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AUTUMN 2026

THE NEW
MYTHS
OF CANADIAN WHISKY

FEDDIE OCEAN
DISTILLERY
DRAMS FROM THE
NORWEGIAN WEST COAST

BOURBONS
NOT DYING
IT'S EVOLVING HAVE FAITH

ADAM VON GOOTKIN
HIGHCLERE CASTLE | GIN

A TEA LOVER'S
GUIDE TO WHISKY



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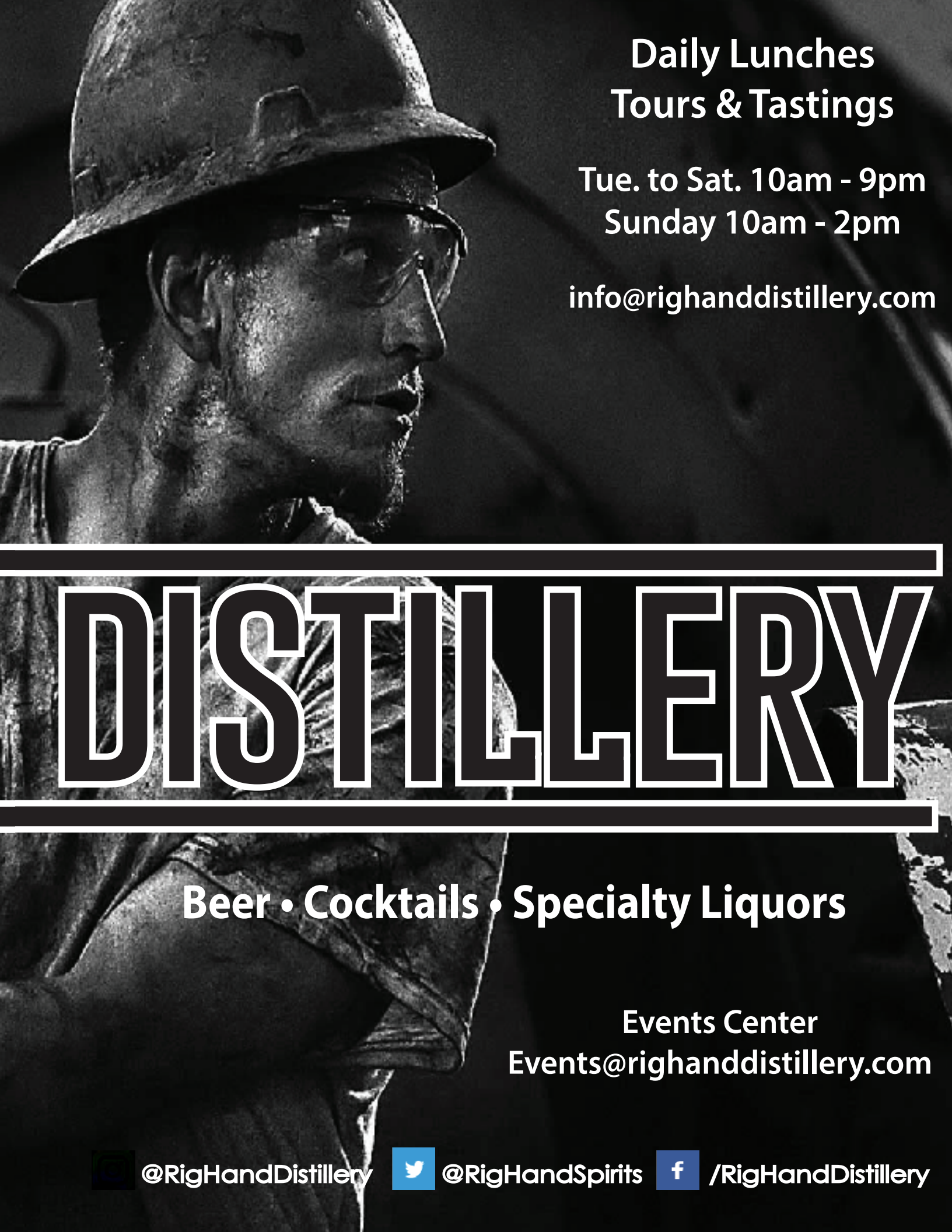


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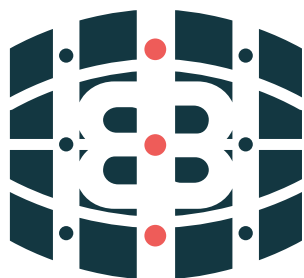
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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Blair Phillips
Davin de Kergommeaux
Inka Kukkamaki
Anthony DeYoung
Drew Hannush
Martin Tønder Smith
Daniel Whittington
Jim Dean
Shay Pal

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PUBLISHER | EDITOR

Robert Windover

ART + CREATIVE

Autumn Clare

MEDIA DESIGN

Mark Tenag

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Judith Kipka

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF SALES

publisher@relishandwhisky.ca

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The fall air is here, and with it comes our retreat to the indoors. Or, if you're like me, sit by a fire and enjoy a sip. Some of us will endeavour to embrace the cool air with a few wool blankets and a dram. Others may stay the course and simply enjoy the change of season from behind the window.

Whatever you partake in, enjoy the moment. I have found the whisky world such an exciting place to be a part of. When you get past the politics of it and share your discovery of something new with another person doing the same, it brightens the day. We have met a lot of passionate people who have put their life into the making of spirits to share with you

around the world. We have had them share their stories with us and in return with you, our readers - who have followed us for many years. Thanks to you we are on our 44th issue. Thanks to you for choosing Relish Whisky Magazine to be that bridge.

We have grown from an idea sitting inside a thoughtful lad, to a magazine viewed around the world. We try to bring a different perspective of the whisky and spirit world, to not persuade you to just follow our advice, but to try something new and break out of that old way of only drinking what your elders did.

We have such a vast culture of people from men to women leading the industry. Distilleries old and new waiting for you to try

their magical elixer. Let us introduce you to some of them within our pages. Then, please, venture out and try some. Look online to find them and more importantly, share them and your thoughts with a friend or with us. Write us with your favourite whisky or spirit story.

Sit back and embrace the season with us and a good whisky, mixed Cocktail or spirit. Enjoy our pages and allow them to slow you down a bit and relax in the moment.

Robert Windover
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

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THE SEARCH FOR WHISKY GREATS

WRITTEN BY **DREW HANNUSH**

If you were tasked with picking the three most impactful legends in whisky history, who would you choose?

That is the question I asked myself after a recent conversation with Jerry Daniels of Stone Fences Tours.

A frequent guest on my Whiskey Lore Podcast, Jerry suggested we create our own lists and count down the seven Kentucky Bourbon legends who are not in the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame.

After looking through the Hall's inductees, I was shocked by how many foundational figures in Bourbon history were missing. The list contained plenty of deserving modern industry professionals and post-Prohibition legends, but who would speak for Colonel E.H. Taylor, James C. Crow, or Elijah Pepper? Maybe Kentucky's Hall needed a veterans committee like Major League Baseball.

As my mind cycled through all of the great names missing from

Kentucky's history, I started wondering: what if I created my own world whisky hall of fame? Who would I choose, and what criteria would I use to narrow the field?

The first thing I knew was that I was not the right person to build something called a hall of "fame." As a whisky researcher who deconstructs brands and lore to find deeper truths, I couldn't in good conscience create a list based on popularity. What I needed to find were people who impacted the whisky we drink today—not just familiar names, but those whose labor, innovation, or influence laid foundations, created turning points, or elevated the spirit's potential.

These couldn't simply be celebrated or heavily marketed figures, but individuals with provable records of impact.





I decided it was a challenge worth taking on. But when I started brainstorming candidates, I quickly realized how daunting the task would be. I wasn't just looking for founders and distillers. The list could include inventors, chemists, blenders, merchants, legislators, marketers, journalists, farmers, and even politicians. And unlike the Kentucky Hall, my list needed to stretch into Scotch, Irish, Canadian, Japanese, and emerging whisky regions throughout Europe, Asia, and Oceania. The field would be enormous. I decided my first task was identifying a Top 10 before narrowing it to three.

I began jotting down names off the top of my head. Naturally, my mind drifted toward giants like Dewar, Jameson, and Daniel. But was I simply recreating another hall of fame rather than identifying the most impactful

legends? I decided to let AI take a shot at it, yet all it returned were modern names like Jim McEwan, Julian Van Winkle III, and Helen Mulholland. All worthy candidates, but again, largely modern figures. I thumbed through the indexes of some of my favorite whisky history books, only to find more founders and distillers.

We live in a world where historians often begin with a narrative and then gather evidence to support it. I prefer to work in reverse. I take the accepted narrative, test it, and then try to uncover its flaws.

I decided the best place to look was my own research notes. While putting together my Whiskey Lore podcast and history books, I've accumulated thousands of documents and fragments of information from contemporary newspapers, court rec

ords, trade journals, and legislative debates. These sources provide insights into how the industry evolved and reveal the people working behind the scenes who are often left out of discussions about whisky legends. Building a meaningful list required going beyond the surface and drawing on a deeper understanding of whisky history.

Once I had assembled my list, the next challenge was narrowing it down. As I refined the names, I discovered that some figures had been given a little too much credit thanks to marketing lore.

For example, in Kentucky, the Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897 is often presented as Colonel E.H. Taylor's crusade to save Bourbon's reputation from rampant adulteration. The popular narrative suggests Taylor wrote the bill and personally shepherded it through Congress.

By challenging that story, I discovered the man who appears to have been its true champion: Kentucky Congressman Walter Evans. A former Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Evans was tasked with developing legislation that would help American whiskey compete with Hiram Walker's Canadian Club, which was dominating export markets in the 1890s. These facts don't minimize Taylor's importance in the industry, but they do challenge one of the accomplishments most often attributed to him, while elevating Evans' place in the story.

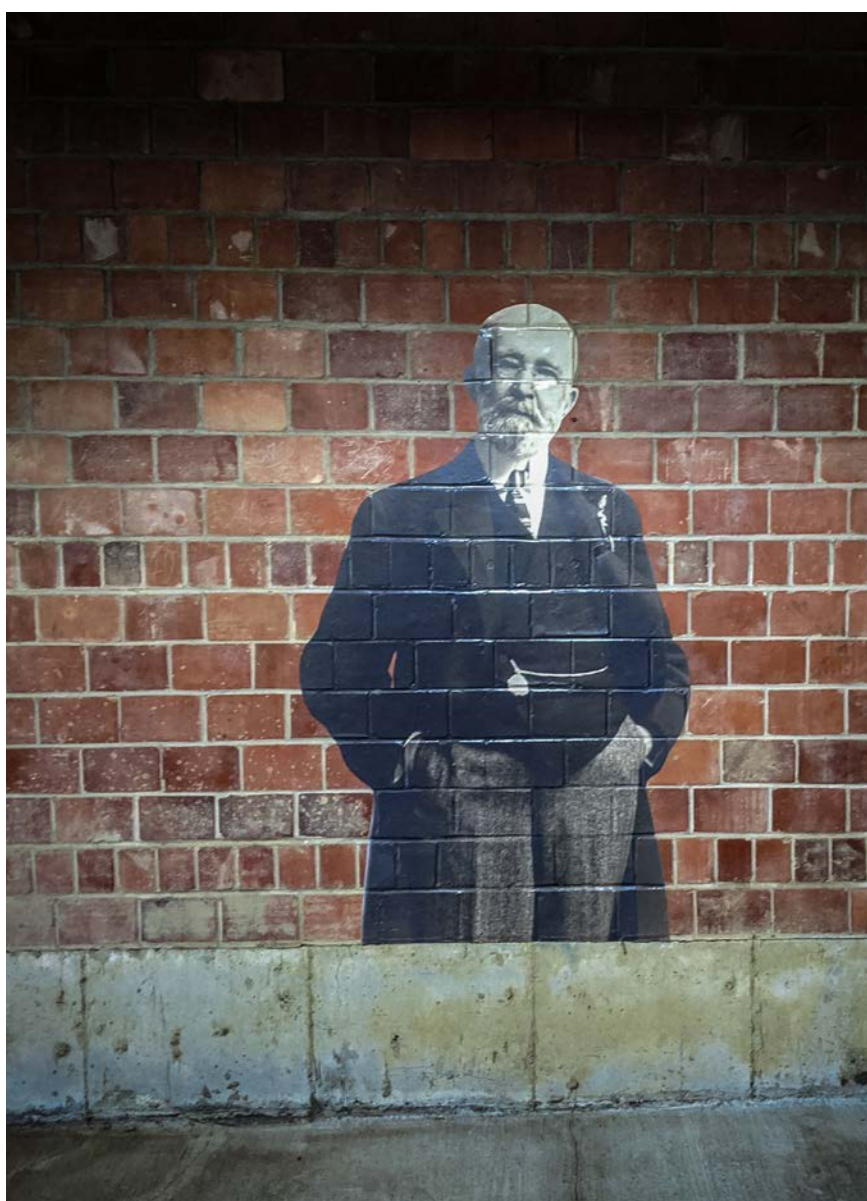
Another finalist on my list was Sir Tommy Dewar. A marketing genius, he was a disruptor long before the term existed. He embraced emerging technologies, creating one of the first filmed advertisements and erecting a spectacular illuminated billboard to promote his product.

What put him above his peers in my eyes was his 1893 trip during which he circumnavigated the globe. The accepted story is that Dewar established the reputation of Scotch whisky around the world. It is an impressive claim—until my research showed Scotch whisky was established in most markets before Dewar's trip. It is still an incredible accomplishment, but it suggests Dewar accelerated Scotch whisky's global reach rather than creating it.

This deeper look made me realize choosing a top three is always going to be an imperfect exercise. The list could shift at any time based on new discoveries, the debunking of claims rooted in oral tradition, or an exceptionally sticky piece of marketing lore.

