

FROM THE BARREL

April 2025

SPRING INTO WHISKEY

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DRINKS FOR
SPRING

Barrel Side Chats

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Hosting Tips

for Whiskey Tastings

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Saturday
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Location

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2100 NW 100th St, Clive, IA 50325



Grand Tasting

12:00PM - 4:00PM

VIP Early Entry at 11:00AM



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"Sip the Essence of
Spring."

- DSM Whiskey Fest

SPRINTZ CON

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2025 DSM WHISKEY FEST

The Des Moines Whiskey Festival is back! Mark your calendars for October 25th – you don't want to miss this year!

Cheers to Our First Volume!

Message from the Editor



Welcome to the very first edition of *From the Barrel*—your new go-to sip of whiskey wisdom, stories, and spirited discoveries! Whether you're a seasoned connoisseur or just dipping your toes into the amber-hued world of whiskey, we're thrilled to have you here.

This magazine was born out of passion—for great whiskey, for Iowa's vibrant distilling scene, and for the incredible community that makes the **Des Moines Whiskey Festival** such a standout event year after year. To our readers, sponsors, vendors, and patrons: thank you. Your enthusiasm and support fuel everything we do.

Each month, we'll pour you a fresh blend of curated content—think **whiskey pairings** (because yes, whiskey and food are a match made in heaven), **distillery travel guides** (start planning those road trips now), **seasonal cocktail recipes** (hello, summer sips!), and the **latest trends** shaking up the whiskey world. Plus, we'll keep you in the loop on all things **Des Moines Whiskey Festival**, from ticket drops to exclusive sponsor features.

Our mission? To celebrate Iowa's distilleries, lift up local businesses, and keep the whiskey conversation flowing all year long. So raise a glass—here's to great whiskey, great company, and the exciting journey ahead.

Sláinte,

Madison Sconiers

Editor, From the Barrel

P.S. Want to see something featured? Have a favorite Iowa whiskey we should spotlight? Drop us a line—we'd love to hear from you! Email us: Info@DSMWhiskeyFest.com.



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royalmilebar.com

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Whiskey Festival.

Drink responsibly.

From the Barrel | Vol. 1 | Pg. 1



Seasons of the Still

How Nature Shapes Your Whiskey

**Whiskey isn't just made
—it's grown.**

From the golden fields of grain to the quiet aging in oak barrels, every season leaves its mark on the spirit. Whether it's the summer heat swelling casks or winter's chill slowing maturation, distillers dance with the elements to craft liquid gold. Here's how the turning of the year transforms whiskey from mash to masterpiece.

Spring: The Season of New Beginnings

Fresh Crops & Mash Bill Magic

Spring's arrival means planting barley, corn, rye, and wheat—the soul of whiskey's flavor. Distillers often tweak

mash bills based on early harvest quality, adjusting for sweetness, spice, or earthy depth.

Yeast Awakens

Warmer temperatures revive fermentation, creating lively, fruity esters. Some Scotch distilleries even open warehouse windows to let spring breezes influence the mash's microbial profile.

Fun Fact:

In Japan, sakura [cherry blossom] season inspires limited-edition wood finishes, adding delicate floral notes.

Summer: The Angel's Share Rises

The Swell & The Shrink

As temperatures climb, whiskey barrels expand and contract, pushing spirit deeper into the oak. This extracts bold vanilla, caramel, and coconut tones—especially in bourbon's scorching Kentucky rickhouses.

Peat's Time to Shine

In Scotland and Ireland, summer is prime peat-cutting season. The damp, earthy fuel will later smoke malted barley, infusing those iconic smoky, medicinal notes into Islay Scotch.



Pairing idea:

Try an oaky bourbon with cinnamon-dusted apple pie—autumn in a glass.

Autumn: Harvest & Deepening Flavors

Grain Gathering

Distillers rush to harvest barley at peak ripeness—too early, and the whiskey lacks body; too late, and sugars turn starchy. Pumpkin-spiced whiskey trends aside, autumn's real magic is in the grain.

Slow Sipping Season

Cooler temps mean barrels rest more quietly, allowing subtler flavors (honey, dried fruit, baking spice) to develop. It's why aged Scotch and rye often taste richer when bottled in fall.

Pro Tip:

Summer's heat accelerates aging—some hot-climate whiskies [like India's Amrut] mature twice as fast as Scotch.

