



AD

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AMERICAN DISTILLER: A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE DISTILLING PROCESS

The American Distilling Institute

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The Spirit of Distilling Present The New Distillery Pubs

by Alan Moen

Local Liquor at Local Color

When Peter Paisley started his microbrewery four years ago, he had no idea that one day he'd be making something other than beer.

Paisley's brewpub, Local Color, opened on January 1, 1998. Located in Novi, Michigan, 45 miles Northwest of Detroit and near Michigan State University, the establish-

ment has done a brisk business from the start. With a capacity of 30,000 barrels, his operation grew 52 percent in 1999 to about 3,300 barrels. In 2000, Paisley figures he brewed approximately 5,000 barrels of beer.

Paisley uses a fully automated 25-barrel, 3-vessel Beraplan brewhouse to make mainly lagers, although the brewery does produce a few ales as well. Its Smooth Talker Pilsner has won a gold medal at the GABF. Other Local Color beers include Cloudy Red Lager, an amber/Vienna style beer, and Corporate Jim Pale Ale.

A fugitive from the automatic dish detergent industry, Paisley once made "Cascade" and other brands for Proctor & Gamble. From his manufacturing background, he found many craft beers to be of inconsistent quality. "Most micros didn't see the consistency issue at first," he says. "For a lot of them, every keg was different. But I knew that the drinking public wants consistency."

All was going well until Paisley decided to add liquor sales to his pub operation. "I wanted to draw more men to the pub," he says, "people who don't want just beer."

But Michigan's laws did not allow him to have a Class C restaurant license to sell liquor. He tried to change the law, but ran



Bardeney Restaurant & Distillery, Boise, Idaho

into difficulties with beer and wine wholesalers. “They saw me as a threat, since I would be serving all tiers of the system—it was ‘the camels’ nose under the tent”, he says.

Then it occurred to Paisley that he might have to provide his own spirits to customers. “I’m don’t really run a restaurant anyway,” he remembers thinking. “Why can’t I make my own liquor?”

Paisley read everything he could about making whiskey, and attended Alltech’s alcohol distilling and production school in Kentucky. “I found out that I could do it, but I wasn’t sure I could do it legally.”

Just as brewpubs were a novelty in the 1980’s, distilling pubs were unheard of in the late 90’s in Michigan. Paisley did his research and found out that he could get a distiller’s license. He contacted both his local government and the ATF, who told him “we better have a meeting.”

“It was an insane process,” Paisley recalls, but he finally got his license. “The local ATF office was great.” It turned out the key was having a “separate” facility to distill. Since his brewery was already separated from customers by a glass wall, it qualified. By setting up his still and aging room on premise, Paisley was able to start making his own liquor—gin, vodka, and whiskey even.

Paisley uses a 350 liter Jacob Karl modified columnar still for his alcohol production, which is currently only a few hundred barrels per year. State laws require him to bottle all spirits produced, and get label approval as well. According to Paisley, this “forced packaging” has made possible for him to sell his liquor off-premise as well.

“We’ve had an unbelievable response. We just can’t make enough of some of our products, like our Michigan blueberry vodka.”

As the state’s only small distillery, Paisley gets many calls from other brewers interested in distilling, he says. He’s currently writing a book on the subject, which he plans to release sometime later this year. “I’m willing to share information with anyone”, he says.

McMenamins’ Alcohol Empire

You’ve got to hand it to Oregon’s Mike and Brian McMenamin. When these “brews brothers” wanted to do something—from building brewpubs to restoring and re-opening old hotels and dance halls—they’ve done it themselves. So it came as no surprise with those familiar with the McMenamins’ entrepreneurial ways when they opened Oregon’s first distillery bar in December of 1998.

The bar is in a building almost hidden on the sprawling grounds of Edgefield Manor, which is the brothers’ showcase brewery/ hotel/restaurant/winery/golf course located in Troutdale, about 20 miles east of Portland. Currently offering two gins and an eau-de-vie made from wine grapes, the facility also is being

used to make at least two different whiskies and grape brandy.

Distiller Lee Medoff worked ten years as a brewer before taking on the challenge of distilling at McMenamins. “For me it was the next logical step,” he says. “It’s great to be in the leading wave of micro-distilling.”

McMenamins uses an Arnold Holstein eau-de-vie still with a 65 gallon capacity. According to Lee, the first distillation normally takes about four hours. All spirits are put through a second distillation of 1-1/2 hours, when the various cuts are made. The tails of the second distillation are re-distilled, but never the heads, which are discarded.

