

INTRODUCTION



Start Up the Still

Fritz Allhoff and Marcus P. Adams

So long as the presence of death lurks with anyone who goes through the simple act of swallowing, I will make mine whiskey.

—*W.C. Fields*

As you sit down to read this introduction, pour yourself some whiskey, whether a wee dram or something more substantial. Our recommendation would be bourbon or, failing that, something from Islay (pronounced *EYE-la*), but choose whatever you wish. Depending on your mood, you might try one of the whiskey cocktails we present at the end of the book. All that really matters is that you have whiskey in front of you. We certainly did while working on this project, and we suspect that many of our contributors did as well. As much fun as it can be to think about the philosophical dimensions of whiskey, it is important to never get too far away from whiskey itself. The essays in this book range from the conversational to the abstract, but they are all unified by homage to the glory of whiskey. So, while we think about whiskey, let's not forget to drink it!

There is no better place to start a philosophical discussion of whiskey than to consider its name: ‘whiskey’ derives from the Gaelic ‘*uisge beatha*’, which translates as “water of life.” The Gaelic underwent various metamorphoses through the 1600s and 1700s before the contemporary appearance of ‘whisky’ in the mid-1700s.¹ Debates rage as to whether Ireland or Scotland should properly be regarded as the home of whiskey, though it is uncontroversial that a license to distill within the Irish district of Bushmills was granted under the authority of King James I in 1608, and that this was the first such license ever issued. In some sense, this gives priority to the Irish, but surely there was whiskey before there were licenses; references to it appear in various forms as early as the 1400s.

Given this long tradition, as well as the rivalry between the Scottish and the Irish, it is inevitable that differences would be had, and the basic spelling of the word is one of the most fundamental. Most of you already know that Scottish whisky and Irish whiskey have different spellings, though this convention is probably more recent than most people think; references to Scotch whiskey appear as recently as the early 1900s.² And, of course, whiskey is now made around the world, and distillers have to figure out how to spell the word that eventually makes its way onto their bottles. Canadian whisky caught a strong foothold in the industry through American Prohibition and follows the Scottish spelling. Japanese whisky—currently the darling of several international whisky competitions—also uses the Scottish spelling. Conventional wisdom also holds that American whiskey is spelled with the Irish spelling, though this is not always true; one of the most famous American bourbons, Maker’s Mark, is labeled “Bourbon Whisky.”³

Most whiskey literature uses ‘whisky’ as the generic term, making exceptions for American and Irish whiskeys. This is undoubtedly because of the enormous influence that single malt Scotch has exerted over the whiskey world, an influence that is surely deserved. Irish single malts have made great progress in recent years, though their more common blended variants pale in comparison to much of the whisky on offer from Scotland;



with few exceptions, even Ireland's single malts are less regarded than their Scottish counterparts. Traditionally, there is little doubt that Scotland's single malts are nearly alone atop the pinnacle of great whiskeys.⁴ Why then, is this book titled *Whiskey and Philosophy* rather than *Whisky and Philosophy*? While acknowledging the ubiquity of the Scottish spelling for generic uses, we nevertheless have adopted the American spelling for present purposes, and for several reasons. For one, our publisher hated the idea of using 'whisk(e)y', which had been our first inclination in the interest of being inclusive. Aside from being invisible to those searching for 'whisky' or 'whiskey' books, the syntax is just unwieldy. Therefore, we had to pick, and the American spelling resonated with us.

While whiskey has a long tradition in the United States, it is clearly undergoing a renaissance. American drinkers have become far more discriminating in recent years, and whiskey bars have begun to open around the country; many of these are throwbacks to the Prohibition-style speakeasy. Small batch and single barrel productions—higher-quality whiskeys than the standard bottlings—are increasingly more widely available and more highly sought. For example, between 2002 and 2006, sales of bourbon and Tennessee whiskey rose just over 12 percent overall, while sales of whiskey in the \$20–\$30 range rose over 27 percent. In the same time period, though, sales of so-called super premium bourbons (\$30) rose over 60 percent.⁵ It is also worth noticing that these bottles were not even produced until about twenty-five years ago, with Blanton's release of the first single barrel bourbon in 1984. Other distilleries soon followed, but American bourbon has hardly been produced at a high level for anywhere near as long as Scotch whisky.

