

WINE News

Spirits of every stripe for collectors and cocktail aficionados alike.



MAY 2, 2022 FEATURES

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Back on the Trail

By David Othenin-Girard and Andrew Whiteley, Spirits Buyers



Andrew Whiteley (left) and David Othenin-Girard (right) in Kentucky with Sylvia from Heaven Hill.

In a world where everyone wants the best, but no one can get it, trusting your spirits purveyor has never been more important. Over the past year, we've seen staples that hadn't left our shelves in decades go out of stock for months at a time. Not only have supply chain issues made it difficult to get products, but demand for the highest-quality spirits has never been more rabid. We don't let shortages and allocations stop us from finding outstanding drinks

for our customers. We've scoured the country—indeed, the planet—to find the very best. No other store offers as diverse a lineup of exclusive selections. Whether it's a hand-picked single cask or an unprecedented deal that seems too good to be true, our singular goal is to find products that go above and beyond expectations.

Recently on our hunt for treasures, we toured one of our country's most important but under-the-radar producers. The Ross & Squib Distillery, as it's now known, has been called many things over the years: LDI, MGP, Seagrams, etc. All we need to know is that the whiskey they make is some of the very best around. On page 2, you'll see a few pictures of the impressive plant. We are convinced it remains one of the most undervalued distillers in the country.

Our first container of rum and single malt Scotch for the year has just arrived and is being processed. That means all those amazing

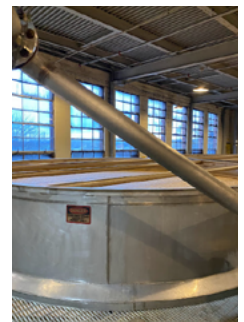
pre-arrivals you've been waiting for are only a few weeks away, and the next container is already in the works. On page 3 we feature three extremely rare bottles from the exciting Golden Devil brand, expected to be delivered in the late fall or early winter. We also highlight a cadre of other bespoke casks from the burgeoning category.

Further on page 3, we turn our sights on brandy. We've compiled an unbelievable list of exceptional brandy from across France. We feature multiple vintages from the undeniably delicious Pellehaut estate, as well as other Ténarèze rarities. There's calvados for every appetite and the wonderful old Armagnacs from the Domaine de la Grangerie La Hauresse, which are so affordable they make ALL our other Armagnac producers just plain mad.

On page 4, we beat the heat with some of our favorite new gins. Whether you enjoy a simple G&T or want to hone your home bartending credentials, you won't get far without a great bottle. We've selected some of the finest craft gins to keep your summer bar sublime.

Finally, you'll get a taste of the future with a piece on the value and complexity of blending Scotch whisky. If you don't see enough single malt in this issue for your tastes, you'll be happy to know that our next container (and their pre-arrival SKUs) will be going live in the coming weeks. We'll be offering some incredible rarities as well as our usual mix of affordable, quaffable drams before you can say...

Slainte.



Where the magic happens at Ross & Squib

A Sleeping Giant Awakens: the Ross & Squib Distillery

By David Othenin-Girard



Formerly known as MGP, Ross & Squib is making some of the finest whiskey in the country.

The old whiskey plant in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, was officially founded in 1847, but production likely began many decades earlier. Once the target of hit pieces by irreverent drinks journalists, it was originally home to at least two distinct distilleries before its current incarnation as the Ross & Squib Distillery. In 1933, the sprawling facility was purchased by the Seagram's Company and spent nearly the next seven decades focused on making their famous American Whiskey blends. When the Seagram's

Company collapsed in the early 2000s, the fate of the historic plant was uncertain, but the beginnings of a revolution in American whiskey were brewing.

The next period was tumultuous, but also represented a bonanza of whiskey production from third-party brands, who were more than happy to make use of the old whiskeys sitting in the warehouse. In 2011, Midwest Grain Products purchased the distillery and began to develop the contractual production in earnest, helping to bolster the craft whiskey boom with high-quality aged spirits.



The unfortunate result of so many brands relying on the excellent whiskeys coming out of Lawrenceburg was that few were ever able to match the quality with their own distillate. Now, almost exactly 10 years later, the owners have begun to release their own spirits by selecting their finest stocks to create some of the most exciting new products on the market today. Some of the best whiskeys on our shelf come from a huge variety of brands that were distilled and aged at this special facility.

