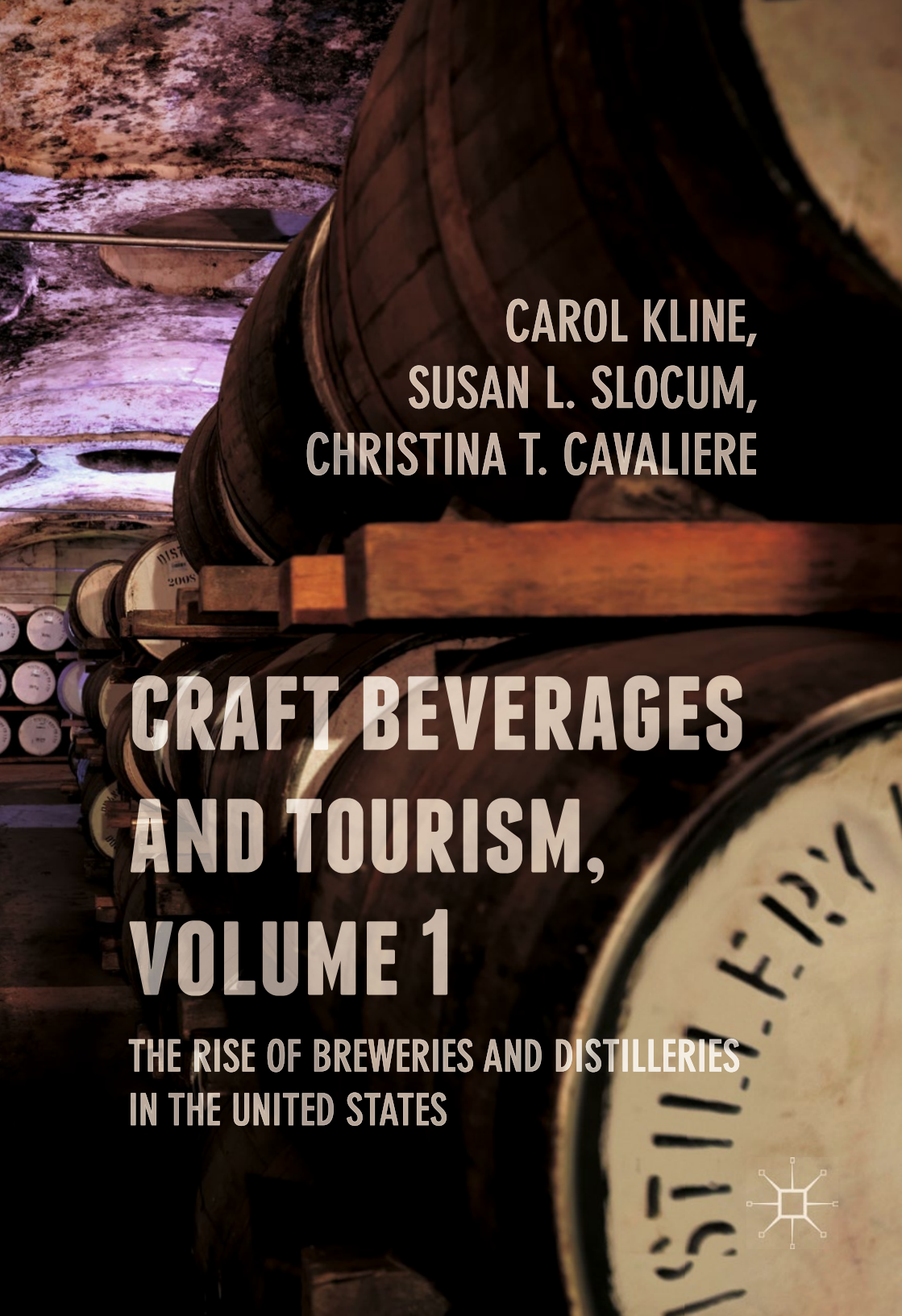




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**CRAFT BEVERAGES
AND TOURISM,
VOLUME 1**

**THE RISE OF BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES
IN THE UNITED STATES**



Carol Kline • Susan L. Slocum • Christina T. Cavaliere
Editors

Craft Beverages and Tourism, Volume 1

The Rise of Breweries and Distilleries in the
United States

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Moonshine in North Carolina: Crafting Quality for Tourism

Carla Barbieri and Annie Baggett

“I am all for that home-spun thing, but the reality is that, since I’m legal, I can learn the best practices, I can network, I can leverage... The moonshiners that are, literally legit moonshiners today, guys that are selling to bunches, they’ve got TV shows” (Pat).

