

SCOTCH BLUE

Owner: Lotte Chilsung

Lotte Chilsung, part of the Lotte Group leisure and retail company—South Korea's fifth-biggest conglomerate—owns the Scotch Blue brand, which has grown very rapidly from its launch some 10 years ago.

It now records sales of more than 500,000 cases, based on spirit supplied by Burn Stewart Distillers. This is not a “value” brand and, indeed, in 2001 Burn Stewart's supply deal was challenged by Allied Domecq, who saw Scotch Blue threatening their Ballantine's brand and raised an action for “passing off” (copying the blend).

This failed to dent the brand's progress and in June 2007 *The Korea Times* reported that “Scotch Blue is no longer limited to the domestic boundaries, but is being exported to Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, and other Asian countries where its popularity is growing.”

The line includes Scotch Blue (with non-age, 17, and 21-year-old variations), Scotch Blue International, and New Scotch Blue Special.

RABBIE BURNS

Dedicated to Scotland's national bard, and particularly enjoyable on January 25, celebrated the world over as Burns' Night—the anniversary of the great man's birthday.

Ingredients:

1 Measure (25 ml) of blended Scotch Whisky
1 Measure (25 ml) Noilly Prat dry vermouth
Dash of Benedictine

Method:

Shake all the ingredients well with cracked ice until a froth forms, then strain into a chilled glass. Finish with a twist of lemon peel.



SCOTTISH LEADER

Owner: Burn Stewart Distillers

This is the flagship blend of Glasgow-based Burn Stewart Distillers, which in turn is part of CL World Brands, an offshoot of CL Financial of Trinidad—thus are the tentacles of the global drinks industry spread far and wide.

The blend's heart is single malt from Perthshire's Deanston Distillery, which was formerly a cotton mill.

Initially targeted at the value-conscious supermarket buyer, Scottish Leader has recently been repackaged and shows signs of an attempted move toward a more upmarket territory. The range of Scottish Leader expressions includes two blended (vatted) malts.

SCOTTISH LEADER

40% ABV • The nose shows hints of peat, while on the palate the whisky is sweetish, with

The stills at Deanston provide the “honeyed” malt at the heart of the Scottish Leader blend.

honey notes in the Perthshire style. The peat smoke returns in the finish.

SIR EDWARD'S

Owner: Bardinet

A competitively priced “secondary” (low price) brand, Sir Edward's is unknown in the UK but popular nevertheless, especially in France, where it is the 10th best-selling brand. Industry statistics show that sales of Sir Edward's passed the one million case mark in 2005. The whisky is provided by Leith Distillers, a subsidiary of Whyte & Mackay, and supplied to the brand owner Bardinet, of Bordeaux, where it is bottled. There never was a “Sir Edward.” Apparently, the late Paul Bardinet, who started the company at the end of the 19th century,



Scottish Leader



Longmorn Distillery supplies one of the distinguished malts in the Something Special blend.

named his imported brand of whisky after his son, Edward. He then added the “Sir” to make it sound more authentic and aristocratic.

Sir Edward’s is sold as a non-age bottling and a 12-year-old version.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

Owner: Chivas Bros.

Under this bold name, Something Special is a leading deluxe Scotch blended whisky in South America, and is particularly popular in Venezuela and Colombia.



Something Special

First introduced in 1912 by Hill Thompson and Co. using casks specially selected by the directors themselves, the Something Special brand is today owned by Pernod Ricard’s whisky subsidiary Chivas Brothers.

As befits its premium positioning, the whisky is presented in a distinctive, diamond-shaped bottle, apparently the inspiration of an Edinburgh diamond cutter.

■ SOMETHING SPECIAL 40% ABV

A distinctive blend of dry, fruity, and spicy flavors, with

a subtle smoky sweetness. The highly regarded Longmorn malt is at the heart of the blend.

ROB ROY

Modeled on the Manhattan (see p198), the warm red color of this cocktail reminds us of the legendary Rob Roy McGregor, outlaw, folk hero, and Scotland’s own Robin Hood.

Ingredients:

1 measure (25 ml) of blended Scotch Whisky
 ½ measure (about 10 ml) of Noilly Prat sweet vermouth
 Dash Angostura bitters

Method:

Mix all the ingredients over ice. Stir and strain into a chilled glass. Finish with a twist of lemon peel.

■ SOMETHING SPECIAL 15 40% ABV

This is a blend made with up to 35 of the better Speyside and Islay malt whiskies, and soft grain whiskies, aged in a mixture of European and American oak casks. So while it retains the distinctive style of Something Special, the 15-year-old expression is of greater intensity, complexity of character, and depth of flavor.

Whisky from Islay’s distilleries is used sparingly in blends to impart depth and smokiness.



STEWART'S CREAM OF THE BARLEY

Owner: Chivas Brothers

First produced in the early 1830s by Alexander Stewart at Dundee's Glengarry Inn, Cream of the Barley quickly attained considerable popularity in Scotland.

By 1969 it was owned by Allied Lyons and enjoyed good distribution in their chain of public houses. The blend was also closely associated with Glencadam Distillery in Brechin, the sole remaining distillery in Angus. However, in total, the blend contains around 50 malts. It is now owned by Chivas Brothers (part of the Pernod Ricard stable) and is a top-selling blended Scotch whisky in Ireland.

TEACHER'S

Owner: Fortune Brands

The Teacher's firm was established in 1830, when William Teacher opened a grocery shop in Piccadilly Street, Glasgow. Like other whisky entrepreneurs, such as John Walker of Kilmarnock, William soon branched out into the spirits

trade and began to develop his business. It became famous for its dram shops—so stern and austere in character that the licensing magistrates congratulated the firm on its work in temperance reform! There was absolutely no danger of adulterated whisky in a Teacher's establishment, even if laughter and general merriment were in short supply.

William Teacher died in 1876 and control of the firm passed to his sons William and Adam. Blending became increasingly important to the firm, and 1884 saw an event of great future significance: the trademark registration of Teacher's Highland Cream.

Originally beginning as "a very small item," Highland Cream came to dominate the firm to such an extent that business and brand became inextricably linked.

As with many independent Scottish companies, Teacher's found it hard to resist offers of outside capital. Under the sustained

pressures of World War II, death duties, high taxation, and the need for continual investment and modernization, many families threw in the towel.

Teacher's was fortunate. It survived on its own until 1976, then its owners shrewdly negotiated a deal with Allied Brewers, instead of waiting for the inevitable hostile takeover. By doing so, the family held on to an important role, even if ownership passed out of their hands. Allied Brewers, along with the rest of the brewing industry, had its own set of challenges and pressures, and it wasn't long before Allied Brewers

evolved into Allied Lyons and then Allied Domecq. That firm was acquired by Pernod Ricard in 2005, then sold, along with Laphroaig and various other wine and spirit brands, to Fortune Brands of the US for a reported \$6 billion.

Ardmore Distillery is one of the essential, characterful malts in the Teacher's blend.



**Teacher's
Highland Cream**





At its mid-20th-century peak, Vat 69 made it into the world's top 10 best-selling whiskies.

TEACHER'S HOUSE STYLE

From its earliest days, Teacher's has always been a full-flavored blend, strongly built on the company's characterful single malts from Glendronach and, more particularly, Ardmore. In fact, more than 35 single whiskies go into the Highland Cream blend to this day—an individual whisky, with a silky texture and quite a quick finish that leaves the palate refreshed.

VAT 69

Owner: Diageo

Though this blend is still selling more than one million cases annually in places such as Venezuela, Spain, and Australia, it might not be entirely unreasonable to suggest that the glory days of VAT 69 are behind it.

Once this was the flagship of the independent South Queensferry blenders William Sanderson & Co.

and the name came from the fact that vat number 69 was the finest of 100 possible blends tested by Sanderson on trade colleagues. Accordingly, Sanderson launched his whisky as VAT 69 in 1882.

At its peak, VAT 69 was the 10th best-selling whisky in the world and even starred in an early example of product placement. In the 1959 film *Our Man in Havana*, one of James Wormold's agents is found dead with a bottle of Vat 69 clutched in his hand.

Today its owners, Diageo, give global precedence to the Johnnie Walker and J&B brands.

WHITE HORSE

Owner: Diageo

White Horse is named after one of Edinburgh's famous coaching inns, The White Horse Cellar Inn, place of embarkation for the eight-day coach trip to London. Once selling around two million cases annually and holding a position as one of the 10 best-selling Scotch

whiskies in the world, White Horse has slipped down the global sales league table. Despite this, it remains a significant brand in its areas of strength, especially Japan, Brazil, Greece, Africa, and parts of the US, and the blend is still marketed in more than 100 countries.

Its heyday came under the ownership and direction of Peter Mackie, who, from 1890, was one of the most famous characters in the whisky trade. He took over the family business from his

SHACKLETON'S THIRST

Sir Ernest Shackleton took along with him on his 1907 Antarctic Expedition bottles of Whyte & Mackay, which turned up 100 years later encased in polar ice. For his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914, however, he took supplies of VAT 69, stating that it would be used "for medicinal emergencies and for feast days in the Antarctic." This evidently was his more favored dram for boosting morale, as Shackleton opted for further supplies of VAT 69 on his 1921 expedition.



VAT 69

FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Today you can buy a bottle of Usher's Green Stripe in the US for \$12.99. The brand, now controlled by Diageo, is among the lowest priced Scotch whiskies available, yet, despite such aggressive pricing, volumes have fallen steadily for the last 10 years. It is perhaps doubtful that today's Usher's drinker either knows or cares that this was once one of the foremost companies in Scotch whisky, and arguably the father of blending.

With a family business established in Edinburgh in 1813, the Ushers established themselves as successful agents. By 1840 it was noted that



Usher's
Green Stripe

“Messrs Usher controlled the whole output of the famous Glenlivet Distillery.”

Andrew Usher II was a blending pioneer, having learned the necessary skills from his mother, as was the family tradition. Usher's Old Vatted Glenlivet is recognized as the first modern blended whisky. Such was the firm's success that by the late 19th century the Ushers were established as generous philanthropists.

The firm joined the Distillers Company (DCL) in 1919 and the Usher's brand slowly faded, eventually reduced to the indignity of bulk export for local bottling and today's bottom shelf discount offers.

Glenlivet was where blending started, in a sense, with Usher's Old Vatted Glenlivet, introduced in 1853.



uncle and soon made an impression on all who met him. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart famously described him as “one-third genius, one-third megalomaniac and one-third eccentric.” Mackie's nickname was “Restless Peter,” and his favorite aphorism, “Nothing is impossible.”



The art of blending may be about balancing flavors, but it is also vital to know the value of whiskies and understand potential markets.

The firm's reputation rested on the quality of its blending, and Mackie shrewdly commissioned the noted journalist and whisky authority Alfred Barnard (*see p.50*) to write for them the handsome pamphlet entitled, “How to Blend Scotch Whisky.”

■ **WHITE HORSE** 40% ABV

A complex and satisfying blend, White Horse retains the robust flavor of Lagavulin, assisted by renowned Speysiders such as Aultmore. With its long finish, this is an elegant and stylish whisky.

WHYTE & MACKAY

Owner: Whyte & Mackay

Whyte & Mackay traces its history back to 1844, when it was founded by James Whyte and Charles Mackay. By the late 19th century they had begun blending and had launched the company's flagship “Special” brand,

which has been a long-standing Scottish favorite.

Having been through a bewildering number of owners in recent years, this venerable Glasgow company was acquired in May 2007 by the Indian conglomerate UB Group for over \$1 billion. Plans to expand capacity at Invergordon, Whyte & Mackay's grain whisky distillery, have already been announced, so blending will presumably be of increased future importance.

Today the firm offers a range of expressions: the Special—ironically a standard blend—and five other blends aged at 13, 19, 22, 30, and 40 years. Though the more cynical drinker might view the unusual age statements as being driven by the need to stand out on the shop shelf, the company claim “the extra year gives the whisky a chance to marry for a longer period, giving it a distinct graceful smoothness.”

Certainly, Whyte & Mackay's master blender Richard Paterson, who joined the firm in 1970, is very highly regarded in the industry and has received a large number of awards and citations. He created the "new" 40-year-old blend, which enjoys a very high malt content—70 percent malt to 30 percent grain—but is available only in limited quantities.

The main market for Whyte & Mackay has historically been the UK, though the older styles, especially the 13-year-old, are popular in Spain, France, and Scandinavia. This may well change under the new ownership, however, with Asian sales likely to grow rapidly thanks to the India-based UB Group.

THE WHYTE & MACKAY STYLE

The "backbone" of the company's blends emanates from Speyside and the Highlands, though small quantities from Islay, Campbeltown, and the Lowlands are also used. For many years, Jura produced whisky in a "Speyside" style,



Whyte & Mackay
Special

and the vast majority of the distillery's output was reserved for blending. In recent years, however, Jura's eponymous single malt has enjoyed growing sales in its own right.

Great stress is laid on marrying the blend at Whyte & Mackay, and the company has long been an adherent to the time-consuming process in which first the malts are married, before combining with the grain whisky and marrying again in sherry butts. The resulting blends, it must be said, are noticeably smooth and well-balanced.

WILLIAM LAWSON'S

Owner: John Dewar & Son (Bacardi)

The William Lawson's range of whiskies is blended and bottled in Coatbridge and Glasgow by John Dewar & Sons (see p130), and is thus ultimately owned by Bacardi. However, the brand can be traced back to 1849, when it

was blended in Liverpool by William Lawson; the trademark was registered in 1889. After various changes in ownership, the name ended up with the Italian vermouth producers Martini & Rossi, through their purchase of the MacDuff Distillery (home of the Glen Deveron single malt).

This distillery had been constructed in 1960 by a consortium of whisky blenders to a design by the innovative Welsh distillery architect William Delmé-Evans (who also designed Glenallachie, Isle of Jura, and Tullibardine distilleries). The original partners sold the business, which was eventually bought in 1972 by Martini, who expanded the distillery. Bacardi then acquired Martini & Rossi in late 1992.

Though not available in the UK, the various William Lawson's expressions sell well over one million cases annually and are extremely popular in France, where they are positioned at the top end of the "value" market. Belgium, Spain, and

Whyte & Mackay, now part of the mighty UB Group, still has its offices in Glasgow, where the firm began.





Alcohol levels in maturing spirit are regularly checked, and whisky usually diluted prior to bottling – blends typically down to 40% ABV.

Venezuela are also significant markets for Lawson's.

In recent years, the brand has been noted for its stylish and witty TV advertising, featuring an iconoclastic approach to the kilt in some unusual settings.

The range comprises William Lawson's Finest, which is the standard style; a 12-year-old Scottish Gold; and two premium styles. Of the premium blends, Founder's Reserve is an 18-year-old blend, first created in 2000, and Private Reserve is a limited edition 21-year-old, which launched in 2004.

Spanish sherry and American bourbon oak casks are used for maturing the whisky, with Glen Deveron Single Malt employing the highest percentage of sherry wood of any whisky in the Dewar's group. This contributes to its full flavor and rich color.



Windsor 17
Super Premium

WILLIAM LAWSON'S FINEST

40% ABV • With its heart of Glen Deveron Single Malt, William Lawson's Finest blended Scotch whisky is distinguished by a satisfyingly well-balanced palate, with hints of a crisp toffee apple flavor. Its body is medium to full and the finish slightly dry, with oak notes.

WINDSOR

Owner: Diageo

This premium brand of Scotch whisky, marketed by Diageo in South Korea, is not to be confused with its Canadian namesake

(see p221), a low-price offering, or even the company's own barely visible Windsor Castle blend. Launched in 1996, Windsor is a serious player in South Korea, one of the world's largest whisky markets.

Gratifyingly, premium whisky brands account for 72 percent of sales there, while super and ultra premium whisky brands take up

some 26 percent. Indeed, standard and low-price brands are virtually unknown.

Moreover, the South Korean market has been growing fast, and—though not without some alarms. Diageo faced its own problems in 2007, when Korea's tax authorities found it dealing with unlicensed wholesalers.

Assuming these local difficulties can be ironed out,

Diageo's Windsor looks set for further growth. Already it is claimed to be the largest selling super premium Scotch whisky in the world, and accordingly has its own unique bottle shapes.

In keeping with the premium standards of this status-driven market, there are two expressions: a 12-year-old blend and a 17-year-old super premium. Windsor 17 features a luminous label to make it stand out in dimly lit clubs.



Windsor 12
Premium

WHISKY LIQUEURS

A liqueur is a sweetened product, in which additional flavors of spices, flowers, fruits, seeds, or roots are introduced to the spirit base through redistillation, infusion, or maceration. Today, whisky liqueurs are a distinct category, albeit dominated by one brand—Drambuie.

Whisky liqueurs have a long historical tradition. *The Practical Distiller* of 1718 includes several recipes for making them, including one for “Fine Usquebaugh,” which required the addition of spices, raisins, dates, a quantity of Lisbon sugar, and other ingredients to rectified malt spirits.

This may have had much to do with the low quality of the spirit base, but here, in the early 18th century, we see the antecedents of today’s whisky liqueur.

Drambuie is produced today by an independent company controlled by the descendants of Captain John MacKinnon. It was to MacKinnon that Prince Charles Edward Stuart (“Bonnie Prince Charlie”) reputedly entrusted the secret recipe of his own personal liqueur in recognition of the captain’s loyalty. Even today, the recipe is known only to the MacKinnon family, and responsibility for the elixir



Drambuie

that flavors Drambuie’s whisky base lies in the hands of the senior female representative of the line.

Other brands compete for this market, which stretches worldwide. They include: Glayva, from Whyte & Mackay; Columba Cream (a cream-based whisky liqueur in the style of Bailey’s); Amber, from Macallan; and a number of liqueurs based exclusively on the whisky from specific

distilleries, such as Arran, Edradour, Glenturret, Old Pulteney, and Glenfiddich Liqueurs.

An interesting recent development is the introduction of Orangerie from Compass Box. Described as a “whisky infusion,” this is not strictly a liqueur, as it is unsweetened, but it represents an exciting contemporary spin on a time-honored tradition.

Edradour Distillery produces its own cream liqueur—a combination of Edradour single malt whisky and Scottish cream.



SHMILLS' D



IRELAND

Sitting, as it does, in the warm damp gulf stream on the very edge of western Europe, it is perhaps not surprising that the story of Irish whiskey is something of a misty and romantic tale. It is also an astonishing and frustrating one.

To begin with, there are the enigmatic monks—the healers of western Europe who are thought to have brought distilling to Ireland in the wake of the Black Death in the 14th century. They effectively policed the production of *uisce beatha* until the Reformation, some 200 years later. With the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the mid-16th century, distilling spread into communities as a cottage industry. However, this all changed with the arrival of English law, set up at the beginning of the 17th century to exact taxation from distilling. In response, much distilling went underground, resulting in two national drinks, duty paid whiskey and illegal poteen.

Duty paid, or Parliament, whiskey (always spelled with an “e” in Ireland) went on to dominate the British Empire, as it was the Irish and not the Scots who were first to turn distilling into a global business. The golden age of Irish whiskey dawned early in the 19th century, and most of Ireland’s most famous brands—Jameson, Powers, and Bushmills—date from this period. The Irish anticipated the needs of the mass market, creating

a product that was consistent in terms of both quality and availability. Today, we’re used to branded drinks tasting identical wherever in the world you buy them, but in the 19th century this notion of sameness was revolutionary.

