Dogged Pursuits

Tito's bills itself as a craft vodka for dog lovers. Have it even if you don't have a pooch, you'll thank us later.

It was three years ago at the Berlin Bar Convent (BCB), one of the spirits industry's premier shindigs, that I first came across this intriguing brand of craft American vodka called Tito's Handmade Vodka, when I wandered into a session on the "power of authenticity" in the 21st century marketplace, by the President of the company. It was unfortunate that the eponymous founder of the company, Bert "Tito" Beveridge (what an appropriate name!) was not there, but the brand's story was a fascinating one, and I had to hear it second hand. It is one of the fastest growing spirits brands in the world and fortunately for us in India is now also available in the domestic market, apart from just duty free.

It doesn't take rocket science to make craft vodka; sometimes all it takes is a geophysicist who's out to make "a vodka which a woman would not make a face at when she drank it." Bert didn't have a liquor start-up on his mind when he would serve friends his flavoured home-made vodka, but they loved it so much that they persuaded him to get his brands to a wider audience. Unfortunately, within six months of his start-up (which he part funded by

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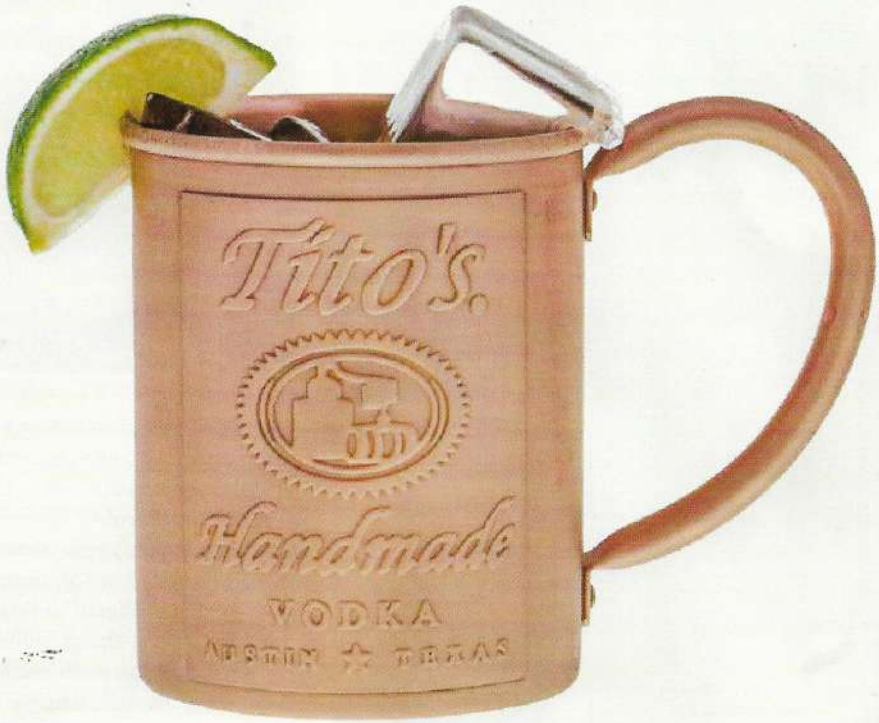

Tito's American Mule

INGREDIENTS
- 45ml Tito's Handmade Vodka
- 15ml freshly squeezed lime juice
- 90ml ginger beer

METHOD
- Fill a chilled copper mug with ice. Add Tito's Handmade Vodka, fresh lime juice, and ginger beer. Shake well, strain over ice.

GARNISH
- Lime wedge or wheel

Tito's Texas Sipper

INGREDIENTS
- 45ml Tito's Handmade Vodka
- 15ml elderflower liqueur
- 45ml fresh grapefruit juice
- Soda water

METHOD
- Combine Tito's Handmade Vodka, elderflower liqueur, and juice in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake well and strain over fresh ice. Top with soda water.

GARNISH
- Mint sprig

maxing out 19 credit cards), his wife left him, taking the house, but leaving him the distillery. Boy, was that a wrong decision! In its first year he did 1000 cases and they currently do upwards of 2 million cases.

Tito's is produced in Austin, Texas, and made in batches, using pot stills, which for a vodka is a rarity. Tito's is made from corn, and they distill their corn mash six times, with the choice of corn as a grain base, again a comparative rarity for a vodka, as they believe that corn retains some of its smoothness after distilling.

A vodka for dog lovers is possibly an unusual choice of brand positioning for a spirit brand, but one no doubt that touch a chord with the important millennial audience, who look for brands which ring true and which support causes they might believe in. Every employee at Tito's, I was told back then, was free to get their dog to work. Back then Tito's bucked the trend of using sex to sell a brand by releasing instead a dog calendar! A charity called Emancipet also benefits from Tito's, along with numerous other pet related causes.

If you love fine spirits (and pets!), then you can pick up a bottle of Tito's handmade vodka between ₹3,500 and 4,500, depending on which city you're in.

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