

# RELISH WHISKY

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SUMMER 2026

CUMBRAE  
DISTILLERS

THE SPIRIT OF  
GLEN DALOUGH

WHERE TO  
LOUNGE  
THIS  
SUMMER

HISTORY  
REVIVAL  
AND MODERN  
FLAVOURS

THE  
JAPANESE  
WAY OF  
WHISKY

PAUL JOHN'S  
MASTER DISTILLER

Michael D'Souza





DEAU

COGNAC



DEAU C  
DEAU C

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*Veronique Bru-Legaret*

OWNER, DISTILLERIE DES MOISANS



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SINGLE MALT  
—• WHISKY •—

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• WHISKY •

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MASHED WITH WATER FROM  
 GLACIER-FED STREAMS

TWO BREWERS  
 BREWED, MASHED, & BARRELED  
 UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN  
 WHITEHORSE • YUKON  
 ESTD 2009

TWO BREWERS  
 BREWED, MASHED, & BARRELED  
 UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN  
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**SINGLE MALT WHISKY**  
*Distillation Date: 18-02-2010 Bottling Date: 16-11-2022*



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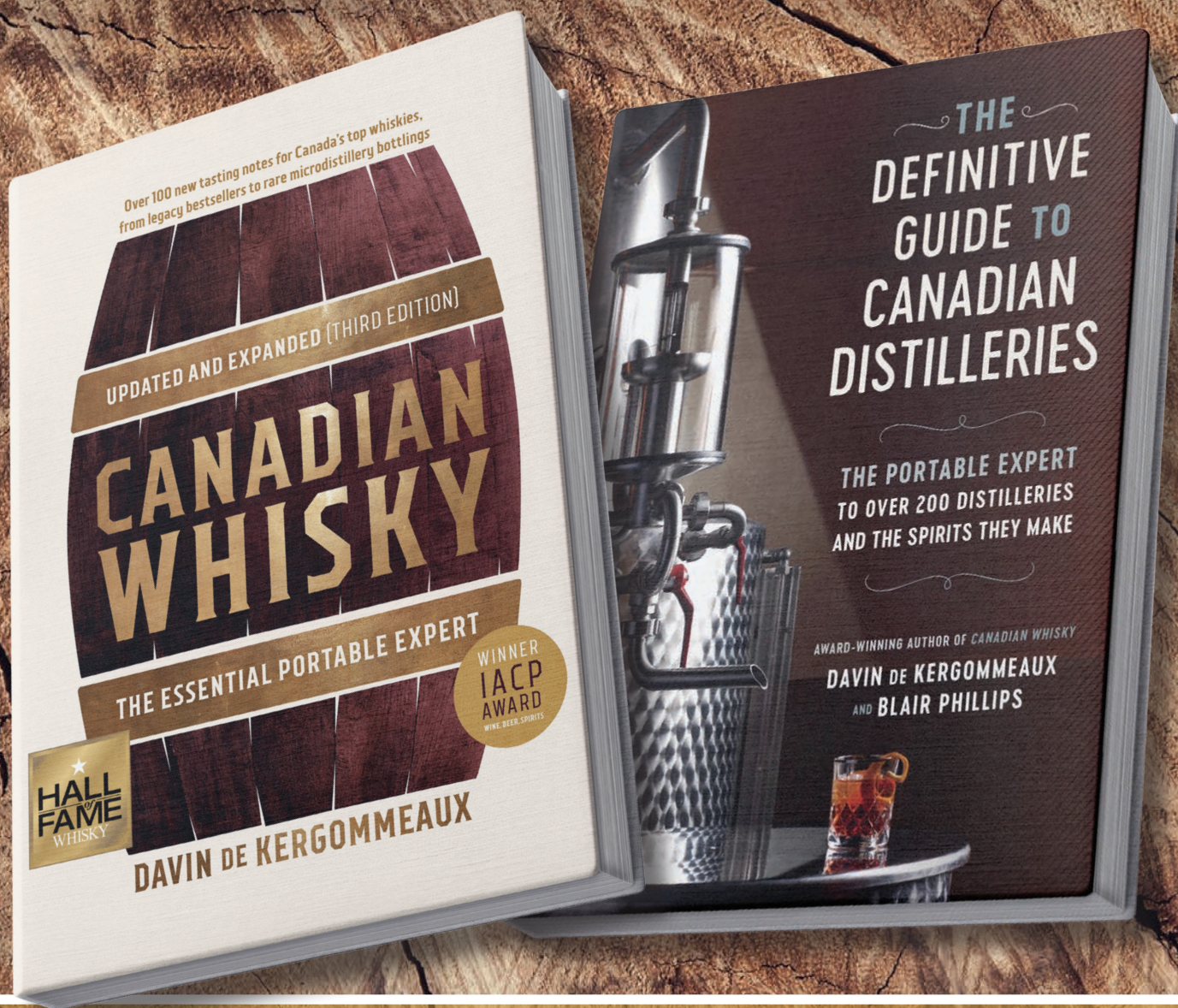
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# THE DEFINITIVE SOURCE FOR CANADA'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF WHISKY



COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION

appetite

by RANDOM HOUSE

## EDITOR'S THOUGHTS

ALLERGIES. WHISKY  
AND NON-ALCOHOLIC SPIRITS

Outside we sneeze, our eyes become watery and all kinds of symptoms take over. The warm weather is upon us. We've shed the excess clothing of the winter and burst into the season, only to be overcome by a pollen speck. It's the little things after all. Undeterred we persevere to the outside. High hopes for relief, ready for battle otherwise. But we are Canadians after all, outside we go. Down that pollen infested brick road. One can't let ALLERGIES slow your summer down. Nope. Especially when WHISKY is on your mind.

I do enjoy sitting outside with a whisky. Though I tend to wait until the latter part of the day, when the sun stops beating down on me. Whether relaxing with a friend, or slowing things down on my own. The ritual of a summer drink calls all the way from early January.

In this issue, sit and sip and share a wonderful expression. If you're unable to attend a local tasting event, we have other options for you. Sit back and enjoy Relish Whisky Magazine. We have a world of incredible things to try. Try it your way. Neat, on the rocks, mixed, or when the

occasion demands - sip some non-alcoholic spirits. We have many options for you to explore in this issue. If you're staying close to home, there are options local to your area. Summer is a more than the perfect day, the perfect weather, the absence of a sniffling nose, or the view across a calm lake, loons calling in the distance. It's taking the time to reset from the indoor seasons, reacquaint with nature - in all its pollinated glory - and treat yourself to a moment of rest.

May your breezes be gentle and your drinks even smoother. Happy Summer and Cheers!

Robert Windover

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supple, with notes of pear  
tarte tatin, pineapple,  
lemongrass"

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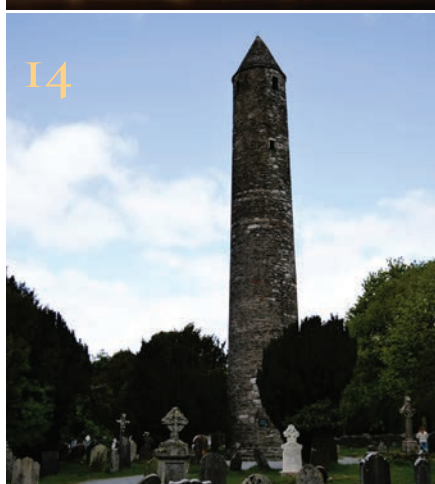
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# OUTSTRETCHED ARMS

## THE SPIRIT OF GLENDALOUGH

WRITTEN BY **BLAIR PHILLIPS**

Not a single person tuned their radio to the Times Square ball drop on December 31, 1899. Neither radio nor Ryan Seacrest had yet been invented. That didn't matter though, because people had plenty of Irish whiskey – with no signs of the category dropping



GLENDALOUGH DISTILLERY

A BAND OF RUGGED ROAMING

STAND

APART

GLENDALOUGH  
POT STILL  
IRISH WHISKEY

NATURED IN  
Wicklow-grown Irish oak

PRODUCT OF IRELAND

700 ml

STAND APART



Wealthy socialites partied hard at opulent banquets featuring turkey, oysters, and champagne, while lesser folk hung out at home or in bars, sipping whiskey, dancing, and ringing in midnight to the sound of church bells.

No one at that party had any idea that Irish whiskey would famously collapse in the first half of the 20th century, that the entire category would find itself beneath the underdog. By the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, Irish whiskey was what your grandfather drank. It stayed that way through the millennium, as the rest of the world experienced a whiskey revival fuelled by cocktails, bartenders, and a craft distilling boom. There were just four distilleries in Ireland in 2010, when Irish entrepreneurs began asking: why not five, six, or seven? With their backs up, independent bottlers and a first wave of craft distillers, like Glendalough, began

re-building Irish whiskey from acorns buried in grounds long forgotten. They sprouted with a story to tell.

Tucked away in the Wicklow Mountains, the Glendalough glacial valley is Ireland's superstar destination, blending history and stunning scenery into a geographic cocktail. With views and stories dating back to medieval times, this valley feels like a real-life history book, complete with ancient stone churches, archways, and towers. From these beautiful, spiritual, and ancient monastic relics to legends of saints, scholars, and invaders, it's a place where the past is alive. And now it comes with the added bonus of whiskey, thanks to the unceasing efforts of Glendalough distiller Ciaran "Rowdy" Rooney.