Both of us are Americans, and we are excited by the prospects of bourbon's future. Though this book is being distributed worldwide, most of its sales will be in the United States, and we wanted to acknowledge that. But most important, we think that American whiskey is really, really outstanding. Why is it that single malt Scotch is so celebrated and American



whiskey so routinely denigrated, at least comparatively? The biggest reason, it seems to us, is consumers' lack of exposure to high-quality American whiskey.

One of us was recently in Europe talking to some friends about whiskey and was surprised to hear the near consensus in the room that American whiskey was just not very good, especially compared to some of the great single malts from Scotland. What American whiskeys are these? Some names were thrown about, nearly all of which were under \$20 a bottle and aged for only a couple of years. It is certainly not surprising that a great single malt, like Lagavulin 16, is more highly regarded than these. This is an obviously unfair comparison, but one that really gets to the heart of a lot of the misconceptions about American whiskey. First, we would put up a \$20 bottle of American against any single malt Scotch sold at that price. The latter, of course, barely even exist and for those that do, the verdict is hardly obvious.

And second, there are some fantastic American whiskeys, and people should get out there and drink them! One of the most amazing bottles of whiskey that we have ever had is the A.H. Hirsch Reserve 16; sadly this amazing stuff, which came from the now-defunct Michter's Distillery, is almost completely gone. Surely this bottle can stand up to some of the great single malts, even if the style is obviously different. As the supplies dwindle, the price of Hirsch Reserve 16 has approached \$300, but it is worth noticing that the original release price was no more than Lagavulin 16 (about \$80). There are other fantastic bourbons—many of which are made by small producers or in small quantities—that stand up to the best that Scotland has to offer. And this was another reason that we chose to use 'whiskey' rather than 'whisky': to celebrate some of the great whiskeys that are being made in the United States.

These previous comments are hardly meant to be irrelevant to some of the central philosophical issues that are engaged in this book, though we will lay out those issues more directly in the second half of this introduction. For now, though,



let us identify two issues already broached. First, orthography is hardly trivial. How we spell ‘whiskey’ is emblematic of myriad historical, cultural, and, indeed, philosophical themes. Notions of identity, supremacy, and patriotism are all bound up in that simple ‘e’ that is either elided or included. Had American whiskey chosen an alternative convention, would it be able to rival Scotch for greatness or would it forever be subservient to it? What ultimately matters, of course, is what is in the glass, though the underlying connotations are significant.

And the rivalry between bourbon and Scotch—or at least the one that we hope to hype and promote—gives rise to deep philosophical issues about aesthetics, objectivity (or subjectivity) of taste, commensurability of values, and so on.⁶ To wit: which is better, bourbon or Scotch? Are questions like this even coherent? Likely not, given the wide range of whiskey that either category has to offer. Go back to the comparison between Hirsch and Lagavulin; is this comparison any more tractable? It probably depends on whether you are sitting in Frankfort, Kentucky, or Islay, Scotland. Lagavulin begs for violent, stormy nights on Scottish Isles, whereas Hirsch could be perfect during a summer sunset in the American South. Hirsch is for weddings and Lagavulin is for divorces. Hirsch is as upbeat and happy as Lagavulin is dark and brooding. They are so different stylistically that all sorts of exigencies dictate which one is more appropriate for the occasion. But there are limits to this subjectivity as either of those wonderful bottles would always be welcome over lesser whiskeys.