However, Irish whiskey was labour intensive and expensive to produce. Pot stills were, and still are, slow and terribly inefficient. Each load is produced singly, batch by batch, and, between each run, the stills have to be cooled and cleaned.

CONTINUOUS DISTILLATION

The holy grail of distilling was a system that allowed continuous distillation—this was the way to raise the economics of scale, and so increase both productivity and profits. The goal was achieved by an Irishman, Aeneas Coffey (*see p172*), and his Patent Still changed distilling forever.

Some Irish distilleries, especially in Belfast, did install Coffey’s still, but as far as the major Dublin distillers were concerned, the problem with “Coffey’s Patent Continuous Distilling Apparatus,” as they referred to it, was that it didn’t produce what they considered to be whiskey. “These things,” they wrote in a circular, “no more yield whiskey than they yield wine or beer.” The Dublin whiskey hierarchy was famous for its flavorsome, “oily” pot still whiskey. It was

Old Bushmills in County Antrim is Ireland’s oldest surviving distillery, producing its own single malts as well as whiskey for many well-known blends.

the way things were done, and they weren't for changing.

The Scots and English, though, had nothing to lose by adopting the Coffey still. Although expensive to commission, they could produce in a week what a traditional pot still could make in nine months.

The Irish had taken their eye off the ball, so it's doubtful that anyone in Dublin made a fuss when changes to the law in the mid-19th century allowed whiskey to be stored and blended prior to the point of taxation, which was now only on shipment. This subtle change meant that merchants were free to buy, blend, and bottle their own whiskeys without having to pay tax up front. Silent spirit could now be blended with some very individual highland malt to produce a new kind of whiskey. The quality of these Scottish blends was consistent, but unlike Irish whiskey, they were easy to make and cheap to produce. The names Johnnie Walker and Tommy Dewar are still with us, but they were not distillers—they were blenders and bottlers, and they went on to become whiskey barons.

TROUBLED TIMES

The dawn of the 20th century brought little comfort for the Irish. After a long court battle, Blended Scotch was allowed to be called whiskey. Then, the whole

IRELAND'S DISTILLERIES



nation was thrown into turmoil as Ireland firstly entered into a war of independence with the British, then embarked on a bitter civil war. By 1922 it was a divided country. In the south, the Irish Free State was founded, while six of Ireland's Ulster counties remained part of the UK. American Prohibition and an economic war with Britain hit the distillers hard: almost

overnight their two largest export markets dried up. To make things worse, the newly free Catholic Ireland reignedited the church dominated temperance movement, and the distillers found they had very few friends in government.

ACROSS THE DIVIDE

By the mid 1960s, there were just two distilleries left, one either side of a bitterly sectarian border. From that nadir, however, the present state of the whiskey industry looks more promising. It centers on three distilleries: Midleton, Bushmills, and Cooley—the new addition to the two left standing in the 1960s. These three distilleries produce all of the brands and bottlings of Irish whiskey, from popular blends to single malts and the last two remaining pure pot still Irish whiskeys.

Bushmills is Ireland's oldest distillery, and its roots can be traced back to the whiskey industry's beginnings in the 1600s.



DISTILLERIES, MALTS, POT STILL

Ireland's distilleries, though now few and far between, maintain a strong tradition of producing unique, world-class malt and pure pot still whiskies. Ireland's blends are covered on pages 169–77.

BUSHMILLS

2 Distillery Road, Bushmills, County Antrim

www.bushmills.com

Open to visitors

Of the 28 Irish distilleries recorded by the Victorian writer Alfred Barnard (see p50) in his guide to the distilleries of the United Kingdom, Bushmills is the only one where whiskey is still made. Kilbeggan and the Old Midleton distilleries now house museums; only at Old Bushmills will you find pot stills that still feel the heat of action.

For a distillery with such a long history, it is not surprising that Old Bushmills has survived by changing with the times. At one point, like just about every other distillery in Ireland, it produced pot still whiskey. But with the rise in popularity of Scotch single malts, like its near neighbors across the narrow strip of the Irish Sea, Bushmills went on to produce a peated malt. Today the distillery's malts are unpeated, and Bushmills is the only distillery in Ireland whose output is purely single malt whiskey—its blends (see p169) use grain whiskey bought in from Midleton Distillery. **BUSHMILLS MALT 10** 40% ABV • This is triple distilled and peat free, and, given how familiar its square bottles have become, it is hard to believe that this single malt was first bottled as recently as 1987.



Bushmills Malt 16

☞ An elegant and tasty dram, quite unlike anything else produced in Ireland—or Scotland for that matter. Malty, with a hint of nutty fudge—warms nicely on the way down.

BUSHMILLS MALT 12

DISTILLERY RESERVE

40% ABV • The 12-year-old reserve is a small but significant malt that can only be bought from the distillery shop.

☞ Sweet and figgy, with the signature Bushmills biscuitiness in evidence. Round, dry fruits, and a touch of liquorice.

BUSHMILLS MALT 16

40% ABV Slightly older bourbon and sherry-wood matured single malt whiskies are vatted and aged for a further year in port pipes, resulting in an exceptional 16-year-old malt.

☞ The color—amber shot through with ruby—is a dead giveaway to the two-fold maturation process. An intense fusion of citrus and chocolate make this a most extraordinarily flavorful malt.

BUSHMILLS MALT 21 MADEIRA FINISH

40% ABV The oldest Bushmills expression is a 21-year-old malt. Due to Ireland's mild climate, a 21-year-old Irish malt can be far more fragile than a similar aged Scotch, and here Bushmills have put an already old whiskey into Madeira wood for a further two to three years. Launched in 2001, this takes maturation to a new level.



Clontarf Single Malt

☞ This is Christmas cake and waves of butter, nuts, and dried fruit. A seriously long finish.

CLONTARF SINGLE MALT

Distillery: Midleton

www.clontarfwhiskey.com

Clontarf is a brand that started life with a unique selling point: after maturation, it was charcoal mellowed. This rather overpowered the original Cooley malt, and the current

Bushmills whiskey doesn't fare any better.

☞ CLONTARF SINGLE MALT 40% ABV

An incredibly sweet drink, which overwhelms whatever else the whiskey may have to offer; hard to see what the charcoal mellowing achieves.

IRISH COFFEE

Ingredients: Half a cup of good quality coffee
1 measure (25 ml) of Irish whiskey
2 spoonfuls of brown sugar
1 tbs (20 ml) of freshly whipped cream

Method: Pour the shot of whiskey into a warmed stemmed glass. Pour in the coffee up to within ½ in (15 mm) of the top. Put in the sugar and stir until it is dissolved. Place the spoon onto the rim of the glass, face up, ensuring that the curved part of the spoon is just touching the coffee. Pour the cream onto the spoon; it will flow over the edge and rest on the coffee.

THE BUSHMILLS STORY

The north Antrim coast is home to the spectacular Giants Causeway, a naturally occurring phenomenon of mostly six-sided basalt columns. But inland just a couple of miles, is something that is arguably even more famous: the Old Bushmills Distillery.

The present distillery, with its Scottish style “pagoda” roof, dates from the late 19th century, but distilling here goes back to the very beginning of English law in Ireland at the start of the 17th century. Up until this time, Gaelic, or Brehon law, had allowed anyone to

freely distil. One of the first things the new English Governor of Ulster did, however, was to introduce taxation on distilling, thereby creating a divide between legal, duty paid whiskey and illegal poteen. From 1608, anyone distilling “within the county of Colrane” had to pay Sir Thomas Phillips a royalty—indeed, that’s where the term “royalty” comes from. For Phillips, it amounted to a license to print money.

There’s no record of how the locals reacted to the new state of affairs—but we can guess. This had always been whiskey country, and it remained a hot

Old Bushmills Distillery produces only single malt, and for its blends uses grain whiskey brought in from elsewhere.



**Old Bushmills’
Cooperidge**

bed of illegal distilling. By the 19th century, the Irish whiskey industry had greatly expanded, but little changed at Bushmills. The distillery continued distilling only malt whiskey, most of which was drunk locally. Ironically, that’s what ensured Bushmills’ survival.

It was small enough to weather the storm that brought the major Dublin and Belfast distilleries to their knees.


It was 1964 before Old Bushmills passed out of family ownership, when it was sold to the English brewers Charrington. However, distilling was of secondary importance to the beer giant, and in the 1970s, Bushmills was first bought by Seagram of Montreal before becoming a subsidiary of the Irish Distillers Group (IDG).

For a generation that’s how things remained. Bushmills’ fine whiskies won plenty of accolades, but, as part of IDG, they were always in the shadow of the Jameson brand. All that changed, however, with Bushmills coming into the hands of Diageo in 2006.



CONNEMARA MALTS

Distillery: Cooley

 www.connemarawhiskey.com

Of all Cooley's whiskies, this is the one that caused the biggest stir in Ireland's whiskey industry. It seemed to contradict everything that the Irish whiskey sector held sacrosanct. Bad enough that it wasn't triple distilled in the traditional manner; even worse ... it was peated.

Connemara takes its name from Ireland's western seaboard, and although it owes a lot more to Islay than to Galway, it would be wrong to think of it as "Highland light." Connemara is a more earthy malt than you'll find in Scotland, and, being warehoused in Kilbeggan—which is about as far from the sea as it's possible to get in Ireland—there's no salt or iodine. Connemara, then, is a breed unto itself—a unique whiskey that allows us to taste age-old flavors of a peated Irish malt whiskey.


As well as the standard single malt, there is a 12-year-old. This is Cooley's oldest and rarest malt simply because the distillery was mothballed between 1993 and 1995. Until stocks catch up with demand, a limited amount of casks can be released. In addition,




Connemara
Cask Strength





Connemara also produce a cask strength monster. It is non chill-filtered, allowing this excellent whiskey to really strut its stuff on your taste buds. One for purists.

 **CONNEMARA SINGLE MALT**
40% ABV • A sweet whiskey, with a gentle, peaty heart and loads of malty character.

 **CONNEMARA CASK STRENGTH**
Minty, smoky, and much oilier and mouth-coating than the original version. There's a soft chocolate finish and a distant rumble of turf embers.

COOLEY

 Riverstown, Cooley, County Louth
 www.cooleywhiskey.com

John Teeling knew a lot about business but little of the world of whiskey when he founded Cooley Distillery in 1987 on the site of a disused industrial alcohol producing plant. At the time, the French drinks company Pernod Richard had recently bought Irish Distillers, and Teeling knew that the French would seek to capitalize on their monopoly by pushing the Jameson brand globally. Irish whiskey then counted for 10 percent of world sales, and Teeling saw an opportunity to succeed with the Cooley Distillery if he could just get a fraction of the Irish whiskey market.

Teeling did his homework. Whiskey needs heritage, so he bought up some old brands, such as Locke's and Tyrconnell, providing his

The Locke Distillery warehouses have been put to good use, maturing Cooley's whiskey.

new whiskey with instant provenance. Better still, he leased the silent Locke's Distillery at Kilbeggan to mature his whiskey.

Having weathered some tumultuous corporate storms (see p164), Cooley now produces whiskey for Connemara, as well as Greenore, Locke's, Michael Collins, and Tyrconnell malt brands (see pp165–68).


The original plant on the Cooley peninsula was joined in 2007 by a microdistillery in the old Locke's Distillery in Kilbeggan (see p165).

DUNGOURNEY 1964

Distillery: Midleton

In 1994 Midleton's master distiller Barry Crockett made a once in a lifetime discovery. In a dusty corner of warehouse No. 11, he found an old cask that was not on any stock chart. It turned out to be 30 years old and had been laid down by Barry's father when he was the master distiller back in 1964.

In honor of the river that runs through Midleton and at one time was used in the making of spirit here, the whiskey has been given the name Dungourney.

 An old elegant leather armchair of a whiskey, with crisp biscuity sweetness. A real charmer with a distant whiff of oak and custard.

COOLEY'S NARROW ESCAPE

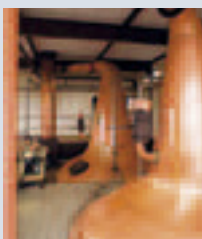
In a world dominated by global brands and multinational drinks companies, Cooley Distillery is that most Irish of things, a rebel. And if you're going to be an Irish rebel, then Easter Sunday is a pretty good day to step up and start the revolution.

In 1989, entrepreneur and permanent teetotaler Dr. John Teeling fired up the stills in Ireland's only independent distillery. Teeling had bought the distillery on the Cooley peninsula in 1987 from the Irish State, who had originally built the plant in the 1950s to turn diseased potatoes into industrial alcohol.

The business was cash flowed for three years while the first batches of whiskey matured, and the plan was for Teeling to then sell Cooley as a going concern, complete with warehouses full of Irish whiskey ready to sell.

Initially there was plenty of interest, but by 1992 Europe was slipping into recession. The whiskey industry was tightening its belt and, in a declining market, no one was buying distilleries. By 1993 the money had run out and Teeling mothballed the Cooley plant.

Then, however, a curious thing happened: Pernod Ricard made



The short, squat stills at Cooley tend to produce a fuller, "heavier" spirit.

Teeling a \$45 million offer. He would have undoubtedly accepted, but Ireland's Competition Authority was unhappy with the proposed takeover. They decided that the inflated price Pernod Ricard were willing to pay for a distillery they intended to close down implied that their interest

was in shoring up their monopoly of the Irish whiskey market. The takeover was, therefore, ruled to be in breach of European Law.

With the French off the scene and no other knight in shining armor around, the Irish banks started to call in their debts. Teeling had just a week to fend off the receivers and convince Cooley's backers to pre-buy millions of dollars worth of stock. Amazingly, he did this, and in 1995 the stills fired back into life and the spirit flowed once more.

Cooley's whiskey is matured in casks in the centuries-old warehouses of the silent Locke's Distillery in Kilbeggan.



WILLIAMSTOWN

Ingredients: 1 measure (25 ml) of Irish whiskey
½ measure (about 10 ml) of Irish Mist liqueur
A splash of red lemonade (only available in Ireland, but try white lemonade or a dash of ginger ale)
Garnish: twist of lemon

Method: Pour ingredients over crushed ice in an old-fashioned glass. Garnish with the twist of lemon.

GREENORE SINGLE GRAIN

Distillery: Cooley

County Louth is Ireland's smallest county; it's also home to Ireland's smallest distilling group, Cooley (see *opposite* & p163). The Cooley plant produces all of its malt and grain whiskey requirements, which is unusual in today's industry—in Scotland, grain whiskey for blending tends to be bought in from specialist grain whiskey distilleries. However, Cooley's grain distilling operation doesn't have the kind of economies of scale seen in Scottish grain distilleries, or even in Midleton, so consequently is very expensive to produce. However, Greenore is the only single Irish grain whiskey available, and it is a drink of which the company is very proud and eager to keep producing.

Named after the nearby port of Greenore, the whiskey is double distilled, then matured in once-used bourbon casks for a minimum of eight years. The casks to be bottled are hand picked by master distiller and



Greenore 8-Year-Old Single Grain

blender Noel Sweeney, who has something of a soft spot for his single grain whiskey.

■ **GREENORE 8-YEAR-OLD SINGLE GRAIN** 40% ABV

The incredible linseed nose promises plenty, and the whiskey delivers. Gentle but firm on the tongue, with peppery cereal and darkest chocolate.

GREEN SPOT

Distillery: Midleton

There was a time, and not too long ago, when Irish distilleries simply made their whiskey, leaving the bottling and selling to independent retailers.

These were the wine and spirit merchants, and they were to be found in just about every town in the country. Most merchants sold “own brand” whiskey straight from the cask; some would even bottle it, though, back then, glass bottles were an expensive innovation that would surely never catch on!

After the foundation of Irish Distillers, sales to the country's spirit merchants were scaled back and eventually they ceased altogether—well almost. Mitchell's in Dublin is now the only remaining whiskey merchant in business, and its famous Green Spot brand is still supplied by Irish Distillers. That alone

would be a good reason for getting a bottle, but this is no ordinary whiskey. It's a pure pot still, and a rather good one to boot.

This whiskey is now released as a 7 to 8-year-old pure pot still, with a juicy quarter of the vatting coming from sherry wood.



Green Spot

A strictly limited 6,000 bottles are produced each year.

Most are sold in Ireland; they never make it as far as the airport retail outlets, though it is possible to buy via online stores.

■ **GREEN SPOT** 40% ABV

Matured for six to seven years, Green Spot's pot-still crackle of linseed and menthol is unmistakable, and the sherry flourishes that follow are like fireworks—brief and dazzling.

THE IRISHMAN

Distillery: Bushmills

The malt here comes from Bushmills, but it is the double cask finish (a mix of whiskeys that have been matured in sherry and bourbon casks) that makes this offering very interesting. A premium bottling released in batches of 1,000 cases.

■ **THE IRISHMAN SINGLE MALT**

40% ABV • Like all single malts produced by Bushmills, the soft cereal is most evident,

KILBEGGAN'S MICRO

Although the stills went cold in 1953, John Locke's Distillery is one of the most precious distilleries in the entire world. To celebrate the 250th anniversary of its foundation, Cooley started making whiskey here again in 2007. The still itself is a real piece of history—it came from nearby Tullamore and is at least 150 years old.

Currently, the first distillation happens in the main Cooley plant in Louth, with the second taking place in Kilbeggan, but there will soon be a second still in Kilbeggan, and so it won't be long before the entire distilling and maturing process takes place on site.

but here the sherry adds complexity and some sweetness, rounding off a very tasty malt indeed.

KNAPPOGUE CASTLE

Distillery: Bushmills

When Mark Andrews got to bottle the whiskey his father had bought from the Tullamore Distillery in 1951, he chose to call it after the family home. So the 36-year-old Knappogue Castle was born, and it proved so popular that Mark decided to bottle a vintage whiskey on an annual basis. The first modern bottlings were released in 1990 and came from the Cooley stable, but more recent vintages have been produced with whiskey from Bushmills Distillery.

🍷 **KNAPPOGUE CASTLE '95** 40% ABV

This vintage is an excellent example of the Bushmills house style. The triple distilled single malt is very approachable, with plenty of light nuts and warming toasted malt. It is, however, still quite young and so not a very complex whiskey.

LOCKE'S

Distillery: Cooley

Of all the heritages and brands that Cooley revived, surely that of John Locke was the most evocative. The Brusna Distillery in Kilbeggan survived until the 1950s and, among older people at any rate, there was a tremendous fondness for their heavy pot still whiskey. When Hollywood's John Ford and John Wayne were filming *The Quiet Man* on location in Ireland in 1951, Locke's was taken to



Locke's
8-Year-Old
Single Malt

their hearts too, and became their hell-raising whiskey of choice.

Modern-day Locke's is a single malt rather than a pot still (see p168), and although distilled in County Louth, like all Cooley whiskey, it is taken by tanker to be matured at John Locke's warehouses.

