

SPIRITS News

From the shores of Islay to the highlands of Oaxaca, K&L's Spirits team roams far and wide to bring you the best deals and one-of-a-kind finds.



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Whisky Season 2014 Begins with K&L Exclusive Single Malts

By David Otherin-Girard

This year's Scotch campaign represents a turning point in our relationship with Scotland. If you're not familiar with our travels, we began visiting Scotland a few years ago, in order to provide our customers with unique offerings that could only be found at K&L. What we didn't know at the time is that the world was about to go *mad* for brown spirits. We can speculate as to why the interest in whisky continues to build, but we can be certain that the thirst for high-quality whisky is poised to outpace supply worldwide. The cyclical nature of the Scotch market is not a new phenomenon, but never have so many emerging markets had so much potential for growth. For instance, India has a strong drinking culture, but Scotch whisky represents a tiny portion of sales in that country. The category remains extremely desirable, but massive tariffs on imported alcohol have made it well out of reach for the growing Indian middle class. The loosening of those protectionist policies is a political matter that multinational drinks companies feel they can influence. If they are indeed successful in removing prohibitive boundaries to entry in this massive market, the growth there will trump even the most optimistic projections.

This is the environment that we found upon arrival in Scotland. The big companies are amassing stock for an impending surge. Companies like Diageo and Pernod are expanding distilleries and continue to build new ones. They're cancelling contracts with blenders and generally making it extremely difficult for smaller suppliers to even buy whisky. The result is a wild inflation in prices of even the lowest-quality offerings. Several of our valued suppliers were unable to offer us any product this year that we felt comfortable selling; either the price was too high or the quality too low. In other instances, distilleries that would previously have had extensive offerings from many different vintages have found their

partners in Europe and the Far East buying out entire vintages. This is all compounded by the fact that 30 years ago the industry was reeling from one of the largest slumps it had seen since the late 1800s. Many distilleries were closed and high-quality old whisky was dumped into lower-quality blends. Now three decades on, the supply cuts of the early '80s are catching up to the industry.

With that in mind, we (and by extension you) are extremely lucky to have made that first trip to Scotland four years ago. For however business savvy the Scottish are — and I assure you they plan to take full advantage

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Bonifacio Arellanes Robles, 11th generation distiller at Mina de Real distillery

David Driscoll Discovers Exciting Agave Spirits in Oaxaca and Jalisco *(See Page 4)*



Mickey Head of Ardbeg distillery pouring a flight of library selections.

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of the situation — they're equally loyal to their customers. We've paid our dues at K&L and our producers know that. For every disappointing moment when Driscoll and I looked at each other shaking our heads at the price list, we had countless moments of utter joy and astonishment at the incredible quality and the fabulous prices that we were still seeing. We've worked tirelessly to make sure that we're offering you exciting bottles at unbeatable prices. We have a container set to arrive in the winter, but there's already plenty from this year to offer — so let Whisky Season begin!

Signatory Whisky Co.

Our partners at Signatory Whisky Co. have always been well-regarded for the quality of their single malt. Each year we spend hours tasting through every possible cask. Each year we find spectacular offerings and leave giddy, praying that the prices will line up where we want them. This year was home run for us. We've purchased 20 casks from Signatory, our largest haul ever from a single supplier. The first 10 casks are available now as pre-arrivals, and they should be landing in September or maybe a little earlier. These might be the highest quality casks we've seen from Signatory, and while there were price increases over last year, they remain some of the most affordable single malts on the market. Buy now, as the prices will likely increase by about 10% on the shelf.

1997 Benrinnes 16 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Bourbon Hogshead (\$72.99) This fabulous cask from the weird little distillery behind the Hill of Rinnes shows how unique Benrinnes can be. The color of a shimmering glass of Chablis, this has an obvious freshness and a strong vanilla note on the nose. With a bit of air and a drop of water, the simple, angular nature expands, exhibiting tons of stone fruit and citrus. Absolutely vibrant and the perfect summer dram.

