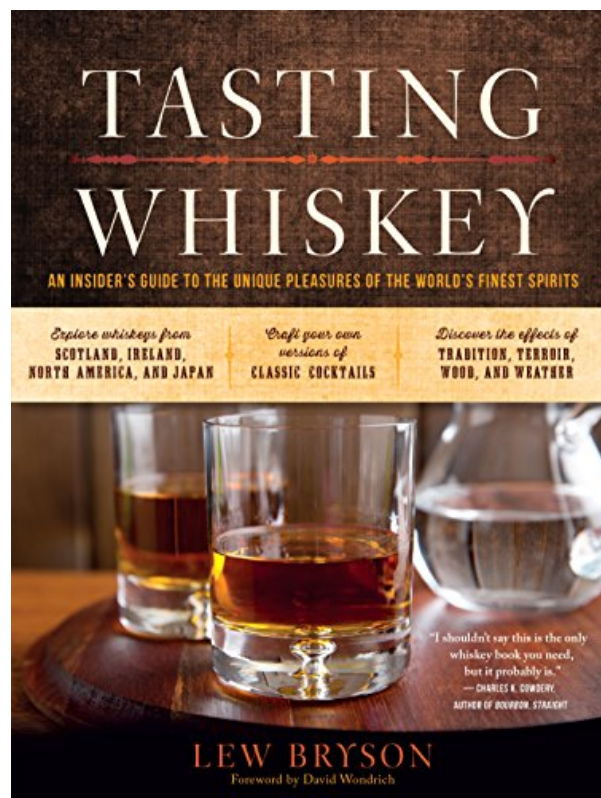
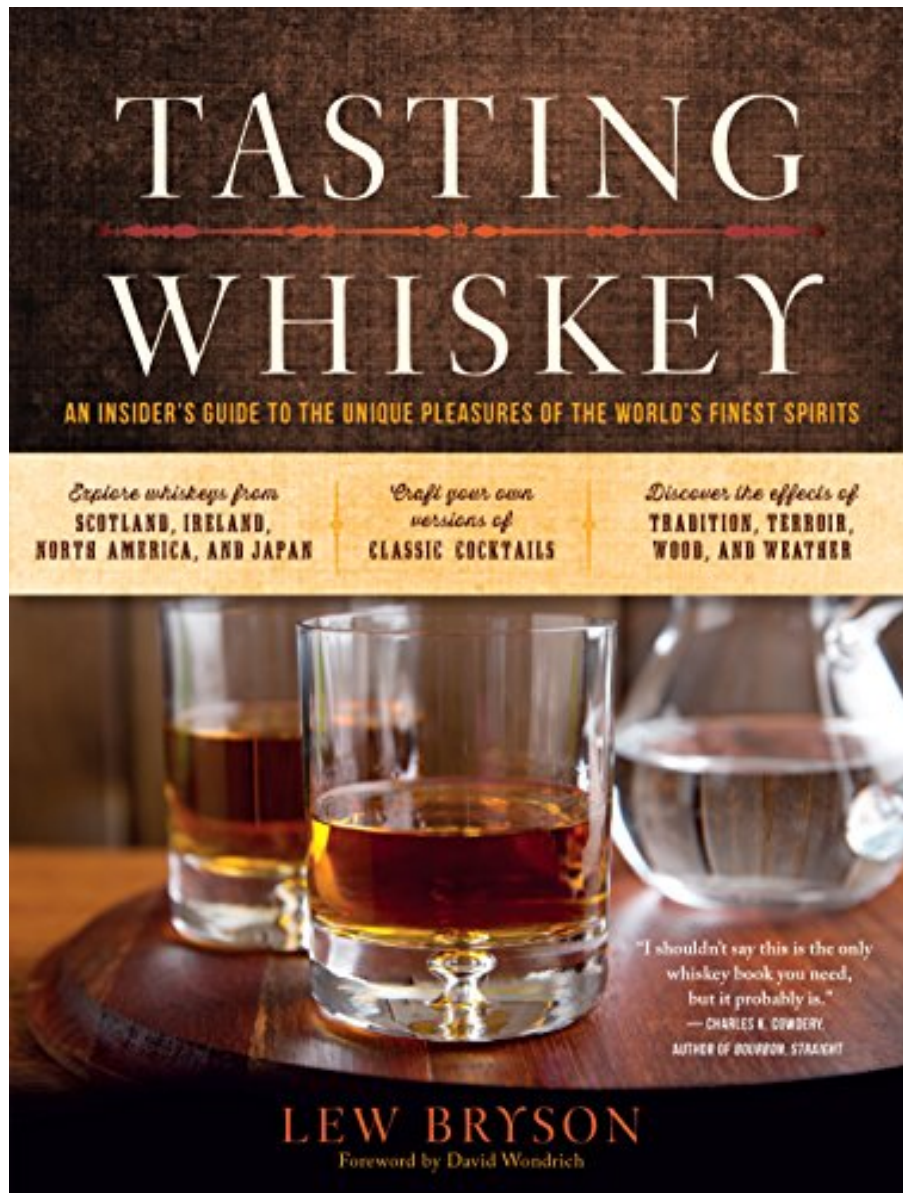