🍷 **LOCKE'S SINGLE MALT**

8-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

Soft and clean if a little uninspiring. This vatting of Cooley's unpeated and peated malts is less than the sum of its parts.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Distillery: Cooley

🍷 www.michaelcollinswhiskey.com

This range of whiskeys was designed for the American market, and it bears the name, and indeed the signature, of one of Ireland's greatest modern heroes. Michael Collins, also known as "the big fellow," spearheaded Ireland's struggle for independence and was the architect of the 1921 treaty, from which the modern Irish state emerged.

Sidney Frank is the company behind the brand, and they worked with Tim Pat Coogan, the official biographer of Michael Collins, to contact the Collins family when seeking an agreement to use Michael's name on their whiskey.

🍷 **MICHAEL COLLINS SINGLE**

MALT 40% ABV • Creamy biscuits, smooth vanilla, and some very decent peat; this malt is a vatting of Cooley's peated and unpeated single malts, and it hangs together most beautifully.



Michael Collins
Single Malt

MIDLETON

📧 Midleton, County Cork

🍷 www.irishdistillers.ie

🏰 Old Middleton Distillery is open to visitors as a museum; the new, working distillery is not

The modern Middleton plant, which has been in operation since the mid-1970s (see opposite) produces the most astonishing range of whiskeys, from heavy to light, pure pot still to single malt to grain. Unlike the situation in Scotland, however, very few of these whiskeys ever get bottled in their own right. Most provide notes, colors, and flavors that are mixed and blended to produce the

huge range of brands in the Irish Distillers stable, which includes Paddy, Jameson, and Powers (see pp172-6).



Redbreast
12-Year-Old
Pot Still

REDBREAST

Distillery: Middleton

Redbreast 12-year-old is the oldest pure pot still whiskey on sale today. It and the younger Green Spot (see p165) are all that is left of Ireland's unique style of whiskey—the pure pot still (see p168).

Redbreast was initially launched in 1939, when whiskey merchants Gilbey's put the label on their own particular blend from the original Jameson Distillery. The brand was so popular that it was subsequently bought from Gilbey's by Jameson, after the distiller ceased to supply the bonded whiskey trade in the 1960s.

The present Redbreast is made of heavier pot still whiskeys that are matured for at least 12 years in sherry casks and bourbon barrels. Like all good pot still whiskeys, it is strongly flavored and assertive, making it a rare treat.

THE MIDDLETON STORY

There's not *one* distillery in the pretty town of Middleton, but two. The first looks as a distillery should—modest in scale, with bright paintwork—the other looks like an oil refinery. Needless to say, the former is a museum, while the latter produces some of Ireland's finest whiskies.

To comprehend the story of what's going on in Middleton is to understand the complex history of whiskey making in Ireland.

The old Victorian distillery belongs to the heyday of Irish whiskey—when Irish, not Scotch, was the drink of the British Empire. Middleton Distillery was born in 1867, when five small Cork distilleries joined forces to form The Cork Distilleries Company (CDC). Over time CDC centralized all production at the Middleton plant; it was a taste of things to come.

Fast-forward 100 years to 1966, and we find that Scotch whisky has become a global phenomenon while Irish whiskey teeters on the brink of extinction. The three Irish distilleries still remaining were fighting each other to the death in a declining market, and something needed to be



Middleton's Distillery is a high-tech operation, but its pot stills are resolutely traditional.

done. John A. Ryan, the Managing Director of John Power & Son (see p176) persuaded the boards of the Cork Distilleries Company and John Jameson & Son to bury the hatchet. After 200 years of rivalry and competition the Irish Distillers

Group was formed. The old Powers and Jameson distilleries in Dublin were closed, and operations were centralized at a new super-distillery in Middleton.

Middleton's Victorian distillery was abandoned, as in 1975 the new plant set sail, carrying with it the hopes of an entire industry. The new Middleton Distillery does not have the romance of the old one, but it has been designed specifically to replicate the output of all the distilleries it replaced. As well as making vodka and gin, it has to reproduce the taste of Ireland's most famous whiskies: Jameson, Powers, and Paddy. Today Middleton produces the widest range of whiskies to come from Ireland (see *opposite*).

Old Middleton Distillery, with its neat stonework and brightly painted shutters, now houses a whiskey museum.



REDBREAST 12-YEAR OLD

40% ABV • Other whiskeys may have “pot still character,” but this is the real deal. It’s a fat, oily riot in a glass, with the unmalted barley bringing a whole new dimension to whiskey drinking. There’s a lovely long finish that resonates soundly for ages.

REDBREAST 15-YEAR-OLD

40% ABV • This whiskey is a huge mouth-coating carnival of sherry and vanilla pods, but the pot still is not shy and here it is aged to perfection. Full flavored but not assertive, this is a monster of a whiskey. Redbreast is simply one of the world’s finest whiskeys.

TYRCONNELL MALTS

Distillery: Cooley

www.tyrconnellwhiskey.com

The Tyrconnell brand was one of the first things Cooley bought when the company went shopping for history (see p163). First introduced in 1876 by Derry distiller Andrew A. Watt & Co., the

Tyrconnell whiskey was launched to celebrate a well-known horse that made everyone but the bookies happy by winning at staggering odds of 100/1.

This unpeated single malt was the first whiskey that Cooley produced at their new distillery when they began producing in the late 1980s. It is now the company’s best selling malt. Alongside the standard malt are three 10-year-old malts with different wood finishes—sherry, madeira, and port. There’s nothing new about finishing whiskey in exotic casks, but this is a first for Cooley and a sign of their growing confidence.

TYRCONNELL SINGLE MALT

40% ABV • Cooley’s signature boiled sweets nose is most evident here and the flowery malt is very well put together. Sweet notes of honey and jasmine combine



Tyrconnell Single Malt

to make this a very approachable malt.

TYRCONNELL 10-YEAR-OLD SINGLE MALT PORT WOOD FINISH

40% ABV • The nose is very spicy and exotic; but the port sits slightly on top of the whiskey. However, there’s plenty of fig, raisins, and ripe plums, as well as a lovely warm finish.

TYRCONNELL 10-YEAR-OLD SINGLE MALT MADEIRA WOOD FINISH

40% ABV • These were good Madeira casks and the flavor of warm toasted wood is very prevalent. It is sweet,

but not overpoweringly so. A great rumble of a finish.

TYRCONNELL 10-YEAR-OLD SINGLE MALT SHERRY WOOD FINISH

40% ABV • It’s not a radical combination, but here the flowery malt and fruity sherry fuse beautifully. The sherry butts add complexity, but leave room for the elegant whiskey to impress. The most accomplished of the three wood finishes.

POT STILL WHISKEY

Pot still whiskey is unique to Ireland. But, ironically, Ireland’s most independent spirit is without a firm standing in law. While Scotland has annexed the term “single malt,” Ireland has all but thrown away the unique expression that is “pure pot still,” and now two contrasting definitions exist to describe what constitutes pot still whiskey.

The legal definition simply states that any duty-paid spirit distilled in a pot still can be called pot still whiskey, regardless of what it

is made from. This is how Cooley’s single malt is labeled as “pure pot still.”

However, traditionally, the appellation was reserved for spirits distilled from malted and unmalted barley. This grain mix is unique to Ireland and this is what traditionally makes a pure pot still whiskey. The element of unmalted barley gives traditional Irish pot still whiskey a steely edge and an oily viscosity that’s as flavorsome as it is unique. Once, just about every Irish whiskey was a pure pot still, but the appellation almost disappeared in the 1970s as Irish Distillers reformulated all their brands.

Today there are only a couple of pure Irish pot still whiskeys remaining, but to track them down is to taste history. Redbreast (see p166) is the most widely known, but Green Spot is also worth making room for, though, unless you’re in Dublin, you may struggle to find a bottle (see p165).

Pot stills in Ireland traditionally distilled a mash of both malted and unmalted barley; this produced the unique “pure pot still whiskey.”





Old Bushmills is the only distillery in Ireland to have remained in operation since the 19th century.

BLENDS

With only three major distilleries in the country, Ireland's blends demonstrate the variety of whiskies that these plants produce. Coupled with the skill of the blenders, it all results in some of the world's finest blended whiskey, some of which has a high proportion of flavorful malt.

BUSHMILLS

Distillery: Bushmills and Middleton

Old Bushmills is a single malt distillery, so the grain whiskey that is blended with their malt to produce brands like Blackbush, has always come from somewhere else. In the past it was made in the nearby Coleraine Distillery, but since the closure of that plant in the 1970s, the grain has come from Middleton. So, long before the Good Friday Agreement, the two traditions on the island—Ulster malt and Republican grain—lived happily together in a glass bottle.

■ **BUSHMILLS ORIGINAL** 40% ABV

A roughly 50/50 split of Bushmills malt and Middleton grain creates a well-balanced easy-drinking blend. Sweet, with the same kind of flavors you get from fruit biscuits dunked in cocoa.

■ **BUSHMILLS 1608** 46% ABV

This new blend marks the 400th anniversary of the original license to distill. Sweet, honeyed, and biscuity fresh on the nose. The Bushmills DNA is very evident: malted milk, but layered with subtle vanilla and raisins, maturing into

toasted almonds, hints of fine cocoa and finishing with a warming peppery tickle.

■ **BLACK BUSH** 40% ABV

An elegant, mostly malt blend, which benefits from being aged in some very juicy sherry wood. The result is a stunning desert island whiskey and the yardstick by which Irish blends are measured.

■ **Oranges and sherry.**

Exotic colors from Jerez dance around the signature Bushmills malt notes. A glorious, mouth-filling experience, and one of the finest blends in the world.

CLONTARF

Distillery: Bushmills and Middleton

When Clontarf whiskey was launched in Ireland, it caused consternation for two reasons. Firstly there was the unusual bottling—three stackable mini-bottles for the price of one—but more shocking still was that Clontarf whiskey was charcoal mellowed.

Recently, however, this whiskey was taken over by Castlebrands, so it is a

product in flux, and all this may change in the future.

■ **CLONTARF BLEND** 40% ABV

The standard blend is an incredibly sweet, almost toffeelike whiskey. It's robust though, with hints of pot still whiskey and some decent lingering chocolate notes toward the end.

■ **CLONTARF RESERVE**

40% ABV • This is quite a light whiskey and is almost overpowered by the layers of woody oak. However, without the body of the classic blend, Clontarf is tooth-meltingly sweet.



Bushmills Black Bush

CRESTED TEN

Distillery: Middleton

This is a spicy, pot still blend, available mostly in Ireland. Launched in 1963, this was the

first Jameson product to be bottled solely by the distillery. Confusingly, the whiskies in the blend are not 10 years old, and have largely matured for seven to eight years.

■ **CRESTED TEN** 40% ABV • A fairly robust pot still flavor, with a strong sherry influence, which comes from first-fill Oloroso casks.





Whiskey drinking is a tradition that harks back to the cottage industry that distilling once was throughout Ireland.

MR. AENEAS COFFEY AND HIS PATENT STILL

In less than a generation, the Coffey still completely changed the face of the whiskey business. Blenders and not distillers had the power and the money, and that's how things remained until the revival in the fortunes of single malt whiskies in the 1970s. The fact that an Irishman, Aeneas Coffey, was responsible for the rise of Scotch blends is not the only irony, for Coffey the distiller used to be an excise officer, and he led a very colorful life.

In the year 1818 in Donegal, Aeneas Coffey was struggling to control illegal distilling. This was one of Ireland's most lawless counties, and Coffey narrowly escaped death on a number of occasions. During a particularly vicious encounter, his skull was fractured and, in his own words, the poteen makers "left my body one mass of contusion and gave me two bayonet wounds, one of

which completely perforated my thigh. I owed my life to the rapid approach of the military party from which I had imprudently wandered a few hundred yards"

Aeneas Coffey went on to be Inspector General of Excise in Ireland and, though

he didn't invent the continuous still, in 1830 he lodged a series of patents that transformed the industry. As a government publication of the time put it, the Coffey still "is said to be the speediest and most economical device for preparing a highly concentrated spirit in a single operation."

The traditional Dublin pot still distillers derided the patent still whiskey as "silent" (tasteless) spirit, so Aeneas Coffey left Ireland for the more open and welcoming Scottish and English markets. The rest, as they say, is history.



A Coffey still is able to work continuously rather than in batches, as with a pot still.

FECKIN' IRISH WHISKEY

Distillery: Cooley
www.feckinwhiskey.com

"Feck" is a very Irish word. It sounds rude, but is in fact no more than a mild oath in Ireland—widely used and socially acceptable. This whiskey, then, is the product of one in a number of independent bottlers using Cooley whiskey to target the younger drinker.

FECKIN' IRISH WHISKEY 40% ABV
 A light, pleasant dram with that signature Cooley sweetness. However, it lacks the depth of similar blends like Kilbeggan.

INISHOWEN

Distillery: Cooley

Inishowen is Cooley's twist on the well-worn blended Scotch. The logic is sound: people like blended Scotch, so let's give them what they want. However, it seems that Ireland's

whiskey drinkers have a hard time getting used to a locally produced peated blend, and this whiskey is hard to find.

INISHOWEN 40% ABV • This is the only Irish blend where peat openly flouts itself. But the real joy here is the dominance of some excellent grain, which gives the blend real spine and lets the turf smoke and oak do their thing.

THE IRISHMAN 70

Distillery: Bushmills and Midleton

This is a most interesting blend, put together by Bernard Walsh, whose company started life with a hot Irish whiskey mix. As the name implies, The Irishman 70 contains 70 percent malt from Bushmills, with the remainder made up of Midleton pure pot still. There is no grain whiskey here at all.

THE IRISHMAN 70
 40% ABV • The pot still

character is evident from the start, but it works well against the crisp malt. This a full-flavored ball of malt, with plenty of rich Christmas cake character. A most welcome addition to the fold.

JAMESON

Distillery: Midleton
www.jamesonwhiskey.com

Jameson is the world's leading brand of Irish whiskey, accounting for nearly 75 percent of all Irish whiskey sold globally. In its home market of Ireland, Jameson has grown over 40 percent during the past five years—but at a cost. Jameson has succeeded at the expense of the quirkier Irish Distillers products such as Hewitt's, which has been dropped, and Bushmills, which has been sold on.

Currently Jameson is a blend of roughly 50 percent medium-bodied pot still and 50 percent grain whiskey, each of which has matured



Inishowen Irish Whiskey

in first-fill bourbon and sherry wood for four to seven years. The whiskey owes not a small degree of its success to a whole heap of marketing.

■ **JAMESON** 40% ABV

There is some pot still spiciness and a pleasant sweetness here, but they fade quickly, leaving short vanilla notes. There are much finer Irish whiskeys to be explored—next time use this book and live a little!

■ **JAMESON 12-YEAR-OLD SPECIAL RESERVE** 40% abv
“Special Reserve” is

the new Jameson buzz word, and while some whiskeys might need that little bit of marketing dazzle on the label, this is one that certainly does not. This whiskey was Irish Distillers first attempt at a premium brand and it started life as Jameson 1780, named after the year in which the Dublin distillery was founded. Now featuring an age statement, this is still one of the best value-for-money Irish whiskeys available.

Typically 80 percent pot still to 20 percent grain whiskey, it is, nevertheless, the use of first-fill bourbon



Jameson Standard Blend

barrels, in addition to the judicious use of sherry wood, that gives this blend its real character.

■ This is a rich, nutty, cinnamon-spicy pudding of a dram. The whiskey is very classy and the excellent wood gives the 12-year-old reserve a wonderful sherry, warm cocoa finish. For all-around value, this is the best Irish you can buy.

■ **JAMESON 18-YEAR-OLD LIMITED RESERVE** 40% abv

Jameson 18-year-old is the master blender’s hand-picked selection of the very best pot still and grain whiskeys, aged in oak casks for at least 18 years.

This whiskey is an excellent example of the fine wood policy employed at Midleton and the art of the blender.

■ The cracking nose is just the start of the adventure here. This exceptional blend is raisins and liquid velvet, maple syrup on muffins, and fudge melted over a choc-ice; an astonishing achievement and a world class dram.

■ **JAMESON GOLD SPECIAL RESERVE** 40% abv

Jameson Gold is a premium Irish whiskey developed for the airport retail and duty-free market. This is the only Irish Distillers whiskey in which virgin oak is used for maturation.

■ Yeasty bread and spicy honey, with some obvious vanilla and a peppery finish. Not the brightest star in the Jameson premium galaxy. It’s also expensive, making Jameson 12-year-old a much smarter buy.

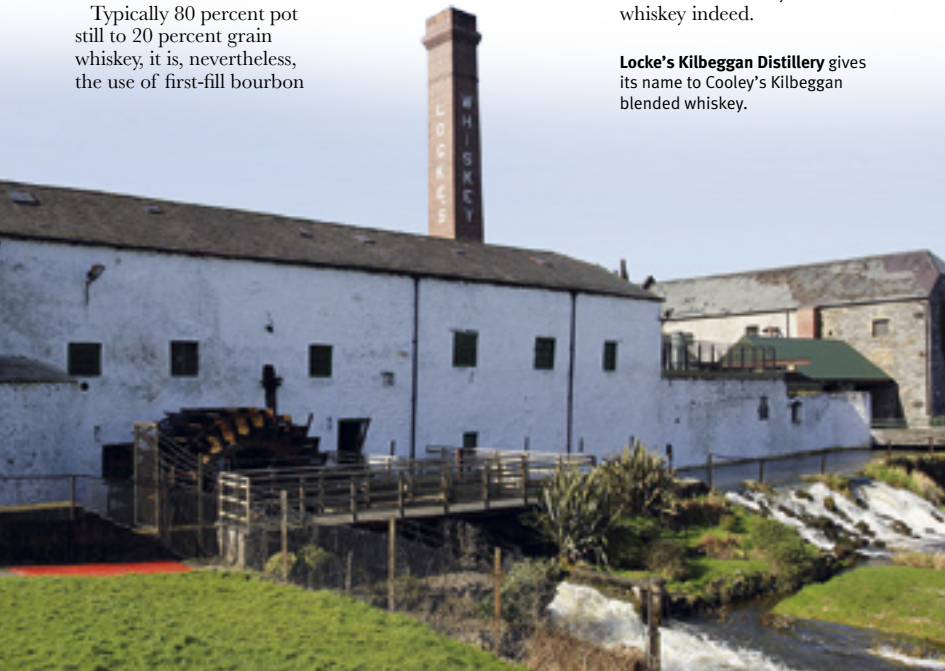
KILBEGGAN

Distillery: Cooley

📍 www.kilbegganwhiskey.com

Kilbeggan is Cooley’s flagship blended whiskey and is named after the midlands town where you’ll find Locke’s Distillery. Master distiller Noel Sweeney started working on this blend in 1994 when the distillery was still mothballed. Early examples reflected the limited range of whiskeys he had to work with, but over the years this blend has matured into a very fine whiskey indeed.

Locke’s Kilbeggan Distillery gives its name to Cooley’s Kilbeggan blended whiskey.