INTRODUCTION

Moonshine, a distilled liquor produced usually from corn, has been an economic livelihood strategy and a heritage representation of the Appalachian region of the USA since the early colonial times (Peine & Schafft, 2012). Soon after their arrival, colonialists started using a variety of fruits and grains from the new world to distill different

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liquors, which later were commonly referred to as moonshine (Dabney, 2014). During the *Prohibition* period (1920–1933), when the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages were banned throughout the country, moonshining remained an economic activity for many Appalachians, but in the underground world (Stewart, 2011). The illicit production and sale of liquor (also referred to as *bootlegging*) and the existence of proscribed drinking spots (*speakeasies*) during the *Prohibition* period made moonshining an icon of regional heritage (Rosco, 2015). During that time, moonshiners and their sympathizers became the “low and vicious class” of the mountain people because the easiness of their livelihood polluted the moral of local communities (Hatch, 2004, p. 71).

Although moonshining for personal consumption has long been permitted in the Appalachian region, popular media has maintained its underground charm (e.g., produced at night, clandestine sales) to make moonshine an authentic product that is wanted by many but reached by few. This is because until recently, permitted craft-distillers in North Carolina (NC) could not sell their spirits on premises directly to customers. The passing of NC House Bill 909 (October 2015) marked a milestone in the modern craft-distilling industry by allowing distillers to sell their booze on premises for off-site consumption. Although Bill 909 limits on-premises sales to one bottle per person per year, it is expected to stimulate the branding and sales of NC craft-spirits, especially for those who are weaving their craft into tourism activities. Many of the NC-permitted craft-distillers (48 as of April 2016) are capitalizing on the Appalachian charm and the high quality of their moonshines to welcome visitors to their tasting rooms and production facilities to enjoy their products. In doing so, they are not only increasing the direct sales and expanding their customer base but also spreading their economic impact to surrounding communities.

To capitalize on the craft-spirits momentum, the Distillers Association of North Carolina partnered with the Agritourism division of the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in 2015 to develop the NC Craft Distillers Trail and Passport program. In brief, this program blends the NC moonshining heritage and the use of local agricultural ingredients to cater to the increasing public interest in homegrown products, including craft-spirits. The program offers an app with a digital collection of craft-distillers directory for smartphone users to capture the increasing demand for online tourism information. It also highlights

the story and products of participating distillers and offers a “passport” that tourists can custom design to commemorate their visits to various distillers. As of 2016, the program includes 28 craft-distillers across the state, offering a variety of liquors, including whiskeys, rums, and brandies, among others. Given the infancy of this industry, little is known about its development and how spirit-crafters will see it unfold. Therefore, we conducted a study to gain a better understanding of moonshine and craft-spirits and the role of tourism in the development and growth of this emerging NC industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Appalachian culinary heritage was traditionally defined as unpretentious because of the prevalence of two simple, although divergent, stereotypes associated with their residents. Appalachians are believed to be either “pure *Elizabethans*” or “backwards *Hillbillies*” (Long, 2010, p. 7). A variety of craft-spirits, which names denote such *Elizabethan* (e.g., whiskey, brandy) or *Hillbilly* (i.e., moonshine) stereotypes, are a focal element of the Appalachian culinary heritage. Regardless of their identity, Appalachians have broadly embraced distilling from their necessity to extend the shelf life of agricultural products, given the poor agricultural and transport conditions of the region (Hatch, 2004; Peine & Schafft, 2012). Over the last decade, though, the onset of several towns as tourism destinations has stimulated the sophistication of the Appalachian cuisine, including beers and spirits, as to complement the tourism appeal of the destination and further stimulate local economic development (Dulaney, 2016). Within this context, craft-distilling tourism in NC has emerged to capture the tourism momentum in the region and to capitalize on the authenticity of a heritage resource, whose commercialization was proscribed until recently.