And we researchers have to face it—the whiskey industry has never done a particularly good job documenting its own history, leaving any list of legends as something of a castle built on sand. Maybe that's why so many whiskey hall of fame lists remain comfortably within the last hundred years.

I ultimately decided the purpose of this list is not to permanently stamp three people as the most important figures in whiskey history.



Instead, it is an opportunity to weigh the factors that have made whisky the remarkable spirit it is today, while shining a light on the individuals whose efforts truly moved the industry forward. With that, I took a deep breath and settled on my first three names. These are people whose influence can still be found in whisky glasses around the world today.

The first was Aeneas Coffey. If blended whisky is the world's most popular whisky style, and it is, then Coffey's impact is difficult to overstate. His continuous column still dramatically increased production efficiency, lowered costs, and created a consistent grain spirit that blenders could use

as a foundation for their products.

The success of blended Scotch whisky helped spread his influence globally, but it didn't stop there. Variations of Coffey's design became standard throughout the whisky industry, from Canadian blends to Bourbon and rye production in the United States.

Whether you prefer single malt, Bourbon, rye, Japanese whisky, or a blended Scotch, there is a good chance the spirit in your glass owes something to Coffey's invention. Remove him from history, and the modern whisky landscape looks dramatically different.



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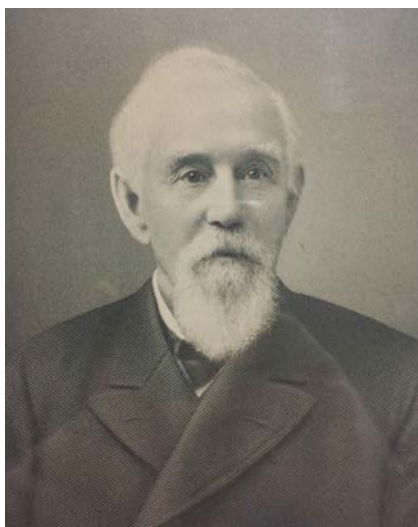
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My second choice was Hiram Walker, the American-born entrepreneur who established a distillery on the Canadian side of the Detroit River in 1857. What made Walker stand out was not a single invention or breakthrough, but the number of times his name appeared when I began tracing the origins of modern whisky practices.

When historians discuss sealed bottles, the spotlight often falls on George Garvin Brown. When they discuss global whisky distribution, attention shifts to the great Scotch blenders. When they discuss the Bottled-in-Bond Act, the conversation



usually centers on Colonel E.H. Taylor. Yet Hiram Walker's influence appears in all three stories. His Canadian Club became one of the most successful bottled whiskies of the nineteenth century, reached markets around the world, and became such a formidable export competitor that American officials cited its success when seeking reforms that ultimately led to the Bottled-in-Bond Act.

The deeper I dug, the harder it became to ignore Walker's fingerprints on the modern whisky industry. While others are often credited with changing a single aspect of whisky, Walker helped shape production, packaging, distribution, and consumer trust all at the same time.

My final choice was perhaps the most surprising. Unlike Coffey and Walker, Josephine Roche is virtually unknown within the whisky industry today. Yet her influence can be found in nearly every whisky-producing nation.

In 1935, while serving as Acting Administrator of the Federal Alcohol Administration, Roche approved the standards that still define American whiskey. Those regulations established requirements for Bourbon, rye, wheat, malt, and other American whisky styles, while also defining what qualified as a straight whiskey. Most importantly, Roche's standards specified that straight whiskey had to be aged in new charred oak containers.

That single decision had consequences far beyond American whiskey. Not only did it standardize maturation practices in the United States, it created a steady supply of used American oak barrels that could then be sold abroad. And while the practice of aging Scotch, Irish, Japanese, and other world whiskies in ex-Bourbon casks predates Roche's regulation, her standards dramatically expanded the supply and affordability of those barrels.

More than ninety years later, whisky makers around the world are still benefiting from a decision made by a woman whose name remains



largely unknown outside historical circles.

You may be looking at my three selections and already building a different list of your own. Good. That's exactly what I hoped would happen and it is why Jerry and I always make independent lists and compare them.

Aeneas Coffey, Hiram Walker, and Josephine Roche are simply the starting point for my search. There are dozens of other names worthy of consideration, and I suspect future research may change how I view some of the people already on my list. That is why this search will continue through my new Whiskey Lore podcast series, *The Legends of Whiskey Lore*, where I'll explore the people whose ideas, inventions, and influence helped shape the whisky we enjoy today.

Most of all, I hope you'll join me in the journey. Create your own list. Challenge my choices. Defend the names I left off. The conversations that follow are often more valuable than the rankings themselves, helping us better understand not just the spirit in our glass, but the people who helped make it possible. ♦

FEDDIE OCEAN DISTILLERY

DRAMS FROM THE
NORWEGIAN WEST COAST

WRITTEN BY **Martin Tønder Smith**

Norway is close to Scotland. So close, in fact, that flights from Oslo/Bergen to Edinburgh are far cheaper than flights from the same cities to the northern part of Norway. No wonder then, that Norwegians have a close relationship to their kinfolk across the North Sea. We've been known to cross this stretch of ocean by boat as well, but that's another story entirely.





Norway has one of the longest coastlines in the world, only beaten by Canada in fact, still, it's a relatively small country with a population of only five million. It's also a highly regulated country in many respects, and very much so when it comes to alcohol.

Alcohol is taxed harshly, and all sale of alcohol above 4,7 % abv is controlled by the government-owned retail chain Vinmonopolet ("The Wine Monopoly").

There's a duality in Norway. Traditionally, we're a spirits consuming folk. But drinking spirits was for many years frowned upon, and the trends since the late 90's have all pointed towards less consumption of spirits, and more wine. One should think that a country that is mostly dark and covered in snow for months at a time, warming yourself on a nice dram would make a lot of sense, but alas, the well-educated and well-situated Norwegians are mostly looking towards France and Italy to quench their thirsts.

The fact that Norway also had a production monopoly on spirits for 80 years, only lifted as recently in 2005, has made Norway a people that is happy with/used to very little choice. Around mid-2010, the first initiatives to establish Norwegian whisky distilleries saw the light of day, and today there are around 20 distilleries making whisky in the country.

They differ a lot, both in style and in production techniques. Sales volumes of whisky in Norway has been steady at 1,3 to 1,6 million litres the last decade, seeing a spike in sales during the pandemic like so many other markets. So far this year, Norwegian malt whisky has a market share of only 6 % of the total off-trade malt whisky market, but the common ambition is to offer Norwegian whisky drinkers tasty drams made closer to home. It also goes without saying that with a home market this small, the ambition to export is a unifying factor among most of Norway's whisky makers.

Feddie Ocean Distillery is one of the 14 makers with whisky currently for sale in the domestic market and was established in 2018. They began filling casks late 2019 and stand out from the rest in several respects. Founded by Anne Koppang, a successful restaurateur, it is today owned by approx. 1200 women and has 100 % female ownership as one of the founding ideas. This is a powerful movement, proven at launch of Feddie's inaugural single malt, when it outsold the big,

international brands and became the most-selling malt whisky at the Wine Monopoly the month it was launched.

As well as the women-empowering credo, it is also the first certified organic distillery in the country. In the year leading up to the launch, Feddie teamed up with the Brand agency Contagious, based in Edinburgh, to develop the brand platform, as well as a bespoke bottle. Feddie, being aware of its environmental impact, tasked Contagious

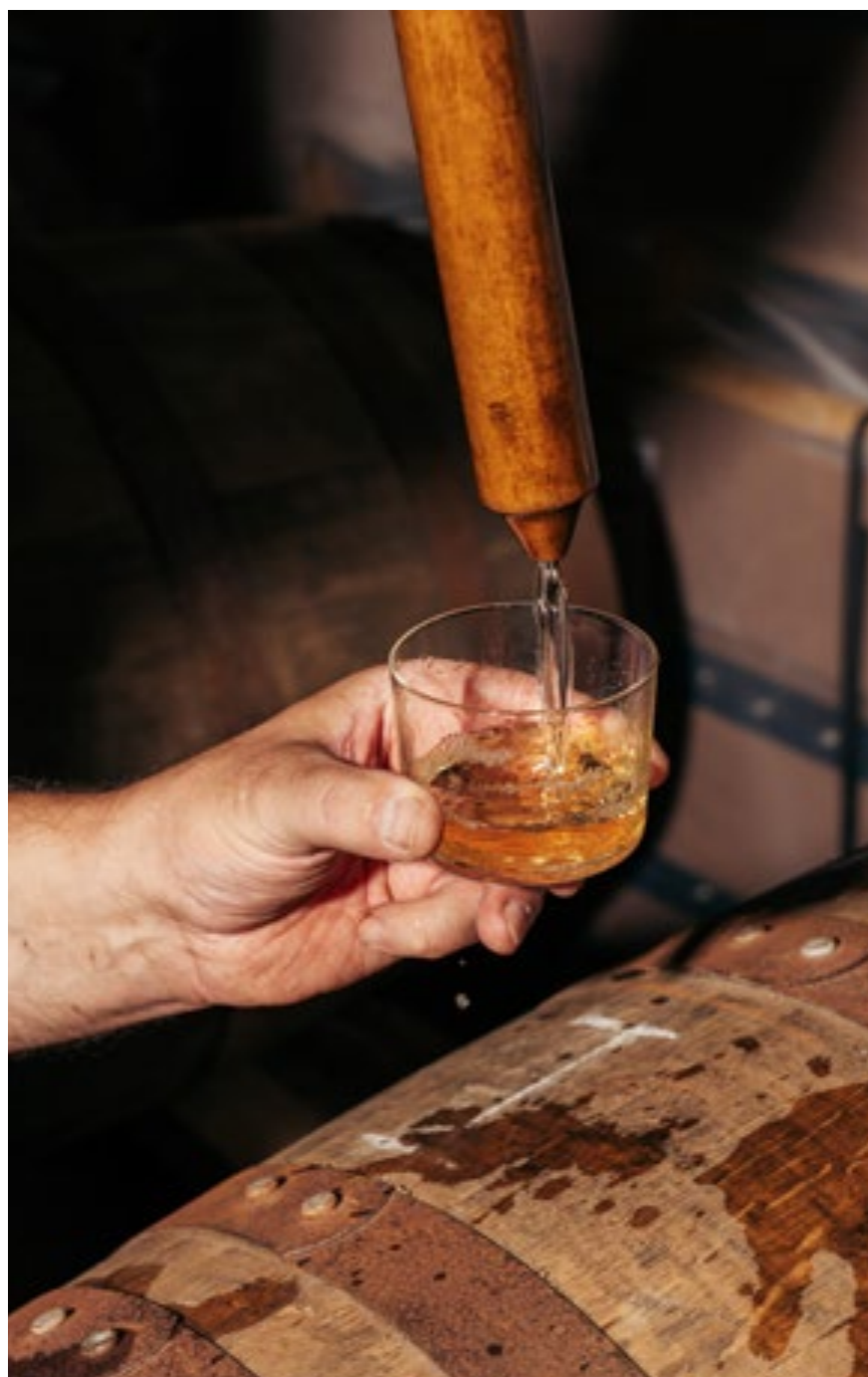


with designing a bottle that was made as light as possible, and made from a high degree of recycled glass. Norway is a market where advertising and marketing of alcohol is prohibited, so the bottle also needed to tell the story of Feddie, based on the three pillars “The Women”, “The Island” and “The Spirit”. The bottle has a wave-like pattern made of dots and dashes, where the dots represent the women investors and the dashes represent the people of Fedje Island.

Visiting Feddie Ocean Distillery is a journey to the western-most part of Norway, surrounded by beautiful nature and coastline. Situated on the beautiful island of Fedje, northwest of Bergen, it is the western-most municipality in Norway. It is closer to the Shetlands than to the capitol, Oslo, and people here have traditionally lived off the sea.

Both fish-processing, whaling, a canning factory, as well as peat-extraction, has employed numerous

islanders over the years. Feddie Ocean Distillery is a hybrid distillery in several meanings of the word. Originally a brewery, the company went under in 2016, and was taken over by Anne Koppang, who started the whisky-project by putting the brewing kit to use



in making wash, as well as installing a 4000-litre pot still coupled with a four-plate column, allowing distilling with one pass only.

With medium-long ferments and active lactobacillus during fermentation, the newmake exhibits a bright, fruity character with an underlaying briny note that tells the story of a coastal distillery. Kevin Jo Hansen, Distillery Manager, is convinced that Feddie’s water source plays a part in this, as this is surface water from a lake on the island, a lake that is



surrounded by peatbogs and is exposed to the ocean spray during the numerous autumn- and winter storms, an influence you can actually taste in the water after especially hefty storms. This briny, almost salty, note in the water is both advantageous for healthy fermentations and tough on the equipment, with a relatively low pH.

Feddie's house-style is this bright, fruity and slightly briny new-make matured on first-fill bourbon barrels, and is a rich and rewarding dram, even at the young age of four years, which is the lower age the whisky team, led by whisky blender Martin Tønder Smith, has decided to be their minimum age for bottling. It has a remarkably rich and oily mouth-feel, which gives it a chewy quality that the team is very happy to showcase in all their bottlings so far. Probably shown best in their Feddie Single Malt Distillery Edition, a whisky that is the same blend/liquid as their core expression, only bottled at 57,2 %, instead of the regular bottling strength of 47,2 %. With a splash of water, this is a richly textured and oily dram that stands its ground against far older whiskies, showcasing bright citrus and stone-fruit against a malty backbone, and with a slightly briny and lingering finish. Currently, their range of released whiskies is their Single Malt and Distillery Edition, primarily bourbon barrel matured, with approx. five percent of the blend having been matured in first-fill Oloroso Hogs-heads. The sherry-matured element in the blend adds complexity, as well as a nutty richness.