Winter: The Silent Sculptor

The Cold's Quiet Work

Freezing winters cause whiskey to retreat from barrel walls, pausing extraction. This "hibernation" creates smoother, more integrated flavors—think Canadian whiskies with their mellow, approachable profiles.

Ice Distillation?

Some adventurous distillers (like Sweden's Mackmyra) freeze-distill whiskey for intense, concentrated flavors—perfect for sipping by a fireside.

Did you know?

Scotch aged in seaside warehouses absorbs briny, maritime notes from winter storms.

Your Seasonal Whiskey Guide

- **Spring:** Floral, grassy malts (e.g., Irish single pot still).
- **Summer:** Bold, oak-heavy bourbons or smoky Islay Scotch.
- **Autumn:** Spiced ryes or sherry-cask-finished drams.
- **Winter:** Rich, aged single malts or wheated bourbons.



The Last Pour

Next time you sip a whiskey, remember: it's a living thing, shaped by sun, wind, and time. Seasons don't just pass—they infuse. So raise a glass to the elements, and savor the taste of the year itself.

Thirsty for more? Subscribe to *From the Barrel* for bi-bi-monthly seasonal guides, rare finds, and spirited storytelling. Cheers!

HIGHLY ALLOCATED

WHISKEY	10Z	20Z
1792 SINGLE BARREL	12	20
BOOKERS BOURBON	16	32
EAGLE RARE 10 IRA PICK	11	20
BLANTON'S SINGLE BARREL	17	33
ELIJAH CRAIG TOASTED	10	20
ELIJAH CRAIG BARREL PROOF	16	32
BAKER'S 7YR HIGH RYE BOURBON	15	30
HEAVAN HILL BiB	9	18
CARIBOU CROSSING	15	30
WOODFORD MASTER COLLECTION	23	45
HENRY MCKENNA 10YR BiB	14	28
STAGG 2024	25	50
ELMER T LEE	20	38
LUX ROW 4 GRAIN	15	29
COL. E.H. TAYLOR BARREL PROOF	20	38
MACALLAN 18YR	45	88

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Spring into Spirited Gatherings:

Hosting the Perfect Whiskey Tastings

As the days grow longer and the air turns crisp with the promise of spring, there's no better time to gather friends for an unforgettable whiskey tasting. Whether you're a seasoned connoisseur or a curious newcomer, hosting a whiskey tasting is an art—one that blends exploration, conversation, and, of course, great flavor. Here's how to craft an event that's as smooth as a well-aged single malt.

Setting the Stage: Whiskey Tasting Essentials

Before diving into pours, set the mood for an elevated experience:

- **Glassware:** Opt for Glencairn glasses or tulip-shaped tumblers to concentrate aromas.
- **Water & Palate Cleansers:** Provide still water and plain crackers or bread to reset between sips.
- **Lighting & Ambiance:** Soft, warm lighting and a relaxed playlist (think jazz or acoustic folk) let the whiskey shine.
- **Tasting Sheets:** Encourage guests to jot down notes—color, nose, palate, and finish.





Curating the Whiskey Lineup: A Flight for Every Palate

A great tasting balances variety without overwhelming the senses. Here's a diverse flight to please every guest:

1. The Gateway Whiskey: Smooth & Approachable

- **Examples:** Jameson Irish Whiskey, Buffalo Trace Bourbon
- **Why?** Easy-drinking with honeyed sweetness—ideal for beginners.

2. The Spiced Charmer: Rich & Bold

- **Examples:** Woodford Reserve, Bulleit Rye
- **Why?** Pepper, vanilla, and oak spice awaken the senses.

3. The Smoky Allure: Peaty & Complex

- **Examples:** Laphroaig 10, Ardbeg An Oa
- **Why?** For lovers of campfire depth and maritime brine.

4. The Luxe Finale: Rare or Cask Strength

- Examples: Macallan Sherry Oak, Booker's Bourbon
- Why? A powerful, memorable finish for seasoned sippers.

Elevate the Experience: Food Pairings That Sing

Whiskey and food? A match made in heaven. Try these pairings to enhance flavors:

Savory Bites

- Aged Cheddar & Dark Chocolate (complements bourbon's caramel notes)
- Smoked Almonds & Dried Figs (echoes peaty Scotch's earthiness)
- Spiced Candied Bacon (pairs perfectly with rye's boldness)

Sweet Endings

- Crème Brûlée (mirrors vanilla and custard tones in whiskey)
- Orange-Zest Dark Chocolate (brightens sherry-cask finishes)



Engage & Entertain: Tasting Games & Conversation Starters

Keep the energy lively with a few interactive twists:

- Blind Taste Challenge: Guess the region or age for fun bragging rights.
- Cocktail Demo: Shake up a classic Old Fashioned or Whiskey Sour as a finale.
- Whiskey Trivia: Share fun facts (Did you know bourbon must be 51% corn?).