JOHN JAMESON & SON

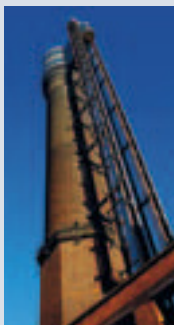
As with most things to do with Irish Whiskey, the further back in time you go, the mistier the details get. What we do know about John Jameson is that he was a Scottish Presbyterian who came to Ireland and took over an existing distillery in around 1780.

For the next 200 years—until 1988 in fact—there was always a descendant of John Jameson working for the company in the same offices at Bow Street in Dublin. Otherwise not much happened: each generation of Jameson built on the success of the last, until JJ&S was recognized as the finest whiskey that money could buy.

The Dublin distillery was very proud of its pure pot still whiskey and initially wasn't too concerned about the rise in popularity of blended Scotch. In 1890 Ireland had about 90 percent of world whiskey exports, with the enormous Bow Street plant accounting for 10 percent of the country's annual whiskey output.

But as outlined earlier, Prohibition in the US, civil war in Ireland, and the

Jameson Distillery was situated in Dublin until the early 1970s, when the Bow Street distillery closed and operations were move to Midleton.



Jameson Tower at the old distillery is now a viewing platform.

rise of blended Scotch devastated the Irish whiskey industry, and, like every other distiller on the island, Jameson felt the pain.

In the mid-1960s Jameson was one of the founding members of Irish Distillers, with the Bow Street plant finally closing in 1971. Then, in 1988, Irish Distillers was taken over by the Pernod Ricard group, and the Jameson brand was singled out for greatness.

In 1996, sales of Jameson finally broke through the magic one million cases a year barrier and the whiskey joined the world's top 100 spirit brands. Today Jameson is synonymous with Irish Whiskey and is sold in over 120 markets. Although now distilled in Midleton, the Old Bow Street Distillery where the whole story began now houses a heritage center.





Kilbeggan 15-year-old

▮ **KILBEGGAN 40% ABV**

Rich and unctuous, this predominantly grain blend is a real mouth-filling wonder of honey and oatmeal, with that now very distinctive after taste of chocolate covered coffee beans.

▮ **KILBEGGAN 15-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV**

Kilbeggan's older brother has a lot in common with his younger sibling. There's the same unmistakable family DNA, but this guy has hormones and he's been at the gym.

This muscular specimen grips the tongue nicely before exploding into life. Now the honey (noticeable in the younger whiskey) is more defined—it's from pine trees and it's on a toasted bagel. The chocolate is still there, but it's darker and the coffee is Italian and impossibly tall, dark, and handsome. Bravo!

LOCKE'S BLEND

Distillery: Cooley

John Locke was the man who put the Kilbeggan Distillery on the map, and his name adorned the beautiful stone crocks that used to hold whiskey from this midlands distillery. Today the Locke's name is back on a whiskey—this time one produced by the Cooley camp. This blend has a higher malt content than its stable-mate



Middleton Very Rare

Kilbeggan, with a hint of that malt being peated.

▮ **LOCKE'S BLEND 40% ABV**

This is an incredibly delicate creature—water kills it stone dead, so be warned. Neat Locke's blend has some charm, but it's a pale reflection of what Cooley can achieve with their malts and grainier blends.

MICHAEL COLLINS BLEND

Distillery: Cooley

A blend designed by Cooley for American importers Sidney Frank.

▮ **MICHAEL COLLINS BLEND 40% ABV** • The start is thin enough, but the whiskey opens up into vanilla and warm oak embers.

MIDLETON VERY RARE

Distillery: Middleton

One of the most expensive whiskeys produced on a regular basis by Irish Distillers. Since 1984, no more than 2,500 cases (and usually fewer) of Middleton Very Rare have been released annually. Older vintages feature whiskey from the silent Middleton Distillery; more recent bottlings are the work of the new Middleton plant.

The whiskeys in this blend are between 12 and 25 years old, and are matured exclusively in seasoned bourbon barrels. The nature of the selection process for Middleton Very Rare means that each vintage has its own distinct character.

▮ **MIDLETON VERY RARE**

2006 40% ABV

Beeswax and melon, with that signature cream soda softness. This is exceptional stuff, showing how

good Middleton whiskey can get, from inception, through maturation, to blending. It is expensive, but then it is an exceptional drop.

MILLARS SPECIAL RESERVE

Distillery: Cooley

Adam Millar & Company was a firm of Dublin whiskey bonders which sat across the road from Powers Distillery. Cooley Distillery bought them out in 1988.

Millars has a 20 percent malt content, with both grain and malt having been aged in freshly emptied bourbon barrels.

▮ Millars is a whiskey with real character. It's a box of tricks—firm, spicy, and unapologetically tasty. The most underrated blend in Ireland.



Millars Special Reserve

PADDY

Distillery: Middleton

It's only in the past half century or so that most Irish distilleries have taken to bottling their own whiskey. In the era of the whiskey merchant, Power's Gold label (white labels were reserved for the merchants) and the Cork Distilleries Company Old Irish Whiskey were the only two proprietary brands.

Paddy Flaherty was the CDC's celebrated sales representative, and during the 1920s and 30s he was well known for his generosity, often buying the whole bar a round of drinks—whiskey of course. Before long his Old Irish Whiskey was known to locals as “Paddy Flaherty's whiskey.”

Over time, CDC gradually incorporated his name and signature onto the label to authenticate it, until eventually it became known simply as Paddy.

Most recently, Paddy's more regal patronage came to light following the auction by Christies in Paris of a rare bottle from the 1920s. Bought by Irish Distillers for \$3,000 in 2003, it was once owned by Edward VIII, Duke of Windsor, but was later sold by his wife, Mrs. Simpson, after his death.

Today Paddy features slightly older whiskies than are found in Jameson, and, although there is a similar wood policy, Paddy does not use as much first-fill wood. The whiskey is made up of roughly equal measures of pot still and grain whiskey. **■ PADDY 40% ABV** • This is a malty and easy-going drink. It's light and peppery, and best served short with a drop or two of water. This opens up the spirit, yielding jasmine and buttery fruitcake. But too much water will drown its delicate nature.

POWERS

Distillery: Midleton

The Powers were the other Dublin distilling dynasty. Their distillery was situated on the south side of the narrow Liffey River, facing John Jameson & Son to the north.

John Power took over the company from his father James in 1817 and became a very influential man in the capital. For a number of years, he was High Sheriff of Dublin, and he was a close friend of Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator. At the age of 64, he became Sir John Power, and could look back on a successful life having extended the distillery until it covered seven acres of the city.



**Paddy
Old Irish
Whiskey**

The company was fond of innovation; they were the first major Dublin firm to embrace the Coffey still, albeit on a limited scale.

They moved into white spirits with Powers gin and Powers vodka, but more importantly they were first to try out in-house bottling. In an era when glass bottles were handmade and expensive, they bottled their own "Gold Label" whiskey. They even went on to produce miniature bottles (known as

Baby Powers)—an innovation, and later worldwide trend, that required an act of Parliament to allow it.

POWERS GOLD LABEL

This is a superbly made whiskey, with that distinctive high Irish pot still whiskey that now only emanates from the Midleton Distillery.

Powers is a rich, round, complex, and full-flavored drinking experience. Selling more than six million measures each year across Ireland, it is the country's favorite whiskey.

■ Gulp, don't sip. Slosh it around in your mouth. Make silly gargling sounds and swallow deeply. Now try and catch all the flavors; there's heather, all spice, cloves, camphor ... now take another gulp and try again. Brilliant!

POWERS 12-YEAR-OLD

SPECIAL RESERVE

Powers 12-year-old Reserve is a premium edition of Ireland's favorite whiskey. This reserve is chosen from specially selected whiskies, aged from 12 to 24 years. It's the same formulation as the regular Powers, just older.

■ It's amazing what a few more years in the wood will do to a whiskey. This is regular Powers on steroids: there's the



**Powers
Gold Label**

usual assault of spice, honey, and hard custard, but this time it's layered with soft wood tones and very soothing fruit jelly.

TULLAMORE DEW

Distillery: Midleton

■ www.tullamoredeu.com

Locke's in Kilbeggan and Daly's, up the road in Tullamore, were the last Irish distilleries to close in the early 1950s. Both were modest rural operations that had clung on long after most of their contemporaries had shut up shop. A micro-distillery has recently reopened in Kilbeggan (see p165), but its close neighbor in Tullamore hasn't been so lucky.

A shopping mall now stands where the whiskey was once made, though there is a museum in one of the old warehouses.

In its time, Tullamore was a very innovative distillery. The owners embraced the continuous still, and in the 1950s Tullamore Dew became the first Irish whiskey to be reformulated as a blend. The distillery was sited in the center of Ireland, but despite poor transportation links to the coastal ports, the company focused on the export market; to this day Tullamore Dew is still the best-selling Irish whiskey in Germany.

The company's most famous brand, Tullamore Dew, is still going strong, though it has passed through numerous hands since the distillery closed in 1954. Today it is owned by the Irish food and drink company C&C, which in turn is owned by a group of UK venture capitalists. So the fate of this brand is far



**Tullamore
Dew**

from settled. All the whiskeys in the Tullamore Dew range are distilled at the Midleton Distillery in County Cork.

■ **TULLAMORE DEW** 40% ABV

By far the lightest Irish whiskey on sale today—very grainy and lacking in much depth. Best served over ice with a sweet mixer like cola.

■ **TULLAMORE DEW 12** 40% ABV

Sherry wood and spicy pot still whiskey is very much to the fore here in a very classy blend, aimed at the premium airport retail market. This whiskey has much more in common with the Jameson family of premium whiskeys than standard Tullamore Dew.

■ **TULLAMORE DEW HERITAGE** 40% ABV

One of the canal-side distillery warehouses is now home to a small museum and a shop, and this is where you'll find this offering. Prior to bottling, all the whiskeys that make up the Heritage blend are married for just under a year in second-fill bourbon wood.

■ There are some very fine and very old pot still whiskeys making themselves known here. A beautifully balanced example of the blender's art; sweet vanilla and sherry drift on with the distant scent of old leather car seats. Very lovely.

WILD GEESE WHISKEY

Distillery: Cooley

📍 www.wildgeese-irishwhiskey.com

Yet another blend aimed at the ex-pat market, but this one's got a bit of bite to it.

■ **WILD GEESE WHISKEY** 40% ABV

This whiskey is sweet at the start, but somewhere in the middle of the tongue it changes into quite a classy monster. Here the grain whiskey makes all the running, but it's good firm stuff, proving that Cooley master distiller, Noel Sweeney, is right to have such faith in his grain.

POTEEN

Poteen is Ireland's other national drink. It's the outrageous outlaw—the bad boy everybody loves. In movie terms, it is Colin Farrell to whiskey's Pierce Brosnan. But how different things could have been. You see, until 1661 *uisce beatha* (whiskey) and *uisce poitín* (poteen) were one and the same, but, after that date, duty was paid on the former and not on the latter, so making poteen illegal.

At the time, there wasn't any difference between the taste of Parliament whiskey (*uisce beatha*) and the illegal stuff (*uisce poitín*), they were both small-batch, colorless spirits distilled from native grain and drunk hot from the still. But as the centuries rolled past, the two spirits took on very different identities.

During the 19th century, distilling in Ireland moved from a cottage industry to a model of Victorian laissez-faire enterprise. Whiskey was no longer sold straight from the still; it was matured in oak wood for at least three years, which gave the spirit extra flavor and color.

Poteen changed too, but in minor ways. It was always made from whatever was cheap and at hand, so molasses replaced barley and copper hot-water tanks replaced tin pot stills.

Despite 400 years of persecution by both Church and State, the outlaw thrived in song and folklore in the hills of Ireland until very recently. Then came prosperity. The Celtic Tiger swept all before it, bringing full employment and soaring house prices, and changing Ireland forever. The market for cheap spirits dried up and the skills that had been passed from generation to generation started to die off.

Whether this is a passing phase, or whether poteen has been fatally mauled by the Celtic Tiger, it's too early to tell. If you see a product labeled "poteen" in an airport or a bar, it's simply a white duty-paid Irish schnapps. By definition, poteen is illegal and can't be sold.

This poteen still from the early 20th century shows how basic the apparatus can be: an open fire heats the pot, the spirit condenses in the pipe and slowly dips into the standing barrel.





THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
150
PENDERYN
2004

THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
2004

THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
2004

THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
2004

THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
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THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
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THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
2004

THE WELSH WHISKY COMPANY
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PENDERYN
2004

ENGLAND AND WALES

If the history of alcohol production in the UK has taught us anything about the English, it's that for them patience is not a virtue. Whiskey takes time to mature, and, while it has been produced in England in the past, it has been only on a modest scale, and the general tendency is toward far faster results.

While the Scots and Irish were perfecting the art of maturation and integrating flavor into their national spirits, the scenario in England was more divided. The nobility bought in quality port, cognac, Irish whiskey, and finally Scotch for their high tables; while the majority of the population settled on a foul-tasting grain spirit, flavored to hide its taste, and called gin. It was a variant of the sweeter Dutch spirit genever, but was a considerably poorer drink. In the 18th and 19th centuries, when gin's popularity was at its height and it was sold in "gin palaces" throughout the land, the spirit was often made with grain unfit for ale production and flavored, not with juniper berries and botanicals as we know it today, but in some instances with turpentine.

There were a few whiskey distilleries in England—Alfred Barnard (*see p.50*) visited four in the 1880s—and they did produce some single malt in pot stills, but most of the output found its way into Scottish or Irish blends, or even went on to make gin. It seems that eventually

the English gave up trying to make malt altogether, however, and simply conceded that the Scots did it far better.

THE WELSH PICTURE

The same conclusion would seem to have been drawn in Wales, too. Although evidence exists that whiskey was made in the province, it died away more than 100 years ago, perhaps to some degree as a result of the temperance movement. The descendants of Welsh emigrants—Evan Williams and Jack Daniel included—did make their mark across the Atlantic in the US, however.

Over the last century, attempts to establish distilleries in England have mostly been half-hearted. Land has occasionally been secured and planning permission sought, but there progress has stalled. Typically, when a distillery was finally established in Cornwall, it was immediately followed by plans for a clutch of others, though so far only one other in England has actually opened—Norfolk's St. George's Distillery.

Meanwhile, a very bright beacon shines in Wales, where whiskey is not only being produced at Penderyn, but is also selling very successfully.

Penderyn uses ex-bourbon barrels for the maturation of its spirit, which is then transferred into Madeira casks to finish the ageing process.

DISTILLERIES

Although there are only three whiskey distilleries in England and Wales, they are not here simply for novelty value. Penderyn is the most established, and is already producing a successful malt using innovative techniques, while St. George's is taking advantage of great local barley.

PENDERYN

☑ Penderyn, Near Aberdare, South Wales

🌐 www.welsh-whisky.co.uk

🏠 Open to visitors

If there was a heavy dose of cynicism about Welsh whiskey being nothing more than poor man's Scotch, it was dispelled almost as soon as Penderyn's first malt appeared, some four years ago. Dressed in modern and stylish packaging that was light years away from anything coming out of Scotland, it tasted other-worldly too.

Closer inspection reveals that the Welsh have pulled off a masterstroke. By teaming up with world-renowned technical experts, Penderyn

Penderyn's unusual still has a rectifying column rising up from the pot-shaped base.

has created a whole new way of making malt.

The wash is brought from local beer brewer Brain's, a break with recognized Scottish production method and is distilled once a unique still that sits at the bottom of a tall rectifying column above. The whiskey comes off the still 91 percent ABV, is light and delicate.

The standard 100 commands a premium price, having been matured in top-notch bourbon casks, followed by finishing maturation in Madeira wood.



Penderyn Single Malt

Penderyn's MD Stephen Davies says that, right from the

start, the aim was to produce a whiskey that wouldn't just survive for its novelty value. It's working. The distillery is selling about 85,000 bottles in 15 countries. The distillery has upped production, though it will



of this increase will see their way into bottles.

■ **PENDERYN SINGLE MALT** 46% ABV

The nose offers over-ripe raisins and candy pineapple. It's zesty and fresh—very appealing. The palate is winey, malty, and then bitter fruits come through—tangerine perhaps. It's rather prickly, fruity, and bitter in the finish but, surprisingly, not unpleasantly so.





St. George's stills will soon be producing a variety of whiskey styles, even including some that are heavily peated.

ST. GEORGE'S

✉ East Harling, Norfolk
 🌐 www.englishwhisky.co.uk
 🏠 Open to the public

St. George's Distillery is run by The English Whiskey Company, which stated its intentions in 2006 with the announcement that the esteemed Scottish distiller Iain Henderson would be coming out of retirement to run England's first licensed distillery for more than 100 years. In 2007 the distillery opened a visitor center and began laying down spirit. It's too early to know how the whiskey will turn out, but the new make is impressive.

Eastern England produces some of the world's finest barley—which helps—and although some have questioned whether Norfolk water is suited to whiskey production, the distillery uses a deep water table and its mineral make up has given considerable grounds for optimism. Quality pot stills and a climate favorable to maturation also play a part.

Iain Henderson retired for the third time in Fall 2007 and has been replaced by David Fitt, a former brewer with East Anglian beer giant Greene King. Although it's

early days, all the signs are that St. George's is preparing to create a large range of whiskey styles and won't be shy when it comes to special finishes. Already the distillery has laid down casks of heavily peated spirit and the new make has many of the characteristics of the sort of Laphroaig Iain Henderson was making some years ago. The word from the distillery is that they have been experimenting with a triple distilled malt, and the plan is eventually to pack the shop with a range of malts, blends, and liqueurs.

THE CORNISH CYDER FARM

✉ Penhallow, Cornwall
 🌐 www.thecornishcydercompany.co.uk

They have been producing whiskey in Cornwall for five years now, so surely that would make The Cyder Farm, and not St. George's, the first English distillery for more than 100 years? But no. "We're not English, we're Cornish," says owner David Healey. A fair point, but what about the kudos of being "the first?" "We are. We're the first Cornish distillery for 300 years."

The whiskey is made with wash from St. Austell Brewery and is distilled in an apple brandy still. It tastes like it—or at least the earliest distillations do—thin, shapeless, apple spirit. But the younger spirit—just one or two years old—has come on in leaps and bounds and is developing a pleasant personality with, yes, a green fruit character. The first batches have already been bought up, so it'll be a while before bottlings are available.

DISTILLERIES ON THE HORIZON

For some time now there have been plans for a distillery in the Lake District in northwest England, permission having been granted to Andrew Currie, formerly marketing director at the Isle of Arran Distillery. But plans for The Barley Bridge Distillery, at Stavely, next to the fast-flowing Kent River, seem to have been put on hold—hopefully only temporarily. There are also plans afoot for a new distillery in Northumbria, over on the northeast coast of England, but, as yet, they are only in the early stages.

Kent River in the Lake District has been identified as a good source of water for whiskeymaking.





UNITED STATES

When European immigrants crossed the Atlantic, they carried with them the art of distilling from grain. Many of them set up home in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and began to make whiskey using rye instead of barley.

Rye grew well, and German settlers in southeastern Pennsylvania had a heritage of distilling schnapps from rye. However, as more settlers moved further west, they found that the most prolific crop was maize, or Indian corn, and so they employed that in their whiskeymaking.

