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# EDITOR'S thoughts



We have you covered for what to serve on the festive Irish day and any joyous day after, with new recipes and chocolate pairings courtesy of Melissa McKinney. While 'tis customary to sip on the dark stuff on March 17th, whiskey is never far from our thoughts, as well our glass.

Our cover star, Tracie Franklin tells a heartwarming journey we have all taken, from first sip to lifelong enchantment. Her unique perspective and impressive education in the whisky world is an inspiration to us all. A reminder of our common threads that bind us together.

## Across the pond we go.

Where else in March? Visitors from Ireland came to stay with us this issue, whiskies they were. They endeared themselves to us so much we couldn't let them leave and now we are excited to share them all with you.

In the spirit of Saint Patrick's Day, let us entertain you with tales of old in our spring issue. History abounds in Reece Sims' article on pre - Confederate Canadian whisky and the many sided story of Irish whisky gets a deep dive from both Blair Phillips in The Irish Connection and expert Davin de Kergommeaux in Whiskey Tales of Northern Ireland. See if they don't leave you with a song in your heart and a wee twinkle in your eye!

This issue is filled will stories and knowledge that will lighten your load while you put up your feet and savour a good read. A few laughs, tidbits of interesting facts and resources to come back to time and time again.

Let's set sail for the whisky world and spring forward in our shared passion together. Slainte!

Editor/Publisher  
Robert Windover

## MAGAZINE

Published Quarterly  
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# SAINT



SaintClo



# CLOUD











# The Irish Connection

By Blair Phillips

Irish whiskey's 19th Century global dominance is the stuff today's cola executives dream of. But it turned into a nightmare when in the 20th Century, an 800-pound gorilla called Scotch gradually stole the Irish crown.





The plot is similar to a brief episode in 1975 when Pepsi took on the chest-pounding Coca-Cola with the Pepsi Challenge. People were asked to taste both colas in a blind test and when their preference was revealed, Pepsi won the crown. The campaign whipped the cola crowds into a frenzy until a short time later when Coke won it back.

Two years earlier, in 1973, Tullamore D.E.W. had challenged Scotch Whisky. The D.E.W. wanted to show in blind taste tests that the underrated Irish whiskey was as smooth as Scotch and that trained palates couldn't tell the difference. They put together a panel of bartenders and then poured the D.E.W. along with a selection of three Scotch whiskeys. Flights were poured neat and on the rocks with \$5,000 up for grabs if the bartenders could identify the

style of all samples, but no one could. The drinks world was in shock because in 1973, if someone told you that they preferred Irish whiskey to Scotch whisky, you would have laughed them back to Dublin. However shocking, the campaign didn't fix Irish whiskey's uncertain future.

A bright future for Irish whiskey was taken for granted throughout the 19th Century. Irish whiskey had developed into the most popular spirit on the planet. It was so popular that it created assumptions that still linger today that Irish whiskey-making traditions were transplanted with immigration to countries like Canada.

"While immigrants from Ireland made up as much as a quarter of those arriving in Canada by the mid-1880s, and no doubt some brought home stills with

them, they had no known influence on the development of whisky making in Canada," explains Canadian Whisky The Portable Expert author Davin de Kergommeaux. "We often forget that immigrants began arriving en masse in Canada long after the eastern U.S. was already well settled. Some people left Ireland for the U.S. and later Canada seeking opportunity, but most were fleeing persecution or abject poverty at home and simply hoped that things would be better on this side of the Atlantic. Most Irish immigrants were more likely to arrive in Canada with little more than what they could carry by hand."

In a way, this story mirrors that of a long-admired Irish whiskey. Tullamore D.E.W. became famous across continental Europe shortly after Daniel Edmund Williams took over Daly



distillery in 1887. This is the Tullamore County distillery where Williams blended a new whiskey he tagged with his initials.

The brand saw success, but as Irish whiskey tragically declined through the first half of the 20th Century, the distillery went through a series of shutdowns and changing hands. By 1947, the distillery, looking to rebound in the U.S. market, shifted to a lighter blend of single-pot still malt and column-distilled grain whiskeys. But it closed again in 1954, and when Powers bought the brand, production of the D.E.W. shifted to what would become Irish Distillers.



But, across the pond in the U.S., the stars of the time, like Marlon Brando and Grace Kelly, weren't looking to set their hair ablaze for an Irish Whiskey endorsement. Instead, when the whiskey premiered in Canada in 1956, a nightmare-fueling leprechaun mascot named Tully O'Dew told whoever would listen to mix their D.E.W. with sugar, coffee and cream. By the late 1970s, the sales graph followed all Irish whiskey into a flatline.

Tullamore D.E.W. changed hands again in 1994, but in 2010, it finally got the respect it deserved. That's when William Grant bought the brand and built a new distillery in Tullamore. Finally, after six miserable decades, the D.E.W. got its due with a facelift and a heritage center located in an 1897 bonding warehouse that had been part of the original Daniel Edmund Williams distillery.

Today's Tullamore D.E.W. Original Irish Whiskey is blended from three types of triple-distilled grain whiskeys aged in traditional refill barrels, ex-bourbon barrels and ex-sherry butts. Marketing tells us to enjoy it in our favourite mixed drink or stirred into a cocktail, and we agree.



## Canadian Irish Whiskey?

But even though Canada's earliest distilleries do not have an Irish connection, some of the microdistilleries that have popped up over the past decade do, by employing Irish tools on their workbenches.

One serendipitous Irish connection occurred at Calgary's Bridgeland Distillery. Though founders Jacques Tremblay and Daniel Plenzik may not have Irish surnames, their St. Paddy's 3X Pot Distilled Grain Spirit is totally Irish-inspired. "We get our barley, wheat and oats from the Hamill family farm near Innisfail, Alberta," says Tremblay. "John Hamill's grandparents immigrated from Ireland to Alberta in 1929, seeking a better future for their family."

The Hamill family also owns Red Shed Malting, where they transform raw grain into malt products for Bridgeland. The name Innisfail comes from an Irish-language moniker for Ireland that translates into "Isle of Destiny." And when Red Shed grew their first crop of oats, it found its purpose in Bridgeland's St. Paddy's spirit.

"The Hamills were quite happy with that first oats harvest and we were looking for an early adopter on the brewing



or distilling side, so we chatted about what to do with it. Oats being an Irish whiskey signature grain, along with raw barley, we came up with the idea that the Hamills could provide us with all the grains needed for a typical Irish grain bill. We had wanted to do a pot “style” whiskey for a while and having access to a great supply of premium oats was the tipping point for us.” The spirit, made from a mash bill of 58% malted barley, 30 % unmalted barley and 12% oats, is also ageing in various barrels, including single malt, used Taber Corn Berbon barrels and new American oak for a future Irish-like triple distilled whiskey.

## A Canadian Irishman Making Single Malt

Irish descendants are distilling in Canada, but even they make single malt rather than single pot still whiskey. In Turner Valley, Alberta, at the Eau Claire Distillery, President David Farran brought on board the distilling talents of Caitlin Quinn, then cut their whiskey path, developing Alberta single malt from the ground up. In the autumn, Farran is found with volunteers, draft horses and antique farm equipment harvesting the grain grown near the distillery the old-fashioned way. Just like Farran’s distillery focuses on turning Canadian barley into single malt whiskey, so do his counterparts in Ireland. Alberta grows and exports a lot of grain. In 2020, the province produced 5.3 million tonnes of barley, some of it shipped to the European Union, including Ireland, to make beer, animal feed and whiskey. But, Farran’s Irish connection runs deeper than Alberta grain.

You must step into Farran’s mom and dad’s Dubarry boots to find his Irish roots. On Farran’s mother’s side, the Lafferty’s, came to Canada from Ireland, landing in Montreal in the 1700s as fur traders settling in Alberta. On his dad’s side, the name “Farran” has several origins, meaning “adventurous” and “the land.” Farran’s Northern Irish great-grandfather was a wing walker for the British air force during the First



World War. “Adventurous” and “the land” are cemented into Eau Claire’s genetic makeup.

