

HI-TECH DRINKING

Technology and alcohol move beyond cocktail apps.

By Robert Haynes-Peterson

Every aspect of our lives has become increasingly hi-tech. There's no reason our enjoyment of fine wines and spirits shouldn't also receive an upgrade. Sure, there are cocktail recipe apps, mostly of the '80s party variety (Sex on the Beach, anyone?), but check out Drinking 2.0:

- Wine connoisseurs should consider replacing their iPhones with the Vertu Ti. The latest release from this luxury brand (phones range from \$9,600 to \$11,500) features a "Vertu key," providing direct access to professional concierge services including a top sommelier at Berry Brothers & Rudd, Britain's most well-respected wine and spirits merchant. From exclusive wine tastings to upscale pairing, purchasing and auction advice, it's unlikely the Pocket Wine app will measure up.

- Wine and whisky auctions are increasingly accessible online. Most houses, like Bonhams and Sotheby's, maintain fairly standard websites, and apps or RSS

feeds highlight upcoming events. But McTear's, a Scotland-based house, offers timed online auctions, extensive search and notification features, and "Text It," a free preliminary valuation service allowing customers to snap a picture and text "value."

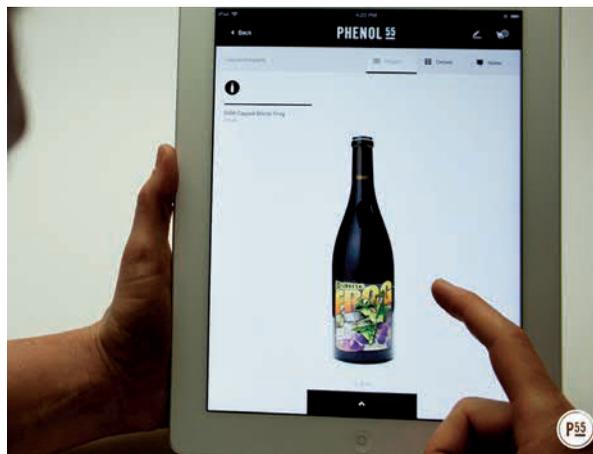
Meanwhile, *ScotchWhiskyAuctions.com* is a fully virtual auction house also based in Scotland, hosting weekly events.

- Once you have those fancy wines and whiskies, what to do with them? You could buy a Sub-Zero and be done with it, but consider Seattle-based Phenol 55 instead. The new state-of-the-art facility offers not only storage, but also dedicated iPad-based tracking, interaction and bottle summoning. Individual QR codes and professional images help track your bottles, no matter the size of your collection.

- While there are dozens of online wine and spirits stores, *Caskers.com* is the only one to both reflect the trend for flash retailing and curate rare and limited spirits and liqueurs. Offering members short-term sales, email and text updates, specialized clubs and exclusive pre-releases, "we curate carefully," says co-founder Moiz Ali. "Men in particular don't like rifling

through 1,000 products while they're shopping. We keep the numbers down so you can connect to the product and find the story behind the distiller."

What could be better than speed and ease?



“Upgrade to Drinking 2.0, like integrated mobile wine storage, tracking and bottle retrieval at Seattle's Phenol 55.”