By the late 18th century, Kentucky boasted a well-established whiskey business based on corn, and Bourbon County was renowned for the quality of its whiskey. Bourbon County is named after the French royal house of Bourbon, and earned its sobriquet because the French gave “rebel” colonists significant aid during the War of Independence. Once the war was over, gratitude was expressed by christening many new settlements and administrative areas with French names. When the then West Virginian county of Kentucky was subdivided in the 1780s, one new county was named in honor of the Bourbons, while Kentucky itself became a fully fledged state in its own right in 1792.

The limestone soil of Kentucky yields rich crops of corn, and it is no coincidence that most of the principal

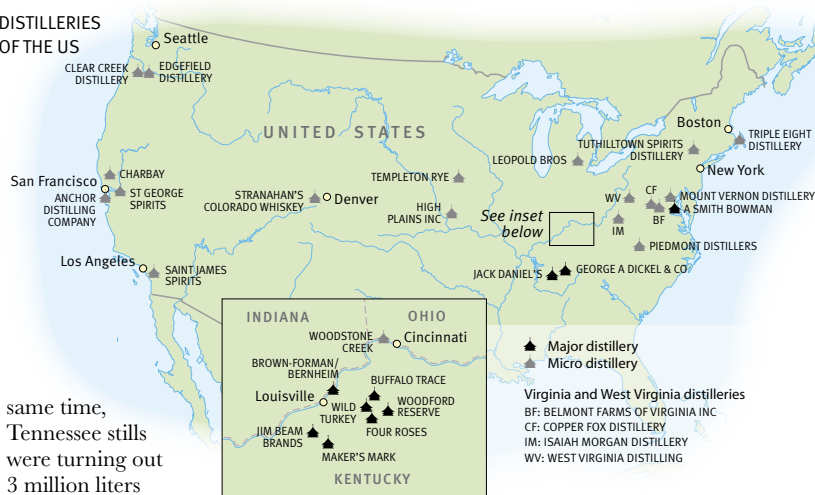
whiskey-producing states of the US, both past and present, partly overlie the same limestone shelf. Limestone also produces excellent spring water, and it is claimed that the calcium content of water that flows over limestone aids enzyme action during the fermentation stage of whiskey making.

THE FATHER OF BOURBON

Evan Williams is often credited with being the first commercial distiller in Kentucky, establishing a distillery in the Louisville area in 1783, but a Baptist minister by the name of the Reverend Elijah Craig is widely considered the “father of bourbon.” According to whiskey folklore, he instigated the practice of using charred barrels for maturation—a serendipitous discovery following a fire—leading to a distinctive style that helps to define bourbon.

The US soon developed a thriving commercial distilling industry, and in 1838 Samuel Morewood noted in his book *Inventions and Customs of Ancient and Modern Nations in the Manufacture and Use of Inebriating Liquors* the existence of 3,594 stills in Pennsylvania, 2,000 in Kentucky, 591 in New York (mostly producing rum and brandy), 560 in Connecticut, 343 in Ohio, and 126 in Georgia. Around the

Kentucky's Maker's Mark Distillery was established in 1805; while there are older distilleries in the US, this one has remained on its original site the longest.

DISTILLERIES
OF THE US

same time, Tennessee stills were turning out 3 million liters (801,000 gallons) of whiskey per year—approximately one third of the combined output of Kentucky and Virginia.

PROHIBITION

Despite the devastation wreaked by national Prohibition (*see p210*), Pennsylvania still had 42 working distilleries at the outbreak of World War II, but when Michter Distillery in Schaefferstown closed in 1988 the great tradition of Pennsylvanian distilling came to an end. Kentucky, too, has lost many distilleries, firstly due to Prohibition and then, in the succeeding years, as Scotch became the favored whisky in North America.

However, growth of interest in single malt from the 1980s onward has also led to a re-evaluation of America's whiskies,

Jim Beam's barrels are stacked upright, in keeping with a modern, palletized storage system (*see p33*).

which have begun to regain favor. Additionally, bourbon has successfully fought back against declining sales with small-batch bourbon, as a significant number of consumers tire of homogenized and mass-produced food and drink. Bottled from the vatting of a small number of particularly fine casks of spirit, small-batch bourbons were America's answer to Scotland's single malt whiskies. Accompanying this trend has been a welcome, if modest, revival in rye whiskies, which became all but extinct in the decades following Prohibition.

REDISCOVERING FLAVOR

During the Prohibition years, rye-flavored blends from Canada were smuggled into the US in massive quantities, and this may have caused confusion among consumers regarding the true character of rye. It may also have been the case that, as drinkers came to prefer increasingly bland drinks, so rye, with its distinctive bittersweet style, was just too characterful.

Today, Kentucky remains the heartland of American whiskey production, with all but three of the country's 13 full-scale, commercial distilling operations based in the state. However, many other states are home to micro, or "craft," distillers (*see p205*). Their ranks have been swelled significantly during the past few years, bringing diversity and dynamism to the American whiskey sector.



Just 40 to 50 barrels a day are filled at Woodford Reserve, the smallest distillery in Kentucky.

DISTILLERIES

The US has about a dozen major distilleries, most of which produce a variety of whiskies. Some also distill for other whiskey brands, which are rounded up on pp212–17; microdistilleries are covered on pp204–9.



A Smith Bowman moved to their new site in the 1980s, as northern Virginia grew more prosperous.

A. SMITH BOWMAN

✉ 1 Bowman Drive,
Fredericksburg, Virginia
🌐 www.asmithbowman.com

The current A. Smith Bowman Distillery can be found on the outskirts of Fredericksburg, in Virginia. However, the original operation was established by Abram Smith Bowman on Sunset Hills Farm, the Bowmans' family property in Fairfax County. That was in 1935, soon after the repeal of Prohibition (see p211).



**Virginia Gentleman 90 Proof
Small Batch Bourbon**

In response to the rapid commercial and residential growth of northern Virginia, the distilling operation was moved in 1988 to the historic city

of Fredericksburg in Spotsylvania County, 60 miles (100 km) from its original location. The semi-derelict, former FMC cellophane manufacturing plant was acquired for the purpose, and subsequently redeveloped into the new Smith Bowman Distillery.

The distillery is best known for its Virginia Gentleman Straight Bourbon Whiskey, and the plant has been owned by the Sazarc Company of New Orleans since its acquisition from the Bowman family in 2003. Sazarc also owns Buffalo Trace (see p188) in Kentucky.

Since the relocation to Fredericksburg in 1988, the first run of Virginia Gentleman has been fermented and distilled at the Buffalo Trace Distillery, before a second, slow run through a copper pot doubler still takes place on the Smith Bowman site. The whiskey is also matured here in charred, white oak barrels. Virginia Gentleman has a higher percentage of corn in

its mash bill than many bourbons, giving it a greater degree of sweetness.

🍷 **VIRGINIA GENTLEMAN**
90 PROOF SMALL-BATCH

BOURBON 45% ABV • This expression of Virginia Gentleman was launched in 1998. It features oak and corn on the nose, with oak, rye, and honey notes in the mouth. Spicy rye continues in the drying finish.

THE LAST DISTILLERY IN VIRGINIA

Until the opening of Mount Vernon Distillery in Fairfax County in 2006 (see p206), the A. Smith Bowman plant was the only surviving Virginian distillery, despite the state's long and distinguished whiskey-making heritage. During the first half of the 19th century, for example, Virginia produced more whiskey per annum than Kentucky.

The distilling equipment at the Smith Bowman plant survives from the 1930s.



BOURBON AND OTHER AMERICAN WHISKEY STYLES

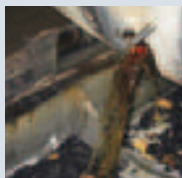
Bourbon is the most famous style of American whiskey. It takes its name from Bourbon County in Kentucky, although it is a popular misconception that bourbon must legally be distilled in Kentucky.

In fact, bourbon can be produced anywhere in the US if it complies with the requirements of component grains and maturation processes. First officially defined by law in 1964, bourbon is produced from a mash of not less than 51 percent corn grain. The raw spirit may not be distilled to more than 80 percent alcohol by volume, and maturation must be for a minimum of two years in new white oak barrels that have been charred in order to allow the spirit to interact more easily with the wood.

TENNESSEE WHISKEY As with bourbon, Tennessee whiskey is a legally-defined, distinct whiskey type, and is made from a fermented mash containing at least 51 percent corn. It is then filtered through a layer of maple charcoal before being aged for a minimum of two years in new, charred oak barrels.

RYE WHISKEY In the US rye whiskey has to be made from a minimum of 51 percent rye, and distilled at no more than 80 percent alcohol by volume.

The small-scale Woodford Reserve Distillery produces some of Kentucky's most highly regarded bourbon whiskey.



Bourbon pouring into charcoal-filtering vats at the Jim Beam plant.

There is no legal minimum maturation period, but it cannot be termed “straight rye” unless it has been aged for at least two years. Like bourbon, rye is aged in new, charred oak casks.

WHEAT WHISKEY Made with more than 51 percent wheat in its mashbill, wheat

whiskey is very rare, but the inclusion of wheat as one of the subsidiary grains in the mashbill—usually in place of rye—gives a sweetness and mellowness to whiskey.

CORN WHISKEY Legally, corn whiskey has to be made from not less than 80 percent corn and be matured in un-charred new barrels or used bourbon barrels. There is no specified minimum ageing period, and it is associated with “moonshine whiskey” (see p206), which is usually sold fresh and new.

BLENDED WHISKEY American blended whiskey comprises a proportion of rye or bourbon whiskey mixed with “grain neutral spirit,” or “light whiskey,” which has been matured in new, uncharred barrels or used oak barrels. The proportion of rye or bourbon may be as little as 20 percent.





Barton Distillery's buildings date from the 1940s, but distilling has been carried out here for considerably longer.

🍷 VIRGINIA GENTLEMAN STRAIGHT BOURBON 40% ABV • Aged for at least four years, Virginia Gentleman offers a light, sweet, toasted nut aroma. Spicy rye, sweet corn, honey, caramel, and cocoa are present on the smooth, well-balanced palate. The finish is complex, with rye, malt and vanilla.

BARTON

📍 1 Barton Road, Bardstown, Kentucky 40004

🌐 www.bartonbrands.com

Barton Brands Ltd. is a distilling subsidiary of the international Constellation Brands Inc. and is situated at Bardstown in Nelson County. Bardstown lies in the true heartland of bourbon country, and once boasted more than 20 distilleries. Today, the town hosts a week-long annual Kentucky Bourbon Festival every September.

Barton has what is probably the lowest profile of all the working distilleries in Kentucky, and has no visitor facilities. The present buildings date principally

from the 1940s, although distilling was taking place in the immediate vicinity in the 1880s, and local distillers Tom Moore and Ben Mattingly established the Tom Moore Distillery in 1889. This was one of the many casualties of Prohibition, but in 1934 the plant was acquired and modernized by Harry Teur. A decade later it was purchased by the Oscar Getz family, whose collection of Kentucky distilling memorabilia was formerly displayed at the distillery but now forms part of the Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History, which is located in Bardstown.

Barton's whiskeys are characterized by being comparatively youthful, dry, and aromatic, and the standard mashbill is made up of 74 percent corn, 16 percent rye, and 10 percent malted barley.

🍷 KENTUCKY GENTLEMAN KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

40% ABV • Made with a higher percentage of rye than most Barton whiskies, Kentucky Gentleman offers caramel and sweet oak aromas, and is oily, full-bodied, spicy, and fruity in the mouth. Rye, fruits, vanilla, and cocoa figure in an assertive finish.

🍷 KENTUCKY TAVERN KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

4-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV • Assertive and oaky on the nose, with apples and honey. Spices, oak, more apples, and a note of rye on the palate.

The medium-length finish is peppery and oaky.

🍷 RIDGEMOUNT RESERVE 1792 SMALL-BATCH BOURBON

8-YEAR-OLD 46.85% ABV

This comparatively delicate and complex bourbon boasts a soft nose with vanilla, caramel, leather, rye, corn, and spice notes. Oily and initially sweet on the palate, caramel and spicy rye develop along with a suggestion of oak. The finish is oaky, spicy, and quite long, with a sweet lingering hint of caramel.

Incidentally, the "1792" in the name refers to the year in which Kentucky became a state.

🍷 TEN HIGH KENTUCKY STRAIGHT SOUR MASH BOURBON 40% ABV

Grainy and slightly oaky on the nose, Ten High is notably malty on the palate, almost like a young malt Scotch, and has notes of vanilla and caramel.

The finish is quite short and drying.

🍷 TOM MOORE KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

40% ABV • Distinct notes of rye and herbs on the nose, along with vanilla, oak, and cooked berries. Medium-bodied, the palate is a blend of sugary sweetness and spicy rye bitterness. Toffee and ginger dominate the finish.

🍷 VERY OLD BARTON KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

6-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV
At a modest six years of age, this is comparatively old for a Barton whiskey, hence its name. The nose is rich, syrupy and spicy, with a prickle of salt. Big-bodied in the mouth, it is fruity and spicy, with spices and ginger in the drying finish.



Ridgemoor Reserve
1792 Small Batch
Bourbon



Very Old
Barton Kentucky
Straight Bourbon

BERNHEIM*See Heaven Hill***BOSTON***See Jim Beam***BROWN-FORMAN**

✉ 850 Dixie Highway
Louisville, Kentucky

🌐 www.brown-forman.com

The Brown-Forman Corporation, which dates back to 1870, also owns the Jack Daniel's and Woodford Reserve distilleries. The company's Louisville facility was established in 1935, when it was known as the Old Kentucky Distillery. Brown-Forman acquired it in 1940 and subsequently rebuilt the plant, ultimately rechristening it the Early Times distillery. Brown-Forman also owned the Old Forester Distillery in Louisville. That



In the fermenter (this one is at the Brown-Forman plant) yeast turns sugars from the grain into alcohol.

DISTILLERY ROW

The Brown-Forman Distillery is situated in the area of Louisville, Kentucky, known as "Distillery Row," where half a dozen distilleries once operated. Today, only the Brown-Forman plant and Bernheim (see p192) survive, but a century ago Louisville was awash with whiskey and home to more than 20 distilleries.



**Early Times
Kentucky
Whisky**

closed in 1979, after which production of Old Forester bourbon was switched to the Early Times Distillery. Today, Early Times Kentucky Whisky and Old Forester Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whisky are the principal output of that plant, and Brown-Forman favors the Scottish spelling of "whisky." It also favors the "Brown-Forman" name to the previous "Early Times."

The Early Times name lingers on, however, in one of the distillery's whiskies—which is a good thing as the brand name has been around since the 1860s and stems from an early settlement situated near Bardstown. Until the Prohibition period, Early Times was a blended whiskey—that is a mixture of straight whiskey and neutral spirit—but was subsequently produced as a straight whiskey.

Generally, it cannot be classified as a bourbon simply because some of the spirit is filled into used barrels, whereas bourbon legislation insists that all spirit must be matured in new charred oak (see p186). Early Times is therefore marketed as a "Straight Kentucky Whisky." The method of maturation—using spirit aged in used barrels for a minimum of three years blended with 5 to 7-year-old whiskey from new barrels—makes for a lighter-bodied, less woody spirit. This version of Early Times whisky was introduced in 1981 in order to compete with the increasingly popular light-bodied Canadian whiskies, but some "straight" Early Times is sold in overseas markets.

The Early Times mashbill is made up of 79 percent corn, 11 percent rye, and 10 percent malted barley, while Old Forester is made with around 72 percent corn; the remainder of the mashbill comprises 18 percent rye and 10 percent malted barley.

🍷 **EARLY TIMES KENTUCKY WHISKY**
OVER 3 YEARS-OLD 40% ABV
Quite light on the nose, with nuts and spices. The palate offers more nuts and spices, together with honey and butterscotch notes.

🍷 **OLD FORESTER KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKY**
OVER 8 YEARS-OLD 50% ABV
Much more complex than Early Times, with pronounced floral notes, vanilla, spice, fruit, chocolate, and menthol on the nose. Old Forester is notably fuller and fruitier than Early Times in the mouth, where rye and peaches vie with fudge, nutmeg, and oak. The finish offers more rye, toffee, liquorice, and drying oak.

BUFFALO TRACE

✉ Sazerac Company Inc.,
1001 Wilkinson Boulevard,
Frankfort, Kentucky

🌐 www.buffalotrace.com

🏠 Open to visitors

Buffalo Trace Distillery is located at a crossing point where, in times past, herds of migrating buffalo forded the Kentucky River. The trail these animals followed was known as the Great Buffalo Trace. A settlement grew up here, starting in 1775, and the first formal distillery was established in 1857 by the Blanton family. From 1886 it was owned by the "bourbon aristocrat" Edmund Haynes Taylor Jr, who christened the plant



**Old Forester
Straight
Bourbon**



Buffalo Trace is known for its sweet flavored bourbon, due to high corn levels in the mash bill.

OFC—initials which stand for Old-Fashioned Copper Distillery.

Another Kentucky gentleman, Colonel Albert Bacon Blanton, rose from office clerk in the 1890s to become distillery manager and part owner with George T. Stagg. He retired in 1952 after 55 years of service to the company, and is commemorated by a statue at the distillery and Blanton's Single Barrel Bourbon.

This was the first commercially available single barrel bourbon, and was introduced in 1984 by then master distiller Elmer T. Lee, who now also has a whiskey named in his honor.

The distillery has an annual capacity of 12 million gallons (54 million liters), and the house style is notably sweet, due to the inclusion of a high percentage of corn in the mashbill. Heavily charred barrels are used for maturation, and the spirit is chill-filtered before bottling rather than employing the more usual method of charcoal filtering.

The Four Roses brand has been around since the late 19th century.



**Buffalo Trace
Straight
Bourbon**

According to the company, this leads to a more flavorsome whiskey.

Buffalo Trace offers the broadest range of aged whiskey (from four to 23 years) in the US, and is the only US distillery using five recipes for whiskey products—namely two straight bourbons, one barley whiskey, one rye whiskey, and one wheated bourbon.

As well as the popular Buffalo Trace Kentucky Straight Bourbon, the distillery also produces several other brands, including Ancient Age (see pp212), which was in fact the name of this distillery until 1999. Since 2002, the distillery has also produced spirit for the Van Winkle brand of whiskeys (see p217).

BUFFALO & GINGER

Ingredients: 2 measures (50 ml) of Buffalo Trace
8 measures (200 ml) of dry ginger ale

Method: Pour the Buffalo Trace and dry ginger over about 6 ice cubes in a tall (Collins or high ball) glass and stir. Garnish with a wedge of lime, squeezed into the drink.

🍷 BUFFALO TRACE KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON 45% ABV

Aged for a minimum of nine years, Buffalo Trace has an aroma of gum, vanilla, mint, and molasses. Sweet, fruity and notably spicy on the palate, with emerging brown sugar and oak. Water releases intensive, fruity notes. The finish is long, spicy, and comparatively dry, with developing vanilla.