But what if people simply disagree about whether something is any good, full stop? One of us was once drinking in Australia with a friend from St. Andrews, arguably the epicenter of single malt Scotch. The best bottle of bourbon available at this Melbourne bar was Woodford Reserve, which is hardly bad stuff. Nonetheless, the Scot, clearly well versed in whisky, alleged that “there’s no future for this.” The comparison between a \$30 bottle of Woodford Reserve and various



\$60 single malt Scotches is already unfair, but what of the blanket smugness and thinly veiled implication that Kentucky has nothing to offer? Surely this cannot be right, but what are two people who disagree so fundamentally about aesthetic value supposed to say to each other? A widely heralded Latin proverb says *de gustibus non est disputandum*, which colloquially means “there is no accounting for taste.” Really? Don’t we want to say that our dear friend from St. Andrews has it wrong? As surely he must. Great philosophers, though, from David Hume⁷ to Immanuel Kant⁸ have wrestled with this question, yet disagreement still abounds.

Sticking with bourbon and Scotch, it is worth emphasizing just how different these sorts of things are. Aside from both being whiskeys, they otherwise have fairly little in common. Bourbon, of course, has to be made from at least 51% corn (by weight, in the mash bill), though most bourbons are made of around 70%–75% corn. The remainder of this is rounded out by other small grains, principally rye, though wheat and barley are sometimes used as well. Bourbon has to be aged in charred new oak barrels, though the aging requirements widely reported are a mistake.⁹ Compare these features to single malt Scotch, which is made from 100% malted barley and aged in reconditioned barrels, predominantly ones that had previously held bourbon. Tabling other differences in production—such as stills, water, and so on—it is not surprising that the finished products taste quite different.

In fact, these differences make it virtually impossible to confuse the two, unlike what once was the case with Old World and New World wines (i.e., wines from Europe and those from anywhere else). In a now-familiar story, one of the most important events in American wine took place at a tasting in 1976, when a California cabernet sauvignon and a California chardonnay outpointed some of the top red Bordeaux and white Burgundy, respectively.¹⁰ At the time, Californian wines were nearly universally regarded as inferior to their French counterparts, and this tasting—which was presided over by French judges—was a catalyst for the Californian wine industry.



In the intervening decades, Californian wines have dramatically increased in stature, though many purists still favor the French. Is some similar recognition possible for bourbon? Probably not, and for the reasons discussed earlier: bourbon would never be confused with a single malt Scotch, and, therefore, tasters would easily be able to discriminate between them. Bourbon is too opulent, too sweet, too oaky, or so the critics would say. It lacks structure and finesse. And so on. Ironically, those are the same things that contemporary critics say about Californian wine, which has transformed stylistically since the 1976 tasting toward bigger, more fruit-forward styles. Part of this has to do with chasing the palates and scores of a few well-known wine writers; Bordeaux is probably even shifting toward California in this regard. The point, though, is that confrontations like this are only possible insofar as the products are similar; in wine, this was once possible and might eventually be again, but with whiskey it never would have been possible in the first place.

So, where does this leave us? In the first part of this introduction, we wanted to raise some general philosophical issues pertaining to whiskey, and we chose two that were related: how to spell ‘whiskey’ and how to think about comparisons of different whiskeys. There was an agenda in both of these discussions, which was to indicate an excitement about American whiskey, and to challenge some of the orthodoxy regarding the supremacy of Scotch. Undoubtedly this will be controversial in certain circles, though we encourage everyone to try some of the best that America has to offer. Much of the discussion thus far will be furthered by the essays in this book, though far more topics will also be broached. In the second half of the introduction, let us more specifically cover the contents of the book and its layout.

We have organized the book into five units: “The History and Culture of Whiskey”; “The Beauty and Experience of Whiskey”; “The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Whiskey”;



“Ethics and Whiskey”; and “Whisky: A Sense of Place.” The first unit is designed with two goals in mind: first, to provide a broad discussion of the historical background of whiskey through detailed accounts of its key figures and early producers; and second, to provide analysis of contemporary cultural issues relating to whiskey enjoyment. The next three units have been organized to cover the relationships among whiskey and many of the primary disciplines within philosophy. A few of the disciplines upon which these essays touch are aesthetics, philosophy of perception, philosophy of language, logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Though the essays in these units argue for substantive (and in several cases quite original!) philosophical theses, these units have been designed to be accessible and engaging. The final unit has been organized around three key geographical regions, where many believe that the whisky produced is directly tied (or not in some cases) to the region in which it is produced. While we suggest reading the first and fifth units each as a cohesive unit, the essays in units two through four could be read independently since each essay in these units argues for a specific thesis. In the remainder of this introduction, we will provide a brief overview of each unit and the essays within each unit.

