

RELISH

# WHISKY

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SPRING 2026

THE CASE FOR DUTCH WHISKY

## MILLSTONE

■  
SPIRITS OF  
SCOTLAND  
ALL YEAR ROUND

■  
NO TOWER LIKE  
THE WIZARD'S  
TOWER

■  
SWEET NORTH  
SMOKEY SOUTH  
THE TALE OF  
TWO ARRANS



BLENDING AMERICAN  
WHISKEY AND BOURBON

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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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*Veronique Bru-Legaret*

OWNER, DISTILLERIE DES MOISANS



# MILLSTONE

DUTCH SINGLE MALT WHISKY



**SINGLE MALT WHISKY**  
Distillation Date: 18-02-2010 Bottling Date: 16-11-2011

## EDITOR'S THOUGHTS

SPRING IS IN THE AIR  
OR AT LEAST ON OUR MINDS.

**W**e haven't shaken off the cold and grey days of winter yet in some areas. Especially here in Canada. But thoughts are a plenty with Spring air and colour returning to us soon. In the meantime we celebrate the variety of whiskies available to us to explore and share. From incredible full bodied Single Malt Canadian Whisky, to across the pond for a taste of Scotch with Aberlour.

We have a wide range of beautiful Dutch Whiskies for you to try and a few options for your travels in this, our 42nd issue. We continue to

grow our readership around the world into parts we didn't even think had access to our Magazine. Our partners and contributors help with all this simply by sharing the whisky life and loving it. We had sometime to explore our great outdoors and actually found some whiskey not being sold now in Ontario still, or actually almost anywhere in Canada. Crazy times. It was like striking gold I tell yah. GOLD.

When you have a favourite that gets removed due to politics and personal ideas well, what's a person to do? I opened myself to the plethora of whisky options from around the world.

I found myself enjoying different ryes, blends and new to the scene whiskies. I haven't found a favourite yet but that's what these tests are for.

Times may change, as ever stay hopeful and enjoy the small moments, small sips and relish in the whisky you have.

Robert Windover  
Editor/Publisher  
@relishandwhisky

# NC'NEAN

ORGANIC SCOTCH WHISKY DISTILLERY

## QUIET REBELS

*Cordon*

"This scotch is the total package. Full bodied and complex with notes of dark chocolate and leather on the nose and a hint of sherry on the palate. It concludes with a smooth but short finish."

SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS AWARDS JUDGES

GOLD MEDAL WINNER 2024



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**OUR CONTRIBUTORS**

Blair Phillips  
Davin de Kergommeaux  
Inka Kukkamaki  
Anthony De Young  
Jack McCreadie  
Jenna Diubaldo  
Bry Simpson  
Devin Walden  
Alasdair Day  
Daniel Whittington

**PUBLISHER | EDITOR**

Robert Windover

**ART + CREATIVE**

Autumn Clare

**MEDIA DESIGN**

Mark Tenag

**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**

Judith Kipka

**NATIONAL DIRECTOR  
OF SALES**

[publisher@relishandwhisky.ca](mailto:publisher@relishandwhisky.ca)

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416-770-7279

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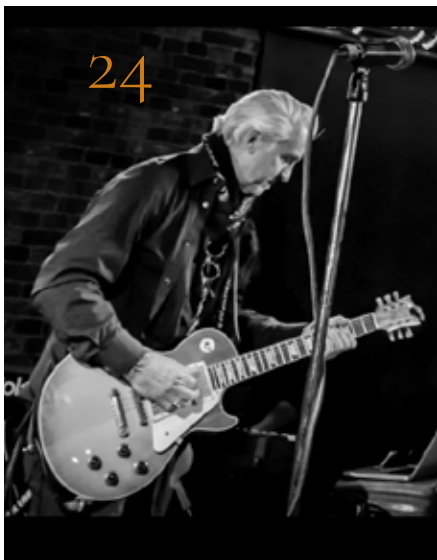
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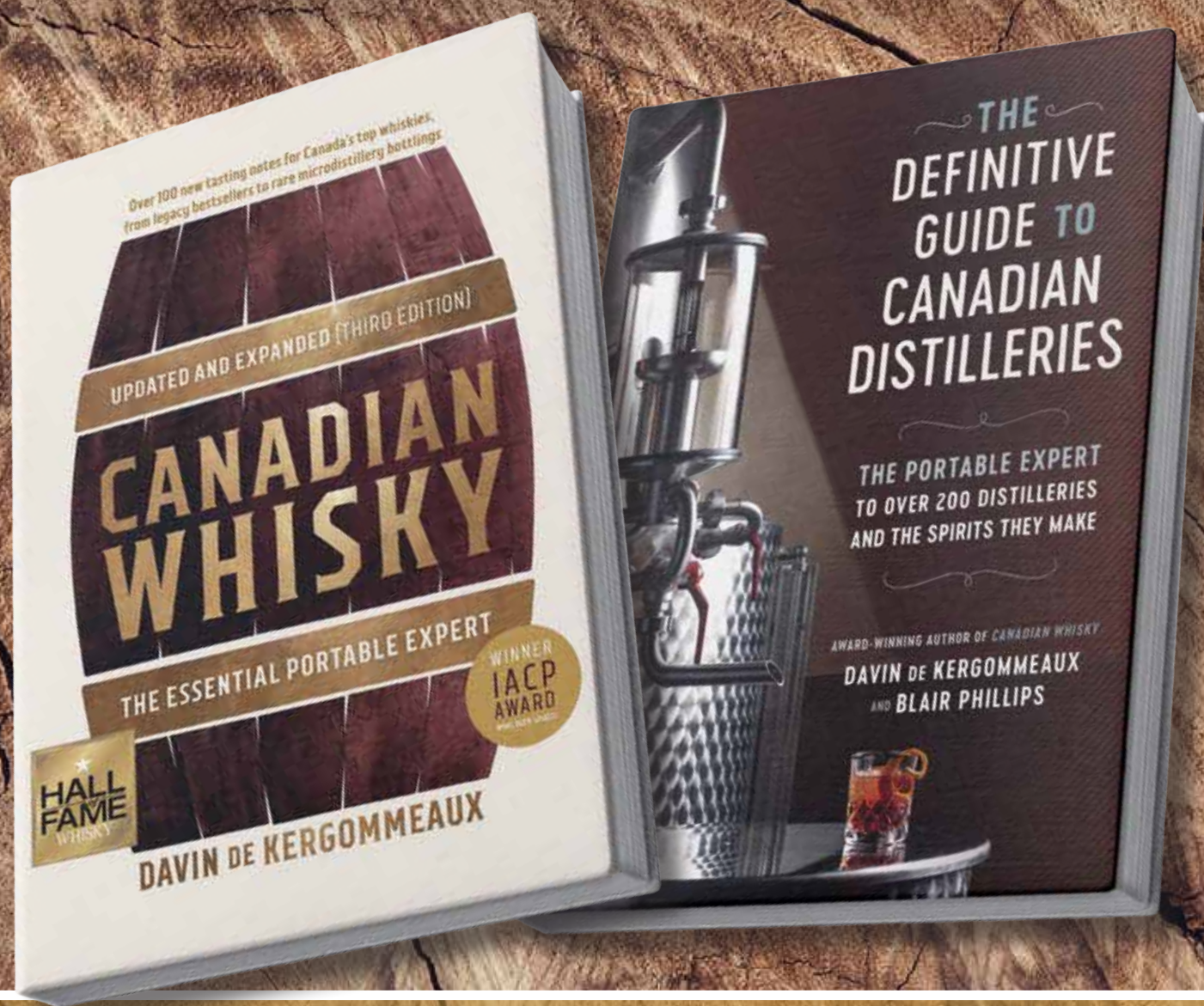
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# THE DEFINITIVE SOURCE FOR CANADA'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF WHISKY



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appetite

by RANDOM HOUSE

# THE CASE



# WHISKY

# FOR DUTCH



# WHISKY

WRITTEN BY **DAVIN DE KERGOMMEAUX**

**W**hen Dutch spirits prodigy, Fred Van Zuidam, quit de Kuyper distillery in Schiedam to struck out on his own, single malt whisky was virtually unknown to the average drinker. In 1975, nearly all notable whisky was blended Scotch. If single malt whisky was an insider's secret, intended for flavouring Scottish blends, the very idea of Dutch whisky was unheard of.

Even as de Kuyper grew into a distilling giant, it did not make whisky. However, the closest thing, genever, a centuries-old, malt-based liquor still popular in Holland today, was one of the many spirits Fred distilled and blended during his career. However, even as Fred was leaving de Kuyper, across the North Sea in Easter Elchies, Scotland, The Macallan Distillery was quietly making malt whisky. Since 1824, Macallan malt whisky, matured in Oloroso Sherry casks, has been highly prized by blending houses. Still, only the tiniest aliquots found their way into bottles as single malt whisky. No one had yet made the case for single malt whisky on its own.

In 1987, Michael Jackson published *The World Guide to Whisky* with glowing accounts of single malt Scotch, and the floodgates burst. Suddenly, soaring sales brought new opportunities for malt distilleries. At the same time, though, they placed a serious strain on materials.

For The Macallan, this meant abandoning their signature ex-bodega Sherry casks in favour of purpose-made flavouring casks – new casks simply seasoned with Oloroso sherry. Unlike those that had spent decades in soleras, seasoned casks offered two advantages: they could be produced quickly in large numbers, and unlike casks used for maturing Sherry, they gave predictable and consistent flavours: exactly what The Macallan needed to keep up with burgeoning sales

as craftsmanship gave way to line production.

So, in 1989, when Fred and H el ene Van Zuidam's son, Patrick, decided to add whisky to the genever, gin, and liqueurs his parents had been making since 1975, the success of single malt Scotch had left a void he would fill with a hand-crafted whisky he called "Millstone" – single malt whisky matured in real, bodega-sourced casks that had spent decades, sometimes a century, in Sherry soleras. After decades holding Sherry, this caskwood had changed more and in different ways than casks that had merely absorbed flavours from a short exposure to Sherry. Rather, its chemistry and structure had changed, its shape sometimes becoming gnarled and twisted, under the slow influences of oxidation, ethanolysis and acid degradation from exposure to generation after generation of Sherry.

"The cask is just a vessel for the whisky," asserts Patrick. "And any flavours that the cask gives must serve to complement the spirit, the whisky itself, without dominating the whisky. I think that it is always a challenge to find a cask that fits the whisky. You have to know in your head before you fill the casks, you have to have a vision, a feeling of how they're going to interact with each other. So that has always been our philosophy about cask aging, that it's about balance, it's about the flavour. The whisky itself has to be augmented or enhanced with the cask flavours."

## THE CASE FOR DUTCH WHISKY

More than 30 years after launching Millstone, Patrick still buys his casks one solera at a time. And beyond the Oloroso and Pedro Xim enez casks most commonly used in Scotland, his whiskies are now matured (not finished) in a broad range of Sherry and wine casks, some of them rare and



almost forgotten. The results are consistently spectacular. If ever there was a case to be made for Dutch whisky, the time is now, the whisky maker is Patrick Van Zuidam, and the whisky is Millstone. Whether shaped by authentic Sherry and wine casks or, more recently, American oak, Millstone

ness softens into plum skins and glides into a slowly diminishing finish.