Like similar tourism initiatives around the globe (e.g., wine tourism, whisky tourism), the appeal of craft-distilling tourism develops around the authenticity and quality that the product or process offers to visitors. Although authenticity can take different interpretations, a postmodern approach seems suitable for tourism developments as tourists have the freedom to create their own understanding of the authenticity behind the product, even mediated by the story the brand portrays (Spracklen, 2011). Such authenticity can be embedded in the *terroir* of the tourism destination (McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008). It is consistently sustained that

offering high-quality experiences to pioneer tourists of new wine tourism regions is critical to creating loyalty and to extending the opportunity to others. In doing so, the quality should comprise the overall tourism experience, including the service (e.g., staff ability to increase visitors' self-assurance as connoisseurs) and ambience of the setting (e.g., tasting room) beyond the product itself (Hall & Mitchell, 2005; McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008). In this regard, Griffin and Loersch (2006) sustain that quality should increase along with the development of the tourism initiative as later tourists will have increased expectations. Importantly, the delivery of an authentic high-quality product should be incorporated into a business model as producers need to find the right price for their products, one that, while securing their profits, also represents a good value for tourists (Fraser & Alonso, 2006; Griffin & Loersch, 2006; Long, 2010). Within tourists' quest for experiencing authenticity and crafters' need for increasing quality in a profitable manner, the commodification of the product, though, seems to be a common end (Spracklen, 2011).

STUDY METHODS

We interviewed six NC-permitted craft-distillers independently in early 2016 using a semi-structured protocol to elicit participants' information on three topics: their venture into craft-distilling (e.g., how did you learn to distill?), the evolution of the industry in NC (e.g., what are the main changes in the distilling process of NC you have seen over the years?), and the relationship between moonshine and tourism (e.g., what made you to branch into tourism?). Although the interviews were guided by pre-determined questions, the researchers left room to probe emerging themes based on participants' responses (Patton, 2002). We voice-recorded interviews, which yielded a total of 361 minutes of data (average 72 minutes per interview), and were then transcribed verbatim for analysis. However, we have omitted unnecessary language fillers (e.g., um, ah) in participants' quotes presented in this chapter to increase narrative flow. Framed within inductive methods, we used open and axial coding during data analysis and peer-debriefed throughout data interpretation to ensure confirmability of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although we have identified study participants with their consent, we have used aliases in all quotes to protect their confidentiality. Given that only one woman participated in the interviews, alias names are gender-neutral and all participants are referred as male.

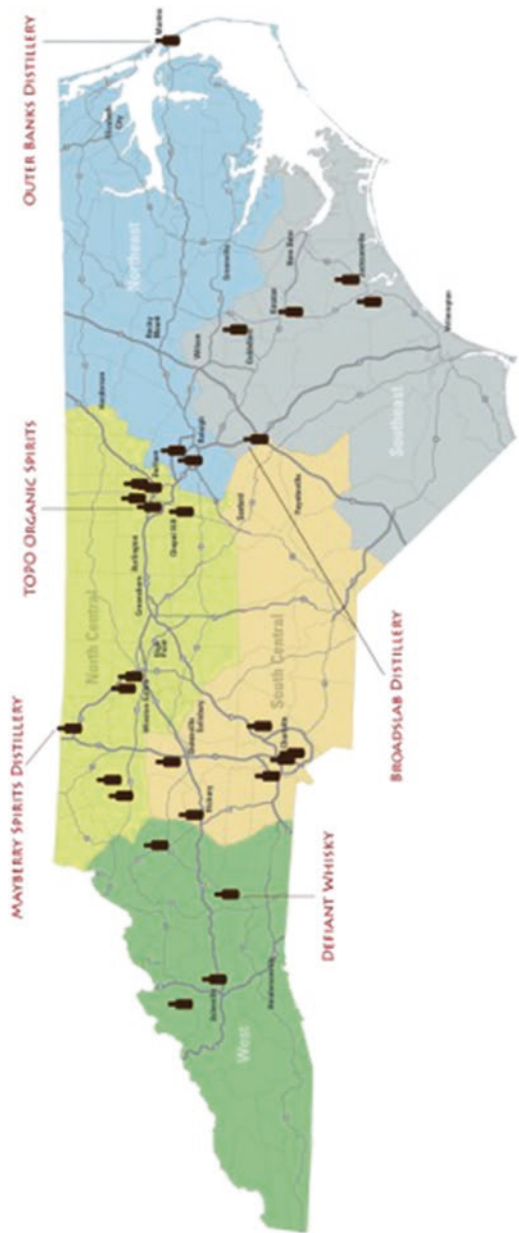
Participants were either the owners or co-owners of five NC distilleries. We purposely selected them because their participation in the NC Craft Distillers Trail and Passport program and to capture a mosaic of craft-distilling operations in terms of production scale and geographic dispersion (Fig. 11.1). Broadslab Distillery is on a 150-acre family farm in Benson, an area known as the “Moonshine Capital of the World”, which produces the white corn used in their spirits. Defiant Whisky is nestled on 550 acres of forest and pasture lands in Golden Valley; its tasting room overlooks a clear lake below and mountain tops above. Mayberry Spirits Distillery, in Mount Airy, produces small batches of craft-spirits using locally grown products; its tasting room is decorated with antiques and handcrafts. The Outer Banks Distilling sits in Manteo; its tasting room was fully renovated with reclaimed wood to blend with the historic atmosphere of their tourist town. TOPO Organic Distillery, in Chapel Hill, is the only U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA)-certified organic distillery in the Deep South; they craft their spirits using locally sourced ingredients.