The Last Sip: Sending Guests Home Smiling

Cap the night with a small favor—a mini bottle, personalized tasting notes, or even whiskey-infused chocolates. After all, the best tastings linger long after the final pour.

Ready to host your own? Gather your favorite bottles, invite good company, and let the whiskey work its magic. Cheers to a spirited spring!



Want more whiskey wisdom? Subscribe to From the Barrel for seasonal guides, rare finds, and the art of the perfect pour.

Mark your calendars:

Exciting Events Ahead!



The world of spirits, whiskey, and craft cocktails is buzzing with unmissable experiences—and that's just the beginning. From exclusive tastings and masterclasses to immersive cultural festivals and zero-proof celebrations, we've got the inside scoop on what's coming next. Whether it's a whiskey expo, a craft cocktail competition, or a vibrant non-alcoholic cultural fair, our curated guide highlights the must-attend events of the season. Connoisseur, curious explorer, or simply here for the vibes—these gatherings promise to inspire, educate, and delight. Cheers to new adventures (with or without the ABV)—see you there!

April

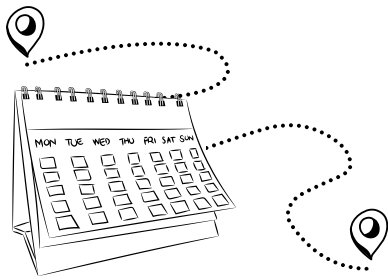
- Plan your visit Wednesdays thru Saturdays at the [Templeton Distillery](https://www.templetondistillery.com). History buffs, whiskey aficionados, tourists and day-trip adventurers can all find something to enjoy on the tour of the Templeton Distillery. Tours begin in the museum and work their way to the state of the art distillery. The tour finishes up in the tasting room for world-class, premium, distillery exclusive whiskies.
[templetondistillery.com](https://www.templetondistillery.com)
- Apr 11, 2025 @ 11:00AM-5:00PM. [Iowa Eats Food & Drink Festival](https://www.iowaeastsfestival.com) in Waterloo features Iowa food and drink products, chefs, artisans and agriculture-related products. Enjoy food and beverage tastings, cooking demonstrations and live entertainment.
[iowaeastsfestival.com](https://www.iowaeastsfestival.com)
- Apr 15, 2025 @ 6:00PM-8:00PM. [Ted Lare Workshop](https://www.iowadistilling.com). Join us for a delicious cocktail or mocktail at The Iowa Distilling Co. and unlock your creativity in this engaging Decorative Wood Board Workshop!
[iowadistilling.com](https://www.iowadistilling.com)
- Apr 17, 2025, 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM. [Books & Bourbon](https://www.wildcatdistillery.com) (FREE event). Looking for a peaceful escape? Join Wildcat Distilling Co. for "Books & Bourbon," the ultimate Introvert Happy Hour, hosted by Kendall Young Library. Grab a drink, settle in with a good book, and enjoy a quiet evening in our cozy tasting room. Wildcat Distilling, Co., 626 2nd St, Webster City, IA 50595.
[wildcatdistillery.com](https://www.wildcatdistillery.com)

- Apr 23-26, 2025. The [115th Drake Relays](https://www.godrakebulldogs.com) is one of the biggest events of the year on Drake University's campus in Des Moines. More than 5,000 track & field competitors and 40,000 fans take part in "America's Athletic Classic."
[godrakebulldogs.com](https://www.godrakebulldogs.com)
- April 23, 2025 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. Off to the Races! : A Kentucky Derby Cocktail Class. Get ready to race to the bar with us at "Shakin' It with Cedar Ridge: Off to the Races!", a Kentucky Derby-themed cocktail class where you'll learn how to craft two iconic drinks that will have you feeling like you're at the track in no time! [cedarridgedistillery.com](https://www.cedarridgedistillery.com)
- Throughout the month - [Foundry Distillery Tour & Tasting](https://www.foundrydistillingcompany.com). This tour is designed around the intricacies of spirits production. From fermentation to distillation to barrel aging and packaging, our staff will walk you through the intersection of art and science.
[foundrydistillingcompany.com](https://www.foundrydistillingcompany.com)
- [Iowa Wine, Beer and Distillery Passports](https://www.traveliowa.com). Your thirst for adventure starts here with the Iowa Wine, Beer and Distillery Passports. Track your progress and support locally owned wineries, breweries, and distilleries. To sweeten the deal, prizes earned by checking in to any business listed in the three passports, and you earn extra points by redeeming available deals and offers!
[traveliowa.com](https://www.traveliowa.com)