Tasting this 10-year-old Millstone, will remind those who remember Sherry-cask whiskies from before distillers switched to seasoned casks, of that distinct “firecracker” flavour that made them so fabulous – a sulphur derivative that in the tiniest amounts contributes a freshness, especially in older whiskies. “It’s a fine line,” Patrick cautions. “There can’t be too much because then it gets in the way. But in a Sherry cask, a little sulphur often helps with the structure and the flavour. The only question is whether the sulphur influence is in balance with the rest of the flavours.”

**Millstone 12 Year Old Sherry Cask** The quintessential Millstone, Patrick could use this whisky as ID because it has his signature all over it. Taste it once, and you’ll understand the superiority of authentic Sherry casks for maturing whisky. Fruity notes combine with minerals, powdery sweetness, clean wood, orange, dried fruit, and honeyed maple-sugared amber. The influence of Sherry is evident from nose to tail, with more honey and vanilla tones drifting into the finish.

“I think the 12 has always been my favourite,” Patrick states bluntly. “It always had some kind of minerality to it. And it’s got that ancient nose.” Although currently sold out, when it returns, Patrick expects the 12-year-old to be a bit fruitier.

“Our new-make has gotten a little bit fruitier over the years from different yeasts and longer fermentations. Where most of my friends in Scotland over the last two decades have gone from three-day fermentations to two-day fermentations; we did the opposite. We did four-day, five-day fermentations, and we’ve gone to seven-day fermentations. So, you get a lot more influence of the wild yeast and

the lactic acid bacteria. And those things give your new-make more fruitiness.”

**Millstone 27 Year Old Oloroso** A tightly integrated nose blends dried prune-like fruits, honey, suave fragrant spices, and warm roasted nuts. The Oloroso character rests gently on a gorgeously sweet palate, laced with soft, elegant spices that enhance the flavours as they meld into a single, focused whole. Unbelievably unified and balanced, and, for bonus points, strong hints of that ever-elusive and oh-so-rewarding rancio tease the palate.

“It’s (rancio) found more often in rums and cognacs,” Patrick explains, “you don’t really find it in whiskies very often. It’s an oxidation flavour profile, and I don’t think anybody knows where exactly it comes from because not all old cognacs have it, not all old rums have it, so it’s something that happens somewhere in the interaction between the wood and the spirit.”

**Millstone 4 Year Old Amontillado Cask** Over the years, while working with Oloroso, PX, and other more common Sherry casks, Patrick would occasionally stumble on other, lesser-known ones. “First you have to find them,” he explains, “then you have to fill them with the type of spirit that you think will fit the cask, and then you have to stupidly wait forever before you can actually bottle it. So, I think over the years, whenever something interesting crosses your path, you try it out and see how it works with the spirit. There are all kinds of casks, but they have to fit the spirit. Otherwise, they’re useless.”

Among these less common whisky casks is a batch from an Amontillado solera, which were used to produce this mere 4-year-old Amontillado-matured whisky. “I think if you smell this, it has a maturity that is more than just the age statement. This is exactly what I wanted to say about the balance between the cask and the spirit.”

remains whisky first and foremost, as it embodies that glorious, fruity complexity of days gone by. For example:

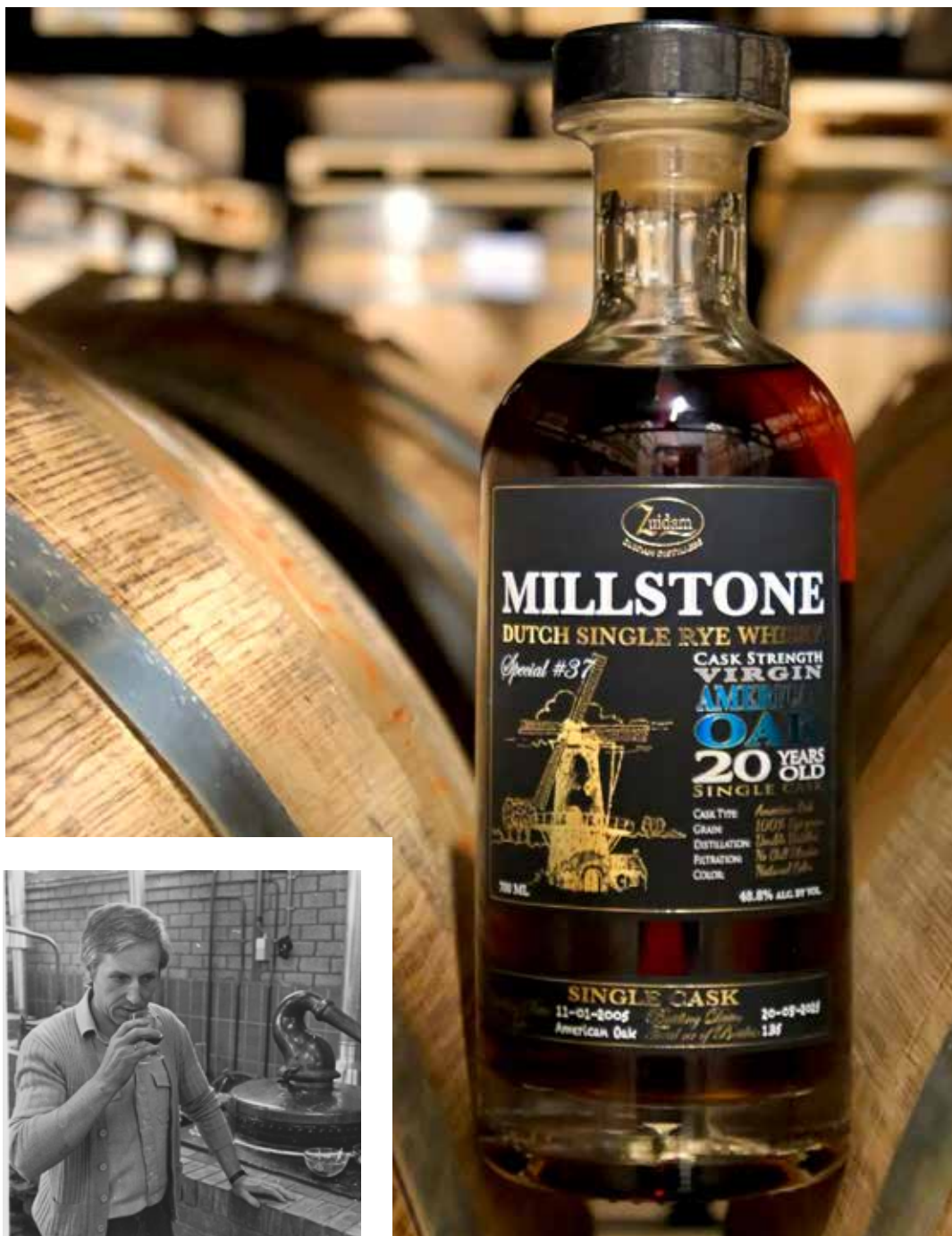
**Millstone 10 Year Old Oloroso** Golden raisins and peeled plums, accented by subtle sweet licorice, mild mint, and rose petals, thread their way through a sound framework of Oloroso fruitiness and the glorious gunpowder tones of ancient Macallans. The sweetness of the raisins moves forward on the palate, with hints of traditional cream Sherry, until a rising spici-

Millstone 4-year-old Amontillado begins with layers of dried fruits, roasted hazelnuts, and a citrus medley that deepens slowly into a warm butterscotch then gradually unfolds in an ever-evolving nose. These layered depths merge again onto a dryish palate with spiced bready malt, clean lumber, mild herbal inflections and the distinctive, pleasing bitterness of almond skin on the finish.

As every bartender will tell you, as they add a few drops of bitters to your cocktail, a little bit of bitterness is actually something that gives extra layers of depth to the flavour. And that holds true for this 4-year-old whisky, which, even at such a tender age, shows masterful balance.

**Millstone 7 Year Old Pajarete Cask** A deeply sweet, dark, fruity profile floods the nose, settling into bursts of freshness. Hints of spice become more pronounced on the creamy and leathery palate. A complex synthesis of flavours embraces raisins, dried figs and other fruits, along with hints of molasses and coffee, just as intense and vibrant semi-dry sherried flavours merge into woody notes through a finish that remains sweet, yet dry and fruity.

“Pajarete is a sweet wine, but nowhere near as sweet as PX. So it’s a softer sweetness, more like Madeira



than like PX,” says Patrick. “Talking about obscure wines, this one is very obscure. Pajarete is made completely in the Sherry style, so with a solera-type aging. And it’s made from PX grapes, but it’s a completely different wine from PX. It’s lighter and makes a great companion for the new-make. It’s got this kind of acidity to it that helps the fruitiness and also helps with the maturation of the whisky. That acidity reacts with the alcohol, and that gives you all kinds of fruity notes.”



“One of the things that always amazes me is that different new-makes also take different flavours from the barrels”

Incidentally, pajarete is not the same thing as the better known and much sweeter wine concentrate called paxarette. Until it was banned in the early 1990s, paxarette was a secret sauce many Scottish whisky makers routinely poured into “tired” casks before filling them with malt spirit. This added deep colour and flavour as the whisky matured. That was not Patrick’s approach, however. Instead, he matured this Millstone Pajarete whisky its full 7 years in authentic pajarete casks, and the effect on the whisky is cosmic.

**Millstone 20 Year Old Rye** An aromatic, fresh nose is structured and layered with caraway, leaning towards traditional rye spices like clove and ginger. Dried apricots and oak highlight a touch of pine needles and orange peel. These flavours whirl in the mouth, with peppery spice that sizzles into the finish with dry toasted oak and bone-dry slightly floral tones. Don’t like rye?

Sample this one’s refined yet robust character before finishing that sentence. Although matured

entirely in American oak barrels, this rye eschews the typical vanilla, caramel and tannins one might expect.

“Different new-makes always takes different flavours from the cask,” Patrick explains. “The 20-year-old,” Patrick whispers as he sips, “I like that one. I think it’s a really good whisky. It’s got those deep caramel vanilla notes, but it also has a freshness to it that you would maybe not expect after 20 years in a virgin oak cask.

**Millstone 27 Year Old Virgin Oak** Surely this whisky, which spent 27 years in American oak casks, will have at least overtones of bourbon, but again, no. Instead, the nose offers subtle hints of nutty, caramelized sugars, then peaches, linking the nose to the palate. Not fresh peaches, though, but canned ones. Other fruity notes, including some spicy zest, are mellowed by the peach, adding complexity to a concentrated palate where dry oak emerges on a lingering finish. Again, Patrick assures that the new-make determines what

flavours the whisky will take from the wood. “And if you leave it longer in the cask, you get a lot more complexity.”

“But what is surprising is if you smell this 27-year-old single malt next to the rye. One of the things that always amazes me is that different new-makes also take different flavours from the barrels, because you’ll find that the rye has that pine-needle freshness, while this malt has a soft fruitiness.





Two completely different flavours, both from the virgin American oak casks, and both without any bourbon notes at all.”