FINDINGS

Data analysis yielded seven major themes that recurrently emerged across all participants. Altogether these themes elucidated on the meaning of moonshine, the emergence of the craft-distilling industry in NC linked to tourism, and the conditions needed (e.g., product characteristics, policy changes) to make individual businesses and the entire industry succeed. We present the emerging themes in bold below to tell the story of NC craft-distilling industry logically so that the themes can build on each other; thus, their order in the text does not indicate any level of importance.

Moonshine is a non-technical term, thus all participants defined whether their liquors were or were not moonshines at a certain point. “*Moonshine is a non-technical term, so it’s not related to actual production of federally approved alcohols in America. Moonshine traditionally was a spirit made from whatever product was geographically available*” (Daryl). The absence of a technical definition resulted in different interpretations of moonshine among participants. Although some argued it refers to any unaged liquor regardless of the ingredient used (e.g., corn, fruits, wheat), others sustained that it refers to illegally produced—thus untaxed—liquors. For example, Alex stated, “*Moonshine, to people, it’s just become un-aged whiskey ... we see it in the ABC stores,*” while Pat emphasized, “*If you’re putting moonshine on a label, it’s BS ... you’re paying tax on it, consequently, it’s*

Fig. 11.1 Location of study distilleries



not moonshine.” Muddling the term moonshine based on perceptions is a common phenomenon across many countries (Haworth & Simpson, 2004). However, participants’ constant allusion to posit/reject their spir-its as moonshine may stem from their self-identification as *Elizabethans* or *Hillbillies* (Long, 2010), which deserves further investigation as to exam-ine how personal identity values are conveyed into the branding of tour-ism products.

Yet, all participants agree that a full understanding of moonshine requires a utilitarian approach within a historic context. Consistently with the literature (Hatch, 2004; Peine & Schafft, 2012; Stewart, 2011), par-ticipants acknowledge moonshine was a means to survive poverty:

It was also another way in the bygone days, particularly when most everyone was poor, to preserve their product that they had made and actually to be able to make more money than they would normally with their raw product. (...) So [moonshine] was another way of adding to their economy. And particu-larly throughout the era of Prohibition, during the 20’s–30’s when alcohol was technically illegal, it was a way for many people to promote and support their families. In fact, the only way for many to pay for food in this region because jobs were scarce in this depression. (Daryl)

However, participants also referred to other utilitarian purposes of moon-shine. For Taylor, moonshine speaks of the times of self-sufficiency when families had to stand for themselves: *“There is a measure, to me, of sover-eignty in independence, in being able to be self-sufficient. And knowing how to make booze was commonplace in pioneer days in the U.S., everybody on the farm had a little still.”* Pat views moonshine as the only readily available medicine to heal people’s bodies and souls in old America:

I think that after the Civil War, North Carolina suffered six times more com-bat deaths than all of the other states combined. There is no medicine—there is no aspirin, there is no Ambien, there is no Zoloft; the PTSD issues don’t change, we just called them different things over the years. (...) You had a horrible war where you saw over half of your adult male population negatively affected by the war in some way, and you literally had no medicine or health care sys-tem. Where do they turn to? They turn to bourbon, which is the cheapest thing around, and they self-medicate.

Moonshining is an extension of agriculture for participants because it represents how the liquor knowledge settlers brought became an integral part of North Carolinian agricultural lifestyle, as Charlie explained:

You talk about whiskey like bootleg whiskey's a bad thing now. But if you rewind and look back, and my granddaddy was of Scottish descent. So they probably were making whiskey before they come over here, and then when they come over here they continued to make whiskey, and then before prohibition they were farming and making whiskey. (...) You know, because [making whiskey] was just an extension of agriculture, the way they looked at it. So we had to—everybody in the family, as long as you could go back, made whiskey.

