

# RELISH WHISKY

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FALL 2025

OSCAR  
GETZ  
MUSEUM  
AMERICA'S  
WHISKEY  
STORY

INCHDAIRNIE'S  
FIRST SINGLE  
MALT

INDIA  
WHISKY  
THE NEXT  
BIG THING

FATHOM  
A EUROPEAN  
TIDE RISES  
ON THE  
WEST COAST

THE CORN  
CONNECTION  
ONTARIO'S CORN  
TO WHISKY CYCLE

JOHN  
SLEEMAN  
& SONS

THE UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT  
OF SPRING MILL

*PLUS*

THE GLENLIVET  
FUSION CASK

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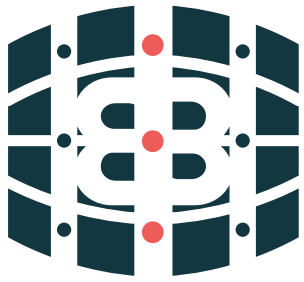
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# GOLDCOCK

— CZECH WHISKY —





# Czech Whisky Launches in Canada

Gold Cock Whisky, the oldest whisky brand in the Czech Republic, has a rich history dating back to 1969. The brand's journey began with the first distillation of malted barley, sourced from the maltings in Bruntál, at the Těšetice Distillery near Olomouc, and aged in Czech European oak casks, laying the foundation for its unique character. In 2008, a significant transformation occurred when the renowned distillery Rudolf Jelinek took over production, ushering in a new chapter marked by a renewed commitment to quality and tradition. Gold Cock Whisky is distinguished by its use of Moravian barley, traditional floor malting, and aging in European oak barrels, resulting in a rich and complex flavor profile with notes of fruit, peat smoke, spices, and oak. The whisky's maturation in a non-temperature controlled warehouse, shared with brandies, imparts additional layers of flavor, contributing to its distinctive character. With its deep-rooted heritage and dedication to craftsmanship, Gold Cock Whisky stands as a testament to the art of Czech distillation, offering a timeless taste that continues to captivate whisky enthusiasts worldwide.



## **Gold Cock 20YO**

*A Masterpiece of Czech Distillation*



Gold Cock 20YO is a refined whisky aged in new, heavily charred barrels, resulting in a delicate aroma and complex flavor profile. Bottled at 49.2% alcohol, it offers notes of wood, fruit, and a warm, dry finish. This exceptional whisky earned a Gold Medal at the London Spirits Competition 2021.



## **Gold Cock 10YO**

*A Robust Czech Classic*

Gold Cock 10YO, distilled on Arnold Holstein pot stills, combines tradition with innovation. Bottled at 49.2% alcohol, it features a fruity, strong, and woody aroma with a robust taste. The finish is warm and long-lasting, with hints of jam and plums.



## **Gold Cock Peated Whisky**

*A Smoky Czech Innovation*



Gold Cock Peated Whisky, introduced in 2016, is the first heavily peated Czech whisky, boasting 45% alcohol and a 30 PPM peat level. Matured in refurbished Slivovitz barrels, it offers a smoky character with floral tones and a dry, smoked aftertaste, marking a bold departure from the brand's traditional profile.





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“We’re a cognac house with a personal touch, where everyone understands the importance of each step in the craft.”

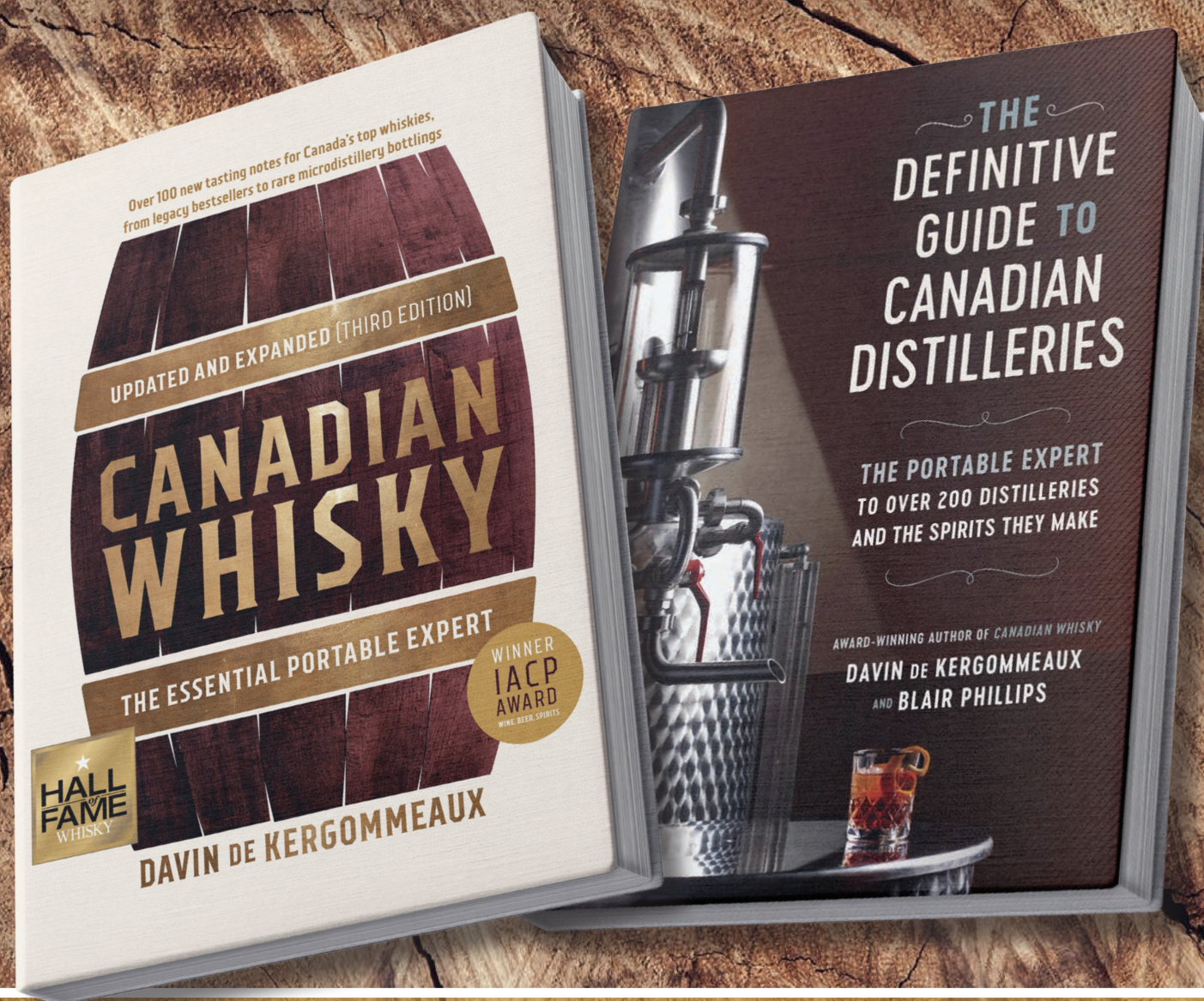
*Veronique Bru-Legaret*

OWNER, DISTILLERIE DES MOISANS





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## COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION

appetite

by RANDOM HOUSE



The season is changing to

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and we anticipate with

FAITH

new exciting releases



I don't always have a whisky in hand. People assume that due to the nature of the profession, a drink is always going to be in my hand when seen and engaged. Sorry to dissappoint but nope. Not always. Most of the time but not always, hah. You will be happy to know that this perticular farm had some lovely cidar which I may have added some whisky to from my flask after finishing the cidar, of course. Something about the cool air and being outside that really welcomes that sip of whisky.

Then the feeling that the change of seasons is approaching and with it New Releases. I will always have some old favourites but its exciting to see the new ones. We have a few here within our Fall pages for you to read. Then you can make your own mind up on which one you will try first. I suggest trying them all. Why not enjoy them over time and with different moods and settings. After all, its the journey, not the destination.

*Robert Winder*  
Publisher | Editor



RELISH  
**WHISKY**

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ON THE COVER

**P.58 JOHN SLEEMAN & SONS**

*The Unbreakable Spirit of Spring Mill*





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# INCHDAIRNIE'S GOLDEN DECADE

By GAVIN D. SMITH

InchDairnie distillery in Fife recently launched its first single malts, has plans to double capacity and is currently celebrating a decade of production. Throughout those ten years it has remained resolutely low in profile, despite being arguably the most innovative Scottish distillery in terms of its approach to the craft of whisky-making.





**I**NCHDAIRNIE was established on a site near the town of Glenrothes by Ian Palmer, a Highlander who followed his father into the whisky industry and started his career as a process engineer at Invergordon Distillers. He went on to work as Distilling General Manager at Whyte & Mackay, Operations Director at JBB and Kyndal International and as General Manager at Glen Turner Company Ltd, where he headed up the team making grain whisky at Starlaw distillery, near Bathgate, between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

According to Palmer, “We didn’t want InchDairnie to be just another distillery, but we wanted it to be different. We set out to push the boundaries to give maximum flexibility of spirit styles.”

Rather than a traditional mash tun, the distillery is equipped with a hammer mill and Meura mash filter, which allows it to process grains other than barley with maximum efficiency. According to Managing Director Scott Sneddon, “It acts like a series of tea bags being squeezed by a balloon, extracting maximum flavour from the mix of grist and water, or wort. Concentrated cereal characteristics and sugars in the wort, when fermented and distilled, deliver a light, floral, cereal-noted spirit.”

The InchDairnie washbacks operate with a high sugar wort, allowing more esters to be formed during fermentation, producing a more fully flavoured spirit. A pair of Italian-made Frilli pot stills is equipped with double condensers and employs thermal re-compression, with external heat exchangers, creating energy savings of 40-50 per cent.



The pot stills are augmented by a bespoke ‘Lomond Hill’ still, which has six ‘bubble plates’ inside its neck, designed by Ian Palmer. As Scott Sneddon explains “We can run the Lomond still at one specific strength throughout distillation – this will be where we, through extensive research, have found the optimum flavour spectrum.”