1997 Glenlivet 16 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single First Fill Sherry Butt (\$72.99) This is the follow-up to the wonderful 1997 Glenlivet that sold out so quickly last year. It sold so fast that ownership seriously questioned our decision to not buy more. Upon returning to the warehouse, we were sad to see that the 20-some odd sherry butts from this wonderful lot had been whittled down to only three casks. Disheartened that the first two were not as full-force sherry, we nearly cried when the third and final 1997 'livet came out of the *valinch* dark as night. This may be showing even more sherry than last year's offering. Amazingly, the price has only gone up a smidge. Still, might be this campaign's best deal.

1997 Dailuaine 16 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Bourbon Hogshead (\$69.99) Dailuaine sits just below Benrinnes in a small valley. It's a funky little distillery, with some lovely stone buildings and a massive industrial grain processing facility hidden behind it. We tried to visit unannounced. They may have called security. Either way, they make a lovely little malt here. Always balanced between tart apple pomace, malted grains and spicy oak. Since it's not a big name the prices are still excellent!

1998 Laphroaig 16 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Refill Sherry Butt (\$159.99) I don't know what they did in the fall of 1998, but the '98 Laphroaigs are truly legendary. Every single one is spectacular. This is in a totally different range than last year's '97, which was all lemon and ocean. Here we have tons of iodine, ash, smoke and creamy sherry to balance. A true classic.

2002 Bowmore 12 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Refill Sherry Hogshead (\$74.99) Another crazy value here with this special little Bowmore. I've said it again and again: Bowmore is the one of the most exciting distilleries in Scotland, and the quality from the late '90s on has

been exceptional across the board. Still, Bowmore seems to fly under the radar of many Islay whisky fans. Of course, once you taste it you'll quietly agree and begin hoarding.

1988 Balmenach 25 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Hogshead (\$139.99) This is sure to be the sleeper hit this year. Nobody, I mean never, asks for Balmenach. The distillery was purchased in 1997 from Diageo, but the stocks were not part of the deal. Thank god, because now we're seeing these fabulous aged Speysiders for a great price. It starts all forest floor, dried leaves, cut grass and earthy Brazil nuts. Those savory flavors are nicely contrasted on the palate, which brings in some great floral honey, candied lemon, caramel apple and more grass! Proof that great old whisky can still be "affordable."

1992 Bruichladdich 21 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Hogshead (\$139.99) This classic hoggie from the famously smoke-free Islay distillery has everything a Laddie fan wants. An exercise in contrast. Oily and rich, but subtle and restrained. Tropical fruit and freshly broken branches. Fresh nuts and dried berries. A contemplative whisky that requires your attention, but without being austere or backward at all.

1995 Glen Elgin 18 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Hogshead (\$79.99) The lovely little distillery in Elgin makes some great whisky. In 2005, it was added to Diageo's list of "Classic Malts" yet we never see it stateside. The distillery is famous for being part of the White Horse Company, which owned Lagavulin and Malt Mill at one point. Now they just make awesome whisky. This is about as classic a Speysider as you could want. It's all about balance and value, which it delivers generously.

1983 Caol Ila 30 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Hogshead (\$259.99) As I said earlier, whisky production was absolutely slashed starting in '83, so we were really surprised to see this old, majestic Islay whisky for sale. While I can't argue that this whisky is inexpensive, I will tell you that it's clearly one of the year's great values.

This special whisky has a lot going on, sweet vs. savory, salty vs. fruity, tea vs. honey. Do whatever you can to get a taste.

1981 Glenlivet 33 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" Signatory Single Refill Sherry Hogshead (\$299.99)

The obvious big boy of the group, we were certain we couldn't afford this whisky when we tasted it. We've brought in casks from Signatory that cost upwards of \$500 on the shelf, and we were sure this would fall into that category. Thankfully, it didn't! This is exactly why Glenlivet is one of the world's best-selling brands: their whisky is of spectacularly high quality. Put that into excellent, yet not overly obtrusive refill sherry, and you'll get a superlative benchmark whisky like this one.