Embracing moonshine as part of the agricultural heritage was so strong among participants that some voiced concerns with current positions opposing its legalization: *“Alcohol is so part of our human experience, and we need to embrace that. And only in North Carolina, in the past 100 years, we did disassociate ourselves, and especially with the agricultural aspect of it”* (Pat).

Increasing the dissociation of moonshine from agriculture may be conducive to the commodification of craft-distilling tourism, which is already a possible outcome due to its rapid development (Spracklen, 2011). Such commodification can represent a major heritage loss in the Appalachia, as Taylor expressed:

My concerns are [underground moonshiners] going away. (...) It's an American heritage and it's a pretty amazing breed of people that are so passionate and convicted about what they're doing, they know wholeheartedly it's totally illegal, and they do it anyway. I like that. You know, that's the spirit of America.

Within this theme, participants frequently mentioned that moonshining runs in their blood as an inherited passion sustained through generations, passed on either explicitly or implicitly. Daryl narrated the giggling reaction of his mother when she caught him distilling as a teenager: *“She says, well, I haven't told you this, but I guess it's time now. Your family's been making it and selling it for the last hundred years in these three counties—must be in your blood.”* For others, the distilling blood-mark was directly shared in their family:

[My grandfather] grew up around the still. I mean, their life consisted of farming and making whiskey. And, he went to distill with his brothers when he was five years old. (...) And then he got his own still when he was like 13. (...) He bootlegged all of his teenage years, and then when he started his family, they come to this farm. (...) And he grew tobacco and sweet potatoes, here on this

farm, and make whiskey. (...) But he always used to tell me that he had a doctor's degree in bootleggin' and he said that when it ever gets in your blood, you can't get it out. (Charlie)

Distilling is easy in the view of our participants, as Daryl explained: “I learned how easy it was, that this is not a hard process and that if people doing it in the woods, doing it in a nice building must be much easier.” Though, Pat distinguished distillation from fermentation: “It’s really about fermentation, the distillation is the easy part. Now, most distilleries you talk to only wanna talk about distilling, because most distilleries do not make their own alcohol from scratch.” In parallel with such easiness, most emphasized a process of self-experimentation to gradually move from ignorance to knowledge. Such experimentation relates to the innovation and originality that are needed to convert cooking into an art, thus an intentional mean for self-expression (Long, 2010). Taylor narrated his start after not finding help from a local moonshiner:

He said, no way in hell, but I’ll sell you a little still, and if you’ve got it inside of you—if you got the passion, you’ll figure it out. So, I went and bought a little still and all the little stuff that you needed to get going, and I started by making a very simple sugar water rum. And the first night where the flames were going and the still’s boiling and just sitting on this turkey cooker, and with the boil it would start to oscillate and just rock. Because it’s in there churning more than it was like chugging. And then choop, choop, choop, choop, [got a] little stream and you’re making booze in your garage. I loved it!

Although participants enjoyed narrating about their own experimentation, they also acknowledged learning and improving their art by consulting or observing others. Only two participants mentioned enrolling in formal classes to perfect their skills. Most, like Taylor, learned on their own: “[I read] everything I could get my hands on. I would just pull up Amazon and type in distilling book and liquor and whiskey...” Interestingly, given the strong presence of distilling in their families, only Charlie received direct counsel from a family member: “It wasn’t until I decided I was gonna open a legal distillery that [my grandfather] come out and he helped me design the still, and the shine that we make is an old recipe that he had. (...) Then he didn’t hold anything back.”

Crafting uniqueness for tourists was another central theme among participants. They believed that a healthy growth of the industry requires that their makers “...have to be unique, interesting, and they’re gonna have

to build it all around the tourists” (Charlie). In Gabriel’s view, makers’ emphasis on craftsmanship is a responsibility because with craft-brands *“you’re not just representing your own business, you’re representing your state and your country. And if you make a crappy product, that’s a poor representation of your region and a poor representation of your industry.”* Participants’ commitment to crafting quality went beyond their spirits and encompassed their tourism offerings, indicating they are cognizant that their success is determinant to providing an exceptional tourism experience (Hall & Mitchell, 2005; McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008):