InchDairnie is classified as a Lowland malt distillery, but such categorisations mean little in this context. While malt whisky – unusually made from winter as well as spring barley varieties – is the staple output of InchDairnie, rye and wheat whiskies are also produced in limited quantities, and in 2019, the distillery became the first in Scotland for over a century to distil using oats.

The wheat whisky is expected to be released when aged eight to 10 years in InchDairnie’s experimental series

PrinLaws Collection, but rye whisky became the first distillery bottling in 2023 under the RyeLaw name. However, according to Scotch Whisky Association regulations it cannot be described as a ‘rye whisky,’ but must be labelled as a ‘single grain Scotch whisky.’

The product of just one week’s distillation each year, quantities of RyeLaw are limited, and the mashbill comprises 53 per cent malted rye and 47 per cent malted barley, ground extra finely for maximum flavour extraction. It is fermented using a rye-specific yeast, which results in lower yields, but higher flavour, and is distilled initially in a pot still and then in the Lomond Hill still.

**IAN PALMER DECLARES THAT** “While we are rooted in Scotch whisky tradition, we have explored what is possible when agriculture meets industry and







innovative technologies combine with methodology, to create a superb rye whisky that is sure to excite palates.

“The rye spiciness with vanilla, sweet biscuit cereal and dried fruit notes seem much more defined than rye whiskeys from America which we’ve compared it to. There’s a richer, more luxurious mouthfeel and great balance, which are certainly helped by the favourable maturation conditions we have in Fife compared to Kentucky. The use of malted rye in the mash means we have a softer, more sippable style of rye whisky.”



With Ryelaw established across a wide range of markets, earlier this year the distillery launched its first single malts, named KinGlassie Double Matured 8 Years Old and KinGlassie Raw 8 Years Old, both made from malt peated to around 50ppm.

The name 'KinGlassie' comes from the Irish 'Saint Glaisne', meaning 'church by the burn', and is also the name of a village close to the distillery.

Double Matured was double distilled and ‘double condensed’ to increase copper contact and remove sulphur notes, before undergoing five years’ maturation in bourbon casks, followed





by three years in amontillado casks. Also heavily peated, KinGlassie Raw was aged for eight years entirely in ex-bourbon wood.

Scott Sneddon says that “We are extremely excited to bring these products to market and believe they will be well suited to fans of highly peated whiskies but also to those who are seeking something different.

“KinGlassie very much demonstrates our ethos of fusing centuries-old tradition with our innovation-led laser focus on creating multi-layered flavour to create a whisky that is luxuriously smoky and smooth.”

Ian Palmer adds that “The launch of KinGlassie Double Matured and KinGlassie Raw is a huge step in our journey, not just as a distillery but as innovators in the whisky industry.

“These two distinct whiskies represent our unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of flavour and delivering a taste revolution. I believe it will become a game changer for those who crave complexity and depth.”

Regarding planned expansion of InchDairnie to double capacity to 4mlpa, Sneddon says that “Whisky is a long-term business, and the developments are all part of the meticulous planning and long-term viewpoint that can be seen throughout our business decision-making since our beginning in 2015.

“As we prepare to mark 10 years, the doubling of capacity is a bold move, but one that ensures we are set to meet the increased growth in demand for our products that we predict will come as more and more discover our innovative whiskies and full flavours.”

A new pair of stills will be installed, complete with energy recovery systems and double condensers like the existing vessels, and three additional washbacks will be added to allow for 24/7 production.

Most innovative is the distillery’s planned conversion to green hydrogen

from natural gas, which should reduce its carbon footprint by an estimated 35 per cent. Achieved through the installation of a new Bosch Hydrogen Ready boiler, it is expected that ScottishPower will begin to supply green hydrogen in 2027.

As part of the expansion plans, four new warehouses will be constructed and land acquired to allow for the construction of up to a further fourteen.

When it comes to maturation in the InchDairnie warehouses, RyeLaw is aged in charred virgin American oak, and a distillery spokesperson explains that “For other whiskies in development at InchDairnie, a varied mix of cask types drive complexity of flavour. Different oaks are seasoned with wines that supplement and enhance the seasonal distillery character. These include Muscatel, Andalusian fortified wine, port, as well as ex-rum and bourbon casks.”

With future resilience and growth in mind, earlier this year InchDairnie Distillery and its strategic partner MacDuff International, owner of the Islay Mist, Lauder’s and Waterproof blended whiskies, merged, with Ian Palmer taking on the role of company Chairman. The new venture is known as InchDairnie Whisky.

Day-to-day operations are controlled jointly by the commercial and distilling Managing Directors, namely Graham Glen (formerly MacDuff’s MD) and Scott Sneddon respectively.

According to Glen, “The formation of InchDairnie Whisky is the natural next step in our journey. We believe that working as one business, with one team and one clear vision, sets us up for long-term success across all areas of our operation.”

InchDairnie distillery does not have a visitor centre, with a sign at the entrance proclaiming that “We are too busy making whisky.” And what fascinating, ground-breaking whisky it is.





KINGGLASSIE

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8  
YEARS

RAW  
WHISKY  
STRENGTH  
READY  
TO ENJOY

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# SAMPLING THE GOODS

**RyeLaw Fife Single Grain  
Scotch Whisky (46.3%)**  
Spice, toffee, honey and  
vanilla on the nose, with an  
underlying herbal aroma.  
The palate is oily, with white  
pepper, cooked apple,  
ginger, marzipan, coffee  
grounds and a subtle  
savory note. Licorice,  
oak and rye spice in the  
medium-length finish.

**KinGlassie 8 Years Raw  
(46.3%)**  
The nose offers mash,  
new-mown hay, vanilla and  
bonfire smokiness, with a  
hint of lemon juice. Wood  
smoke, citrus fruits and  
rich maltiness on the palate,  
while the finish yields smoky  
malt, drying and ashy.

**KinGlassie 8 Years Double  
Matured (46.3%)**  
Hand-rolling tobacco,  
barbecue smoke, almonds,  
dark chocolate and oak  
on the nose. Quite full in  
the mouth, with rich smok-  
iness, black pepper, wal-  
nuts and salted caramel.  
Licorice, malt and cask  
char in the finish. ♦





# INDIAN WHISKY

## A PRIMER

By Davin de Kergommeaux

Scotch whisky is about to reach a remarkable milestone. In October 2025, Gordon & McPhail will release the oldest whisky ever bottled, an 85-year-old Glenlivet distilled in 1940. Meanwhile, in February 2025, Bengaluru-based Amrut Distilleries launched India's longest-aged single malt ever, and it too is no small accomplishment.

India's torrid climate gives Amrut's wicked warehouse angels an unquenchable thirst, which, in turn, makes extended ageing exceptionally difficult. Scotland's angel's share may be 2% a year, while India's routinely soars into double digits.

Amrut's The Expedition matured in an underground cellar for 8 years in European Sherry casks, then was re-gauged into American bourbon barrels for another 7 years, yielding a seemingly impossible 15-year maturation. That is longer than India's three other major single malt brands have been in existence. To commemorate its 75th anniversary this year, Amrut produced just 75 bottles, 66 of which it exported around the world. No wonder each bottle sold for \$12,000 US.

But as impressive as India's single malts are, so too is the story of how India became a whisky-making nation.







## Homesick for Scotch

The Turks, and the Mughals, and whichever other foreigners, in succession, ruled India over the past several millennia, all left their marks – religion, language, Adiga's Black Fort, but never whisky. That glory awaited an Englishman, brewer Edward Dyer, who began distilling whisky in North India in 1835. He assumed that India's massive population had no interest in whisky. But Dyer, who was born and raised in Kolkata, knew that British military and business personnel working in India longed for Scotch whisky – the familiar taste of home – despite the cost of importing it. Dyer was sure they would enjoy his less expensive locally made whiskies.

Sixty-three years later, in 1898, Angus McDowell introduced another whisky economy to India when he began blending small amounts of imported Scotch into local cane neutral spirits (made from molasses). Known as Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), McDowell's innovation soon took over the market. Today, as much as 99% of the whisky consumed in India is IMFL, with McDowell's brand alone selling over 30 million cases a year.

IMFL whiskies blended from Scottish and Indian malt whiskies and Indian grain neutral spirits are now finding space on liquor store shelves in Canada, too.

## Geography, Climate and House Styles

It is still too early in India's malt whisky history to talk about terroir. However, as India's malt distilleries are widely dispersed across the sub

continent, their diverse climates and geographies are already shaping individual house styles around a distinctive pan-Indian signature characterized by sweet floral notes, ripe fruits, rich nutty cereals and clean woodiness.

Beyond hot ambient temperatures and how each producer manages their effects, there is another commonality also helping to shape this style: Each distillery uses at least some indigenous barley for its malt. One can only hope that, as large foreign multinational distillers begin producing malt whisky in India, their penchant for value engineering will not include efforts to replace flavourful Indian barley varieties with Western cultivars that, although blander, yield more alcohol.

## AMRUT ▶

India's southernmost malt distillery, Amrut, sits between the Eastern and Western Ghats (mountain ranges) on the Deccan Plateau. Moderate summer and winter temperatures at that altitude result in a smaller angels' share (around 9%) than that of other Indian distilleries. As well, the maturing whisky loses water more quickly than alcohol in Bengaluru's arid atmosphere, which concentrates its flavours.

J.N. Radhakrishna Rao Jagdale founded Amrut in 1948 to make blended whisky and brandy, distilling the brandy, India's most esteemed spirit at the time, from local Bangalore Blue grapes. However, the market was shifting as more and more drinkers developed a taste for whisky.

The idea of making single malt in India to sell abroad began to take shape in 2002, when Rakshit (Rick) Jagdale and his friend Ashok Chockalingam were



MBA classmates at Newcastle University in England. Rick's late father, who was then CEO of Amrut, suggested that for his thesis, Rick should explore the possibility that there might be a market for Indian single malt whisky in Great Britain's Indian restaurants. There was, but the two soon found greater interest among whisky aficionados in Scotland and England. By 2004, Amrut's first single malt was ready to launch.

