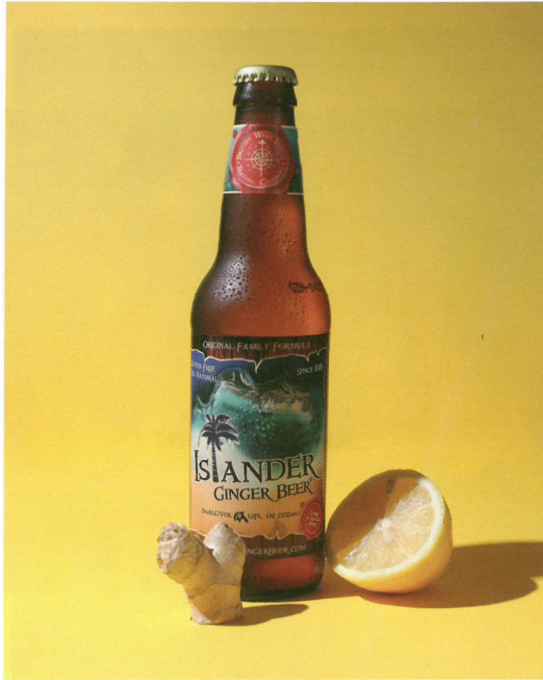


TOWN

eat+drink

FOOD FINDS & CAN'T-MISS DISHES



British West Indies Trading Company CEO Georgia Dunn preserves a family legacy, brewing Islander Ginger Beer and other Harriott's beverages in Greenville.

ISLAND TIME

A CENTURIES-OLD GINGER BEER TRADITION FINDS ITS WAY TO GREENVILLE FROM CARIBBEAN SHORES

BY KATHRYN DAVÉ • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL MEHAFFEY

It doesn't take long for things to get lost in the passage of time. Georgia Dunn, the founder and CEO of the British West Indies Trading Company, never intended to become a producer of ginger beer. But then, while working in Turks and Caicos, she began interviewing her grandparents and realized the traditional island ginger beer was vanishing with their generation. Armed with a recipe assembled from family interviews and archival research, Dunn began hand-bottling her first ginger beer, made with fresh produce, cane sugar, and Caribbean spices—as had been the tradition for hundreds of years.

"I encourage everyone to talk to their elders about their food traditions so we can preserve the uniqueness of every community," Dunn says. Her family, who founded the Turks & Caicos salt business that would eventually become Morton Salt Company, can trace its lineage directly back to Thomas

Harriott, the English explorer who mapped much of the East Coast in the 1500s. Their family tradition of fermenting fresh ginger beer dates back almost as far. Dunn revived the original brewing process as an act of preservation and considered her cultural imperative fulfilled.

"Not so fast," said Dunn's U.S. friends and family, who encouraged her to bring her ginger beer to the States. Rapid success after being stocked at Harris Teeter meant Dunn suddenly needed to scale production up significantly. Singing the praises of Greenville, South Carolina's incredible water quality, the Bacardí family (yes, that one) helped Dunn connect with Thomas Creek Brewery, a family-owned beverage company that prizes quality as highly as Dunn does.

Now brewed and bottled in Greenville, Harriott's Islander Ginger Beer is nothing like the artificially sweetened, spicy, non-alcoholic ginger beer we're used to consuming. Made only with hand-prepped lemons and limes, ginger, cane sugar, and Caribbean spices, Dunn's ginger beer is warm and complex, with just enough alcohol (5 percent) to enjoy cold on its own or as a mixer for a Moscow or Kentucky Mule. Its immediate success prompted the creation of two new Harriott beverages—Harriott's Hard Lemonade and Mango Mimosa—both crafted with the same commitment to whole fruit and cane sugar.

No one in the Harriott family—including Dunn—could have imagined a lively beverage business growing from their traditional family leisure-time drink. But their way of life made it possible. As Dunn always says: "We are all standing on the shoulders of giants who came before us." **T**

Find Harriott's products locally at Harris Teeter and other select stores. For more, go to harriottslegacy.com.



A CENTURY AGO, ALCOHOLIC GINGER BEER WAS THE SINGLE MOST POPULAR DRINK IN AMERICA, WITH MORE THAN 1,500 BREWERS PRODUCING THE LOW-ALCOHOL BEV. PROHIBITION CHANGED ALL THAT, PRACTICALLY WIPING THE BEVERAGE FROM POPULAR CULTURE—UNTIL CRAFT PRODUCERS LIKE HARRIOTT'S BEGAN REVIVING IT.