I was lucky enough to tour the site for the first time in early Spring of 2022. The sprawling brick warehouses are reminiscent of the brick warehouse of Brown Forman in Louisville, but do not feature a steam heating element. That means they maintain a very consistent temperature throughout the year due to the thick walls, but a relatively high humidity, so proofs tend to go down rather than up—as is the case in some Kentucky warehouses. The site includes two large fermentation rooms, with a massive capacity for production, although the owners will not divulge the total production numbers. Six dedicated beer stills and another seven for neutral grain allow for a significant amount of production.

One of the important bottle necks that they've rectified at the

facility is the processing of the spent grain. A huge drying drum allows all the spent mash, which is particularly sticky and viscous when running rye, to be dried and repurposed for high-quality animal feed.

The historic site is truly a working plant, and it's not set up for tourism in the slightest. But with the release of the distillery's own brands, they are considering opening the plant to visitors. It is a magnificent experience to appreciate the scale that was planned during the post-Prohibition whiskey boom and to see the current explosion in production there. We couldn't be prouder to feature a large host of high-quality single casks from this excellent facility.



Heaven's Door 6 Year Old K&L Exclusive Barrel #114 Indiana Straight Bourbon Whiskey (750ml) \$59.99 This new brand founded by folk music legend Bob Dylan is seemingly getting cherry picked casks. We're happy to benefit from any nepotism that might be involved with those selections.

Old Pepper K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Barrel Proof Straight Indiana Rye Whiskey (750ml) \$49.99 One of the few rye whiskeys available from the Ross & Squibb, which specializes in rye. It's exceptionally delicious and wildly undervalued.

Rare Character 5 Year Old "SF Palace of Fine Arts" K&L Exclusive #IRT-24 Cask Strength Bourbon Whiskey (750ml) \$69.99 This excellent new brand is offering unique expressions from distilleries around the country. Here we have a very unusual bourbon distilled in Indiana but aged almost entirely at the famous "Old Taylor" Warehouse B at Kentucky's Castle & Key Distillery near Frankfort.

Three Chord K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Indiana Straight Bourbon Whiskey (750ml) \$49.99 A new brand founded by guitarist Neil Girardo has offered us high-quality MGP high rye at very affordable prices.

Smooth Ambler 6 Year Old "Old Scout" K&L Exclusive Barrel #28007 Indiana Straight Bourbon Whiskey (750ml) \$54.99 One of the original brands to make the contracted MGP juice famous, Smooth Ambler's younger stocks are now starting to come of age. This exceptional whiskey offers so much more than you might expect for the price. Almost no one in Kentucky is selling us whiskey of this quality and age, and the few that are ask about twice the price.

Rossville Union "Master Crafter" Batch #1 Barrel Proof Straight Indiana Rye Whiskey (750ml) \$54.99 One of the absolute finest ryes on the market at any price!

Rum Revitalized

By David Othenin-Girard

We've been told for more than a decade that the rum revolution was coming, but the category seems to suffer from fits and starts. Just when attention seems to be really turning toward this diverse category, something, somehow, makes it take a step back. We once were getting exceptional and rare rums from Habitation Velier and Hampden—now almost none is available. We once had access to incredible single casks of all ages from bottlers in Scotland—now all the stocks seem to have disappeared. Yet slowly and steadily, a few brave souls have waded knee-deep into the category and we're beginning to see some exceptional single-cask expressions from numerous producers.

We have several new bottlers in the States focused exclusively on rum, like Holmes Cay and Rare Cane. We've got classic old-school bottlers like Plantation and Ed Hamilton. And we've got direct-import exclusives from the boys at Dornoch (Thompson/Redacted Bros) and the famous Golden Devil brand.

2013 Clarendon 8 Year Old "Hamilton" K&L Exclusive Barrel #435782 Cask Strength Single Barrel Jamaican Rum (750ml) \$79.99

2011 Clarendon 10 Year Old "Hamilton" K&L Exclusive Barrel #434516 Cask Strength Single Barrel Jamaican Rum (750ml) \$99.99

2010 Foursquare 10 Year Old "Hamilton" K&L Exclusive Barrel #8 Cask Strength Single Barrel Barbados Rum (750ml) \$89.99

2010 Diamond Estate (Port Mourant) 11 Year Old "Hamilton" K&L



Exclusive Barrel #81 Cask Strength Single Barrel Guyana Rum (750ml) \$89.99

2005 JMWP (Worthy Park) 15 Year Old "Redacted Bros." (Thompson/Dornoch) K&L Exclusive Single Refill Hogshead Cask Strength Jamaican Rum (700ml) (Pre-Arrival) \$69.99

