



AD

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AD will promote distilling and discussion concerning Whisky, Malt Whisky, Blended Scotch Whisky, Bourbon, Rye Whisky, Vodka, Gin, Grappa, Eau de Vie, Schnapps, Calvados, Apple Brandy, Apple Jack, Liqueur, Cognac, Armagnac, Rum, Tequila, Cordials, Perfumes, Tinctures, Distillation, Pot Stills, Column Stills, Coffey Stills, and Aroma Therapy.

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The ADI is the collective voice of the new generation of progressive beverage, medical and aromatic distillers, and is dedicated to the mission of disseminating professional information on the distilling process. The ADI has filed for a designation as a 501(c) Non Profit Corporation.

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Travel Report

Sierra Nevada has a Taste of Scotland

Recently William and I had the pleasure of meeting up with some of the Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. gang in Scotland as we had all generously been invited to the annual barbeque at the Crisp Maltings in Portgordon. We checked into our hotel, The Craigellachie, which overlooks the River Spey, and were welcomed in true Scottish fashion, with a “wee dram.” The naturally peated, clear brown water of the Spey is considered to be the key to some of the finest Scotch whisky in the world, so our odyssey began in a prophetic fashion.

Steve Dresler, Terence Sullivan and Dave Heric rolled in the next morning with a great deal of luggage. Apparently both Dave and Terence are avid golfers, and had planned a whirlwind tour of some of the more famous golf courses to be found in the region. So, off they went, dampish weather notwithstanding. William, Steve, and I, on the other hand, were not all that interested in trudging around the dripping Scottish countryside lugging great bulging sacks of metal sticks, chasing little white balls. Visiting the many fine distilleries to be found in the area became our mission, of course.



Euan McPherson and Richard Beattie, of Crisp Maltings, had kindly set us up with appointments for guided tours. Feeling a bit like royalty, we started off gently with a visit to The Strath Isla Distillery where Steve and William soon discovered the upside of dragging “the wife” along; I don’t drink scotch, which meant an extra measure for them, at every distillery we visited.

We then met up with Richard Beattie who took us by way of a beautiful drive up into the Highlands, and a stop at an old ruined barracks, to a small distillery at the beginning of the Spey. The Speyside Distillery is hidden in a little valley and ringed by a loop of the now

much smaller Spey. I have rarely seen a more idyllic spot. It felt a bit like we had stepped back in time. It was easy to imagine a distiller practicing his art there two hundred years ago, without too many changes. And so on to lunch at a local spot on a small highland loch.

After lunch, Richard had to return to work, so we decided to head back to the hotel via the Cooperage where many of the barrels that are used to age the whisky are refurbished. An interesting fact picked up here is, a large quantity of the barrels used for aging scotch are made of Kentucky oak, and were used previously to age American bourbon, Spanish sherry or port. They are then shipped over to Scotland, disassembled and reassembled by the coopers, and reused as many as three times depending on the flavor profile each Distillery hopes to achieve. The Cooperage keeps authentic Highland cattle, so a quick stop to photograph these unique animals was required.

On the way back to the hotel the decision was made by two of the gentlemen on board (the only gentlemen on board) that it was absolutely necessary to find out whether all the fuss about the Spey water was true. We made a short stop at the local shop, a bottle of scotch was purchased, and down to the river to experiment went the guys. Does scotch taste better with water fresh from the Spey, or bottled water? As there was a fly fisherman in a pair of rather large waders not 20 yards upstream of the researchers, I restrained my need to know the answer to the question. The research accomplished, a visit to the pub down the street was now called for in search of a good local brew. Collecting our erstwhile companions Terence and Dave, who were damp but very cheerful from their game of golf we headed off.

Reaching said pub, we were all rather disappointed with the drafts on offer. So back up the street to our hotel, which owns a very large collection of, you guessed it, single malts in their library. The hotel also has a very fine restaurant with many local specialties on the menu which we all enjoyed sampling during the course of our stay. So ended our first day in Speyside to the satisfaction of all.

Day two found all four guys raring to go Distillery hopping and me longing for some time with a good book. So leaving me in peace at the hotel, the gang headed off to visit the Glenfiddich Distillery, which is the only distillery left that has a floor maltings. Those funny looking tower-like things that one sees on just about every distillery is a remnant of the days when every distillery had it's own floor maltings. They helped in circulating air and dissipating excess moisture and heat. The guys were given a personal tour by Graham Coul, one of the managers, and so were able to see considerably more than the average tourist. The tour naturally included many more generous tastings.