**Millstone 6 Year Old Peated Rivesaltes** Loads of interaction on the nose with deep peat smoke wafting through sweet dried fruits over a nutty underpinning. This oily malt hits three key flavour touchstones on the palate: campfire smokiness, sweet dried raisins, and a perfectly seasoned saltiness. The barbecue-like smoke on the finish makes you wonder if you should be heading to the Netherlands instead of Texas.

Rivesaltes, a renowned fortified sweet wine from southern France, is known for its richness, high sugar content and deep, complex, oxidative character. Intense aromas of dried dark fruits, including figs, dates, prunes, and raisins,

with hazelnut, walnut, roasted cocoa, coffee, and tobacco, all lead into those often elusive and always coveted savoury rancio notes, found more commonly in long-aged cognac. Fresh acidity softens the sweetness, leaving a smooth richness which supports decades-long aging.

“We buy 50 parts per million peated malt, and this six-year-old peated Rivesaltes is just amazing. That’s one thing about peated whisky, it doesn’t have to be exceedingly old to be very complex and interesting,” says Patrick. “And I think what I like about this Rivesaltes is that integration in the nose of the flavours, the whole campfire notes that you get from the peat and that kind of oiliness that you get from the malt.”

## Millstone Peated PX R4

The peat smoke on the nose opens into cocoa, dried fruits, and dark chocolate. The sweet, sherried palate is smooth, resting on a bed of mild smoke, with notes of sweet plums, figs, and golden syrup. Peat smoke lingers longer than the sweet fruity PX notes on the long finish.

“These PX casks were just 85 litres,” Patrick comments with a chuckle. “It was the most stupid sized cask I’ve ever filled, and they didn’t fit the normal racks. They were too small, so they fell right through. We had to keep them on these old figure 8 racks, which wouldn’t stack on anything else, so we had to keep moving them around.”

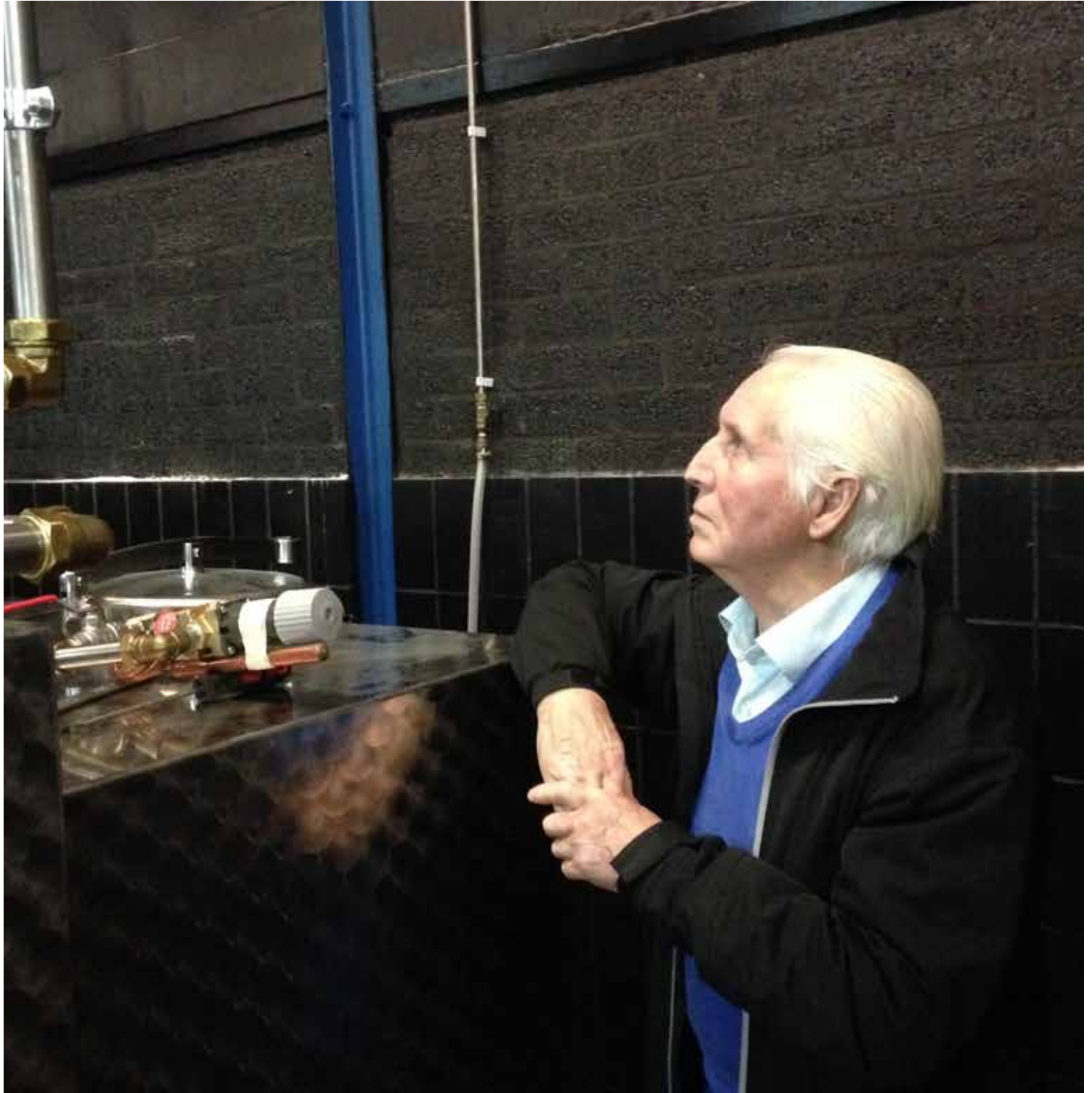


## Zuidam's Legacy

Fred Van Zuidam passed away in 2025, but not without witnessing the success his son, Patrick, achieved with Millstone Dutch Whisky. Fred and his wife H el ene had dedicated their lives to creating

authentic spirits that combine robust and subtle flavours, and Zuidam Distillery still follows some of their recipes. Millstone whisky is Patrick's contribution to a family legacy of flavourful spirits, and it's clear that the spirit of masterful

distiller and blender, Fred Van Zuidam, lives on in each release. Rich, moreish whisky of unparalleled flavour makes the case for Millstone. Try it and see if you agree that Millstone itself is making a convincing case for Dutch whisky.





# FLIPSIDE & THE BLUES

The Legend Behind the Label

WRITTEN BY **BLAIR PHILLIPS**



**R**ock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Neil Giraldo grew up among people who created with their hands. This was evident in his Cleveland community's food, drink, and music. Where he grew up, experiencing creativity didn't necessarily come with a price tag. Musicians gathered to create something from nothing, sharing the experience.

So, when he launched Three Chord Bourbon, he assembled a team to capture and bottle that same essence. Like the music he fell in love with, his whiskey is a tribute to the artists, musicians, and trailblazers who create with their hearts, souls, and hands—where musical notes are not commodities, but a form of self-expression with limitless possibilities. When Three Chord released Flipside Triplewood Bourbon Volume-0001, honouring blues icon Guitar Shorty, in a growing lineup of new core expressions, it was time to listen. Three Chord delves deep into the stories that shaped music, paying homage not only to the musicians but also to the graphic designers, concert photographers, and everyone else who create or appreciate music as an art form.

Guitar Shorty is a contemporary blues legend and a trailblazer in stage showmanship. He's a guitar hero who, unlike Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, never gained widespread fame through his music. You had to find him in a dimly lit club, and once you did, you'd understand. "He would stand out as soon as you put eyes on him," says Giraldo. "How was it that he was able to play guitar in the craziest positions? A real showman."

On September 8, 1934, Guitar Shorty entered the world as David William Kearney. It wasn't long before he picked up a guitar after listening to artists like B.B. King, T-Bone Walker,



and John Lee Hooker. At seventeen, Kearney landed a gig with Walter Johnson's swingin' 18-piece orchestra. As he was so young and still developing, a club owner called him Guitar Shorty. The nickname stuck.

Blues legend Willie Dixon heard Shorty, liked what he had to offer, and encouraged the young musician to develop a voice that told a story. This opened doors to a stint with Ray Charles and then an opening slot with

one of Guitar Shorty's idols, Guitar Slim, known for his wild stage antics. Guitar Shorty absorbed the soulfulness of Ray Charles and the athletic showmanship of Guitar Slim, blending them before joining Sam Cooke's touring band. A star grew brighter to those who knew.

He sings as passionately with his guitar as with his voice. Buddy Guy's playing reflects Shorty's identity, and Jimi Hendrix amplified his influence.



Shorty attacks each note with intensity and a raw, piercing edge, similar to how saxophonist Sonny Rollins attacked a note. But Shorty's powerful right hand contrasts with how he extends a note with soulful emotion into a stage-shaking vibrato with his left.

"Guitar Shorty's music is a funky, boisterous buffet of off-the-wall blues fun," said *Downbeat Magazine* as his underground reputation grew. *Billboard* called his sound, "Blistering, modern blues-rock, bristles with galvanizing guitar and forceful vocals."



Reviewers were captivated by Shorty's stage show, which featured an electrifying display of headstands, somersaults, backflips, and him playing the guitar behind his head. Jimi Hendrix would catch a Guitar Shorty performance whenever he could and was mesmerized by his showmanship. It's said that the reason Jimi Hendrix set his guitar on fire was that he couldn't do a backflip. At one performance, rock star photographer Larry Hulst captured the perfect shot of Shorty with his legs in the air. That image also captures the vibe of the Three Chord bottle where it now appears.

Hulst's photos now form a black-and-white collection, covering five decades of rock history. Like Guitar Shorty, his photography established a connection that captured the raw energy and emotion of a performance in a single, powerful image. Hulst didn't work from backstage; he preferred to be among the fans in the crowd. His photography has appeared on the now-iconic pages of *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, and *Guitar Player Magazine*, with his images chosen as

album art for Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, and Bruce Springsteen.

If only you could hear Hulst's Flipside photo. With Guitar Shorty flipped over, the guitar almost behind his head and his legs in the air, you'd expect to hear wild feedback, distortion, and complete chaos. Instead, Shorty would just keep playing as he always did, speaking to the crowd with guitar licks filled with raw emotion. That's not to say he didn't play with flash. He did. But he never sold his soul; the feeling was always there.

"Flipside is a unique story in that we found that photo, and it kick-started a whole reinvention of the brand, instead of starting a rebrand and incorporating the photo into the story. We wanted to do something new and almost outlandish after reading more and more about Guitar Shorty's story," says Three Chord Whiskey Maker Kars Peterson. "He was so influential in so many ways but still so unknown at the same time, and we wanted to continue that legacy of blazing new trails and creating something unique and interesting."



Series releases, when I collaborate with bands to come up with custom blends, I try to listen to their discographies while I blend. I find it helps me embody the spirit of the music and channel it into coming up with something that's actually connected with the band, instead of just throwing something together and hoping that they like it," says Peterson. "I took the same approach when working on Flipside. It inspired me to come up with something novel yet approachable for people. A lot like Hendrix had a big part in reinventing rock and roll, his blues roots shone through in his works, I wanted to come up with a new approach to whiskey finishing and blending while still staying true to what people might expect of an affordable sipping whiskey."