This adventurous land-based spirit is displayed in Eau Claire’s single malt program, which includes their ongoing single cask releases. The latest is Cask 148, a single malt whiskey aged for five years in ex-bourbon barrels and finished in a Ruby Port Cask for five months.

Back in Waterford County, Ireland, a whiskey merchant has found a genuine Irish connection reminiscent of the forgotten styles of the 19th Century. W.D. O’Connell Whiskey Merchants have built their library by sourcing a full range of Irish whiskey styles that shows there is more to the country’s whiskey history than traditional pot still whiskey. They are delicious, but there is so much more to Irish Whiskey’s range of flavours and W.D. O’Connell is constantly looking for a variety of new make and mature whiskey from Irish distilleries to showcase its range.

Their lineup includes a forgotten style, a peated malt called Bill Phil. The whiskey is named after founder Daithí O’Connell’s great-grandfather William Philip O’Connell, a blacksmith from County Limerick. William was well-known for his hand-crafted turf-cutter named Bill



Phil Sleán. Peat on the Emerald Isle is called turf and back when Irish whiskey was the talk of every town, it was turf they used as fuel to dry malt. Turf smoke would drift from the distilleries and was part of the whiskey’s flavour in the decades before coal came to Ireland. Bill Phil is just a reminder in a room full of Irish whiskeys that bring you back to the future and across the globe. The Irish connection remains strong. And while the Irish had nothing to do with bringing distilling to Canada, don’t tell an Irishman holding a sharp turf-cutter that. ♦

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# Reviving Canada's Pre-Confederate Whisky

By Reece Sims

Canadian whisky is confusing. The term 'Canadian whisky' has long been used interchangeably with 'rye' or 'rye whisky' even though no rye grain actually needs to be used in the mash bill to be labeled as such.







Meanwhile in Upper Canada (now Ontario), where there were no major seaports and transportation was inconsistent, pioneering farmers began to use their lower quality wheat, middlings, and surpluses to make wheat whiskies. It was noted in The “Loyalist” Economy of Upper Canada 1784-1806, that distilled wheat made up approximately 15 percent of the total estimated wheat output for Upper Canada during this era.

Wheat whisky, which at the time was typically only distilled once and consumed unaged, continued to be produced on farms and as a flour mill bi-product. In addition to acting as a potable tippie during and after a laborious day of work, it also held weight for bartering purposes. For example, in an advertisement in the Western Mercury, on February 17, 1822, the Ancaster Flour Mill and Distillery offered two gallons of their whisky in exchange for 60 pounds of rye or Indian corn.

Similarly, after building a small distillery in 1837, Gooderham and Worts began to distill their excess wheat (which would have become waste). Their first batch of whisky was noted as being made from 36 bushels of

Oftentimes in fact, ‘Canadian rye whisky’ is made with a heavy blend of corn-based whisky with some rye and a touch of malt for good measure. But before these blends became the main representation of our whisky here in Canada, another style was more prevalent.

Despite Canada producing 300 metric tonnes of rye per year, the majority of the world’s rye is actually produced in Eastern, Central, and Northern Europe, affectionately known as the rye belt. Nordic countries in particular, possess a special affinity to rye as it has been the principle grain consumed in traditional Scandinavian diets for hundreds of years. Therefore, it comes as little surprise that up-and-coming distilleries such as Stauning Whisky in Denmark and Kyrö Distilling Company in Finland are releasing rye whiskies with deeply personal cultural connections, contributing to their international acclaim.

It seems that increasing competition in the rye whisky space from new international distilleries and well-known American producers, combined with ongoing confusion around what Canadian rye whisky is (and isn’t) may be a sign. Perhaps now is the time for Canada to rebrand its ‘whisky identity’ tie to rye.

With deep-seated roots in Canada’s pre-confederate history, there is enormous potential for Canada to realign and take ownership over a category that has yet to have its heyday: wheat whisky. We’re beginning to see many Canadian craft distilleries release brilliantly aromatic, light, and fruity small batch expressions; this grassroots trend has the potential to become a national movement.

## En-grained History

To provide you with a brief history, Canada’s distilling culture became prominent towards the end of the eighteenth century, when French fur-traders and settlers, living in Lower Canada (what is now Quebec), began distilling their own rum from molasses. This substance was brought from the West Indies in British ships, however, due to trading laws of the time, duties made it expensive to produce. Those who lived in port towns were able to source alternatives such as wine, brandy, and other liquors from abroad with ease. However, other inland settlers with lack of access to these international delights began constructing their own stills to create whiskey blanc from potatoes, corn, and/or wheat grists.





wheat, 304 bushels of wheat middling (leftover from milling), and 27 bushels of malt.

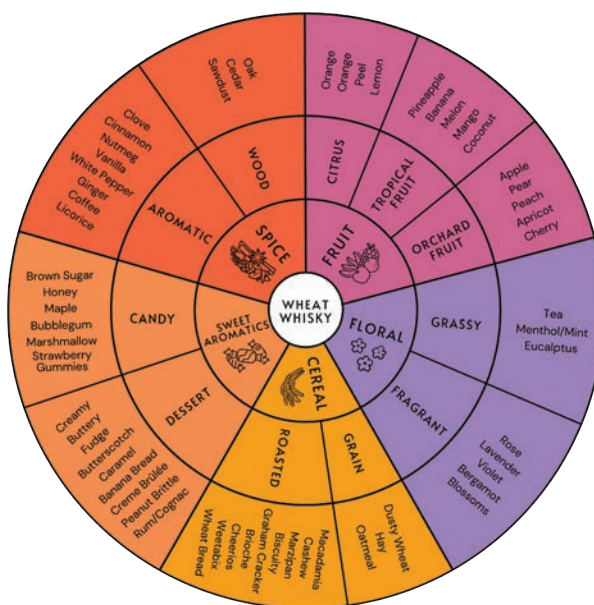
By the 1840's over two hundred distillery licenses had been registered in Upper and Lower Canada and an industrial revolution was on the horizon. While many of these were still small-scale farm-based licenses, producing wheat whiskies, the establishment of larger scale distilleries such as Gooderham & Worts, Hiram Walker & Sons (Canadian Club), and Granite Mills and Waterloo Distillery (Seagrams), popularized whiskies that were made from a blend of grains including rye. Whiskies made with only wheat and wheat middlings became known as 'common whisky' or 'straight whisky', while whiskies with rye added to them were called 'rve'.

## Wheat Flavour Profile

Today, wheat is arguably the most important cultivated crop in Canada, with over 50,000 farms producing 30 million tonnes of wheat annually. As the fifth largest wheat producer in the world, Canada has a long standing history of exporting high-quality wheat. The introduction of Red Fife wheat in the 1840's and then Marquis wheat in the early 1900's saw Canada setting standards of quality internationally.

When it comes to whisky, what distinguishes wheat whiskies from other styles, is it tends to be lighter and more forgiving, often maintaining a better balance when bottled younger than that of rye, and possessing more aromatics than that of corn whiskies.

In an article published by the Faculty of Bioscience and Technology for Food, Agriculture, and Environment at the University of Teramo (in Italy), a research team found a number of key volatile organic compounds (VOCs) derived from the fermentation of wheat.



**Some of the key VOCs they discovered include:**

**Aldehydes:** nonanal (*waxy, citrus, floral and green*) and decanal (*sweet, waxy, orange peel*)

**Esters:** ethyl heptanoate (*grape/cognac note*), ethyl octanoate (*pineapple, apple, apricot*), ethyl nonanoate (*oily, fruity, apple, banana, nutty*), ethyl butyrate (*pineapple*), ethyl 2-phenylacetate (*fruit, honey*), and 2-phenylethyl acetate (*sweet, honey, floral, rosy*)

**Ketone:** 2-nonanone (*fruity, floral, fatty, herbaceous*)

**Terpene:**  $\beta$ -Linalool (*floral, spicy, citrus, tropical*)

**Phenol:** 2-methoxy-4-vinylphenol  
(clove, curry, spice)

Maturation vessels aside, wheat whiskies tend to possess flavour notes that fall into five main categories: sweet aromatics, spice, fruit, floral and cereal notes. These can be further explored in the proposed wheat whisky flavour wheel (which is suggestive, not exhaustive).