The first unit, “The History and Culture of Whiskey,” covers a great deal of ground by providing interesting accounts of whiskey’s origins and the culture surrounding whiskey enjoyment. Though few whiskey drinkers today would realize it, whiskey is quite unique as a distilled spirit; it has a much more detailed history than many other spirits such as rum or vodka. Not only does it have a rich history, but the production process is quite detailed and requires more care in the case of whiskey than in the case of other spirits. To begin the unit, Andrew Jefford, an accomplished whiskey and wine writer,¹¹ masterfully details whisky’s origins by first considering what sort of product it is: is it agricultural or industrial? Next he discusses issues of geography, asking whether the place where a whiskey is produced leaves its mark, or *terroir*,



on the resulting spirit. Jefford discusses many more topics relating to the origins of Scotch whisky and to its present form due to control by conglomerates; this essay makes not only a great start to the unit, but also to the volume as a whole.

The next essay, from Ian Buxton, attacks two ideas about whisky that permeate not only the marketing of whisky but also strongly influence how many people evaluate a particular whisky's quality and desirability: provenance and authenticity. By first detailing the background related to the rise of whisky brands around the turn of the twentieth century, Buxton shows how in most cases claims to a whisky's authenticity and references to a particular whisky's provenance serve as merely emotional appeals in a corporate marketing strategy. As Buxton argues, these references are often only thinly based in history. Given that it is nearly impossible to find a Scotch whisky brand (and most brands of other types of whiskey) that doesn't make reference to at least one of these concepts, Buxton's essay plays an important role in evaluating the claims companies make. The third essay, by David Wishart, highlights various key points along the development of whisky. Here Wishart underscores the variegated groups who have had control of Scotch production, from the Guild of Surgeon Barbers to Monks. His essay is a unique contribution because of his account of how the best whisky in the 1820s happened to be secretly produced contraband whisky (which eventually was legalized because King George liked it so much!).

Next, Ada Brunstein provides a penetrating analysis on the topic of women and their participation in whiskey production, and how more recently women have an increased market share in whiskey consumption. Brunstein's wit makes this essay quite enjoyable to read, but it also provides some novel ideas—especially her theory on why both women *and men* get past the “burn” and keep drinking whiskey after their first encounter with it. Wrapping up the first unit is Hans Allhoff's essay, which discusses two approaches to a classic



whiskey cocktail: the Manhattan. Here, Allhoff compares approaches to the Manhattan to womanizers' approaches to women, using an account from Milan Kundera¹² as a springboard for his philosophical reflections. What follows is a lighthearted but substantive argument that also provides many useful notes on crafting an excellent Manhattan for one's own consumption.

In the second unit, "The Beauty and Experience of Whiskey," we start exploring topics within the traditional philosophical disciplines of aesthetics and philosophy of perception. The essays in this unit cohere around two central themes: first, what sort of experience it is to drink a whiskey; and second, what makes a particular whiskey a good one. These topics are fitting to consider whether one is an accomplished whiskey taster or a novice; after all, when we taste a whiskey aren't we often inclined to step away and consider both the experience of tasting it as well as the qualities that make it a good one? With these themes in mind, the unit begins with Robert Arp's essay on pleasure and whiskey enjoyment. Here Arp explores the hedonistic paradox in the context of whiskey drinking and living a wild lifestyle. Whiskey drinking is a great context to discuss the hedonistic paradox, which is when one seeks pleasure but ends up finding pain, because of the association people have of whiskey drinkers with wild living—especially those whiskey drinkers who, as Arp discusses, "gulp" their whiskey. To resolve the paradox for whiskey drinkers, Arp provides a solution from the philosopher John Stuart Mill, and in the end Arp inspires us all to be more reflective whiskey drinkers.