1998 Long Pond 22 Year old "Plantation" Bardstown Bourbon Finished Single Cask Jamaican Rum (750ml) \$129.99

1993 Jamaica's Top Pots (Hampden) "Golden Devil" Single Barrel Jamaican Rum (750ml) (Pre-Arrival) \$280.00

Diamond Estate (Port Mourant) 13 Year Old "Golden Devil" Single Wooden Pot Still Single Barrel Cask Strength Guyana Rum (750ml) (Pre-Arrival) \$99.99

1998 Caroni 23 Year Old "Golden Devil" K&L Exclusive Cask Strength Single Barrel Trinidad Rum (750ml) (Pre-Arrival) \$279.99

Buoyant Brandy

By David Othenin-Girard



For anyone who wants to know where the booze world is headed, I'll tell you right now—toward brandy. Long dominated by big-house Cognac and an aesthetic which kept many drinkers wary, the eclectic world of brandy is now poised to become an important category for

wide swaths of the high-quality drinking public. That's because there's still SO much value in the category and the masses have yet to jump on board. But like any trend, if you don't get out ahead of it, you'll find quickly that you've missed the boat. We've been sourcing incredible brandy from all over France for many years, but it's only now that the larger drinking public is taking note. Don't sleep on these special selections, we never know when these wonderful stocks will run dry.

Château de la Grangerie K&L Exclusive Armagnac (1L) \$29.99

1970 Château de la Grangerie Leon Beyries (De Gerault) "La Hautesse" 50 Year Old K&L Exclusive Armagnac (750ml) \$144.99

Château de Pellehaut "K&L Exclusive - L'Age de Glace" Ténarèze Armagnac (750ml) \$34.99

2001 Château de Pellehaut 100% Folle Blanche Ténarèze Armagnac (750ml) \$79.99

1986 Château de Pellehaut Vintage Ténarèze Armagnac (750ml) \$109.99

continued...

Brandy Continued

1987 Château Pellehaut K&L Exclusive Ténarèze Vintage Armagnac (750ml) \$99.99

1973 Château de Pellehaut Armagnac from Ténarèze Armagnac (750ml) \$229.99

Domaine Hubert “K&L Exclusive” Pays d’Auge Vieux Calvados (750ml) \$34.99

Domaine Pacory 8 Year Old “High Proof” Domfrontais Cask Strength Calvados (750ml) \$44.99

Domaine Pacory 30 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Domfrontais Calvados (750ml) \$119.99

1990 The Rare Armagnac Collection (Domaine de Pouchegu) K&L Exclusive Vintage Armagnac (750ml) \$139.99



Vineyards at Château de Pellehaut.

1978 The Rare Armagnac Collection (Domaine de Pouchegu) K&L Exclusive Vintage Armagnac (750ml) \$299.99

Summertime and the Gin Drinkin’ Is Easy

By Andrew Whiteley



As summer fast approaches, we’re getting prepped for warm-weather cocktails. And the timing couldn’t be better—our gin selection is sharper than ever, with unique selections from all around the world.

Whether you’re making a refreshing G&T or a crisp Martini, we’ve got you covered. Today we’re taking you off the beaten path to a few exciting international gin destinations.

Glendalough Wild Botanical Irish Gin (750ml) \$29.99 This incredible Irish gin is a truly terroir-driven product. Glendalough employs a full-time forager (who actually goes out foraging every single day), and everything the forager picks goes into the still—fresh, not dried. The result is a sustainably made, intensely flavored gin. The slow distillation carefully extracts the delicate nuance of the fresh botanicals in tiny 250-liter batches at a time. The nose shows notes of robust juniper, citrus, and a touch of pine. The palate is loaded with summer blossom, fruits, and warm spices. The delicious finish makes for a great cocktail that leaves you wanting more. It’s a terrific gin from one of the most exciting distilleries in Ireland, and perfectly priced for everyday mixing.



If you want to dive deeper into terroir-driven gin, be sure to check out the **Inverroche gins** from South Africa. These amazing gins take advantage of the Cape floral kingdom’s unique and extraordinarily diverse botanicals known as Fynbos. There are thousands of endemic Fynbos in the area that grow absolutely nowhere else on earth. All three of Inverroche’s gins utilize these amazing plants, but each features Fynbos from distinct soil regions.

