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Men's Journal

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Still Life

The Hudson Valley's newest school of innovators is capturing the region's splendor — not in oil on canvas, but in barrels, botanicals, and brewer's yeast. With their own wines, beers, and small-batch spirits, these craftsmen are forging a reputation for intoxicating beauty.

Distiller Bryan Hartz (left) wears a denim jacket by LEVI'S, \$148; shirt by STEVEN ALAN, \$225; henley by INHABIT, \$195; pants by DOCKERS, \$95; belt by JOHN VARVATOS, \$175; shoes by BILLY REID, \$395. Distiller Liam Doyle (center) wears a denim shirt by POLO RALPH LAUREN, \$125; henley by THREE DOTS, \$72; jeans by LEVI'S, \$70; scarf, \$185, and belt, \$195, both by JOHN VARVATOS; watch by SEIKO, \$295; boots by WOLVERINE, \$350. Joel Elder (right) wears a jacket by POLO RALPH LAUREN, \$1,195; denim shirt by UNIQLO, \$25; plaid shirt by JOHN VARVATOS, \$325; jeans by DIESEL, \$280; boots by BILLY REID, \$625.

photographs by JOHN MIDGLEY
fashion by PATTI O'BRIEN

JOEL ELDER

Tuthilltown Spirits

Joel Elder was bartending at a restaurant when he heard about a sweet new bourbon being produced locally. One problem: "I couldn't get my hands on it," says Elder, 33. "It was selling so quick." Now, five years later, he's the head distiller at Tuthilltown, which began making its caramel-tinged Hudson Baby Bourbon Whiskey in 2006. Working in the granary of a 220-year-old gristmill, Elder uses local orchards to produce spicy ryes, oaky rums, and vodka made from apples. He's also bringing back old-world grains. "Ninety-nine percent of all distillers use number-two field corn, the standard for everything from pig feed to tortilla chips," says Elder. Instead, he has local farmers grow heirloom corn for his line of spirits: "It's like the difference between a mealy supermarket beefsteak tomato and an heirloom tomato you get at a farmers market. It blows your mind."