By 2009, with praise from several key critics, Amrut single malts had landed firmly on the world whisky stage. It was still early days, and Amrut had the category to itself until Goa-based Paul John arrived in 2012, followed by Rampur in 2016 and Indri in 2021.

Today, even as single malts from all four of India's major malt whisky distilleries routinely score global accolades, more sales are made to Indians themselves. Take that, Edward Dyer!



## PAUL JOHN ▼

Paul John single malt comes from another south-Indian distillery. Established in 1996, John Distilleries initially focused on brandy, rum and blended whisky. Then, in 2012, it launched three malt whiskies – Bold, Brilliance and Edited – in the UK, and accolades began pouring in. A fourth core expression, Nirvana, joined the lineup in 2018. Two cask-strength versions, Classic and Peated, are whiskies unto themselves, not high-strength versions from the core lineup.

The distillery's western location in Goa, just 10 Km from the Arabian Sea, means warm, humid weather year-round. While distiller Michael D'Souza mashes primarily Indian barley malt, there's a Scottishness throughout, and a reliance on Scotland for peat gives the peated Paul John whiskies a smoky edge that Islay lovers will relish.

While most Paul John malts mature in ex-bourbon barrels, recent additions of Oloroso- and PX Sherry-finished versions have yielded glorious Sherry bombs that land neatly within the malty-Scotch Paul John house style.



## RAMPUR ▲

When Rampur's parent company, Radico Khaitan, began operations in 1943 as Rampur Distillery and Chemical Company, the intention was to make bulk neutral spirits. From that vision, it has grown into India's largest producer of spirit alcohol, maturing 2.6 million litres of malt whisky annually and, since 2016, bottling its namesake whisky, Rampur, a highly regarded premium single malt.

Rampur distils, matures and bottles its whisky in North India, in the Himalayan foothills of Uttar Pradesh, maturing them primarily in ex-bourbon barrels. Hot and humid subtropical summers promote rapid maturation, which cooler, drier winters then slows down. With such large annual volumes of malt whisky, Radico Khaitan also supplies fillings to other malt brands and IMFL producers.





## ◀ INDRI ▶

On its path across North India from Bangladesh to Afghanistan, the 2500-year-old Grand Trunk Road traverses the grain-rich heart of India's Food Bowl, below the Himalayas. Piccadily Distillery, based in Indri, Haryana, is located just north (and east) of this much-storied cultural landmark.

Piccadily took a somewhat roundabout route from its 1953 start in pre-division Punjab as Kedar Nath & Sons. From beginnings as the region's sole liquor distributor, it expanded into hospitality, media and entertainment, eventually becoming the largest malt spirits producer in India.

For Indri whisky, 1994 proved an auspicious year when the founding Sharma family purchased a sugar mill and distillery in Indri city. By 2009, it was distilling spirits from cane juice and importing oak barrels from the United States. In 2012, it began distilling whisky using Scottish-style copper pot stills, designed and crafted in India.

It was 2021, a year after launching a blended whisky called Whistler, that it began bottling Indri Trini, a single malt matured in first-fill bourbon barrels, ex-French wine casks and PX Sherry casks. Trini and the robust cask-strength Indri Dru are both fragrant, floral drams built on a firm base of clean barrel wood.

Those who have tasted the lightly peated Indri Agneya, released this past July, have enthused over the soft vanilla, spicy and fruity notes that reflect its maturation in ex-bourbon barrels and Sherry casks.

Nevertheless, it is a reportedly exquisite new limited-edition Indri that today holds India's whisky cognoscenti in its thrall. A tribute to the remarkable legacy of Indri's visionary founder,





Pt. Kidar Nath Sharma, the 11-year-old Indri Founder's Reserve matured entirely in ex-Bordeaux red wine casks and is bottled at cask strength (58.8%). Of only 1,100 bottles produced, half are destined for export.

Summers can be brutal in Indri, reaching up to 50°C, so when winter brings temperatures as low as 0°C, fermentation can take up to 10 additional hours. Master blender Surrinder Kumar, who was the quiet flavour guru behind early Amrut and Paul John single malts, has adjusted various whisky-making parameters at Indri, making its ultra-complex single malts the most floral in India.

## Indian Made Foreign Liquors

Despite the soaring success of Indian single malts abroad and within India itself, the primary use for most of the malt whisky made there is still IMFL, with reasonably priced bottlings that can be respectable whiskies in their own right.

Yes, the Turks, the Mughals and the British left many marks on India, among these, whisky. But just as India, in all its diversity, has remained uniquely itself, so too is its whisky, today, distinctly Indian.

## SOME TYPICAL BLENDS

Here are a few of the typical Indian blends that have emerged from India's flirtation with locally made whisky and are currently available in Canada and the US.

## BLACK DOG GOLD 42.8 % abv

United Spirits Limited, a subsidiary of Diageo, has significant operations in India, and one of its leading blends is Black Dog Gold, produced in Nashik, Maharashtra. Blended from Scottish malt and grain whiskies, but no Indian spirits, it is not really IMFL, but Scotch. Matured in Oloroso Sherry butts and lightly peated, it could easily pass for single malt.

Robust aromas and a rich, malty palate hint at butterscotch, orchard fruit (maybe apricot), citrus fruit, cereal, dry brown hay, fruity pipe tobacco, searing peppers, vague hints of smoke, clean lumber and fragrant barrel tones.

\$45.99 at Platina Liquor in Calgary,

\$60.95 at LCBO.





# MILLSTONE

## DUTCH SINGLE MALT WHISKY







## ANTIQUEITY BLUE ▲ 42.8% abv

Antiquity Blue whisky from Radico Khaitan, the makers of Rampur single malt, is a premium Scotch-style blend, made with Indian malt whisky and Scottish malt and grain whiskies.

The nose is full, and the palate reveals mild, fruity, floral notes – lilac, barley sugar, brown sugar, cereal notes, and peppery spices with hints of peat smoke. It soon turns malty, maybe grassy, with luscious fruitiness – red apples and vague citrus notes – and herbal tones. Finishes malty, hot, mildly woody and slightly tannic.  
\$32.99 at WOW Liquor in Calgary,  
\$40.25 at LCBO.

## SIGNATURE RARE ▼ 42.8% abv

United Spirits launched Signature Rare in 1994. Renowned blender Caroline Martin of Diageo (and now Busker) created the whisky using Indian and Scottish malts, including a touch from Islay. This IMFL has a twist because Martin did not include any neutral spirits, making Signature Rare a blended malt. The abv is typical for Indian blends.

Fruity, with caramel, hints of prunes, pink grapefruit, cereal, malt, lingering crisp peppery spices, hints of clean wood, and pleasant bitter tannins. Light and somewhat restrained.  
\$30.99 at WOW Liquor in Calgary,  
\$40.95 at LCBO.



## ROYAL CHALLENGE ▲ 42.8% abv

Since its launch early in the 1980s, Royal Challenge, or RC as it's known in India, has become one of India's leading premium IMFL blends. United Spirits, which acquired the brand in 2005, blends it at its Nashik facility, using Indian and Scottish malt whiskies along with Indian-made cane neutral spirits.

Leads off with caramel, burnt sugar and butterscotch. Hot white pepper surges in the middle, followed by dustiness, dark fruit, fresh fruit and possibly hints of peat smoke and clean wood. A longish spicy finish suggests woody tannins with a pleasing bitterness on the fade.  
\$30.99 at Liquor Baron in Alberta,  
\$31.90 at LCBO. ♦



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# NC'NEAN

## SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

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BANANA AND HONEY ON THE NOSE, AND A  
WELL-BALANCED FULL MOUTHFEEL THAT  
TASTES OF FRUITS AND SPICE."

-

SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS  
COMPETITION JUDGES

-

DOUBLE GOLD MEDAL WINNERS



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# WALKING THROUGH AMERICA'S WHISKEY STORY

## MY VISITS TO THE OSCAR GETZ MUSEUM

By Anthony DeYoung



OSCAR GETZ 1897-1983

### A Journey into Bourbon's Past

I have visited the Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History in Bardstown, Kentucky, more times than I can count. Each visit feels like a homecoming—though not to a house or a family, but to a spirit, a tradition, and a story that is deeply American.

When I first stepped through the doors of Spalding Hall, where the museum is housed, I was struck by the sense of history that hangs in the air. The stately red-brick building, with its tall windows and arched entryways, has seen more than two centuries of life. Built in 1826, it once served as a seminary, then later as a hospital for both Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. Today, it shelters an entirely different kind of history: the story of whiskey in America.

The Oscar Getz Museum doesn't just showcase artifacts; it tells the story of how whiskey has been woven into the fabric of the nation. From colonial farm stills to industrial distilleries, from Prohibition's struggles to modern branding, the museum is less about bottles behind glass and more about America itself.

"Whiskey is not just a drink. It's a mirror of American history—its struggles, its resilience, and its ingenuity."

To understand the museum, you have to understand the man whose name it bears: Oscar Getz. Born in Chicago in 1903, Getz came of age during one of the most transformative times in the liquor industry—Prohibition. The 1920s shaped his view of whiskey as more than a product; it was a survivor, a spirit that endured when the law itself seemed to conspire against it.