Blending whiskey and discovering music are about respecting roots and traditions while exploring new horizons. When food, drink, or music finds harmony between the familiar and the unexpected, it tells a story that simmers. Flipside bridges these worlds—inviting you to put on a record and savour whiskey born of the same creative spirit. Turn it up, raise a glass and let the music play on.



"It was less his sound and more his showmanship, and not to be afraid," says Giraldo. "Just move and play whatever feels right for you." But when you listen to Guitar Shorty's later records, he remains consistent, always hitting notes with purpose, yet it never seems like he's about to lose control. Every note is deliberate. Guitar Shorty can say more with two notes than some musicians could express on an entire record. His playing feels simple to the ear because he hits the right note exactly where it needs to be. A single-note bend or a two-note hook with sweeping vibrato to emphasise a lyric is all that's needed. His style is both bold and balanced, and this is something that Flipside Triplewood Bourbon Volume-0001's flavour profile captures.

We often mistake scorching high-proof and heavily woody whiskeys as bold and complex. But, this overlooks whiskeys that balance boldness with subtle layers of elegant flavours. Elegance is frequently mistaken for humdrum simplicity compared to high-proof, palate-numbing, barn-burners. The latter has become an easy way out. Not with Flipside; this is easy-going and approachable whiskey, like a Guitar Shorty lick. Yet, it also features Shorty-inspired layers blended to bring balance to a straight Kentucky bourbon that's aged in new, charred American oak, then finished in new and used toasted French and American oak barrels.

"Something that I carried over from working on our annual Backstage

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# TALNUA DISTILLERY

UNVEILS OLD SAINT'S KEEP 2026







A unique expression celebrating both gaelic distilling tradition and collaboration within the Colorado craft distilling community. Arvada, Colorado — Talnua Distillery proudly announces the release of Olde Saint's Keep 2026, an American Single Pot Still Whiskey special release.



This year's expression was created to honour the high-quality and collaborative spirit of Colorado distilling. Rooted in tradition and elevated by community, this limited-edition whiskey stands as a celebration of shared craft, timed fittingly with the spirit of St. Patrick's Day, a holiday long defined by gathering and connection. At its core, this release is a tribute to the state's esteemed distilling community, award-winning producers whose commitment to quality continues to elevate Colorado spirits on the world stage. A True Colorado Finish.

The whiskey for this year's expression was aged for a minimum of three years in Char #2 American White Oak barrels, then finished for 6-9 months in unique casks sourced from six Colorado distilleries, each contributing a distinct layer of character and complexity. These finishing casks include, listed alphabetically by distillery:



**Bear Creek Distillery**  
Rum cask

**Deerhammer Distilling Co.**  
Apple Brandy cask

**The Family Jones Distillery**  
Rye Whiskey cask

**Laws Whiskey House**  
Wheat Whiskey cask

**Spirit Hound Distillers**  
Single Malt Whiskey cask

**Storm King Distilling Co.**  
Bourbon Whiskey cask




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## Production Details

*Mashbill: 50% malted barley / 50% unmalted barley*

*Distillation: Triple distilled*

*Age Statement: Minimum 4 years*

*ABV: 50% | Proof: 100*

*Bottles Released: 1,200*

*MSRP: \$110.00*

“At Talnua, tradition isn’t static, it’s built together,” said Founder/Master Distiller Patrick Miller. “Olde Saint’s Keep 2026 is our way of honoring the people, places, and producers who make Colorado distilling what it is today. St. Patrick’s Day has always been about community, and this release is a reflection of that spirit.”



# NO TOWER LIKE THE WIZARD'S TOWER

The Wizard Academy is a business school for entrepreneurs based out of Austin, Texas. It is home to the Whisky Marketing School, a whisky sommelier training program. Daniel Whittington is the Chancellor of both, and contributes to an ongoing series of thoughts about whisky, marketing, and life. Here is one such thought from **"DRINK WHISKEY. DON'T BE AN A\$\$HOLE"**

WRITTEN BY DANIEL WHITTINGTON



Have you ever heard the sentence, "There's no Guinness like the Guinness in Ireland"? I've always had a small problem with that statement, because, in the left-brain science world, there's no way that's true.

Guinness is massive; they're brewed in over 50 countries and available in over 120 countries. In 2011, they sold enough Guinness to fill 333 Olympic swimming pools.

They have a lot of money invested in making sure they can put out a consistent product across the planet. It would be insane for them to make a product that is inferior everywhere except a small island off the coast of England.

But in spite of that, the right brain knows the real truth. There's no Guinness like the Guinness sipped in the corner snug of a 200 year old Irish pub.

That is why Wizard Academy classes will always be held inside the Wizard's Tower in South Austin on one of the ancient holy grounds of the Texas Hill Country.

Your left brain will tell you this would have been a lot easier if you simply learned the facts in a zoom call from the comfort of your dining room table.

Or maybe when you get to campus, you should suggest to Dave Young that we take the Wizard Academy on the road to a La Quinta ballroom near you so that you can save on travel expenses.

But as you climb the winding stairs from the Don and Sherry Kuhl Art Gallery, you make your way past Gordon, the Tower Guard, prepping for lunch in the Property Guys dining room. You cross through the wooden door into the vaulted ceiling Eye of the

Storm where loud music, wine, and fresh coffee welcome you into the first day of a new class. You meet interesting strangers and start conversations that you know will continue long after dinner and into the night outside the Whisky Vault patio.

That night you crawl down the hill under a canopy of stars and go to rest in your room at Engelbrecht House. And that is when your right brain will remind you of something far more true. Something your left brain is only beginning to understand.

“  
There's no  
place like  
home.”



A photograph of the Arran distillery building, a large white structure with a dark roof and a prominent wooden distillation tower. The building is set against a backdrop of a large, flat-topped mountain under a grey sky. In the foreground, there is a parking lot with several cars, including a white car, a dark blue car, a maroon SUV with a roof rack, and a black Volvo SUV. The text 'Arran Single Malt' is visible on the building's facade. The title 'FROM SWEET NORTH TO SMOKEY SOUTH' is overlaid in large white letters, with 'THE TALE OF TWO ARRANS' in smaller white letters below it.

# FROM SWEET NORTH TO SMOKEY SOUTH

## THE TALE OF TWO ARRANS

WRITTEN BY **INKA LARISSA**





**A**rran is the home of two very different independently owned distilleries, Lochranza and Lagg. Lochranza is nestled amongst the peaks of the north and Lagg Distillery is located at the southern tip of the island overlooking the iconic Ailsa Craig. The Isle of Arran is known as Scotland in miniature due to its varied landscape. Within a small radius you'll find

dramatic mountains, glens, waterfalls, castles, sandy beaches and rocky coastlines.

The Highland–Lowland boundary fault line goes through the middle of the island. The north is visually rugged and mountainous like the Highlands and the south has softer, rolling farmland, typical of the Lowland part of Scotland. This also means that Lagg

is a Lowland distillery while Lochranza makes Highland whisky, although, neither really fits the traditional scotch whisky regional mould. Lagg couldn't be further away from a conventional Lowland spirit, which tends to be light, floral and malty. Their single malt is rich, earthy and heavily peated (50ppm). Lochranza, on the other hand, produces a sweeter whisky style.

## Lochranza Distillery

Lochranza Distillery has been making single malt whisky for over three decades. As one of the few independent distilleries in Scotland, it's known for crafting sweet and fruity expressions with significant weight on the texture that translates into a creamy mouthfeel. The distillery has a dedicated fan base who appreciate the consistent quality across all their releases throughout the decades. Their whisky is better known as Arran Malt; you rarely hear people calling their whisky by the name of the distillery.

coming atmosphere. The tours are fun, interactive and informative, with each tour guide bringing their own energy. The people who work for Lochranza (and Lagg) are very much part of the distillery's story.

When it comes to the location, the distillery has a stunning backdrop of hills with golden eagles flying above. Visitors can often spot one or more during the distillery tour. In fact, in 1994 the construction of the buildings had to be paused to allow the eagle family quiet space for nesting. They have remained in the area ever since.

Distillation is done slowly, at six to seven litres per minute, allowing the alcohol to interact more with the copper. It takes about two hours to collect the heart, the middle cut of the spirit run. The flow rate is one of the slowest in Scotland.

The cut point is quite early to help to avoid the heavier flavours and to leave more lighter, fruity notes. The distillery's total maximum capacity is just over one million litres, so it is a relatively small site. The focus is on lower quantities but of very high-quality whisky. Perhaps this is the reason why its quality is consistent and



Despite its core devotees, Arran single malt has been underrated for a long time, but perhaps within the last few years things have started to change. Maybe it's the upgraded bottle design that is catching the eye of the enthusiasts, or perhaps the word is finally getting around.

Lochranza is not simply all about the whisky, it is also about the people and the place. You really feel this when visiting the distillery. You are greeted with big smiles and a wel-

### Discover the sweet side

Arran new make is very fruity and there are many elements during the production process that help to create the desired fruit-forward flavour profile. Fermentation takes around 85 hours, creating a wash that tastes like cider rather than beer. The stills are fairly small with a long and narrow nearly 90-degree angle on the lyne arm to maximise the copper contact.

appreciated by many. The distillery also keeps its whisky accessible and affordable.

The Arran new-make really works beautifully in various casks; and no matter what the cask or finish, you can always detect the distillery's DNA. Since the launch of its sister distillery, Lagg, Lochranza has phased out its own peated production. A few smoky releases may still be found in shops or in the warehouse, but no peated spirit will be made at the distillery.

## Lagg Distillery

Lagg has played a big part in the island's whisky history. Arran was once a hive of whisky making, its spirit flowing freely long before legal distillation reshaped the industry. To provide extra income, various communities across the island would make their own spirit and sell it on the mainland.

The Firth of Clyde had supported fishermen and whisky transportation for centuries. The fishing boats would take the illicit spirit, widely known as 'Arran water', to eager buyers along the coast.

At one time there was a legal distillery in the village of Lagg. It operated only briefly before closing in 1840, hindered by poor infrastructure, transport difficulties and growing competition from larger mainland rivals. During its on and off operation, the distillery's production peaked in

1833 at just under 26,000 litres. For contrast, the new Lagg Distillery made around 500,000 litres in its first year of distilling. It would be nearly two centuries before distilling returned to the south end of Arran, when Isle of Arran Distillers revived the tradition in 2019.

The distillery building is designed to fit the surrounding nature. The green roof is made up of a series of sedum species, some mosses and grasses, allowing it to change colour with the seasons.

### Peated spirit

The barley for Lagg is dried over peat smoke, but none of that peat comes from Arran. The island was designated a UNESCO Global Geopark last year, meaning its landscapes, including peatlands, are now protected. The peat used at the distillery comes from the Highlands.



Even if the distillery uses various levels of phenol parts per million (ppm), usually 20 to 50ppm, the whisky isn't medicinal, Islay-style but meatier and more full-bodied. Their starting point is a warm spirit with light fruitiness and an oily mouthfeel.

Most of their barley comes from the east coast of mainland Scotland.



For a short window each year, Lagg produces new-make spirit from barley grown in fields close to the distillery. Some intriguing releases will emerge from these trials in due course. One batch of the local barley was peated to an impressive 135ppm, while earlier experiments included a 90ppm spirit and an unpeated run. It will be

interesting to see how these evolve during maturation.