May

- May 1-3, 2025. Pella's annual [Tulip Time Festival](https://www.visitpella.com). Pella comes alive with tulips, Dutch attire, food, fun, and more for the 90th year. Three days each spring, Pella is bursting with color and excitement for Pella residents and visitors alike! 507 Franklin Street, Pella, IA.
[visitpella.com](https://www.visitpella.com)
- May 7, 2025 @ 12:00PM - 10:00PM. [Whiskey Wednesday](https://www.mrdistilling.com). Join Mississippi River Distilling every Wednesday at both locations. Specials for Everyone: Save \$2 on all whiskey cocktails, and Whiskey Club Members enjoy Buy One Get One Free whiskey cocktails!
[mrdistilling.com](https://www.mrdistilling.com)
- May 9, 2025 @ 6:00PM-9:00PM. [Friday Night Music - Retro Rockits](https://www.cedarridgedistillery.com). A 5-piece band based out of Cedar Rapids that plays the biggest "radio hits" from the 60s, 70s & 80s with great three and four-part harmonies. Cedar Ridge Winery & Distillery 1441 Marak Road, Swisher, IA [cedarridgedistillery.com](https://www.cedarridgedistillery.com)





- May 10, 2025 @ 11:00AM-2:00PM. [Mother's Day Brunch](#). Join us at Paws & Pints for a special Mother's Day Brunch in celebration of National Dog Mom Day, partnering with the Young Women's Resource Center. Paws & Pints 6218 Willowmere Dr., Des Moines, IA 50321
- May 10, 2025 @ 3:00PM. [173 Distillery Tour](#). 173° Craft Distillery is a small-batch distillery located in Clear Lake, Iowa that specializes in rum, vodka, bourbon, and gin. Our passion for crafting high-quality spirits began with a simple idea: to create unique, handcrafted spirits that capture the essence of the Midwest. 306 1st Ave N, Clear Lake, IA 50428. [173craftdistillery.com](#)
- May 15-17, 2025. [Orange City Tulip Festival](#). Enjoy Dutch music & dances, two daily parades, Dutch delicacies and dishes, all surrounded by thousands of tulips at the Orange City Tulip Festival. [octulipfestival.com](#)
- May 16-17, 2025. [Greenbelt Music Festival](#) is an outdoor music festival featuring national and local live entertainment. Enjoy an outdoor stage, games and activities, amazing food, tasty beverages, vendors, indoor stage and more!. Horizon Events Center. 2100 NW 100th Street, Clive, IA 50325. [greenbeltmusic.com](#)
- May 21, 2025 @ 7:00PM-9:00PM. Jam out to snippets of top music while playing competitively against other music lovers and sipping on handcrafted cocktails during [Music Bingo](#) the 3rd Wednesday of each month! 4349 Cumming Avenue, Cumming, IA 50061 [iowadistilling.com](#)

- May 23-24, 2025. [CelebrAsian 2025](#) in Full Bloom | 50th Anniversary Ray of Freedom. Iowa's largest Asian American event! Immerse yourself in the richness of Asian heritage without leaving Iowa. Don't miss this highly anticipated event of the year. Experience the warmth, flavors, and traditions of Asia at CelebrAsian. 1205 Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50309. [iowaasianalliance.com](#)
- May 24, 2025 @ 7:00PM-10:00PM. [JunqueFest Finale with Jake Beaty](#). (FREE event). End JunqueFest weekend on a high note with Jake Beaty—because nothing caps off a weekend of junkin' like good music and whiskey. Wildcat Distilling, Co., 626 2nd St, Webster City, IA 50595. [wildcatdistillery.com](#)