## Pioneering the Old-New Frontier

Wheat whiskies were historically produced in the East but it's craft distilleries in the West that are currently pioneering high or all wheat mash bills. Copper Spirit Distillery, located on Bowen Island, BC, has an organic, red fife wheat whisky currently aging in new Hungarian oak for future release. Only just considered a whisky at three years old, it tastes surprisingly mature for its age. Notes of cinnamon hearts, straw, sultanas and vanilla, are followed by banana, maple fudge, light roast coffee and dusty wheat on the palate with a surprisingly smooth finish.

Stillhead Distillery, located in Duncan, BC, has taken an alternative approach with their wheat whisky releases thus far. To add complexity to the lightness of the whisky, owner Brennan Colebank finishes their wheat whiskies in ex-Islay Scotch casks. Aptly named “Smokin’ Wheat’, these small batch releases are an interesting dichotomy of florals, peaches, apricots and cooked wheat, contrasted with cigar box and tobacco leaves.



Founded by Edmontonians Adam Smith and Andrea Shubert, Strathcona Spirits Distillery, which is set in a small boomtown building in Edmonton, has been releasing small batch 'frontier style' whiskies over the past few years. Three editions in particular, the Dreamland Prairie Whisky, Dreamland Straight Whisky and Pedro's Dreamland Whisky (which is still currently available), contain 75 to 100 percent hard red wheat. The Dreamland Straight Whisky, in particular, which was made from 100 percent hard red wheat and aged in virgin oak quarter casks was a benchmark representation of the potential aromatics and flavour profile of this category. On the nose are vivid notes of mango, ripe peaches, yellow apples, honey nut cherries, cinnamon, vanilla cream and white florals. It's something you just want to nose over and over again to discover different nuances. On the palate, creamy vanilla, brioche, nutmeg and a touch of saline are met with a soft, astringent finish.

Leaning even further into the tropical fruit notes that wheat offers, the tastings notes for Wild Life Distillery's first whisky release, which is made from 61 percent wheat, 26 percent barley, and 13 percent rye and aged for approximately 3.5 years in American oak, can be summarized as banana cream pie meets Hubba Bubba gum.

Finally, Last Mountain Distillery, located in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, has released two batches of 100 percent wheat whisky. The first batch was aged for 3.5 years in an ex-bourbon barrel and possesses notes of purple florals, banana, clove, nutmeg, maple and a touch of herbaceousness. Their second batch is finished in a red wine cask from California, presenting cedar smoked strawberries and marshmallow fluff on

the nose and palate with a lightly spiced, mouth drying finish.

As is evident, each of these distilleries have concocted their own unique expressions, however, one similarity is apparent; all of these releases are young, being aged for only three to four years and yet taste more mature. As the craft distilling industry continues to boom across Canada, it seems that wheat whiskies may present distilleries a way in which to release high quality, more mature tasting whiskies in a shorter period of time.

## Subsets of Wheat Whisky

Traditional wheat whiskies tend to be light, smooth and aromatic, however, there are also subsets within this category that can offer more robust flavour profiles. For example, triticale is a hybrid wheat-rye grain which features fruit and spice notes. Monashee Distillery in Revelstoke, BC, as well as Tumbleweed Distillery in Osoyoos, BC have both released triticale whiskies. Monashee Spirits' release, which is once again, only about three years old, yet tastes much more mature, is full of spiced vanilla, clove, dried orange rinds, tobacco and red fruit notes while Tumbleweed Distillery's 1888 Triticale features toffee, banana bread, ginger and allspice notes - again, fruit and spice is prevalent.

DeVine Distillery in Saanichton, BC, has produced an award-winning 'ancient grain' whisky using khorosan, emmer, einkorn, and spelt, grains which are in fact, types of 'ancient' wheat. Notes of candied fruit, macadamia nuts, allspice, clove and apricots are abundant. Liberty Distillery, located in Vancouver, BC, also produces an Ancient

Grains expression which possesses floral, honey, baked apple and molasses notes.

With rye whisky becoming an increasingly competitive category of whisky, Canada has a distinctive opportunity to establish expertise in a new category that possesses long standing historical relevance to the evolution of the country itself. Wheat whisky, which was once the popular style for pioneering farmers, offers a fresh palate of fruity flavours for imbibers to explore while offering versatility. Subsets including ancient grain and triticale whiskies can provide nuttier, richer, spicier profiles while playing with different cask finishing techniques (like ex-Islay casks) can add more dimensions of flavour. Craft distilleries are already leading the way in producing these styles - it's time for commercial distilleries to look to this historic style to transform Canadian whisky's future. ♦







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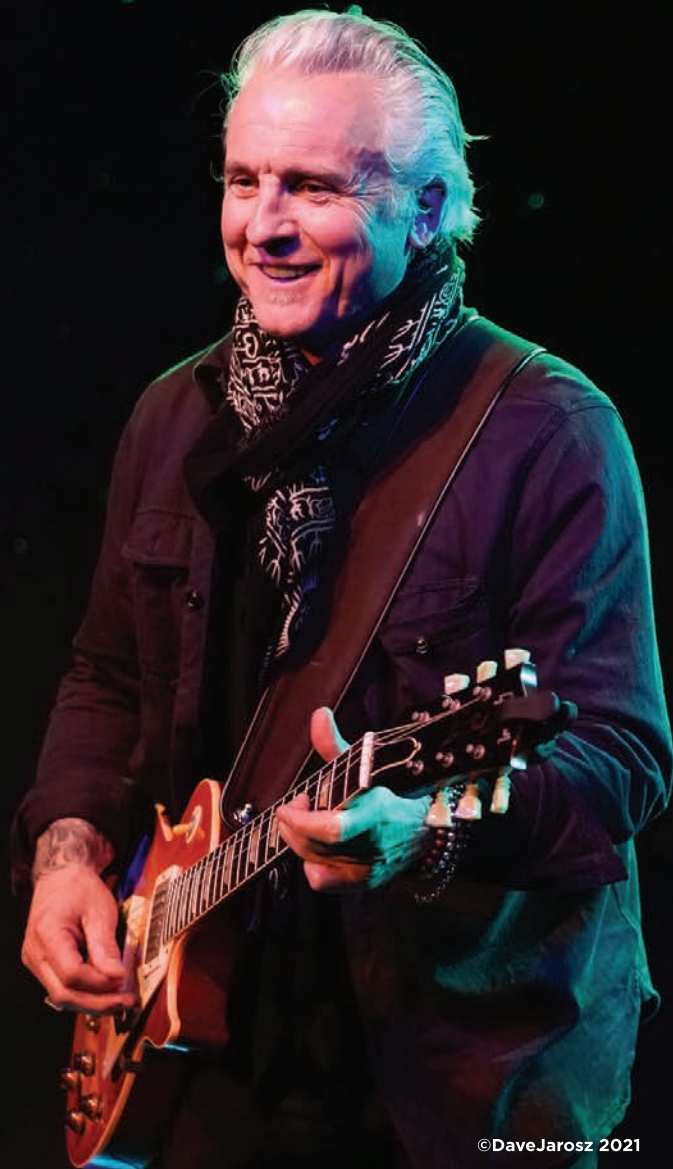


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# Whiskey Tales of Northern Ireland

By Davin de Kergommeaux

The face of Irish whiskey is changing, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the north. Reduced in the 1970s to but a single distillery, more than a dozen northern producers now have wide ranges of bottlings on offer.

We've all heard the tales of Irish whiskey, how it is more refined – smoother – than other whiskies because it is unpeated and triple distilled.

Some enthusiasts will even swear that the Irish invented distilling itself, and only later did they introduce it to Scotland.







distillery in more than 125 years, the family owned Echlinville distillery is now the proud custodian of the historic Dunville's Irish whiskey. Known as the "Spirit of Belfast," Dunville's premium and super-premium single malts and vintage blends are highly regarded. With demand for Irish whiskey surging, in October 2020, Echlinville announced an investment of about \$15 million to increase production capacity and establish a new immersive visitor's centre.



