

Ole Smoky starts marketing moonshine from El Segundo office

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Michael Hixon

Ole Smoky Tennessee Moonshine opened its first distillery five years ago in Gatlinburg, Tenn., at the entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The company has grown quickly in that short time, adding another distillery in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., a new production facility, as well as a West Coast headquarters in the old post office on Main Street in El Segundo.

Ole Smoky offers a variety of spirits, from the popular 40-proof Apple Pie to the brand new 128-proof Blue Flame.

“Most people have never had moonshine and they don’t know what it is,” said CEO John Cochran, who was hired in 2013 to build a marketing and finance team on the West Coast. “Moonshine, broadly speaking, is basically the term one would use for any un-aged corn liquor. In our case its un-aged corn whiskey.”

Meg Bruno, the head of marketing for Ole Smoky, said Moonshine is a “unique product.”

“It really just became legal to sell in states and we were the first licensee in Tennessee to start selling this legally,” Bruno said. “For us, everything we have been able to do in the last couple of years has been phenomenal, we’ve quickly become a huge brand ... it has created a whole new brand in the spirits world.”

Ole Smoky has more than 20 flavors. It is produced in copper stills in 300 gallon batches, considered “small scale,” but substantially larger than in 2010. That year, they made and sold 8,000 cases of product. In 2014, that increased to 250,000 cases.

A number of mix recipes are available on its website, but Cochran said mixologists enjoy creating new concoctions with their product. One simple drink is a Greyhound cocktail spin-off, called Fire Hound, where Blue Flame replaces your standard vodka or gin.

“You get a little more gusto for the person who wants something fun, maybe a little naughty,” Cochran said. “It’s really a blast to work with, but I find the products are made so well that they mix quite easily.”

Bruno added, “It caters to a vast array of different audiences whether you want something a little sweeter and easier to shoot, very low proof, or if you want to kick up the proof of a classic cocktail.”

For more information, visit olesmoky.com.

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