Whiskey entered Glendalough's story in a dark and dreadful period in history

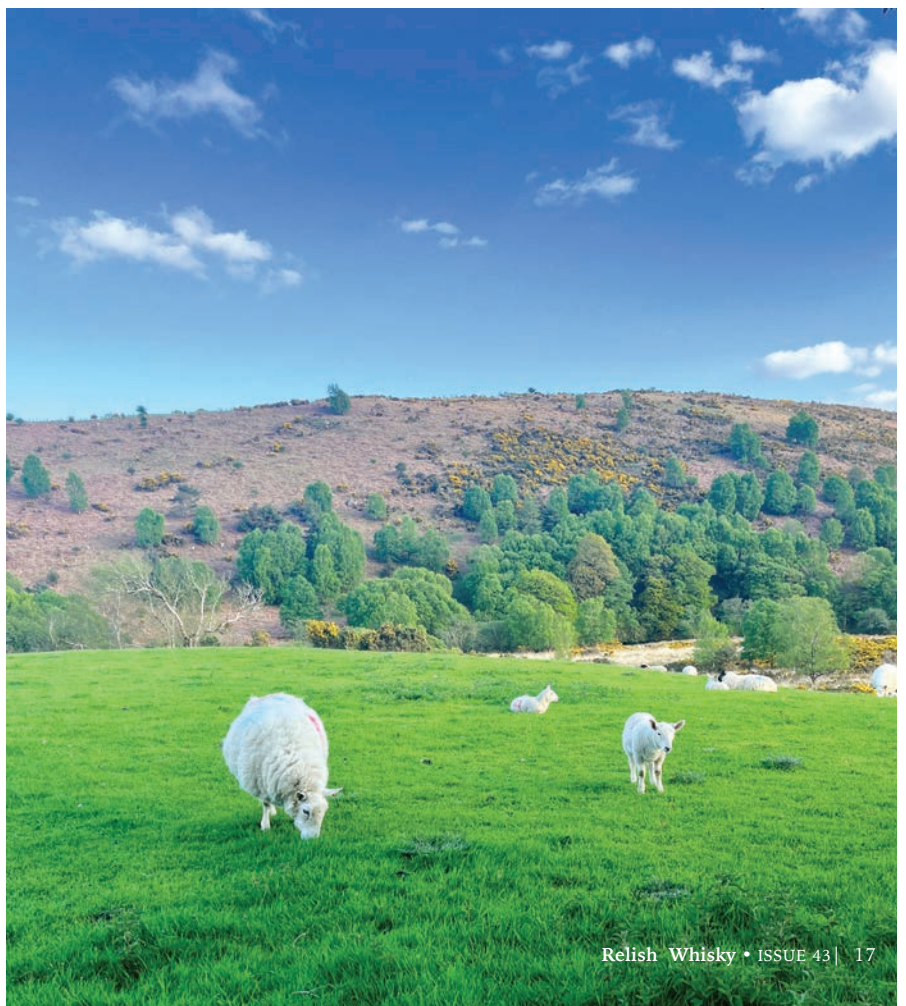
known as "The Time Before Irish Whiskey." Glendalough, meaning "Valley of the Two Lakes," was home to the solitary Saint Kevin, a hermit monk who graces the label of every Glendalough bottle of whiskey and gin. He social distanced himself from the hustle and bustle of monastic life to seek solitude, living a puritan life devoted to prayer, contemplation, and routine conversations with wildlife. His unwritten storybook is legendary.





The most famous account of the mulling monk tells of him standing in the water, praying with his arms outstretched, when a blackbird landed upon his palm and laid its eggs. Any other monk would have reached for the Kerrygold butter, and breakfast would be served. Not St. Kevin. He stood there with his arms outstretched for a couple of weeks, until the eggs hatched safely.

Years before Kevin became the holy, egg-holding hermit, he was tending his father's flock of sheep when he spotted some starving travellers. With no eggs to spare, he gave four of the sheep to them. When Kevin and his father later counted the flock, inexplicably, all the sheep were accounted for. This story might well be true. County Wicklow is home to around 250,000 sheep. With more sheep than people, Wicklow is the fifth-largest sheep-farming county in Ireland and has the country's highest density of sheep-to-land. No one has trouble falling asleep in Wicklow. Just stick your head out any window and start counting sheep... lights out.



At the Deerstone cottages where I was staying, the menu paired roast lamb with Glendalough whiskey cocktails. Yet, miraculously, not a single missing-sheep poster appeared at the nearby Lynhams of Laragh pub or in the pastures. As many sheep were grazing that morning as ever, throwing me shade with their “baas” as I walked by to check if lamb was on the breakfast menu too. It was a St. Kevin miracle, and the scrambled eggs were delicious.

Not to outdo the lambs or the black-bird, another anecdote tells of a woman who died giving birth to twins. The father came to Kevin for guidance. Dad couldn’t feed his newborns without milk during an egg shortage. Like the OG Dr. Doolittle, Kevin spoke to a deer, who came every day thereafter to fill a stone bowl called the deerstone with milk for the twins. In another version, a wolf came along and ate the doe. The Doolittle Monk

then convinced the wolf to step up and provide milk for the infants. They all lived happily ever after, except for the doe. This tale may explain why there are no longer wolves in Ireland. They emigrated to countries where there aren’t consequences for their actions.

But why do these stories strike a chord with Glendalough’s whiskey? The two run parallel, sharing the same philosophies. Symbolically, standing in a lake for two weeks with your arms outstretched, or convincing a deer, then a wolf, to feed a child, is not the easy way to do anything. Walk up to a wolf demanding milk, then tell us how that goes. Like St. Kevin, when Rowdy makes whiskey, he’s not looking to do things the easy way.

Instead, Rowdy respects time and patience, and leans into nature, three traits that we’ll see allow the whiskey to stand apart. “We choose the better way, not necessarily the easy way, not necessarily the cheapest way. It’s what we want to do,” says Rowdy. “Our philosophy is to try and do things better, to stand apart, to try and excel, and sometimes that means going that extra mile, spending that extra couple of quid, but delivering or extracting that extra flavour. I hope you agree with me, it’s priceless.” The whiskey reflects Rowdy’s personality. There is no pretension or snobbery in this whiskey. It’s purposely drinkable.



“As one of the first modern 'craft' distilleries in Ireland, Glendalough Distillery helped drive the revival of Irish whiskey by bringing innovation, experimentation, and a strong sense of identity back into the category,” says Gary Byrne of Ireland Whiskey Tours. “At a time when the Irish whiskey industry was still relatively small and dominated by a handful of established brands, Glendalough showed that smaller independent distilleries could succeed and offer something different.”

Standing on the grounds of St. Kevin's monastery is an experience that is difficult to put into words. Yes, it's spiritual, but that feeling runs deeper. It wasn't until later, on the gardens of the Ballinacor estates, that a flash of clarity connected the pieces like Lego, intensifying Gary's words. That feeling is supported by Rowdy and a rare Irish oak grove that prospers here: “One of my favourite parts of my job is driving through that drive and coming up here and getting a wonderful welcome and a cup of tea and going for a walk around here.”

Ballinacor Estate is a massive, 4,000-acre sporting and agricultural estate established over a century ago. At its core is Ballinacor House, a magnificent late-18th-century Georgian home. Features include an iconic portico reminiscent of an ancient Roman temple, a deer park, and a landmark Italianate clock tower. Sir Robert and Lady Goff purchased Ballinacor Estate in 2001 as a grouse hotspot and working farm. As beautiful as it is, it wasn't until we walked through the woods with Rowdy and the Goff's eldest son, Will, that we found the estate's whiskey temple – the Irish oak trees, the motherload.

Irish oak was considered one of the seven “Nobles of the Wood” before and after St. Kevin's lifetime. It was deemed exceptionally valuable because its acorns provided an important food for fattening pigs, and its timber was sturdy material for fencing and house-building. The oak's bark was also used in early Ireland to tan leather. Before



that period, Irish oak was the preferred material for building ploughs, troughs, carts and mallets. This oak is linked to narratives of strength, longevity and fertility in Irish mythology, making it so valuable that if someone damaged or harmed your tree, they would need to give you a three-year-old heifer and two milking cows as a penalty. Trying to pass off a milking wolf instead would get you beheaded.

This oak is highly porous. Ireland's climate causes the tree to develop large, wide vessels that quickly transport sap from its roots to its leaves. Compared with American oak, Irish oak has a lower wood density and an open grain structure. During whiskey maturation, this sponginess allows the spirit to penetrate deeper into the wood. This process extracts natural Irish flavour compounds, such as intense vanilla and caramel, that help develop a host of plusher, complementary flavour profiles.

It's a quintessential Irish whiskey, and arguably the most Irish there is. “What the world knew as Irish whiskey in the day? How can we make that a little bit more Irish? We put it into Irish wood and make the most Irish whiskey even more Irish,” says Rowdy. To under score Rowdy's point while standing in

the oak forest, he poured his five-year-old pot still Irish whiskey into a glass. It was creamy, with sweet vanilla and the spices you would expect from an Irish whiskey.

He then poured the same whiskey, aged for an additional two years in Irish oak. The secondary ageing transformed the standard Irish whiskey into a culinary experience. A procession of orchard and citrus fruits burst from the glass. Polished leather, layers of sweetness, and wood spices kicked into overdrive, with elegant woody notes blanketing the palate. It was purposely drinkable yet complex and refined.





produce. Then dry it, toast it, cooper it into barrels, ship it back to Ireland, fill it with mature whiskey, then, with outstretched arms, tend to the saplings and wait for about two years – Rowdy is driven by flavour and not time – for the whiskey to hatch. Twenty-two pairs of hands touch the wood, from harvesting the tree to its homecoming. This is standing apart.

In the early days, Rowdy’s Irish-wood pot-still whiskeys were good, while still showing a lot of untapped potential. Over the years, he has viewed oak barrels, no matter where they are from, as ingredients rather than containers. This approach has elevated his Irish-oaked pot-still whiskey to a higher plane, where today’s bottlings have evolved into a complex dram with grace and that trademark drinkability.