In addition to malt whisky, Feddie is one of the largest suppliers of craft gin in their home markets, as well as producing a range of aquavits, a caraway-based liquor, made in a similar way as gin, some expressions are cask matured, others are unaged and pairs excellently with the bountiful seafood Norway is known for. They also make an Oyster shell vodka, where neutral spirit is redistilled with oyster shells and lemon peel, to make a vodka with



a fresh and umami-like flavour, that was developed for a seafood restaurant in Oslo. This has turned out to be a much-loved take on a ubiquitous drink, especially for oyster bars and others serving shellfish and seafood.

Currently, Feddie is available in Sweden, Switzerland and the UK, but the team's ambition to grow their export sales is clear. Feddie Single Malt Whisky, much like the island that is its home, is waiting to be discovered. ♦



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A photograph of a whiskey distillery warehouse. Rows of wooden barrels are stacked on racks, receding into the distance. The lighting is warm and focused, highlighting the texture of the wood and the perspective of the rows.

BOURBON INVENTORY GLUT

How oversupply, global expansion, and market correction
could create a golden era for whiskey drinkers

WRITTEN BY **ANTHONY DEYOUNG**



For years, American bourbon rode a wave of explosive growth. Distilleries expanded production, investors rushed into whiskey casks, and non-distilling producers scrambled to secure aging inventory before prices climbed even higher. New rickhouses stretched across Kentucky's landscape, while barrel brokers and independent bottlers competed for every available drop.

Now, the industry finds itself at a turning point

Warehouse inventories are historically high, the secondary cask market has softened, and some producers are beginning to sell aging whiskey at prices that would have seemed impossible only a few years ago. To some observers, this sounds alarming. Headlines about "oversupply" and "inventory gluts" create the impression that bourbon's boom years are over. I disagree.

What we are experiencing is not the collapse of bourbon. It is a market correction — and for consumers, it may become one of the greatest opportunities in modern American whiskey history.

A Market Built on Optimism

The bourbon industry expanded aggressively throughout the late 2010s and early 2020s. Demand appeared unstoppable. Premiumization drove consumers toward higher-end products, while cocktail culture and whiskey collecting introduced bourbon to new audiences around the world. Distilleries responded exactly as businesses should: they invested.

New warehouses were built at a historic pace. Production schedules accelerated. Independent bottlers secured contracts years into the future. Investors purchased casks believing they would appreciate indefinitely. In many ways, the optimism made sense. American whiskey had transformed from a category once associated primarily with domestic consumption

into a global luxury product. Enthusiasts in Europe, Asia, and Australia began pursuing allocated bourbons with the same enthusiasm long associated with rare Scotch whisky. But bourbon production operates on a delayed timeline.

A distillery cannot instantly respond to changing demand. Whiskey laid down four, six, or eight years ago was produced based on forecasts and market sentiment from another era. Today, many of those barrels are finally reaching maturity at the exact moment the market has cooled. That disconnect has created the current surplus.

Why Consumers Are Winning

For consumers, increased inventory changes everything. Over the past decade, many bourbon drinkers experienced frustration. Limited releases became nearly impossible to find. Retail markups exploded. Everyday products suddenly carried luxury-level pricing. The market often rewarded scarcity more than quality. Now the equation is beginning to shift.

As inventories rise, producers and independent bottlers must compete harder for consumer attention. That competition benefits drinkers in several important ways: Better Whiskey at More Accessible Prices. One of the biggest outcomes of oversupply is value.



Whiskey that may once have been destined for ultra-premium pricing can now appear in products at far more approachable price points. Barrels that sat untouched waiting for rising valuations are increasingly entering the marketplace.

Consumers are beginning to see:

- Older whiskey in lower-priced blends
- More aggressive barrel finishing programs
- Higher proof releases
- More age-stated products
- Increased transparency from producers
- More experimentation from independent bottlers

The reality is simple: when inventory expands, quality whiskey becomes more available.

Independent Bottlers Gain Opportunity

The current environment also creates major opportunities for independent bottlers and non-distilling producers. For years, sourcing mature whiskey was extremely expensive. Many emerging brands struggled to access quality aged bourbon without paying enormous premiums.

Now, independent companies can secure barrels at more favorable pricing, allowing them to focus on innovation instead of pure inventory survival. That matters because independent bottlers often bring creativity that larger producers cannot.

They blend across mash bills, distilleries, warehouse locations, and barrel types. They experiment with finishing techniques. They create highly nuanced flavor profiles that traditional single-distillery models sometimes avoid. In many ways, this mirrors the evolution of Scotland's independent Scotch bottling culture.

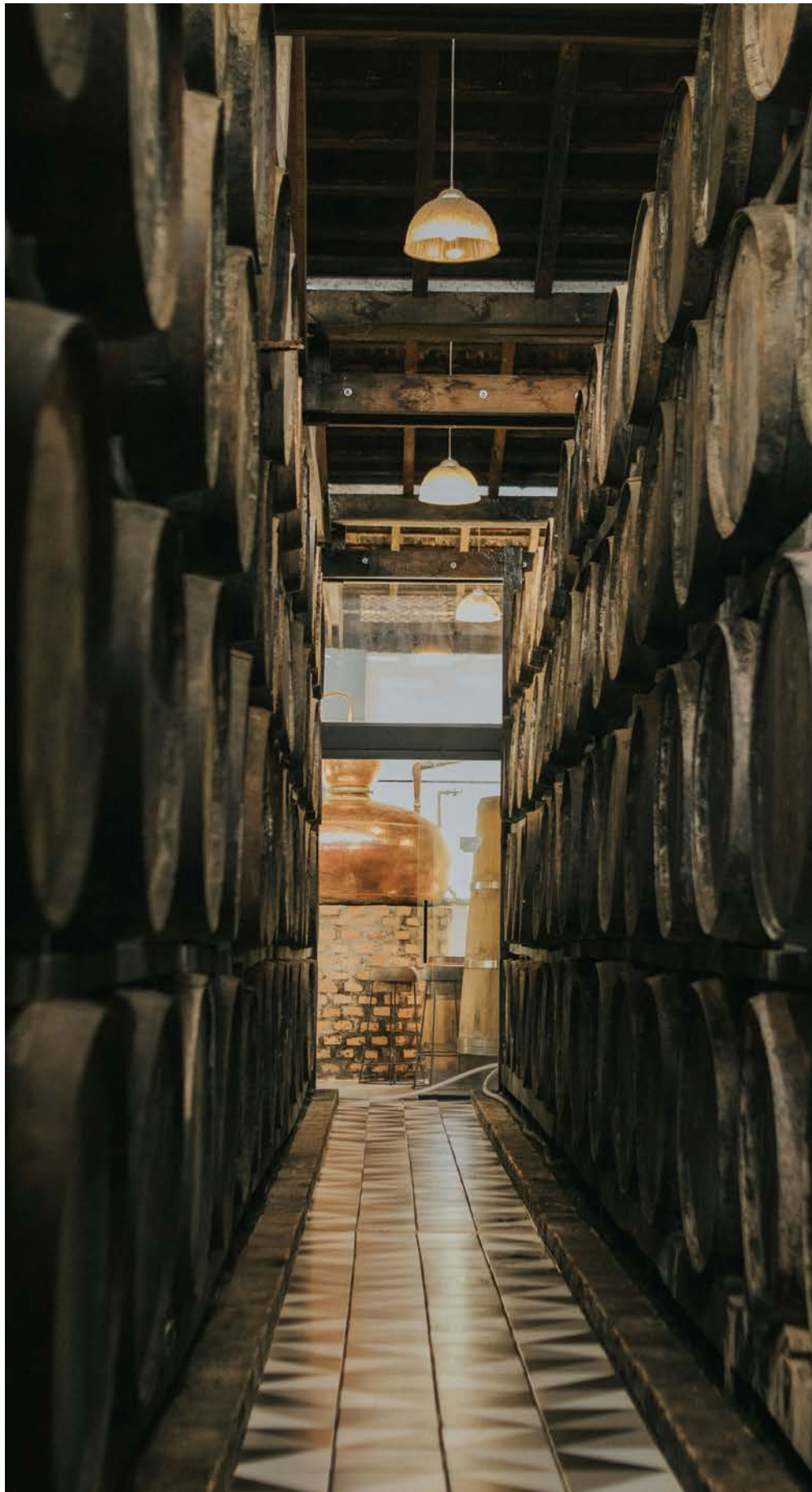
Companies such as Gordon & MacPhail, Signatory, and Adelphi built reputations not by distilling whiskey themselves, but by selecting and elevating exceptional casks. American whiskey may now be entering a similar phase. Consumers stand to benefit from a wave of innovative products created by experienced blenders and curators who finally have access to broader inventories.

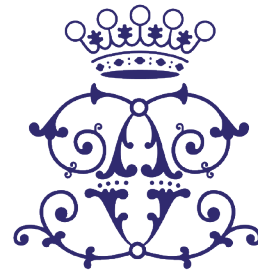


The Cask Investor Reality

One important distinction needs to be made. Not everyone participating in the barrel market is losing money. Much of the current stress is concentrated among newer speculative investors who entered the market during peak enthusiasm. Some viewed whiskey casks almost like cryptocurrency or high-growth equities, expecting rapid appreciation without fully understanding the long-term realities of maturation, storage costs, and exit strategies. Those investors are now attempting to liquidate inventory into a softer market.

Meanwhile, many established industry participants — distilleries, experienced brokers, blending houses, and long-term operators — continue functioning normally. For them, bourbon remains a multi-decade business. This distinction matters.





THE
SPIRIT
OF
GOOD
TASTE

AVAILABLE IN ONTARIO, CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES



The bourbon industry itself is not disappearing. Rather, speculative expectations are being reset to more sustainable levels. And again, consumers benefit from that reset.

The Return of Authenticity

One of the most encouraging outcomes of a more competitive marketplace may be the return of authenticity. When demand dramatically exceeds supply, brands can sometimes rely too heavily on hype, scarcity, or packaging. But when consumers have more options, the market becomes more merit-based.

Flavor matters. Transparency matters. Storytelling matters.

Consumers are becoming increasingly sophisticated. They want to know:

- Where the whiskey was distilled
 - How it was matured
- Whether it was blended or single barrel
 - What grains were used
 - What finishing techniques were applied
 - Who selected the barrels

This is healthy for the category.

The next generation of successful bourbon brands will likely combine authenticity with craftsmanship rather than relying solely on artificial scarcity.

A Consumer Renaissance for Bourbon

Historically, periods of oversupply often create incredible eras for enthusiasts. Wine, Scotch whisky, and even craft beer have all experienced cycles where temporary excess inventory eventually led to remarkable product quality and innovation. The bourbon market may now be entering its own consumer renaissance. More mature whiskey is becoming available. More independent bottlers are emerging.

More blending innovation is occurring. And perhaps most importantly, consumers once again have leverage. That leverage encourages producers to overdeliver. For whiskey drinkers, this could mean a future where premium bourbon becomes more accessible, experimentation becomes more common, and quality rises across multiple price tiers.

The Global Opportunity Ahead

Despite current inventory pressures, bourbon's long-term global outlook remains extremely positive. American whiskey still has enormous room for international growth. Many overseas markets remain underdeveloped compared to Scotch whisky, yet consumer interest in premium American spirits continues to rise. Countries throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America are increasingly embracing bourbon as both a luxury product and a distinctly American cultural experience.

Tariffs and trade disputes have certainly created temporary challenges in recent years. However, most industry professionals understand that these disruptions are unlikely to define the category forever. As international relationships stabilize and trade barriers normalize, American whiskey producers may find themselves exceptionally well-positioned. And this is where today's inventory surplus could eventually become tomorrow's strategic advantage.

The barrels currently aging in Kentucky warehouses are not simply excess inventory. They are future global supply. When overseas demand accelerates again — and many in the industry believe it will — producers with mature inventory will be able to respond quickly. That may ultimately help stabilize pricing, support long-term category growth, and introduce millions of new consumers to American whiskey.

The Bottom Line

The bourbon industry is not dying. It is evolving.

Yes, the market is correcting after years of extraordinary expansion. Yes, some speculative investors are discovering that whiskey is not a guaranteed short-term financial instrument. But for consumers, whiskey enthusiasts, independent bottlers, and long-term operators, the future may actually be brighter.

**More whiskey.
More innovation.
More transparency.
More value.**

The barrels resting quietly inside America's rickhouses today may soon fuel one of the most exciting periods bourbon consumers have ever experienced. And in the end, great whiskey has always belonged not to speculators — but to the people who pour it, share it, and enjoy it together. ♦





A TEA LOVER'S GUIDE TO WHISKY

WRITTEN BY INKA KUKKAMAKI



It may surprise you to learn that there are many similarities between tea and whisky. Not just in ritual, but also in flavour and aroma. Just as whisky heavily relies on casks, ageing and region, tea's character is shaped by how the leaf is processed. And just as scotch whisky regions each have their own signature (generally speaking), from maritime smoke of Islay to sherried sweetness of Speyside, tea making regions (and countries) have their own unique techniques for bringing out specific flavours. And it's not just scotch, if you analyse whisky producers globally, you can begin to see many similarities in production between regions even if they may not be officially categorised by the locations like in Scotland, whether it is wood types, flavour profiles or local climate.

Take Lapsang Souchong, for example. The well-known smoky black tea is made in the Wuyi Mountains in Fujian province in China. The leaves are dried over smouldering pinewood fires, not dissimilar to the way malted barley is dried over peat fires on Islay, each imparting a smoke that's now part of the region's identity. Or look at Kyrö Distillery's alder-smoked rye whisky, which follows an old northern tradition, a technique inspired by the Finnish smoke sauna. The malted rye is smoked in a 100-year-old "riihi" barn using alder wood. So, whether it is adding smoke to tea leaves or grain, each can be tied to a specific local tradition.