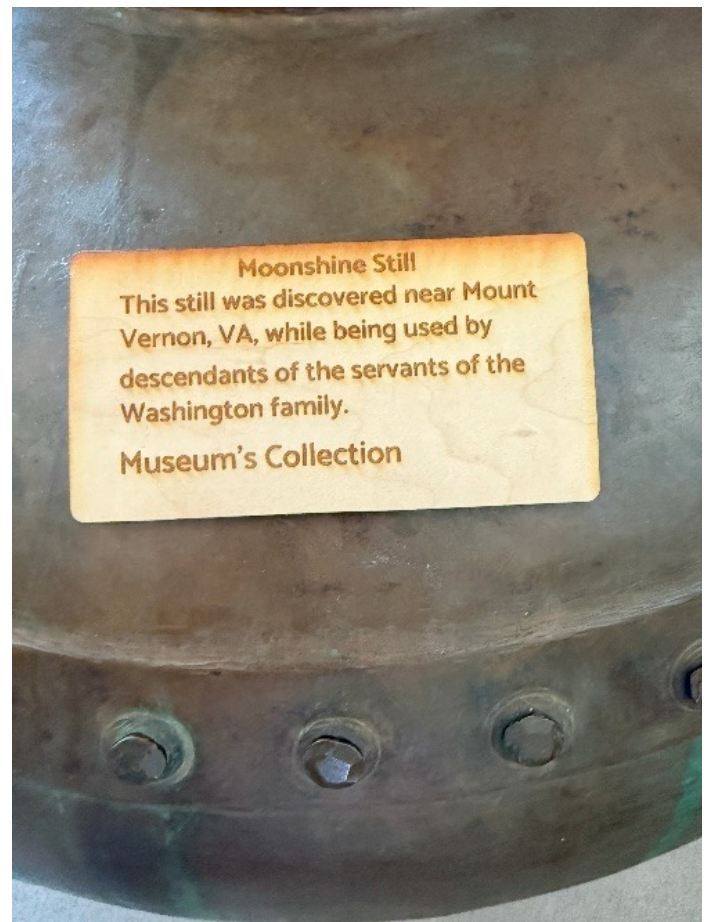
After Prohibition ended in 1933, Getz saw an opportunity not only to work in the liquor business but to preserve its heritage. In the 1940s, he partnered with Paul L. Beam, a member of the legendary Beam distilling family, to acquire a distillery in Bardstown.

This connection to Kentucky gave him access to the world of bourbon at its roots, and soon Getz began collecting artifacts, documents, bottles, and even equipment that told the broader story of whiskey in America.

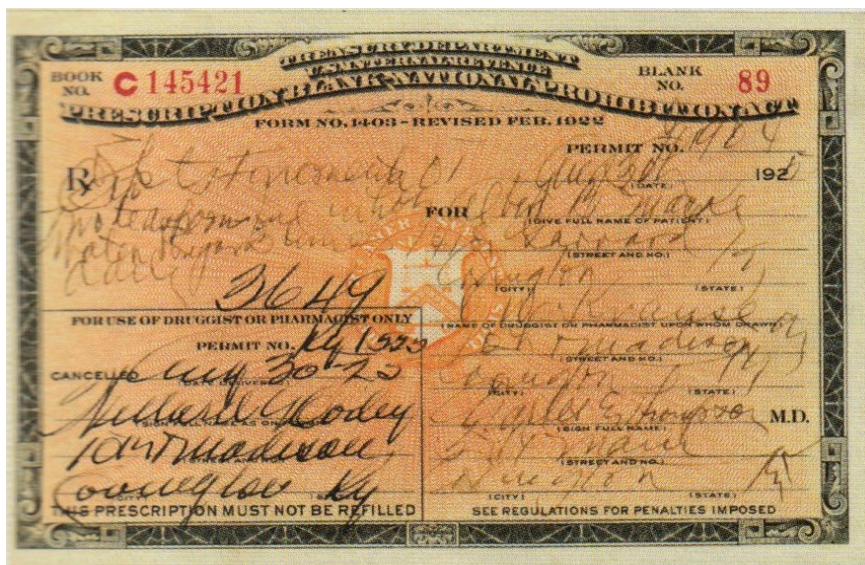
What made Getz remarkable was his foresight. At a time when few people thought to save whiskey labels or copper still fragments, he recognized them as pieces of cultural history. To him, every bottle had a story, every label a voice, every tool a place in the American narrative.











people proudly call itself the “Bourbon Capital of the World”, and for good reason.

Founded in 1780, Bardstown was one of the first towns west of the Allegheny Mountains. Its fertile soil made it ideal for growing corn, the key grain in bourbon. The region’s limestone-rich water, naturally filtered and free of iron, proved perfect for distilling. Add to that Kentucky’s unique climate—hot summers and cold winters that force whiskey in and out of charred oak barrels—and you had the perfect recipe for bourbon.

By the 1980s, his collection had grown so vast that it demanded a permanent home. Getz donated it to Bardstown, where it found its place in Spalding Hall. His gift was more than a donation; it was a legacy. Thanks to him, whiskey’s history is preserved not in academic texts or scattered archives but in a place where anyone can walk through and experience it firsthand.

“Oscar Getz believed bourbon wasn’t just a drink. It was America in a bottle.” Every time I visit the museum, I find myself pausing in different places. The collection is so rich that it takes multiple visits to truly absorb. One of the crown jewels is the exhibit on George Washington’s distillery at Mount Vernon. Many people know Washington as a general and president, but fewer realize that he was also one of the country’s largest whiskey producers. In 1797 the distillery in Mount Vernon that Washington built delivered 600 gallons of whiskey. 3 Years later in 1799, the year Washington passed away, the distillery produced 110,000 gallons. The reason: cash. Whiskey was in demand and Washington did his best to meet it. Seeing artifacts and documents tied to that chapter of his life is a powerful reminder that whiskey isn’t just part of American culture—it was part of its founding.

The bottle collection is another marvel. Some are slender and delicate, designed to resemble fine perfume

containers. Others are squat and sturdy, built for practicality. Labels range from ornate Victorian designs gilded with gold leaf to stark, utilitarian branding from the 1930s. Each one tells a story of style, taste, and the rise and fall of brands that once filled saloons and parlors across the country.

Perhaps the most eye-opening displays come from the Prohibition era. There are whiskey prescriptions, legally dispensed under the guise of medicine, and bottles labeled “For Medicinal Purposes Only.” Some brands, like Old Forester, managed to survive by selling through pharmacies. Others disappeared forever, victims of a political experiment that reshaped the industry. These exhibits capture not just the creativity but also the desperation of distillers and drinkers during America’s “dry” years.

Beyond these highlights, the museum houses distilling equipment, advertising posters, photographs, and even quirky relics like whiskey-themed political cartoons. Together, they paint a vivid portrait of an industry that has always been more than just business—it has been culture, politics, and survival rolled into one. “In the Oscar Getz Museum, a whiskey label is never just paper and ink—it’s a voice from another time.”

The story of the museum cannot be separated from the story of Bardstown itself. This town of fewer than 15,000

Families like the Beams, the Samuels (makers of Maker’s Mark), and the Willetts established distilleries here in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their names still carry weight today, anchoring the bourbon industry’s global reputation.

During Prohibition, Bardstown’s distilleries suffered, but the spirit never disappeared from the community. After repeal, the town came roaring back. Today, Bardstown is home to Heaven Hill, Willett, Barton 1792, and several newer craft distilleries. Each fall, the town hosts the Kentucky Bourbon Festival, drawing thousands of visitors from around the world for tastings, tours, and celebrations.

Walking Bardstown’s streets after a museum visit, I always feel a sense of continuity. The town is not just preserving bourbon—it’s living it.

Every storefront, every rickhouse on the horizon, every glass poured in a bar feels like an extension of the museum’s story.







“Bardstown isn’t just where bourbon is made—it’s where bourbon lives.” What strikes me most about the Oscar Getz Museum is how it connects whiskey to America’s broader identity. Whiskey was currency on the frontier, sparking the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, when farmers resisted federal taxes. It was medicine during Prohibition. It was a product of ingenuity, of immigrants who brought their distilling traditions and adapted them to the New World.

Every exhibit reminds me that whiskey’s story is America’s story—messy, resilient, full of highs and lows, but always moving forward. From Washington to Lincoln, from bootleggers to master distillers, whiskey has been at the table, in the glass, and in the bloodstream of the nation.

For me, the Oscar Getz Museum is more than a tourist stop. It’s a pilgrimage site. Each time I walk its halls, I come away with a deeper respect not just for bourbon but for the people who made it possible.

Oscar Getz ensured that the story of American whiskey wouldn’t fade into obscurity. His vision created a bridge between past and present, allowing today’s bourbon boom to rest on the shoulders of those who came before. In an age when bourbon is more popular than ever, with bottles fetching thousands of dollars and distilleries attracting international attention, the museum offers perspective. It reminds us that bourbon wasn’t always glamorous. It was once a rough frontier drink, a farmer’s side hustle, a struggling industry under threat. Its survival is a

testament to the resilience of American culture itself.

“The museum teaches us that every pour of bourbon carries with it centuries of struggle, survival, and pride.” Each visit to the Oscar Getz Museum leaves me a little more grounded. It reminds me that whiskey is not just flavor in a glass but history in liquid form. It is tradition carried forward, one barrel at a time.

As I leave Spalding Hall and step back into Bardstown’s quiet streets, I always feel grateful. Grateful for Oscar Getz, whose passion preserved this heritage. Grateful for Bardstown, which continues to nurture bourbon’s future. And grateful for the chance to walk, sip, and reflect on a story that is as uniquely American as whiskey itself. ♦



# FROM FIELD TO FLASK

## THE CORN CONNECTION

Corn's journey from Ontario soil  
to the spirit that defines Canada

By Reece Sims

Canadian whisky may be synonymous with rye, but look behind almost every glass and you'll find corn quietly doing the heavy lifting. It's the workhorse grain of the industry, prized for its high starch content, approachable sweetness, and ability to form the backbone of blends. And nowhere is corn's role more central than Ontario, where nearly two-thirds of Canada's corn is grown.

Corn thrives here thanks to the long, warm growing seasons that stretch across Southern Ontario's fertile belt. Farmers track Corn Heat Units (CHUs) — a measure of accumulated warmth over the season — to predict how well their crops will ripen. With the right heat and moisture, Ontario delivers the kind of high-yield, high-quality grain corn that distillers depend on.