Not taking the easy way comes with a side effect. “The distillery played an important role in broadening consumer interest through unique casks and creative maturation techniques, helping redefine what Irish whiskey could

be,” says Gary. “By experimenting with rare woods and unconventional casks, Glendalough encouraged both producers and consumers to think beyond traditional styles. Alongside other early independent distilleries, Glendalough demonstrated that Irish whiskey could combine heritage with innovation, fueling the significant expansion of new distilleries and brands across Ireland over the past decade.”

With the support of forager Geraldine Kavanagh and distiller Sam Mulligan, Rowdy, like St. Kevin, set out to forge his own path. And there are still plenty of ideas for this power trio to explore. When you survey the Irish whiskey landscape while standing on Irish ground, you get a sense that some of the weight to keep the Irish whiskey category relevant and give it a longer reach, rests on Glendalough’s shoulders. It’s a selfless path, lined with Irish oaks that Rowdy and a team are planting, but whose shade they know they shall never sit in. It’s a poetic thought, one day, perhaps, to become a new episode in St. Kevin’s story. ♦



This is when St. Kevin reared his saintly head. The barrels are bloody expensive, as Rowdy would say. It would be so much easier to source conventional barrels from the open market instead of searching out a sustainable grove, deliberately selecting a candidate, felling the tree to allow the sun to hit the damp forest floor, planting 7 or 8 trees in its place, nurturing them, hauling out the logs, milling the lumber, shipping it to Spain to a family business that Rowdy spent years developing a relationship with because they care about what they





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OF  
GOOD  
TASTE**

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A few places to

# LOUNGE

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Look no further then here. Enjoy the atmosphere and partake in the spirits.



## CLIVE'S CLASSIC LOUNGE

is cocktail culture since opening in 2008. Designed as a modern interpretation of a classic whisky den, the space is intimate, refined, and quietly confident where low lighting and warm textures create an atmosphere that feels both elevated and deeply welcoming.

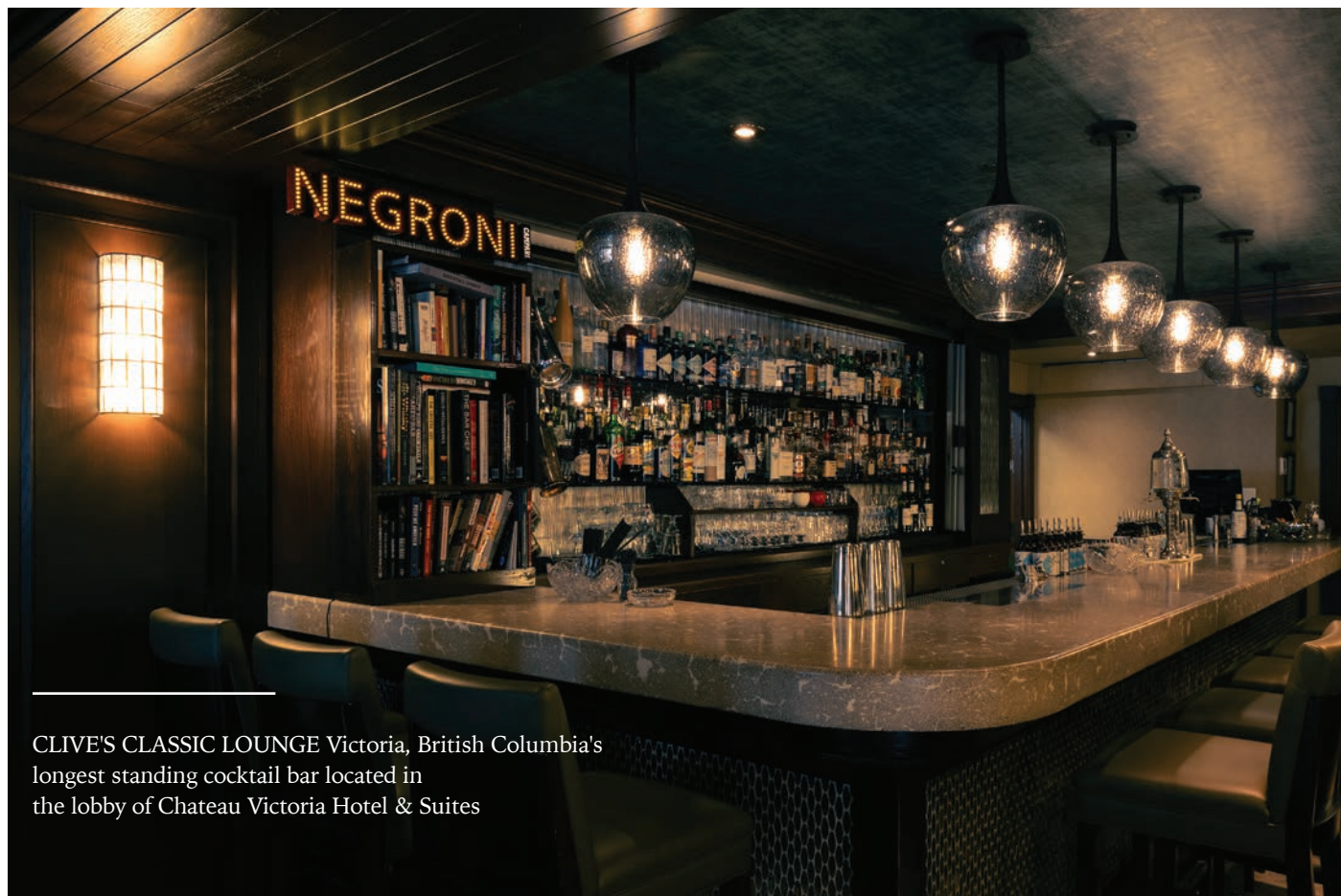
At its core, Clive's is a celebration of craftsmanship. The bar program blends timeless classics with inventive, seasonally driven creations, supported by an extensive collection of rare and premium spirits, including one of the largest whisky selections in the city.

Each cocktail is approached with precision and creativity, often incorporating house-made ingredients and local influences, while the food program offers curated, locally sourced dishes designed to complement the experience.

The lounge has been featured on World's 50 Best Bars Discovery list,



named among the best hotel bars in Canada by Tales of the Cocktail Foundation, and ranked No. 15 on Canada's 100 Best Bars. It has also received global recognition through the Spirited Awards and was named World's Best Whisky Hotel Bar at the Icons of Whisky Awards. Clive's remains a place where conversation, connection, and a genuine passion for hospitality continue to shape the city's cocktail scene."



CLIVE'S CLASSIC LOUNGE Victoria, British Columbia's longest standing cocktail bar located in the lobby of Chateau Victoria Hotel & Suites



Apothecary Lounge  
a speakeasy housed in a building  
that has stood since 1875

## APOTHECARY LOUNGE

Step beneath Ottawa's historic ByWard Market and you'll find more than just a cocktail bar—you'll discover a journey through time. Welcome to Apothecary Lounge, a speakeasy housed in a building that has stood since 1875, whispering stories of its past.

The last time this building changed hands was nearly a century ago, if its walls could talk, they'd tell tales of prohibition-era escapades, of bootleggers and the countless souls who sought solace within its embrace.



Before it became Ottawa's premier speakeasy, this space was a sanctuary, its cellar walls holding the secrets of a bygone era. Today, we honour that legacy in every detail. You can feel it in the hand-carved oak bar and see it in the velvet-draped corners that invite you to linger. We celebrate those prohibition vibes, blending vintage charm with modern innovation. Our cocktails are not just drinks, they are elixirs inspired by the herbalists and bootleggers of the past, crafted to soothe the soul. Our bartenders are alchemists, ready to prescribe the perfect potion for your palate. Whether you choose the bold "Mortician" or the refreshing "Botanical Bliss," every sip is a step back in time. Unsure of your elixir? Opt for a "Dealer's Choice"—a personalized creation tailored to your taste and mood, designed with care by our experts.

For those in the know, our hidden private room is the ultimate secret. Tucked behind the gates behind the bar, this exclusive space offers a cozy, intimate atmosphere

that feels like stepping into another world—perfect for intimate gatherings or simply indulging in the allure of mystery. Apothecary Lounge isn't just a place to drink—it's a place to experience. It's the cure for the common night out. From the smooth notes of live jazz on Thursdays to the thrill of Spooky Bingo on Wednesdays, every visit is an event.

Reserve your remedy today and discover the magic of Ottawa's best-kept secret.





Speakeasy-inspired cocktail lounge  
 One of Toronto's most extensive  
 whisky collections Bespoke cocktail  
 program with seasonal and signature  
 creations Curated small plates menu  
 with Live jazz

## CHAR No.5 WHISKY & COCKTAIL LOUNGE

Located beneath the grand staircase of Delta Hotels by Marriott Toronto, CHAR No.5 Whisky & Cocktail Lounge emerges as one of the city's most distinctive cocktail



destinations, offering an intimate, design-forward space where craftsmanship, atmosphere, and curated experiences come together.

Tucked within Toronto's vibrant South Core, CHAR No.5 invites guests to step away from the energy of the city and into a warm, low-lit lounge defined by rich textures, polished metals, and a sense of understated luxury. Just steps from the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, CN Tower, Scotiabank Arena, and Rogers Centre, the lounge seamlessly connects business, entertainment, and late-night indulgence.

A Destination for Whisky and Cocktail Craft At the heart of CHAR No.5 is one of Toronto's most extensive whisky collections, complemented by a cocktail program rooted in balance, creativity, and visual expression. Each drink is thoughtfully composed to deliver both

depth of flavour and a refined presentation, from spirit-forward classics to modern interpretations.