On the way back to the hotel a drive by the Cooperage was opted for so Terence could get a photo of the Highland cattle, too. Unfortunately, they weren't as cooperative as on the previous day, so Terence had to maneuver a bit in order to get close enough to photograph them. You might have noticed in the photo that they have sort of long, sharp horns. As I wasn't a witness to this event, I have had to build a mental video from

what I was told by the others. Imagine being in the middle of a soggy Scottish pasture with a large, hairy, and very grumpy Highland bull. A Highland bull which suddenly objects to being photographed, and consequently, whose pointy bits are rapidly closing the distance with your backside. Yup, that was Terence. Luckily this was after the first samplings of the day, and Terence had the extra fuel to win the race to the fence.

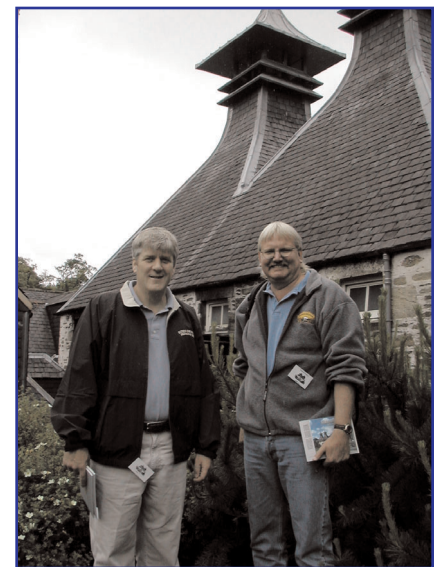
Picking me up on the way past, we drove on to Elgin for a pub lunch and a visit to the woolen mills there. The mills make, and sell, every tartan known to mankind. None of us was interested in taking the tour so we got some shopping done. Not everyone Stateside was going to want souvenirs from a distillery, Steve's kids for example. While looking around the shop a miniature still was spotted which began a new mission, Steve had to have one...

So we headed off from Elgin for our tour at Crisp Maltings in Portgordon discussing along the way where we might find a miniature still for Steve. The maltings is located on the coast near the mouth of the Spey so we got our first sighting of the North Sea on our way there. On arrival we were met by Richard who personally showed us around and explained some of the differences between malting for distilling and malting for brewing. With a little detective work (we simply asked Richard) it was discovered that the coppersmiths that make and maintain most of the stills was just down the road, what luck! The quest was on.....

We found the place without too many wrong turns and were lucky enough to arrive after the coppersmiths had finished work, but before management had finished for the day. We wandered into the offices and met the assistant manager who very graciously took us on a tour of the works. A lot of

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will be held February 27-28 at St. George Distillery in Alameda, California. For more information email [distilling @aol.com](mailto:distilling@aol.com), or write to American Distiller, P. O. Box 577, Hayward, CA 94543.



fascinating facts about stills were learned by all of us, but the jewel of the tour was sitting down at the end of the hangar-sized building. Standing in a corner on it's own like a thoroughbred in a stable of workhorses was a small still. For Steve it was lust at first sight. How might he manage to get it back to Sierra Nevada in Chico? We could see him trying to figure out where he would put it in the brew-house, and how he could manage to talk Ken into buying it for him. Wouldn't that be cool? Sierra Nevada Whisky! Dave, as Sierra Nevada's premier maintenance wizard, and Terrence were more interested in the repair side of things. The poor assistant manager duly had her brain thoroughly picked clean by the two of them, luckily without objection. It was a very full and informative day. We headed back for dinner as the two golfers in the group requested a relatively early night as they had managed to score a tee time at St Andrews the following morning. Unfortunately the tee time was for 8am, and it had been ascertained after much discussion and higher mathematics, that it would take 4 hours driving to get there. In any case, everyone was a bit tired after such a long day, so after a meal in the village pub we called it a day.

Day three dawned soggy as usual. Don't go to Scotland to work on your tan, by the way. The malt hounds and I set off for one of William's favorite distilleries, The Macallan. Another appointment made for us by Crisp Maltings, so we again got the special treatment. We almost lost Steve in a 50 year-old cask, and William tried his best to get himself locked in one of the cellars. We got to speak to one of the distillers and met the "nose" in training. He was the nose in training because he had only been an apprentice for 15 years. The guys were offered, and accepted, tastings of every different year of Macallans' sold in the gift shop. It was at this point I started worrying about if we had enough luggage space to get all of the purchases back home, and how much scotch it is legal to import.

