



## Distilling Alumni Spirits

by Kristen Manieri | photos by Scott Cook

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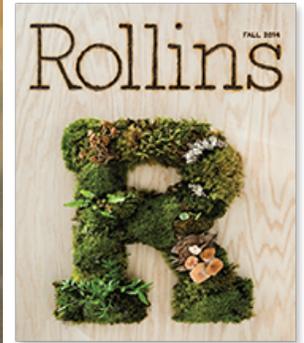
Writer Elbert Hubbard once said, “Art is not a thing; it is a way.” It can take on many forms: a painting, a poem...

For some, it s a pint.

There is an artisan movement brewing in the spirit and beer industry, one that’s given folks with vision, ingenuity, and a touch of audaciousness a new canvas on which to create. We’ve discovered five such artists in our alumni midst. Each has chosen a different brush—vodka, beer, whiskey—but all have set out on a newly blazed trail seemingly without limits.

### Masters of Whiskey Paul Twydord '94 President, Winter Park Distilling Company

With the first distillery in the Winter Park area (legally at least), Twyford is breaking new ground literally and figuratively. “Up until 15 years ago, there were very few



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craft distilleries in the country because the rules were so onerous,” says Twyford, who thinks 350 new craft distilleries have set up shop across the country in the last 10 years, thanks to a slight softening of regulations.

Hurdles aside, Winter Park Distilling Company opened in January 2011 with one rum, one vodka, and two whiskey products. Named after Winter Park places and people, the products’ names and label designs give a nod to the town in a way that’s both obscure and artful, depending on how well you know the area.

Unlike large, multinational whiskey producers, craft distillers like Twyford produce small batches using a handcrafted process. “We are distilling by

hand, which means we aren’t using computers to gauge the smell and taste of our product. Using our noses and palates, we make decisions throughout the entire distillation process that will affect the way the final product tastes,” Twyford says. “The idea of having a computer taste your product seems ridiculous when you think about it, but that’s the way corporate liquor has been doing it for 100 years. To contrast that, you have craft distillers standing over their still, smelling and tasting the distillate.”

General

**The Last Word**

A Divine Graduation

“TOO MUCH OF ANYTHING IS BAD, BUT TOO MUCH OF GOOD WHISKEY IS BARELY ENOUGH.”

MARK TWAIN

## David Spike McClure '81

### The Whiskey Guy

Becoming a Master of Whiskey has been the perfect career for David Spike McClure '81, aka The Whiskey Guy, a [history major](#).

After graduating from Rollins and then getting an MFA from Ohio State, McClure jumped headlong into a two-decadelong theater, film, and television career in New York City before stumbling into a gig that changed his trajectory entirely.

“A friend of mine was getting paid to wear a kilt and go to bars to talk about whiskey and buy people drinks,” he says. “I thought, I want to get paid to do that.” So McClure applied and was hired, even though his employer didn’t know that he and his friend had been studying whiskey on their own inside the small single-malt collecting club they had previously started.

Impressed by the pair's in-depth and uncommon whiskey acumen, the import company asked them to come on board full-time as whiskey ambassadors. Frequent trips to Scotland and behind-the-scenes training in distilleries all over the world's whiskey regions eventually earned McClure the title of master of whiskey. From trainings with wholesalers and large restaurant groups to consumer classes and tastings, McClure has shared his spirit savvy with thousands across the U.S.

## Better Know a Whiskey

**Irish whiskey** is triple distilled in pot stills and comes in both single-malt and blended varieties. Example: Bushmills (single malt and blend)

**Scotch whiskey** is double distilled in pot stills and comes in both single-malt and blended varieties. Example: Johnnie Walker (blend), Oban (single malt)

**Rye whiskey** is made from at least 51 percent rye and is distilled in column and pot stills. Example: Bulleit Rye

**Bourbon whiskey** is distilled in column and pot stills and made from a minimum of 51 percent corn. Example: Bulleit Bourbon

**Tennessee whiskey** comes in corn or rye styles and is filtered through beds of charcoal. Example: George Dickel

**Canadian whisky** is a blend that may include corn, wheat, rye, and barley and is distilled in column and pot stills. Example: Crown Royal



### Whiskey or Whisky?

The spelling differs geographically and has two legitimate spellings. Americans and Irish prefer whiskey, while Scots, Canadians, and the rest of the world's single-malt producers opt for whisky.

**WHISKEY BY THE NUMBERS**

- 90% of the world's single-malt whisky comes from SCOTLAND
- 13 years: The length of Prohibition in U.S.
- 5,000 DIFFERENT TYPES OF SINGLE-MALT WHISKEY
- \$628,205: The amount a rare bottle of Macallan "M" whisky sold for at a Sotheby's auction in 2014, setting a world record for the most expensive single-malt whisky ever.

## 6 Surprising Facts About Moonshine

1. Moonshine begins in the same fashion as whiskey with one major difference: Whiskey is aged, sometimes for many years, in oak barrels.
2. Made at illegal distilleries, moonshine whiskey got its name because it was made only at night when officials could not see the smoke from the distilleries.

3. The “XXX” label on bygone moonshine jugs meant that it had been run through the still three times and was almost pure alcohol.

4. Moonshine is usually between 150 and 170 proof, a potency that results from the fact that it is neither cut nor aged.

5. Distilling moonshine requires just four simple ingredients: corn, sugar, yeast, and water.

6. It’s still illegal. You can brew your own beer in all 50 states, but distilling your own liquor is still legally taboo.

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### The MBA

You’ll need a highball glass and a cocktail shaker.

Orange slices  
blueberries  
1.5 oz Whiskey  
0.5 oz Simple syrup  
0.5 oz Ginger ale

**Directions** Add orange slice and blueberries to a shaker and muddle. Add whiskey, simple syrup, and ice. Shake and pour in a highball glass. Top with ginger ale. Garnish with an orange slice and blueberries.

**Pairings** The MBA can be served with dishes ranging from teriyaki pork, sweet and sour chicken, and goat cheese and

balsamic crostini to good old-fashioned southern barbecue. For dessert, try serving with a variety of handmade chocolates.