Signature offerings include elevated takes on timeless cocktails such as the Smoked Old Fashioned, alongside a rotating selection of bespoke creations inspired by seasonality, global influences, and the art of mixology. The experience is further enhanced by a curated menu of small plates designed to complement the beverage program and encourage sharing. ♦



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# INDIA IN A BOTTLE

## PAUL JOHN SINGLE MALT

If you are an athletic young lad growing up in Coorg, a hill station of half a million people in Karnataka state, India, there's a pretty good chance you'll have a passion for field hockey

WRITTEN BY **DAVIN DE KERGOMMEAUX**

Paul John





*The Great Indian  
Single Malt*



**T**he game is so popular in Coorg that up to 280 families have fielded teams in a single year at the annual Kodava Hockey Festival, and 50 Kodavas (Coorgis) have represented India in the Olympic Games. Yes, families. The tournament was founded to strengthen kinships among the ethnic Kodava population. To make the cut, all team members must share the same surname.

Consumed by the game, young Michael D’Souza, a natural athlete, thought he might one day turn pro. Travelling 250 kilometres east

from Coorg, he entered a sports technical institute in Bengaluru, where the Sports Authority of India (SAI) trained elite players and coaches.

Today, as master distiller at John Distilleries near Cuncolim, in Goa, India, he coaches staff aspiring to be elite whisky and gin makers. And if that’s not going to get him on a Wheaties box, at least put this truth on a t-shirt: “When you want something done right, ask Michael D’Souza.” He may be the only person on the planet who can thread together insights from elite field hockey, fine Italian wine-making, and artistic

aqua-scaping, to create world-acclaimed single malt whisky.

While still at SAI, D’Souza learned that Mr. Paul John, a man whose father owned coffee plantations and liquor stores in Coorg, had just opened a new distillery in Bengaluru and was looking for help. “I wanted to make some money,” D’Souza recounts. “I joined John Distillery in 1993 as an intern. It was blended whiskies only. I worked under the chief blender making IMFL (Indian Made Foreign Liquor). He did the formulations, and we did the blend.” One of these blends, John’s Original Choice,

**“We wanted to create something unique and elegant that would showcase India inside the bottle.”**

remains a best seller with about 20 million 9-litre cases sold each year.

As volume increased, Paul John (often referred to as “Mr. Paul”) leased a fully operational distillery. “Until then, we were buying whisky from others, and it had different profiles, so we decided to make our own alcohol. I was put in charge and started to learn the arts of fermentation and distillation in the late 1990s. By 2006, Mr. Paul had settled in the US, where he tasted American wine and developed a passion to make wine in India.” Ask Michael D’Souza.

In 2007, Paul John sent D’Souza to Italy to learn about winemaking. There, he served internships at 11 wineries in various parts of the country. On his return, the company launched a vineyard in Chunchunkuppe a village about 28 kilometres from Bengaluru. They named their vineyard “Big Banyan” after the famous Dodda Aalada Mara (meaning big banyan), a nearby banyan tree, approximately 400 years old. At its peak, Dodda Aalada Mara – one massive single tree – spanned about 2 hectares.

In 2008, Mr. Paul decided to set up a malt distillery. Ask Michael D’Souza. After visiting a number of successful malt distilleries, D’Souza realized they would have to start from scratch. “Everything is different here, the climate and the environment. We wanted to create something unique and elegant that would showcase India inside the bottle.” Accordingly, and with the help of distilling consultants, they designed a pot still to suit the environment. “Everything was done in India,” he says with pride. “India has one of the best technologies when it comes to manufacturing. Most companies are very good at it. And to buy anything from India is much more economical.”



Under D'Souza's direction, the distillery and warehouses were completed in 2008. By 2009, they were distilling 3,000 litres a day of single malt spirit, which they filled into an assortment of barrels sourced from the USA. In 2012, after 4 years maturing in Goa's tropical climate, the first expressions landed in the UK. It was 2015 before they began selling Paul John single malt in India. Today, having undergone two expansions, they distil 10,000 litres each day – about 3 million litres a year – using four pairs of India-made copper pot stills. About 50,000 barrels of maturing whisky sit in 3 warehouses, and the distillery ships Paul John single malts to markets around the world.

With increased production and global sales comes a need for skilled distillery workers. "It's not easy in India to get a sound technical person. We don't have any professional courses," D'Souza laments. "The gestation period to reach top level is too long for youngsters. Everyone wants to become a master distiller overnight. It doesn't happen that way." And so, development turns to daily learning on-the-job. "I've identified a couple of people for secondary roles whom I believe in to carry the legacy forward."

One of his most skilled recruits is Tanvi Garg. Tanvi joined the distillery in a production role in 2021, bringing strong technical skills learned while completing her distillation degree at Heriot-Watt University. Beginning with a gin project, for the past 5 years, Tanvi has worked as D'Souza's protégée in the blending lab. "He teaches me everything about how to make Paul John whisky. Michael Sir is my mentor," she beams.

The many expressions of Paul John single malt whisky are based on two spirits, one peated and one not. Both are distilled entirely from 6-row barley, grown and malted in India. Six-row barley is not commonly used elsewhere as it has a lower ratio of starch to protein than the typical 2-row barley most malt whisky-producing nations prefer. However, beyond being indigenous to India, 6-row produces a more flavourful, congener-laden spirit, even if there is less alcohol per mash. Thank goodness the bean counters have not infiltrated whisky-making in India, because rich,



Jagannath Poke and Miloska Rodrigues

## "Indian whisky is unique, and people are tired of the same old liquids."

authentic flavour is why Indian whisky is now taking the world by storm.

"Indian whisky is unique, and people are tired of the same old liquids," D'Souza says, explaining why quality Indian whisky is growing while many top malts from other countries are in decline.

"People are looking for something different, something unique. I call our whisky "hybrid bourbon." It's (the whisky, that is) so rich here; the huge wood extraction makes them different. Goa has a more tropical climate for conditioning. This also makes our whisky more interesting for people to talk about."



Two maturing regimens further expand the range of flavours. A traditional above-ground warehouse yields bolder, richer, more tropical whiskies, while a second, cooler, underground cellar delivers more elegance. From these, they blend 3 core whiskies: Brilliance, Bold and a blend of the peated and unpeated whiskies called Edited.

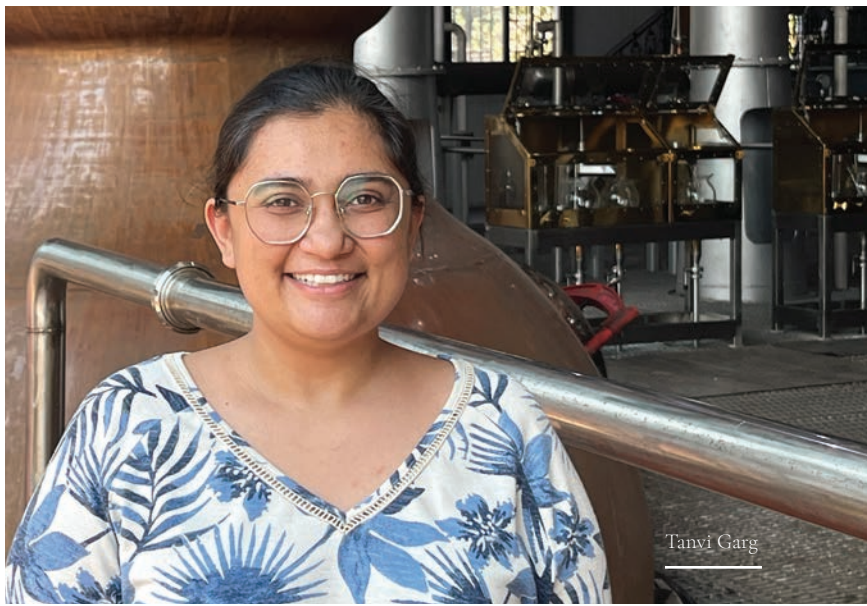
“When it comes to creating new expressions, I’m the only one,” D’Souza tells us. “Fermentation in winemaking is much more complex,” he explains.

“We’ve been doing this for 17 years now, and every day we are learning by doing different experiments with different casks, enzymes, yeasts. I do a lot of tastings and travel a lot and understand different markets and tastes. Based on that, I try to create different expressions. Everything in the market is my experimentation.”

With whisky as special, and singular, and uniquely Indian as Paul John single malt, one has to wonder if the 2017 sale of controlling interest in the distillery to US-based Sazerac

has brought change. “We have taken inputs from them”, D’Souza responds, “but when it comes to whisky making and blending, everything comes from us. It’s good to get support, but there is no direct involvement from Sazerac in the whisky-making process.”

In Goa, talk of spirits naturally turns to feni, an earthy, sometimes rustic indigenous Goan distilled spirit made from cashew fruit, and showing herbal, fruity and floral tones. With today’s globally exploited finishing craze



started making noise, the industry and market dynamics have changed. My goal was to create an Indian whisky category. It's not possible to do that alone, and that's why I support other distilleries, because as Indian distillers, we were never quality conscious."

And yet, as remarkable as his achievements have been, you sense there is another Michael Sir beyond the whisky. "I'm still a big fan of sports," he says, "– cricket, field hockey, soccer – on TV, of course. I love animals," he continues, "I love dogs. I live in an apartment unfortunately (so can't have a dog). Instead, I have a hobby of aqua-scaping – growing plants in aquariums."

Goa is rightly described as a tropical paradise with lush forests, gorgeous, fragrant flowers and endless safe beaches. One can only imagine the aquascapes the man whose whisky successfully captures the essence of India in a bottle would design in that environment. As we raise a dram of Paul John single malt, let's toast the patient, impassioned person behind such enjoyment. If he's at home, he's likely raising a dram of his own, watching pro sports teams compete on the tube as schools of fluorescent tetra fish twist and turn in perfect synchronization through undersea jungles he himself has created. Paul John single malt: it's whisky that speaks for itself.

