



The Terroir of Whiskey: A Distiller's Journey into the Flavor of Place

Rob Arnold

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Wine enthusiasts know the importance of terroir: environmental factors, and how grapes are grown, impact the flavor of the beverage. In *The Terroir of Whiskey*, Rob Arnold—a whiskey distiller with a PhD in plant genetics—explores how that same concept applies to a range of whiskeys. The result is a fascinating look at whiskey and the manner in which it is made, written in a knowledgeable but friendly tone that welcomes newcomers as well as whiskey aficionados.

The Terroir of Whiskey walks through the process by which whiskey acquires its flavor, from the roasting of malt to the barrel-aging process, describing how flavor is imparted at each step. It also describes the often overlooked importance of grain, which is selected for its quality, but not always for the regional flavors and notes that it can bring. The flavor development process is described in a style that mixes those of food and science writing, going through the taste profiles of specific varieties with descriptive language and breaking down the chemistry to show what compounds produce what smells and tastes.

Along with its thorough analysis of whiskey and its creation, *The Terroir of Whiskey* includes helpful suggestions for whiskey tastings, recommending a number of distilleries with tips for sampling the different terroirs discussed in the text. It has travelogue and history elements, too: Arnold visits wine country to talk with growers about terroir, interviews growers from different Texas farms about their crop rotations and varieties, and discusses how grains were cultivated through the years to become the forms grown today.

With standout information that's both broad and deep, *The Terroir of Whiskey* considers bourbon, rye, and other popular whiskeys from all angles.

JEFF FLEISCHER (November / December 2020)

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