

MAN
AT HIS BEST
WINTER '19

Esquire

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HONeST,
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BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

THE VOICE
AMERICA NEEDS
RIGHT NOW

By Michael Hainey



DRINKING

ALL HAIL THE HIGHBALL

It's the **COCKTAIL** for those who need a break from cocktails

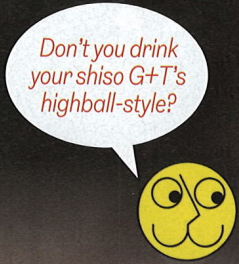
● You know things are serious when two grown men are talking about the size of bubbles.

The subject of carbonation is where my conversation has veered with Masahiro Urushido, head bartender at Katana Kitten, a Japanese-American bar in New York that, like other fine watering holes (including Pacific Cocktail Haven in San Francisco and Houston's Tongue-Cut Sparrow), is bringing the artful craft of the Japanese-style highball stateside.

What's in a highball? Whisky and soda. Cue spit take. Are we saying the whisky soda, a drink that is barely a drink, is making a comeback? Yes, but the highball is different. How? "Care and love," Urushido says. "It's all about how you make it."

Hence, bubbles. At a growing number of bars, highballs come from a machine newly developed by Suntory and Hoshizaki that dispenses perfectly carbonated water and chilled Suntory Toki whisky, mixed at the spout. Katana Kitten serves them in frozen steins with a stick of ice so clear that you can read fine print through it. The attention to detail is palpable. There's a bracing fizz and a steady undercurrent of whisky from first sip to last, with no watered-down sludge at the end; ye olde whisky soda, by comparison, tastes like a bad accident. Highballs are as clean and easy as vodka sodas, but without the stigma of basicness. They are the antidote to seven-ingredient mixology hijinks, a respectable respite from your martini habit, and the drink of the post-experienced drinker.

No highball machine? This is how Urushido makes them at home: Keep a slender glass and a bottle of whisky in the freezer. Fill the glass with ice, add about two ounces of whisky, and then, holding it at an angle, slowly pour in chilled soda water. Don't stir. It'll mix on its own. Garnish with a lemon twist. About those bubbles: Urushido likes club soda from Q or Vintage in small bottles for maximum fizz. What's not optional? Care and love. They really do make all the difference. —Kevin Sintumuang



2018's Best New Spirit Surprises

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