("Yeah, they finished it, alright," as a waggish critic once put it), the question arises, "Would you ever consider putting feni in barrels so you could use them later to finish single malt whisky?"

D'Souza is circumspect in his response: "Until now, we are taking small steps, but proper ones. We're trying Indian wine barrels. I know some of the start-ups try out everything, but feni is going to alter the flavour of the single malt. Other than a marketing aspect, I don't see anything here."

Having produced some of the most exciting single malt whiskies in India and winning over 400 prestigious awards for them, being named Master Distiller

for them, being named Master Distiller of the Year (again) in the 2026 Icons of Whisky Awards, travelling the world to showcase Paul John single malts, taking several protégés under his wing as a mentor, and serving as the face of the brand, what does Michael D'Souza look back on as his greatest achievement?

"When I started in whisky, the only brand anyone knew about was Amrut. Since everything else was made from molasses, nobody at whisky shows had a good opinion of Indian whisky. Paul John changed the perception of people about Indian whisky. I'm proud of that. Whatever you are seeing today, (other than Amrut) they were not quality conscious back then. Since the time we



## TASTING NOTES

### Nirvana 40%

Waxy, spicy, peppery, slightly floral and sweet with peaches, apricots and dark tropical fruits. Waxiness turns to lush creaminess with sweetish barley sugar. Just hints of barrel tones and mild fruitwood. Fades out on a sweetish, peppery finish. Quaffable.

### Brilliance 46%

Delicate floral tones of tropical fruits, ripe orchard fruits, sweet malt and caramel. Hints of grain and dry grass. Clean barrel wood and soft tannins. Butterscotch and maybe vanilla, with a touch of chocolate and warming spices. Elegant and flavourful.

### Bold 46%

Lovely, tempered, peat smoke. Charcoal and vague bacon, with campfire ashes fading into aromas of a hay loft and dry grain. Breakfast cereal and hints of malt. Hot and spicy with both sweetness and a sourish tinge. Clean firewood and hints of pine pitch. Crisp red apples and soft milk chocolate. Oh, that gorgeous smokiness.

### PX Sherry 48%

Sweet, heavy, and herbal with soft wood, black raisins, black currants, dried dates, figs and apricots. Very peppery at first, then a softer warm glow. Sandalwood then barrel wood with some astringency and a hint of earthiness. Complex rich and layered.

### Oloroso 48%

Big sherry, very fruity pipe tobacco, sweet red fruits, tropical fruit and citrus hints, like pink grapefruit. Sweet tannic wood, icing sugar, cloves then lively pulling spices, briefly hot with white pepper then a lovely warming glow. Sherry cask delight.

### Peated Select Cask 55.5%

Big peat smoke, pungent flowers, animal barn, a sweetish smell almost like molasses that turns to creamy honey. Almost bitter black licorice and an earthy ashiness. Searing peppers and hot cinnamon, lots of ripe orchard fruits, lingering heat. Peat and more.

### Mithuna “The Beast” 58%

Matured 7 – 8 years in virgin oak and ex-bourbon barrels. Very spicy and very creamy with a softly sweet waxiness and real vanilla. More of the Paul John mocha notes and maybe chocolate-orange candy. Pulling tannins, herbal tones with nutty barley. A longish finish fades slowly into a soft pleasing oak-sugar sweetness. Bestly power.

### Malhar Citrus Gin 43%

Local botanicals distilled separately or in groups across the year, as they come in season, and held for blending. Restrained juniper leaves Indian key lime to anchor. Very citrusy with grapefruit, lemon, sourish hibiscus and orange. Indian tea contributes a slight tannic feel. Refreshing.

### Paul John XO Brandy 10yo 46%

An ultra fruity brandy made from Bangalore Purple and India-grown Italian Ugni Blanc grapes. A curious blend of candied dried fruit and fresh berry flavours with a few citrus and maybe anise notes thrown in. Raisins, dates and hints of tannin. Rich and regal. ♦

# WHISKY HIGHBALL

## THEN AND NOW

History, Revival  
and Modern Flavours

WRITTEN BY **INKA LARISSA**



As the weather warms up, it feels like the right moment to revisit the whisky highball. This tall, refreshing mix of whisky and soda is a great way to explore the flavour differences across whisky styles. You can really discover the complexity of the spirit when soda water is added.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

When it comes to the history of the highball, there are many stories, and it is hard to confirm where it was first invented. One of the most popular stories takes place in 1894 and is about an English actor, E.J. Ratcliffe, whose favourite hangout was The Adams House in Boston. It was there that he asked the barman for a scotch and soda, or the scotch highball, as he called it. To his disappointment, the bar didn't stock any scotch at the time, but after months of hunting down some cases, the barman finally managed to find some. The bottles didn't last very long as the highball became an instant hit.

In 1895, the drink appeared in a book called *The Mixologist* under the name of 'Splificator'. If we go even further back in time, it is likely that scotch and soda evolved from brandy and soda in the early 1800s. Brandy and soda was a popular drink in England then, and it makes sense for someone to try a similar serve with scotch whisky. This would explain the highball's journey to America via people like Ratcliffe.

However, John Dewar & Sons trademarked the term 'High Ball' back in 1902. They claim that Tommy Dewar came up with it in 1891 in New York during his global marketing voyage. His friend had suggested they stop for a 'ball' in one of the bars on Broadway. Back then, 'ball' was a

term used for a measure of whisky. Tommy was not happy with the small glasses the whisky was served in and requested high glasses so they could have a 'high ball'.

It is possible Tommy and his pal were only served a large measure of whisky, but over the years the story has evolved to include ice and soda in their order. Either way, in 1899, Dewar's brought out White Label, marketing it as a High Ball whisky. Johnny Walker followed suit a few years later, suggesting that their Red Label blend be served with soda water.

## RISING FROM THE ASHES

As the years passed, the highball faded away, making room for new obsessions. It remained on the back-bench up until 2008, when Suntory wanted to strengthen the Japanese whisky scene and tap into a new, younger audience. They came up with a very successful marketing campaign for their canned Kakubin whisky and soda, known as Kaku Highball.

Their strategy included celebrity endorsements and youth-focused ads to move away from the image of whisky being a drink for older men. The focus was also on the quality of the soda water; the drink had to be perfect, no matter where it was made or who made it. For the first couple of years of the campaign, Suntory pushed the drink on trade by convincing tens of thousands of bars, izakaya, to add Kaku Highball to their menus, which then helped to encourage more and more venues to do the same. Within a few years they had skillfully revived the whole whisky category in Japan and made a highball the IT drink amongst a younger generation of consumers.





A bar in Tokyo known as Marugin was the first in Japan to begin serving Kaku Highball. Even to this day, the serve is their bread and butter, attracting drinkers from far and wide.

Thanks to the Japanese influence, the highball has made it back onto the drink menus across the globe. It is such an easy drink to make, even at home. Whether you make it with scotch, American whiskey, Japanese malts, a blend or a single malt, it all comes down to the complexity of the flavour profile.

## How to take it a little further

In Japan, less is more when it comes to highballs, but the rest of us are more than happy to jazz up our serves with a touch of flavoured syrup, liqueurs, fresh fruit or unique soda waters.

There is no need to complicate matters; after all, highball is all about allowing the whisky to shine. The key is to complement it.

You might not think so, but there are significant differences between soda waters, and I would always encourage you to choose one with a low salt level, long-lasting fizziness, and a clean, crisp taste.

Bring a touch of fruitiness through syrups such as roasted pineapple, grilled peach or lychee, add floral notes through elderflower or lavender, or highlight those herbal notes with various garnish options. By creating a tea-based syrup you can play with flavours such as Earl Grey, green tea, mixed berries, or mint. The citrus and bergamot from Earl Grey tea pairs well with floral flavour profiles and the subtle smokiness of some single malts. A quicker upgrade to your highball can

be made using flavoured soda water. Look for sodas with delicate flavours and long-lasting fizziness. Avoid overly sweet ones, as you want to keep the highball dry and refreshing.

## HIGHBALL RECIPES

To help you embark on the journey of exotic highballs, try these easy recipes.

Tip: Cask-strength and higher ABV whiskies work well in cocktails as they add texture and bring different notes from the whisky to the forefront, contributing significantly to the body of the drink.

### PINK HIGHBALL

For this serve, choose a single malt with red-berry notes and fresh fruitiness. No need to complicate things – a whisky with subtle cask influence, such as second-fill ex-bourbon works well. The cherry syrup adds a touch of sweetness, and it looks stunning if added last. If you prefer a dryer highball, feel free to skip the syrup.

*40ml Fruity single malt  
25ml Rosé vermouth  
Soda water  
3 Maraschino cherries  
2 barspoons of syrup from the cherry jar (optional)*

*Simply build the drink over ice, give it a gentle stir and garnish with the cherries and the syrup.*

### THAI HIGHBALL

The lemongrass pairs well with savoury whiskies. Perhaps something oily from the west coast of Scotland that offers those lovely umami notes. If you aren't in the mood for making

lemongrass cordial at home, you could use a ready-made lemongrass syrup or a ginger & lemongrass flavoured soda water instead.

*40ml Savoury or herbal single malt  
20ml Lemongrass cordial  
Soda water  
Kaffir lime leaf for garnish*

Simply build the drink over ice, give it a gentle stir and garnish with a dried Kaffir lime leaf.