June

- Jun 1, 2025 @ 12:00PM-9:00PM. [Des Moines Biergarten](#). Open Wednesdays - Sundays every week, from Noon - 9pm (depending on weather), through to Fall, 2025! This pop-up experience offers local and German brews, German-inspired eats, live music and yard games. Des Moines Water Works. 2201 George Flagg Pkwy, Des Moines, Iowa 50321. [desmoinesbiergarten.com](#)
- Jun 7, 2025 @ 4:00PM-9:00PM. Free Live Music at [Revelton Distillery](#). They offer free live music (almost every) Saturday from 4:00 - 7:00PM. 1400 W Clay Street, Osceola, Iowa 50213. [reveltondistillery.com](#)
- June 27-29, 2025. [Des Moines Arts Festival](#). Step into the heart of creativity at one of the world's most prestigious festivals, where 195 of the nation's top artists transform downtown Des Moines into a breathtaking urban gallery. Located in the 4.4-acre John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park and the iconic Krause Gateway Center, designed by Renzo Piano Workshop, this is more than an event - it's an experience. Western Gateway Park, Downtown Des Moines, Iowa. [desmoinesartsfestival.org](#)

Have an event or tasting you think our readers would like to experience?

Send us an email with flyer and/or event details to:

info@DSMWhiskeyFest.com with Subject: [From the Barrel Events](#).

Back again at the 2025 Des Moines Whiskey Festival

99 Proof Designs

Nestled just outside the Iowa border (in Moline, IL) 99 Proof Designs brought fun and novelty to the Des Moines Whiskey Festival last year. This year their back again with custom laser engraving, t-shirt/hat design, unique candles, handmade bath & body items, and home/bar decor.

These realistic gel wax candles are designed to look like old fashioned cocktails. The candles are in whiskey glasses, complete with faux ice cubes and cherries, and the gel wax mimics the appearance of the drink. The branding on the glasses adds to the realistic effect, making them a unique and decorative item. These are fragranced with a honey, bourbon scent with a touch of orange. Just like the drink.



Bourbon /whiskey candle - \$32.00
Click [here](#) to order.

BARREL SIDE CHATS



Des Moines Whiskey Festival: A New Chapter

Hold onto
your
Glencairns,
whiskey
lovers

— the **Des Moines Whiskey Festival** is back, and it's got a new crew! In this first sip of our **Barrel Side Chats** series, we're cracking open a bottle of banter with two of our festival partners **Ryan Lett** and **Shawn Vodenik**. Think of it as speed-dating, but with fewer awkward silences and way more bourbon.

In this Q&A conversation, we'll take you BTS (behind the scene) of our brand story, as Ryan and Shawn spill the beans on their backgrounds, whiskey obsessions, wild

festival dreams, and probably some embarrassing drinking stories (no promises, but we're pushing for it).

To get the ball rolling, let's get to know a little more about Shawn Vodenik, his personal background, and connection to whiskey.

Q: Can you share a little about your background and what led you to be a part of the Des Moines Whiskey Festival?

A: When I find something I enjoy, I want to learn as much as I can about it. I was able to attend the Whiskey Festival on a couple of occasions in the past





Shawn pictured (on the left) with his father.

and was blown away by the amount of local distilleries here in Iowa. Sampling the products is certainly a fun way to learn, but I wanted to know more. I wanted to hear about the process and the passion that goes into making something that takes 2 or more years to produce. When Edgar approached me about the opportunity to purchase the festival, I saw it as a chance to satisfy my passion to learn and share the experience with others.

Q: The DSM Whiskey Festival is now veteran-owned and operated. As a veteran, how have your military experiences shaped who you are today and how you approach running this festival?

A: While in the military, I was able to travel and interact with people from all over the world. The best festivals I've attended are the ones which transcend culture and make all of those in attendance feel as though they are the culture. You don't need a special hat or wear special pants to prove you enjoy whiskey. We want to facilitate an environment where everyone can

pursue their whiskey journey in their own way. Whether it's a guided educational tour, a group experience, or an individual taking their time to sample and enjoy the different spirits we've made available.

Q: What does whiskey mean to you personally?

A: For me, whiskey has always been the drink of choice to celebrate the beginning or the end of a great time. Whether it's the start of a new career or a retirement after 20 years, a reunion amongst friends or a parting glass to a best friend. If done right, the unique aroma of a good bourbon should make you smile or tug on your heart with the reminder of a specific moment. Whiskey helps make the memory linger in the best way possible.

Q: Why do you believe whiskey is more than just a drink—what does it represent in terms of culture, history, and community?