At Lagg, they use a mechanical rake to stir the mash. Raking will even out the temperature and improve water flow. It contributes to a cloudy wort in contrast to the clear one at Lochranza. The point of this step is to lessen the fruitiness of the

fermentation and to bring a more nutty and earthy character.

Both stills are short and plump, the wash still shaped like an onion bulb, and the spirit still more like a lamp glass with a downward sloping lyne arm.

When it comes to ageing, Lagg Distillery doesn't shy away from unique cask types. Their core releases use classic ex-bourbon and Oloroso sherry casks. The small-batch editions have come in anything from Palo Cortado sherry to tequila, rum and Tokaji wine.

## Releases to keep an eye on

Lochranza Distillery will bottle its 30-year-old single malt again this year, with greater numbers for worldwide availability. The distillery is also bringing back a much-loved classic that's still fresh in everyone's memory and palates – make sure to keep an eye on their socials for announcements. This year sees the final chapter of the Arran Signature Series (following Remnant Renegade, Barrel Bonfire, and Duero Discovery). Made using hand-selected casks chosen and put together by the Distillery Manager Stewart Bowman, these whiskies showcase the unusual and adventurous sides of the Arran Malt. If you missed the first batch of Arran Barley, the second edition of the hugely successful 10-year-old release using barley from Bellevue Farm in the southern part of Arran will be available later on in the year.

Finally, Lagg Distillery is bringing out two more global small-batch releases this year (hopefully continuing its streak of interesting cask finishes), as well as a potential single cask edition.

@onthesauceagain  
@whiskysisters.podcast



# TEST YOUR WHISKY WISDOM

Some friends from the Whisky World took time to participate with us and share their knowledge with you.

What do you know about  
the whisky you're drinking ?



Co-FOUNDER & MASTER DISTILLER  
ISLE OF RAASAY DISTILLERY

## Alasdair Day

**Question-1** Given that there are over 600 different oak species in the world and over 500 in the Northern Hemisphere how many different oak species are used for maturing whisky?

**Question-2** Given that the yeast dies off after about 70 hours (three days) into fermentation, what type of fermentation occurs during longer fermentations (between 3 and 7 days or longer) after the yeast dies?

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TEST YOUR WHISKY WISDOM



DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION OPERATIONS &  
HEAD DISTILLER, NASHVILLE YARDS  
**Devin Walden**

**Question-1**

How many distilleries are currently on the Tennessee Whiskey Trail?

**Question-2**

True or False: One of the requirements, by law, in order for a whiskey to be labeled as "Tennessee Whiskey" has always been that the whiskey distillate must be filtered through maple charcoal before going into a barrel?



BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR  
GLENMORANGIE AND ARDBEG  
**Bry Simpson**

**Question-1**

Which famous Glenmorangie Single Malt Scotch Whisky uses Ruby Port Wine Casks for cask finishing?

**Question-2**

What is the name of apparatus used by Ardbeg to filter out Heavy Vapours during distillation?

TEST YOUR WHISKY WISDOM



NATIONAL BRAND AMBASSADOR  
CHIVAS BROTHERS

Jack McCreadie

**Question-1**

In 1822, King George IV was the first reigning British Monarch to visit Scotland in over 160 years. Whilst on his state visit to Edinburgh, the King asked to try which Scotch Whisky?

**Question-2**

Aberlour's intensely sherried cask-strength whisky takes its name from Scottish Gaelic – but what does "A'bunadh" mean?



BLENDER & WHISKY PROGRAM MANAGER  
AT SONS OF VANCOUVER DISTILLERY

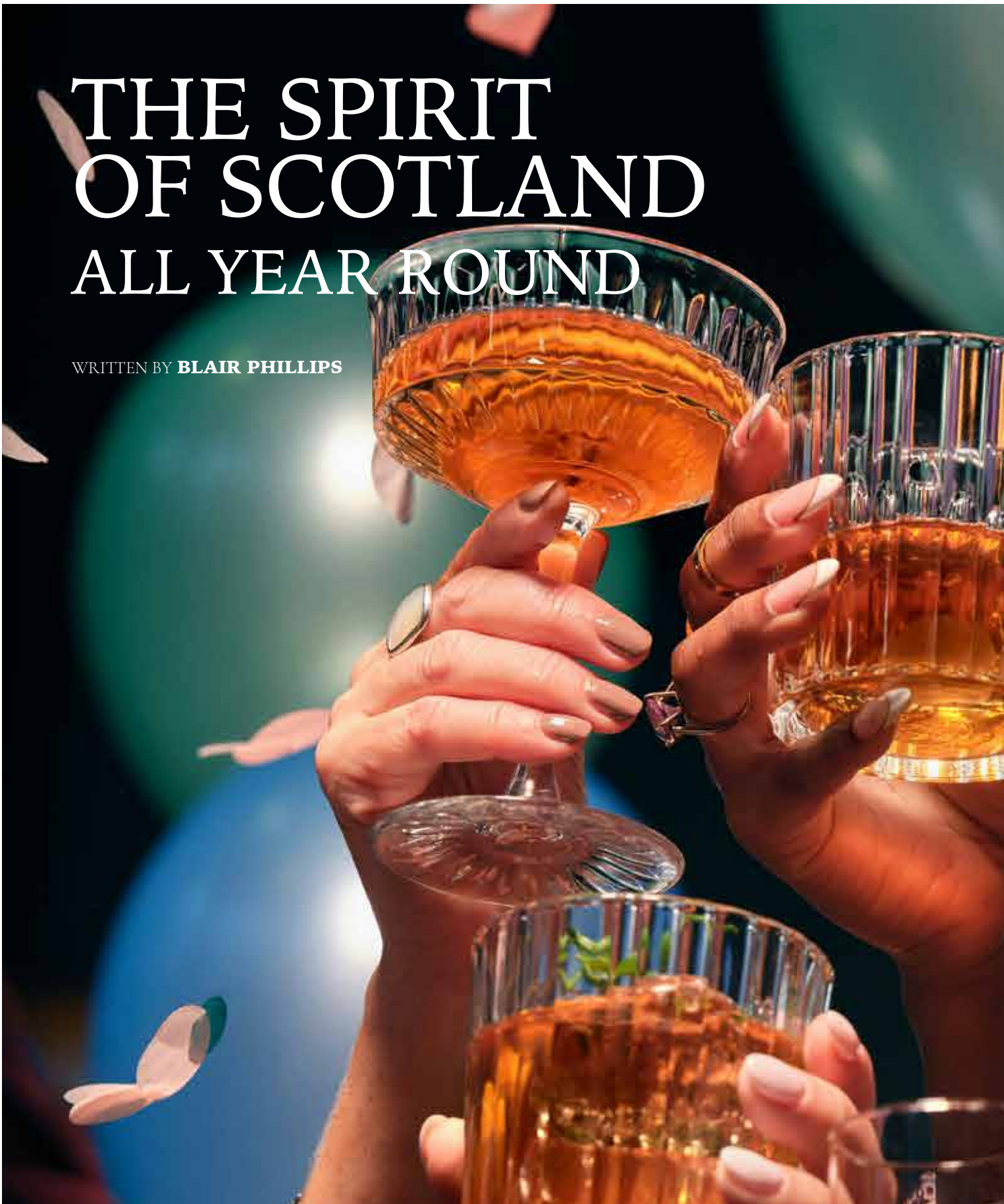
Jenna Diubaldo

**Question-1** In 2023 at the Canadian Whisky Awards, Sons of Vancouver Distillery became known as the first independent distillery to ever win which prestigious award?

**Question-2** A standard barrel of whisky is known to hold what volume of liquid?

# THE SPIRIT OF SCOTLAND ALL YEAR ROUND

WRITTEN BY **BLAIR PHILLIPS**





**H**istorically authentic Scottish tradition requires Scottish chefs to mince sheep's liver, heart, and lungs with oatmeal, mutton suet, onions, and spices, then stuff the mixture into a sheep's stomach and boil it to make haggis. Each January 25th, however, most often it's a variation of this old-school recipe that appears on Robbie Burns' Day menus worldwide, served with traditional neeps and tatties—Scottish code for turnips and potatoes. To wash it down? Plenty of classic single malt whisky spanning the range from bold peat bombs like Ardbeg 10-Year-Old, to exquisitely balanced Glenmorangie 12-Year-Olds.

Food historians tell us haggis existed long before it gained popularity in the late 1700s. For many, the thought of eating sheep's innards wrapped in its stomach is gut-wrenching nightmare fuel on a plate, keeping haggis virgins awake morbidly counting sheep the night before their first Burns' Day dinner. Back in the day, Scots weren't exactly lining up around the block to eat at fancy haggis establishments either, because there weren't any. The dish became popular at home because the ingredients were cheap, and Scotland was going through rough economic times. Eighteenth-century Scots were resilient, though, and did what was needed to get by until some Gaelic genius invented the deep-fried Mars bar.

Renowned Scottish bard, Robert Burns, witnessed the growing popularity of haggis as more than just a dish for making ends meat. In 1786, he published his first poem on the subject, calling it "Address to a Haggis."

An ode to this culinary classic, that he truly loved, Burns penned the poem in prose that might benefit from more than a wee splash of whisky to be understood in today's English.

When King George IV visited Scotland in 1822, the Scots rolled out a red carpet of national hospitality. "Gie him a Haggis!" they cried,



---

Ye Pow'rs  
wha mak  
mankind your care,  
And dish them out their  
bill o' fare,  
Auld Scotland wants  
nae skinking ware  
That jaups in  
luggies;  
But, if ye wish her  
gratefu' prayer,  
Gie her a Haggis!

---



and it became his main course. The fallout was a finger-licking good boost to haggis's growing fashionable reputation. As it became a romantic entrée among the upper class, its popularity skyrocketed.

It was 1843, when a farmer named William Matheson set out with his wife, Anne, to build a distillery in the Scottish Highlands. Their distillery was destined to become the home of Glenmorangie, Gaelic for "Valley of Tranquillity." And for some, the valley of flavours in an outstanding single malt is all that's needed to put baaaaaad dreams aside and work up the courage to try haggis for the first time. But by the time whisky first flowed from Matheson's stills, Robbie Burns was no longer alive. Had he been, we certainly wouldn't be talking about haggis on Robbie Burns Day, would we? Instead, and with every sheep's hearty endorsement, we'd be reciting his "Address to Glenmorangie", a true staple of single malt whisky.

Today, chefs worldwide have elevated haggis, serving it as a terrine with celeriac purée, as deep-fried haggis balls, pastry-wrapped haggis, or as perfectly seasoned haggis drizzled with whisky cream sauce. The Caledonian in Toronto, for instance, elevates their haggis – a staple on the Pub's menu – by preparing it with lamb, oats, and spices, towering over a bed of mashed potatoes and turnip, graced with an elegant, savoury gravy, and with a selection of Ardbeg malts at the ready to pour. Meanwhile, the Wedgewood Restaurant in Edinburgh serves peppered haggis seasonally, with potato rösti, pistachio, and neep ketchup. Keeping up with gastronomic trends, Scottish chefs have more recently developed vegetarian and gluten-free versions of this national dish.