I refuse to optimize the profit-making part of our tours [because] I can’t stand the idea of us turning it into, ‘hey, here’s the thing, buy a bottle of that’. (...) I actually think that I could turn and burn four tours on a Friday night, but instead I only do two. (...) My hope though is that I actually can break through, and I can make my brand important to these folks, not because I am extolling the virtues of my brand, but I’m showing them the virtues of craft. And then by association, they’re gonna realize, ‘hey, there’s a lot of craft that went into that spirit’. And then when they taste it and they like it, the whole point is that it all comes together in the package. (Pat)

In crafting their uniqueness, spirit makers were utilizing traditional American and Appalachian ways of living and, for some, even representing NC historic markers: *“What makes our product unique is not only the quality; I think what we’re doing is you feel like you’re a part of something, with having the historical background of [town removed]”* (Alex). At the same time, some also emphasized the need to forego stereotypes related to moonshiners (e.g., uneducated mountaineers in overalls) that no longer exist, rather calling for being authentic and representing cultural evolution, which denotes their consciousness of cultural dynamism (Long, 2010). Crafting uniqueness by no means was associated with small-batch production or confinement within a narrow market: *“... because I don’t have the vision of it just being a small, local thing”* (Taylor). Rather, the emphasis was placed on the craftsmanship of the process, from hand-selecting raw materials to labeling, as Charlie explained:

All the equipment we have is hand-built; we don’t have any bought equipment. It’s all old school, all copper-pot still. We grow the grains right here. As far as I know, you can’t buy malted corn, so you have to make the malted corn. (...) That old recipe, and the equipment, and the technique. That’s what makes it unique.

Participants believed that being able to craft uniqueness and quality was possible because of the increase of *locavore* tourists who are in the quest for high-quality locally produced foods and products. Such perception captures the dynamism of traditional cuisine (foods and beverages) as any other form of cultural expression, which adapts core elements (e.g., ingredients, processes) to evolving contextual elements (Long, 2010). Alex explained,

When I go travel somewhere, the first thing I seek is what's made here locally—whether it'd be wine, beer, spirits. (...) When I go out to dinner somewhere, I want to sample what's grown there, and I wanna eat what's grown there, I wanna drink what's made there. (...) And I think a lot of people are really in the same boat with doing that. Anything that's craft, people are looking for that. People are getting away from the Budweisers and the Bacardis, and they're going to craft beer, and they're going to craft [distillery removed], and that's what we want. And I think as more people come in to North Carolina, no matter whether you're going to come to the coast or whether you're going out to go hiking in the mountains, people are really going to be seeking that out.

Marrying craft-distilling to tourism was a necessity of success in the view of the study participants who frequently mentioned their hope of becoming a destination of their own, similar to the Bourbon Trail in Kentucky. This sentiment rejects Long's (2010) notion that the Appalachian's backward cuisine (e.g., moonshine, cornbread) would never be suitable for tourism purposes as in most cases, the distilling-tourism marriage was conceived from the beginning of their operations, as Alex explained:

[Offering] guided tours, guided tastings, and having a very unique tasting room and facility for people was, from day one, was a big part. (...) So tourism is gigantic on this [place removed], and with us, that's a big part of it. (...) Even when we went to the town and present our idea—they're: okay, we'll allow you to do a distillery, but we want you to provide tours, operate a retail store, and do tastings. And we would be dumb not to [being] in a tourist-driven community.

Charlie found the distilling tourism a perfect match later, after he opened his facility to the public because his distilling operation was struggling financially:

The original plan was get into production up here at the distillery. We were gonna get a product on the shelf, and it was supposed to generate enough cash

flow that I could come in the near future and add on to the distillery (...) That didn't happen. (...) So, we were going broke, and it wasn't working, and now we're headed toward the green. At least to the break-even point, and maybe even profitable at some point, and it's all because of tourism.