A: The history of whiskey is old, but the story of Iowa whiskey is relatively new. Cedar Ridge, one of our sponsors, was founded in 2005 and was the first licensed distillery here in Iowa since prohibition. Now we have over 20 native distilleries with numerous small batch hobby producers. Since nearly all of the ingredients are grown here in abundance, the taste of local whiskey is uniquely Iowa.

Q: What values do you and your fellow partners bring to this organization to ensure its success and integrity?

A: This event is a passion for us and we genuinely care about making it the best it can be. We appreciate constructive feedback when making improvements, the good and the bad. Our objective is to create an event where our customers and sponsors all walk away feeling great.

Q: What's your vision for the future of the Des Moines Whiskey Festival?

A: I would love to see this become an Iowa Whiskey Festival and host the event throughout the state.

Q: Why is it important to provide a platform for local and small distilleries?

A: It's hard to compete with the big names attached to a long history. So providing an opportunity for potential customers from all over to sample a variety of local whiskey is important for growth, not just at the business level, but at the cultural level. It's important to show people that whiskey can be made everywhere and good whiskey is not synonymous with one geographic area.

Q: When people hear "Des Moines Whiskey Festival," what do you want them to think or feel?

A: If hearing the words "Des Moines Whiskey Festival" brings a smile to their face, I think that's great. But if they catch the scent of whiskey and it evokes great memories of "The Des Moines Whiskey Festival," then I know we're accomplishing our mission.

Q: What excites you the most about the 2025 festival?

A: The whiskey! Last year we felt rushed and there were so many questions we didn't even think to ask. This year we are operating on a lot of lessons learned and I'm excited to see those improvements implemented.

While Shawn brings his passion for discovery to the festival, we have another partner who adds his own unique perspective. In this next segment, we sit down with Major Ryan Lett to discuss his journey, his vision for the festival's future, and what sets this event apart in Iowa's thriving whiskey scene.



Ryan pictured (on the left) with his partner, Nicci Atzeni.

Q: Can you share a little about your background and what led you to be a part of the Des Moines Whiskey Festival?

A: I attended Whiskey Fest in 2021 and had a great time. I found out the Festival was for sale in spring 2024 and there was an opportunity to take this event, improve on it and make it a prime event for Iowa.

Q: Not only are you a veteran, you actively serve. How have your military experiences shaped who you are today and how you approach running this festival?

A: We all have similar life experiences and mindset when it comes to teamwork, structure and creative ideas. Having the mindset of keeping events and deadlines on schedule and delegating work responsibilities.

Q: What does whiskey mean to you personally?

A: Whiskey to me... if I'm drinking whiskey, the occasion means more than just hanging out and chugging light beer. I'm introducing family and friends to whiskey, and try something new. A memory for me... coming home after the first Afghanistan deployment, sitting in my apartment and having a glass of Maker's Mark and just enjoying the silence.

Q: Why do you believe whiskey is more than just a drink—what does it represent in terms of culture, history, and community?

A: Whiskey is more than a drink because (like wine or champagne) it's a direct representation of the land from where it's distilled. American whiskey is different from Scotch or Irish whisky because of the mash and the water used in the distillation process. Distilling great whiskey takes years of labor and supervision to ensure the process is completed to bring us a nice glass.

Q: What inspired you to take on this leadership role in the festival?

A: I saw an opportunity to be a part of something special that can bring people together instead of driving us apart. Get off your phone, get off your couch... grab a glass, rub some elbows with people you've never met before and make some new memories.

Q: The Des Moines Whiskey Festival is veteran-owned and operated—how does that identity influence the way you run the festival?

A: Taking care of each other, taking care of our customers and doing our part to be stewards of the Festival. Attention to detail to ensure that we are bringing the best experience.

Q: What's your vision for the future of the Des Moines Whiskey Festival?

A: Expansion. Bigger events. Make this a platform for distillers to debut new or exclusive tastings.

Q: Why is it important to provide a platform for local and small distilleries?

A: They are producing great whiskey, and we feel we can help them gain exposure to a wider audience.

Q: The festival also supports businesses that make whiskey-related products. How does this event help small businesses thrive?

A: Last year we had Ivy Rose Boutique and 99 Proof Designs as vendors which offered awesome novelty experiences for whiskey enthusiasts through custom hats, flask sets, commemorative bottles and other goods.

Q: What do you think makes Iowa whiskey special?

A: Corn is Iowa's biggest product and corn is distilled in the whiskey mash. Each glass is a drink of Iowa.