It's no wonder whisky-loving Winston Churchill is said to have enjoyed Lapsang Souchong as his tea of choice, even reportedly calling it "the whisky of the tea world."

Tea rituals vs whisky

Tea has been used for medicinal purposes for centuries, while whisky was once prescribed by chemists and doctors, and it is still credited by some with the comforting effects of a hot toddy.

In many cultures tea drinking rituals are linked to hospitality, unity and traditions. Even the precise way

of serving tea, whether with milk, honey, sugar, how long it's brewed and how it's poured has similarities with whisky drinking traditions. Whisky has its own version of this ceremony: you let it breathe in the glass, take in the aroma, admire the colour, taste it in small sips, add a drop or two of water. Both rituals ask you to slow down and pay attention.

The Japanese matcha tea ceremony focuses on every gesture, from whisking to pouring, where the tea bowl is admired as carefully as the tea, and the whole practice is built around hospitality rather than simply having a hot drink. It's not so different from a serious whisky tasting, where the glass, the discussion, and the pace all matter as much as the whisky itself. Or look at chai traditions in India:

spiced tea is served at work, on the streets, at home, drawing people into conversation and bringing people together. Whisky does something similar. You might walk into a whisky bar alone and leave having connected with strangers over nothing more than a shared interest in the spirit, its stories, and the flavours in the glass. And there, carefully rejoicing in every sip, every nuance of the aroma, whisky and tea become the same ritual - one of connection, patience, and shared pleasure.

So, with all these similarities, it raises the question: can the type of tea you prefer be an indicator of the style of whisky you might like? Let's look into the flavour profiles of each tea category.



and a silky texture that is parallel to the tea's mouthfeel. A good option if you want something with a touch more depth without losing the delicacy.

Green tea

Green tea leaves are steamed or pan-fired instantly to stop oxidation. This process will retain the natural green colour and fresh, grassy and vegetal notes. Green tea can have some bitterness from the polyphenols and tannins, as well as a dry mouthfeel. Some Japanese teas come with savoury/umami undertones, while Chinese green tea is often more nutty or even slightly smoky. Loose leaf green tea might have added florals in the blend to create fragrant and fruity notes.

If you like green tea, try

The Epicurean, 46.2% ABV - This Lowland blended malt is zesty, grassy and fresh with aromas of citrus, oats and herbs. On the palate, it offers more citrus, orchard fruits, subtle spice and grassy notes. Herbs, honey, almonds and fresh bread on the finish. Basically, a green tea in a whisky form.

Ardbeig Smokiverse 48.3% ABV - This whisky can be compared to the smokier and savoury style of green tea. Tropical fruits on the nose accompanied with some moss. Plenty of familiar sweet Ardbeg smoke throughout. The palate is offering a nice balance of sweeter and green notes.

Yellow tea

The traditional Chinese yellow tea sits somewhere between white tea and green tea. It is softer and less grassy than green tea, bringing more nuttiness and sweetness instead. Think of sweet corn, honey, chestnut and toasted grain.

If you like yellow tea, try

Glenfarclas 12, 43% ABV - Nutty and honeyed with a gentle sherry warmth, this offers dried fruit, walnuts and a soft sweetness. Some subtle earthy forest floor and oak in there to measure up to the tea notes.

Arran Local Barley, 51.5% ABV - Made entirely from barley grown on the island, this has a rich,

The types of tea

There are six main types of tea: white, green, yellow, black, oolong and pu-erh. All varieties come from the same plant, and the differences in colour, flavour and aroma come from the steps taken during the processing. For tea, that means oxidation: whether it's encouraged or controlled, and how much the leaves are bruised, broken or rolled, with heat and humidity determining the outcome. For whisky, the equivalent is the ageing process from oak varieties to previous liquids to length of maturation and the local climate.

White tea

White tea has the least intervention as the young buds are left to wither and

quickly dried. Of course, there are different types of white tea with slightly different characteristics, but generally speaking white tea has a sweet and delicate taste with fragrant yet fresh aroma. Think of florals, honey, melon and fragrant pear. The mouthfeel is silky and soft.

If you like white tea, try

Glenkinchie 12, 43% ABV - A classic Lowland malt, and Lowlands are traditionally the lightest, most delicate style in scotch. Grassy and floral with a touch of honey and orchard fruit, it mirrors white tea's freshness and lightness.

Glenlivet 18, 40% ABV - Slightly richer than the above, but still soft and elegant, with honeyed fruit





malty sweetness with notes of toasted grain, honey and orchard fruit. The malt-forward character mirrors yellow tea's sweet corn and toasted grain notes particularly well, with the natural cask strength giving it a bit more depth without tipping into heavy oxidation.

Black tea

Black tea goes through full oxidation, creating robust and bold flavours. Depending on origin, the flavour profile can range from malty and smoky to fruity and floral, with natural tannins giving a dry, astringent finish.

Darjeeling, often called the "champagne of teas," sits at the lighter end of black teas. It is floral and delicate. Keemun, sometimes known as "Keemun fragrance" for its aromatic, balanced profile, offers a combination of fruity and floral notes like orchid, rose and dried apple. It can have subtle smokiness and a hint of cocoa, providing a long aftertaste and a soft mouthfeel. Assam, from northeast India, moves into bolder territory with its malty and strong flavours. It is the tea most people picture when they think of classic breakfast tea. And Ceylon, from Sri Lanka, brings a rich body with a distinctive citrus note that sets it apart from the others.

If you like black tea, try

Assam - Mortlach 12, 43.4% ABV - Rich and malty with real depth. Think toffee, dried fruit, cocoa, cinnamon and warming spice, backed by Mortlach's signature meaty weight. It has the same warm, rounded, slightly sweet robustness of Assam.

Keemun - Compass Box Orchard House, 46% ABV - As the name suggests the flavour profile is dominated by apples and pears, but also fragrant lychee, plus there's citrus and gentle smoke reminiscent of Earl Grey tea.

Ceylon - Hakushu Distiller's Reserve, 43% ABV - Made using both peated and unpeated single malts to create lightly smoky and fragrant whisky. Its flavours compare to the delicacy of a smoked tea. Plenty of citrus (yuzu, lemon balm, pink grapefruit) to match the classic Ceylon character.

Oolong tea

Oolong tea is partially oxidised, bruised and tossed, then rolled and often roasted. There can be big differences between the teas depending on the length of the oxidation and scale of roasting. Think of it like toasting and charring a whisky barrel, the level of fire used has a huge impact on what kind of flavours the barrel gives to the spirit inside. Oolong can vary from buttery to floral bouquet to roasted nuts to dark fruits and chocolate. The spectrum of oolong tea is wide and makes it one of the most versatile teas in the world.

If you like oolong tea, try

Method & Madness Amburana Wood Edition, 46% ABV - Finished in casks made from South American amburana wood, traditionally used to age cachaça. It's fragrant, spicy, sweet and woody at the same time. That spiced, toasted, nutty-sweet profile mirrors a heavily roasted oolong beautifully. Cardamom, cloves, dark fruit jam, potpourri, marzipan, hazelnut syrup, demerara sugar and vanilla are just some notes to describe this delicious whisky.

GlenDronach 12, 43% ABV - This fits the medium-oxidised,

fruity-honeyed end of the oolong tea spectrum. Sherry-cask matured with dried apricot, nuts and gentle spice - its stone-fruit sweetness speaks to oolong tea lovers.

Glenmorangie 12 The Original, 40% ABV - Given its citrus, honey and light floral character, this single malt suits the lightest end of the oolong spectrum perfectly.

Pu-erh tea

Unlike the teas mentioned above, Pu-erh tea leaves are fermented. It is also left to mature for decades rather than a year or two more common with other tea varieties. The ageing adds complexity and softens the mouthfeel.

There are two types of pu-erh tea, raw and ripe. The raw method involves ageing where natural microbes slowly ferment the tea. This method brings notes of dried fruit, oak, herbs and honey. The longer the ageing the richer the flavours. To create ripe pu-erh, the fermentation is controlled by keeping the leaves warm and moist. The outcome is mellow and autumnal with notes of dark chocolate, damp oak and dates.

If you like raw pu-erh (well-aged), try

Ichiro's Malt Mizunara Wood Reserve, 46.5% ABV - This Japanese whisky brings a lot to the table, showcasing the character of Mizunara oak. It has a lovely balance of sweet fruit, antique wood and subtle bitterness. A range of oaky notes can be detected throughout, from nose to finish.

If you like ripe pu-erh, try: Lochlea Dark Briar, 46% ABV - The combination of Pedro Ximenez, Oloroso and Port cask contribute to a rich note of dark dried fruits, treacle, dark chocolate and certain dampness or an autumnal quality, which are all typical in ripe pu-erh teas. ♦



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STILL SPIRITS

Toronto's Distillery District was once home to one of the world's great distilleries. The machines stopped long ago. But by the accounts of those who work there, something never clocked out.

WRITTEN BY JIM DEAN





Late one night, an employee at Archeo, a restaurant and event space in Toronto's Distillery District, was polishing glassware when a man strolled past toward a back hallway. He wore a vintage blue suit and matching hat, the whole look straight out of the 1920s. The employee called after him to say the restaurant was closed. No answer. He followed the man around the corner and found only an empty hallway.

Weeks later, he mentioned the encounter to a security guard. Something dropped in the guard's stomach. He knew exactly who the employee meant. He had seen the same figure on a freezing January morning, walking outside with no coat. When the guard went after him, the man had vanished. There were no footprints in the freshly fallen snow.

Today, the Distillery District is one of the loveliest places in Toronto to lose an evening, with its cobble-

stone lanes, restaurants, galleries, warm brick, and beautifully restored Victorian industrial buildings. But it was not built to be picturesque. It was built to work.

Long before it became a place to wander, dine, and drink, it was the beating heart of Gooderham and Worts, one of the great whisky empires of its age. The story began in 1831, when a miller named James Worts left a depression-gripped England for a plot of land on the edge of the young town of York. He built a windmill to grind flour, 22 metres tall, one of the tallest structures on the shoreline. The ghost of the windmill remains, a semicircle of red brick set into the pavement to mark its historic foundations.

Worts brought in his brother-in-law, William Gooderham, and together they built a successful milling business at the edge of the lake. But Worts never saw what it would become.

Three years after arriving, his wife and child died during childbirth. Soon after, Worts was found dead at the bottom of the well beside his own windmill. The exact circumstances remain uncertain, though newspapers at the time suggested suicide.

In the years that followed, Gooderham expanded the business from milling into distilling, transforming the site into a 19th-century powerhouse that produced millions of gallons a year. The whisky kept flowing until 1957.

After that, the stills made rum and industrial alcohol from great vats of molasses. It did not last. By 1990, the work had stopped for good. The buildings sat empty for years, used mostly by film crews, until 2003, when the site reopened as the Distillery Historic District. But not everyone who once worked here seems to have accepted that.

In stores and restaurants throughout the district, staff still report objects flying from shelves, footsteps in empty buildings, crashing sounds, and the distinct prickle of being watched. What sets these stories apart is how they are passed on. Not as campfire tales, but as workplace stories, traded quietly among people who stayed late, opened early, or heard something move where nothing should.

One of the distillery's most colourful chapters was the Prohibition era. When Ontario banned the public sale and consumption of alcohol in 1916, the business survived by adapting, including wartime chemical production, while whisky made for export remained legal.



After the Gooderham family sold the business, Harry C. Hatch took over and built a reputation for moving product south. He kept a fleet of fast boats built to outrun the authorities, with crews that towed whisky behind them in nets. If they spotted trouble, they could cut the line and let the barrels sink.

The clever part was a block of salt and a hidden buoy. Overnight, the salt dissolved, the buoy floated free, and the runners came back to collect their whisky exactly where they had left it. Could the man in the blue suit be an echo of that time? A coatless figure in 1920s tailoring, vanishing into snow without a trace, fits the era exactly.

Whoever, or whatever, he is, he came dressed for Hatch's distillery.

If whisky is partly about time, the Distillery District is a remarkable barrel of it. Along Tankhouse Lane, the old tank houses and rack houses were built to store whisky as it aged, a necessity once Canadian law required whisky to spend two years maturing before sale. Time gave the spirit colour and character. It may have done something similar to the place itself. In the Fermenting Cellar, now part of Illuminarium, a technician closing up alone came across a man in coveralls and a worker's cap on the catwalk. Told he should not be up there, the man said he was only going to check the



molasses vats. It was an odd thing to say in a building long removed from its rum-making days. The technician followed him, but when he reached the old vats, no one was there.

It was not the technician's only encounter on that catwalk. The second time, he found his nerve and asked the man directly if he was headed for the vats. The man said yes, and walked on. At first, the encounters frightened the technician. Now he believes the restless spirit is simply doing the job he always did, the way he always did it.