Today's haggis is far from the adveturous boiled sheep's stomach of Robbie's days, and like Glenmorangie, it is too enjoyable to be served just once a year. Traditional Burns Day fare and the malts that accompany it should be savoured throughout the year, at the table and afterwards in restful dreams of sheep jumping a fence.





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# The Art and Science of BLENDING AMERICAN WHISKEY and BOURBON

A Blender's Perspective on Complexity, Integrity, and Possibility

WRITTEN BY **ANTHONY DEYOUNG**



## Why Blend?

I believe, unequivocally, that some of the finest whiskies in the world are blended. Not diluted. Not disguised. Blended. At its best, blending is not compromised; it is composition. It is the deliberate orchestration of variables that no single distillery, mash bill, yeast strain, or warehouse can fully express on its own. Blending is where chemistry meets intuition, where structure meets creativity, and where experience matters more than dogma.

When two or more whiskies are brought together, especially from different distilleries, the resulting spirit can achieve a level of complexity, balance, and narrative depth that transcends its individual components.

That outcome is never accidental. At Three Chord, we always say the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

This article is written from the perspective of a practitioner. It is not an argument against distilling excellence, nor is it a defense of poor practices. It is an explanation of why blending, when executed with skill, transparency, and integrity, belongs at the highest tier of bourbon and American whiskey.

## Blending Is an American Tradition

Blending is not new, and it is certainly not un-American. Prior to Prohibition, blending was both common and respected. Rectifiers, wholesalers, and merchants routinely combined whiskies from multiple distilleries to achieve consistency, regional style, or a distinctive house profile. Many of the most prominent whiskey names of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were blended by design. "Blending allows us to think like composers instead of technicians—structure, rhythm, harmony."

— Neil Giraldo, Three Chord Bourbon

At the turn of the 19th century, Buffalo, NY was a city of massive culture and Growth. The world's fair in 1901 came to the 8th largest city in the United States and Chuck Person and Sons was the cities most prestigious whiskey blender...

C. Person's Sons was a whiskey distillery and wholesale distribution center

in Buffalo, New York from 1850 until closing due to Prohibition in 1920. Known throughout all of western New York as the "foremost whiskey rectifier", C. Person's Sons was known for integrity, the excellence of its wares, and the courteous handling of its customers.

C. Person's Sons was founded by Charles Person, a German immigrant from the Alsace-Lorraine region. Person arrived in the United States at the age of fourteen and at the age of 23 opened his business, simply called "Charles Person's", in a rented space of twenty-by-thirty feet.

Developing his skill and taste, Person also started a family with wife Sophia in 1850, a family that would grow to include ten children (six boys, four girls). As early as 1875, the business listing filed by Person was now titled "Charles Person and Son", and by 1885, "Charles Person and Sons."

In the few years leading up to the Volstead Act and Prohibition, C. Person's Sons enjoyed ever-increasing success. The firm was eventually established on historic Elm Street in Buffalo, occupying an impressive five-story building, specifically built for the firm. The building had lavished salesrooms and massive storerooms.

In 1908, C. Person's Sons appeared before a New York district court for



violation of applicable laws relating to distilleries and whiskey as a medicinal component only. In the case, 93 cases of C. Person's Sons whiskey was confiscated and ordered destroyed, unless properly packaged as a medicinal medium only, along with payment of a \$2,000 bond. According to case files, the packaging was corrected and the bond was paid.

When Prohibition was finally enacted, C. Person's Sons was forced to close down, being too large of a business to continue running as a speakeasy or moonshine operation. Two weeks before the official operation. Two weeks before the official

closing, people from all over Western New York began lining up to buy and presumably stock up on what would soon become an illegal commodity. The line formed each day, all day, and when the business finally closed its doors, there were still 2,000 cases of whiskey remaining, giving testament to the size and volume of C. Person's Sons business.

Prohibition fractured that system. When legal whiskey production returned, the industry understandably emphasized single-distillery identity as a signal of legitimacy and quality. Over time, blending became unfairly associated with dilution, deception, or inferiority. Perception

shaped more by history and occasional bad actors than by the practice itself.

Today's resurgence of blending is not a rejection of distilling craftsmanship. It is a continuation of American whiskey's original creativity and expression.

### **Every blend begins with structure, and structure begins with grain**

When blending whiskies from different distilleries, one immediately gains access

to multiple grain sources and mash bill philosophies. These differences are not cosmetic; they are foundational. Grain selection influences starch composition, protein levels, oil content, and ultimately mouthfeel and flavor density.

A high corn bourbon may deliver sweetness and roundness, while a higher rye bourbon contributes spice, lift, and dryness, sweetness and roundness, while a higher rye bourbon contributes spice, lift, and dryness. Wheat forward mash bills can soften edges and introduce pastry like notes, while malted barley adds enzymatic depth, nuttiness, and connective tissue.

Blending allows these elements to support one another, sweetness framing spice, softness cushioning intensity, and grain-driven flavors layering rather than colliding. Water rarely receives the attention it deserves, but blenders know its influence is profound. Two whiskies from two distilleries almost always mean two different water chemistries.

Variables such as pH level, calcium concentration, magnesium content, and total dissolved solids shape fermentation behavior long before distillation begins. Calcium rich water often supports yeast health and clarity, while magnesium can influence metabolic efficiency when properly balanced. pH affects enzyme activity, fermentation speed, and ester development.

When whiskies made with different water profiles are blended, the result is not simply a flavor merge, it is the convergence of distinct biochemical environments, each leaving a lasting imprint on aroma, texture, and balance.

## Fermentation: Where Flavor Is Born

Fermentation is the true engine of whiskey flavor. Differences in fermentation methodology can create dramatic contrasts between otherwise similar mash bills. “Fermentation creates the whiskey. Distillation and aging only shape what fermentation gives you.” Dave Pickerell, Master Distiller.

Ferm Solutions founder Dr Pat Heist has guided us, at Three Chord, to various yeast strain selections, fermentation, duration, and temperature control

influence the final distillate. We worked with Wilderness Trail to master a contributor to our blend. Short, warmer fermentations may emphasize grain-forward and cereal notes, while longer, cooler fermentations often produce higher ester concentrations—fruity, floral, and aromatic compounds that define complexity.

For a blender, this diversity is invaluable. It allows the construction of a broader aromatic spectrum: stone fruit layered over caramel, citrus lifting oak, savory notes anchoring sweetness. Fermentation-driven character is often what gives a blend its soul. Distillation differences between distilleries are numerous and consequential. Still design, column height, number of plates, cut points for heads and tails, and proof off the still all shape the spirit’s texture and intensity. Higher-proof distillates tend to be lighter and more refined, emphasizing elegance and clarity. Lower-proof distillates often retain heavier congeners, oils, and mouth-coating richness.

When a blend works, it doesn’t announce its parts. It tells a story. Blending allows these contrasting styles to co-exist. It is how elegance gains weight, and how power gains precision. A successful blend often contains both restraint and presence qualities that rarely come from a single distillation philosophy alone. Aging is not merely time in wood; it is time in a specific place under specific conditions.

Temperature fluctuation, humidity, air pressure, and airflow all

influence how whiskey interacts with oak. A spirit aged in a hot, dry climate may extract aggressively, developing bold oak, spice, and tannin. One aged in a cooler or more humid environment may mature more slowly, preserving freshness and balance. These are facts that have come to the industry’s forefront, only recently. Blending whiskies matured under different environmental conditions allows extremes to be reconciled. Intensity can be tempered with elegance. Structure can be deepened without excess. This is where balance becomes intentional rather than incidental.

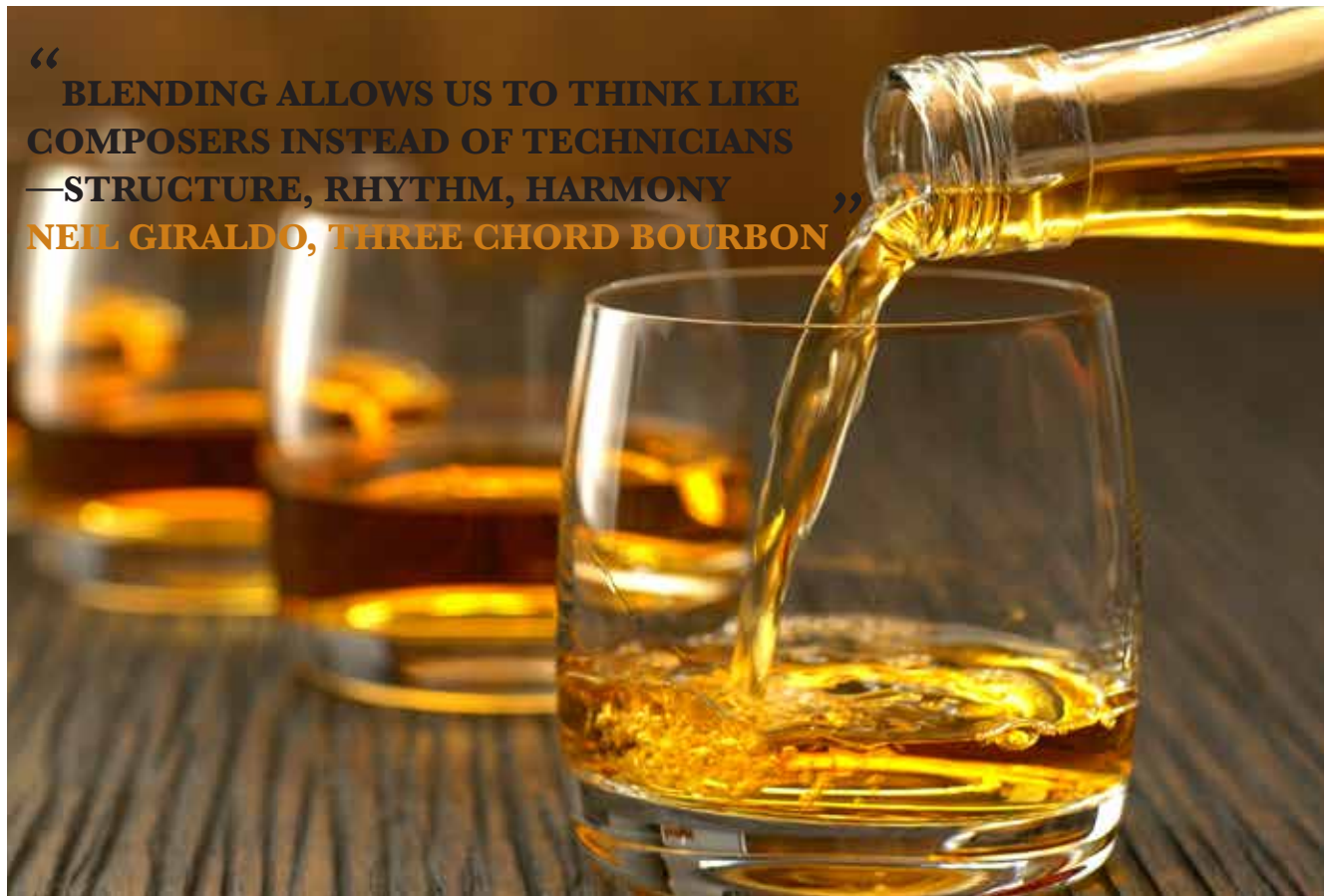
## The True Art: Making Whiskies Work Together

At Three Chord, we believe, the hardest part of blending is not finding good whiskey. It is making multiple whiskies function as a unified whole. I personally have turned two A barrels into a D lot of whiskey, and I’ve taken a B barrel and a D barrel and turned them into an A lot. Weird, right?