FOUR ROSES

✉ 1224 Bonds Mill Road
Lawrenceburg, Kentucky

🌐 www.fourroses.us

🏠 Visitor center at bottling and warehousing facility:
624 Lotus Road, HWY 1604,
Cox's Creek, Kentucky

Built to a striking Spanish-Mission style design in 1910, Four Roses Distillery is situated near the town of Lawrenceburg and takes its name from the brand





These barrels at Four Roses are vatted (combined with other barrels), prior to bottling.

trademarked by Paul Jones Jr. in 1888. Jones was born in Georgia, and legend has it that his fiancée wore a corsage of four red roses to indicate acceptance of his marriage proposal, hence the name given to his bourbon.

In 1922, the Paul Jones Company purchased the Frankfort Distilling Company, one of only six distilleries granted permission to operate through Prohibition in order to produce bourbon for medicinal purposes. Four Roses became the best-selling bourbon in the US in the years following Prohibition, and in 1943 the Canadian-

based Seagram organization purchased Frankfort, principally to acquire the Four Roses brand. However, for many years they used the Four Roses name for a blended whiskey in the US market, rather than a straight bourbon.

In February 2002, the Tokyo-based Kirin Brewery Company bought the Four Roses brand trademark, along with the production, bottling, and warehousing facilities, naming their new acquisition Four Roses Distillery LLC. Two years later they added a visitor center and shop. Kirin also reintroduced Four Roses into the US in the as a straight bourbon.



Four Roses Small Batch Bourbon

used the same grain source for 45 years, and two mash bills are in daily production. One mashbill contains much more rye (35 percent) than any other bourbon, giving a spicy, full-bodied taste. Five

proprietary yeast strains are used, and the combination of two mash bills and five yeasts gives 10 different bourbon flavors, which are usually blended to create one bottling style. Four Roses is also the only distillery that uses single-story rack warehouses to minimize variations in temperature. This promotes a more even maturation process.



Four Roses Single Barrel Bourbon

👉 **FOUR ROSES KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON**

WHISKEY 40% ABV

The original Four Roses offering,

Yellow Label, is aged for five to six years and is a light-bodied bourbon, with honey, burned sugar, and wood varnish on the nose. Water releases orange and cream notes. Fresh fruits, spice, and oak characterize the palate, while ginger nuts and drying oak figure in the medium finish.

👉 **FOUR ROSES SMALL BATCH BOURBON 45% ABV**

• The most recent addition to the Four Roses range, Small Batch is mild and refined on the nose, with nutmeg and restrained honey. Water releases delicate, toasty, floral notes. Bold and rich on the well-balanced palate, with spices, fruit, and honey flavors. The finish is long and insinuating, with developing notes of vanilla.

👉 **FOUR ROSES SINGLE BARREL BOURBON 43% ABV**

• Single Barrel was launched in 2004, and offers a rich, complex nose, with malt, fruits, spices, and fudge. Long and mellow, with vanilla, oak, and a hint of menthol. The finish is spicy and decidedly mellow.

George Dickel Distillery was built in the late 1950s, close to the site of the original Cascade Distillery.



GEORGE DICKEL

📍 1950 Cascade Hollow Road
Normandy, Tennessee

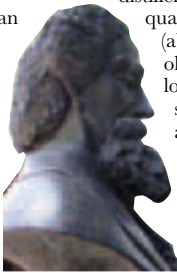
🏠 Open to visitors

Along with Jack Daniel's, George Dickel is the only surviving licensed, full-scale distillery in the state of Tennessee. Tennessee whiskey has enjoyed its own legal designation since 1941, and is characterized by the Lincoln County Process of charcoal mellowing, which sees the new spirit, or "white dog," filtered through a deep bed of sugar maple charcoal for several days before being filled into barrels. This process removes some of the heavier fusel oils, giving a cleaner spirit.

George Dickel Distillery is much smaller in scale than its neighbor Jack Daniel's, located some 10 miles (16 km) away, and lies 6 miles (10 km) northeast of the town of Tullahoma, between Nashville and Chattanooga. The distillery uses the Scottish "whisky" spelling because founder George A. Dickel insisted that the spirit he made was as smooth as the finest Scotch.

Dickel was German by birth, and was operating as a merchant in Nashville when he discovered Cascade Hollow and decided to make whiskey there. The firm of George A. Dickel & Co. was registered in 1870, and the Cascade Distillery was founded seven years later.

1910 saw the onset of Prohibition in Tennessee, and the Dickel operation moved to Kentucky, where distilling took place for a time at the Stitzel Weller plant in Louisville. In 1937, George A. Dickel & Co. was acquired by Schenley Distilling Co., who moved



Bust of George Dickel

MATURATION

When new white oak barrels are charred, compounds in the wood change and become "active," lending sweetness and color to the spirit, while the char itself removes "off notes." During maturation, usually in racked warehouses where barrels are stacked up to 24 high, the spirit experiences significant seasonal changes of temperature, with barrels high up in the warehouses subject to most heat, and therefore maturing faster than those lower down. Overall, the comparatively high levels of heat and humidity experienced in American warehouses mean that the spirit matures earlier than it would in countries such as Scotland and Ireland.

Barrels at a low level in the storehouse mature more slowly than those higher up.



production to the Ancient Age Distillery—now known as Buffalo Trace (see p188).

In 1958, Schenley decided that George Dickel should return to its roots, and a new distillery was built three-quarters of a mile (about 1 km) from the old Cascade Hollow location. Through a series of mergers and acquisitions, the Dickel Distillery and brand name subsequently came into the possession of Diageo. In character, George Dickel whiskies tend to be lighter,

more aromatic and less oily than those produced by neighbor Jack Daniel's.

🍷 **GEORGE DICKEL NO 8** 40% ABV
Sweet on the nose, with aromas of chocolate, cocoa, and vanilla. The palate of this whisky is quite sweet and well rounded, with fresh fruit and vanilla notes. The short finish features spices and charcoal.

🍷 **GEORGE DICKEL NO 12** 45% ABV

The nose is aromatic, with fruit, fresh leather, butterscotch, a whiff of charcoal, and vanilla too. The palate is also rich and complex, with rye, chocolate, fruit, and vanilla. The finish offers vanilla toffee, and drying oak.

HEAVEN HILL

📍 Bernheim Distillery,
1701 West Breckinridge Street
Louisville, Kentucky

🌐 www.heaven-hill.com

🏠 Heaven Hill Distilleries Bourbon Heritage Center, 1311 Gilkey Run Road, Bardstown, Kentucky

For most of its existence Heaven Hill has focused on its flagship bourbon labels, Evan Williams and Elijah Craig (see pp213–14). However, it is also now a major supplier of own-label whiskey to other customers. The company's speciality is older, higher proof bourbons, which are traditional in character,

HEAVEN HILL AND THE BERNHEIM DISTILLERY

A Heaven Hill Distillery had been built in 1890, but the present Heaven Hill company was established in 1935, soon after the repeal of Prohibition, by five Shapira brothers. They constructed a distillery close to the Loretto road, just south of Bardstown.

Descendants of the Shapira brothers control the firm to this day, and Heaven Hill is America's largest independent producer of distilled spirits to remain in family ownership. It is also the last family-owned distillery in Kentucky.

The history of whiskey-making features many distillery fires, but the most spectacular and destructive in recent times occurred on November 7, 1996, when the Heaven Hill Distillery and warehouses were almost completely destroyed by fire, and over 75,000 gallons (340,000 liters) of maturing spirit was lost.

While future plans were being considered, production capacity was provided for Heaven Hill by Brown-Forman and Jim Beam, and eventually it was decided that rather than rebuild on the old site, Diageo's Bernheim Distillery in Louisville would be purchased instead.

Bernheim was built in 1992, and is one of the most technologically



**Bernheim
Original**

advanced distilleries in the States. It was constructed on the site of the old Astor and Belmont distilleries (respectively home to Henry Clay Bourbon and the Old Charter and IW Harper brands), which the Guinness subsidiary United Distillers had purchased and subsequently demolished. United Distillers also closed the Stitzel-Weller Distillery in Shively and concentrated production of Old Fitzgerald, Old Weller, and Rebel Yell in the new Bernheim plant.

In 1997 Guinness merged with GrandMet to form the giant Diageo organization. Bourbon was not a global priority for Diageo, whose US distilling interests were soon concentrated around the George Dickel brand of Tennessee whiskey (*see p191*), along with a number of bourbons that were made under contract. This paved the way for Heaven Hill's acquisition of the Bernheim Distillery in 1999.

A stylish new heritage center now stands close to the site of the old Heaven Hill Distillery.



full-bodied, and complex. Heaven Hill is also the only national producer of corn whiskeys left, including both aged brands, such as Mellow Corn, and un-aged bottlings such as Georgia Moon.

While fermenting, mashing, and distilling the Heaven Hill range occurs at Bernheim, ageing, bottling, and shipping still take place in Bardstown. The Bourbon Heritage Center is also there, among Heaven Hill's "rickhouses," where the world's second-largest stock of bourbon (as many as 600,000 barrels) matures.

Alongside Bernheim Original Straight—the only straight wheat whiskey in the US market—the distillery also produce a couple of interesting rye whiskeys. Rittenhouse Rye, once associated with the rye whiskey-making heartland of Pennsylvania, now survives in Kentucky, its mashbill comprising 51 percent rye, 37 percent corn, and 12 percent barley. Complementing Rittenhouse's "Pennsylvania style," a "Maryland," or "Potomac style" of rye also survives in the shape of Pikesville Supreme Straight.

Among the Heaven Hill bourbons is Very Special Old Fitzgerald—a complex and well-balanced spirit, made with some wheat in the mashbill rather than rye. Another in the range is Henry McKenna Single Barrel, which uses a family recipe brought by McKenna from Ireland in 1837 and first used in the US when he settled in Fairfield, Kentucky and founded a distillery in 1855.

🍷 **BERNHEIM ORIGINAL STRAIGHT WHEAT WHISKEY** 45% ABV • Bernheim exhibits toast and butter on the spicy nose, with freshly-sawn wood, toffee, vanilla and a hint of



mint on the palate. The finish is good and long, drying, and nicely spicy.

🍷 **GEORGIA MOON** 40% ABV Bottled in a mason jar, and with a label that promises that the contents have spent less than 30 days maturing, Georgia Moon harks back to the old moonshining days. Consequently, drinkers should not expect something sophisticated from this one! After an initial tang of sour liquor on the nose, the smell of sweet corn follows. The palate suggests cabbage water and plums, plus developing sweeter "candy corn" notes. The finish is extremely short.

🍷 **HEAVEN HILL OLD STYLE BOURBON** 4 YEAR-OLD

40% ABV • This is an excellent and competitively priced "entry level" bourbon,

with a nose of oranges and corn bread, a sweet, oily mouth-feel, with vanilla and corn featuring on the well-balanced palate.

🍷 **HENRY MCKENNA SINGLE BARREL KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY**

10 YEAR-OLD 50% ABV

This single barrel whiskey boasts an interesting blend of citrus fruits, charcoal, vanilla, and caramel on the nose. The contrasts continue in the palate,

where spices and charred oak vie with mint and honey.

Heaven Hill racks its barrels three high on 16 floors; summer temperatures reach 120°F (48.9°C) at the top.

🍷 **MELLOW CORN KENTUCKY STRAIGHT CORN WHISKEY** 50% ABV Wood varnish and vanilla, along with floral and herbal notes, are what greet you on the nose. The palate is big and oily and fruity, with toffee apples. More fruit, cinder toffee, and an understated trace of vanilla complete the finish. Young and boisterous.

🍷 **PIKESVILLE SUPREME STRAIGHT RYE WHISKEY**

4 YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

The nose presents bubble gum, fruit, and wood varnish, while on the palate there is more bubble gum, spice, oak, and an overt vanilla theme.

The finish mixes more lingering vanilla



Rittenhouse Rye Whiskey

with ripe oranges.

🍷 **RITTENHOUSE RYE WHISKEY**

50% ABV • The nose is notably spicy, with nuts and oranges.

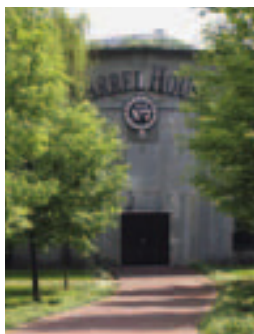
On the palate, powerful spices and oak meet lemon and then a much sweeter note of lavender and violet. As for the finish: it is a long, bitter rye classic.

🍷 **VERY SPECIAL OLD FITZGERALD KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY** 12-YEAR-OLD 45% ABV

The nose is rich, fruity, and leathery, while the palate exhibits sweet and fruity notes that are balanced by spices and oak. The finish is long and drying, with vanilla fading to oak.



Heaven Hill Old Style Bourbon



There are 76 barrel houses at Jack Daniel's, holding 42 million gallons (190 million liters) of spirit.

JACK DANIEL'S

☒ 280 Lynchburg Road
Lynchburg, Tennessee

📞 www.jackdaniels.com

📍 Open to visitors

The Jack Daniel's enterprise operates on a grand scale, with a distillery output of some 20 million gallons (90 million liters) of alcohol per annum. Ten million cases of whiskey are exported annually to 150 different countries, with



Jack Daniel's
Old No. 7

around 50 percent destined for Europe. Seventy-six warehouses contain 42 million gallons (190 million liters) of maturing spirit, and seven on-site bottling lines are in operation.

The Jack Daniel's mashbill is high on corn, which constitutes 80 percent of the total; the remainder comprises 12 percent rye and eight percent barley malt. Like George Dickel, Jack Daniel's uses a version of the Lincoln County Process of charcoal

mellowing prior to being filled into barrels.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of visitors flock to Lynchburg in pilgrimage to Jack Daniel's—the man and the whiskey. Ironically, while they are able to purchase any number of varied souvenirs emblazoned with the Jack Daniels' name, they cannot buy the whiskey. Lynchburg is situated in Moore County, which is officially “dry.”

Jack Daniel's was able to resume distilling in Tennessee in 1938.



Gentleman Jack

In fact, of Tennessee's 95 counties, spirits may legally be distilled only in Moore, Coffee, and Lincoln counties.

📍 **JACK DANIEL'S OLD NO. 7** 43% ABV

Jack Daniel's presents a powerful nose of vanilla, smoke, and liquorice. On the palate it offers oily cough mixture and treacle, with a

final kick of maple syrup and burnt wood in the surprisingly long finish. Not particularly complex, but muscular and decidedly singular.

📍 **GENTLEMAN JACK** 40% ABV

Gentleman Jack is characterized by being charcoal-mellowed twice: once before barreling and again after ageing for about four years. The result is a nose that is considerably more mellow, muted, and fruity than that of Old No. 7. The palate yields more fruit, along with caramel, liquorice, vanilla, and a whiff of smoke.

📍 **JACK DANIEL'S SINGLE BARREL TENNESSEE WHISKEY** 47% ABV

Introduced in 1997, Single Barrel is charming and smooth on the nose, with notes of peach, vanilla, nuts, and oak. The comparatively dry palate offers depth, richness, and elegance, with oily corn, liquorice, malt, and oak. Malt, oak, and a touch of rye spice are present in the lengthy finish.

JIM BEAM

☒ Clermont and Boston Distilleries

Clermont Distillery, 149 Happy Hollow Road, Clermont, Kentucky

📞 www.jimbeam.com

📍 Open to visitors

The principal Jim Beam Distillery is located at Clermont, in Bullit County, 25 miles (40 km) south of Louisville in Kentucky, and not far from the “bourbon capital” of Bardstown.



THE JACK DANIEL'S STORY

Jack Daniel's has become a truly iconic brand, known all over the world. It is America's best-selling whiskey, and is famous as the rock star's drink of choice. Often consumed with cola, "J.D." is one of the few brown spirits consistently popular with younger drinkers.

The story of Jack Daniel's begins with the birth of Jasper Newton Daniel in Lincoln County, Tennessee in 1846. Legend has it that "Jack" did not get along with his stepmother, and at the age of six left home. He eventually came to live with local farmer and Lutheran lay preacher Dan Call. Call ran a whiskey still, and one of his slaves, Nearest Green, taught young Jack the art of distilling. When pressure from Call's congregation led him to choose religion over whiskeymaking, he sold the still to Jack, who was aged just 14 at the time. Despite his youth, Jack Daniel clearly already possessed the sharp business brain that was to see him succeed so well in the future. He soon moved the still, settling on a site next to Cave Spring, in an area close to Lynchburg known as The Hollow. Jack was drawn to the area by the spring's abundant supply of pure limestone water, and he christened the new plant the Jack Daniel Old Time Distillery.

In 1887 Jack was joined in the business by his nephew, Lem Motlow, and it was Lem who was responsible for moving the distilling operation to

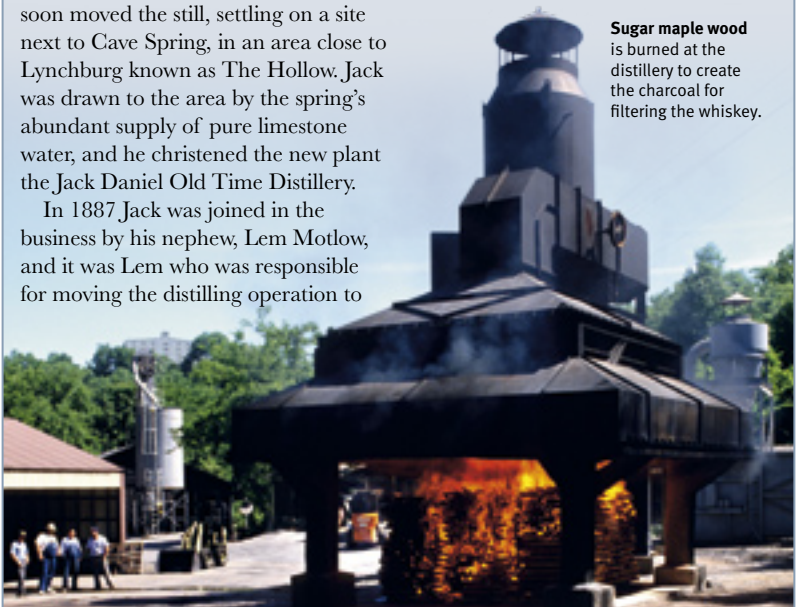


Jack Daniel's statue now resides in the visitors center.

St. Louis in 1910, when Tennessee went "dry." Jack died shortly after, in 1911, following a bizarre accident in which he kicked a stubborn safe door in a temper and got a foot infection, which led first to amputation, then to gangrene, and finally to death.

The distillery continued to operate in St. Louis until 1919, when National Prohibition intervened. It was not until 1938 that Motlow and his sons were granted permission to recommence distilling at the Old Time Distillery. They developed the company extremely successfully in the difficult years after the repeal of Prohibition, and in 1956 sold the enterprise to the Brown-Forman Distillery Corporation for \$18 million.

Sugar maple wood is burned at the distillery to create the charcoal for filtering the whiskey.



THE JIM BEAM STORY

The origins of Jim Beam date back to the 18th century, when German-born farmer and miller Jacob Boehm traveled west into Bourbon County from Virginia, carrying with him his copper pot still. There he settled down and created a small-scale distillery.

Jacob is reputed to have sold his first barrel of whiskey for cash in 1795. He subsequently moved his distilling operation to Washington County when he inherited land there from his father-in-law.

