

## THE DRINK

By Daliah Singer



# Spirit of the South

Brandy-based Träkál distills Chilean Patagonia

What does a hike through Chilean Patagonia's dense forests smell and feel like? Five years ago, Argentina-born master distiller and former investment banker Sebastian Gomez Camorino set out to answer that question and, as he describes it, "put Patagonia in a bottle."

"I wanted to make something that tastes good, that could only be made there with what's available," Gomez Camorino says. The region doesn't produce the grains for whiskey or the juniper for gin, but it is lush with herbs and fruits. For two years, Gomez Camorino learned from the indigenous

Mapuche community and experimented with ingredients until he arrived at a recipe for Patagonia's first new distilled spirit, Träkál (which means "first warrior into battle" in the Huilliche language).

Made in the south-central Chilean town of Osorno and released last summer, the clear liquor has an apple- and pear-brandy base that is triple-distilled with concentrates of four wild berries and essential oils extracted from seven native herbs, which are handpicked by the local community. Every ingredient, from antioxidant-rich *maqui* berries to

indigenous *tepa* leaves, is collected within 100 kilometers of the distillery. "We created something new," says Ben Long, who cofounded the brand along with Gomez Camorino and Matthew O'Brien, "but we had to go to the end of the world to do it."

In North America, Träkál is currently available in British Columbia, Georgia, and Colorado (spirit hounds can order it from Denver's The Proper Pour). The distillery also plans to launch in California, Peru, and parts of Europe later this year—meaning the end of the world may be even closer than we all thought.

## THE SNACK

### Haw Flakes

Tart, fruity, wafer-shaped haw flakes—made from crushed hawthorn berries, sugar, water, and food coloring and packaged in cellophane

or cylindrical wrappers like firecrackers—have long been a favorite treat in Hong Kong. The hawthorn berry has been used for centuries by practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine to alleviate digestive issues and abdominal pain, and many adults in Hong Kong will remember eating

haw flakes to offset the bitter taste of Chinese medicine. You can pick them up at snack shops throughout the city, or take a trip to the Wong Wing Kee Preserved Fruits Factory, which opened in 1901 just a five-minute walk from the ornate Man Mo Temple. —Sandy Bornstein



Stacey Lamb (haw flakes)