

Raising the Spirits

The popularity of throwback whiskeys, modern-day re-creations of old brands and recipes, makes for some damn good stories—and booze. **by KEVIN GRAY**



IT'S ALIVE!

The best new retro whiskeys.

1/ MACKINLAY'S SHACKLETON SCOTCH WHISKY

One hundred years after being abandoned in Antarctica, a bottle was recovered, analyzed, and re-created. This version has a mild smoke and sherried-fruit flavor with a warm finish. \$35



2/ NELSON'S FIRST 108 TENNESSEE

This whiskey is based on an original recipe dating to the 1800s. It's available in cask-strength varieties, which sport notes of brown sugar, toffee, and baking spices. \$40



3/ JEFFERSON'S OCEAN

Jefferson's sends casks out to sea to mirror bourbon's maturation process from the 1700s and 1800s. The rocking boat creates more interaction between barrel and liquid, and the result is a dark, rich, savory bourbon with flavors of sweet, caramelized wood. \$80



A CENTURY AGO, Scotland was brimming with local distilleries cranking out small-batch whiskeys with distinct characteristics—some peaty, others briny, a few with a distinct sherry influence. These were “craft” spirits long before the term became trendy. Over time, however, nearly half of them, about 100 in all, were forced to close due to war, temperance movements, or sometimes straight-up bad luck. The rest of Europe suffered a similar fate, with some great brands just disappearing. But now

a few of the best are coming back. In Scotland, Lost Distilling Company scoured government archives for tasting notes and faded labels to re-create seven whiskeys, including Stratheden, which has an almost Madeira-like kick, and Lossit, once the biggest producer on Islay (both above). There are others: Mackinlay reengineered a 100-year-old version after finding a bottle that sailed to Antarctica with Ernest Shackleton, and the Whiskey Barons Collection just released two whiskeys (as we spell it in America) once popular in pre-Prohibition times. In other words, here's to the old stuff. ■

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