Glenfarclas

We have a special relationship with what is arguably the best Speyside distillery. George Grant is one of our favorite people in Scotland and we always want to work with him, but his single cask prices have become cost prohibitive. I don't blame him—he can sell every single one to Taiwan for twice what he's asking us. But because George is always looking to make things work, he suggested we take a selection of casks to get the cost down. We were so excited at the opportunity for a multicask bottling, we made two!

1990 Glenfarclas 24 Year Old "K&L Exclusive" First Fill Sherry Casks (\$149.99) This magnificent monster was drawn from two sherry butts of stupendous quality and bottled at a reasonable 100 proof. If we'd bottled the single cask it would have been more than twice the price. I could wax poetic about how special this is, but once it arrives it will easily be the best value in old sherry cask whisky on the market *anywhere* in America. I'm just saying.

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Kyle Kurani standing in front of Caol Ila distillery on Islay.

The Exciting World of Agave Spirits

By David Driscoll

Just a few weeks ago, I was lucky enough to spend some time in Mexico visiting some of the finest producers of agave spirits and getting the chance to see their operations firsthand. I began my trip in the region of Oaxaca, a southern state that sits along the Pacific Coast just before Mexico turns into Chiapas and Guatemala. It is known for its intense, smoky, and rustic mezcals, distilled from various species of both cultivated and wild agave. I finished my trip in the state of Jalisco, a northern state and the home of tequila, the world-renowned spirit distilled from the prized agave azul, or blue agave. While both mezcal and tequila are distilled from agave, and are the product of one country, they couldn't be more different in their flavors. Much like Cognac versus Armagnac, or Scotch versus bourbon, the refined flavors of tequila and the metropolitan feel of Guadalajara stand in stark contrast to the bucolic, rugged landscape of Oaxaca and its indigenous culture, much of which is still untapped and unchanged.

Passion for mezcal at Real de Mina

I was on this trip with Jake Lustig and his partner Jose Espinoza, the guys behind the ArteNOM tequilas and a number of different mezcals from Oaxaca. Jake Lustig grew up dividing his time between his mother, who moved to Oaxaca City, and his father in the Bay Area. Thirty years later, after spending many a summer meandering through the eclectic and colorful streets, he is a knowledgeable tour guide, with a wealth of information about the many sights and sounds happening around the area. We began our adventure by heading south of Oaxaca de Juárez to Santa Catarina Minas—literally translated: the mines of St. Catherine. There was once a large silver and nickel business operating deep underneath the terrain of the *montañas*, but today it's mostly just a maze of empty tunnels.

After a bit of a hike we came upon an expansive agave field with budding *espadín* sprouting in orderly rows. It was in this field that we began to understand how special this place is to Bonifacio Arellanes Robles, the man who owns the other half of Real de Mina. He represents the eleventh generation of distillers in his family, and his story began many years ago on this very mountainside, more than 4,000 feet above sea level. Boni's ancestors began distilling mezcal in clay pots using outdoor ovens to roast the agave right next to where they were harvested. Boni remembers tending to the ovens as a child, and the scorched earth still remains where the operation once took place. Back then, his great-grandfather would put the distilled mezcal into a pot, strap it on his back, and hike the 30 miles north to Oaxaca de Juárez where he would sell his spirit for 30 centavos a liter.

The Real de Mina distillery was built by Boni's father and grandfather with two clay pot stills and a roasting pit outside. Up until 2006, when Jake and Jose decided to partner with the family, the mezcal was only sold within the village; there was never any serious commercial production. Jake has known the Arellanes family since 1988 when he began studying mezcal in the region as a teenager, visiting different producers all over Oaxaca. The spirits of Santa Catarina Minas were his favorite, and 10 years later he thought about turning those *mezcales*

into a business. His partner Jose began helping the distillery financially in 1995, sending money to help with repairs to the infrastructure.

