

Dragon Moonshine Company
photos & words by Ellen Gurley



Right in the heart of the bible belt, Charlotte, North Carolina now has a brewery or distillery in most of our neighbourhoods. Some even have multiple. This does NOT mean that Charlotte has a problem, it means we have a solution ... on almost every corner. Dragon Moonshine is one of the newest player in this game of spiritual healing. Located in NoDa's Area 15, just shy of all of the breweries there, they are a welcome addition. My City Magazine thinks they'll fit in just fine.

Rick Lavin and Christopher Wagner came about starting their distillery in the same way that many others did; they like to drink. Dragon Moonshine was borne out of that shared activity but also out of a desire to leave corporate America. This is a common reason to start one's own business. Beginning their journey in 2015, they have just jumped the final hurdles that are necessary to saturate the market.

Rum is what they began with. It's a silver rum to which I have already grown partial. Very soon after having mastered that recipe, they moved onto moonshine. I have diagnosed Chris with ADD since he can't just stop at rum and moonshine. They will be staggering the release of their flavoured moonshines and every week Chris tries to produce something else. Just last month he cranked out a whiskey (to be aged), a vodka from the moonshine mash, and some amaretto. He cannot help himself. You've got to love that dedication and

curiosity.

Their labels are reminiscent of when the sailors all were paid in booze. Back in the day, the quality of this payment was validated by pouring a small amount of the alcohol into a pile of gunpowder. If it all burned up, then it was legit. This is the equivalent of holding your bills into the light. That is why their logo is burned around the edges. I like this homage paid. And if you think that this financial center is too far from Appalachia to produce a good hooch, you're wrong. Additionally, if you think that two dudes that are not even from the south can't rock the crap out of some moonshine, then you're wrong again. Chris has made sure to give a nod to the pioneers and not only makes a classic version of moonshine (often referred to as white lightning) but with their flavored releases they will be giving a shout out to the rural grandma with an apple pie, taking you back to southern jam with their strawberry, and presenting a true redneck mouthwash with their peach one.

Their set-up is one step out of the woods and the distillery is adorned with repurposed wood making this tasting room a warm get-away right in the middle of the city. Due to the laws, you can visit their NoDa location and purchase one bottle per year, but they are in ABC Stores now so you can go grab endless amounts of bottles. Go get a tour and a tasting today. You'll get a commemorative glass that really holds the nose with its shape and (here's the clincher) you can boast that you support local. Then after you fall in love with the taste, ask your local watering hole to start carrying Dragon Moonshine products.



"Put Some Fire in Your Belly"
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