For his whiskey, Medoff makes a beer of about 6% alcohol (“like our Hammerhead without hops”) and ferments it warm (over 70°F) for three to five days. “I try to get it as dry as I can,” he says. A 20-barrel batch of the initial beer takes about five days to distill, with two separate runs a day for a total of 10 distillations. This nets about 100 gallons of spirit.

Medoff has two different types of barrel, 53 gallon American oak for whiskey and 60 gallon French oak barrels for brandy. Most are used cooperage, but there are a few new barrels as well. The spirits are cut with water before they are put in barrels at around 100 proof (about 140 proof for the brandy). So far the distillery has about 25 barrels of whiskey in the works, and about half that many for brandy, with the oldest dating from 1998. Lee filled nine whiskey barrels in 1999, and 12-14 more were added last year. Medoff expects to release McMenamin’s first whiskey on St. Patrick’s Day, 2002.

Since the company also makes its own wine as well as beer, the McMenamins decided to make brandy, too. Medoff is working on two different brandies from blends of different Northwest grape varieties—Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and Sémillion and Sauvignon Blanc. The brandy spir-

its are being aged in a separate part of the cellar in French oak barrels from the Cognac region. According to Medoff, McMenamins’ has purchased (but not yet installed) an alambic pot still that will be used to make brandy in the future.

Whiskey and brandy take considerable time to produce, of course, and the distillery has a lineup of other “faster” spirits that it currently sells at its attached bar. These include a very fragrant and clean (triple distilled) poire eau-de-vie made from Oregon Hood River pears, a marionberry-flavored grappa, a very fruity and potent un-aged Syrah brandy, and an interesting gin made with a wine base (a malt-based version is also in the works). All (as well as Scotch, bourbon, and other non-McMenamins spirits) are available at the Distillery Pub, which is open from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. year round.

To be able to sell its spirits on premise, McMenamins obtained its own distributor’s license from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. All of its products are bottled and stored at a special OLCC warehouse within the building (they cannot be taken directly from distillery to bar.) “There’s a lot of paperwork, but the state has been easy to work with,” Medoff says.



Distiller Lee Medoff

Bardenay Restaurant & Distillery

Bardenay Restaurant & Distillery, in Boise, Idaho, was begun by cider maker Kevin Settles, who formerly made Seven Sisters Cider (after 1996, the company was sold and re-named Seven Sisters Wild Horse Cider, which is no longer in business). Working with partner Dave Krick, who operates the Bittercreek Ale House, Settles began negotiating with the ATF and the State of Idaho for permission to make vodka, gin, and rum on premise. "We decided to do this in a very public manner", he says. By March of 2000, permits were secured. "We became the first establishment in the country to operate a distillery in a public [retail] place," Settles claims.

Marketing its products has been a convoluted process for Bardenay, however. Because all spirits must be sold or dispensed from bottles, the company had to get label approval from the ATF before it could bottle its products. Bardenay's spirits had to be shipped to a state liquor warehouse, then sold back to the restaurant through a wholesaler. There is a significant loss of revenue for the company by this system, Settles admits, but profits are recovered by the low pour cost of having one's own alcohol. Using a Holstein pot still in a small (260 square foot) space, Settles acknowledges his production limitations. "The biggest mistake you can make in this business is overestimating the volume you can produce", he believes. So far most of Bardenay's production is sold at the pub in mixed drinks. Currently, five liquor stores in the Boise area also carry Bardenay products.

The raw material for Bardenay's spirits is not beer or wine, but cane sugar. "It makes very pure alcohol," Settles says. For the distillery's gin, which begins at about 95% ethanol, 12 different botanicals are added. "We think our gin will stand up against anyone's," Settles claims.

Settles has no plans to make whiskey at this point, since the distillery has no space for aging. "Right now we want to be the finest cocktail bar that we can be," he says. Bardenay's 12-page drinks menu includes many top single-malt Scotches as well as small batch Bourbons, high quality Tequilas, a wide selection of Northwest and California wines, and 13 beers on tap.

R&D at Lagunitas

Meanwhile, at Lagunitas Brewery in Petaluma, California, owner Tony Magee has also made the move to micro-distilling. His still is a homemade affair, fabricated from a 100-gallon Grundy tank with a lyne arm added.

The company intends to produce whiskey, using a yeast from Tennessee to produce the original beer. So far only one pilot batch has been distilled, just 15 gallons at about 95% ABV. Lagunitas currently has a permit from the State of California to produce 220 cases (about 500 gallons) of spirits per year.