Yet while Kentucky has built a global identity around bourbon and its corn fields, Ontario has never fully claimed corn as its calling card. That may be changing. The province has both the agricultural advantage and the whisky tradition to define a corn-forward style of its own — one that reflects local climate, farming, and craftsmanship.

This is the starting point for a story that comes full circle: corn planted in spring, harvested in fall, transformed into whisky, and then sent back to the fields as cattle feed.

### THE FIELD

Growing Corn in Ontario

On the edge of Comber, Ontario, sits Graceland Farms, owned by fourth-generation farmer Grace Mullen, who supplies corn, among other cash crops, to Hiram Walker & Sons in Windsor. For Grace, farming is both livelihood and legacy. "We have corn as part of our rotation for diversification and the potential profitability it offers," she explains. "Corn loves southern Ontario due to the growing season and the climate. The summers are hot, the soil is rich, and the lake winds keep the crops healthy."

Her family plants in spring as soon as the soil warms. Over the summer, the stalks stretch higher by the day, soaking up CHUs that farmers watch like hawks. By October, combines rumble across the rows, harvesting grain corn

that will head first to on-farm storage and drying. "Corn in Ontario needs to be 14.5 per cent moisture to be considered dry," Grace says. "Corn will often be harvested at 20 to 25 per cent moisture. Having storage and drying on site is an advantage for us given the quantity we produce, and it's a cost saving."

For whisky, not all corn is created equal. Distillers look for varieties with high starch and consistency, the kind that ferments cleanly into alcohol and leaves behind the characteristic sweetness Canadians expect in their whisky. Grace is proud to meet that standard. "We produce high quality grain and this is a standard for all grain in Canada. Ontario and Canada produce grain that is known worldwide for its quality and why many countries purchase grain from Canada."

What makes whisky-bound corn particularly meaningful, she says, is knowing it goes to a local distillery and becomes a spirit people enjoy. "Seeing our grain turned into a product that connects directly with consumers makes the work especially rewarding."

Photography Reece Sims







“Corn grown in Ontario is more than just a crop. It’s a cornerstone of our craft and a symbol of our commitment to local sourcing, quality, and innovation.”

## THE GATEKEEPER

Receiving & Testing the Grain

Once harvested, the corn makes its way to Hiram Walker & Sons Ltd., one of the largest distilleries in North America. Here, the grain passes through the hands of Alice McLeod, Supervisor of Grain Operations. If Grace is the one who grows the corn, Alice is the one who decides whether it makes the cut.

On any given day, Alice receives around 16 truckloads of grain (roughly 800 metric tonnes) arriving from local farmers across the region. Each load is probed and tested on arrival, with a focus on three key factors: moisture levels, starch content, and cleanliness. Only when the corn meets those standards does it head into storage bins for whisky production.

There’s another, less visible test too. Corn can sometimes be affected by Gibberella ear rot, caused by the fungus *Gibberella zeae* (also known as *Fusarium graminearum*), which produces the mycotoxin deoxynivalenol (DON), commonly called vomitoxin. While DON does not carry through distillation into whisky, the concern lies in the spent mash that returns to farms as cattle feed. If contaminated, it could make animals sick. By screening incoming corn for vomitoxin, Alice’s team ensures not only that the whisky’s flavour remains true, but also that the local agricultural ecosystem stays healthy.

The work may sound technical, but it’s fundamentally about flavour integrity. Off-notes in the corn can lead to flaws during fermentation; a bitterness here, a dullness there. By scrutinizing each load, Alice ensures that the corn and other grains entering the silos will ferment cleanly, setting the stage for spirit that’s sweet, smooth, and true to style.

## THE TRANSFORMATION

From Corn to Spirit

From Alice’s grain bins, the corn travels deeper into the distillery, where Amy Levesque, Director of Distillation, oversees its transformation. Corn kernels are milled into a fine meal and mixed with water in giant mash tuns, where enzymes break down starch into sugar, creating a thick, sweet mash. Next comes fermentation: yeast is added, converting sugars into alcohol while producing subtle flavour compounds. After several days of bubbling activity, the mash resembles a beer-like wash, ready for distillation. It’s then boiled, condensed, and refined into new-make spirit, the foundation of many blended Canadian whiskies.

Corn’s role as the cornerstone of blended Canadian whisky is unmistakable. It brings a creamy mouthfeel, rich sweetness, and notes that mature into vanilla, toffee, popcorn, and baking spice once oak works its magic.

Master Blender Dr. Don Livermore explains how distillation further shapes corn’s character: “Corn has long been

a cornerstone of Canadian whisky production, valued for both its yield and its unique contribution to flavour. Depending on the distillation method, it can express itself in remarkably different ways. Single column distillation retains more of the grain’s natural character, resulting in a whisky that’s full-bodied, flavourful, with notes of sweetness, cooked cereal, and fresh vegetables. Double distillation creates a lighter, more refined spirit, subtle and citrusy, ideal for balancing the bolder notes of rye in blended whiskies.”

Ontario corn doesn’t just grow well in the field, it performs just as reliably in the still. From the producer’s standpoint, Dr. Don Livermore mirrors Grace’s pride in quality, noting that the starch-rich grain she grows ferments cleanly and consistently into the spirit that underpins Canadian whisky. As he puts it, “Corn grown in Ontario is more than just a crop. It’s a cornerstone of our craft and a symbol of our commitment to local sourcing, quality, and innovation.”

Don’s pride in Ontario corn extends beyond its flavour potential to how the distillery handles what’s left behind. After distillation, the story doesn’t end in the warehouse. The spent mash, known as distillers’ grains, is loaded back onto trucks and sent to farms as livestock feed, a return journey that only works because the corn is carefully screened at intake for issues like vomitoxin.







By ensuring quality from the start, the distillery protects both the whisky in the glass and the animals that rely on its by-products. At Hiram Walker, this cycle has been refined even further. Don explains, “At Hiram Walker Distillery, we are deeply committed to environmental responsibility and sustainable practices.

Traditionally, drying distillers’ grains for feed is both energy-intensive and carbon-heavy. By transitioning to wet distillers’ grains, we’ve significantly reduced our carbon footprint. Partnering with forward-thinking agricultural operations that can use them efficiently not only minimizes energy use but strengthens our ties with the local farming community. It’s a win-win for the environment and the region.”

## FROM SOIL TO STILL

### And Back Again

The journey of corn in Ontario whisky is a story of land, people, and flavour, but also of community and ecology. From Grace’s fields to Alice’s grain tests to Amy’s stills, every step reflects a careful balance of tradition and innovation. Once distilled, the spirit moves into the hands of Dr. Don Livermore, whose role as Master Blender is to shape these corn distillates into exceptional whiskies, balancing sweetness, spice, and oak into products that define Canadian style.

And when the spent mash returns to the farm, the circle completes: what began as grain becomes whisky, and what remains nourishes the very animals raised on the same land. That closed loop is more than efficient, it’s a living ecosystem. Farmers depend on the distillery, the distillery depends on farmers, and together with the blender who completes the cycle in the bottle, they sustain not just a regional industry but a way of life that’s uniquely Southern Ontario. Whisky here isn’t abstracted from its environment; it’s inseparable from it.





## LOOKING SOUTH

Looking Forward

**“Single column  
distillation  
retains more  
of the grain’s  
natural character...  
double distillation  
creates a  
lighter, more  
refined spirit.”**

In Kentucky, corn is more than just an ingredient, it’s part of an identity. Bourbon, by law, must be made with at least 51 per cent corn, and the state’s narrative is woven around its cornfields and limestone-filtered water. That story has given Kentucky bourbon a global reputation as a spirit inseparable from its place of origin. Ontario, meanwhile, grows more corn than anywhere else in Canada, yet hasn’t fully claimed it as a whisky-defining trait. Corn here isn’t just abundant; it’s exceptional.

Beyond Hiram Walker, craft distillers are beginning to signal a shift. Spirit in Niagara nods to bourbon with its Brrrbon while putting an Ontario stamp on it. Last Straw Distillery leans into corn identity with sCorn Whisky, marketed as ‘spiteful Canadian corn whisky.’ Barnburner Whisky, from Maverick Distillery, is a double-aged Ontario corn-and-rye expression described as ‘a little bit bourbon, a lot Canadian whisky, and completely its own thing.’ Taken together, these high-corn whiskies are smooth, approachable, and help carve out a distinct Ontario identity.

These examples raise an intriguing question: could Ontario turn corn into its calling card, the way Kentucky did with bourbon? At a time when U.S. whiskies are being pulled from LCBO shelves due to trade tariffs, the opportunity is sharper than ever. Ontario doesn’t need to mimic America; it can carve its own path, with a corn-led style that reflects its climate, farming traditions, and circular grain-to-glass ecosystem.

With the right storytelling, Ontario’s corn connection could shift from quiet backbone to proud hallmark, giving the province a whisky style that reflects its fields and its future. ♦









# ENJOY OUR FALL Bottle Roundup

This whisky season is different from most. Our beloved spirit has become a political prop placed on a pedestal. It's a trendy political weapon and the victim of tariffs and boycotts. Colonel Mustard dumping whisky onto the Ballroom carpet, coming soon to the board game "Clue-less".

Politicians and world leaders have become brand ambassadors, telling us which bottles to buy without tasting a drop. Turning on the news might mean catching a whisky seminar. For this season, we've tasted whiskies that deserve a pedestal because they are downright delicious and cover a broad spectrum of tastes. You may not enjoy all of them, but there is something here for everyone.



# 1 NC'NEAN ORGANIC SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

CASK STRENGTH  
(59%) ▶

This cask strength expression of Nc'Nean highlights the malty flavours of the original, including creamy honey, a mix of orange and lemon, and a touch of oaked spice. But here, they are elevated into a malt that demonstrates a high-proof spirit can be well-balanced. The malt is aged in a combination of red wine, American whiskey barrels, and a small number of sherry casks, developing a peppery spice and oak tones that are rich with tannins without overpowering the whisky's fresh profile.