The **Inverroche Classic Gin (750ml) \$39.99** selects Fynbos from the limestone-rich soils of the Cape. The Classic drinks like a more exotic version of a London Dry.



The **Inverroche “Verdant” Gin (750ml) \$39.99**, with a slightly green hue achieved via a maceration after distillation with Fynbos, features a selection of botanicals grown on the steep mountain terrain that can be found on the Cape. It’s a more floral expression reminiscent of chamomile and elderflower, citrus and spice.



By far the most striking gin of the trio is the **Inverroche Amber Gin (750ml) \$39.99**. Its dark amber color—100% naturally imparted from a post-distillation maceration—is a surprise to many. Featuring Fynbos from the coastal sandscape it is a much richer, more aromatic gin.



As the pioneers of South African craft gin, Inverroche Distillery was founded 6 years ago by Lorna Scott and her family in the community of Still Bay in the Western Cape of Southern Africa

Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: Blended Whisky

By Andrew Whiteley

Given our focus at K&L on sourcing high-quality single malt casks from all over Scotland, it might be easy to forget how much wonderful blended Scotch we have on our shelves. When made with care, the blend really can be a masterpiece of nuance and balance.

With the boom in single malt over the last two decades, much of the Scotch cognoscenti forgot about blends entirely. With the exception of a few prestige marks from the big players, the blended category had, for years, been largely written off as containing mass market, inferior products. It took folks like John Glaser of Compass Box and a handful of others to really champion the high-quality blend and help those who “drink only the best” realize that much of the finest drinking—as measured by complexity of flavor, completeness of composition, and value delivered—is afforded by the careful combination of multiple malt and grain whiskies. In the end, you truly can wind up with a whisky that is greater than the sum of its parts, and we have a few favorites here for you.



Compass Box “Glasgow Blend” K&L Exclusive Craigellachie Aged Oloroso Marrying Cask #1 Blended Scotch Whisky (750ml) \$54.99 It’s tough to argue that you can spend \$55 bucks more effectively on Scotch than with the impeccably crafted Glasgow Blend Marrying Casks from Compass Box. A unique twist on “single cask” for a company that only makes blended whisky. The award-winning Glasgow Blend is Compass Box’s peaty, rich, high-malt blend for everyday drinking. When they combine the component whiskies to blend,

they’re left with the original casks those whiskies came in. After blending, they redistribute the final blend back into the component casks for months or even years to marry before they’re ready to be sold as single cask blends.

We got first crack at the last parcel of marrying casks and it was a no-brainer to snatch up all we could. It’s incredible how much character that marrying cask can re-impart to the final blend. The cask we chose was an Oloroso butt that had aged in the Craigellachie component of the blend. More simply put: our Glasgow



Blend went into a choice second-use sherry butt for 2.5 years of finishing! It’s then bottled at a robust 49.5% ABV and of course, without color or chill filtration. Add to that the fact that the blend is made up of top-notch distilleries like Craigellachie and Laphroaig, and you’ve got a recipe for success.

Compass Box “Glasgow Blend” SCWC Exclusive Marrying Cask Cameronbridge Finished Single Barrel Blended Scotch (750ml) \$54.99

The Southern California Whiskey Club also selected a cracking cask from CB’s Marrying Cask program. Their Glasgow Blend went back into a grain component cask—specifically old Cameronbridge Single Grain. It’s the perfect foil to the K&L Oloroso Craigellachie cask. If you truly want to see the massive influence the marrying cask has on the final whisky, check these two out side by side — it might be the most educational tasting you’ll do all year.

Faultline Blended Scotch Whisky (750ml) \$24.99

While we think there is no one doing blends quite as well as the Compass Box crew, we did take a stab at it ourselves. Painstaking trial after trial and an insistence on natural color, high ABV, and high malt content finally paid off. And thanks to the exceptional pricing possible through our direct relationships in Scotland, we are proud to offer Faultline Blended Scotch—and dare say it might be the greatest value in the modern history of blended Scotch. For a mere \$25, we are able to offer a high-malt-content blend at 100 proof with big, rich, smoky flavors and not a shred of artificial color. The high proof stands up beautifully in any cocktail and the flavor profile is to die for. Bold and smoky, rich, sweet grain, stone fruits, and tropical notes all mesh with an easy going vanilla finish.



Compass Box's Master Whiskymaker John Glaser

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