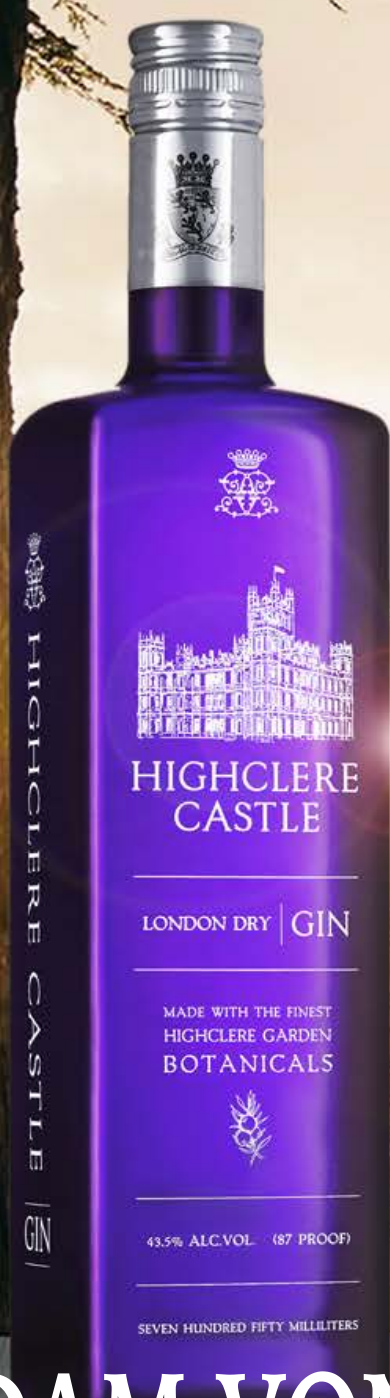
That may be the real pull of the place. It is not haunted simply because it is old. It is haunted because it was

alive. People worked here, schemed here, drank here, built fortunes here, and lost things they could not get back.

So this autumn, raise a dram of Gooderham and Worts to the people who built a whisky empire on the lakeshore, and to the ones who may still remain. In Toronto's Distillery District, the spirits, both kinds, still stir after dark.

Spirits of the Distillery District is The Haunted Walk's 75-minute evening ghost tour through Toronto's historic distillery lanes, where history and hauntings are poured into the same glass. Tickets and dates are available at hauntedwalk.com. ♦





ADAM VON GOOTKIN HIGHCLERE CASTLE GIN

WRITTEN BY **BLAIR PHILLIPS**

Long before Highclere Castle became the backdrop for the hit television series *Downton Abbey*, the castle's grounds held the true stories of the Carnarvon family, whose history spans 400 years. It's here that the 1867 British North

American Act was drafted, paving the way for Canadian Confederation. Canada's first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, signed the guest book in 1866. So did kings and queens, scions of industry, Hollywood celebrities, Olympic athletes, famous authors, politicians,

and presidents. Winston Churchill strolled through these fragrant gardens, as did Ian Fleming, the James Bond novelist. It's not far-fetched to assume they also enjoyed a gin martini here – stirred, not shaken. This story of the castle's famous botanical gardens



drew Adam von Gootkin, founder and chairman of Highclere Castle Spirits, to the property. Now, Highclere Castle plays the starring role in his Highclere Castle Gin – a gin authentic to the castle’s legacy and heritage, with a story to tell.

BLAIR PHILLIPS: How did your partnership with the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon begin?

ADAM VON GOOTKIN: I thought the castle and property were the perfect stage to build an award-winning

category-leading spirit brand. The more I learned about Highclere, the more it became clear that this was true, because it is an authentic home. Lord Carnarvon is essentially a farmer.

Despite its fame from Downton Abbey, it's very much a working 5,000-acre estate. And so, it was the ultimate terroir landscape for developing a spirit brand. So many brands are built in marketing boardrooms, and I felt this would really stand out as an authentic project because it was truly born on the grounds.

BP: Were Lord and Lady Carnarvon fans of gin? Did they already drink gin before you started Highclere Castle Gin?

AVG: Yes. I mean, gin is so authentically and quintessentially British. And Lord and Lady Carnarvon did love gin and tonics before I approached them with the project.

BP: If the Highclere Castle estate drew you to the castle to create the gin, is the Downton Abbey connection a happy coincidence?

AVG: I learned about it from Downton Abbey. In fact, I learned about it through a PBS special, a documentary on Highclere Castle, which is what drew me to it. I think the first thing was that Lord and Lady Carnarvon had a very authentic, genuine vibe about them. You can tell they're working really hard to preserve the estate



for future generations to enjoy. They also seemed like very humble people. I thought they would be open-minded to a project that was a bit out of the box, very difficult and very expensive to get off the ground, which, of course, this project has been. But also, you know, the fact that it's a functioning farm and estate, it's living and breathing, it's not a museum, it's not a wedding factory venue. It's not been converted into a hotel. It's a working, running family home and estate. I think authenticity these days is paramount to any brand that's going to be successful, and it rang true, ticked all the boxes in my book.

Downton Abbey will always play a role in Highclere's history because it's now part of what makes Highclere recognizable to hundreds of millions of fans around the world. But our gin is not called "Downton Abbey Gin" for a reason. It's called Highclere Castle Gin because we're committed to the authentic story of what life is like at Highclere and the people behind it, and the terroir, the earth, the plants, the botanicals, and the fruits that we use in the greenhouses, the Victorian-era orangeries.

Now in our peach rose production, the honey that we use, that's made and overseen by the beekeepers and all of that. That's what Highclere Castle Gin really represents. So a happy, lovely, fun coincidence, Downton Abbey, but definitely not the foundation of our brand.

BP: How essential were the estate-grown botanicals to the gin's identity?

AVG: It was very essential to have some of the botanicals grown on the estate. Absolutely. For example, the lavender we use in the gin was planted by the Bishop of Winchester in the 9th century, so it's over 1,000 years old. I think the symbolism here is that we're distilling the heart and soul of

Highclere Castle itself to make this gin, using as many of the botanicals as we can from the estate. We're using the honey, the oranges, the lime flower, the lemons, and the peaches. We're using the rose oil from the Lady Carnarvon rose. This is all the

embodiment of what Highclere Castle stands for. And the fact that we are so determined to keep it as authentic and from the estate as possible, I think, is also a great symbol of what Highclere Castle itself stands for. A real place that hasn't sold out.





The Earl and Countess
of Carnarvon

BP: The gin is distilled at the Langley Distillery. Did you select them to make the gin because their story has a similar pedigree as Highclere Castle, or were there additional reasons?

AVG: There were many reasons. We interviewed and looked at pretty much every distillery out there. Langley has a very old history. It's the oldest continuously running gin distillery in England. They also own the oldest copper pot gin stills in all of England. I felt they had a very craft mentality, but they also had the scalability for global growth. We had to think about both things. We needed commitment to ultra quality and craftsmanship, but we also needed them to be able to produce the volumes we needed, because

we came into this fully aware that at some point we were going to be one of the top-selling gins in the world, and we're well on our way.

BP: When you were developing the gin recipe, what was the template, the end goal that you were striving for in terms of a personality and a flavour profile?

AVG: I feel that most London dry gins are so juniper-forward that they drive many consumers away from gin. That's why gin accounts for only about 6 to 7% of the US spirits market. It's tiny. I know it's much bigger in the UK and larger in Canada, but in the US and in other countries, the gin category is quite small. Juniper is a very distinct

flavour, and many people don't like it because of its overwhelming pine-like nature. Because Highclere has the orangery right behind it, I wanted this to be a gin that would welcome new gin drinkers into the category. So I decided to stay true to the Highclere estate.

We made it citrus-forward instead of juniper-forward. So the juniper is definitely in there, but I treat it more like black pepper in a well-balanced dish. Not the front, not the leader of the show. Instead, it's the citrus, the touch of florality, and then, in the background, sits the juniper. Doing an excellent job of being crisp and being every bit of gin. But our slightly modern take on it is the creaminess of that. I will also mention that we're the first



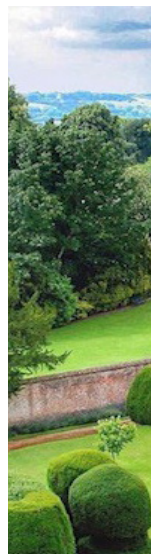
gin in the world to use oats in our botanical blend, grown at Highclere. They have fed her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II horses for many, many decades, and they're the highest-quality horse-feed oats in the world. We are the first to use those oats in the gin, which creates this incredibly creamy, velvety mouthfeel that makes Highclere Castle Gin the only gin I have yet to taste in the world that you can actually sip straight on the rocks and enjoy. So those two things combined, citrus-forward with oats, create this incredible spirit that is a London dry gin, but very, very different and incredibly smooth.

BP: The estate's authenticity and architecture is also part of the gin?

AVG: Most of the brands that are leading brands in the world today either have no story, or nobody knows the story, or they were literally designed in a marketing boardroom on Madison Avenue in New York. So all of the story matters more than anything. We live in a world where so much is plastic and so much is fake, or so much is lies told for marketing reasons. The first and foremost thing about Highclere Castle Gin and Highclere Castle is that it's real. There are real people behind it. I have a real team. Lord and Lady Carnarvon are really involved, as are other teammates at the castle. There's a long heritage of serving gin at the castle. Even the colour of the bottle, the shape of the bottle, is meant to represent the large tower at Highclere, the largest of the towers. Every single thing was given years of thought and planning because we developed a gin brand that we know would still be here in 100 years, just the way Highclere Castle will.

BP: How did the peach rose gin come to be? Was it designed for a specific purpose?

AVG: Yes, I wanted to celebrate the idea of the quintessential English garden party in summer. I would walk through Highclere's gardens in the summertime, and the scents of the





Lady Carnarvon, Lord Carnarvon,
Regina Von Gootkin, Adam Von Gootkin

flowers, the bees, and the beautiful fragrances of Highclere, with the beautiful castle in the distance, just gave me the idea of creating a gin that was very summertime. I really like the idea of peach. I haven't seen peach played with very much in gin. Peach is also a very hard flavour to work with. You taste a peach-flavoured iced tea, or something like that, and it tastes overwhelmingly fake. It tastes like what they call natural flavour, which of course is fake flavouring. And so using real peach oil from the peach and the juice from the peaches themselves is a very expensive process.

You can taste it because I wanted it to taste like an overly ripe peach on a midsummer's day, where you bite into

it and the juices drip down your chin. The same goes for the Lady Carnarvon rose oils. We use just a touch of that, then add the honey for a sweetened effect. Overall, I think what we've achieved is this kind of close-your-eyes moment: you're at Highclere in the middle of a garden party on a hot summer's day. It's refreshing and it's luxurious and it's everything that the Highclere gardens represent. It's the circle of life. The bees pollinate the flowers, then they go back and make the honey. We harvest the honey and the flowers. This is a circle of life at Highclere, of sustainability.

BP: The barrel-aged gin is a limited edition. Could we see another limited edition barrel-aged gin down the road, exploring different barrel types?

AVG: Yes, we're developing more line extensions, for sure. I would love to play around with different barrel types. I'm a whiskey lover at heart and always will be, so there are definitely ways we can play with that. For the barrel-aged version, I chose about 33% Cognac and Armagnac barrels that were over 50 years old, 33% Scotch Whiskey barrels, and 33% New American unused medium-char oak barrels. That gave us a very balanced approach to the barrel-aged gin. I'd definitely like to play with barrel aging in the future. We're designing other flavour line extensions. We're going to be doing a special edition, duty-free-only version, coming soon. So it's very exciting to have time to work on those.

BP: What does a French Armagnac cask bring to the gin, and what was the thought process behind using them?

AVG: Well, if you close your eyes and try to imagine the flavour of Armagnac, on a beautiful autumn day or a winter day, that kind of plum-cherry toastedness you get from it, that stone-fruit quality with the char of the barrels as well, you end up with this kind of beautiful, elegant gracefulness that's also a touch smoky, very mature, old-tasting, and leathery.

I wanted to play with that idea of kind of kissing the brightness, the creaminess, the citrusness of our gin. It was an experiment, and if it didn't taste good, it would have been a very costly failure. I called it our toasted citrus brulee, like a pudding on a winter's day dessert. That's really how it came out.

BP: You also co-founded the Highclere Castle Cigar Company. Cigars have long been paired with brown spirits. How have you paired your cigars with gin, and did you create the barrel-aged gin to connect to the cigars?

AVG: Yes, we did the Highclere Castle cigar, which I'm incredibly proud of. I had the idea and wanted to create a cigar brand because Highclere has a long history of enjoying cigars. Both Lord Carnarvon's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were cigar aficionados. It felt like a perfect lifestyle product to represent the Castle to a demographic of cigar fans around the world and tell that story. I wouldn't have done it if it wasn't for my good friend Nick Melillo, who is a world-renowned cigar blender. He has incredible talent and skill in cigar blending and access to very rare, choice tobaccos from Nicaragua and around the world. The only reason I did that project was that Nick agreed to be part of it, to develop it, and to release it as part of the Foundation Cigar Company portfolio. I did want a spirit to go with the cigars. Nick and I had been talking

for a long time about doing some kind of pairing. The cigars came out about three years before the barrel-aged gin did, so in a way, it was just me getting caught up, because I did want a barrel-aged product to go with the cigars. What I also find, interestingly enough, is that you're very right. Typically, brown spirits are thought to go with cigars, but Highclere Castle Gin goes perfectly with our cigars because it acts almost like a sorbet. As you're smoking the cigar, every few puffs or draws, you take a sip of Highclere Castle Gin on the rocks, or the barrel-aged on the rocks. You're actually getting this beautiful palate cleanser that brightens and refreshes. So when you revisit the cigar, instead of it acting like a heavy whiskey, cognac, or rum, which entirely coats the palate and alters the flavour profile of the cigar, what it does is cleanse the palate to make way for the cigar flavour anew. I actually find it to be a more compelling offering to drink Highclere with our cigars, then I do with a fine scotch.

Although I will never, ever turn down a fine scotch, not as long as I shall live. ♦

ENGLISH GARDEN

1.5 oz. Highclere Castle Gin
1 oz. Elderflowers Liqueur
(St. Germain)
2.5 oz. Apple Juice
0.5 oz. Lime Juice

Shake the ingredients in a shaker and strain into a glass filled with ice.

Garnish with apple and ribbons of cucumber.