"We're still in the R and D stage here," Magee says. "We want it now, but this is going to be a long process."

New Players at an Old Craft

Compared to brewing, distilling is a long process indeed. The rewards, particularly those involving whisky or brandy,

are usually achieved in years rather than a few weeks or months. There are different techniques involved and different skills to be learned in the craft of distilling. But indications are that more American artisanal breweries are now making a commitment to a new craft—one that should pay off handsomely in the future.

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Cooking with Spirits

by Lucy Saunders

The flavors of distilled spirits can add a new dimension to side dishes of all kinds. For example, start with the simplest preparation of bland vegetables, such as purees of winter squashes. Stir in a splash of a citrusy liqueur, such as Cointreau, and suddenly the dish takes on new elegance and sophistication.

Even basic salad dressings and dips get a boost from distilled spirits. Here are two recipes to get you started. The spread, modeled after a Liptauer recipe, calls for hot red pepper vodka to punch up the creamy cheese flavors.

One of my favorite salad dressings is made with Calvados, that essence of apples from Normandy, France. It's delicious over a salad of baby spinach leaves, or a mixed mesclun lettuce blend.

CALVADOS CREAM SALAD DRESSING

2 T Calvados	one-half t. finely grated lemon zest
2 T canola oil	Pinch sugar
1/3 cup cream	Kosher salt and fresh ground
2 Ts minced scallions	pepper to taste

Whisk all ingredients together, and serve on a salad of baby lettuce, mixed mesclun greens, sliced pears and sprinkled with finely chopped toasted walnuts.

LIQUORISH LIPTAUER

Liptauer cheese spread is a spicy mix of cream cheese and grated cheese, sometimes seasoned with salty anchovies. Here, I skip the anchovies in favor of hot pepper vodka and spices.

1 pkg. cream cheese, room temp.	1 T hot Hungarian paprika
4 T butter, room temp.	3 dashes Worcestershire
4 T finely grated sharp Cheddar	Dash hot red pepper sauce
2 oz. hot red pepper vodka	Salt and coarsely ground
3 T minced shallots	pepper

Blend all the ingredients and mash well, until smooth. Pack into a 2-cup serving dish, and chill covered for at least one hour to let the flavors meld. Serve with crackers or toasted pumpernickel bread rounds.

Good Books and Sites

by Fal Allen

The history of alcohol production is inexorably intertwined with the history of human kind. There are many anthropologists and historians that believe that the reason humans gave up the wandering life style of the hunter-gatherer and settled down to form more permanent colonies was so that they could farm cereal grains and have a continuous and steady supply to make alcoholic beverages.

The examples of beer, wine, and spirits being intertwined with historical events is everywhere: the Holy communion; Louis Pasteur's ground breaking microbiological work; Absinthe and the impressionist painters; the whiskey rebellion;

In America today the progression from an interest in fine wines and hand crafted beers has opened up an interest in fine spirits.

brewing and its contribution to the industrial revolution; Prohibition with its many opportunities in bootlegging that

lead directly to the unchecked growth of organized crime (without which, I must remind you, we would never have had LAS VEGAS ... obviously prohibition wasn't all bad) and the fortunes of Americas royal family. The instances are endless.

The process of separating ethanol from an alcoholic beverage, or distilling, was invented by the Egyptians over 4000 years ago (ironically modern Arabs are prohibited by their religion from drinking alcohol of any kind). There has been a continuous refinement of the process over that time. In America today the progression from an interest in fine wines and hand crafted beers has opened up an interest in fine spirits. And, as with wine and beer an interest in European spirits has led Americans to produce there own high quality interpretations. It started with brandies and Eau de vie in California and has led to malts, bourbon and other liquors all over the country. The next logical step is micro distilleries and possibly even bars that distill their own unique liquors right there on premises. We can only hope.

EVENTS

■ **Whiskies of the World Expo.** On Sat. March 16, 2002 at the Hotel Nikko, San Francisco, Calif. you will find 300 of the worlds finest single malts, boutique bourbons and specialty spirits. Go to www.cellicmalts.com.

■ **Whisky Fest.** April 17, 2002 at The Hyatt Regency in Chicago. Sample more than 200 of the finest and rarest whiskies, single malts, scotch, Irish bourbon, Tennessee and Canadian whiskies. Information at www.maltadvocate.com.