Jake and Jose's ownership and financial dedication to the distillery mark a huge contrast from other mezcal brands sold in the U.S. who simply contract their production. Many expressions found today in the States are simply purchased from the locals (for a very inexpensive price), repackaged, and sold in boutique stores with authentic-looking labels (for a not-so-inexpensive price). I have a lot of respect for the dedication these guys have shown to Boni and his family, as well as to the development of the region. The relationship is so strong that several of Boni's children have gone to Oakland over the last decade and lived with Jake and his family. This is not merely a capitalistic opportunity for Jake and Jose; it's become part of who they are as people. Jake's passion for Mexican culture is part of what drew me to him four years ago.

Today, after a bit of remodeling, the distillery is a more functional and streamlined operation, although there's not much of a difference other than that they've added a bit of modern technology (like an oven and one computer to send emails). All distillation is still done in clay pots, heated by fire, and condensed in a second pot by a stream of cool water that runs from a pipe over the top. There are four stills currently in operation (two located outside) at Real de Mina. While the agave used for Don Amado mezcal is roasted in the outside fire pit, the agave used for Mina Real is steam-cooked in an internal oven that Jake built a few years ago (with advice from Carlos Camarena in Jalisco).

The flavors that result from the two different processes are quite striking. The *piñas* roasted in the pit taste almost like barbecue sauce, with a smoky, tangy, meaty flavor with lots of sweetness. We chewed several pieces to release the juices onto our palates. The *piñas* steamed in the internal oven have a much fruitier flavor, and the texture of the agave itself is quite different as well. The agave has almost the texture of a papaya or guava, and the sweetness is much less dominant. The contrast between these flavors represents the main difference between the delicate character of Don Amado and the more savory profile of Mina Real.

Much like Islay whiskies, the smoky flavor of mezcal has become the hot booze trend over the last few years, giving the category a much-needed boost against its more refined cousin, tequila. Jake, however, has spent the last decade trying to temper the smoke from his mezcal and focus more on the flavor of his agave. "You wouldn't add a



smoky flavor to wine,” he said to me recently, “because it would mask the delicate flavors in the grape itself.” He has other motivations besides terroir, however. When Boni’s wife passed away 11 years ago from lung cancer, after working in a smoke-filled agave pit for most of her adult life, Jake had a revelation. “Some of these people are being poisoned by all of the smoke being put into the air around here. When Boni’s wife passed it was the first time I really felt like smoke was the enemy, and it inspired me to find an alternate way to cook our agave.”

We’re currently selling three different expressions from Mina de Real distillery. The **Mina Real Blanco Mezcal (\$26.99)** really showcases the quality of the Santa Catarina Minas agave by allowing the flavors to shine without intense, smoky remnants masking its purity. Not only is it the least expensive mezcal we carry, it’s also one of the best. More importantly, it’s the perfect entry into the category if you’re curious about mezcal, but don’t want to start with the most intensely flavored selection. The tangy, savory, roasted flavors of the espadin are clean and fresh on the palate. The **Mina Real Reposado Mezcal (\$29.99)** adds a bit of barrel aging to the formula and a bit more vanilla to the profile, but without taking away from the pure agave flavor. For the price, these two mezcals are absolutely unbeatable. The **Don Amado Rustico Mezcal (\$43.99)** uses the agave from the roasting pit, rather than the oven, so it does have a smokier profile. The meaty, almost barbecue-like tanginess from the agave is on full display, but the delicacy of the spirit comes first and foremost. It’s never overpowering, nor does it overshadow the agave flavor itself. It’s a beautiful product in perfect balance.