## 2 THE GLENLIVET SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

### FUSION CASK (40%)

To make this whisky, first-fill rum barrels and first-fill bourbon barrels were dismantled. Then, in a skilled



sort of barrel LEGO, the best staves from each barrel type were reassembled into a super barrel. Ageing malt in these barrels enhances the depth of the whisky, blending a wide range of flavours including sweet island fruits, honey, brown sugar, orange, toffee, and a hint of baking spice. It's delicious.

## 3 Wild Turkey Rare Breed (58.4%)

Rare Breed is created by blending six-year-old whiskies from the top floor of the rickhouse, eight-year-old whiskies from the middle floor, and twelve-year-old whiskies from the bottom floor. The blend is bottled at barrel proof. This is how Jimmy Russell first made it in 1991, and it's made the same way today. Rare Breed is one of the bourbons that helped initiate the premiumization of the bourbon category. Vanilla, baking spices, and sweet corn combine with peppery spices, cherry, and plenty of oak, showing through flavour why this whiskey doesn't need to change its feathers.



## 4 DILLONS SINGLE GRAIN RYE WHISKY (43%)

Dillon's makes this whisky using 100% rye grain, aged for at least three years in three types of oak: first-fill bourbon, new American oak, and new Ontario oak barrels. There is no shortage of rye flavours in this whisky. It erupts with caraway and ginger spices, complemented by white pepper and herbaceous notes. The oak plays a supporting role in this spirited rye, making it perfect when stirred into your favourite whisky-forward cocktail.



## 5 SHELTER POINT CLASSIC SINGLE MALT (46%)

Since 2011, Shelter Point has dedicated itself to ensuring that the flavours in this made-in-Canada single malt live up to the word "classic". They could have added terms to the label such as exceptional, delicious, balanced, and ground-breaking, and no one would disagree. The malt-forward flavour profile is highlighted with spiced fruits, oak, and nuts, complemented by a rich caramel-vanilla sweetness and the charm of Vancouver Island's coast. And the best part is, you no longer need to travel to British Columbia to find it.

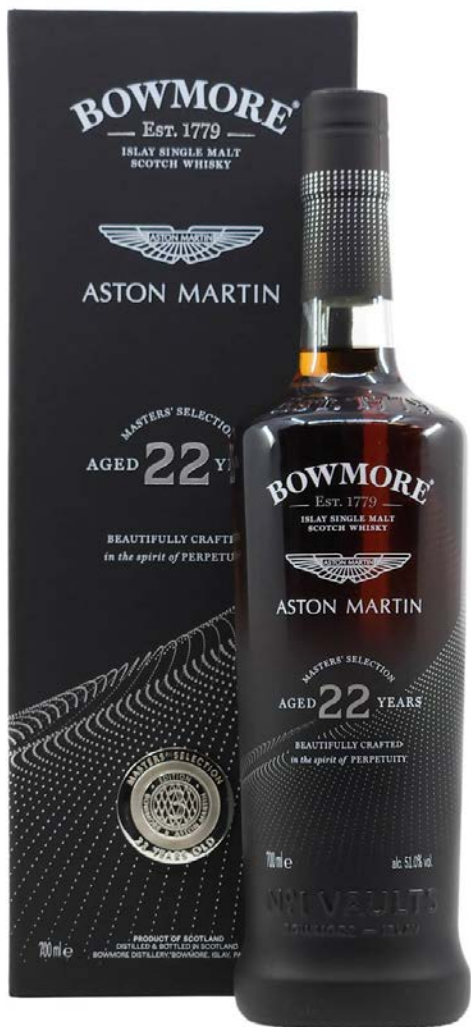




## 6 BOWMORE ISLAY SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

### MASTER'S SELECTION (51%)

The Aston Martin that James Bond drove in Goldfinger was equipped with rotating license plates, machine guns, an ejector seat, tire cutters, a smoke screen, and a range of other gadgets.



Nothing could be cooler. That is, until Bowmore partnered with Aston Martin for this 22-year-old whisky. But, there are no gadgets in this malt, just beautifully composed, rich, sweet-honeyed flavours accented by orchard fruits, citrus, vanilla, nuts, and a peated smoke screen that envelops every drop.

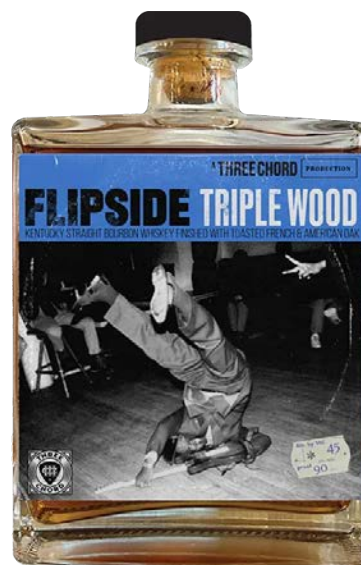
## 7 ALBERTA PREMIUM GOLDEN RYE (45%)

This nine-year-old whisky blends rye whiskies aged in new white oak, ex-bourbon, and ex-Canadian whisky barrels into an affordable sipper. Golden Rye is sweet and spicy, with crackling grains, caramel, oak, dried fruits, hot pepper, and a warming rye spice that no one does better than Alberta Distillers.



## 8 THREE CHORD FLIPSIDE TRIPLE WOOD (45%)

Guitar Shorty, the musician featured on Flipside Triple Wood's bottle, was renowned for his lively performances. He was part master guitarist and part master gymnast, often performing backflips on stage. However, his guitar playing had a soulful, attacking vibrato that included bent notes with a graceful touch. This triple wood Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey is aged and finished in charred American oak, toasted American oak, and toasted French oak. It features notes of sweet corn, vanilla, and dry spices, while skillfully avoiding developing a heavy woodiness by slowly bending those wood notes into an easy-drinking sipper.



## 9 HENNESSY VERY SPECIAL CARNIVAL EDITION COGNAC (40%)

The beautiful and festive artwork on the bottle features the blue tones of the sea and vibrant colours of Carnival-themed decorations. This Caribbean tradition, celebrated worldwide, combines dance, music, art, and costumes to express freedom and self-expression. The cognac is equally lively, with hot wood spices, dried fruits like raisins and apricots, citrus, tannins, caramel, and honey notes that dry off with new oak.





# 10 FORTY CREEK NIAGARA TRIPLE RESERVE

CASK STRENGTH  
(51%)

◀ This year's limited-edition release features a cask-strength version of Forty Creek's Double Barrel Reserve, finished in Niagara Cabernet wine casks, which develops layered flavours as the glass rests. Forty Creek's signature fruits, such as apricots and citrus complement strawberry, milk chocolate, and wood spices. Over time, Niagara's lighter, less jammy cabernet notes become more prominent, adding a subtle hint of dark fruits to this exceptional blend. ♦







# WHISKY WHISDOM





What's your knowledge of the  
**WATER OF LIFE** ?





HEAD DISTILLER,  
RESERVOIR DISTILLERY  
**Mary Allison**

**Question-1**

What makes open-top fermentation unique?

**Question-2**

What are the benefits of single grain  
whiskies?



MASTER BLENDER  
FORTY CREEK DISTILLERY  
**Bill Ashburn**

**Question-1**

Does Whisky improve in the bottle  
over time?

**Question-2**

Why do so many Distilleries use  
Secondary ageing techniques?





MASTER BLENDER  
HIRAM WALKER & SONS DISTILLERY  
**Don Livermore**

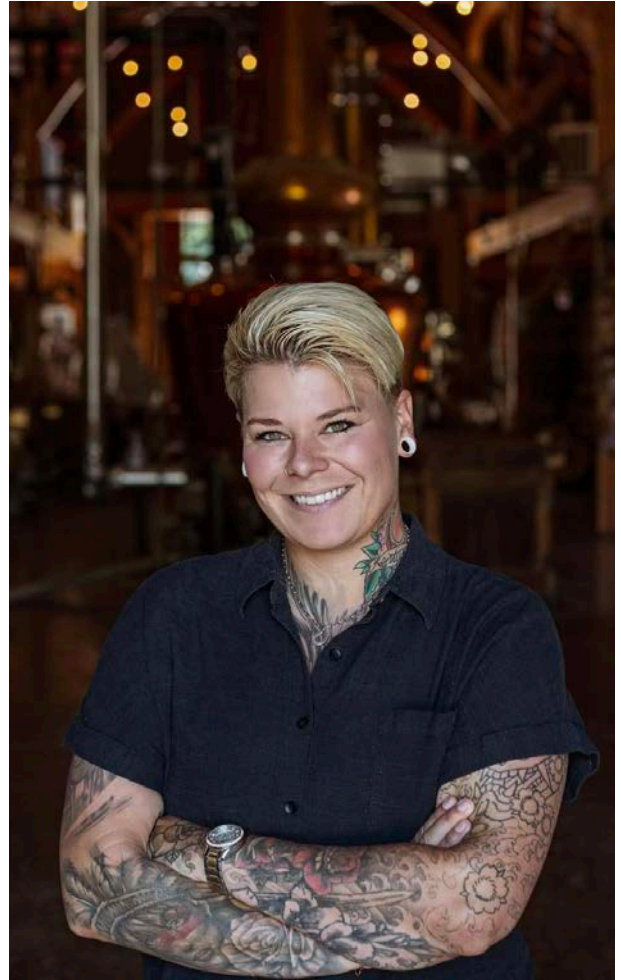
**Question-1**

The whisky industry is closely connected to the agriculture community. We purchase grain such as corn, rye, wheat, or barley from farmers, but also at the same time we sell our co-products after distillation back to the agriculture community as feed. We can sell in a dried or wet format.

What do we call these co-products?

**Question-2**

Fermentation is the heartbeat to a distillery. Yeast not only makes the all important ethanol, it also contributes many of the flavour compounds such as the fruity or floral notes that we enjoy in our whisky. Name three parameters in fermentation that are essential for brewers\distillers to control to make consistent whisky. ?



HEAD DISTILLER  
LEIPERSFORK DISTILLERY  
**Devin Walden**

**Question-1**

Who is Colonel Henry Hunter?