For sure, Ireland was well-established as a whisky-making nation long before Scotland was, and the Irish will never forgive the Scots for stealing the whiskey industry from under them. In 1830, when Aeneas Coffey found a way to make whiskey quickly, Irish distillers rejected it, opting to stick with their traditional pot stills. The Scots, however, leapt at the idea of cranking out whiskey in a hurry. It didn't taste very good, but it was inexpensive and soon began pushing Irish whiskey aside. So the story goes, in order to set their pot-distilled whiskey apart from that coarse Coffey-stilled Scottish stuff, the Irish decided to add an 'e' to their whiskey to ensure no one would ever be fooled.

Talk of Irish whiskey in whisky clubs, bars, and wherever this most approachable liquid is shared, is well sprinkled with such tales. And now, thanks to Tommy Shelby and the Peaky Blinders – or maybe it's simply good taste – there seem to be many more

occasions where Irish whiskey is doing the rounds. So, let's look more closely at some of these stories. Who knows, we might end up winning a bar bet or two.

## Irish whiskey is unpeated

This may have been true briefly, but peat (called turf on the Emerald Isle) has traditionally been used as fuel in Ireland, including fuel to dry malt. In his 1830 book *Domestic Economy*, Michael Donovan mentions "the turf smoke with which these mountain distilleries abound." Still, "Peat is rare today," says John Kelly, CEO of McConnell's distillery, "Some do use it – Connemara is a good example," he points out. Today, among several other Northern distilleries, Echlinville, about an hour outside Belfast, makes a traditional softly peated Irish blend called Three Crowns Peated. Established in 2013 as Northern Ireland's first newly licensed

Meanwhile, Hinch distillery in nearby Lisburn stays true to the turf tradition with its peated Irish single malt. The \$25 million Hinch, situated between Belfast and Ballynahinch on the glorious Killaney Estate, was launched in November 2020. In addition to its peated single malt, Hinch offers an assortment of other scrumptious Irish whiskeys.







Willie MacKay, former manager of the Bushmills distillery on the north-east coast of County Antrim, once explained, “It is the drying stage that gives the whiskey its peaty flavour. The fire is fuelled by peat or turf which contains phenols, and the phenols in the smoke are absorbed by the moist grain.”

There are more than a dozen distilleries in Northern Ireland today, but for much of its 400+ years, Bushmills was the only one with a license. And according to MacKay, Bushmills was still lightly peated in the 1970s and 80s when he was there making it. Nevertheless, as Kelly reminds us, though peat is used for some Irish whiskey, it is still not that common.

Irish whiskey is triple distilled  
“About 98% of it is triple distilled,” says Kelly. Nevertheless, for much of its existence, Irish distillers have used both double and triple distillation, just like distillers everywhere else. Indeed, some Irish whiskeys today are blends of double- and triple-distilled whiskeys, and some are single malts. As far back as 1866, when whisky

chronicler Alfred Barnard visited Ireland, many producers were distilling twice. Bushmills boasts that it is triple distilled now, but when Barnard called on them, it was one of no fewer than eight Irish distilleries using double distillation. Bushmills also makes an impressive range of single malt whiskeys. And while several Irish distilleries are returning to traditional double distillation for at least some of their whiskeys, triple distillation is not unique to Ireland. Among many other distilleries in several other countries, Auchentoshan in Scotland and Collingwood in Canada, also triple distill.

## The Irish invented distilling

This theme was recalled recently by British High Commissioner to Canada, Susannah Goshko at a pre-St Patrick’s

Day reception at her residence in Ottawa. “Ireland is the home of whiskey and where whiskey got its name,” she declared. “Uisce beatha means ‘water of life,’ so what we’re drinking tonight is water,” she added, joking.

Whether whisky really was first produced in Scotland, Ireland, or elsewhere is still debated in most quarters. Nevertheless, long before people in either country made the amber dew, distillation was practiced in Asia and the Middle East. Many historians believe that rather than inventing it, the Irish learned of distilling from missionaries returning home to Ireland from the Far East.

## Irish whiskey is spelled with an

# “e”

For the most part, this has become the case today, in practice, though not in law. However, despite the tale of using spelling to differentiate their whiskey from Scotch, by tradition, both spellings were used for Irish whiskey until the 1970s. That’s when an economic dispute with England, that kept Irish whiskey from being sold in Commonwealth countries, turned the hangover from American prohibition near-fatal. As a result, every Irish distillery but two went out of business.

A single company, Irish Distillers, owned those last two distilleries and also bought the rights to hundreds of other Irish whiskey brands. So, when the company decided to standardize the spelling on all its labels as ‘whiskey,’ those brands had no choice but to follow suit. For example, when it took over the production of Paddy’s Whisky in the





1970s, Irish Distillers changed the label to read Paddy's Whiskey. According to Kelly, "in the 1800s, all Irish whiskey was spelled without an 'e'." But as far-reaching as the 1970s decision to insert an "e" became, that decision was made solely by one distiller. It just looked like an industry-wide consensus, and only because one company, Irish Distillers, operated the entire industry in Ireland back then.

With today's resurging popularity (Irish whiskey is the fastest-growing whisky sector in the US and has expanded by more than 50% in Canada in the past five years), there is no reason why an Irish distiller or brand owner couldn't set themselves apart by reverting to that other, quite traditional spelling –

### **"whisky."**

McConnell's distillery has done just that, reviving the "no-e" spelling used by J&J McConnell since 1776. We'll be hearing more about McConnell's over the next few years: Its parent firm, Belfast Distillery Company, is investing \$32.7 million in a spectacular distillery development opening later this year. The new distillery and visitors centre sits in one of Belfast's most historically significant buildings, the Crumlin Road

Gaol. It's not exactly a homecoming for him, in the 1980s, McConnell's John Kelly, happened to attend school just across the wall from that old jail. "There were prisoners in there when we were at school," he recalls with a smile. McConnell's, incidentally, is not alone in reverting to past tradition. Waterford distillery, way down south in County Waterford, has also dropped the "e." Watch this space. We could be witnessing the start of a trend. So, there you have it. The Irish have accomplished many things in the history of western civilization, but inventing distilling is not one of them. It's rare, though becoming more common, that just like any other whisky, Irish whiskey

may be peated or unpeated. It may also be double distilled, triple distilled, single malt, or blended, and it may spell its name with an "e" or without one. So next time someone bets they know more about Irish whiskey than you do, smile and order them a Dunville's Three Crowns Peated. Why? Well, it seems the folks at Echlinville distillery plant and harvest some of their whiskey grain themselves, on their farm where the Ards Peninsula wraps around Strangford Lough in County Down. And dang if some of that whiskey doesn't end up being single malts, double-distilled blends, or even peated whiskeys. You can't get much more Irish than homegrown. ♦





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# Test Your Whisky Wisdom

How well do you know the whisky world ?  
We asked our friends to share some whisky experience with us. See how well you do without looking up the answers. Cheers.





## **Lisa Wicker, CEO/ Master Distiller**

**Question One-**  
Our Town Branch Distillery located across the street from our Lexington Brewing Co. was the first new distillery to be built in Lexington, Kentucky in more than 100 years making us the seventh official stop on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. What year did Town Branch Distillery join the iconic Kentucky Bourbon Trail?

**Question Two-**  
The Pearse Lyons Distillery is located in Dublin's historic Liberties. Here we create our award winning, small batch Irish Whiskey in a restored 18th Century Church. The former Church of St. James, now a distillery, is a home worthy of the spirit it embodies. Where were our copper pot stills made?

## **Don Livermore, Master Blender**

**Question One-**  
What is the difference, or is there a difference between a barrel and a cask?

**Question Two-**  
Why is copper used during distillation?







Sarah Kennedy

## Sarah Kennedy, McConnell's Irish Whisky Brand Manager

**Question One-**  
In May 2022,  
McConnell's added to  
their product range with  
the introduction of the  
McConnell's Sherry  
Cask finish. What type  
of Sherry Cask was used  
in the finishing of the  
whiskey?