Jacob had two sons, named John and David, and during David Beam's time at the helm, the distillery adopted the "Old Tub Distillery" name. In 1854 David's son, who was also named David, moved the venture to Nelson County, where the Clear Springs Distillery was established close to a railroad.

Jim Beam himself was Jacob Boehm's great-grandson, and was christened James Beauregard Beam. He entered the family firm in 1880 at the age of 16, and trade prospered for the distillery in the years before Prohibition forced the closure of



Jim Beam and associates
at the Clermont Distillery
in Kentucky.

Clear Springs. Jim Beam established the present Clermont Distillery close to Clear Springs soon after the repeal of Prohibition at the end of 1933, despite being 70 years old at the time. Jim died in 1947, five years after the Jim Beam

name began to be used on the bottle labels. The family connection carries on to this day through Fred Noe, great-grandson of Jim and a seventh generation Beam family member. Fred's father was the late, legendary Booker Noe, a larger-than-life figure who is acknowledged as one of the true greats of bourbon distilling, and the man responsible for developing small-batch bourbon.

In contrast to the company's industrial-scale distilleries, the Jim Beam American Outpost recalls the older traditions of distilling at a leisurely pace.



The Jim Beam American Outpost is a major tourist attraction, though the Clermont Distillery itself is staunchly industrial in appearance and scale.

Jim Beam is the best-selling bourbon brand in the world, and the James B Beam Distilling Company has belonged to Fortune Brands Inc. (formerly American Brands) since 1967. It was formerly in family ownership for around 150 years before being sold in 1945 to Harry Blum of Chicago, previously a partner in the company for several years.

Illinois-based Fortune Brands actually operates two Jim Beam distilleries: at Clermont and in nearby Boston, where the distillery dates from 1953. Together, the two plants have an annual capacity of 9 million gallons (nearly 40 million liters). All of the spirit bottled as Booker's (see p213) is distilled at the Boston Distillery and Jim Beam White Label is a 50/50 mix of bourbon from Clermont and Boston.

In 1987, American Brands acquired Frankfort-based National Distillers, and with it the Old Crow, Old Taylor and Old Grand-Dad distilleries and brands (see p216). The three distilleries

were closed down, and their whiskies are now distilled in Jim Beam's distilleries at Clermont and Boston.

The Jim Beam house style is characterized by high proportions of rye and corn in the mash bill; the rest is made up of malted barley. In addition to the White and Black labels, and the Kentucky Straight Bourbon and Straight Rye, the distillery also produces a range of specialist whiskies,

such as Baker's Kentucky, Booker's Kentucky, Basil Hayden's, Knob Creek, Old Crow, Old Grand-Dad, and Old Taylor.

Information about these bourbons can all be found in the Brands section (pp212–17).

JIM BEAM WHITE LABEL KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

4 YEAR-OLD 40% ABV
Vanilla and delicate floral notes on the nose. Initially sweet, with restrained vanilla, then drier, oaky notes develop, fading into furniture polish and soft malt in the finish.



Jim Beam White Label



Jim Beam Black Label



Nosing is vital to monitor consistency in any distillery, and Jim Beam is no exception.

JIM BEAM BLACK LABEL KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY 8 YEAR-OLD 45% ABV

Greater depth than White Label, with more complex fruit and vanilla notes, along with liquorice, vanilla, and sweet rye.

JIM BEAM'S CHOICE KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY 5 YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

In the style of Tennessee whiskey, this is charcoal-filtered, after maturing. It is soft and silky, with caramel notes.

JIM BEAM STRAIGHT RYE WHISKEY 40% ABV

Light, perfumed, and aromatic on the nose, with lemon and mint. Oily in the mouth, with soft fruits, honey, and rye on the palate; the finish is drying and spicy.

Jim Beam's Clermont Distillery is industrial in look and scale.



MAKER'S MARK

✉ 3350 Burks Springs Road
Loretto, Kentucky

🌐 www.makersmark.com

🏠 Open to visitors

Maker's Mark Distillery is located on the banks of Hardin's Creek, near Loretto, in Marion County, and was established in 1805 as a distillery and grist mill. It is the oldest working distillery on its original site in the US, and in 1980 was declared a National Historic Landmark.

Exactly two centuries earlier, Robert Samuels had migrated to Kentucky, where he farmed and distilled whiskey. In 1844 Robert's

MAKER'S MARK BOURBON MANHATTAN

Ingredients:

2 measures (50 ml) of
Maker's Mark Bourbon
1 measure (25 ml) of
sweet vermouth
2 dashes of
Angostura bitters
½ (about 10 ml) of
maraschino cherry syrup
(from the jar)

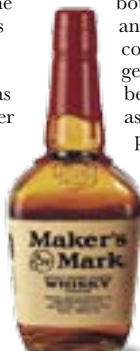
Method: put all ingredients into a mixing glass filled with ice; stir thoroughly for about 30 seconds. Strain into a cocktail glass, and garnish with a twist of orange (squeezed) and a maraschino cherry.



grandson, T.W. Samuels, built a commercial distillery at Deatsville, Kentucky, and the "secret" family mash recipe was subsequently handed down from one generation of distillers to the next.

In 1943, the old Deatsville distillery was sold, and a decade later Bill Samuels Sr. purchased the dilapidated Star Hill Farm and the Happy Hollow Distillery near Loretto. He was eager to create a particularly smooth and refined bourbon, and using the example of the Old Fitzgerald brand, he developed a new recipe based on locally grown corn and malted barley, coupled with red winter wheat, rather than the traditional rye. This had the effect of reducing the "burn" left by many

Every aspect of Maker's Mark, right down to these spirits safes, was duplicated to enlarge the distillery in 2001.



**Maker's Mark
Straight Bourbon**

bourbons of the time, and resulted in a comparatively soft and gentle spirit, which becomes very mellow as it matures. Samuels perfected the recipe, not in a distillery but in the family kitchen, baking bread and experimenting with different grains.

The Scottish spelling of "whisky" has been employed since the outset in recognition of the family's Scottish ancestry. It is Bill Samuels' wife, Marge, who is credited with naming the new whiskey. As a collector of pewter, she was accustomed to searching for "the mark of the maker." She was also a

The original barrel warehouses at Maker's Mark Hardin's Creek site are about 100 years old.



collector of bottles of cognac, many of which were sealed with colorful wax, and the hand-dipped red wax seal was soon adopted for Maker's Mark bottles.

In 1981 Maker's Mark passed out of family ownership to Hiram Walker & Sons, and ultimately came into the hands of Allied Domecq. Since 2005, however, Maker's Mark has been owned by Fortune Brands Inc., who also own Jim Beam.

Due to the growing popularity of the whiskey, the Hardin's Creek site was expanded in 2000–2001, duplicating, in exact detail, the distillery as it had been restored in the 1960s. This doubled production capacity.

MAKER'S MARK KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKY

45% ABV • A subtle, complex, clean nose, with vanilla and spice, a delicate floral note of roses, plus lime and cocoa beans. Medium in body, Maker's Mark offers a palate of fresh fruit, spices, eucalyptus, and ginger cake. The finish features more spices, fresh oak with a hint of smoke, and a final flash of peach cheesecake. A delicate and circumspect bourbon.



Wild Turkey Distillery has been owned since 1980 by the French drinks company Pernod Ricard.

WILD TURKEY

- 📍 US Highway 62 East
Lawrenceburg, Kentucky
- 🌐 www.wildturkeybourbon.com
- 🏠 Open to visitors

Wild Turkey's Boulevard Distillery is situated on Wild Turkey Hill, above the Kentucky River in Anderson County. The plant was first established in 1905 by three Ripy brothers, whose family had been making whiskey in the nearby distilling center of Tyrone since 1869.

Today, Wild Turkey is created under the watchful eye of legendary master distiller Jimmy Russell—one of the great characters of the bourbon world, and now

TURKEY COLLINS

Ingredients:

2 measures (50 ml) of Wild Turkey
1 measure (25 ml) of lemon juice
1 measure (25 ml) of sugar syrup
5 measures (125 ml) of soda water

Method:

Mix the ingredients in a shaker, then pour into a tall (Collins) glass over ice. Garnish with a maraschino cherry, an orange slice, and a lemon slice.

a leading ambassador for the bourbon industry all over the world. James C. Russell, to give him his full name, has worked at Wild Turkey since 1954, and both his father and grandfather were also distillers. Fittingly, Jimmy's son Eddie has followed in the family tradition too.

Wild Turkey uses the smallest percentage of corn of any Kentucky bourbon, with greater quantities of rye and malt to achieve a fuller bodied and generally more flavorsome whiskey. The same mashbill and yeast strain is used for the entire Wild Turkey range.

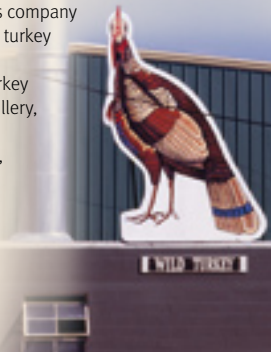
The spirit is distilled at a comparatively low proof (56–57.5 percent) because Jimmy Russell likens making great whiskey to making great soup: "If you cook it longer at a lower temperature, you retain the best flavors." An additional influence on the character of the matured spirit is that the "white dog" (the new make, clear spirit) is filled into heavily-charred barrels. The heavy charring contributes significantly to Wild Turkey's signature flavor.

The most readily available expression of Wild Turkey in most markets, "101," is notable for possessing a remarkably soft yet rich aroma for such a high proof

THE WILD TURKEY NAME

The Wild Turkey brand was conceived in 1940, when Thomas McCarthy, president of Austin Nichols (a specialist wine and spirits business), chose a quantity of 101 proof (50.5 percent ABV) straight bourbon from his company stocks to take along on a wild turkey shooting weekend. For many years what is now the Wild Turkey Distillery was J.T.S. Brown Distillery, and produced Wild Turkey bourbon under contract. Then, in 1971, it was acquired by Austin Nichols Distilling Co., and the name was changed.

The **Wild Turkey** brand has been owned by Pernod Ricard since 1980.





Wild Turkey's spirits safe, where the stillsman can test the flowing spirit and make the "cut."

whiskey—no doubt due in part to its eight years of maturation. Wild Turkey "80" was introduced to the range in 1974, and, according to Jimmy Russell, this expression is ideal served on the rocks, and perfect for drinkers who enjoy their bourbon with a mixer.

The Kentucky Spirit is a single barrel whiskey, with each barrel being personally selected by Jimmy Russell, who sets out to choose examples that are fuller bodied than normal, with rich vanilla flavors and a hint of sweetness. Jimmy maintains that 50.5 percent (101 proof) is the optimum bottling strength for Wild Turkey whiskey.

Launched in 1991, Rare Breed comprises whiskeys aged from six to 12 years. Russell himself believes that

10 years is a wonderful stage of maturity for a bourbon. His son Eddie agrees, and indeed it was Eddie who suggested offering the 10 year-old expression.

▮ **WILD TURKEY KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY 80 PROOF** 40% ABV • The soft, sweet nose hints at corn, while on the palate this is a very traditional whiskey, nicely balancing sweet caramel and vanilla flavors.

▮ **WILD TURKEY KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY 101 PROOF** 8-YEAR-OLD 50.5% ABV

The nose offers caramel, vanilla, fresh, soft fruits, and a touch of spice, while in the mouth this is a decidedly full-bodied, rich, and robust bourbon, with more vanilla, fresh fruit, and spice, as well as brown sugar and honey. Notes of oak develop in the long and powerful, yet smooth finish.

▮ **WILD TURKEY KENTUCKY SPIRIT** 50.5% ABV • The nose is fresh and attractive, with oranges and notes of rye, while on the palate it is complex, with almonds, honey, toffee, more oranges, and a hint of leather. The finish is long and initially quite sweet,

gradually darkening and becoming a little treacly.

▮ **WILD TURKEY RARE BREED** 54.2% ABV • As with "101," both the aroma and flavor are notably smooth for a high-strength bourbon.

The complex nose is initially slightly assertive, with nuts, oranges, spices, and floral notes. Honey, oranges, vanilla, tobacco, mint, and molasses make for a complex palate to match the nose. The finish is long and nutty, with spicy and peppery rye.

▮ **WILD TURKEY RUSSELL'S RESERVE 10 YEAR-OLD**

50.5% ABV • The nose boasts toffee, vanilla, oak, rye, and a hint of worn leather, while the massive body gives spicy and citric notes

in the mouth, with traces of cumin and almonds.

▮ **WILD TURKEY KENTUCKY STRAIGHT RYE** 50.5% ABV • Wild

Turkey's offering of a straight rye has a pleasingly firm nose that's crammed with fruit. The body is full and rich, while the well balanced palate offers intense spices and ripe fruit. The finish is profoundly spicy and nutty.



Wild Turkey 8 Year-Old Bourbon

WOODFORD'S PEPPER AND CROW

Woodford Reserve traces its origins back to 1797, when Elijah Pepper moved from Virginia to Versailles, where he made corn whiskey in a small distillery behind the county courthouse. In 1812 he moved his operation to the present site on Glenn's Creek in order to take advantage of the excellent supply of pure limestone water.

Two years after Elijah Pepper's death in 1831, his son Oscar hired Scottish-born chemist James Crow to work at the "Old Pepper Distillery" (later christened the "Oscar Pepper Distillery"). The bourbon industry owes much to the work of Crow. He recognized the importance of consistency in whiskeymaking, perfected the "sour-mash" process, and discovered the benefits of maturing spirit in charred oak barrels. Crow worked as head distiller for 29 years.

The whiskey produced on the stills at Woodford Reserve became a favorite of writers Mark Twain and Walt Whitman, and of the 7th US president, Andrew Jackson.





Woodford Reserve is the new incarnation of a distillery that had lay silent since the early 1970s.

WOODFORD RESERVE

✉ 7855 McCracken Pike
Versailles, Kentucky

🌐 www.woodfordreserve.com

👤 Open to visitors

Woodford Reserve is the smallest distillery operating in Kentucky, and is unique in using a triple distillation method. This employs three copper pot stills—built in Scotland by the renowned Speyside coppersmiths Forsyth's. Woodford is the only bourbon distillery to use exclusively copper pot stills in the distillation process, the last having been the Old Crow distillery prior to its closure during Prohibition.

Woodford Reserve is operated by the Louisville-based Brown-Forman Distillery Corporation, which also owns Jack Daniel's. The plant stands on the banks of Glenn's Creek, near the late 19th-century town of Versailles, in the heart of Kentucky's bluegrass thoroughbred racehorse breeding country.

The distillery was in the Pepper family from the late 18th century until the 1870s, when it was acquired by Frankfort banker James Graham and French wine merchant Leopold Labrot. Apart from during the hiatus of the Prohibition years, they ran the plant until 1940.

Then in 1941 Brown-Forman bought the site and more than 25,000 barrels of high quality bourbon from Labrott & Graham for an extremely modest \$75,000. However, in the postwar years bourbon sales went into decline, and many distilleries closed down. The small distillery by Glenn's Creek was no exception, and in 1972 it was sold to a company called Freeman Hockensmith, who proceeded to make the car fuel substitute gasohol in the distillery for a short period. When that venture failed, the distillery lay silent for the next 23 years.

However, when the distillery had been sold to Hockensmith, it was with the proviso that Brown-Forman could buy it back at a future date. So when, in 1994, Hockensmith died—and with interest in small-batch bourbon rising—Brown-Forman bought back the semi-derelict site, and went on to spend \$10.5 million restoring it.

After almost a quarter century, the Labrott & Graham distillery reopened, and in 2003 the present Woodford Reserve name was adopted for the distillery and its whiskey. Between 40 and 50 barrels a day are filled here, and to ensure

THE MINT JULEP

Woodford Reserve was introduced to the UK in 1998, and soon became a favorite with cocktail makers. Here's the distillery's recipe for a classic Mint Julep.

Ingredients:

2 measures (50 ml) of Woodford Reserve
2 heaped teaspoons of caster sugar
10–12 mint leaves

Method: into a large glass, pour the sugar, a splash of the Woodford, and the mint leaves. Muddle the mint (using the end of a rolling pin or similar object) to release the oils. Fill the glass with crushed ice and pour in the rest of the bourbon. Stir briskly and top up the glass with more crushed ice if necessary. Garnish with a couple of large sprigs of mint.

consistency, the Woodford spirit is blended with a quantity of Old Forrester Straight Bourbon from Brown-Forman's Louisville Distillery (*see p188*); the resultant whiskey is bottled at six to seven years of age. The mashbill comprises 72 percent corn, 18 percent rye, and 12 percent malted barley.

WOODFORD RESERVE

DISTILLER'S SELECT KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON 45.2% ABV

Elegant yet robust on the nose, perfumed, with milk chocolate raisins, dried fruit, burned sugar, ginger, and a little saddle soap. Complex palate: fragrant, fruity with raspberries, camomile, and ginger. The finish displays lingering vanilla notes and peppery oak. Cognac-like until the vanilla kicks in.



Woodford's Distiller's Select Bourbon





The fertile fields of Kentucky form the heartland of American whiskey production, providing the grain for distilling as well as the pure spring water that is so essential to whiskey making.



Microdistilleries

A microdistillery, or craft distillery, is defined as one that manufactures fewer than 500 barrels of spirit per year. A decade ago there were only a handful, while today there are more than 60, producing a wide range of spirits.

St. George Spirits was established in 1982 after its founder Jörg Rupf gave up studying law at the University of California.

ANCHOR DISTILLING COMPANY

☒ 1705 Mariposa Street
San Francisco, California
📞 www.anchorbrewing.com

Fritz Maytag is one of the pioneers of the American micro drinks movement. As the man who's been largely responsible for the revival of craft brewing in the US, he has been running San Francisco's historic Anchor Steam Brewery since 1965. He also makes York Creek wine and port at his vineyard, which straddles the famous Napa and Sonoma wine-producing areas just to the north of San Francisco.

In 1994 Maytag added a small distillery to his brewery on San Francisco's Portrero Hill. His aim in doing this has been to "re-create the original whiskey of America." And by that, he means making small batches of spirit in traditional pot stills, using 100 percent rye malt.

🍷 **OLD PORTRERO SINGLE MALT WHISKEY** 62.1% ABV • Aged for one year only in new, lightly-toasted oak barrels, Old Portrero Single Malt is described by Maytag as having an "18th-century style." It is floral and nutty on the nose, with vanilla and spice. Oily and smooth on the palate, with mint, honey,

chocolate, and pepper evident in the lengthy finish.

🍷 **OLD PORTRERO SINGLE MALT STRAIGHT RYE WHISKEY** 62.6% ABV Aged for a little longer—three years in this case—in new, charred oak barrels, this "19th-century style" whiskey, to quote Maytag again, boasts nuts, buttery vanilla, sweet oak, and pepper on the nose. Complex in the mouth—oily, sweet and spicy, with caramel, oak, and spicy rye notes in the finish.

BELMONT FARMS OF VIRGINIA, INC.

