honey is dissolved. Add a squeeze of lemon if desired.



Three Olives Jacked Apple Vodka

is an apple cinnamon-flavored vodka imported from England. The base for this unique blend is a small batch vodka crafted from a 300-year-old recipe made from English wheat. It's triple distilled and charcoal filtered and infused with flavors of fresh apples and cinnamon.

Garden of Eden

courtesy threeolives.com

- 2 ounces Three Olives Jacked Apple Vodka
- 4 ounces cranberry juice
- 1 splash club soda

Mix the vodka and cranberry juice in a shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously and strain into a martini glass. Top off the drink with a splash of club soda and serve.



E&J Apple Brandy is a California brandy blended with apple liqueur. E&J Brandy, in particular, is made from California grapes that are harvested in the state's Mediterranean climate, providing distillers a diverse variety. Each vintage is distilled within three months of fermentation, and then aged in oak, which adds complexity. E&J Apple Brandy uses that spirit as its base, and adds the fresh flavors of apple liqueur to produce bright apple flavors with a hint of sweet vanilla and caramel. It can be sipped over ice or as part of a simple, fall-themed cocktail.

Ginger Apple

courtesy ejbrandy.com

- 1 ounce E&J Apple Brandy
- 4 ounces ginger ale or ginger beer

Combine the brandy and ginger ale over ice in a Collins glass and serve.

Bird Dog Apple Whiskey is an 80 proof, golden amber-colored whiskey with ripe, fresh apples on the nose. Sweet, fresh apple flavors fade into bourbon on the finish with a lingering warm, cinnamon zest. Bird Dog Apple Whiskey is perfect for sipping neat, on ice or in a warming shot.

Lucky Harvest

courtesy birddogwhiskey.com

- 1 ounce Bird Dog Apple Whiskey
- 1 ounce Bird Dog Peach Whiskey
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Combine the Apple and Peach Whiskeys in a double shot glass and then top with lemon juice.