**Question Two-**  
2023 is an exciting year  
for McConnell's Irish  
Whisky with the antici-  
pation of the opening of  
our new Distillery and  
Visitor Experience. With  
that comes the appoint-  
ment of our Master Dis-  
tiller. What is the full  
name of the McConnell's  
Irish Whisky Master  
Distiller?



Jenna Diubaldo

## Jenna Diubaldo, Distiller, Blender

**Question One-**  
Sons of Vancouver just won  
'Canadian Whisky of the Year'  
at the 2023 Canadian  
Whisky Awards for their  
Caribbean-cask rye, aptly  
named what?

**Question Two-**  
In order to be called  
'Canadian Whisky,' how long  
does Sons of Vancouver have  
to age their rye?





Meet

# Spirit Tracie Franklin

By Maggie Kimberl



ed





In 2020, Jack Daniels and Uncle Nearest announced The Nearest & Jack Training initiative and Tracie Franklin became the first apprentice of the program. She spent two years training on various aspects of the distilling industry before graduating. Before that she worked as an actor and bartender and then a brand ambassador for many different brands of Scotch whisky. Franklin is currently consulting with businesses on all points of the whisk(e)y continuum. Relish & Whisky recently caught up with her to learn more about her background and mission.

**MK: How did you get into the whiskey business?**

**TF:** Well, this is a bit of a long story. I have always been someone who relished flavor. My father was in the military and when he would return from tours in other countries, he would try to find restaurants that prepared those cuisines so he could share his stories with us while giving us a taste of the culture he'd experienced. We grew up eating everything we could find and loved trying new cuisines. When I graduated college and started working on musicals, I kept the same excitement for food as I traveled the world singing in different languages. What I also began to realize was that I was able to sing much more clearly when I drank whiskey than if I had mixed drinks or even wine the night before. Whiskey became my drink of choice and I began to explore the diversity of the category. I started to seek out opportunities to learn. Luckily, I had landed back in New York city where brand ambassadors worked closely with the U.S. Bartender's Guild. I began to volunteer to help with tasting events to get more education and to save myself a buck or 50. Once the ambassadors realized I was serious I was offered the opportunity to pour for

whiskey festivals, in-store tastings, and at private tastings. The hourly pay was decent and kept me from closing the bar and getting home at 4AM with auditions to do that same morning. I continued to represent brands like Ardbeg (my gateway whisky) and Glenmorangie, but realized brands weren't speaking to my demographic. I teamed up with my whiskey sister and dear friend, Jennifer Wren to create a whiskey marketing company called, Whersky. We hosted educational whiskey events that were targeted to younger audiences.

**Our slogan was, "Whether you're in a kilt, heels, or both, Whersky welcomes you!"**

Gina Fossit was one of our first supporters and she brought Diageo on board. Our names and purpose quickly spread throughout the whiskey industry and from there we started getting offers to work for brands. Being that we were both actors, the 401K match and health insurance were too much to refuse. I am grateful to have the opportunity to bring my passion for whiskey to the world each and every day.

**MK: What was your mission with Whersky?**

**TF:** To increase diversity in the whiskey industry. At the time we founded Whersky, most brands were overlooking people of color, young drinkers, LGBTQ+ and women in their outreach. We wanted to fill the gap by offering blog posts written from diverse perspectives, educational 101 classes to empower the attendees, and creative drinking opportunities to create community. Unfortunately, we weren't able to keep the company going once we became

employees of brands but we were able to take our advocacy into our roles.

**MK: How has your past bartending experience shaped your knowledge of whiskey consumers?**

**TF:** While I was in New York I worked as a bartender when I wasn't touring and it helped give me a thick skin. I was already a hospitality professional after years of being a server in college and this is where I gained the ability to read my guests and to predict their needs. At Heartland Brewery in Union Square, I learned shots, beer pairings, and how to shut down a finance bro in 5 words. At Vinus and Marc, I learned classic cocktails and began to connect flavor expectation with guest reactions. It wasn't until I began going to Brandy Library and Flatiron room that I learned to distinguish the many whiskey flavor profiles with a guest's current palate. Now, I am the Whiskey Whisperer! I love talking to people about their preferences and then finding the perfect pairing served in the appropriate way for their palate.

**MK: As a former William Grant & Sons Ambassador, what do you want Bourbon drinkers to know about Scotch?**

**TF:** It's varied and complex and there are numerous ways to learn to appreciate it. Also, you don't have to appreciate it! I love ALL whiskey and think there is an expression for every season and event. However, if you're a Bourbon lover and Scotch hasn't been your thing, don't force it. Do your best to stay open minded though. As you begin to understand what it is you didn't enjoy about the whiskies you've tried, you'll get closer to finding the whisky that will become the bridge to expanding your palate and your world of whiskey flavor.







**MK:** What was your apprenticeship experience like under the Nearest & Jack Advancement Initiative?

**TF:** WOW! It was a truly unforgettable experience that I will be forever grateful for. I had the opportunity to work with some of my favorite distilleries for extended periods of time to get more familiar with their process, philosophies, and team structures. I attended distillation, craft spirits, and ethanol conferences where I met people from all aspects of the industry who have a passion for science, ecology, and education. Nicole Austin and Becky Harris assisted me as mentors throughout the process. Being able to compare the advice and experiences from the perspective of a large conglomerate and a small craft distillery were priceless and made me much more open minded. Kevin Smith is a microbiologist who assisted with the program and generously shared his knowledge and time to ensure I was prepared for my diploma course (Yeast Biochemistry is hard!), and for the obstacles I was experiencing in day to day production. Uncle Nearest allowed me to help guide the build out of their new distillery and working with the contractors and consultants was incredibly difficult and rewarding. I am grateful for all of the generosity the industry showed me and continues to show me as I build my new career.

**MK:** What do you hope to do with the knowledge you gained during that experience?

**TF:** I'm not sure. Unfortunately, I went through a very difficult health issue that has caused permanent damage to my body and I can no

longer pursue a career with physical demands. Even though my body may be weak, my mind is full of ideas and knowledge and my goal for now is to find ways to share it with as many people as I can. I've had the opportunity to work with some craft distilleries as a production consultant. Simply being another pair of eyes to ensure their SOP's are safe, efficient, optimal, and consistent. I've also started doing some spirits consulting and marketing work for new brands. I've found both of these jobs to be incredibly rewarding.

**MK:** What is your favorite thing about being a whiskey maker?

**TF:** Knowing that you have so many levers of flavor to consider and yet, in the end you must abdicate your powers to nature as maturation takes over. Checking in on casks to see how they progress so uniquely, is a testament to the magic of whiskey making. Blending is the art and it's where a dream can become reality.

**MK:** What is your favorite whiskey cocktail?

**TF:** In the summer, I sip on a whiskey highball (soda) or Paper Plane. In the winter, give me an Old Fashioned with a spiced syrup.

**MK:** As a consultant and whiskey expert, what are some of the things people hire you to do?

**TF:** Right now, I do more education than anything and I do enjoy it immensely. Whether it's a 101 or chemical breakdown of flavor, I enjoy seeing the light in people's eyes as they begin to appreciate the labor and magic of whiskey.

I'm the distiller/blender for a new spirits project that I'm hoping to announce soon... Really, I'm hoping to work with more craft distilleries and want to use my platform to highlight trendsetters and flavor seekers. The industry is getting much more exciting and I want everyone to know.

I enjoy seeing the light in people's eyes as they begin to appreciate the labor and magic of whiskey.

**MK:** How can folks get in touch with you for whiskey tastings or cocktail experiences for their events?

**TF:** Feel free to reach out to me through my website, spiritedtracie.com, and definitely follow me on IG @Spirited\_Tracie where I share my passion for whiskey, flavor, and spirits education. ♦











# WHISKY UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN

By Bob Baxter

**Y**ukon Brewing opened as the first craft brewery in the Yukon since prohibition. The company was founded by Alan Hansen and Bob Baxter, a chemical engineer and mechanical engineer respectively. Given that technical background, it seemed only a matter of time before brewing great beer was not enough. In 2009, the company bought a small still and began their distilling adventure.