### Lemongrass cordial

*750ml Water  
300g Caster sugar  
6–8 Stalks of lemongrass  
6 Kaffir lime leaves  
2 Lemons  
70g Fresh ginger  
¾ tsp Citric acid*

- 1 Peel and juice the lemons. Discard as much pith as possible from the peel to avoid making the cordial bitter.
- 2 Peel and chop the ginger.
- 3 Bruise the lemongrass stalks with a rolling pin and break them in half.
- 4 Add the lemon juice, lemon peel, ginger, lime leaves and lemongrass to a pot with the water and simmer gently for 5–10 minutes.
- 5 Turn off the heat and let it sit for half an hour before straining. Store in the fridge for up to two to three weeks. ♦





# INDIA AISLE IN CANADA DUTY FREE

WRITTEN BY **DAVIN DE KERGOMMEAUX**

India's growing cultural and trade presence in Canada reached a significant milestone on Thursday, May 21, 2026, when Great White Northern Spirits founders, Balaji Naagaraja and Pooja Srinivasamurthy launched the

## “India Aisle in Canada.”

Senior Canadian government officials joined the founders in a Grand Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony to mark the debut of Indian spirits in Canada's duty-free shops at major international gateways,

including Toronto Pearson International Airport, Vancouver International Airport, key airports in Alberta, and major land-border crossings in Ontario and British Columbia.

The launch comes as Indian whisky and spirits gain increasing recognition on the world stage for quality, authenticity and heritage. India Aisle offerings include Indri & Rampur Indian Single Malts, Sangam World Whisky, Camikara Indian Rum, Kohinoor Rum, Jaisalmer Indian Craft Gin, Hapusa Himalayan Gin, Greater Than Gin,

Mansion House Brandy and Monarch Brandy.

“Today is not just about launching products into a new market,” Mr. Naagaraja & Ms. Srinivasamurthy commented during the ceremony, “it is about opening doors for Indian heritage, craftsmanship and stories to travel globally.”

Along with Indian diplomatic representatives, VIP guests included cultural leaders, trade stakeholders, hospitality professionals, retail partners, and members of the media. ♦

# THE GLENCAIRN<sup>®</sup> GIN GOBLET

*The Next Generation of Gin Glass*



## 1. LIP

Designed with a lip for ease of drinking.

## 2. CURVE

Curves in at the top to focus and enhance the aroma.

## 3. STEM

Incorporates a stem to keep the hand away from warming the gin.

## 4. CRYSTAL


Made from crystal to enhance the clarity of the drink.

## 5. ICE

Requires less ice.

## 6. WEIGHT

Perfect weight in the hand.



# WHISKIES & NON-ALCOHOLIC SPIRITS

OPTIONS FOR YOUR OUTDOOR TIME

WRITTEN BY **JAMES DOUGLAS**



# RELAXING WITH FRIENDS

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## THOMPSON TWO TONE CASK SELECTION

Two-tone refers to this New Zealand whisky being blended with whisky aged in ex-bourbon barrels and in European oak previously used to age New Zealand red wine. Chock full of red-berried tones, dressed with peppery spice flares.



## MAGNOTTA 271 WHISKY 10 YEAR OLD SINGLE MALT

Named after Magnotta's flagship winery at 271 Chrislea Road in Vaughan, Ontario, this lightly peated malt matured for ten years in oak, developing sweet nuances. The peat smoke is gentle, without masking the malt's lushness.



## SONS OF VANCOUVER THE FIRST CRACK OF A CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Taking home Best Cask Strength Whisky at the 2026 Canadian Whisky Awards, this wheated rye evokes caramelized and creamy custard flavours, like digging into a crème brûlée at a French restaurant with cloth napkins – not the paper kind.

## EAU CLAIRE DISTILLERY PLOUGHMAN'S SINGLE MALT CANADIAN WHISKY

Eau Claire's limited release is finished in Pedro Ximénez solera casks from Ximénez Spínola in Jerez, infusing the bold Alberta single malt with a bedroll of sherry character. Layered and structured, with luxurious dark notes of chocolate, dried fruits and beautiful oak.



## THE BALVENIE CARIBBEAN CASK 14 YEAR OLD

This classic Speyside single malt Scotch whisky matures for 14 years in traditional oak casks, then is finished in casks that previously held Caribbean rum. The malt is rich with layers of sweetness, with tropical fruits atop its signature honey profile.

## RIG HAND DISTILLERY ROCKING R 100% RYE WHISKY

Rig Hand made this rye from local grain grown on a farm established in 1901 and owned by the Knull family. Aged in various types of barrels, the rye's spices made their way to Ottawa, where it became the first Canadian whisky selected as the House of Commons' "Speaker's Whisky."



# SHARING THE TIME

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## **COPPER WORKS AMERICAN SINGLE MALT WHISKEY R35**

The Copper Works Distilling Co. in Seattle, Washington, blended four casks of Baronesse barley malt with two casks of their pale malt recipe for Release 35. The whiskies were aged for at least 39 months in new American oak, imparting a fresh grassiness to the malt.

FROM GREAT BREWING COMES GREAT SPIRITS

# COPPER WORKS

# FOR SITTING OUTSIDE

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## GNISTA BARRELED OAK

This Swedish-crafted non-alcoholic spirit layers a dark flavour profile with familiar oak and whisky-like spices.



## SPIRITLESS KENTUCKY 74

This distilled non-alcoholic spirit is produced using a proprietary reverse distillation process. Sip it or stir it into your favourite cocktail.



## SOBER SPIRITS W

Crafted in France, Sober W takes dealcoholized three-year-old Scotch, then redistills it with roasted wood bark to pull in bourbon inflections.

## HP JUNIPER SINGLE MALT

Whisky ingredients, including Scottish peated malt, are distilled without alcohol and using traditional methods to produce this non-alcoholic whisky.



## RIG HAND DRY WELL WHISKY

Complementing a line extension of alcohol-free spiced rum and gin, this alcohol-free whisky adds whisky flavours to any mixed drink.

## ALT NIN-ALCOHOLIC PEATED MALT

Magnotta has taken the smoky flavours of an old-world whiskey and converted them into this vegan-friendly, gluten-free, non-alcoholic option. ♦



# ENJOY THE MOMENT

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## ORACLE BOURBON ALTERNATIVE

This low-calorie bourbon alternative brings familiar oaky notes of citrus, wood spices, vanilla and caramel to zero-proof cocktails.





# TEST YOUR WHISKY WISDOM

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Four of our friends participated in our summer issue and shared their whisky knowledge with us




MASTER DISTILLER  
HOOD RIVER DISTILLERS, INC.  
**Caitlin Bartlemay**

**Question -1** McCarthy's American Single Malt is a part of the American Single Malt Whiskey Commission.

In what year did the commission see American Single Malt ratified as the newest category of spirits in the United States?

**Question -2** As a part of the new rules for American Single Malt, is there a minimum age requirement for time in a barrel?





MASTER DISTILLER  
ST PETERSBURG DISTILLERY  
**Clara Robbins**

**Question -1** What is the congener/compound produced during the fermentation of whiskey that smells like almond?

**Question -2** Which class of compounds is primarily responsible for fruity notes like banana or pear in whiskey?

MASTER BLENDER  
**Ashley A Barnes**

**Question -1** What effect do high aldehydes have on a mature whiskey?

**Question -2** When vanilla is detected organoleptically in a barrel, what flavors can be expected to carry through into a blend?





MASTER BLENDER,  
BUSHMILLS IRISH WHISKEY  
**Alex Thomas**

**Question -1** Which came first?  
The distillery, the river, or the  
village of Bushmills?

**Question -2** What makes Irish  
Single Malt unique? ♦

-If you most, the answers are on page 71-



# ANOTHER ROUND ANOTHER RALLY

WRITTEN BY **SUMI SARKAR**

Another Round Another Rally (ARAR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting hospitality workers through education, community, and financial assistance. Founded by industry professionals, ARAR creates programs that uplift bartenders, servers, chefs, and hospitality teams while helping build a more sustainable and connected future for the industry.

Through initiatives like Rally for Tomorrow, a traveling event series bringing together hospitality leaders and change-makers for conversations around leadership, sustainability, innovation, and the evolving future of hospitality, ARAR creates space for connection, collaboration, and industry growth.

The organization has provided millions in relief grants and resources while continuing to champion education, opportunity, and long-term support for hospitality professionals. ♦

*For more information go to [anotherroundanotherally.org](http://anotherroundanotherally.org)*



# ROCKING R

100% Rye Whisky • Award Winning • Speaker's Selection, House of Commons'.  
Crafted in Alberta. Chosen in Ottawa. Canadas Premier Rye.

7 Year  
Barrel Aged

40% alc/vol

“Hot spice  
notes,  
caramel,  
smooth  
pepper  
finish”



Rig Hand Craft Distillery • Leduc County, Alberta  
Order online at [righanddistillery.com](http://righanddistillery.com) • Available at fine retailers

# The Japanese Way of Whisky

Japan's whiskies  
and how to enjoy them



Dave Broom  
Photography by Kohei Take

ウイスキー道



## EXPERIENCING THE CULTURE

An in-depth, personal journey around Japan's whisky distilleries, telling their stories and unveiling the philosophy that lies behind this fascinating whisky culture



Award-winning author and Japanese whisky expert, Dave Broom, tells the stories of Japan's whisky distilleries, unveiling the philosophy that lies behind this fascinating whisky culture, and revealing how it relates to many Japanese concepts.

Dave looks at the history and output of each distillery, considering the elements that make that particular whisky what it is, and including tasting notes. Features on aspects of Japanese life and culture that are crucial to a wider understanding, from the importance of





the seasons to the role of craftsmanship, add to the picture. Interwoven throughout the book is the fascinating narrative of the journey across Japan which Dave made with photographer Kohei Take, offering further insight into the country which creates this wonderful drink and making this a must-have edition for any whisky lover, whisky drinker, whisky collector or Japanophile.





