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The Essential Scratch & Sniff Guide To Becoming A Whiskey Know-It-All: Know Your Booze Before You Choose



Synopsis

A clever distillation of Americaâ™s favorite libation, by the New York Times best-selling authors of The Essential Scratch & Sniff Guide to Becoming a Wine Expert Whiskey fever is sweeping the nation. Every day, craft distilleries are popping up in remote counties and urban centers, offering a wealth of great choices to consumersâ and just as many puzzlements. Does the introduction of a simple âœeâ • to go from whisky to whiskey mean anything? Whatâ™s the difference between Scotch and Rye? Whatâ™s Canadian whisky anyway? And what about the whiskeys of Scotland, Japan, and Ireland? Whereâ™s a humble Joe to start? In this witty kid-style book on an adult topic, Richard Betts boils down his know-how into twenty pages, cooling our âœbrown-sweatâ • anxieties and dividing whiskey into three simple categories: Grain, Wood, and Place. While most whiskey tomes are about as fun as a chemistry lesson, Betts makes the learning slide down easy, reassuring us that this exalted spirit is just distilled beer and, through a nasal romp, helping us figure out which kinds we love best. Humorous illustrations and scratch-and-sniff scents (vanilla, sandalwood, grass, and more) help would-be connoisseurs learn their personal preferences. Language label and Map to Your Desires included.

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Customer Reviews

A Conversation with Richard Betts We chat with the best-selling author of The Essential Scratch & Sniff Guide to Becoming a Wine Expert about tasting 500 whiskeys for his new book, training your nose, and more

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After the success of your previous book on wine, what made you decide on whiskey for this one? Our contribution to food, wine and drink literature is very much about making it inclusive, democratic and easy. Whiskey is an area of much enthusiasm and yet it remains a broad and varied topic without an easy, empowering guide. We're not here to say this is the end-all be-all historic tome, or that we're the world's foremost whiskey experts, instead we're here with a unique methodology that breaks down the topic into easy to understand pieces that actually allow you to learn in a way that will make you smile. How many different whiskeys did you sample for the book, and did you ever get sick of tasting them!? We (my partner and fellow sommelier Carla Rzeszewski and I mostly, with some help from friends) tasted nearly 500 whiskeys blind - so we could be objective - and worked very hard to put them into a logical order from what requires the least of the drinker (i.e. the easiest to taste and categorize) to the most demanding (i.e. very complex flavors that demand more of one's palate, often accompanied by a higher proof) and this is for sure hard. Even when you spit, the physiological effects are real and so you cannot do too many at once. This means many sessions, lots of double and triple checking your work, etc. It took the entire summer of 2014. In the end I'd spent every dime of the advance and gave away hundreds of bottles of whiskey to many happy friends.

How did you decide what types of scents to include in the book? It really flows out of what makes things smell and taste the way they do. For example, the base grain used to make the whiskey has a large impact so it makes sense to include those scents. You could also look at place, where the whiskey is aged and if that place contributes flavor, then include that too. I don't have the best sense of smell! Can I train my nose? My dad said the same thing. Forever. Then his son became a sommelier and started sticking all kinds of things in front of him and whamo, there it was! We all have a keen sense of smell that goes back to our ancestors as hunter-gatherers but it is the sense that we least use today so it is really just a matter of dialing it back in. ..just like when the car radio goes fuzzy.

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