COCKTAIL RECIPES WITH HIGHCLERE CASTLE GIN



THE GOLDEN ANKH MARTINI

2.25 oz. Barrel Aged Highclere Castle
Gin (notes of vanilla, burnt orange,
and smoky cherry with a classic
juniper backbone)
0.5 oz. Italicus Rosolio
0.5 Amaro Nonino
Bar Spoon Orange Oleo Saccharum

Frozen lemon wheels are
used to chill the glass while
mixing. All ingredients are
added to a mixing glass and
stirred for a minimum of
20 seconds. The resulting
mixture is strained into a
long-stemmed cordial glass
that evokes the magic of the
Egyptian Empire. Garnish is
scored lemon peel upon the
side of the glass.



THE NEGRONI

$\frac{3}{4}$ OZ HIGHCLERE
CASTLE GIN,
SWEET VERMOUTH,
CAMPARI

Add equal parts of gin,
vermouth, and Campari to
a mixing glass. Add ice and
stir until you feel a chill on
your fingers.
Strain over fresh ice.

Garnish with an orange peel,
squeezing it over the drink
to release precious oils.



The Vanguard of the American Craft Spirits Movement Inside KOVAL's Grain-to-Bottle Revolution

Prior to 2008, Chicago had not seen a distillery operate within its city limits since the mid-1800s.

That historical drought ended when Dr. Sonat Birnecker Hart and her husband, Dr. Robert Birnecker, left their esteemed academic careers to found KOVAL Distillery. Today, KOVAL stands as one of the largest fully independent, woman-owned craft distilleries in the United States, and the only one focused on spirits that are not only organic and sustainable but also regenerative. Sonat's leadership extended

far beyond her own brand; as she successfully lobbied to create the first Craft Distiller's license in Illinois, permanently altering the state's legislative landscape to allow distilleries to conduct tours, tastings, and retail sales on-site.

The Heart of the Matter A New School of Whiskey

What truly separates KOVAL from traditional American whiskey producers is an

uncompromising, technical approach to distillation. Drawing from Robert's heritage, three generations of Austrian brandy making, KOVAL applies a classic European fruit brandy methodology to its grain spirits.

Traditional American whiskey production often incorporates the "tails" of the distillate into the barrel. These tails can contain fusel oils that smell slightly like a wet dog, ultimately muddying the character of the final spirit.



KOVAL strictly utilizes a "heart-cut" process, capturing only the most vibrant and precise "filet" of the distillate. This meticulous technique has ushered in a "new school" of American whiskey that is remarkably bright and unapologetically grain-forward. To maintain this exacting standard across every batch, Robert incorporated high-tech automation into their custom Kothe stills, utilizing an array of sensors to continuously monitor temperature and flow rate, while collecting big data to learn more from the process itself.

The Distiller's Distiller

KOVAL's influence on the craft movement is not limited to the spirits bearing their label. Robert Birnecker is widely regarded throughout the industry as a "distiller's distiller". Through Kothe Distilling Technologies, he has educated over 3,500 people in the art and science of distillation. His technical expertise has provided the foundation for nearly one-third of all craft distilleries in the U.S. and Canada. Robert has personally architected the setup of over 250 craft distilleries globally, ranging from Kakira in Uganda to the Tokyo Hachioji Distillery in Japan. Furthermore, he provided critical consulting and installed the original systems for heavyweights of the modern whiskey revival, including Woodinville Whiskey Co., High West, and WhistlePig.

The Grain as the Star Organic & Regenerative Innovation

KOVAL broke traditional industry molds by becoming a pioneer of the alternative grain scene. They are focused on organic spirits, sourcing grains directly from Midwest farmers to support sustainable and regenerative agriculture.

At the center of this environmental mission is millet, a highly sustainable, drought-resistant crop that actively regenerates the soil by adding nutrients back into the earth. KOVAL elevates this base grain to the star of the show. The flagship KOVAL Single Barrel Bourbon utilizes a distinctive mash bill of 51% corn and 49% millet. This unconventional pairing creates a deeply balanced profile featuring notes of mango chutney and vanilla, evolving into

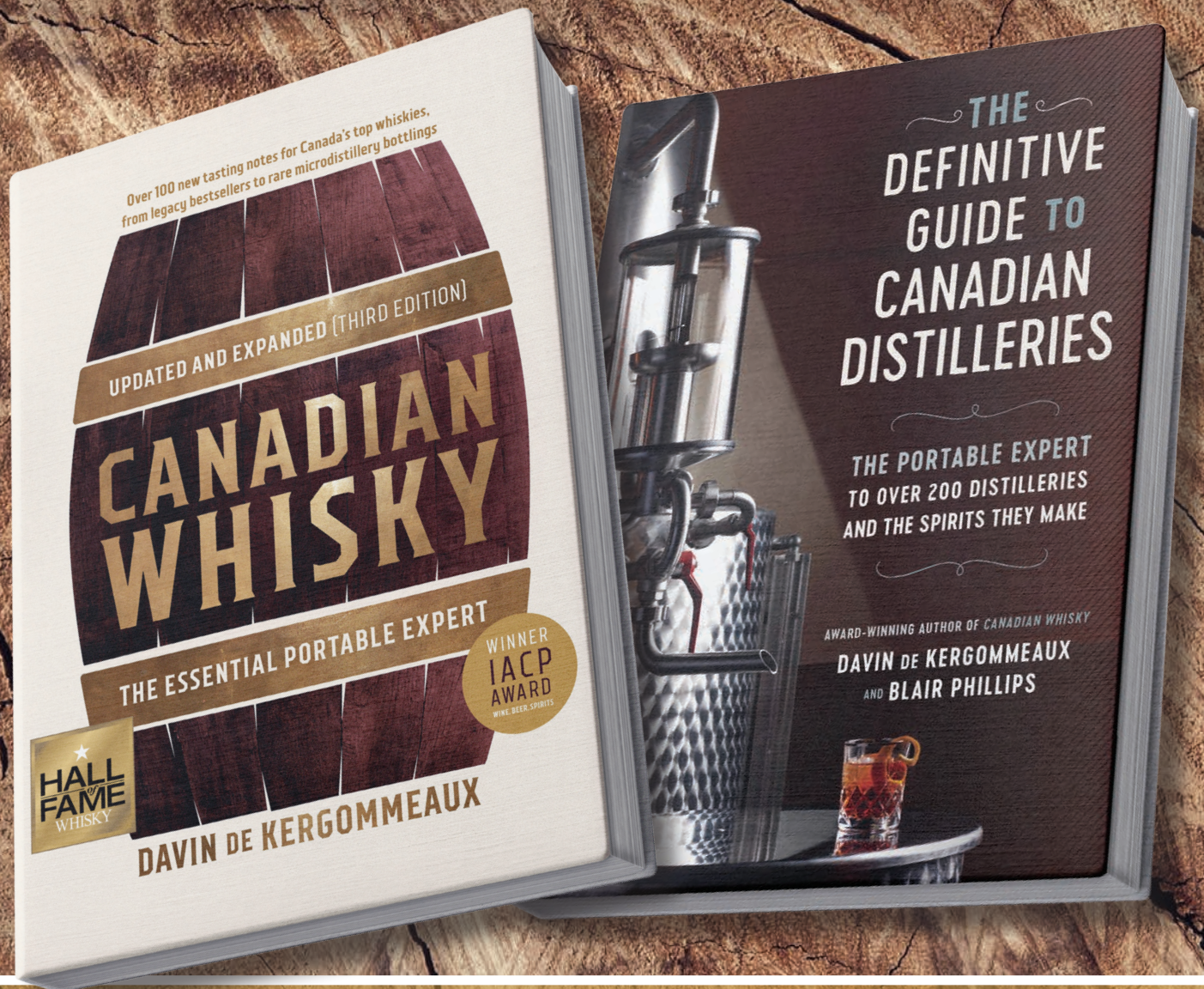


a peppery caramel finish that hums with a blooming warmth.

For the ultimate expression of this regenerative grain, the Thresh & Winnow 100% Millet Whiskey represents a masterclass in spirit-forward complexity. Legally designated as Bottled in Bond, aged for a minimum of four years and bottled at a robust 100 proof—this spirit requires no embellishment. The nose opens with delicate honeysuckle and hay, expanding on the palate with rich browned butter, orchard apple, and toasted hazelnut. A splash of water unlocks its full depth, leading to a long, memorable finish that leaves a faint trace of chamomile tea, a slow, evolving conclusion that drinks like the last line of a compelling story. ♦



THE DEFINITIVE SOURCE FOR CANADA'S WONDERFUL WORLD OF WHISKY



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appetite

by RANDOM HOUSE



THE NEW MYTHS OF CANADIAN WHISKY

WRITTEN BY DAVIN DE KERGOMMEAUX



About 250 years ago, Canada's first known distiller, James Grant of Quebec City, began making rum in pot stills. Records from his estate show he also made and matured grain spirits. A century later, Canadian distillers were selling more whisky each year in Canada and the US than all other styles combined. Stellar sales continued until 2010, when bourbon, briefly, caught up. However, the 16.8 million cases of Canadian whisky sold in the US in 2025, once again exceeded bourbon's 14.7 – 16.5 million cases (reported as 49% – 55% of America's 30-million total for all types of American whisky).

Information like this is important to keep in mind when talking about Canadian whisky. Consumers today value transparency, prize authenticity and demand accuracy. Yet, in social media posts, online articles and discussions, many Canadian whisky enthusiasts act as if Canadian whisky is struggling and do a “look at me” victory lap with any media mention. Largely this misconception is based on having blindly accepted PR-oriented whisky literature, publications and stories as fact; placing undue trust in Wikipedia and Google; and the dominance of web-based misinformation generated by non-whisky-drinking robots called AI – the abbreviation for “Asinine Information”. It's time we set the record straight.

Legacy whisky brands often cite history to demonstrate their authenticity, even if they occasionally massage that history to imply that their modern penny-pinching practices are somehow traditional. And when someone we like tells us an interesting and romantic story, we tend to take it at face value without actually checking. However, in the current attention economy with its instant-experts, those of us who want to see Canadian whisky continue to thrive, need to apply some critical thinking to the messages we hear, and even more so to the messages we pass along. Having

a strong social media presence is no guarantee that a brand or anyone else speaks knowledgeably about Canadian whisky. It is quite possible they are repeating common myths in their race to post or to grab market share.

Canada's most influential whiskies

The most recent reliable sales data I have for Canadian whisky, shows that the following whiskies are Canada's eleven top-10 sellers globally: In order – Crown Royal, Canadian Club and Black Velvet (tied), Canadian Mist, Rich & Rare, Windsor Canadian, Seagram's VO, Canadian LTD, Pendleton, Canadian Hunter and Lord Calvert. Most of these don't show up at consumer events or on social media, and so we tend to forget about them. However, we are doing Canadian whisky a distinct disservice when we perpetuate the myth that other, lower-selling brands are representative of all Canadian whisky. Certainly, they are part of the story, but not the biggest part.

Without the top sellers to generate interest and define Canadian whisky in most consumers' minds, the smaller brands would wither, not thrive.

Commentators who do not know these top-10 bestsellers, should be careful when making generalizations about Canadian whisky or repeating brand PR without validating it independently. No matter how popular it's promotional material may make it seem, any brand not on the top sellers list is, comparatively speaking, a niche brand and so, does not speak for Canadian whisky writ large.

The data above, incidentally, was generated independently from sales data sold to the brands by reputable commercial research companies. (Note, since the US accounts for about 70% of sales, and Canada about 30%, other global sales, though significant, have only marginal impact overall.)

If we are serious about helping Canadian whisky gain more respectability among connoisseurs, let's make sure what we are telling them is true. To begin, here are a few myths we can help dispel:





The 9.09% myth

No matter who tells you otherwise, historically, adding non-whisky flavouring to whisky is not a Canadian tradition. It wasn't codified, and generally not practiced, until the mid-1950s. It was introduced in response to a 1954 change in American tax law and was intended, solely, for bottom-shelf Canadian whiskies competing with inexpensive American blends. In the US, then and now, a vast range of flavourings and as much as 80% neutral spirits, is permitted in blends. Canada, on the other hand, has limited the use of non-whisky additions to mature spirits and wine, with a maximum of 9.09% allowed.

Sadly, the regulators decreed that the 9.09% component did not have to be revealed to consumers on labels or anywhere else and could be ignored in age statements. All those thrilling age-statements we see promoted every fall? In most countries they'd be reduced to single digits. 100% Rye? From a craft distiller, probably yes; Legacy distillers? That 100% may apply only to the 90.91% of actual whisky in the bottle. Up to 9.09% may be much younger whisky added to provide flavour. Not very transparent, is it?

But where did the idea that the 9.09 was traditional come from anyway?

Unfortunately, a decade or so ago, someone found a whisky recipe that included non-whisky flavourings in an old Hiram Walker blending book and leaped to the conclusion that adding flavouring was a Canadian whisky tradition. However, their logic ignored two key factors.

First, Hiram Walker was already a well-established American whisky maker long before he built his distillery in Windsor. His move to



Canada was simply to get away from American prohibitionists, and America remained his market. He was an American, making American whisky in Canada.

And second, at that time, it WAS an American tradition to add flavouring to whisky, and Walker's recipe strongly resembles some of those published in the US by Joseph Fleischman in a popular 19th-century spirits guidebook called *The Art of Blending*.