The original plan was much like other craft distillers – make unaged spirits like vodka and gin to avoid the delay inherent in bringing aged spirits, like whisky, to market. However, whisky was the spirit Alan and Bob most enjoyed, so it only seemed right to make whisky the spirit that they chose to focus on. Fortunately, the brewing operation provided the cash flow that would give the whisky time to become whisky. The original ‘we can wait three years’ thinking turned into much longer (it was seven years before the first whisky was released). But, they did not want something on the market that was not at a level to be proud of, and beer sales provided the luxury of that time.

Working with their still manufacturer, Christian Carl, they put some of their technical training to work right away. As brewers, a kettle was a piece of equipment that was used every day. And,

given a location where cold outdoor temperatures are a reality of life several months a year, their brew kettle had a stack condenser instead of a chimney to the outdoors. The pair reasoned that there was little difference between their brew kettle and a pot still, other than a still would be made from copper and the brew kettle was stainless steel. However, working with Christian Carl, they designed a device to connect to the top of the brew kettle to act as a secondary copper chamber. In addition to building this device from copper, it was filled with copper wool to maximize copper contact with steam coming off the kettle. A condenser off the top of the device, which they refer to as a helmet, completes the system.

Essentially, their brew kettle can be converted to act as a stripping still. The kettle is much larger in volume than their actual still, so stripping is done at a much faster rate (and with the

resulting labour savings), than if all of the fermented wash was put through the actual still. It is not uncommon for distilleries to have a stripping still and a finishing still – however this may be the only convertible brew kettle in existence. Who knows?

After the equipment was shipped from Germany to the Yukon, arriving just before Easter, 2009, the first new make was crafted and the first four barrels filled. However, right off the bat, Alan and Bob crafted washes from brewers’ grains. The reasoning was that the wide world of beers came largely due to the variety of malted grains in use, so it would likely matter in the new make going into the barrels. And, if it tasted different going into the barrel, it would taste different coming out of the barrel.

different going into the barrel, it would taste different coming out of the barrel.

This is where the name Two Brewers comes from – Alan and Bob are making single malt whisky the way a brewer would.







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Using the brew kettle as a stripping still comes with a penalty. It interferes with the brewing of beer. That is not a problem during the slower winter months, but is not feasible during the summer, when the operation is making beer at full steam. As such, the distillery is producing about 40 barrels per year, when time permits. In the wide world of whisky, this is not a large volume. In fact, without using colourings or flavourings, which were never part of the plan, it would be difficult to have a consistent, always available profile. There simply were not enough barrels in the building for that.

So, the decision was made to go all in on the use of varied grains in an effort to make every batch quite unique from the batch before. This was partly due to the varied use of brewers' grains, but also from the varied use of barrel type, fermenting regimes, and distilling regimes. The idea was to create a pile

of barrels that are, essentially, a spice rack of flavours. A good chef makes full use of the world of spices, learning how the flavours work together when creating a new dish. Each expression that Two Brewers creates, takes that same approach – make full use of the uniqueness of every barrel to produce whisky with the same layers and complexity that a skilled chef looks for.

In order to pull this off, four categories of single malt whisky

were created by Two Brewers. Classic (like you might expect from scotch single malt), Peated, Special Finishes (like sherry, port or rum), and Innovative. Each release, therefore, is small in number (often less than a thousand bottles), consecutively numbered, and grouped under one of the umbrella categories.

Innovative whiskies are those that do not fit into the other categories. The first Innovative whisky was a release made from a genuine sour mash. As brewers first, Alan and Bob knew how to make sour beers. Their question was – if the wash was intentionally soured in the brewing process like a beer would be, but was then fermented and distilled like a whisky would be, how would the result taste? The simple answer was that the new make tasted unlike any of the others that they had made to that point. To call the flavours funky would be an understatement. However, the pair

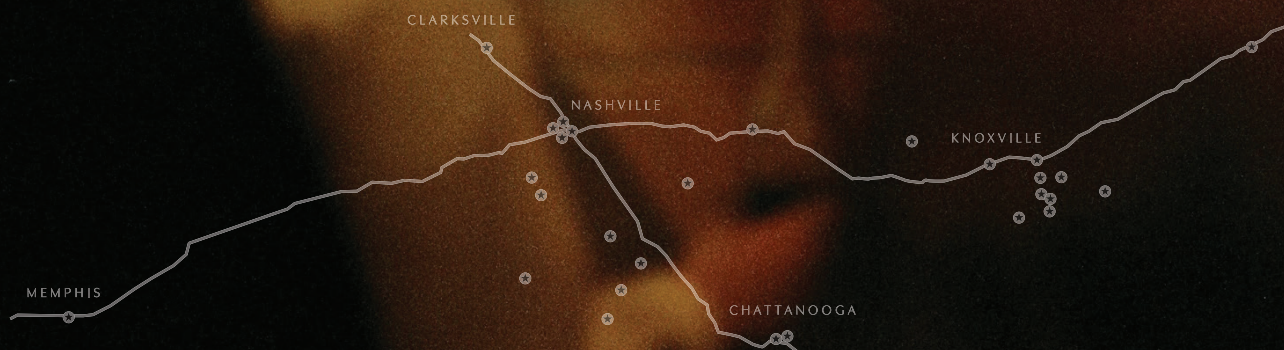
reasoned, why not barrel it and see what happens in time? And, time did its magic, turning that liquid into an important building block for subsequent releases. If the goal was to create a spice rack, which it was, the sour mashes became critical pieces of the whisky puzzle.

Two Brewers Yukon Single Malt Whisky is now up to Release 37. And, so far, results have been outstanding. Each release has medaled at the Canadian Whisky Awards. Normally 4 or 5 releases are done each year but, due to a couple of small single barrel releases in 2022, there were 7 releases entered. And, of the seven releases entered, seven gold medals were awarded. As well, one release (Release 33, a Classic style single cask whisky) was awarded the Canadian Single Malt Whisky of the Year, and the Single Cask Whisky of the Year. To top it off, Two Brewers Yukon Single Malt Whisky was named the Artisan Producer of the Year. ♦





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MAJOR JAMES GRANT  
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ESTD 1840

AGED 5 YEARS  
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RYUKYU WHISKY  
WHITE OAK VIRGIN CASK

WIN  
GLEN



# Whisky & Chocolate

A timeless (& delicious) union

By Melissa McKinney

Part of the fun of the modern whisky re-invention is that pairing food with our drams is becoming increasingly common. As this grows in popularity, we witness the simultaneous expansion of flavour and mastery.







flavour idea, a specific whisky to work with, a taste in the whisky where I find a particular note that presents itself, that I then explore further. Even tasting something that's not whisky or chocolate, but having a moment where a flavour peaks my curiosity and gets the best of me, can inspire me. I then share my ideas with Julie, who will usually say that they are becoming increasingly wild, complex, or that we are entering completely uncharted territory, yet again. This is then followed by Julie getting excited and totally on board for the idea, thus beginning her process of bringing the idea to life in chocolate form. She will experiment with ingredients with painstaking attention to detail in order

**W**hisky and chocolate have an organic connection, as both contain molecules such as acetylpyrrole, vanillin, tannins, and lactones. The alcohol enhances the aromatic molecules in the chocolate, and the fat in the chocolate tempers the alcohol, making it a naturally delicious combination.

Let me share with you a 'behind the scenes' look into the work and fun of creating these whisky and chocolate pairings. It began just over four years ago, a happenstance of chance. I had the pleasure of meeting Julie Briere, owner of Julie's Delights, and we have been creating whisky and chocolate pairings ever since. We've created over a hundred original combinations with many ideas still in the works. Julie has an extensive knowledge of all things chocolate, and this is showcased by her business continuing to grow and expand. This, combined with our trained palates, allows us to create combinations ranging from classic flavour profiles, to bold, and even the unusual.