Integration requires discipline, patience, and humility. Components that shine individually may dominate or clash when combined. Others that seem understated alone may become essential in a blend. Time after marrying matters. Oxygen exposure matters. Rest matters. “Our goal has never been to make whiskey taste the same every time—it’s to make it taste right every time.”

— Joe Beatrice of Barrell  
Craft Spirits





“  
**BLENDING ALLOWS US TO THINK LIKE  
 COMPOSERS INSTEAD OF TECHNICIANS**  
**—STRUCTURE, RHYTHM, HARMONY**”  
**NEIL GIRALDO, THREE CHORD BOURBON**

When blending is successful, the result is not a checklist of flavors but a coherent experience. The whiskey does not announce its parts; it tells a story. “Blending isn’t about hiding flaws. It’s about building something you can’t get from a single barrel or a single distillery.”

— **Dave Pickerell, Master Distiller**

Cask finishing, when used responsibly, is an extension of the blend’s narrative, not a correction for flaws. Secondary maturation in wine, rum, brandy, or fortified wine casks can introduce complementary aromas, enhance mouthfeel, and add layers of complexity. However, restraint is critical. Finishing should support the base whiskey, not overwrite it.

**Cask Finishing:  
 A Second Act, not a Disguise**

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Secondary maturation in wine, rum, brandy, or fortified wine casks can introduce complementary aromas, enhance mouthfeel, and add layers of complexity. However, restraint is critical. Finishing should support the base whiskey, not overwrite it. A well-finished blend still tastes like whiskey first. The finish should feel inevitable, not imposed—an additional chapter rather than a plot twist.

**Authenticity, Transparency,  
 and Consumer Trust**

Blending demands honesty. Consumers deserve transparency about sourcing, blending methodology, and finishing practices. Authenticity does not require distilling every drop in-house. It requires telling the truth about what you do and why you do it. Sourcing whiskey is not inherently negative. Dave Schmier from Proof and Wood once told me sourcing isn’t a crime! When practiced responsibly, it

drives innovation, expands stylistic expression, and enhances the consumer experience by offering something genuinely new.

**Every industry has bad actors. They should not define an entire category**

Conclusion: Complexity with Purpose Blending is an act of respect—for the distillers who created the components, for the materials and environments that shaped them, and for the consumer who will ultimately experience the result. When executed with skill, integrity, and transparency, blending can produce some of the most complex, expressive, and rewarding whiskeys available today.

**The future of American whiskey is not singular. It is plural. And blending has always had and will continue to have a rightful place within it.**



# HENNESSY

COGNAC XO and VSOP  
Lunar New Year Limited Editions

## HENNESSY X.O

In 1870, the Master Blender Emile Fillioux crafted a special blend for Maurice Hennessy. More than 150 years later, Hennessy's powerful, balanced "Extra Old" blend remains the cognac of choice for sharing with one's inner circle.

Hennessy celebrates Lunar New Year 2026 with a limited edition X.O, honoring the Year of the Horse. The artistic design captures the animal's energy and grace with equine motifs on a dark red neck capsule and an eco-designed cream gift box with gold accents. The X.O carafe, adorned with a vibrant red and gold label, is an ideal gift for art and exceptional cognac lovers.

## HENNESSY VSOP

Ever true to its heritage, Hennessy V.S.O.P once again revolutionizes the culture of luxury spirits by breaking down the boundaries between past, present, and future.

This Lunar New Year 2026 carafe captures the majestic animal's energy, freedom and grace in rich red with gold detailing, while its eco-designed gift box features a sculptural, embossed equine motif in satin cream and red accents. An expression of timeless elegance honoring the deep ties Hennessy has forged with China since 1859. For art enthusiasts and cognac lovers alike.





# FLAVOURFUL RECIPES For Your Chill Time

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*Clodagh's Happy Cooking: 100 Easy, Speedy,  
Healthy Recipes for Good Mood Food*  
by **Clodagh McKenna**

*Better at Home: Recipes for Big Nights In*  
by **Colu Henry**

*and Gather Together: Delightful Décor and Simple Recipes  
for Every Occasion*  
by **Robyn Chubey**





# GUINNESS & TREACLE BROWN SODA BREAD

Recipes from *Clodagh's Happy Cooking: 100 Easy, Speedy, Healthy Recipes for Good Mood Food* by Clodagh McKenna. Photography by David Loftus. ©2026 by Octopus Publishing Group. Excerpted with permission from Kyle Books. All rights reserved.

MY MUM'S IRISH STEW WITH PEARL BARLEY



Recipes from Clodagh's Happy Cooking: 100 Easy, Speedy, Healthy Recipes for Good Mood Food by Clodagh McKenna. Photography by David Loftus. ©2026 by Octopus Publishing Group. Excerpted with permission from Kyle Books. All rights reserved.

## RHUBARB MOJITO



Recipes from *Gather Together: Delightful Décor and Simple Recipes for Every Occasion* by Robyn Chubey. Photography by Robyn Chubey. ©2026 by Rock Point. Excerpted with permission. All rights reserved.

**SPICED LAMB AND LEMON SKEWERS  
WITH CUCUMBER AND SUMAC**



Recipes from Better at Home: Recipes for Big Nights In by Colu Henry. Photography by Silver und Seck. ©2026 by Abrams Books. Excerpted with permission. All rights reserved.

## A BRANDY ALEXANDER



Recipes from Better at Home: Recipes for Big Nights In by Colu Henry; Photography by Silver und Seck. ©2026 by Abrams Books. Excerpted with permission. All rights reserved.

**Full Recipes on pages 66, 67 and 68**



# LIVE LOUD & SIP SLOW

Three Chord's lineup is built like a great record collection—each one with its own character, all made to be played loud and poured often.

From everyday pours to late-night favorites, this is whiskey for people who know the difference between background noise and the good stuff.

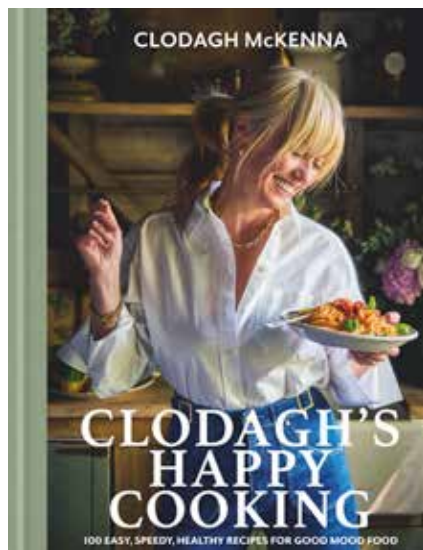
[ThreeChordBourbon.com](http://ThreeChordBourbon.com) // [@ThreeChordBourbon](https://www.instagram.com/ThreeChordBourbon)

Drink Responsibly, RESPECT THE MOMENT. Three Chord Bourbon, Inc.

## RECIPES

SHOWN ON PAGES 60-64

The following recipes are from **Clodagh's Happy Cooking: 100 Easy, Speedy, Healthy Recipes for Good Mood Food. Better at Home: Recipes for Big Nights In** by Colu Henry



### GUINNESS & TREACLE BROWN SODA BREAD

Makes 1 × 450g (1lb) loaf

A majestic bread, rich from treacle and buttermilk, which is fantastic with smoked salmon, crab and prawns. It's a stir-and-bake bread; you don't even need to shape it, as the dough simply gets popped in a loaf tin. I always make a double batch – just by doubling the ingredients – and freeze one.

You will need a 450g (1lb) loaf tin.

400g (14oz) wholemeal flour

100g (3½oz) rolled oats, plus 2 tablespoons for the top

2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

330ml (11fl oz) Guinness

170ml (6fl oz) buttermilk

2 tablespoons black treacle

Butter, for the tin

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (400°F), Gas Mark 6.

2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients.

3. In a large jug, whisk together the Guinness, buttermilk and treacle.

4. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients and, using a fork, mix in the wet ingredients. Stir until combined; the

mixture will appear quite wet.

5. Butter a 450g (1lb) loaf tin and tip the bread dough in, then sprinkle evenly with the 2 tablespoons oats.

6. Bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes. Once baked, allow to cool on a wire rack before slicing. It will last, wrapped in a damp tea towel, for 1 week.

### MY MUM'S IRISH STEW WITH PEARL BARLEY

Serves 4

If you were to ask me to choose just one recipe as my last dish, it would be this. It's a big Irish hug, based on a delicious stock made from a lamb bone with all the flavours of herbs and vegetables. Pearl barley is an ancient grain that I absolutely love: it gets plump with all the juices from the casserole. My mum made this for us at least once a month throughout my childhood, so when I taste it, I go right back to that warm loving place around the table, with my mum cooking for us all.

50g (1¾oz) butter

6 carrots, peeled and cut into chunks

4 onions, sliced

3 parsnips, or turnips, peeled and cut into chunks

6 medium waxy potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks

8 lamb cutlets

120g (4¼oz) pearl barley

Leaves from 2 thyme sprigs

Sea salt flakes and freshly ground

black pepper

#### For the STOCK

1 lamb bone

1 carrot, scrubbed and halved

1 onion, halved

1 bouquet garni

1. First, make the stock. Place all the ingredients in a saucepan and pour in 2.5 litres (4½ pints) of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for as long as possible to bring out the flavour; try to give it at least 2–3 hours. Strain through a sieve into a large bowl.

2. Preheat the oven to 150°C fan (340°F), Gas Mark 3½.

3. Place a flameproof casserole over a

medium heat and melt the butter.

Next add the carrots, season with salt and pepper and stir until they are a nice golden colour.

Remove to a plate and repeat the process with the onions, then the parsnips or turnips, then the potatoes and finally the lamb cutlets.

4. Spoon all the vegetables, lamb and pearl barley back into the casserole, placing the potatoes on top. Add the thyme leaves and cover with the hot lamb stock. Cook in the oven for 1½ hours, then serve straight from the casserole.



### Spiced Lamb and Lemon Skewers with Cucumber and Sumac

Serves 4 to 6

Time 30 Minutes, plus marinating time  
This feast is perfect for christening grill season. In fact, the first time I made it was at the start of grilling season, and it reminded me how creative you can get threading things onto skewers! If you have more time to let the lamb marinate, it will deepen the flavor, but if you've only got an hour, it will do. I highly recommend making Homemade Flatbread for this meal. It's incredibly satisfying. If you don't eat lamb, like my friend Kevin, you can still make this recipe.

Try it with beef or chicken; and if you do, go with fattier cuts such as boneless short ribs and chicken thighs. He did and was very pleased.