If we simply want to see Canadian whisky succeed, we need not do much cheerleading. It already leads whisky sales in North America and will likely continue to do so unless tariffs and exclusions related to current trade disagreements with the US bring major disruptions. Nevertheless, if we want to promote Canada's lower-selling brands (and most of them merit more recognition) or see Canadian whisky gain more respect in the connoisseur market (which, we must remember, accounts for a minority of all whisky sales), then we need to stop justifying the 9.09% rule. Instead, we should start encouraging Canadian distillers to learn from the exciting recent experiences of Japanese and Indian whisky makers who have both seen sales and respectability of their whiskies soar when they instituted regulations and identifying marks for whisky that is 100% all-whisky, and with age statements that reflect the youngest component, no exceptions. That doesn't mean getting rid of the 9.09 entirely. It is still needed to keep bottom-shelf Canadian whisky competitive in the US. But we need to encourage producers to stop using it for connoisseur whiskies and create an easily identified class of whiskies, as the US did with bourbon, that really are 100% all whisky.

The bourbon myth

American whisky makers made a smart move when they recognized the commercial importance of including non-



whisky flavouring in blended American whisky, and also realized they could, at the same time, differentiate bourbon from the rest and elevate its stature by strictly prohibiting additives in bourbon. Among many connoisseurs, bourbon now rightly has the cachet

of single malt Scotch. The regulations which govern ingredients and ageing are the reason bourbon has become so popular over the past twenty years or so. However, it is not the regulations themselves that give bourbon its unique character. Ninety-five percent

Crown Royal RESERVE NOW AGED 12 YEARS



Crown Royal

of bourbon is made in Kentucky, and it is Kentucky's weather and the massive, towering rick houses – so huge there are microenvironments within them – that give bourbon its signature flavour.

If we want to stand up for Canadian whisky, we need to stop pretending that even when it's made with mostly corn and is matured in virgin oak, it tastes like bourbon.

it doesn't. And don't tell me Windsor is as far south as Kentucky.

The Great Lakes ensure that Windsor has a very different climate and unlike Canadian warehouses, the top few stories of those ultra-tall Kentucky warehouses are like ovens. It is true that there can be similarities, and many Canadian whiskies are every bit as enjoyable as the best Kentucky bourbon, but head-to-head none of them are easily mistaken for it.

The Scottish heritage myth

The story of Scotch whisky is better known than that of most other whiskies. As such, some people have added Scottish immigrants to their Canadian whisky origin stories, apparently to make them seem more authentic. We need to stop mimicking and repeating these stories. They are false.

First, remember that by the time Canada was settled, the US already had a 100-year head start making whisky. America has its Scots Irish whisky origin stories, but Canada's history is not at all like America's.

The distillers who had any real influence on developing a Canadian whisky style were mostly from England, and their primary products were not whisky. We need to stop repeating the myth of early Scottish influence. Braveheart was a very exciting though somewhat fanciful movie, but the Highland Clearances had zero known impact on Canadian whisky. That story is rubbish, even if it shines a halo of legitimacy around our whisky. When someone talks about the Scottish influence on Canadian whisky, remember that they are either misinformed or deliberately misleading us. If we have the best interests of Canadian whisky at heart, honesty, transparency and authenticity demand we not repeat the nonsense. Canada has its own wild and romantic stories. We don't need to make things up.

After more than a quarter of a century researching Canadian whisky history, independently, it is discouraging to hear relative newcomers creating and perpetuating new and misleading myths about Canadian whisky. Crown Royal, Canadian Club, Black Velvet, Windsor Canadian and other top sellers don't do that, and neither should we. If we don't know something, let's just say so. We make wonderful whisky here in Canada, and we should work hard to tell its story accurately, and if this sounds like a rant, so be it. ♦

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LET THE FALL BE-GIN

Gin, craft chocolate, and the art of seasonal pairing

WRITTEN BY **SHAY PAL**

*"Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world,
she walks into mine."*

Humphrey Bogart's celebrated line from *Casablanca* was never about gin itself, yet few spirits carry quite the same weight of mood, memory, and reinvention.

Gin has traversed centuries as medicine, tavern staple, cocktail cornerstone, and now one of the most expressive and varied categories in contemporary distilling





At its foundation, gin is defined by juniper. That resinous, piney berry gives the spirit its unmistakable identity — the word itself traces back to juniper, through the Dutch genever and the French genièvre. Yet beyond that singular botanical, gin is remarkably elastic. Citrus peel, roots, herbs, blossoms, tea, warm spice, wood, and regional botanicals can all profoundly shape the character of the final spirit. That range makes gin a particularly compelling presence at the table. It can be crisp and dry, floral and ethereal, spicy and warming, or barrel-aged and contemplative. It also makes gin an unexpected but persuasive partner for craft chocolate.

Fine chocolate carries its own complex vocabulary: fruit, acidity, roast, spice, cream, salt, tannin, and texture. When approached thoughtfully, gin and chocolate draw hidden notes from one another. The botanicals in the glass sharpen the nuances in the cacao, while the chocolate softens, deepens, or elegantly redirects the spirit.

This fall, rather than reaching instinctively for the familiar whiskey-and-chocolate pairing, consider letting juniper lead.

GENEVER, NEGRONI NOTES, AND JUNIPER IN CHOCOLATE

Before gin became the crisp, clean London Dry style most drinkers recognize today, there was genever: maltier, rounder, and decidedly more grounded. With its malt-spirit base, pronounced juniper character, and restrained botanical profile, genever carries an old-world depth that feels especially well suited to the cooler months.

This pairing takes its inspiration from the Negroni. The chocolate — a dark bar from Austrian chocolatier Mayerschokoladen — weaves together zesty orange notes and caramelized juniper pieces. Rather than imitating the cocktail directly, the bar reads as a deconstructed expression of it: orange for the bitter-citrus lift, juniper for the spirit's defining signature, and dark chocolate for the bittersweet depth that anchors the whole.

The result is structured, aromatic, and quietly nostalgic — a pairing that feels at once classic in its references and entirely modern in its execution.



BARREL-AGED GIN WITH TART CHERRY CHOCOLATE

Some pairings require little embellishment. This one is built around a deceptively simple pink gin serve: barrel-aged Koval gin, Peychaud's bitters, tropical bitters, and ice. The drink remains clean and spirit-forward, allowing the barrel-aged character to hold the center of attention.

The chocolate comes from Sweet Minou — a bar crowned with tart cherries from local Kimmel Orchard, freeze-dried cherries, Loup River Distilling bourbon, and sea salt.

The connection between glass and bar is immediate. The barrel-aged gin contributes gentle oak, warmth, and spice, while the chocolate answers with tart fruit, salinity, and a subtle bourbon

BARREL-AGED GIN WITH SHEEP MILK CHOCOLATE

Drawing once again on the barrel-aged Koval gin, this pairing moves in a softer, more luxurious direction.

The chocolate is from Plaq, the acclaimed Parisian maker, crafted with Gran Nativo Blanco cacao sourced from Piura, Peru, and finished with sheep milk. Gran Nativo Blanco — meaning "Grand Native White" — is prized for its high proportion of pale cacao beans and a notably delicate aromatic profile.

The bar announces itself from the first bite. Fruit notes emerge clearly, but it is

the sheep milk that fundamentally alters the structure. It imparts a creamy, faintly savory quality quite distinct from the familiar character of traditional cow's milk chocolate.

Against the barrel-aged gin, this pairing achieves a particular refinement.

The oakiness of the spirit folds seamlessly into the chocolate's creamy texture, while the cacao's fruit character keeps the combination in balance. It feels rich without heaviness, and elegant without fragility.

Of all the pairings in this tasting, this one lingered longest: soft, layered, and almost regal on the palate.



The bitters amplify the fruit. The barrel aging deepens the chocolate. The sea salt keeps the finish animated. It is polished without becoming overly earnest — the kind of pairing that feels effortless at first encounter, then rewards closer attention with each successive sip.



MASALA CHAI CHOCOLATE AND MASALA BEE'S KNEES

Few things feel more restorative in cooler weather than a well-made Indian masala chai. Clove, cardamom, cinnamon, star anise, ginger, and black tea create a warmth that transcends the beverage — it is closer to ritual than refreshment.

Indian chocolate maker, La Folie Real Chocolate captures that essence in a bar made with Ecuadorian cacao, cane sugar, warming spices, and Darjeeling tea. It carries the comforting familiarity

of chai while maintaining the structural integrity and depth of fine chocolate. The cocktail pairing needed to honor the spice without overwhelming it. Darjeeling presented itself as the natural bridge, though its delicate fragrance risked being subsumed. Pu-erh tea, with its deeper, more grounded earthiness, provided the backbone the drink required.

For the Masala Bee's Knees, Opihr Gin is cold-infused with pu-erh tea, then combined with fresh lemon juice, honey syrup, and ice. Opihr is particularly well suited here: its spice-forward botanical profile — built around cubeb berries, black pepper, and coriander —

makes it a natural companion to chai's warming architecture.

Together, the pairing unfolds at an unhurried pace. Honey tempers the spice while lemon introduces lift. Pu-erh deepens the gin's resonance. As the chocolate slowly yields, cardamom, clove, cinnamon, tea, and cacao move through the palate in waves, each note briefly distinct before dissolving into the next.

The overall impression is of a journey through a spice market: warm, fragrant, textured, and unmistakably seasonal.



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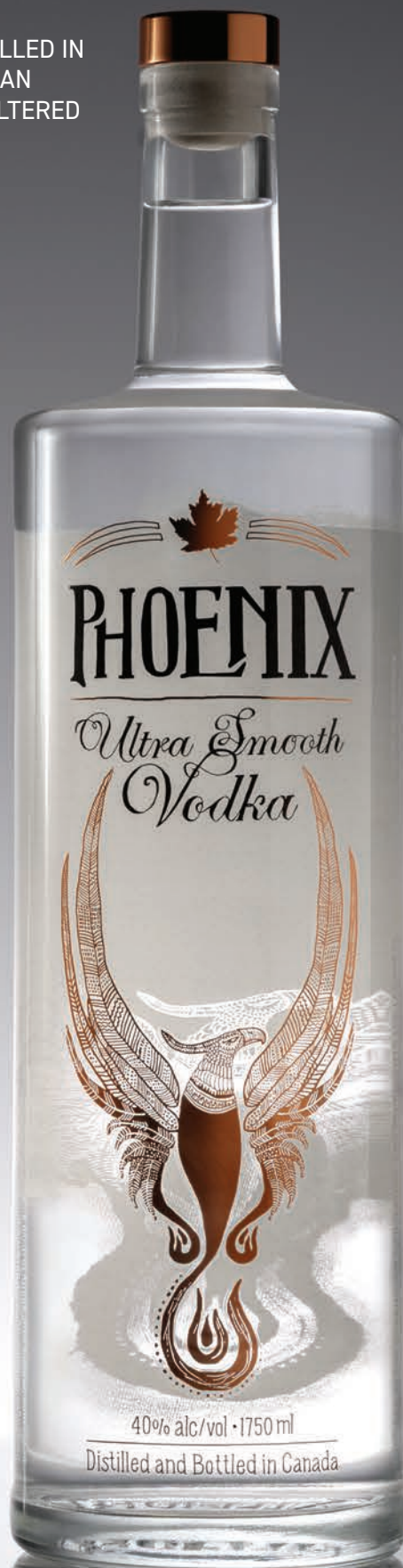
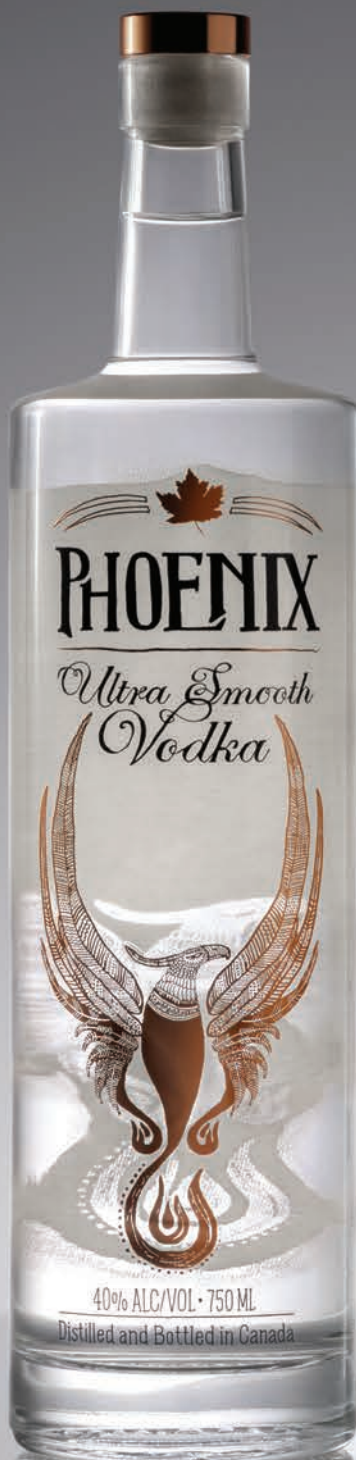
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BERRIES, BUBBLY AND JAPANESE BOTANICALS

Ritual Chocolate's Berries & Bubbly bar brings a brighter, more playful sensibility to the tasting. Crafted by macerating cacao nibs in a sparkling white wine barrel, the 70% Madagascar chocolate is infused with dry bubbly and finished with whole dried raspberries.

The bar opens with raspberry on the nose, followed by a fudgy, yielding texture, tart red-fruit brightness, and wine-inflected aromatics that shift between ripe white fruit and dry florals. The raspberry seeds provide crunch and keep the experience from settling into anything too comfortable.

The pairing called for something with equivalent lift and Ki No Bi gin from

The Kyoto Distillery answered precisely. Produced with botanicals including yuzu, hinoki cypress, bamboo, gyokuro tea, and green sanshō peppercorn, the gin carries a refined citrus-herbal elegance that harmonizes beautifully with tart fruit and wine-accented chocolate.

The serve preserves that brightness: Ki No Bi over ice, tonic for lift and gentle bitterness, finished with a measure of butterfly pea flower-infused gin. The pea flower contributes a quietly earthy, floral note and an arresting visual dimension without encroaching on the chocolate.