The second essay in this unit, by Mark Waymack—a philosopher who has written extensively on whiskey¹³—ventures into the philosophical discipline of applied aesthetics as he explores the topic of why we choose certain whiskeys over others. Waymack's account is derived from his response to a question he often hears when someone finds out he writes about whiskey: What is the *best* whiskey? Rather than presuming a *particular* whiskey to be best or that there is some



Platonic form of whiskey, in this essay, Waymack provides his answer to that question. His account first details a few of the three basic elements that allow us to enjoy a whiskey: first, we must be receptive to it both physically and psychologically; second, it must be well made; and third, we must prefer the taste profile. Next, Waymack tells how our choice of whiskey is related to the things we associate with it. Some of his own associations are his encounters with individuals in the whiskey industry such as Bill Samuels (president of Maker's Mark), Jimmy Russell (master distiller of Wild Turkey), and Jerry Dalton (master distiller of Jim Beam). Finally, Waymack argues that these associations influence our experience of whiskey, but this is not to say that we enjoy bad whiskey as a result; rather, his account shows that they can enhance the richness of our experience.

The next essay, from philosophers Douglas Burnham and Ole Martin Skilleås, continues with aesthetics as the language that professional whiskey tasters employ when appraising whiskeys is analyzed. Here, Burnham and Skilleås argue that such appraisals are *not* merely subjective, but that they have an intersubjective status. To defend this claim, they examine tasting language from two distinct schools: first, a descriptive school that employs terms like 'dried apples', 'butter', and 'toast'; and second, the evaluative school that makes use of terms like 'abrasive', 'weak', 'bold', and so on. Burnham and Skilleås conclude by arguing that both of these schools implicitly depend upon aesthetic judgments.

Next, Thom Brooks brings in the philosophy of nineteenth-century philosopher G. W. F. Hegel to help us judge among different varieties of Scotch (though his account is applicable to other types of whiskey), and especially to be able to do so when advice from whisky reviewers can be quite variegated. Here, Brooks makes use of what Hegel calls his "logic," a system designed to help us distinguish and order various features of things we are examining such as whisky. Brooks argues that the ideal, or best, Scotch is the one that possesses all the flavor notes he describes and one that does so in a particular order.



Brooks concludes the essay by discussing what he believes is an example of such an ideal whisky—the Macallan. His discussion from Hegel and detailed account of flavor notes is sure to enhance one’s whisky experience as well as provide a unique system by which to evaluate the Scotch. In the final essay of this unit, philosopher Harvey Siegel provides a biographical account of his experiences with whiskey, especially detailing time he spent in Scotland as he discovered his love for Scotch. Here he recounts a memorable occasion when he stood at the intersection of two famous whiskey rivers: the Spey and the Fiddich. As he details this time, he recounts how his experience at this intersection can only be described as “spiritual.”

The third unit, “The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Whiskey,” deals with issues relating to two of the major disciplines within philosophy: metaphysics and epistemology. This unit, though accessible, contains some of the more esoteric essays in the volume. The first is by philosopher Tom Polger, who talks about an important topic in metaphysics: natural kinds. Here he considers whether whiskey—like gold, silver, cats, and dogs—is a natural kind. Another way of phrasing this question is whether whiskey “carves nature at its joints.” Along the way, Polger considers whether various types of whiskeys might make good candidates for being natural kinds, focusing especially on bourbon. In the end, Polger concludes that considerations about whether whiskey is a natural kind have raised more questions than they have answered, but the essay is an enjoyable read that brings many issues from metaphysics to the forefront in discussing whiskey’s place in the world. The next essay, by former Jim Beam master distiller Jerry Dalton, explores connections between whiskey tasting and the German physicist Werner Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle. Like Waymack, Dalton recounts how he is often asked what the *best* whiskey is (specifically bourbon); however, unlike Waymack’s account of his answer in terms of aesthetics, Dalton looks to physics and chemistry to investigate the relationship between the taster and the thing being



tasted. What follows is an intriguing account on the uncertainties involved with tasting from a recognized bourbon expert.