**Ingredients**  
**for the lamb:**

- 1 1/2 pounds (680 g) boneless leg of lamb, cut into 1 1/2-inch (4 cm) pieces
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons dried mint
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper or 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 cloves garlic, grated
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 10 to 15 pitted dates
- 1 medium red onion, cut into small wedges
- 1 large lemon, cut into small wedges

**for the labneh:**

- 2 cups (480 ml) labneh or sour cream
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon za'atar
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh herbs, such as dill, parsley, or cilantro
- Olive oil, for drizzling
- Flaky salt (optional), for finishing

**for the cucumbers:**

- 6 Persian (mini) cucumbers, thinly sliced lengthwise
- Kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons ground sumac
- 1/4 cup (10 g) roughly chopped tender herbs, such as cilantro, mint, and dill

**Method**

Marinate the lamb: In a large bowl, combine the lamb, salt, mint, turmeric, cumin, Aleppo pepper, cinnamon, and garlic. Add the olive oil and stir everything together until the lamb is well coated in the spice mixture. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to overnight. Take the lamb out of the refrigerator about 1 hour before serving to come to room temperature. Meanwhile, prepare the labneh: In a bowl,

stir together the labneh, lemon juice, and a good pinch of salt. Taste and adjust with more salt as needed. Top with the za'atar, herbs, a good drizzle of olive oil, and a few pinches of flaky salt (if using).

Prepare the cucumbers: Place the cucumbers in a large bowl and season generously with salt and the lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasonings with more salt and lemon juice as needed. Transfer to a platter and top with the sumac and the herbs.

When ready to finish, build a screaming hot fire or if using gas, take it as hot as it will go.

Thread the lamb onto a 9- or 10-inch (23- or 25-cm) skewer, followed by a date, a piece of onion, and a piece of lemon. Repeat with the remaining ingredients, making 4 skewers total. Brush each skewer with a bit of olive oil.

Grill the skewers, flipping occasionally, until the lamb is brown and golden, about 6 minutes total for medium-rare. Transfer to a plate or platter.

Serve with the labneh alongside as well as grilled flatbreads or pita.



**RHUBARB MOJITO**

TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES YIELD:  
1 MOJITO PLUS 1 CUP (240 ML) OF  
SIMPLE SYRUP

This cocktail is the perfect complement to the flavors in the preceding Easter recipes, and it's also a drink that's meant to be enjoyed all spring! This refreshing Rhubarb Mojito combines the tartness of rhubarb with a burst of minty freshness, making it the perfect sip to kick off any gathering. It's a drink that brings together the vibrant flavors of the season in every glass.

**FOR THE RHUBARB  
SIMPLE SYRUP**

- 3/4 cup (180 ml) cold water
  - 1/2 cup (100 g) granulated sugar
  - 1 cup (122 g) diced rhubarb
- FOR THE MOJITO**
- 10 mint leaves, plus more for garnish (optional)
  - 1/4 cup (60 ml) fresh lime juice
  - 1 medium lime, sliced into 1/4-inch (6mm) slices, divided
  - 6 tablespoons (90 ml) Rhubarb Simple Syrup
  - 2 tablespoons white rum or gin
  - Ice cubes or crushed ice
  - 1/2 cup (120 ml) sparkling water or club soda

1. To make the Rhubarb Simple Syrup: In a small saucepan, stir together the water, sugar, and rhubarb. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to a high simmer, and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 to 10 minutes, until the rhubarb starts to melt into the liquid. Blend well, then strain through a mesh sieve. Pour the liquid into a jar and seal.
2. To make the mojito: Drop the mint leaves into a tall cocktail glass and cover with the lime juice.
3. Using a muddler or the top end of a wooden spoon, muddle, press, or squish the mint into the lime juice in the bottom of a glass to release the mint oil into the juice.

4. Add a couple slices of lime, the rhubarb syrup, and the rum or gin, then add ice cubes or crushed ice.
5. Top with sparkling water or club soda. Garnish with lots of lime slices and mint.
6. Give it a swirl and enjoy!

**Note**

The rhubarb simple syrup can stay in the fridge for 2 to 3 weeks.

### A Brandy Alexander

Taken from Better at Home by Colu Henry  
Published by Abrams 2026

**Makes**

1 cocktail

**Time**

5 minutes

I bartended in restaurants all through college and again when I first moved to New York City in the early aughts. So as you can imagine, it was the last thing I wanted to do when I went home for the holidays. Yet, somehow I always ended up in the kitchen, shaker in hand, making Brandy Alexanders to order.

I wasn't thrilled. It took me up until meeting our pal Dan Farber, an incredibly talented brandy distiller, to think about them again. Upon our first meeting, trying to make conversation, I sheepishly asked how he felt about this classic, retro dessert cocktail. I was surprisingly met with warm enthusiasm and promptly invited him over to drink one. He did. We were up till 1 a.m.

**Ingredients**

- Ice
- 1 1/2 ounces Cognac or brandy
- 1 ounce dark crème de cacao
- 1 ounce heavy cream
- Freshly grated nutmeg, for serving

**Method**

Fill a cocktail or coupe glass with ice water. In a cocktail shaker, combine the Cognac, crème de cacao, and cream, and fill with ice. Shake with great purpose until the outside of the shaker becomes so cold you almost cannot touch it. Discard the ice water from the cocktail glass and strain the cocktail into the glass. Grate a bit of nutmeg over the top.

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ANSWERS FOR  
*TEST YOUR WHISKY WISDOM*  
Page 42-45

**Jack McCreadie National Brand Ambassador, Chivas Brothers**

**QUESTION-1** In 1822, King Geroge IV was the first reigning British Monarch to visit Scotland in over 160 years. Whilst on his state visit to Edinburgh, the King asked to try which Scotch Whisky?

**ANSWER-1** As part of a carefully stage-managed visit in August 1822 organised by Sir Walter Scott, King George IV asked to try a drop of the infamous Glenlivet whisky. The King was even willing to overlook the fact there were no legally licensed distilleries in The Livet Valley! This was an illicit dram, yet it was so renowned that even the King called for it. This infamous visit kickstarted interest in Highland whisky among the Lowland Scots and English aristocracies.

In 1823, a new excise act was passed which reduced the cost of a distilling licence and so brought legal whisky production within reach for many Highland distillers. Then in 1824 George Smith purchased his license and became the first legal distiller in the

parish of Glenlivet. The reputation grew, and the name Glenlivet became synonymous with high quality whisky. You could fetch sixpence more per gallon for a whisky carrying The Glenlivet name. Long before the classification of Speyside was defined, distilleries used Glenlivet as a suffix like 'Aberlour-Glenlivet' or 'Longmorn-Glenlivet'. In 1884, George's Son John Gordon Smith helped pass an indenture that we were to be the one and only The Glenlivet.

Over 200 Years later, The Glenlivet still proudly craft exceptional whisky in Speyside. Exploring innovative cask finishes and maintaining our smooth, balanced profile.

**QUESTION-2** Aberlour's intensely sherried cask-strength whisky takes its name from Scottish Gaelic – but what does "A'bunadh" mean?

**ANSWER-2** "Origin" or "The Original". Aberlour A'bunadh (pronounced AH-BOO-NAH, though technically AH-BOO-NAV in Gaelic), stands as our tribute to our founder James Fleming. The whisky was originally released to celebrate the traditional maturation vessel during the time of James Fleming: the sherry cask. This single malt is bottled at cask strength with no chill filtration, exclusively matured in 100% first fill Oloroso sherry casks.

Over 25 years since the first batch, A'bunadh has become a cult classic among whisky lovers. Our expert team make small variations batch to batch to ensure each one has its own influences and flavours. There are even dedicated fan groups for fervent discussions on preferred batches! I personally love a 'sherry bomb' dram, and the whisky reminds me of Christmas cake and boozy raisins with citrus peel. As we say in the Northeast of Scotland:

# BOWMORE®



THERE IS ALWAYS MORE.

DRINK  SMART™

Bowmore® Scotch Whisky, 40% alc/vol. ©2025 Beam Suntory, Inc. Chicago, IL.

**Bry Simpson Brand Ambassador  
Glenmorangie and Ardbeg**

**QUESTION-1** Which famous Glenmorangie Single Malt Scotch Whisky uses Ruby Port Wine Casks for cask finishing?

**ANSWER-1** Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban 14 Years Old (Glenmorangie were the first distillery in the world to release a whisky cask finished in Port casks)

**QUESTION-2** What is the name of apparatus used by Ardbeg to filter out Heavy Vapours during distillation?

**ANSWER-2** The Purifier (Ardbeg are one of the few distilleries in the world to use a purifier, and the only on Islay. The purifier allows for more reflux during distillation creating a 'peaty paradox' of big but not heavy flavours and aromas).

---

**Devin Walden Director of Production  
Operations & Head Distiller,  
Nashville Whiskey Trail**

**Question-1** How many distilleries are currently on the Tennessee Whiskey Trail?

**Answer-1** 25

**Question-2** True or False  
One of the requirements, by law, in order for a whiskey to be labeled as "Tennessee Whiskey" has always been that the whiskey distillate must be filtered through maple charcoal before going into a barrel

**Answer-2** False, this state law was not passed until 2013

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**Jenna Diubaldo Blender & Whisky  
Program Manager at Sons  
of Vancouver Distillery**

**Question-1** In 2023 at the Canadian Whisky Awards, Sons of Vancouver Distillery

became known as the first independent distillery to ever win which prestigious award?

**Answer-1** Canadian Whisky of the Year

**Question-2** A standard barrel of whisky is known to hold what volume of liquid?

**Answer-2** 200 liters or 53 gallons

---

**Alasdair Day  
Co-founder & Master Distiller  
Isle of Raasay Distillery**

**Question-1** Given that there are over 600 different oak species in the world and over 500 in the Northern Hemisphere how many different oak species are used for maturing whisky?

**Answer-1** 13 (see below) but typically and traditionally only 3 of these have been used to mature Scotch Whisky (in blue).

1. Quercus alba (North American white oak)
2. Quercus muehlenbergii (Chinkapin oak)
3. Quercus garryana (Pacific Northwest)
4. Quercus humboldtii (Colombian / Andean oak)
5. Quercus polymorpha (Mexican oak)
6. Quercus petraea (European, sessile oak)
7. Quercus robur (European, pedunculate oak)
8. Quercus frainetto (Hungarian or Balkan Oak)

9. Quercus pyrenaica (Pyrenean Oak or "Black Oak")

10. Quercus ilex (Holm Oak or Truffle Oak) is very rarely used and very difficult to cooper into casks.

11. Quercus macranthera (Caucasian Oak or Persian Oak)

12. Quercus mongolica (Mongolian oak [Japan, China, Korea, Mongolia, and Siberia])

13. Quercus crispula (Japanese Oak - Mizunara)

**Question-2** Given that the yeast dies off after about 70 hours (three days) into fermentation, what type of fermentation occurs during longer fermentations (between 3 and 7 days or longer) after the yeast dies?

**Answer-2** Lactic acid fermentation: Lactobacillus bacteria occur naturally in the environment and come in on the malted barley. There are over 260 different \*Lactobacillus\* species, but very few of them can survive the temperature of the first water in the mashing process. For example we have 9 different types of lactobacillus in our wash at our Isle of Raasay distillery.

These "friendly" bacteria produce lactic acid. Lactic acid reduces the wash's pH; the lower the pH, the better the catalytic reaction with the copper in the stills. This reaction removes impurities such as sulphur.

The lactic acid also reacts with the esters (flavour compounds) already produced by the yeast to create longer-chain esters, which distil across and produce more of the dark fruit characteristics we are looking for.





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