# TASTING WHISKEY: AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE UNIQUE PLEASURES OF THE WORLD'S FINEST SPIRITS BY LEW BRYSON



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"Takes on the whiskey world in down-and-dirty details, from production to tasting. With maps, infographics and flavor profiles for iconic bottlings, alongside Bryson's smart, straightforward text, *Tasting Whiskey* is both accessible to novices and compelling for the expert."

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Pour a stiff drink and crack open this comprehensive guide to everything there is to know about the world's greatest whiskeys. Exploring the traditions behind bourbon, Scotch, Irish, and even Japanese whiskey, you'll discover how unique flavors are created through variations of ingredients and different distilling techniques. With advice on how to collect, age, and serve whiskey, as well as suggestions for proven food pairings, you'll be inspired to share your knowledge and invite your friends over for a delicious whiskey tasting party.

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Most helpful customer reviews

40 of 42 people found the following review helpful.

Tasting Whiskey: great for novices and know-it-alls

By Michael Dietsch

On the front cover of Lew Bryson's *Tasting Whiskey*, there's a quote from the whiskey writer Charles Cowdery: "I shouldn't say this is the only whiskey book you need, but it probably is." I don't know if I'd go so far, but I will say this much: this is the book you want and need if you're just starting out in whiskey.

Bryson maps the major styles of whiskey, from bourbon to rye to Canadian, from Irish to Scotch to Japanese, and from craft to the various world whiskeys, from growing markets such as India and Taiwan. He describes what sets the various styles apart from one another; so, for example, he details the grains that are in each style, the barrels it's aged in, the climates and warehouses that hold it, and the length of time its aged.

Scotch, for example, is made primarily or exclusively from malted barley; it's aged in used barrels (normally bourbon, but with some sherry and other wine casks tossed in for additional flavor); it ages in a cooler climate that enables longer aging; and it can age for up to 30 years or more without getting too woody.

Bourbon, conversely, is made primarily from corn, with other grains in the mix to add accent flavors; it ages in new oak barrels that impart more woodiness than do scotch's used barrels; it ages in a warmer climate that ages it more rapidly than Scotland's cooler climate; and therefore, it usually reaches its peak at roughly 10-12 years.

Each individual style is different, and Bryson masterfully explains how those differences affect the flavors of the finished product.

Every whiskey drinker starts somewhere. I started with bourbon and moved to scotch and then rye and on to other styles. When I started drinking scotch, I couldn't begin to understand what made it unique until I started reading books that helped me puzzle it all out. *Tasting Whiskey* is such a book.

Its other strength is the infographics that Bryson uses to illustrate some rather complicated concepts. I write about whiskey, and so I know that it's not always easy to describe, in words, the effects of barrel aging, or how barrel placement in a warehouse affects how quickly or slowly the whiskey ages. Bryson's infographics demonstrate these concepts concisely and thoroughly.