**Question-2**

Is there terroir in whiskey?

(ANSWERS PAGE 66)





FATHOM

**A European Tide Rises  
on the WEST COAST  
CHEF LANDON CRAWFORD**

**Leads a Bold New Chapter for this  
Victoria Harbourfront Restaurant**

By Becca Penner









a refined European sensibility to the menu—thoughtful in technique, rooted in local ingredients, and crafted to highlight the natural character of each dish.

## From Island Roots To Michelin Recognition

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Born and raised on Vancouver Island, Crawford's culinary foundation was shaped early by the region's bounty and beauty. But his approach began to evolve in 2016, when he left Canada to work in some of Europe's most renowned kitchens. He started his Michelin journey in Gstaad, Switzerland, then moved on to Germany, where he became Chef de Cuisine at Kai-3—an ambitious new concept that earned a Michelin Star within its first year.

After Germany, Crawford relocated to Copenhagen, where he spent time in the kitchen at Noma, one of the world's most influential restaurants, and later joined the team at Marchal in the famed Hotel D'Angleterre. Each step refined his approach, instilling curiosity and a deeper appreciation for bold, clean flavours—where every ingredient has a purpose and nothing is hidden.

Returning home in 2020, Crawford brought with him a toolkit of European techniques and a desire to apply them in a distinctly Pacific Northwest setting. Fathom, with its harbourfront location and strong local ties, offered an ideal setting to bring that vision to life.

## The Menu

### European Foundations, Coastal Expression

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Chef Landon Crawford's approach at Fathom is shaped equally by his Michelin-starred experience in Europe and his deep roots on Vancouver Island. His philosophy emphasizes classic techniques, modern

**T**ucked into Victoria's Inner Harbour, Fathom at Hotel Grand Pacific is entering its next chapter, led by Chef Landon Crawford, a Vancouver Island native whose Michelin-starred experience in Europe is subtly shaping the restaurant's continued evolution.

Fathom offers a range of dining experiences to suit any mood. Enjoy brunch on the airy outdoor terrace, unwind over small plates and cocktails during Social Hour, or settle in for a refined dinner in the main dining room. The lounge offers a more relaxed atmosphere, complete with live jazz or DJ music most weekends. For private gatherings, The Mark provides an

intimate setting ideal for celebrations, business dinners, or special moments with close company.

Fathom's beverage program extends beyond creative cocktails and local wines, with an emphasis on thoughtfully curated whisky offerings and flights. At the heart of it is Spirit of the Deep, Fathom's own custom whisky, developed in collaboration with Driftwood Spirits. Crafted to reflect the depth and character of the West Coast, this exclusive release offers guests a taste of something truly local and distinctive.

Fathom has long drawn inspiration from the Pacific Northwest, and under Crawford's guidance, that foundation remains strong. His influence brings



interpretations of retro sauces, and a focus on balance. “I believe restaurant concepts should be considered living,” he says. “Constantly growing, evolving, and adapting to their environment.”

That spirit of evolution is reflected in Fathom’s seasonally driven menu. Drawing from the Island’s farms, forests, and coastline, dishes shift throughout the year; lighter and brighter in the warmer months, heartier and more robust as the seasons change. Crawford’s cooking is clean and bold, highlighting natural flavours without masking or overworking them. Seafood is presented cleanly, without clutter, and vegetables are treated with equal care. The larger mains are designed for sharing and are paired with classic sauces and seasonal sides. The result is a menu that feels both rooted in place and elevated by technique.

### **Mentorship in the Kitchen** Fostering The Next Generation

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Crawford’s impact at Fathom goes further than the plate—it’s woven into the culture of the kitchen. A passionate mentor, he sees his role not just as chef, but as teacher and collaborator.

“What excites me most about leading this kitchen is the enthusiasm of the team,” he says. “They have shown a remarkable willingness to embrace change and continuously learn. Being able to mentor such a receptive team and help elevate their skills has certainly been rewarding for me.”

This mindset is one he brought back from Europe, where kitchens demand excellence but also foster long-term growth. At Fathom, it translates to a strong, cohesive back-of-house team and a front-of-house that’s deeply knowledgeable about the food they’re serving.





“

Guiding and teaching the team and seeing the collective progress is what I'm most passionate about at this moment.” Crawford says. “Creating an environment where everyone feels empowered to improve not only strengthens our kitchen, but also enhances the guest experience

”



## Seasonal Focus

### Capturing the Moment (and Preserving It)

Seasonality is at the heart of Fathom's evolving identity. Crawford is a firm believer in cooking with what's available, not just because it's fresher, but because it tells a story about the landscape at that exact moment in time.

There are incredible purveyors on Vancouver Island, and building relationships with them has been key to sourcing the best possible ingredients for Fathom. These connections go beyond supply—they allow the kitchen to collaborate directly with farmers and producers, sometimes even growing specific items tailored to the restaurant's needs. Through these close partnerships with local farmers, fishers, and foragers, the restaurant can access a wide range of exceptional ingredients—including many that are hyper-seasonal or fleeting. These ingredients often have a brief window of availability, which is why preservation plays such a key role in the kitchen's year-round strategy.

**A New Chapter for Victoria's Culinary Scene**  
For both locals and travelers, Fathom offers something rare: a restaurant that is both relaxed and refined, grounded yet elevated. Under Chef Landon Crawford's leadership, it has become a place where European technique meets Pacific Northwest soul.

A place where mentorship flourishes, and menus change with the tide. A place that welcomes you in, then surprises you.

For those curious about the future of Victoria's culinary scene, look no further. Fathom is leading the charge—with intention, with flavor, and with a whisky glass waiting for you at the bar. ♦











# THE UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT OF SPRING MILL

By Blair Phillips







Never tell a Sleeman, "No, you can't do that." Nothing rouses the family's can-do spirit more quickly than the impossible. It's a resilience embedded in their genetic code, and embodied by John W. Sleeman, a giant in Canada's world of beer. The sheer determination he inherited from his ancestors defines a long-standing beverage lineage that now includes Guelph, Ontario's Spring Mill Distillery. Here, Sleeman's sons, Cooper and Quinn, carry on the family tradition by creating a range of whisky styles from around the world that they proudly produce right here in Canada. It's a story inspired by generations, from John H. Sleeman in 1834 to today; a Sleeman never gives up, never cuts corners, and excels at taking calculated risks.

Case in point: in 1869, two years after John H. Sleeman retired and his son, George Sleeman took over the Silver Creek

Brewery, another risk-taker named Professor Andrew Jenkins crossed the Niagara gorge from Canada to the American side. What made it risky? He did so riding a bicycle on a tightrope. Sleeman and Jenkins were acquaintances, as the brewer had brought Jenkins to Guelph years earlier to perform an exhibition.

On the day of the Niagara stunt, George Sleeman, in Buffalo on business, ran into a visibly upset Jenkins. The daredevil's crew had quit that morning because they believed the stunt was impossible. Sleeman's "No, you can't do that? - Watch me" genes kicked in, and he stepped in to help rig the tightrope and make the final adjustments to the unusual hand-pedalled bike. As thousands of people gathered, biting their nails, Jenkins nonchalantly completed his once-in-a-lifetime spectacle, and George headed back to Guelph.

Five decades on, it was George's grandson, Henry O. Sleeman, running the brewery when the double whammy of Ontario and American Prohibition presented a new impossibility. Undaunted, Henry found ways—some more daring than walking a bicycle on a tightrope—to keep the family brewery running. Eventually, Prohibition's legal arm caught on, and without a safety net, the brewery plunged out of sight. It was a setback—the end of one chapter but not the end of the story.

In 1988, decades after Silver Creek had bottled its last drop of beer, production was back up and running. It was a new generation risk-taker, John W. Sleeman's turn to face the impossible as the Canadian brewery tightrope turned into a gauntlet with Labatt on one side and Molson on the other. Despite this momentous challenge, John W pedalled the re-established



Sleeman's approach to brewing beer. When the Sleeman Brewery opened in the 1980s, it began with a cream ale—one of the recipes in the old Sleeman's recipe books that caught John's eye. Just months after launching the cream ale, he realized he needed a lager because not everyone drinks ales. "He opened the recipe book and found Silver Creek lager and went, This one looks good. Let's make it," says Cooper.

The brewery's range of flavorful and approachable beers expanded naturally, and now at the distillery, history repeats itself with the same mindset. "You can't run a distillery if you've only got a handful of people who like your product," explains Cooper. "To put food on the table for all my employees, I need to sell liquid." Gin, vodka, and liqueurs were first. Then, in 2022, Spring Mill introduced a traditional straight whisky, inspired by Kentucky mashbills and methods that blend woody, spiced notes with a rich and sweet fruitiness. It drinks with an approachable flair, akin to their cream ale.

Next, master distiller Doan Bellman blended a classic Rye Whisky expression using traditional blending techniques. Corn whisky aged in predominantly used whisky barrels forms the base, blended with rye aged in ex-bourbon barrels and rye whisky aged in Quinn's (the family's cooper) new Canadian oak barrels. The final blend is a contemporary, easy-drinking Canadian-made whisky that balances flavours. It's approachable like a lager.

Sleeman Brewery into Canada's top three. Thousands grew into millions as beer fans gathered wherever Sleeman's was sold. But this wasn't the end of the story either. This is the intermission, where John stepped out into life's lobby to join his sons Cooper and Quinn for a dram of whisky.

"My father has always been passionate about brown spirits, and in 2010, he began considering opening a distillery," says Cooper. While working on a business plan,

the family discovered that John H. Sleeman had added a distillery to his brewery in 1836. Located in the Niagara region, it was called the Spring Mill Distillery. The brewery packed up in 1851 and moved its operations to write Canadian brewing history in Guelph, leaving the distillery behind. "Technically, we re-opened the Spring Mill Distillery 185 years later," says Cooper.

