

NATHAN KAISER

This reformed techie has returned to his corn-filled roots.

SEATTLE DISTILLERY

owner Nathan Kaiser is a nostalgic guy. When his tech career began to feel stale, memories of hauling corn alongside his grandfather on the family ranch inspired his next step. “I remember driving all over South Texas and he would know everybody—the hay farmer, the feed guy,” Kaiser recalls, “and I said, ‘I’m going to get back to that.’” Armed with a microbiology degree, a love of bourbon and a family moonshining tradition, Kaiser opened 2bar Distillery, where he and head distiller Maddie Kelly craft true grain-to-glass spirits. Kaiser sources his feed corn from a young farmer in eastern Washington. “By using really fresh, really good corn and mashing it, fermenting it, distilling it, aging it and bottling it ourselves, we just get so much flavor,” says Kaiser. But it’s 2bar’s moonshine—a clear, unaged whiskey—that truly spotlights the pure corn flavor. “It’s kind of like sweet, fresh cornbread,” Kaiser says. Though interest in 2bar spirits has grown exponentially, the way Kaiser’s work hearkens back to days on the ranch may be his biggest reward. “Every time I open one of those grain bags, I think of my grandfather. Who gets to relive that kind of history on a daily basis?” — **GINA DECAPRIO VERCESI**



▶ **Scientists** believe cultivated corn hails from a Mexican grass called teosinte, which yields skinny cobs with a few kernels wrapped inside hard casings.

▶ **Packed** with antioxidants, protein, zinc and iron, heirloom blue corn has far more health benefits than white and yellow varieties.

▶ **Native Americans** interplanted corn, beans and squash—known as the Three Sisters—because the mutually sustaining crop trio thrives when grown together.

AW, SHUCKS!

Corn pops its way into mazes, games and frightening festivals.



1 The annual corn maze at **Cool Patch Pumpkins** near Sacramento is so large visitors have called 911 to be rescued from the labyrinth.



2 With the growing viewership of the popular game on ESPN, the **American Cornhole League** is working to get the sport into the Olympics.



3 Established in 2015 in Miami, the **Popcorn Frights Film Festival** is the largest genre movie fest in the Southeast United States.