■ **Worldwide Distilled Spirits Conference.** Sept. 8-12, 2002 at Roxburgh Hotel in Edinburgh, Scotland. www.distillingconferences.com.

Books to read

- *Still Life with Bottle*, by Ralph Steadman
- *The World Guide to Whiskey*, by Michael Jackson
- *The Book of Bourbon*, by Regan & Regan
- *Whiskey*, by Oscar Getz
- *Mountain Spirits*, by Joseph E. Dabney
- *The Second Oldest Profession*, by Jess Carr
- *Armagnac*, by Charles Neal
- *The Cognac Companion: A Connoisseur's Guide*, by Conal R. Gregory
- *The Book of Gins and Vodkas: A Complete Guide*, by Bob Emmons
- *Rums of the Eastern Caribbean*, by Edward Hamilton
- *The Social History of Bourbon*, by Gerald Carson
- *Moonshine Bible*, by J R Payne
- *Absinthe: History in a Bottle*, by Barnaby Conrad
- *The Martini: An Illustrated History of an American Classic*, by Barnaby Conrad
- *Practicle Distiller*, by Leonard Monzert

Good Web sites

- <http://www.stgeorgespirits.com>
- <http://www.jepsonwine.com>
- <http://www.rmsbrandy.com/products.htm>
- <http://www.clearcreekdistillery.com>
- <http://www.mclainandkyne.com/products.html>
- <http://www.bayou.com/~sshawhan/0007.html>
- <http://www.straightbourbon.com>
- http://www.history-of-whisky.com/html/the_u_s.html
- <http://www.neworleansrum.com>
- <http://www.glenoradistillery.com/distillery.html>
- <http://realbeer.com/maltadvocate>
- http://www.sallys-place.com/beverages/spirits/eau_de_vie.htm
- <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/cruz/12.07.95/tequila-9549.html>
- http://www.tastings.com/spirits/american_whiskey.html
- http://www.wineentusiastmag.com/issues/march00/mar_proof.cfm
- <http://www.discovereconomics.com/bookstore/economichistory/0313213305AMUS186773.shtml>
- <http://www.seborabsinth.cz>
- <http://www.delphis.dm/rum.htm>
- <http://www.rum.ch>
- <http://www.matusalem.com>
- <http://www.ministerofrum.com/book.html>
- <http://www2.eos.net/beerwine/distillery.html>
- <http://www.georgian.net/rally/tequila>
- <http://www.ambrew.com/distilling.html>

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Fal Allen is a brewer, writer and brewery manager for Anderson Valley Brewing Co. — home of the Boonville Beer Festival (5/4/02).

The Basis of North American Whiskies

by Alan S. Dikty

North American whiskies are all-grain spirits that have been produced from a mash bill that usually mixes together corn, rye, wheat, barley and other grains in different proportions, and then generally aged for an extended period of time in wooden barrels. These barrels may be new or used, and charred or uncharred on the inside, depending on the type of whiskey being made.

The Distillation of North American Whiskies

Most North American whiskies are made in column stills. The United States government requires that all whiskies:

- Be made from a grain mash.
- Be distilled at 90% ABV or less.
- Be reduced to no more than 62.5% ABV (125° proof) before being aged in oak barrels (except for corn whiskey, which does not have to be aged in wood).
- Have the aroma, taste and characteristics that are generally attributed to whiskey.
- Be bottled at no less than 40% ABV (80° proof).

Classifications of North American Whiskies

North American whiskies are essentially classified by the type or variety of grains in the mash bill, the percentage or proof of alcohol at which they are distilled, and the length and manner of their aging.

Bourbon Whiskey must contain a minimum of 51% corn, be produced in the United States, be distilled at less than 80% ABV (160° proof) and be aged for a minimum of two years in new charred barrels, although in practice virtually all straight whiskies are aged at least four years. Any bourbon, or any other domestic or imported whiskey, for that matter, that has been aged less than four years must contain an age statement on the label. **Small Batch Bourbons** are bourbons that bottled from a small group of specially selected barrels that are blended together. **Single Barrel Bourbon** is bourbon from one specifically chosen cask.

Tennessee Whiskey must contain a minimum of 51% corn, be distilled at less than 80% ABV (160° proof), filtered through a bed of sugar maple charcoal, and be aged for a minimum of two years in new charred barrels.