Participants constantly mentioned their quest for scaling up their operations to ensure success, which is evidently related to producers' necessity to secure profits (Fraser & Alonso, 2006; Griffin & Loersch, 2006; Long, 2010). Such quest for profitability comprised two aspects among study participants. First, to grow their distilling operations to the point where they can buy in bulk to reduce costs, as Gabriel mentioned: *"Manufacturing is manufacturing. Your economies of scale—it's the same for the craft distillery."* Second, to keep expanding their tourism offerings to maximize their visitors' experience, as Charlie excitedly shared with us his short-term plans: *"We're gonna move the tasting room and gift shop up there (...) And we're in the process now of making this restaurant-and-bar type situation. (...) And we're gonna do entertainment on the porch (...) And a space for meetings, weddings."* But participants recognized that scaling up required working very hard and doing the work themselves. Alex narrated with pride the many hours put into renovating the building purchased for their distillery:

So it took us an entire year to renovate the building. We, [identifier removed] did it ourselves (...). That's how we ended up repurposing all the floor joists that were cypress and hard pine floorboards, and, every piece of wood in the building, with the tasting bar, the picture frames, the front door—everything coming from the building. So it was a long process in that.

Participants' dedication to their distilleries and tourism offerings was coupled with their commitment to growing a strong and healthy NC craft-distilling industry: *"We want everybody to flourish along with us in what we can do"* (Gabriel). With such an aim, craft-distillers emphasized the need of stakeholders to band together, both within the craft-distilling industry and across industries, as Daryl stated: *"We need the cooperation and collaboration of our partners in both the distilling industry and the tourism industry."* Building a stronger industry in NC also requires that distilleries capitalize on their own unique propositions, be it the tourism appeal, history of local towns, proximity to major highways, or NC agricultural ingredients.

Craft-distilling tourism is beneficial according to the study participants. Most frequently, spirit makers confirmed the economic contribution of the industry to local communities (McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008; Rosco, 2015), even at its early stages, by generating tax income and stimulating tourists' expenditures:

This is a very tax-heavy industry. So, the more product that moves—wherever it's going, whether that's being sold to individuals on a tour or whether that's pallets being sold to other state markets—state tax is a big thing. (...) As an industry whole, together we're a real force to be reckoned with as far as a reason to come across the border into North Carolina. And when you start selling hotel nights and meals and everything that comes along with that—when people are away from home and they're on the road, normally their wallets are fairly freed up already—they're in spending mode. (Taylor)

Participants explained that the high economic contribution of their industry to local communities was because of their commitment to local products, especially by integrating local agricultural ingredients in their spirits and supporting neighboring farmers and producers. As Alex proudly explained, *"There's a grove right across the sound in [name removed]. It's 92 trees; it's been there since 1927. They bring us the shelled pecans every week, so we use that. The honey comes from [name removed], so it's all local ingredients."* In doing so, craft-distillers were pulling from and contributing to the *terroir* of their places (McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008). Alex expressed his passion and pride for localism when asked about the possibility of selling his distillery in the future:

Being in this small, tight-knit community, I feel like if we built this from the ground up, and then immediately sold it out to somebody from New York, or L.A., or something like that, then it loses some of the appeal. (...) I like it when I go to have dinner, I see people ordering our cocktails and enjoying them; I can say I made that. And people really appreciate that it's locally-owned, locally-operated, and we're—we can be part of the community.

Participants also believed that the benefits craft-distilling delivers to NC communities are beyond economic. Gabriel explained how NC moonshine tourism educates visitors about agriculture and local products: *"The agricultural component of what makes that spirit, if it is actually made from that region. Why is that region great? What was happening here? All of those components, and now you have a product where people are learning where*

that came from.” Daryl sustained that it increases visitors’ cultural awareness and builds residents’ community pride:

It increases the awareness of local and locally produced things—that people want something that they have made or participated in making that they enjoy with their family and friends. It’s not simply a mass produced something from far away, but it is something that even if they don’t make it themselves, they know a friend who does. And it’s part of their town. It’s something they can be proud of. I think products like moonshine made at home increase your pride of place, increase your community spirit—your esprit de corps, if you will, of your local region—as well as family and friend ties.

Although craft-distillers were very vocal and passionate about the benefits craft-distilling is bringing to communities, when probed, they all rejected unintended harm derived from the craft-distilling industry and the associated tourism. However, it is still unclear whether society is aware of the many stated benefits craft-distilling is producing, as regions in similar emerging tourism enterprises (i.e., wine tourism) have repeatedly reported a mismatch between the producers and the local residents (Fraser & Alonso, 2006; Xu, Barbieri, Leung, Anderson, & Rich, 2016).