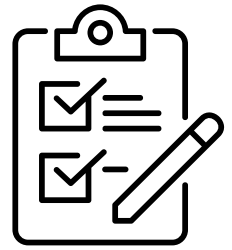
Ryan's insights leave no doubt—the **Des Moines Whiskey Festival** is in passionate hands, with big things on the horizon. But the story doesn't end here. Stay tuned for part two of this multi-part series, where we'll introduce our third partner, and the owner—because why reveal all the good stuff at once? Cheers to new beginnings!

Join us as we raise a glass to fresh perspectives, bold ideas, and the next era of the **Des Moines Whiskey Festival**—where tradition meets innovation, and every pour tells a story. The journey begins here.

🍷 MUST BE 21+ TO ENTER | DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Disclaimer: The 2025 Des Moines Whiskey Festival is a celebration of spirits for adults only. Valid photo ID required for entry. We encourage all guests to enjoy tastings in moderation and prioritize safety. Please arrange for a designated driver or ride service.

Whiskey Lovers, We Need You!



Help us craft the **BEST** Des Moines Whiskey Festival yet in 2025! We want your pours... ahem, we mean your **thoughts**—on tastings, experiences, entertainment, and more.

Spill the whiskey tea (or bourbon, or Scotch...) in this quick survey, and you could help shape the most unforgettable festival yet. Plus, who knows? Your dream whiskey experience might just become a reality!



Tap **here** to take the survey—it's smoother than a fine single malt. (25 questions, but we promise it's easier than choosing just one favorite whiskey.)

Your Voice Matters—And So Does Your Privacy!

*All responses are **100% anonymous**. We won't contact you or share your data—unless you specifically ask us to (like if you win a surprise festival perk). Drink up (responsibly) and answer freely!**



Spring Sippin'

6 Refreshing Whiskey Drinks for the Season

As winter's chill fades and blossoms emerge, it's time to lighten up your whiskey game. Spring calls for bright, floral, and subtly sweet cocktails that celebrate renewal—without sacrificing whiskey's rich character. Whether you're lounging on a sun-dappled patio or hosting a garden soirée, these **six seasonal whiskey drinks** are your perfect pour.

1. The Whiskey Smash

Fresh, Herbal & Zesty

Why It's Perfect for Spring: This minty, citrus-kissed cocktail is like a julep's brighter cousin—ideal for sunny afternoons.

Recipe:

- 2 oz bourbon (try Maker's Mark)
- 3 lemon wedges
- 5 fresh mint leaves
- ½ oz honey or simple syrup

Muddle lemon, mint, and syrup. Add bourbon and ice, shake, and strain over crushed ice. Garnish with a mint sprig.



Pair With:
Grilled shrimp skewers or strawberry salad.



Pair With:
Lemon tart or
goat cheese
crostini.

2. Lavender Whiskey Sour

Floral, Silky & Elegant

Why It's Perfect for Spring: Lavender's delicate perfume elevates the classic sour into a garden-party staple.

Recipe:

- 2 oz rye whiskey (like Bulleit)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz lavender syrup*
- 1 egg white (optional for froth)

*Dry shake (no ice), then shake with ice. Strain into a coupe. Garnish with lavender buds. *(Simmer 1 cup water, 1 cup sugar, and 2 tbsp dried lavender for 5 mins, then strain.)*

3. Peach & Ginger Highball

Fruity, Spicy & Effervescent

Why It's Perfect for Spring: Juicy peaches and fiery ginger beer scream spring awakening.

Recipe:

- 1.5 oz Irish whiskey (Jameson works well)
- 2 oz peach nectar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz lemon juice
- 3 oz ginger beer

Build over ice in a tall glass. Stir gently. Garnish with a peach slice.



Pair With:
Spicy glazed
chicken wings
or mango
salsa.

4. Rosemary Maple Old Fashioned

Woodsy, Sweet & Aromatic

Why It's Perfect for Spring: Rosemary's piney freshness cuts through maple's richness for a sophisticated twist.

Recipe:

- 2 oz bourbon (Woodford Reserve)
- ¼ oz maple syrup
- 2 dashes orange bitters
- 1 rosemary sprig

Stir syrup, bitters, and bourbon with ice. Strain over a large cube. Garnish with a rosemary sprig (lightly slap to release oils).



Pair With:
Maple-glazed pecans or roasted carrots.



Pair With:

Coconut shrimp or citrus-marinated olives.