The third essay in this unit, from philosopher Steven Geisz, explores how the Buddhist theory of no-self could impact one's decision to drink whiskey in the present, especially *how much* whiskey one should drink in the present. The primary question he considers with regard to the self is whether, if the Buddhist theory of no-self is correct—i.e., the view that there is no continually-existing self—we can drink all we want in the present and just let our future self worry about the consequences. After all, if there is no self that continues across time, the person who wakes up tomorrow will be a different person! Ian Dove's essay on informal logic wraps up the third unit, and here he provides a method for comparing tasting notes from experts. Throughout the essay, Dove provides side-by-side comparison of whiskey tasting notes from experts such as Michael Jackson and Jim Murray and discusses how one might evaluate differing opinions from such experts. Following these comparisons, Dove concludes with recommendations to the whiskey buyer who stands in the store wondering what to buy.

For the fourth unit, "Ethics and Whiskey," we explore how ethical considerations relate to whiskey. In the first essay, philosopher Richard Menary provides an account of what it means to be virtuous, something philosophers have discussed since the ancient Greeks. Here, Menary notes three types of virtue: the moral virtues, the intellectual virtues, and the aesthetic virtues. As Menary argues, the virtuous whiskey drinker exhibits all three. Menary's essay will help you think about ways both to live well and to drink well! The next essay, from philosopher Dave Monroe, explores a question about whiskey and ethics: Does whiskey make people immoral? This is an especially provocative question because of the manner in which whiskey drinkers are often portrayed in movies and novels such as the Clint Eastwood movie *Unforgiven*,¹⁴ which Monroe discusses. To answer the question, Monroe ponders



whether whiskey might have a special property that causes people to be immoral (what he calls the mean property thesis, or MPT), concluding that whiskey does not have such a special property but also arguing that we should work to dispel the myth that whiskey causes people to be immoral. The final essay in this unit is from Jason Kawall, a philosopher, who draws comparisons between arguments in environmental ethics about preserving species and arguments for preserving distilleries. Should we be concerned if a distillery like Port Ellen closes? Kawall's essay looks at distillery closings and argues that we should value distilleries. But what if whiskey produced elsewhere tastes the same? Should we then care if a particular distillery has closed? Yes, Kawall argues, and this is because our enjoyment of whiskey is enhanced through knowing about its history and origins—these are lost forever when a distillery shuts down.

The fifth unit, “Whisky: A Sense of Place,” closes the volume by providing detailed discussions of three key whisky regions that have historically played a major role in the whisky industry: Islay, Japan, and Speyside. The first essay is from Kevin Sweeney, an aesthetician. In the essay, Sweeney weaves together two distinct elements: first, he provides philosophical discussion of an important issue relating to whether taste is cognitive, that is, whether we have control over our tastes; and second, he provides a biographical account, which also serves as an example in Sweeney's essay, of how he and his wife, Elizabeth, traveled to Islay to explore its whiskies and countryside. To tackle these twin objectives, Sweeney recounts how Elizabeth found Islay whiskies repulsive, so they decided to travel to Islay to see if she would come to like them. Sweeney argues that taste can be based on a cognitive attitude, and his wife, to some degree, is a case in point of this view: because of their time on Islay, her taste in whisky changed, even if “only modestly.” For those who are well acquainted with the wonder of Islay whiskies, or for those who are novices, this essay provides an excellent overview of



the enjoyment of Islay whiskies as well as a detailed discussion of what it means to acquire tastes.