The vibrant expressions of La Tequileña

After two days tasting through the mezcals of Santa Catarina Minas, we headed back to the airport and caught a flight to Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco. With little time to rest, we packed into the car and drove straight to La Tequileña Distillery, owned by Enrique Fonseca, the man behind the now-legendary K&L Exclusive Fuentesecca Extra Añejo. Enrique Fonseca’s family has been growing agave in Jalisco since the 1880s, each new generation learning how to cultivate the plant in the fertile soils of the Highlands region. Today Enrique, from the fourth generation of Fonseca farmers, is the largest private owner of agave in Jalisco. However, while most of his holdings lie near his amazing hacienda near the town of Atotonilco, his distillery is on the opposite side of Guadalajara in the town of Tequila—a three-hour drive from where he lives. Purchased from Bacardi in the late 1980s, La Tequileña Distillery isn’t the most romantic-looking distillery, but it is one of the best-equipped. With five pot stills and even a large column still (on which he does distill tequila, making him the only producer

I know of to use one for quality spirits), Enrique is cranking out high-quality distillates using many strategies that set him apart from other *tequileros*.

Enrique uses a patented, self-engineered screw press (which I cannot show here as Enrique is protective about this proprietary technique) to essentially squeeze the juice out of the agave without the need for shredding or mashing—processes that can easily strip essential sugars from the juice. What that means is that while other tequila distilleries are getting from 6% to 8% ABV out of their *fermento* (or wash, or *mosto*), Enrique is putting his into the still at 15% ABV due to the extra sugar. He ferments only in large stainless steel tanks, allowing him to control the temperature and create a long, slow process to obtain that extraordinary percentage.

The best way to taste the vibrancy of Enrique’s spirit is by pouring a glass of **Purasangre Blanco (\$25.99)**, a softer, rounder tequila due to the higher levels of sugar during fermentation. The fruity flavor of the blue agave is fresh and enticing, and for the price, you can mix with this bottle all day long. It’s one of the most overlooked bottles in the store—period. The cooler breezes of the higher altitude also affect how the tequila matures in barrel, which is why Enrique stores most of his aging stock at his home, rather than at his distillery. He has more than 20,000 barrels of Tequileña spirit in wood, which is why we were able to choose so many different expressions for our Fuentesecca blend. The fact that he has a cooler warehouse in Atotonilco has a lot to do with why his tequilas can withstand so much time in barrique.

There are a number of great options if you want to taste through Enrique’s aged expressions. The **Purasangre 2 Year Old Añejo (\$35.99)** is the best deal of the bunch, a dry and herbaceous tequila that shows what oak maturation can do to the flavor of high-quality distillate. Those who want a bit more richness, however, should opt for the **ArteNOM Seleccion 1146 Añejo Tequila (\$49.99)**, Jake and Jose’s project with Enrique, with its heavier, woodier flavors due to extended



maturation; warm baking spices on the palate, black pepper, fruit and roasted nuts on the finish. If you want to go all the way, it's tough to find a better showcase for Enrique's tequila than our own **Fuente-seca Reserva "K&L Exclusive" Extra Añejo Tequila (\$189.99)**, a marriage of 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, and 21-year-old tequilas, formulated by myself and Enrique into a blast of pepper, agave, sea salt and caramel.

For those who just want to mix and have fun, Enrique's more than capable of making entry-level booze at the highest possible quality level. His **Cimarron Blanco (\$15.99)**—for a liter!—is an absolute steal. While it doesn't have the intense fruity character of the Purasangre, it's still fresh, clean and tasty. You can also snag the **Cimarron Reposado (\$21.99)** if you like a bit of wood aging. Enrique actually blends in a bit of añejo tequila to give it some extra color.

El Paraiso and Siembra Azul

After having dinner at Enrique's hacienda in Atotonilco and spending the night in his guest houses nearby, we awoke the next morning and headed north towards Jesus-Maria, a town high up in the mountains, more than 6,000 feet above sea level. Located there is the distillery now known as El Paraiso, my favorite producer in all of Mexico. I was super pumped to finally get up there and have a look at what makes this tequila what it is: high-elevation agave. As you drive up to the distillery along the long dirt road extending from the highway, you can see the expansive campos and the vibrant red soil, rich with iron and magnesium. It's this soil that creates small, compact agave with extremely high sugar levels that translates into a fruity, flavorful, round style of blanco tequila.