Spring Mill produces a diverse selection of world whiskies and spirits that reflect





Between special releases, dual Forsythe pot stills turn out a delicious single malt brimming with flavour, while an Irish-style whiskey ages for a future release. "What we tried to do from the beginning is make a beautiful Irish-style whiskey. Make a beautiful Scottish-style single malt, a beautiful bourbon. That was the idea." The newest release, a high-rye bourbon-style whisky made from a mashbill of 51% corn, 34% rye, and 15% malted barley, has been aging quietly over the past few years. It might not exist if it weren't for "No, you can't do that," rearing its head once again.

"There's no interest in it. Why would you make a bourbon here in Canada? That's what everyone was telling me for the last six years," says Cooper. "They're like, 'Cooper, you know, good idea. Why are you so in love with this bourbon idea? Like anybody can just pick up from the States and get hundreds of different types of bourbon. Why would they pick yours? You can't even call it bourbon.'" But who cares if it can't be labelled as bourbon as long as it's delicious Canadian-made whisky. With the Canadian and American governments turning whisky into a political weapon and American-made whiskies pulled from most Canadian shelves, Cooper looks like a genius. But back then, he looked like a Sleeman with determination mistaken for foolishness, spurred into action by that now familiar phrase that fires up the Sleeman spirit.

Good whisky makers focus on making whiskies they love instead of chasing trends, since trends can come and go before a whisky ages. The best whiskies are true to the distillery—created because the whisky maker has a flavour story that reflects what the distillery can achieve. There isn't a crystal ball that could predict today's political climate. But there is a dedicated team that loves all whiskies and strives to make the best they can. The Spring Mill bar is set high, so interpreting this new release as being at the right place at the right time would be a mistake.







Cooper is quick to credit lead distiller, John O'Hara, who came up with the idea of doing a high rye bourbon. "We've been laying it down every year," says Cooper. "It's despite the thinking that there isn't a huge interest in this whisky. We knew how good it was. I think it might be the best whisky we make."

Spring Mill's High Rye Straight Whisky possesses an approachable flavour profile that hints at the development of a distinctive John Sleeman and Sons signature house style. It is rich with rye spices without overwhelming the palate. It is worth bringing back the word "smooth" as a descriptor. The whisky's profile surges with notes of banana bread and peppery oak. Fruity cherry and orange citrus notes comple-

ment the sweetness, with lingering baking spices and a Canadian-style dusty rye spice supporting the oak backbone. This is the real thing, not a hand-drawn facsimile of an American-claimed style.

In 1924, fifty years after George Sleeman participated in the Niagara stunt, Professor Andrew Jenkins passed away. George acquired the outfit from that day, which included a length of rope, a balancing pole, and the bicycle, adding them to his collection of historical relics. If he were alive today, each Spring Mill release would be in the same trophy case—symbolizing the courage to take that leap of faith—the Sleeman perseverance displayed as the results of a distillery's calculated risks to create delicious whiskies. ♦





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# MAVERICK DISTILLERY



## Barnburner Highball

- 1.5 oz BARNBURNER Whisky
- 4 oz soda water
- Lemon twist

(Pour over ice, top with soda, garnish.)

## Barnburner Old Fashioned

- 2 oz BARNBURNER Whisky
- 1 sugar cube
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- Orange peel

(Muddle sugar and bitters, add whisky, stir with ice, garnish with peel.)

## Smoky Maple Sour

- 2 oz BARNBURNER Whisky
- 3/4 oz lemon juice
- 1/2 oz maple syrup
- Egg white (optional)

(Shake without ice, then with ice. Strain into a coupe, garnish with bitters.) ♦

( maverickdistillery.ca )



RELISH  
WHISKY

# COCKTAILS





## Mary Allison HEAD DISTILLER, RESERVOIR DISTILLERY

### Answer-1

Open-top fermentation refers to the technique of leaving all or part of the top of the fermentation vessel exposed to the surrounding environment. This tradition dates back thousands of years to the earliest forms of fermenting sugar-based ingredients to create wine or beer. Before the modern collection and propagation of specific yeast strains, open-top fermentation was a necessary method, allowing the base fermentable to gather wild yeast from the air to initiate fermentation.

While some producers still rely solely on this method, today open-top fermentation is more often one of many tools in a fermenter's toolkit rather than the primary means of fermentation. At Reservoir, we use propagated yeast strains as our primary drivers of fermentation. However, we also incorporate open-top fermentation as a secondary method to capture additional yeast and environmental variables from the air around us. This practice helps ensure our product is uniquely tied to our location, shaped by the natural yeast and particulates present in our ecosystem.

The idea behind this approach stems from the belief that a distinct and specific microbial environment exists only in our exact location. Even if our same process and recipe were replicated just a few miles away, the final product would not be identical. Open-top fermentation also allows our whiskey to evolve organically over time. While the base product remains consistent batch to batch, subtle shifts in flavor can occur with the changing seasons and the evolution of our local ecosystem.

Our distillery is fortunate to be located in a neighborhood that is also home to several other producers of beer, wine, and mead. As these businesses operate and introduce their own yeasts and fermentable materials into the environment, our whiskey naturally picks up tiny influences from each, making every batch a unique time stamp of the day it was created.

### Answer-2

When we began making whiskey, there were few—if any—single grain products available on the market. From the start, we saw this as an opportunity to differentiate ourselves and bring something new to the table. Over time, we discovered several unique benefits to single grain whiskies.

First, single grain whiskey allows you to truly taste the flavor of that specific grain without interference from other aromas or flavors. For those new to whiskey, identifying the elements you enjoy (or don't) in a mixed mashbill can be difficult. Tasting single grain whiskeys helps you hone your palate and better understand which grain types suit your preferences. Eventually, this famili-

arity can also help you recognize specific grain notes in blended or mixed mashbill whiskeys.

We also discovered that by producing individual single grain whiskeys, we had unintentionally created a set of building blocks. These base spirits can be blended in nearly infinite combinations to craft distinct whiskey profiles. We've used this technique in-house to develop some truly custom and unique expressions—but consumers can do the same at home. By purchasing a few of our single grain whiskeys, anyone can experiment with blending their own preferred ratios to create a personalized flavor experience.

## Bill Ashburn MASTER BLENDER FORTY CREEK DISTILLERY

### Answer-1

Very loaded question. Much like wine, Whisky does experience bottle shock when being bottled. A freshly bottled whisky will seem unbalanced and requires time (minimum of 4 weeks) in the bottle to come back to equilibrium. After that I firmly believe that the whisky does continue to change in the bottle but it is a very slow process taking decades to make a noticeable change.

### Answer-2

A secondary ageing or finishing opens up an additional pallet of flavours and aromas to enhance the existing structure of the Whisky. Barrels or staves of non-traditional woods bring in different tannins and extracts from the wood that are not obtainable in traditional charred American White Oak. Examples are Cherrywood, and Chestnut. Some non-traditional woods such as white birch do not go well with whisky (you really don't want to know what it tastes like). Another form of secondary ageing is ageing in barrels that have been used to age either wine or other aged spirits. These can add subtle nuances to the resultant spirit, and no, tabasco barrels really don't work well as secondary ageing vessels.

## Don Livermore Master Blender HIRAM WALKER & SONS DISTILLERY

### Answer-1

Distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) is a combination of the leftovers of corn, rye, barley, and wheat. Yeast will use the starch in fermentation leaving a residue rich in crude protein, fat, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. It is currently used as aquaculture, livestock, and poultry feeds. DDGS is dried to 10% - 12% moisture and is very stable with almost an indefinite shelf life. This allows it to be shipped to any market regardless of proximity to the distillery. The downside is that its energy intensive to make DDGS. Another option is to produce wet distillers grains (WDG). This is essentially the unfermented residue after the distillation process. Typical moisture content of WDG is 70%, which means the production is

less energy intensive and less carbon footprint to produce. The downside to WDG is its shelf life is four to five days. It is only practical to ship WDG within a 200 km radius of the distillery.

Interestingly, JP Wiser's purchased a distillery in 1857 for the primary purpose of raising livestock. At one point he had over fifty thousand head of cattle and he was the first to ship cattle to the UK. He understood cattle nutrition in the 1850s. He was one of Canada's agriculture experts and a pioneer in the field of agriculture science.

### Answer-2

Temperature. The maximum temperature brewing yeast can tolerate is about 32°C. pH. Typical whole grain fermentation pH starts at 5.5 and finishes around 4.0. Brix. This is a measure of starting solids content. This correlates with the concentration of sugar. If the sugar content starts too high, this can shock the yeast and fermentation will be sluggish. Nutrients. Yeast is dependent on oxygen, nitrogen, or vitamins to support growth. Yeast strain. Distillers need to be consistent with pitch (dose) rate, health, and genetics. Processing aids. The mash or wort requires commercial enzymes or malt to convert starch to sugar. Other processing aids could be hops or sour mash to control bacterial infections.

## Devin Walden HEAD DISTILLER LEIPERSFORK DISTILLERY

### Answer-1

We believe, yes! Many industry leaders agree we're still in the beginning of recognizing how different climates have different impacts. Terroir connects whiskey to a place. The same mash bill can be used; however, a different location will produce a very different whiskey because of climate and soil have different impact. All of our corn is being grown at our owner's farm, Riverbound Farms. Our wheat comes from Williamson County. Our rye and barley are from Robertson County, just north of Nashville. Barley is then sent to Ashville for malting.

### Answer-2

Colonel Henry Hunter was the third owner of the property where Leiper's Fork Distillery is built. Originally a land granted piece of property awarded to Robert Hayes after the Revolutionary War with more than 649 acres, this land has only had four owners since that time.

We gave our hand-selected bourbon the name of Colonel Henry Hunter to honor his distilling background. Approximately 3 miles from this property, he owned a 125-acre tract of land referred to as the Still House tract. This piece of land had a spring fed creek and was an excellent resource for whiskey making. Colonel Hunter would have made bourbon in a pre-prohibition style and was one of the first distiller's in this area to distill for a business ♦



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# ENGLISH FOR WHISKY

— Estd  2014 —

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