## Author Biography

### DAVE BROOM

is an internationally celebrated spirits expert. He has won two Glenfiddich prizes and, in 2013, the IWSC Communicator of the Year Award. In 2015, he won The Spirited Award for Best Cocktail & Spirits writer and in 2018, his book *The Way of Whisky* won an André Simon prize. In 2020 he was named Best Drinks Writer at the Fortnum & Mason awards. He has been a contributing editor to Whisky Magazine, Whisky Advocate and scotchwhisky.com.

He started thewhiskymanual.uk in 2020 and is also the whisky correspondent for jancisrobinson.com. He has made two films, *Cuba in a Bottle* and *The Amber Light*. The latter, on whisky and Scottish culture, won Best Programme at the 2020 Fortnum & Mason awards.

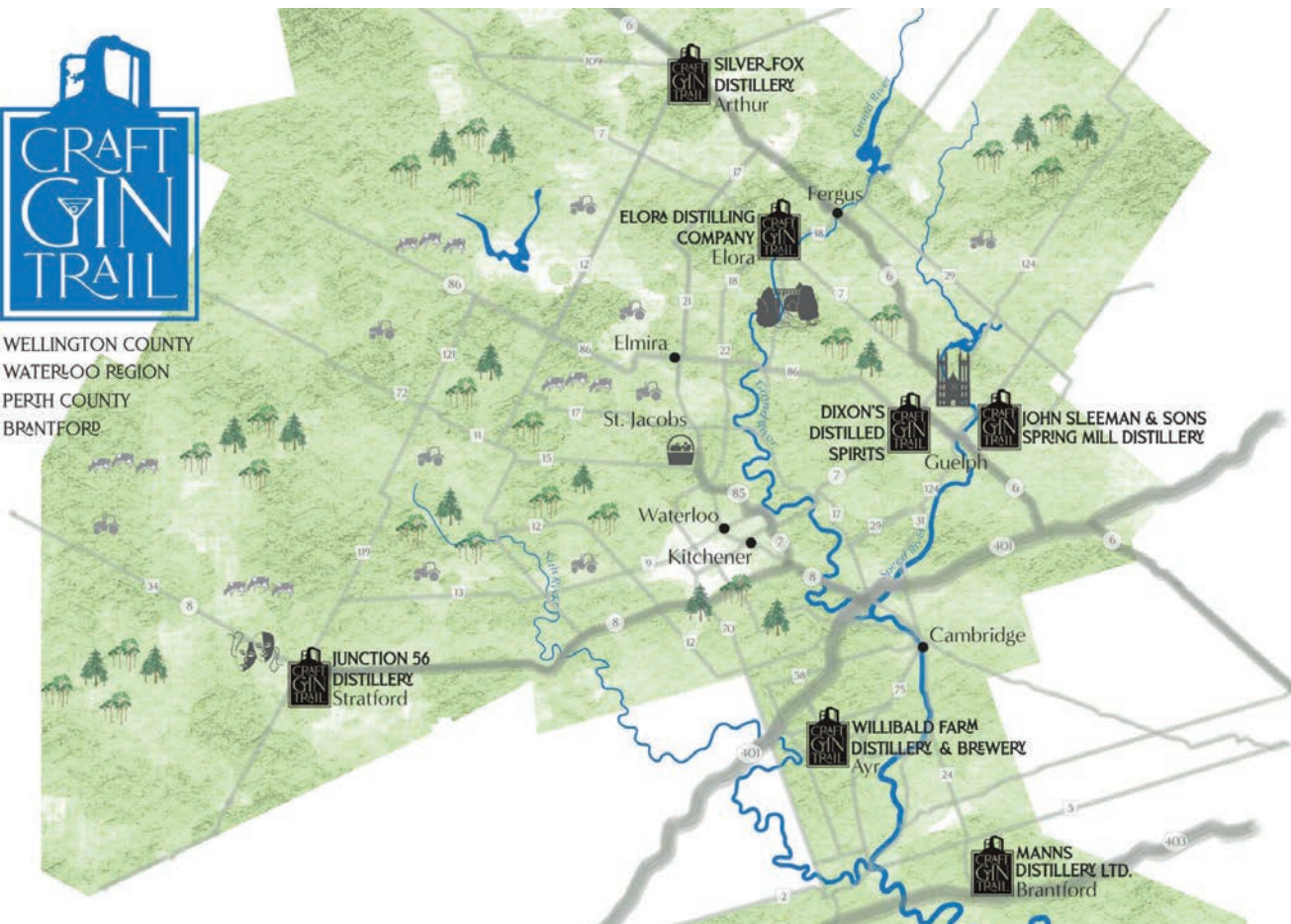
Dave has built up a considerable international following, with regular training and educational visits to Japan, France, Holland, Scandinavia, Germany, Africa and North America. He is involved in whisky education and acts as a consultant to major distillers on tasting techniques as well as training professionals and the public.

Dave's previous books include three editions of *The World Atlas of Whisky*, *Whisky: The Manual*, *Gin: The Manual*, *Rum: The Manual*, *The Japanese Way of Whisky* and *A Sense of Place*. ♦





WELLINGTON COUNTY  
WATERLOO REGION  
PERTH COUNTY  
BRANTFORD



## THE CRAFT GIN TRAIL

Ontario's first Craft Gin Trail invites gin lovers on a self-guided road trip through some of Southwestern Ontario's most distinctive distilleries

WRITTEN BY PAUL LACHOWICH

The scenic route winds through Waterloo Region, Perth County, Wellington County, and the City of Brantford — all within about an hour of the Greater Toronto Area — connecting eight distilleries, each with its own unique expression of craft gin and spirits.

The Craft Gin Festival launched in 2023 and is now in its fourth year. The annual event brings together Ontario distillers and gin enthusiasts to celebrate and explore the world of craft gin.

Craft Distilling is a new art form for Ontario. The first distilleries only came into being after 2009. Since that time a scattering of craft distillers have popped up across the province but due

to heavy taxation and difficult regulations imposed on them, their numbers are small. Fortunately in the area of Wellington, Waterloo and Perth Counties there is a nexus of people with a creative spirit and hardy soul who have embraced this fledgling industry.

These are creators who have turned away from the industrialized world of mass produced spirits and revived the hand-crafted methods from a bygone era. They are connecting with local farmers to source fresh ingredients, and they are experimenting with unique flavours in small batches. This gives the consumers a chance to drink great local products that are exciting and new.

Gin is of course one of the most exciting spirits because it offers the most freedom to be creative. The base alcohol must be flavoured with juniper but after that the world is our oyster.

Each of these six distilleries is exploring new botanicals and flavourings as well as experimenting with small batch techniques. You are bound to find new a gin experience that will excite your palate.

Each distillery offers consumers a chance to come and see how alcohol is made, learning the ins and outs of distillation. Another advantage of visiting a producer is that often you are able to sample products to make informed choices before purchasing. These are exciting early days of a new Spirits Industry here in Ontario and the Craft Gin Trail gives you a front row seat on its journey.

On May 6 2026, Elora Ontario's fourth annual Craft Gin Festival invites gin lovers to sample more than 30 unique, handcrafted gins from some of Southwestern Ontario's most distinctive distilleries. ♦



# GOLDCOCK

— CZECH WHISKY —

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. 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.



## 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.



# NO BEES REQUIRED FOR THIS BEE STING

## Dillon's DIY cocktail kit puts a twist on a classic

WRITTEN BY **BLAIR PHILLIPS**

In 1985, killer bees hitched a ride aboard a South American ship and arrived in California for the first time. The arrival caused panic, a posse rounded up the bees, and then it faded from the news. Since then, we have occasionally heard about the migration of killer bees from South America, which have been moving at a rate of 500 kilometres a year. This should have placed the spicy bee in the southern United States by 1988 and in Niagara by 1993. Maybe the bees were weighed down by southern food or couldn't figure out the GPS, but the killer bees never showed up. But the fact that Niagara is

100% killer-bee-free didn't stop Dillon's Small Batch Distillers from making a cocktail that puts a sting on a classic Prohibition-era cocktail called the Bee's Knees.

A Bee's Knees is a simple sour gin cocktail made with lemon and honey. It has migrated to cocktail menus over the past couple of years and has been buzzing ever since. Variations include the Bee Sting, in which peated whisky replaces gin. Dillon's has created their own riff on a Bee Sting using their gin, and now, with their cocktail kit, you can shake up this killer Dillon's cocktail at home.





## The BEE STING cocktail kit includes a quartet of ingredients

### Dillon's Dry Gin 7 (200 ml)

This dry-style gin is produced by vapour distillation using juniper and a variety of traditional botanicals. Made from a base of 100% Ontario rye grain, the other botanicals include coriander, cardamom, angelica, orris root, orange and lemon peels, and oak.

### Dillon's Elderflower Liqueur (750 ml)

Dillon's Elderflower Liqueur alone makes this kit worth the price of admission. To make the liqueur, elderflowers are cold-steeped in grape spirit for a month to capture their honeyed floral tones and sunny fragrance. A secondary infusion includes ginger,

grapefruit peel and other botanicals to balance the elderflower's brightness with warm, deep layers. The liqueur is sweetened with a bartender's touch, using cane sugar and pear juice.

### Dillon's Ginger Bitters

Like many of the distillery's bitters, this one is beautiful and precise, playing a supporting role without cluttering the palate. Fresh ginger plays a starring role in this bitters, binding and elevating the elderflower liqueur with the gin.