When we finally reached the distillery and saw the agave being roasted in the ovens, we were overcome with emotion. Some of the guys working on site pulled one out of the *horno* and let us rip off a piece. We chewed the fleshy, fibrous pulp and released the intensely sweet juice into our mouths. The smell of fruity, roasted agave permeated everything at El Paraiso and reminded me almost exactly of the aromas emanating from the bottles of **ArteNOM 1580 Blanco (\$39.99)** we have at K&L: the soft fruit, the hints of pepper, the round and flavorful palate that finishes smooth and clean. It was also indicative of the other blanco tequila we carry from El Paraiso: the **Herencia Blanco (\$21.99)** that

really finishes with a round, tropical hint of pineapple, the result of the incredible fermentation with very special agave. You know you're at a great distillery when the actual product tastes as good as the distillery smells—it means they're distilling with supreme skill.

The red soil of Los Altos extends down the hill from Jesus-Maria and into the town of Arandas, a mecca for Highland tequila production that includes Cazadores and La Alteña—the home of Ocho and Tapatío. We made the short trip in no time at all, pulling into the Feliciano Vivanco distillery, the home of **ArteNOM 1414 Reposado (\$49.99)**, what some consider to be the best tequila on the market. Sergio and Jose Manuel Vivanco are quite popular these days. Besides the ArteNOM reposado, they also make the entire line of Siembra Azul tequilas for David Suro and the lovely Gran Dovejo tequilas that we love so much at K&L. There's a reason why people want to work with these guys: their tequila is amazing.

What makes the Vivanco tequilas so special is their yeast production and fermentation process. They actually plant citrus trees alongside their agave fields so that the pollen will drop down and spread onto the agave leaves, encouraging the cultivation of natural, airborne yeast in the *campos*. When the agave is harvested, they scrape the leaves and collect the residue in a petri dish, in which they begin a strain for fermentation. This natural process creates a soft and delicate tequila with supreme balance. The **ArteNOM Reposado** is perhaps the most popular tequila we sell, with its incredible concentration of pepper and butterscotch that only grazes the palate with kid gloves. The other fantastic expressions from Vivanco we carry are also quite amazing. The Siembra Azul selections are right there with the ArteNOM expressions as far as quality is concerned. The **Siembra Azul Blanco Tequila (\$37.99)** is an expressive and zesty blast of fresh baking spices and citrus; wonderful stuff. The **Siembra Azul Reposado (\$42.99)** has more richness than the ArteNOM and brings more vanilla and caramel, along with the pepper. The **Siembra Azul Añejo (\$49.99)** might be one of the unsung heroes of the tequila world—a rich, bourbonesque spirit of masterful craftsmanship. It's actually quite similar to the **Gran Dovejo Añejo (\$54.99)**, another Vivanco tequila that we carry that is actually distilled under the supervision of Leopoldo Solis Tinoco, a renowned distillery and tequila technician. It's been one of the top añejo tequilas at K&L since long before we were ever aware of what made the Vivanco distillates so special.

What you learn by visiting the distilleries of Mexico is that agave spirits are more similar to wine than they are to whiskey. The agriculture, terroir, fermentation techniques and sugar levels play a more important role in the ultimate flavor than the distillation process often does. All of the aspects that we look at for top wines—varietal, soil type, elevation, sun, wind, weather, etc.—play a similar role in the appreciation of agave spirits. It wouldn't surprise me if we started seeing producers take a more wine-based approach to their marketing, by stressing these elements on the label, allowing consumers to join in on the technical side and add that to their enjoyment and connoisseurship. Maybe that's something I need to work on the next time I head down to Mexico!



New Gin in Time for Summer

By David Driscoll

We've always prided ourselves on our wonderful selection of interesting and out-of-the-ordinary gins, even going through the trouble of making our own Faultline expression. Now that the weather is heating up and the time for white spirits is coming into season, here's a list of the gins we think you should be drinking right now.