5. Hibiscus Whiskey Lemonade

Tart, Floral & Vibrant

Why It's Perfect for Spring: Hibiscus' cranberry-like tang and vivid pink hue make this a showstopper.

Recipe:

- 1.5 oz Scotch (a light Highland like Glenmorangie)
- 3 oz hibiscus tea (chilled)
- 1 oz lemon juice
- ½ oz agave syrup

Shake and pour over ice. Top with club soda. Garnish with edible flowers.

6. Cucumber Mint Cooler

Crisp, Clean & Ultra-Refreshing

Why It's Perfect for Spring: Cucumber's coolness and mint's brightness mimic spring's dewy mornings.

Recipe:

- 2 oz Japanese whisky (Suntory Toki)
- 3 cucumber slices (muddled)
- ½ oz lime juice
- 4 mint leaves
- Soda water

Muddle cucumber and mint. Add whisky and lime, shake, strain over ice. Top with soda. Garnish with cucumber ribbon.



Pair With:
Sushi or
herbed goat
cheese dip

The Seasonal Takeaway

Spring whiskey drinks should **balance freshness with depth**—think herbs, stone fruits, and floral notes that complement (not overpower) the spirit. **Pro tip:** Use seasonal produce (ripe berries, tender herbs) for the best flavor.

BONUS: Find more fun whiskey cocktails with our sponsor, **Templeton Distillery**, [here](#).

Ready to shake up spring?

Pick a cocktail, grab a bottle, and let the sunshine in. Tag us with your creations **#SpringIntoWhiskey** for a chance to be featured!

A Sweet Finish: Whiskey & Spring, Perfectly Paired

No great whiskey experience is complete without a decadent finale—especially one that celebrates the season! Our Lemon-Whiskey Berry Trifle blends the warmth of bourbon with bright citrus and juicy spring berries for a dessert that's as refreshing as it is indulgent. Ideal for capping off a tasting or impressing guests at your next gathering, this layered treat proves that whiskey belongs on the dessert menu.

(Pro tip: The longer it chills, the better the flavors mingle!)

Lemon-Whiskey Berry Trifle

(Serves 8-10)

Ingredients

(For the Whiskey Lemon Cream)

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp bourbon or Irish whiskey (adjust to taste)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon

(For the layers)

- 1 store-bought or homemade lemon pound cake (cut into cubes)
- 2 cups mixed spring berries (strawberry, raspberries, blueberries)
- ¼ cup whiskey (for lightly drizzling on cake)
- Optional: Mint leaves for garnish



Instructions:

1. Make the whiskey cream: Whip the heavy cream, powdered sugar, whiskey, vanilla, and lemon zest until soft peaks form.
2. Assemble the trifle: In a glass bowl or individual cups, layer:
 - Lemon cake cubes (lightly drizzle with whiskey)
 - A spoonful of whiskey cream
 - Fresh berries
 - Repeat layers.
3. Chill for at least 1 hour to let flavors meld.
4. Garnish with extra berries, lemon zest, or mint.

Why It's Perfect for Spring:

- Bright citrus balances the whiskey's warmth.
- Fresh berries add a seasonal touch.
- Light yet indulgent—great for brunches or outdoor gatherings.

Optional Twist: Swap whiskey for a floral gin if you prefer a lighter kick!





SPONSOR THE 2025 DES MOINES WHISKEY FESTIVAL

Raise Your Brand's Profile with Iowa's Premier Whiskey Event!


Join us for the 2025 Des Moines Whiskey Festival—where connoisseurs, collectors, and casual sippers gather to celebrate the finest spirits, tastings, and whiskey culture from across the state of Iowa and beyond. This high-energy event draws thousands of enthusiasts, offering exclusive exposure for your brand among a passionate, affluent audience.


Why Sponsor?

- **Unmatched Visibility** – Align your brand with Iowa's top whiskey event.
- **Engage Directly** – Connect with whiskey lovers, industry leaders, and influencers.
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- **Media & Social Buzz** – Get featured in event promotions, press, and social media.

****Various Sponsorship Tiers available to best support your business' needs.****

Limited Slots Available - Act Now!

 **Event Date:** Saturday, October 25th, 2025

 **Location:** Horizon Events Center - 2100 NW 100th St, Clive, IA 50325

Elevate Your Brand with the Hottest Event in Des Moines!



Contact us today: info@dsmwhiskeyfest.com

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