

Windy City Wonder

The Scofflaw Group's Danny Shapiro is enriching the Chicago bar scene

When Danny Shapiro and partners Andy Gould and Kristofer Nagy opened the gin-focused bar Scofflaw in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood in March 2012, they had a simple goal in mind. "We guessed that we could make a valuable contribution to the Chicago cocktail scene, and we weren't really focused on much beyond making Scofflaw the best possible guest experience," Shapiro says.

The trio were right to think they'd make a mark. By early 2013, Chicago Magazine deemed Scofflaw the best bar in the city; the following year, GQ called it the best gin joint in the world. Scofflaw has become an indispensable part of Chicago's booming bar industry. And Shapiro, Gould, and Nagy didn't stop there: Under the business moniker The Scofflaw Group, they quickly eyed expansion. "We really hit the ground running with Scofflaw and used that momentum to open Slippery Slope in May 2014, The Heavy Feather in June 2015, and The Moonlighter in October 2017," Shapiro says. They've stayed true to their roots, with all of the bars located in Logan Square.

While Nagy handles the financials and Gould runs operations, Shapiro oversees the beverage programs at the bars, each with a



The Scofflaw Group (partner Danny Shapiro pictured) boasts five venues in Chicago's Logan Square, each with a distinct focus. The first concept, a gin bar, opened in 2012.

distinct focus. Gin reigns supreme at Scofflaw in such cocktails as Shapiro's Rocket Frost (\$10), featuring Letherbee gin, Schladerer Pear brandy, lime juice, house-made grenadine, egg white, and Angostura bitters. Slippery Slope has more of a club vibe, with the drinks menu focused on bottled cocktails that can be taken onto the dance floor. The Heavy Feather plays homage to the fern bar era of the 1970s and 1980s—the bar's namesake cocktail (\$10) blends Old Overholt rye whiskey, Meletti amaro, Del Maguey Vida mezcal, Demerara syrup, Angostura bitters, and The Bitter End Mexican Mole bitters. The Moonlighter, meanwhile, is focused on offering elevated, bespoke cocktails in a sports bar atmosphere, such as the Tipping Point (\$10), which mixes Banhez mezcal, Lustau Fino Sherry, Lucky Falernum, lemon juice, house-made strawberry syrup, and salt tincture.

The Scofflaw Group won't be slowing down anytime soon—they debuted a wine bar, also in Logan Square, last month. "Our overarching approach to the business has remained the same throughout the years," Shapiro says. "We're still trying to figure out how to get better and make fewer mistakes—or at least different ones."

Sally Kral

PHOTOS BY (TOP) JASON LITTLE; (BOTTOM LEFT) DANIEL SEGAR; (BOTTOM RIGHT) JUDE GOERGEN

Danny Shapiro's Recipes



ROCKET FROST

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ ounces Letherbee gin;
- ½ ounce Schladerer Pear brandy;
- ¾ ounce lime juice;
- ½ ounce grenadine¹;
- 1 egg white;
- 3 drops Angostura bitters.

RECIPE:

In an ice-filled cocktail shaker, combine gin, brandy, lime, grenadine, and egg white. Shake vigorously and double strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with Angostura bitters.



THE HEAVY FEATHER

INGREDIENTS:

- 1¼ ounce Old Overholt rye whiskey;
- 1 ounce Del Maguey Vida mezcal;
- ¼ ounce Meletti amaro;
- ¼ ounce Demerara syrup;
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters;
- 5 drops The Bitter End Mexican Mole bitters;
- Orange swath.

RECIPE:

In an ice-filled mixing glass, combine whiskey, mezcal, amaro, syrup, and Angostura bitters. Stir and strain into a rocks glass over a large ice cube. Garnish with bitters and an expressed orange swath.

¹Combine equal parts Pom juice (or any 100% pomegranate juice brand) and sugar in a pot and stir over heat until sugar dissolves, then cool and bottle.