### Rosewood Hot Honey

This honey packs a serious sting and is anything but mild. The fiery, small-batch kick of lacto-fermented chillies,



paired with the sweet richness of Niagara's Rosewood honey, lights the fuse for this cocktail's flavourful heat.

You don't have to dress up like a beekeeper to shake up this delicious cocktail, but you can if that's your thing. The kit includes easy-to-follow instructions for making this Bee Sting. ♦

# ISLE OF CUMBRAE

EST. DISTILLERS LTD 2019

MILLPORT, SCOTLAND

## The Wise Women Who Founded It All

Founded in 2019, Isle of Cumbrae Distillery began with five women brought together on a Scottish island by a shared love of gin and a deep passion for the place they call home.





In April 2024, four of the founders stepped back to enjoy retirement, passing the torch to new custodians Husband and Wife team: Caroline and Struan. Coming from a cask whisky background, they bring a wealth of expertise to the distillery.

Working alongside founding member Juli, they continue to craft exceptional premium spirits while delivering a memorable visitor experience.

Located in Millport, Isle of Cumbrae Distillery currently produces five craft gins: Nostalgin, Croc

Rock, Maura, Waverley, and Gargowan No. 35. The range also includes Veya Vodka, along with limited-edition whiskies such as the single malt Stone Lore and the blended malt Lion Rock.”

### Croc Rock Gin

celebrates Millport’s iconic Crocodile Rock, one of the most recognised symbols of the island which has delighted visitors of all ages for over 100 years. Much passion and deliberation went into this gin, with the botanicals being meticulously selected... as it turns out, ginger best represents the ‘snap’ of the croc.





## LION ROCK

Introducing Isle of Cumbrae Distillers first Scotch Whisky, a twin release representing two sides of an ancient tale surrounding one megalithic structure.

These blended malts have been created and selected by us at IOCD as we have a burning passion for whisky.

Our intention was to create a whisky which represents the Lion Rock story, and can be enjoyed by seasoned whisky drinkers or those being introduced to the dram for the first time.

## VEYA

Created in collaboration with our Maura Gin, Our Veya Craft Vodka is a tribute to “St. Beya” of Wee Cumbrae. St Beya was a medieval princess who fled to Britain and eventually settled on “Wee Cumbrae” – a spirit of resilience and timeless elegance with a poetic nod to the Island itself.





## Gargowan

marks the beginning of the Ayrshire Hospice’s story. Named after the historic villa at 35 Racecourse Road, which has been home to the Hospice since 1989, it symbolises a lasting commitment to providing care and support across Ayrshire and Arran. Crafted in partnership with Isle of Cumbrae Distillers, this gin celebrates the region’s rich heritage and the spirit of community that lies at the heart of the Ayrshire Hospice.

## Nostalgin

the strong emotional connection and nostalgia Millport holds in so many people’s hearts, especially those who spent their childhood summers here in the 50’s and 60’s. Those who return, now bring their own children and grandchildren, and the connection to the island continues to grow and thrive. ♦



## MAURA

An ancient Celtic name meaning ‘Star of the Sea’, Maura celebrates Scotland’s women, who helped shape its history, legends and stories of the sea. We also commemorate St. Maura, who settled on Great Cumbrae in the 7th Century and helped spread Christianity to the West of Scotland.

Our Maura label artist, Hope Blamire, is a celebrated Scottish painter (and self-described gin enthusiast!), whose vibrant artwork captures the coastal landscapes and glistening waters of the West Coast of Scotland. Her artwork is featured in galleries and shops across the UK, and in homes throughout the world.





# TO CHANGE *OR* NOT TO CHANGE

## Decisions are not always that easy

WRITTEN BY **DANIEL WHITTINGTON**

I was reading G.K. Chesterton last week and stumbled onto this quote: “There exists in such a case a certain institution or law; let us say, for the sake of simplicity, a fence or gate erected across a road. The more modern type of reformer goes gaily up to it and says, ‘I don’t see the use of this; let us clear it away.’ To which the more intelligent type of reformer will do well to answer: ‘If you don’t see the use of it, I certainly won’t let you clear it away. Go away and think. Then, when you can come back and tell me that you do see the use of it, I may allow you to destroy it.’”  
— The Thing, G.K. Chesterton

I’ve been thinking about that a lot lately, especially watching the

constant branding changes in the whisky industry.

Every time I turn around, someone is redoing fonts, changing bottles, rewriting websites, altering packaging, shifting color schemes. Reinventing. Refreshing. Modernizing. Now, to be fair, I’m not anti-change. I’m currently helping one of the companies I consult for go through a significant brand evolution. So yes, pot meet kettle.

But too often we start changing before we understand. Change for change’s sake is not necessarily progress. Sometimes it’s just motion.

The same thing is true at Wizard Academy.

We run more than 30 events a year on campus. There’s a well-worn path we follow each time: meals, tower prep, tastings, classrooms, logistics, the entire rhythm of hosting and sending people back out into the world.

When you repeat something that often, it can start to feel predictable to the team. Familiar. Maybe even boring. And that’s when the temptation creeps in.

We once stopped using a restaurant we regularly hired for catering. We liked them. There was no problem. We were just tired of eating the same thing every week.

What we forgot was that our students don’t eat it every week. They experience it once. Maybe twice a year. For many of them, it’s part of the ritual. Part of what they look forward to. In a class of twenty people, more than half were visibly disappointed when the meal changed.

It was a quiet but very real lesson. Change is not always improvement. ♦

**TEST YOUR WHISKY WISDOM ANSWERS**

**ASHLEY A BARNES  
MASTER BLENDER**

QUESTION- What effect do high aldehydes have on a mature whiskey?

ANSWER- Elevated aldehyde levels can significantly impact both aroma and palate. They often contribute pronounced notes reminiscent of overripe or decaying fruit, while also increasing perceived astringency and bitterness—particularly on the finish—resulting in a less balanced and more abrasive profile.

QUESTION- When vanilla is detected organoleptically in a barrel, what flavors can be expected to carry through into a blend?

ANSWER- The presence of vanilla can enhance a blend in several nuanced ways. Depending on its character, it may express as a delicate, sweet floral note or amplify richer elements such as caramel and aged tobacco. In addition, it typically provides a cohesive thread of warm vanilla that integrates and rounds out the overall flavor profile.

**CAITLIN BARTLEMAY MASTER DISTILLER  
CLEAR CREEK DISTILLERY  
HOOD RIVER DISTILLERS, INC.**

Question- McCarthy's American Single Malt is a part of the American Single Malt Whiskey Commission. In what year did the commission see American Single Malt ratified as the newest category of spirits in the United States?

ANSWER- (January 19, 2025)

QUESTION- As a part of the new rules for American Single Malt, is there a minimum age requirement for time in a barrel?

ANSWER- (There is no minimum age requirement. This was important for the category as it allows for expressions of the whiskey to come from the many varied climates of the United States)

QUESTION- What is the congener/compound produced during the fermentation of whiskey that smells like almond?

Answer: Benzaldehyde

QUESTION- Which class of compounds

is primarily responsible for fruity notes like banana or pear in whiskey?

Answer- Esters

QUESTION- In a humid climate, like Florida, does proof tend to go up or down during aging?

Answer- The Proof tends to go down, because ethanol evaporates more readily than water in high humidity

**ALEX THOMAS, MASTER BLENDER,  
BUSHMILLS IRISH WHISKEY**

QUESTION- Which came first? The distillery, the river, or the village of Bushmills?

ANSWER- The village came first. The Bushmills distillery takes its name from the small village on the North Coast of County Antrim, Northern Ireland. Bushmills gets its name from a combination of the River Bush and the numerous water-powered barley mills that lined the river in the village of Bushmills, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland. The name signifies "mills on the River Bush," reflecting the geographic location and the industry that dominated the area, paying homage to its roots.

Just like the heritage of its name, Bushmills Distillery combines the importance of the quality of its process and the love for the brand of its people. Together they make up the Bushmills family and are a testimony to upholding tradition, community and operating with a passion that is passed down through generations.

Bushmills has a restless pursuit of perfection and draws on over 400 years of history whilst taking inspiration from its surrounding. Come visit us and see for yourself what makes the place, the people and, of course, our whiskey so special!

QUESTION -What makes Irish Single Malt unique?

ANSWER- Irish single malt whiskey is a type of Irish whiskey that must meet the following criteria:

- Ingredients: Made from 100% malted barley

- Origin: Must be produced in Ireland
- Production: Distilled in a pot still at a single distillery. Distilled to an alcohol content of less than 94.8% ABV (Alcohol by Volume). The whiskey must be distilled in such a way that it retains the aroma and taste derived from the raw materials used.
- Aging: Matured in wooden casks, not exceeding 700L for at least three years on the island of Ireland
- Bottling: Bottled at a minimum of 40% ABV
- Additives: Contain no additives other than water and caramel colouring

Bushmills Irish Whiskey is characterized by its triple-distillation, producing a lighter, smoother, and fruit forward flavour profile compared to the typically double-distilled, and often peated/smoky profile of Scotch whisky.

Bushmills has the title of The Oldest Licence Distillery in the world due to it receiving its licence way back on 20th April 1608 from King James 1st. The 1608 license does not mark the start of whiskey production for Bushmills though – far from it – but rather it is an indication of the reputation it had acquired for its quality and tradition of whiskey making. We are proud to say over 400 years later we are still making our whiskey the way our ancestors did with quality and traditional at the centre of all we do.

**CLARA ROBBINS  
MASTER DISTILLER  
ST PETERSBURG DISTILLERY**

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Answer- Esters

QUESTION- In a humid climate, like Florida, does proof tend to go up or down during aging?

Answer- The Proof tends to go down, because ethanol evaporates more readily than water in high humidity ♦



# 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://twitter.com/ThreeChordBourbon)

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