☒ 13490 Cedar Run Road
Culpeper, Virginia
📞 www.virginiamoonshine.com

For the past 15 years, corn grown on Belmont Farm has been used to make Virginia Lightning Corn Whiskey (50 percent ABV). The mash is cooked to an old family recipe, and is then distilled in a 2,000-gallon (9,000-liter) copper still that dates back to the 1930s. Finally, it passes through a "doubler" ("analyzer still" in the UK) to increase its strength and remove impurities before being bottled.

CHARBAY

☒ 4001 Spring Mountain Road
Napa Valley, St. Helena, California
📞 www.charbay.com

Father Miles and son Marko Karakasevic are 12th and 13th-generation winemakers and distillers. Among their spirits is Charbay Double Barrel Hop-Flavored Whiskey, which is double distilled using European malted barley in the mash, and hops for aromatic effect. This is true small-batch distilling, with just 24 barrels being filled from the first batch of spirit, which is offered at barrel strength.

🍷 **CHARBAY DOUBLE-BARREL RELEASE ONE** 64% ABV • Honey, vanilla, oranges, oak, and smoky spice on the nose; citrus spice and honey on palate; long, vanilla and dried fruit finish.

CLEAR CREEK

☒ 2389 NW Wilson Street
Portland, Oregon
📞 www.clearcreekdistillery.com

Steve McCarthy established Clear Creek Distillery more than 20 years ago because he wanted to find the best use for fruit from the



Clear Creek's McCarthy's Single Malt

McCarthy family's orchard. During his travels in Europe, he became acquainted with a number of traditional European spirits, among them an *eau de vie* (spirit) made from Williams pears. He has now been distilling for 10 years, and his whiskey is made from peat-malted barley bought in from Scotland. In fact, he claims that "the whiskey would be a single malt Scotch if [only] Oregon were Scotland."

McCarthy's Oregon Single Malt Whiskey is close in style to Lagavulin single malt from Islay (see p104). It is initially matured in ex-sherry casks for two or three years, then for six to 12 months in barrels made from air-dried Oregon oak.

|| MCCARTHY'S OREGON SINGLE MALT WHISKEY 40% ABV

Kippery and spicy on the nose—with a hint of sulfur, peat, and vanilla—Oregon is big-bodied and oily. The meaty palate is smoky-sweet, with dry oak, malt, spice, and salt in the lengthy finish.

COPPER FOX

✉ 9 River Lane
Sperryville, Virginia
🌐 www.copperfox.biz

In 2000 Rick Wasmund paid a visit to Scotland with the idea of starting up his own microdistillery back in Virginia on his return. He spent six weeks working at Bowmore Distillery on Islay (see p99), then purchased an existing Virginia distillery to launch Copper Fox Whiskey in the spring of 2003. Wasmund malts barley in the traditional Scottish manner, on a malting floor, and then dries it, not using peat, but with the infusion of apple, cherry, and oak wood. It is distilled twice in one-barrel batches.

Wasmund has developed a unique "chip and barrel ageing process," which consists of bags of charred chunks of apple, cherry, and

oak wood being suspended in the spirit as it ages in the barrel. The effect serves to speed up maturation dramatically, and the whiskey is usually aged for just four months prior to bottling. Copper Fox moved to its present new-build site at Sperryville in 2005, and 2006 saw the release of the first single malt using Wasmund's malting and maturing innovations.

|| WASMUND'S SINGLE MALT WHISKEY 48% ABV • A nose of honey, vanilla, leather, and watermelon. The palate



Wasmund's Single Malt

offers a well-balanced blend of sweet and dry flavors, with notes of smoke, nuts, spices, and vanilla.

EDGEFIELD

✉ 2126 S.W. Halsey Street
Troutdale, Oregon
🌐 www.mcmenamins.com

Located in a former dry store for root vegetables, Edgefield distillery is operated by the McMenamin's hotel and pub group. The distillery has

been in production since February 1998, producing not only whiskey, but also brandy and gin. According

THE MICRO PHENOMENON

During the 1980s and 90s, Scotch whisky producers developed a growing market for single malts, and it wasn't long before the large, commercial US distillers began to emulate them by developing small-batch bourbons. Similarly, micro, or "craft," distillers saw the opportunity to create notably characterful and individual whiskeys on a small scale.

Not bound by convention, and with flexibility due to the size of their operations, they could experiment with ingredients and processes. With a blend of historical reverence and modern science, they have taken up the baton of the rye revival and also championed single malts—one of the most interesting developments on the scene. Hop-flavored and fruit-flavored whiskeys have appeared on the market, along with "legal moonshine" and something very close to an Islay single malt.

The phenomenon began in California and Oregon, often on the back of microbrewing enterprises, but has since spread out to embrace a number of states, including Kansas, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio—states that either have very little heritage of distilling or lost their distilleries many years ago. It seems likely that the trend will continue, too, as the desire to seek out all things quirky, niche, and hand-crafted continues unabated among discerning drinkers.

Clear Creek distills with peat-malted barley from Scotland to create an Islay-like American whiskey.



to McMenamin's, the copper and stainless-steel still they use "resembles a hybrid of a 19th-century diving suit and an oversized coffee urn." Its design was the work of Holstein in Germany, the world's oldest surviving manufacturer of spirit stills.

■ **HOGSHEAD WHISKEY** 46% ABV
Banana and malt are on the sweet, floral nose, with sweet vanilla and caramel notes on the palate. Barley, honey, and oak come into play in the medium-length finish.

HIGH PLAINS INC.

✉ 1807 South 2nd Street
Leavenworth, Kansas
🌐 www.highplainsinc.com

Seth Fox, a former process engineer and amateur distiller, converted the profitable electronics company he started in 1984 into High Plains in 2004, producing the first liquor to be distilled legally in Kansas since the state banned its manufacture in 1880. Fox is the seventh generation of a family with a history of illicit distilling in the hills of North Carolina. "I'm not the first to do it in my family," he says, "but I am the first to do it legally."

Having specialized in vodka, sold under the Most Wanted brand, Fox introduced Most Wanted Kansas Bourbon Whiskey and Most Wanted Pioneer Whiskey in 2006.

ISAIAH MORGAN

✉ 45 Winery Lane
Summersville, West Virginia
🌐 www.kirkwood-wine.com

Isaiah Morgan is notable for being the first legal distillery in southwest Virginia. It was established by Rodney Facemire in 2002, and now produces Isaiah Morgan Rye Whiskey and Southern Moon Corn Liqueur. Both whiskeys are bottled white and unaged in the best moonshining traditions.

MOONSHINE

The term "moonshine" refers to illicitly-distilled liquor, usually made from corn and sugar. The sooner the spirit was removed from its place of production, the safer for all concerned, so the luxury of a period of maturation in oak barrels was eschewed in favor of filling it into mason jars while it was fresh and clear—hence the nickname "white lightning." The southern states formed the principal moonshine territory, and the craft continues to this day. The drink enjoys a rebellious reputation, and to buy a jar is to defy authority—though today it is possible to purchase "legal moonshine," such as Catdaddy (see opposite), Georgia Moon (see p193), Mountain Moonshine (see p209) and Southern Moon Corn Liqueur (see below). Despite this niche market for lawful moonshine, the clichéd image persists of "good ole boys" loading up pickups and "running shine" on the dirt back roads of Tennessee and Georgia.

An illicit still is seized by officers of the law during Prohibition.



LEOPOLD BROS

✉ 523 South Main Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan
🌐 www.leopoldbros.com

Leopold Bros is a family operated small-batch distillery located in an old renovated brake factory. Its vodka, gin, and flavored whiskeys are produced in a hand-hammered pot still.

■ **PEACH WHISKEY** 40% ABV

The juice of Rocky Mountain peaches are blended into this whiskey, resulting in a peachy-sweet spirit, with underlying oak, vanilla and raisin notes.

■ **BLACKBERRY WHISKEY** 40% ABV

Blackberry juice is added to whiskey and racked into ex-bourbon barrels for up to a year. The sweetness of the blackberries is immediately apparent, but oak and vanilla also develop, giving the whiskey complexity.

MOUNT VERNON

✉ Mount Vernon Estate, 3200
Mount Vernon Memorial Highway,
Virginia; the distillery is on
Route 235, 3 miles (5 km) south of
Mount Vernon

🌐 www.mountvernon.org
🏠 Open to visitors

The first president of the United States, George Washington, was also a whiskeymaker, and built a distillery on his Mount Vernon estate in 1798. With five stills producing some 11,000 gallons (50,000 liters) of whiskey per year, it was one of America's largest and most profitable distilleries.

As a military man, Washington had firmly advocated the supply of spirits to his troops to combat the effects of inhospitable weather and fatigue. "The benefits arising from the moderate use of strong



At the Mount Vernon Estate, a re-creation has been made of George Washington's distillery.

liquor have been experienced in all armies and are not to be disputed," he wrote.

In 1939 a still believed to have come from Washington's original distillery was captured by revenue officers. It bore the legend, "Made in Bristol, England, 1783," and was discovered during a raid on an illicit whiskeymaking venture run by an African-American family who were descendants of slaves on Washington's estate.

Excavation and restoration work began on the distillery site during 2000, and reproduction 18th-century stills were subsequently installed in the reconstructed buildings, which opened to the public in September 2006. The stills produce 135° proof (67.5 percent ABV) spirit to the recipe developed by James Anderson, Washington's Scottish-born farm manager, who was responsible for the construction and operation of the distillery, along with his son, John. The mashbill consists of 60 percent rye, 35 percent corn and 5 percent malted barley.

In 2003 a number of distillers combined to produce a batch of whiskey in a replica 18th-century still using Washington's

rye mashbill. This was matured at Mount Vernon and is now on sale in commemorative bottlings, along with miniatures of the "new" Mount Vernon spirit.

PIEDMONT DISTILLERS INC.

✉ 203 East Murphy St.
Madison, North Carolina

🌐 www.catdaddymoonshine.com

Piedmont is the only licensed distillery in North Carolina, and its Catdaddy Moonshine celebrates the state's heritage of illicit distilling. It was in 2005 that ex-New Yorker Joe Michalek established Piedmont Distillers—the first legal distillery in the Carolinas since the days before Prohibition kicked in.

"According to the lore of moonshine, only the best moonshine earns the right to be called the Catdaddy," says

Michalek. The whiskey is distilled in a copper pot still and is made in very small batches that yield just 1,500 bottles each year. It is a flavored moonshine, which uses secret ingredients that, according to Joe Michalek, are unique to his moonshine whiskey.

🍷 **CATDADDY CAROLINA MOONSHINE** 40% abv

Triple-distilled from corn, Catdaddy Moonshine is a sweet and spicy whiskey, with notes of vanilla and cinnamon.



Catdaddy Moonshine

ST. GEORGE SPIRITS

✉ 2601 Monarch Street
Alameda, California

🌐 www.stgeorgespirits.com

St. George Spirits was established by Jörg Rupf in 1982 to distil *eau de vie*. Brought up in the Black Forest region of Germany, Rupf moved to the US in 1978 to study law at the University of California. He gave up a legal career, however, in favor of craft distilling. As one of the pioneers of the American microdistilling movement, he is a widely respected figure and something of a mentor. His distillery employs two Holstein copper pot stills and uses a percentage of heavily roasted barley and some that

THE AMERICAN WHISKEY TRAIL

Mount Vernon is the only operating 18th-century-style distillery in North America. It functions as a national distilling museum and is also the gateway to the American Whiskey Trail, which encompasses historic distilling-related sites in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The Mount Vernon project has been financially supported by The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, which represents the interests of many of the country's distillers. Its website (www.discus.org/trail) has information about the trail.

Mount Vernon estate





The handsome copper still made by Holstein is kept in sparkling condition at St. George Spirits.

is smoked over alder and beech wood. Most of the single malt is matured in ex-bourbon barrels for three to five years, though a proportion is put into French oak and former port casks.

■ **ST. GEORGE SPIRITS SINGLE MALT WHISKEY** 43% ABV • The nose offers fresh floral notes, with fruit, nuts, coffee, and vanilla. Quite delicate on the palate—sweet, nutty, and fruity, with a hint of menthol and cocoa. Vanilla and chocolate notes figure in the finish, with the merest wisp of smoke.

SAINT JAMES SPIRITS

✉ 5220 Fourth Street Unit 17
Irwindale, California
☎ www.saintjamesspirits.com

In 1995 Jim Busuttill founded Saint James Spirits to produce a range of premium liquors. Busuttill's family has a long history of wine production, and Jim learnt his distilling skills in Germany and Switzerland. He also manages to combine running the distillery with his career as a teacher. Since 1997 he has been making a single malt whiskey called Peregrine Rock. It is produced from peated Scottish barley and matured in bourbon casks for a minimum of three years.

■ **PEREGRINE ROCK CALIFORNIA PURE SINGLE MALT WHISKEY** 40% ABV • Floral on the nose,

with fresh fruits and a hint of smoke. The palate is delicate and fruity, with a citric twist, while sweeter, malty, and new-mown grass notes develop in the slightly smoky finish.

STRANAHAN'S COLORADO WHISKEY

✉ 2405 Blake Street
Denver, Colorado
☎ www.stranahans.com

Stranahan's distilling enterprise had an unlikely beginning, when volunteer firefighter Jess Graber tackled a neighbor's barn fire. The neighbor, George Stranahan, was a drinks connoisseur, and the result of their subsequent friendship was the establishment in March 2004 of the first licensed distillery in Colorado.

Three barrels of whiskey are produced each week, using a four-barley wash from the neighboring Flying Dog Brewery. The spirit is filled into new, charred American oak barrels, and is aged for a minimum of two years. Each batch bottled comprises the contents of between two and six barrels.

■ **STRANAHAN'S COLORADO WHISKEY** 47% ABV • The nose is quite bourbon-like, with notes of caramel, liquorice, spice, and oak. The palate is slightly oily, big and sweet, with honey and spices. The comparatively short finish is quite oaky.



Stranahan's Colorado whiskey

TEMPLETON RYE

✉ Templeton Rye Spirits
Templeton, Iowa
☎ www.templetonrye.com

Scott Bush's Templeton Rye Single Barrel Rye Whiskey came on to the market in 2006, and is distilled in a 308-gallon (1,400-liter) copper pot still before being aged in new, charred oak barrels. Bush boasts his rye is made to a "Prohibition-era recipe," and the story of the origins of Templeton Rye is an extraordinary one.

In the years of the Great Depression, a group of farmers in the Templeton area started to distil a rye whiskey illicitly in order to help boost their faltering agricultural incomes. Templeton Rye earned a widespread reputation for being a high quality spirit, and, during Prohibition, it apparently came to the attention of cohorts of Al Capone. Capone's gang began bootlegging hundreds of kegs of Templeton Rye per month, distributing it to speakeasies throughout New York and Chicago, and as far west as Denver. The story goes that Capone even orchestrated a mission to have a case of Templeton Rye smuggled to him while incarcerated in Alcatraz.

Scott Bush grew up in Western, Iowa, where his great-grandfather had an illicit still on his farm and his grandfather was one of the originators of Templeton Rye. This pedigree proved useful when Bush decided to recreate the spirit on a legal basis, and enabled him to discover the original recipe from a number of "old-timers" who were reluctant to discuss the subject with anyone else.

■ **TEMPLETON RYE SINGLE BARREL RYE WHISKEY** 40% Abv • The revived Templeton Rye is bright, crisp, and mildly sweet. The finish is smooth, with a long, warming finish.

TRIPLE EIGHT

✉ 5&7 Bartlett Farm Road
Nantucket, Massachusetts
📞 www.ciscobrewers.com

Dean and Melissa Long started up their Nantucket Winery in 1981, and added the Cisco Brewery in 1995. Two years later they established the region's first microdistillery, which takes its name from its water source—well number 888. The first single malt whiskey was distilled in 2000 and is called Notch Whiskey—“Notch” because it is not Scotch, but is produced in the Scottish style. George McClements—former distilling consultant to Bowmore distillery on Islay—was involved with the whiskey's development.

Notch is made by distilling Whale's Tale Pale Ale from the Cisco Brewery in a pot still; it is then matured in ex-bourbon barrels for five years.

TUTHILLTOWN SPIRITS

✉ 14 Gristmill Lane
Gardiner, New York

Based in a converted granary which adjoins a historic gristmill dating back to 1788, Tuthilltown distillery was set up in 2005 and is operated by Brian Lee and Ralph Erenzo.

In 1825 New York State had more than 1,000 working distilleries and produced a major share of the nation's whiskey, but today, Tuthilltown is New York's only distillery.

It produces Hudson Baby Bourbon (46 percent ABV), made with 100 percent New York State corn. This is the first bourbon to be made in New York, and the first legal pot-distilled whiskey to be produced in New York since Prohibition. It is described as “a mildly sweet, smooth spirit with hints of vanilla and caramel.” Hudson Manhattan Rye (46 percent ABV) is “floral, fruity, and

smooth” and works as “a perfect complement to sweet vermouth.” Government Warning Rye (46 percent ABV)—made from a mash of 100 percent rye—is described as “grassy and soft—perfect sipping rye.”

WEST VIRGINIA DISTILLING

✉ 1425 Saratoga Ave, Suite C
Morgantown, West Virginia
📞 www.mountainmoonshine.com

Lawyer and entrepreneur Payton Fireman and his friend Bo McDaniel run West Virginia Distilling. They are dedicated to producing legal moonshine in the best traditions of West Virginia, which boasts a distilling heritage dating back to the late 1700s. Payton's operation is West Virginia's first licensed distilled spirits plant, and Mountain Moonshine Old Oak Recipe Spirit Whiskey (50 percent ABV) is distilled from fermented corn mash. It is then aged with roasted oak chips for a short period

to remove the harsher flavors and “change the complexion of the whiskey from white lightning to smooth sipping,” as Payton Fireman puts it.

WOODSTONE CREEK

✉ 3641 Newton Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio
📞 www.woodstonecreek.com

Woodstone Creek is Ohio's first microdistillery. It is owned and run by husband-and-wife team Don and Linda Outterson. In 2001 the couple added a pot still operation to their urban winery, producing vodka, rum, and three whiskeys.

The whiskeys (employing the Scottish spelling) are produced in a rare, direct-fired pot still, and will all be marketed as single barrel expressions, though they are currently still maturing. Don Outterson has distilled a straight bourbon from a five grain recipe and a malt whiskey; a small-batch blended whisky will also be on offer in due course.

THE WHISKEY REBELLION



General George Washington was an accomplished distiller.

In 1791 the first tax was imposed on distilled spirits in the US. Commercial producers were assessed at a rate of six cents per gallon, but smaller, farm-based distillers were assessed at nine cents per gallon. Those most affected by this apparently unfair discrepancy were western settlers of Scottish and Irish origin, who often had little choice but to convert the grain they grew into whiskey to use as a form of currency. Unrest spread among farmers along the western frontier, from

Pennsylvania to Georgia, with many refusing to pay their taxes. In the summer of 1794, this manifested itself in what became known as the Whiskey Rebellion, when excise officers were assaulted and armed groups threatened to march on Pittsburgh. The rebellion was only quelled when 13,000 troops were assembled and marched along the course of the Monongahela River, under the command of future president and distiller General George Washington (see also p206). It is sometimes claimed that it took more troops to defeat the distillers than it had to beat the British during the War of Independence!