Our next stop, after a quick picnic lunch in the car, was a smallish distillery called Glen Moray. We were welcomed and taken around by the manager himself, Ed Dodson, an acquaintance of Richard's. I think that this distillery was my favorite. It was very traditional and they only give tours by appoint-

ment, unlike Glenfiddich, which is a scotch drinkers Disney Land. It was here in the gift shop that both William and Steve did the worst damage to their wallets on the trip so far, and I now knew we were going to be over the limit. We went back to the hotel to rest up for the barbeque and to find out how our golfers made out.

The day at St Andrews for Dave and Terence had been as good as ours. It was worth the drive and will probably be talked about for years to come, if not decades. I guess most serious golfers would feel the same way. Anyway, we three got to hear all about it on the way to the barbecue, which was held under a tent (wisely) at the maltings. There were masses of delicious food and drink and an apparently "world-famous" band from Bradford, England. Not to insult Bradford, but does anybody besides the members of the band know where in England Bradford is? We chatted with John and Barbara Capstick, Chairman of Crisp, Euan and Carol MacPherson, CEO, Martyn and Gaye Mayes, Director, and of course, Richard and his wife Kim, as well as meeting many others. It was a great party; many thanks are due to all who helped in arranging it. It was the perfect end to a wonderful trip. We parted ways early next morning, William and I back to the States and Brewers Wholesale, the Sierra Nevadans to England in search of the perfect pint.

And guess what? It finally stopped raining.....
Hint: Anybody interested in making a similar journey, William has some pull.

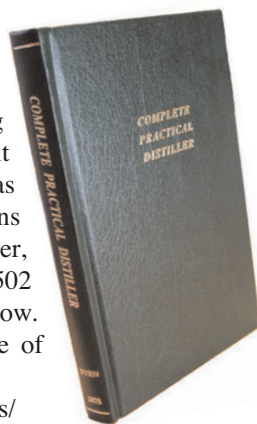
Oh, as it happens, the experimentation with the Spey water was inconclusive as the researchers were too heavy handed with the scotch bottle.

William Crisp is President of Brewers Wholesale Supply in Newport, RI. Lowie Crisp is, as previously mentioned, the "wife" and general dogsbody. Steve Dresler is Brewmaster at Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. in Chico, Ca. Terence Sullivan is Assistant Brewmaster/Cellar Operations at Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. Dave Heric is Plant Facilities Operations at Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.

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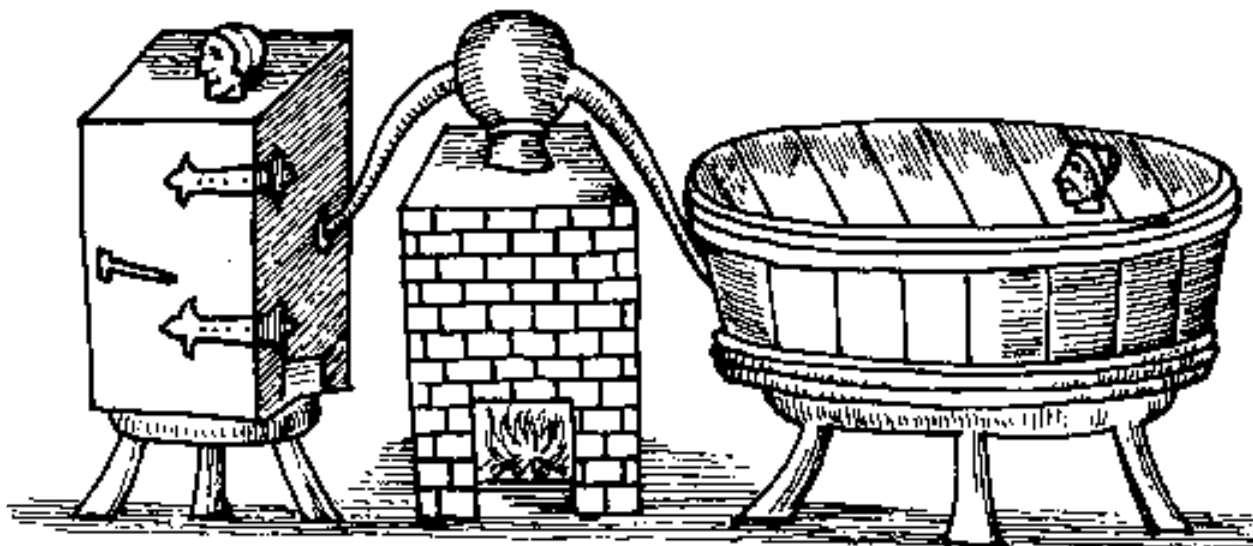


ILLUSTRATION FROM "THE ART OF DISTILLATION", LONDON 1651, BY JOHN FRENCH