Overcoming Prohibition hangover summarizes the unified call of participants to abolish or relax the selling cap on premises (NC House Bill 909) that is slowing down the craft-distilling industry as compared to similar industries (wine and beer), as Daryl explained:

I hope that there will be some movement on the federal level to decriminalize this because we are no longer in the Prohibition era—most of the legislation we are currently having to follow is what I call Prohibition hangover. These are leftovers from the 20’s and 30’s that no longer fit with our culture or with the way that people celebrate, produce, or do anything relating to alcohol. (...) The old ideas—particularly in the South and I would say particularly in North Carolina, which is a very conservative state in the South—we are starting to see that the acceptance of alcohol among the more fundamentalist parts of the Christian world has quelled. You will find members of the fundamental Christian groups in your local ABC stores. They may not speak to you, but you will find them.

Some acknowledged the historical health-related logic behind these restrictions, as Pat explained: “One of the reasons policy decision-makers in North Carolina right now, are anti-alcohol, are so anti-alcohol [is] if

they've ever drank, because they were drinking it when it was illegal in the 50's and 60's, unregulated; nobody knew the strength. They're drinking this crap, they're seeing people get horribly drunk off of it." However, participants argued that these restrictions, in addition of being obsolete, should not be applicable only to moonshines because *"if you're gonna be imbibing and driving, it's all on the same plane, you know. You can only have one drink per hour or whatever to be at your.08"* (Gabriel).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Interviews with six NC craft-distillers inform us about the meaning behind moonshine and how their crafters perceive the role of tourism in this development. In doing so, we learn that a holistic understanding of moonshine should be contextualized within a utilitarian purpose beyond economics (e.g., medicine of bodies and souls), although participants recognize a strong desire for profits similar to wine tourism entrepreneurs (Fraser & Alonso, 2006; Griffin & Loersch, 2006). From the heritage perspective, moonshine is conceived as a means to keep the former Appalachian agricultural lifestyle sustained through self-sovereignty. Although participants de-mystified the complexity of distilling, they were perseverant in cultivating their processes through personal experimentation and plenty of passion, which Long (2010) refers to as converting the "cooking" into an art. In such development, participants highlighted their quest to provide a complete quality experience beyond their spirits, which has been suggested as a critical element of tourism success (Hall & Mitchell, 2005; McBoyle & McBoyle, 2008). Participants finally reflected on how the emerging craft-distilling industry will hold up, mainly by marrying with tourism and by banding together to foster the sustainability of the entire NC craft-distilling industry and their local communities beyond the success of their own distilleries.

Study findings are not intended for generalization, especially given its small sample. Rather, they are intended to identify issues deserving further exploration or raising practical implications. As such, a major finding relates to how craft-distillers market their spirits as moonshine or something else in view of inexistent technical definitions. In doing so, NC craft-distillers are redefining the Appalachian cultural identity by moving away from its marginal status (Long, 2010). However, it is yet to be known whether such cultural redefinition is consciously attached

to their self-definition as *Elizabethans* or *Hillbillies*, which may carry political implications for the tourism industry. Although participants were very vocal about the numerous benefits their emerging businesses deliver to the society, research indicates the need to proactively communicate those values to visitors and the general public (Fraser & Alonso, 2006; Xu et al., 2016). On this regard, it is critical that craft-distillers increase awareness of the legality of distilled spirits in NC and to reduce any distasteful imagery of the word “moonshine”. It is also important to overcome the *Prohibition hangover* by educating policy makers about the many benefits this rapidly growing industry can bring to NC. In this sense, further research is needed to investigate the most effective channels and messages to create an effective and seamless path to wider acceptance of moonshine.

Be it through generational connections or through history of place, from the coast to the mountains, NC-permitted spirit makers are crafting a new industry through the creative use of local agriculture inputs and by fine-tuning fermentation techniques. In making a conscious choice of tying their spirits to local agriculture and the local food movement, NC craft-distillers are not only extending the heritage value behind moonshines but helping to sustain agriculture, the state’s core economic industry. With the decline of tobacco and the relocation of the textile industry, craft-distilleries have the opportunity, and even the responsibility, to use their products to rebuild the rural NC counties that seek, need, and deserve revitalization.

Acknowledgments Our profound thanks go to Tim Ferris and Lauren Kuchar (Defiant Whisky), Vann McCoy (Mayberry Spirits), Scott Maitland (TOPO Organic Spirits), Jeremy Norris (Broadslab Distillery), and Scott Smith (Outer Banks Distillery) for participating in this study and for the time and energy they spend in building the NC craft-distilling industry. Our appreciation also goes to the reviewers and editors of this chapter for their insights and thoughtful suggestions.

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