Yuzu elevates the raspberry, tonic mirrors the bar's natural acidity while tea and hinoki lend quiet structural depth. The pairing is botanical, tart, gently bitter, and unexpectedly vivid — a reminder that autumn pairings need not default to the dark and the heavy.

THE FINAL FOUR

Gin and chocolate may not represent the most intuitive pairing, but that is precisely what makes the combination so rewarding. Both are shaped by aroma, provenance, craft, and texture. Both are capable of carrying fruit, spice, bitterness, floral delicacy, and something harder to name — the suggestion of a place, a season, a memory.

A juniper-studded dark chocolate can return gin to its botanical roots. Tart cherry chocolate can lend a barrel-aged spirit greater depth and definition. Sheep milk chocolate can transform oak and cream into something quietly regal. Masala chai chocolate can elevate a gin cocktail into a layered passage of tea, honey, cacao, and spice. The finest pairings do not manufacture a connection. They reveal one.

So this season, unwrap the chocolate with care. Pour the gin with intention. Allow the botanicals to meet the cacao. And let the fall fun be-gin! ♦



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.

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Nothing says Fall time like Pumpkins. Except for Whisky and Spirits. Pour yourself something and relax with the change of season. If you look hard enough, there is a bottle behind the pumpkins.





SANCTUARY SINGLE MALT WHISKY RESERVÉ EDITION
Victoria, BC

Old George lives at the Phillips Fermentarium in Victoria, British Columbia.



This isn't a squatter's nickname but the name of a 1920s-era still used by the Hiram Walker & Sons Distillery when it operated in the Okanagan. Since 2013, Old George has been producing whisky and gin at its new Phillips home. This whisky is made from local barley, malted on-site at its malting plant, then

fermented, distilled and aged on-site in a combination of ex-bourbon, wine and Phillips beer casks, producing an authentic coastal single malt whisky.

BALDUR'S RELEASE 11
Lumsden, SK

Saskatchewan's Last Mountain Distillery has established itself as a leader in wheat whisky, producing some of



the best in Canada. Through its Baldur lineup, the distillery showcases its adventurous side with whiskies that incorporate rye, corn and malted barley. In mythology, Baldur, the Son of Odin, was described as so handsome, knowledgeable and joyful that light emanated from him. This eleven-year-old whisky shines

a light on wheat whisky aged in smaller new oak barrels, then transferred to used bourbon barrels containing Last Mountain's rye and corn whiskies. This dual-barrel maturation process brings mountains of flavours to a whisky fit for the gods.

ROYAL AMBER WHISKY
Elora, ON

The beautiful town of Elora, Ontario, is home to the Elora Distilling Company, which has been crafting spirits that live up to the town's beauty since 2020. Famous for its scenery, gorge, architecture and mill, the distillery



offers a prime setting to sip and savour spirits that match the town's ambience. This includes their Royal Amber Whiskey, made from local rye, corn and wheat and aged in oak from the famous Kelvin Cooperage.

BARNBURNER SINGLE BARREL WHISKEY (BARREL No. 3)
Oakville, ON

The Maverick Distillery in Oakville, Ontario, sourced this seven-year-old bourbon from Bardstown, Kentucky, and bottled it at cask strength. The 60% whiskey is made from a mash bill of 75% corn, 13% rye, and 12% malted barley. Traditional caramel and vanilla bourbon notes hit a sweet spot with baking spices, baskets of dried fruit, tobacco, and scorched oak.



TWO BREWERS YUKON SINGLE MALT WHISKY RELEASE 51
Whitehorse, YT

Two Brewers releases all its whiskies under four banners: classic, special finishes, innovative and peated. For this peated release, they have once again shown how gracefully peat can be integrated into a whisky. They do so in this expression by combining 100% peated malt with pale malted barley and malted wheat whisky. Aged for at least 11 years, the whisky spent twenty-eight months in sherry barrels, lending an exceptional fruitiness to the whisky's unfolding smokiness. Sold out, but there is always more whisky on the way.



GRAINHEDGE ARROWOOD No. 3
Red Deer, AB

The Troubled Monk Brewery in Red Deer, Alberta, makes this third edition of their award-winning rye whisky from a combination of flaked rye and rye malt. Head Distiller Garret Haynes fermented, distilled, and then aged the rye for 5 and a half years in new American oak. The result is a whisky that balances fruity and floral tones with its beautiful grain structure. Mixed peppery spices and vanilla custard lifts the prairie grain into a delicious sipper.



HIGHWOOD 25 YEAR
CANADIAN WHISKY
High River AB

Highwood Distillers is named after the Highwood River, which flows through the distillery's hometown of High River. Just as water flows through the town, so does excellent whisky. Highwood recently released a series of self-titled expressions aged 5, 15, and 25 years. The 25-year-old (The Legacy) is made from 100% corn whiskies laid down in 2001 and blended to create a complex array of layers. Oak, dark fruits, and warm spices – this flavourful whisky drinks with style and refinement.



HIGHCLERE CASTLE
BARREL-AGED GIN
Highclere Castle, ENG

A little over a hundred years ago, Howard Carter discovered the tomb of King Tutankhamun. It took another ten years to remove and catalogue its contents, a process made possible by his careful attention to detail. He documented and photographed 5,000 fragile items to help conserve them.

This limited edition commemorates this discovery, with the same meticulous attention to detail applied to the production of a barrel-aged gin. A gin made from Highclere botanicals was aged in Armagnac casks, Scotch and American whiskey barrels, and, just like King Tut's tomb, the honey-smoked flavours that top-dress the gin's citrus tones are a treasure.





PHOENIX ULTRA SMOOTH VODKA
Mississauga, ON

Dripp CAN Spirits specializes in small-batch, Mediterranean-inspired spirits such as Arak and Pastis. Adding to their Canadian-made lineup is Phoenix Vodka, which is triple-distilled and charcoal-filtered from a spirit made with non-GMO Canadian corn. In ancient Mediterranean culture, the phoenix symbolizes rebirth and renewal, which is exactly what this vodka does to your favourite vodka cocktail.

HENNESSEY VS CARNIVAL COGNAC
Cognac, FRA

This new 2026 limited-edition bottling reimagines last year's festive carnival artwork, featuring a feathered motif



with red, gold and sea-green accents, and a green foil band instead of last year's blue. The cognac's flavour profile is equally colourful, with toasted oak spices, green fruits and a signature honey note accented by soft spice.

SHERINGHAM SEASIDE GIN
Langford, B.C.

French Beach on the south shore of Vancouver Island inspired this gin. While distillery owners Alayne and Jason MacIsaac were walking along its rocky shores, the sea air mingled with wild roses against a forest backdrop. They set out to capture this feeling in a gin expression and walked away with a balanced masterpiece.



Seaside Gin is an intricate blend of flavour accents that coalesce into a unified profile. It's floral, fresh and bright, with a delicate interplay between these beach-inspired top notes and the juniper foundation. Creamy on the palate, it features rose-petal aromas, while juniper gives the gin the feel of a pine forest. A seasoned brininess drifts into the finish, courtesy of French Beach seaweed from a licensed, sustainable harvester, balanced by a slight green resin note and crisp citrus.

TEQUILA TROMBA
Jalisco, MX

Tromba translates from Spanish to English as an intense rainstorm, a symbol of the release of great energy

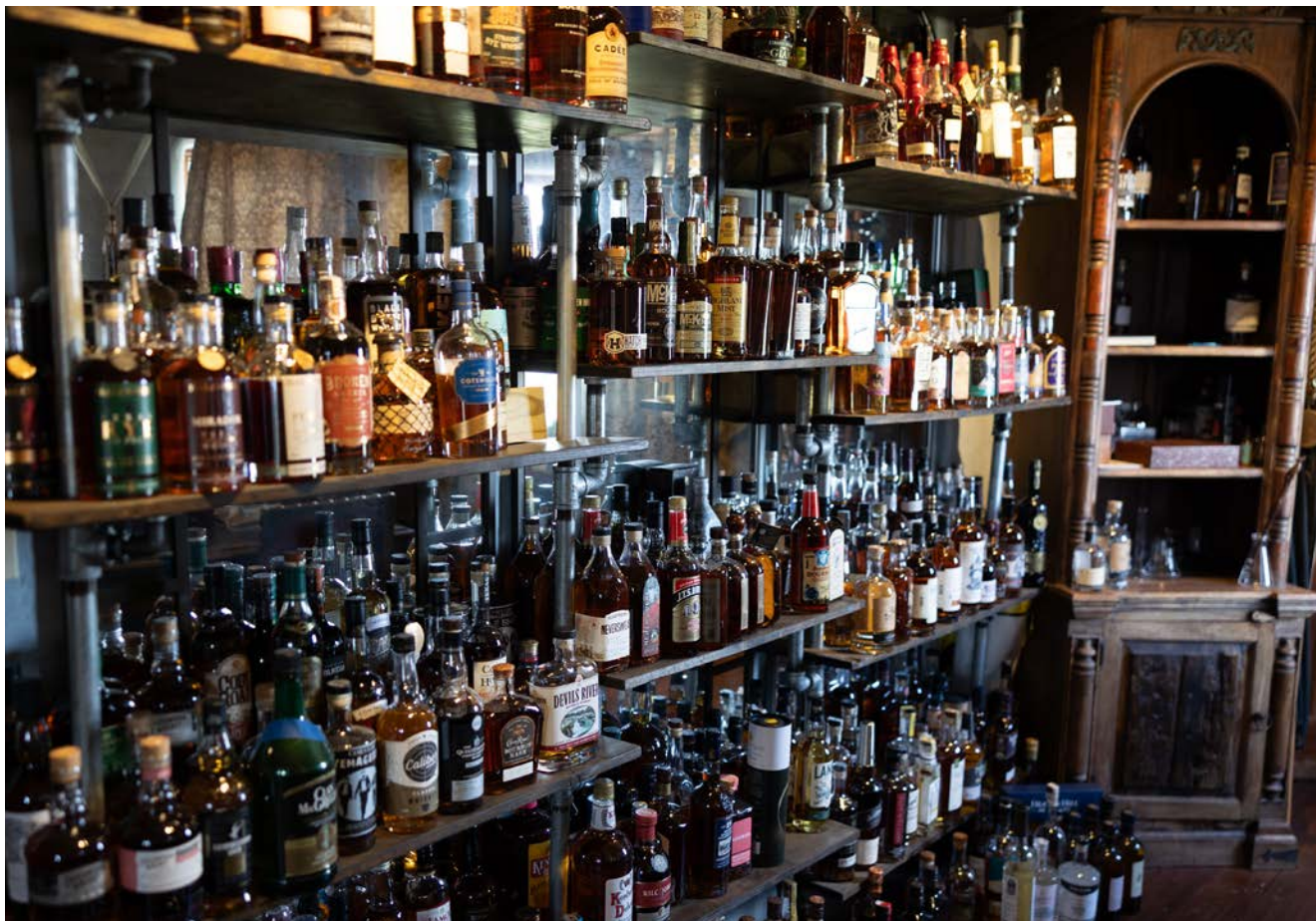


that, in its wake, brings life and renewal. Tromba's master distiller, Lilia Quintero, is an expert at selecting mature Blue Weber Agave to ferment and distil slowly into a delicious range of tequilas that deliver equally intense flavours without the need for an umbrella.

Tequila Tromba Blanco: Cooked-agave notes are layered with black pepper, melon and clean citrus—a consistent tequila for shaking into a Margarita or for stirring into a Paloma.



Tequila Tromba Reposado: Aged in white oak, the tequila's agave profile is accentuated by its time in the barrel. Caramel, wood spices and vanilla add layers to the peppery, citrus profile. Sip on ice or neat, or give whisky the night off and stir it into an Old Fashioned.



FIRST, SOME BRAIN SCIENCE

WRITTEN BY **DANIEL WHITTINGTON**

Four of your five senses get routed through your thalamus, the relay center that connects sensory data to awareness, conclusion, and action.

Your sense of smell is unique. It bypasses the relay center completely and makes its first stop in the parts of your brain responsible for memory and emotion. It goes to the lizard brain first.

That's why your first reaction to smelling something might be a memory of a moment or a person, or even just a feeling. If I said, "This smells like Christmas," you wouldn't just think of pine or cinnamon. You'd think of your Christmas. Specific rooms. Specific faces. Specific emotions.

Smell isn't just data and deduction. Your brain throws up memories and emotions first, and only then does the rest of your mind try to deduce what's happening.

That's a really roundabout way to arrive at, "This is a smoky single malt scotch." The moment you come to a conclusion about what you're smelling, you stop taking in new sensory data and start experiencing only the data that reinforces your conclusion.

The moment you come to a conclusion is the moment you eliminate discovery. In sensory training, we try to delay that moment for as long as possible. We hold the glass. We revisit it. We ask better questions. We let it change. Because the longer you postpone certainty, the more there is to find.

But this isn't just about whisky. This is about how we experience reality. The moment you decide someone is arrogant, you stop seeing their insecurity.

The moment you decide someone is foolish, you stop noticing their intelligence. The moment you decide a group "always does this," you stop seeing

the exceptions. Your brain is efficient. It loves shortcuts. Conclusions are shortcuts. Discovery is slower. It requires humility. In a whisky glass, rushing to certainty just means you miss a few flavor notes. That's harmless.

In a marriage, a friendship, a business partnership, or a culture, rushing to certainty means you stop seeing the person in front of you. If you want to become better at tasting whisky, you learn to delay your conclusions. If you want to become better at living with other humans, you might need to do the same thing.

**Because the moment
you become certain,
is usually the moment
you stop discovering. ♦**



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.

CENTENNIAL™

Ten years in charred oak.
Since 1996.

Canadian rye from High River, Alberta.



Please enjoy responsibly.