Monkey 47 Schwarzwald Gin (\$44.99 375ml) We've already sold more than 1,000 bottles of this incredible gin, and it's only been in the country since May! The romantic story of Monkey 47 gin is as follows: In 1951, a British man named Montgomery Collins moved to Germany's Black Forest and opened a guesthouse named "Zum Wilden Affen"—the Wild Monkey. A renowned gin drinker, Collins' taste for the spirit was not particularly important until renovation work at the country guesthouse led to the discovery of a weighty old wooden box containing a bottle and a letter. The dusty bottle had been labeled and decorated by hand, showing a sketch of a monkey and the words "Max the Monkey—Schwarzwald Dry Gin" in black lettering. The accompanying letter contained not only personal notes and photographs but also a detailed description of the plant ingredients Montgomery had used in his recipe, from which the Monkey 47 gin was reproduced. The important story of the spirit is this: Monkey 47 gin is *amazing*. It's like an elixir sent from heaven. A good third of the ingredients for this special gin came from the Black Forest (including local juniper, important for making Black Forest ham). In total, 47 handpicked botanicals, prepared in extremely soft spring water from a local Black Forest source give Monkey 47 an unrivaled complexity and quality. The use of local cranberries adds a distinct fruity note to the incredibly floral and complex whirlwind of flavors. Esteemed wine critic Robert Parker called it "the greatest gin I have ever tasted." We're not sure if that makes it 100 points, but it might be as close as one can get.

Faultline Gin Batch #3 (\$34.99) Yes, you are correct—we absolutely do not ever make a batch of Faultline Gin more than once. So why are there suddenly more bottles of Batch 3 in stock at K&L? Because apparently St. George ran out of labels while bottling it last year and left the remainder of the gin sitting in a tank. A little over a month ago, Dave Smith called me and said, "Hey, so do you guys want the rest of that gin, or what?"

"The rest of what gin?" I asked, puzzled.

"The rest of Batch 3."

"There's more?"



"Yeah. You didn't know we ran out of labels and had to stop bottling?" You can imagine where the conversation went from there. So there's about 300+ more bottles of delicious Faultline Gin Batch #3 in stock as of now—just in time for this lovely warm weather. How does one follow up two of the most popular batches of gin ever sold in the history of K&L? It's been tough coming up with that act. Even my own mother was trying to exert her parental influence, hoping to convince Dave Smith and me to do a second batch of Batch #2, our lovely smoked citrus peel delight. We held fast, however, determined to make each batch of Faultline a one-time-only edition in the name of soldiering forward towards new flavors and new ideas. We originally began the blueprint of Batch #3 with melon in mind. We wanted to make a softer, rounder, fruitier style of gin, but two things happened that prevented this approach: our melon distillates left a lot to be desired and Tanqueray resurrected

their similarly-styled Malacca gin. Dave and I went back to the drawing board. Both of us have been trying to create a grapefruit aperitif for the past year, so we had a well of grapefruit spirit to take from. Dave had also finished a batch of clove-macerated spirit that might pair quite well with the citrus. A few gin-soaked nights later we had the right balance—lots of grapefruit, highlighted with the bright, herbaceous note of fresh clove and accented with pepper and juniper. It's still gin and tonic season in the Bay Area, so this should take us through October. Try mixing a Greyhound or Corpse Reviver #2 as well. It's more grapefruit eau de vie than gin. You'll be pleased.

Genius Navy Strength Texas Gin (\$29.99)

The Genius Gin from Austin, Texas is one of the best new craft spirits I've tasted in years, and the price is right where it should be at \$29.99. Austin is one of the most up-and-coming cities in the United States, with a

cocktail scene and farm-to-table culture that now

rivals San Francisco and New York. In 2011, Charles Cheung and Mike Groener created Genius Gin, a cane-based spirit made entirely from scratch in a tiny warehouse with a tiny still. Utilizing years of tech industry experience, Genius ferments, distills, and bottles with immaculate attention to detail. The navy strength was inspired by Plymouth and Old Tom style gins; the botanicals span from lime leaves to lavender to create a classic gin profile that is quite simple and utilitarian in its profile. It's not some wacky new designer gin, but rather an honest, botanical-driven spirit that's distinct, yet familiar. At 57% ABV it packs quite a punch! K&L is the exclusive retailer for Genius Gin in California.