Rye Whiskey must contain a minimum of 51% rye grain, be distilled at less than 80% ABV (160° proof) and be aged for

a minimum of two years in new charred barrels. A small amount of straight rye whiskey is bottled and marketed, but most of the industry production is blended into other whiskies to give them additional character and structure. Canadians frequently refer to their whiskey as “rye,” though it is in fact made primarily from corn or wheat.

Blended American Whiskey is required to contain at least 20% straight whiskey; with the balance being unaged neutral spirit or, in a few cases, high-proof light whiskey. It has a general whiskey flavor profile (most closely resembling bourbon), but lacks any defining taste characteristic.

Corn Whiskey is a commercial product that must contain at least 80% corn, be distilled at less than 80% ABV (160° proof) and be aged for a minimum of two years in new or used uncharred barrels.

Moonshine Whiskey (a.k.a. white lightning, corn likker, white dog) is distilled from a varied mix of corn and sugar and is aged in Mason jars and jugs for the length of time that it takes the customers to get home or the Dukes of Hazzard to make a delivery in the General Lee.

Canadian Whisky is made primarily from corn or wheat, with a supplement of rye, barley or barley malt. There are no Canadian government requirements when it comes to the percentages of grains used in the mash bill. They are aged, primarily

in used oak barrels, for a minimum of three years, with most brands being aged four to six years. Virtually all Canadian whiskies (except the pot-distilled malt whiskies of Glenora in Nova Scotia) are blended from different grain whiskies of different ages.

Bulk Canadian whiskies are usually shipped in barrels to their destination country where they are bottled. These bulk whiskies are usually bottled at 40% ABV (80° proof) and are usually no

more than four years old. **Bottled in Canada whiskies** generally have older whiskies in their blends and are bottled at 43.4% ABV (86.8° proof).

“Taken sanely and in moderation whiskey is beneficial, aids digestion, helps throw off colds, megrims and influenzas. Used improperly the effect is just as bad as stuffing on too many starchy foods, taking no exercise, or disliking our neighbor.”

– Charles H. Baker, Jr.,
The Gentleman’s Companion, 1939

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You can reach Alan Dikty at dikty@tastings.com.

The Liquor Cabinet will continue in the next issue of *American Distiller*.

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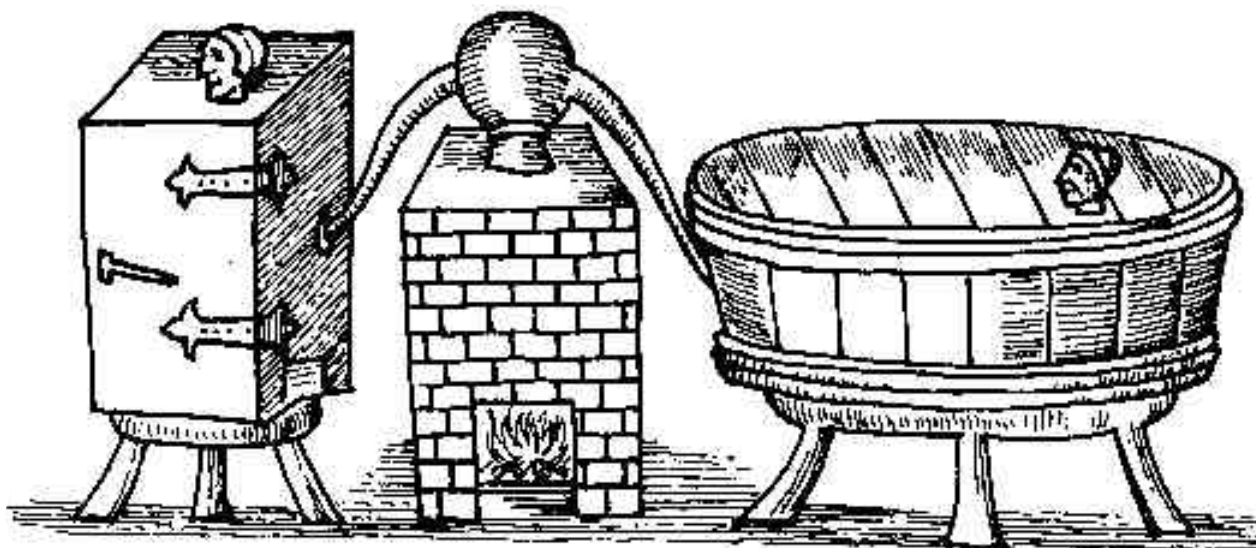


ILLUSTRATION FROM "THE ART OF DISTILLATION", LONDON 1651, BY JOHN FRENCH