After describing the major styles, Bryson then provides advice on how to drink the stuff, in an enjoyable chapter on water, ice, and cocktails. Is it okay to drink your whiskey with a bit of water? Bryson tells you. On the rocks or neat? He has some answers for that as well. Cocktails? Of course! What I enjoyed about this chapter was how conversational and story-oriented it was. No recipes at all, just a description of how to make a damn good Manhattan or Old Fashioned.

If you're new to whiskey, and you need a friendly guide to the topic, Bryson's book is for you. But if you've been around the block a few times, you'll still find this book to be enjoyable and useful. I learned quite a bit from it.

36 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

Superb! No whiskey aficionado should sip without this book in hand

By I Do The Speed Limit

I like the title. It reminds me right off the bat: The reason to drink whiskey is to taste it. And after studying this book, may I add? It should be done with care and respect during times of quiet contemplation.

This is a great book for gifting: Perfect for the person who loves to sit in a comfortable chair, reading and sipping. You will find pleasure in giving this book. And the recipient could only be appreciative. (I wish it was a hard cover book, but give it along with a well-chosen bottle and no one will notice that it's a paperback....)

The first 50 pages tell the history of whiskey, and discusses the mechanics, the science, and aging. You think you know it all? Maybe, but I bet you will learn plenty in these first few chapters. It "whets your whistle" for the rest of the book. And I really cozied up to it, because the author gladly shares his vast experience and his appreciation of this spirit.

Perfect timing for this book to be published, too. When the trees start changing colors and there is a chill in the air along with the smell of burning leaves, we head to the liquor store to check out the new offerings in the whiskey isle. It's sipping time!

It is beautifully put together: Its two-column layout is well-balanced between an easy-on-the-eyes serif type style in a decent point size, and an abundance of collectible prints and vintage advertising, colorful charts and artsy photos. The author has a personable writing style that held my interest. He talks to his reader, and it works.

Many of the chapters can be considered nice, long, well-written essays: "The Challenge of Tasting Whiskey", tasting and experience, the styles of whiskey, "What Goes Well with Whiskey", and "Collecting Whiskey". Within the chapters are short essays, for instance this one that I found particularly interesting: Craft distillers have taken to using smaller size barrels. Does it work? Is the whiskey aging faster or aging differently? On almost every page there is food for thought and questions raised. Discussions on taste and technique versus supply and demand versus cost and logistics bring whiskey into the real world, make this book appealing to even the most intellectual and business-minded, too.

Other chapters cover scotch, Irish whiskey, "Craft Whiskey", "American" (bourbon, Tennessee, rye), Canadian and Japanese. I skipped to my favorites: The American whiskeys, ryes and bourbons.

The author promises a guide to picking the best whiskey: But he makes it clear that the "best" is all in the sipper's own taste. Just like a great teacher, he fulfills his promise by giving the reader all the possible information and experience he can--guiding and encouraging and expounding, giving advice, without telling



you how it's got to be. He tells you how to form your opinion, not what your opinion should be.

You learn to evaluate the color, shape of the glass, what to look for as you smell and taste, how to properly water the whiskey.

The author provides lists of whiskeys, in different cost categories, that are worthy. He has set up flavor graphs, (that I found particularly helpful). There is a glossary and a section of resources, again very helpful.

\*\*I received a temporary download of this book from the publishers, prior to publication. It is a book that I will purchase for myself.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Lew Bryson knows his stuff!

By biglove

Lew Bryson is a living legend when it comes to knowledge about whiskey and craft beer.

Stumbled across Lew when I was into craft beer over a decade ago. Have always appreciated his insights into individual products as well as the alcoholic beverage industry at large.

This book will serve to increase the knowledge of the novice and the aficionado alike.

Well written, captivating. Beautiful pictures and tons of knowledge.

Anyone interested in whiskies must read and is a great gift for anyone interested in any kind of whiskey!

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