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Glenfarclas “K&L Exclusive” Faultline Casks First Fill Oloroso Sherry Casks (\$99.99) The beauty of Glenfarclas is that George basically lets us do whatever the hell we want in the warehouse. After our standard marathon tasting we decided the move was to take our favorite casks and marry them together. Here we have a multicask mixture aged around 10 years and bottled at 57% ABV that captures the essence of Farclas perfectly. Incredible density and power for the age and I think you’ll agree that it’s an absolute steal at this price.



Faultline

Our Faultline brand represents the most exciting casks and best values that we can pry out of our suppliers’ hands. These are some of the best values you’ll see out there, so definitely check out our fabulous selection of exclusive bottlings. These are all in stock and ready to ship!

2002 Faultline Royal Lochnagar 10 Year Old Hogshead (\$59.99) Fresh and easy summer dram, all apple and malt with a little grip to keep it interesting.

1996 Faultline Bowmore 16 Year Old Single Refill Sherry Butt (\$104.99) This magnificent whisky has everything you want in a sherried Islay without losing its character.

1989 Faultline Cragganmore 23 Year Old Single Refill Sherry Butt (\$109.99) Very well priced from this well-regarded distillery. I’m surprised that this isn’t sold out considering how many people loved

the 21-year we did a few years ago. Dark exotic wood, dense dried fruit and salty, savory sherry to balance.

1992 Faultline Longmorn 21 Year Old Single Refill Sherry Butt (\$114.99) Legendary Longmorn is Pernod’s blue chip distillery. It’s usually really expensive. This bottle keeps getting better and better every time I go back to it. Ultra-round and easy even at full strength; expect tons of dark coffee, rich toffee and sweet, dense fruit.

1987 Faultline Mortlach 25 Year Old Single Refill Bourbon Barrel (\$139.99) This is just silly. Mortlach is the hottest property in Dufftown. This is the total opposite of the ultra-sherried 22-year from Chieftain’s, but it’s a magnificent example from this special distillery.

1982 Miltonduff 30 Year Old Faultline Single Bourbon Barrel (\$159.99)

Without a doubt one of the most complex and intriguing whiskies in our portfolio, I’m shocked that this remains in inventory as it’s the most affordable 30-year-old whisky in the store, plus it’s absolutely wildly delicious.

Other K&L Exclusives Casks

Ardbeg 21 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Sovereign Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$349.99)

Arran 17 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Single Sherry Hogshead Single Malt Whisky (\$109.99)

Caol Ila 32 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Sovereign Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$269.99)

Benriach 19 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Single Bourbon Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$149.99)

Bladnoch “K&L Exclusive” Young Heavily Peated Single Barrel #57 Cask Strength Single Malt (\$54.99)

Bladnoch 11 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Lightly Peated Single Barrel #303 Cask Strength Single Malt (\$69.99)

Glendronach 18 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Single PX Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$149.99)

Glengoyne 16 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Sovereign Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$79.99)

Glenrothes 8 Year Old “K&L Exclusive” Sovereign Single Sherry Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt (\$49.99)

Island Distillery (Ledaig) 7 Year Old “K&L Exclusive Malts” Single Barrel Cask Strength (\$59.99)

Kilchoman “K&L Exclusive” Single Bourbon Barrel #172 Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky 750ml (\$109.99)

Kilchoman “K&L Exclusive” Single Bourbon Barrel #74 Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky 750ml (\$109.99)

Littlemill 25 Year Old “K&L Exclusive Malts” Single Barrel Cask Strength Lowland Single Malt (\$139.99)



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K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to KLWines.com/Local-Events.

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