The second essay, which is from Tokyo-based journalist Chris Bunting, surveys an area of the whisky market often unknown to whisky drinkers, Japan. As mentioned earlier, Japan has recently won numerous awards for producing excellent whisky in the Scotch style, but it still has limited international availability and exposure. Bunting's essay fills this lacuna by providing a detailed account of whisky's origin in Japan from its early days to its award-winning expressions today. Along the way, Bunting also provides an account of the Japanese whisky brands that have emerged by referencing the French philosopher and social critic Jean Baudrillard's work on the words we use to refer to products like whiskey. Bunting's essay is one of our favorites in the volume, and one that must be read by anyone unfamiliar with the story of whisky in Japan. The final essay in this unit, from Susie Pryor and Andrew Martin, examines two of the most renowned whisky regions in Scotland: Speyside and Islay. In their account of these regions and the whisky from them, Pryor and Martin argue that the enjoyment of whisky is influenced to a great degree by certain experiences that whisky companies promote, such as festivals and at distilleries, among others. Through personal interviews of individuals on Islay and on the Malt Whisky Trail in Speyside, Pryor and Martin illustrate how events such as these influence how people think and talk about whisky. Pryor and Martin help us consider the ways in which corporations (and their brands) influence how we perceive a product—our view of a particular whisky is not as simple as merely an interaction between us and a drink! Accordingly, their essay is an excellent close to the volume as they help us think about the influence of corporate branding strategies and the whiskies we love to drink.

Enjoy, and don't forget to drink good whiskey during your voyage! Especially if it's bourbon.



NOTES

The epigraph is taken from W. C. Fields and Richard J. Anobile, *Drat! Being the Encapsulated View of Life* (New York: World Publishing, 1968), p. 82.

1. Charles MacLean, *MacLean's Miscellany of Whisky* (London: Little Books, 2004), p. 12.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
3. George Dickel Tennessee Whisky, which dates to the late 1800s, is also an exception to the standard American spelling. Wasmund's Single Malt Whisky, made in Virginia, also uses the Scottish spelling, though for obvious stylistic affinities.
4. We will use 'whiskeys' as the plural of 'whiskey' and 'whiskies' as the plural of 'whisky'. Any unqualified use of 'whisky' will be a reference to Scotch whisky, and other uses will be qualified (e.g., 'Japanese whisky').
5. Eric Asimov, "Bourbon's Shot at the Big Time," *New York Times* (November 28, 2007).
6. For discussion of these issues in the whiskey context, see Jerry Dalton, "Heisenberg's Spirits: Tasting Is More Uncertain Than It Seems" (this volume), pp. 195–207. For closely related discussion pertaining to wine, see George Gale, "Who Cares If You Like It, This Is Good Wine Regardless" in *Wine & Philosophy: A Symposium on Thinking and Drinking*, ed. Fritz Allhoff (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 172–185.
7. David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" in *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, [1757] 1987).
8. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, [1790] 1987).
9. See the "Standards of Identity for Distilled Spirits," http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2002/aprqtr/pdf/27cfr5.21.pdf (accessed September 15, 2008). Incidentally, there are a lot of myths about bourbon: that it has to come from Bourbon County, Kentucky; that it has to be made with at least 51% corn and less than 80% corn (lest it be corn whiskey instead of bourbon); and that it must be aged a minimum of two years. The geographic requirement has largely been debunked though still persists at some levels. The aging requirement is for straight bourbon, not bourbon simpliciter; this former is, technically, a different category. The 80% corn limit simply doesn't exist, as the Standards of Identity indicate. Corn whiskey can't be aged in charred new oak barrels and that's what distinguishes it from bourbon, not the corn content. Or, to say



it another way, if bourbon had 80%-plus corn and was aged in charred new oak barrels, then it would still be bourbon; it just turns out that bourbon is traditionally made with less corn. This error regarding corn limit is still fairly common and is even made by such authorities as our illustrious foreword writer! See MacLean, *Miscellany of Whisky*, p. 32.

10. See, for example, Orley Ashenfelter, Richard E. Quandt, and George M. Taber, "Wine-Tasting Epiphany: An Analysis of the 1976 California vs. France Tasting" in Allhoff, *Wine & Philosophy*, pp. 237–247. See also George Taber, *Judgment of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting That Revolutionized Wine* (New York: Scribner, 2005).
11. See, for example, Andrew Jefford, *Peat Smoke and Spirit: A Portrait of Islay and Its Whiskies* (London: Headline, 2004).
12. Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).
13. See M. H. Waymack and J. F. Harris, *The Book of Classic American Whiskeys* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1995).
14. *Unforgiven*. Dir. Clint Eastwood, Malpasco Productions, Los Angeles, 1992.

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