The process that we have created between the two of us begins with me having a





to present the most flattering combinations. During this process, she tastes the whisky with the chocolate to be sure that she's on the right track. Once I receive the message that her creation is complete, the excitement is palpable. We get together as soon as possible to taste the pairing to see if any changes need to be made. This basically never happens, however, due to Julie's high standards. Finally, we are ready to share the brand new pairing with the world!

When we are drinking whisky, some common flavour notes are vanilla, caramel, salt/salinities, citrus, stone fruits, and varying elements of smoke & peat. To pair those flavours, sometimes we amplify the natural profile to elevate the entire pairing. For example, when pairing a mild Irish whiskey, we love to accentuate the flavour profile with a delicate cinnamon & vanilla piece, served alone or as a mousse in a milk chocolate shell. Alternatively, you can take a stronger tasting whisky such as a heavily peated Scotch, and pair it with a dark salted caramel or peppermint to bring the rich components of the whisky to meet these polarizing flavours, creating a thrilling tasting experience.

As whisky and chocolate pairings becomes increasingly popular, it's exciting to see how creative and innovative these pairings can get. This February, we had the pleasure of hosting the first Whisky & Chocolate class of 2023, where we explored some of our wildest concepts yet. We began with some of our more classic pairings, pairing Glen Grant 12 with an apple pie chocolate, which pulled out the naturally occurring baked green apple, nutmeg, cinnamon, and allspice notes in the whisky. The Armorik "Classic" French single malt was paired with a crème brûlée chocolate that was created delicately with a caramel chocolate ganache poured into a mini chocolate cup and topped with a glass-like sheet of salted caramel brittle. This gave it



a stunning silhouette and a multi-layered tasting experience.

Our two wildest chocolates were truly unique. One was a dark chocolate that had been smoked with wood from an Ardbeg cask, then paired with Two Brewers #30, a peated expression, resulting in a beautiful marriage of smoke and peat. Then, there was the ultimate challenge: using black koji that we had sourced directly from Japan via a local koji maker. We set to work figuring out how to use it. Using the traditional method of mixing 1:1 black

koji:water at 60 degrees for eight hours, it gave us a sweet drink that was then infused into a dark chocolate. Koji is a Japanese mould that is responsible for the flavors of miso, soy sauce, and sake. Combining these flavours with Kujira 5yo Ryukyo Japanese whisky, which is made from 100% Indica rice & fermented with black koji, was a huge task. The end result was a shocking new combination our palettes had not previously experienced. These innovative flavours combined beautifully and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.





# PEARSE

IRISH WHISKEY





To truly experience a whisky & chocolate pairing, we recommend following these steps:



- First, take a sip of the whisky, allow it to coat your mouth fully, then swallow.
- Then, take a small bite of chocolate, allowing it to mix with the residual whisky in your mouth.
- Explore the flavors you are finding individually.
- As they slowly meld together, take another sip of your whisky to really bring it all together. This is the moment you experience the full glory of the pairing.
- From here, it's a choose-your-own-adventure scenario: enjoy the pieces separately, or combine them some more.

Pairing classes that involve working with experts in their respective fields is incredibly fulfilling, and the feedback we receive only pushes us further. Moving forward, we plan to continue working on new combinations with new flavors. It's easy to see why this category has been expanding so wildly in the last 5-10 years, as it combines so many beautiful things we love! If you haven't tried pairing your whisky with chocolate yet, we hope this article gives you some guidance on where to start and some inspiration to give it a try. ♦





# Copper Funk Espresso Martini

*(A collaboration with House  
of Funk Coffee Roaster/  
Brewery)*

Full Recipe Page 63



Full Recipe Page 63



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# Hinch

## 12 Years Old

## Irish Whiskey

## Amarone

## Finish

By Blair Phillips

When homesick Irish expatriates put on their Sunday green best to gather on New York City streets on March 17, 1762, to march, sing and dance, little did they know this first NYC parade would become an iconic St. Patrick's Day tradition. A decade later, in Italy, the famous vineyards in Valpolicella watched the Boscaini family parade into the valley to harvest the first grapes to make into Masi Amarone wine. Amarone is notoriously tricky to make.

The process involves taking those harvested grapes and then allowing them to dry on bamboo racks for the winter months to intensify their rich flavours and tannins. All that concentrated flavour soaks into the oak casks through the ageing process waiting to be extracted.

Almost through a cosmic serendipitous coincidence, history has repeated itself at Ireland's Hinch Distillery, where they have taken an Irish whiskey that's been marching in ex-bourbon barrels for just over a decade, then aged it for an additional year in 500 litre Masi Amarone Casks.

The result is a 12-year-old whiskey worth its weight in green. The fruity and expressive nose is lush with dark plum, ripe cherry and cocoa-laced baking spices. Buttery toffee enhances a palate loaded with baked purple fruits, chocolate, oak tannins, more berries and impressive gritty, earthy accents. A balanced blast of spices and another round of fruit cap the finish. This Hinch expression has twelve years of swagger that deserves its own parade. ♦









A person wearing a blue button-down shirt is holding a clear glass filled with whisky, ice cubes, and a slice of orange. The glass sits on a rustic wooden surface. The background is softly blurred, showing the person's torso and arms.

# Starlight Distillery Launches in Canada

By Christian Huber

Starlight Distillery calls upon a foundation of family history to craft some of the finest American spirits. Seven generations of Hubers have sustainably operated the now 850-acre family-owned estate established in 1843 by German immigrant, Simon Huber—a farmer and winemaker—and have been producing exceptional agricultural products for over 180 years!



Founded in 2001, Starlight Distillery has quickly become known as one of the best craft distilleries in the nation. Seeing more than 300,000 visitors annually, Starlight Distillery pays tribute to its agricultural roots and focuses on providing a unique experience for all visitors seeking to better understand the grain-to-glass production methods utilized at the distillery. Founded upon an established agricultural farm, visitors of Starlight Distillery are encouraged to tour the grounds that have been cared for by previous generations of Hubers. The 7th generation Hubers carry on the traditions of sustainability and responsible agriculture that has paved the way for future generations.

Prioritizing quality and sustainability, everything from apples to grapes, to non-GMO heirloom corn varieties are grown on the estate, making Starlight Distillery the largest sustainable, award winning, farm to bottle distillery in Indiana. Starlight curates craft spirits that highlight the family's focus on sustainable local agriculture. Here at Starlight Distillery, we pay homage to all generations that have come before us through the production and blending of sustainable, craft, farm-to-bottle spirits.

"At Starlight, we are committed to crafting the best terroir driven spirits possible from local and estate grown sustainable grains." –Ted Huber (Owner and Master Distiller)

The name Starlight Distillery comes from the town of Starlight located in southern Indiana, which the distillery resides in. In addition, the majority of Starlight's agricultural ingredients are grown on the Huber estate or sourced from neighboring farms, and the distillery publicly shares yearly agricultural reports on yields and quality to underscore the transparency and sustainability of its distilling processes.



Distillation is performed by several Master Distillers, including Ted Huber and his two sons, Christian and Blake Huber, with each distiller utilizing their own favorite mash bills, yeast preferences, fermentation methods, and distillation techniques to create craft spirits which are then aged and meticulously blended by the entire team to create a consistent house style. Trust, passion, and expertise are paramount in operating a distillery with Starlight's approach, where fermentation, mash bill, and distillation methods are done by hand and by taste.

Pairing the expertise and personal preferences from each master distiller, at Starlight Distillery there is a still to accompany it. The spirits produced are specific to one of the two pot stills utilized here at the distillery.

Our original still is an 82-gallon German Christian Carl still. This still, the smaller of the two stills on property, is responsible for the launch of Starlight Distillery and the ports and brandies originally produced. This small but precise still allows for distillers to make the finest of cuts during the distillation process. These precise cuts create spirits with soft and elegant characteristics that

shine through in our hand-crafted ports and brandies.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Starlight Distillery's 500-gallon Vendome copper pot still. This still is responsible for the overall launch of the bourbon boom here at Starlight Distillery. This larger pot still allows for increased production of grain-based spirits that the smaller, original Christian Carl still was not capable of producing. The hand-crafted distillation method used on this still curates unique and one of its kind whiskeys that shine through in the end product produced from the barrels. As Master Distiller Blake Huber says, "Starlight Distillery prides itself on producing the best whiskey of each day."

Maturation takes place in the distillery's four aging warehouses high upon the Knobstone Escarpment, a limestone bluff 960-980 feet above sea level overlooking the Ohio River Valley. Just 20 short miles north of Louisville, Kentucky, the climate lends comparable maturation conditions, while the elevation and proximity to the river, results in rapid temperature and barometric pressure fluctuations ideal for barrel aging.

**"Sustainably Hand Crafted without Compromise" – Christian Huber (7th Generation, Master distiller)**







Blending starts in the distillery's four barrel warehouses, where the team at Starlight gathers hundreds of samples of different lots, mash bills, cooperages, and warehouses to masterfully blend their award-winning spirits! The goal is to create a whiskey better than the sum of its parts! Tasting and blending can take up to a few months before ever making a final decision.

"The process of blending at Starlight is science, sustainable agriculture, and art coming together to create an incredible

hand-crafted whiskey" -Blake Huber (7th Generation, Master Distiller)

As the bourbon and whiskey industry continues to boom and grow at unprecedented rates, the Huber family continues to focus on innovative approaches to drive the industry forward. Starlight Distillery sources new American oak barrels from ten different cooperages across the world – seven domestic cooperages, and three international cooperages. Pairing the varieties of barrels from all differing cooperages combined with the varying char and toast levels, these barrels deliver a unique and elevated experience for each barrel coming out of Starlight Distillery.

"The beauty and appeal of Starlight is that no two barrels are ever the same."  
-Andrew Jerdonek (Spirits Program Director)

Starting in 2018, Starlight Distillery opened the secondary finishing cask program, beginning with its authentic Huber Winery port wine barrels and Starlight Distillery's apple brandy barrels being used to secondarily age bourbon and rye whiskey.



Since implementing its barrel program, Starlight Distillery has become an industry leader in the secondary finishing cask market. In the last 4 years, Starlight has grown the barrel program portfolio to include over 30 differing finishing casks sourced from all around the world.

#### Mash Bills

3-Grain Mash Bill: 60% corn; 20% rye; and 20% malted barley.

4-Grain Mash Bill: 51% corn; 20% rye, 20% malted barley, and 9% wheat.

#### Old Rickhouse

Starlight Distillery's flagship OLD RICKHOUSE RYE WHISKEY, named after the old Rickhouses located high upon the Knobstone Escarpment in Starlight, Indiana, is a blend of our two signature rye mash bills. Beginning with sweet mash fermentation and distilled in our copper pot stills, this straight small batch rye whiskey is aged in new American Oak barrels for a minimum of 4 years, then blended and bottled at 92-proof.

The result is a sustainably crafted small batch rye whiskey displaying distinctive hints of sweet caramel and vanilla. The prominent characteristics of rye exhibit classic spice notes which shine through, making for a long smooth finish.

#### MASH BILLS

Rye Mash Bill 1: 80% rye & 20% malted barley

Rye Mash Bill 2: 90% rye & 10% malted barley ♦





We're excited about 2023:

- new whiskies from around the world
- bigger & better venue
- more masterclasses

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Patrick van Zuidam, Master Distiller &  
Managing Director, Zuidam Distillers

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# Whisky

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## Test Your Whisky Wisdom

### Answers

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**Lisa Wicker, CEO/Master Distiller of Lyons Brewing & Distilling Co. with Lexington Brewing & Distilling in Lexington, Kentucky, Pearse Lyons Distillery at St. James Church in Dublin, Ireland and Dueling Barrel Brewery & Distillery in Pikeville, Kentucky.**

Question One -

Our Town Branch Distillery located across the street from our Lexington Brewing Co. was the first new distillery to be built in Lexington, Kentucky in more than 100 years making us the seventh official stop on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. What year did Town Branch Distillery join the iconic Kentucky Bourbon Trail?

Answer One -

It was late September 2012.

Question Two-

The Pearse Lyons Distillery is located in Dublin's historic Liberties. Here we create our award winning, small batch Irish Whiskey in a restored 18th Century Church. The former Church of St. James, now a distillery, is a home worthy of the spirit it embodies. Where were our copper pot stills made?

Answer Two-

Vendome Copper & Brass Works  
Louisville, Kentucky.

**Sarah Kennedy  
McConnell's Irish  
Whisky Brand Manager**

Question One-

In May 2022, McConnell's added to their product range with the introduction of the McConnell's Sherry Cask finish. What type of Sherry Cask was used in the finishing of the whiskey?

Answer One-

Spanish Oloroso Sherry Butts

Question Two-

2023 is an exciting year for McConnell's Irish Whisky with the anticipation of the opening of our new Distillery and Visitor Experience. With that, comes the appointment of our Master Distiller. What is the full name of the McConnell's Irish Whisky Master Distiller?

Answer Two-

Graeme Millar.

**Jenna Diubaldo  
Distiller, Blender & Partner  
Sons of Vancouver Distillery**

Question One-

Sons of Vancouver just won 'Canadian Whisky of the Year' at the 2023 Canadian Whisky Awards for their Caribbean-cask rye, aptly named what?

Answer One-

'Palm Trees and a Tropical Breeze.'

Question Two-

In order to be called 'Canadian Whisky,' how long does Sons of Vancouver have to age their rye?

Answer Two-

Three years.

**Don Livermore  
Master Blender**

Question One-

What is the difference, or is there a difference, between a barrel and a cask?

Answer One-

All wood containers are casks, but not all wood containers are barrels. A barrel refers to a specific size of container typically used for bourbon production. A barrel is 200 L or 53 US gallons. There are other types of casks that are used in whisk(e)y production such as quarter casks (125 L), barrique (225 L), hogshead (250 L), puncheon or butt (500 L), port pipe 550 L, and drum (650 L).

Question Two-

Why is copper used during distillation?

Answer Two-

Copper is necessary for the removal of sulfur components. Sulfur is not a desirable character in beer, wine, or spirits. It can come in many forms and could contribute a garlic, burnt match, rotten egg, or vegetable characteristic to alcoholic beverages. Sulfur can come from a number of sources including the grain or raw materials, it can be formed during the malting process, or produced by yeast in fermentation. Brewers and wine makers will optimize all the conditions in the process, or demand good quality raw materials to minimize the sulfur content. Distillers have the luxury of using copper in the distillation equipment to remove sulfur. Copper has the unique ability to combine with sulfur during the vapour phase in distillation to form a salt called copper sulfate. This typically forms at the top of the distillation unit. After many hours of use, the distiller will open up the equipment and wash or physically remove the salt to keep a fresh, clean surface. The copper contact is important for the production of good quality spirits – whether it is whisky, brandy, or vodka.





## Copper Funk Espresso Martini

(A collaboration with House of Funk Coffee Roaster/Brewery)

1.5 oz Gin 005  
1/2 oz Crème de Cacao  
1 oz Kahlua  
2 oz House of Funk Espresso Coffee Concentrate

Combine all ingredients into a shaker FULL of ice.  
Vigorously shake and double strain into a martini glass.  
Garnish with three espresso beans.  
Enjoy.

## Signature French 75

Social Project Gin 005  
1.5 oz  
Rose Prosecco 3 oz  
Simple Syrup 0.25 oz  
Lemon Juice 0.75 oz

Combine Gin 005, Simple Syrup and Lemon into a shaker with ice.  
Shake and then double strain into a coup and top with prosecco.  
Garnish with Rosebud or flower.  
Enjoy.

## Social Negroni

1.5 oz Social Project 005 Gin  
1 oz Martini Rosso  
0.75 oz Campari

Put all ingredients into a glass of ice and stir for 30 seconds.  
Strain and pour over giant cube and garnish with orange twist.  
Enjoy. ♦





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