

HIGHSPIRE WHISKEY

“A NEW CLASS OF WHISKEY”

MEDIA DECK





STORY

where it all began...TO PRESENT DAY

It was the decision not to reinvent rye whiskey, but to return to the origins of it, that led us to the doorstep of Robert Wilson. A visionary Irish immigrant with boundless ambition, Wilson founded Wilson Distilling Company and Highspire Pure Rye Whiskey in 1823 on his good name and a promise: to bring a uniquely American flavor to the spirit of his native land.

Today, longtime winemaker Austin Hope has taken his expertise and passion for rye whiskey to create a new class of whiskey. Highspire is bringing back the classic taste and experience of pre-Prohibition American rye whiskey for the modern connoisseur. We have set out to craft a whiskey made with 100 percent rye mash with clean, pure and cool water. Our rye is grown on the historic Waldeck Farm that is located less than one mile from our distillery. It is a great honor to be able to bring back the Highspire Whiskey experience and we think Mister Wilson would be proud too.

PUBLICITY

PUBLICATIONS



OBSERVER

EATER

Los Angeles Times

THE TASTING PANEL

DRINKHACKER

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BEVERAGE WORLD

PUBLICATION QUOTES



Titles with rectangles indicate clickable links!

2015 Holiday Spirits Gift Guide

- **Gabe Sasso**, TheDailyMeal.com | December 10, 2015

“The long finish shows off bits of dusty chocolate and a nice bite. This versatile whiskey can be sipped neat or mixed into cocktails that will benefit from its quality.”

Experimental Whiskey: Using Winemaking Practices to Make a Never Before Seen Whiskey

- **Mikey Blanco**, Foodworldnews.com | December 10, 2015

“For his whiskey, however, it is all about the barrel. Hope’s whiskey was going to take the wine route and “make it all about the grain.”

What Happens When a Winemaker Makes Whiskey?

- **Chantal Martinau**, FoodRepublic.com | December 1, 2015

“Hope only ages his for 130 days. The result is a rye with plenty of spice but also fruit. With less barrel influence, it shows its softer, prettier side. Call it rye au naturel.”

Brandy, whiskey and more are being poured in Paso Robles wine country: 6 to try

- **Jenn Harris**, The Los Angeles Times | August 28, 2015

“You can smell the grain, almost like baked bread on the nose. It’s toasty, a little fruity from the wine barrels, but soft and not too overwhelmingly woody. And it sips like smooth, silky caramel. Drink it with one ice cube, on a comfy lounge chair, by a fire.”

Five Fantastic American Whiskeys to Embolden the Holidays

- **Richard Carleton Hacker**, The Robb Report | October 31, 2015

“Once distilled, the spirit is aged in ex-red wine barrels made from American oak, but only for 120 days, thanks to a custom-charred barrel stave that is added to each cask and accelerates the aging process. The result is a young whiskey with a deep golden color that tastes decidedly older than it is.”

Highspire Whiskey Review

- **Kevin Gray**, CocktailEnthusiast.com | September 10, 2015

“The wine barrels impart tons of character and offer something different in the ever-growing category of ryes.”

- **F. Paul Pacult**, Spirit Journal; Vol. 26, Issue 1, No. 109 | March 2016

“As unique a 100% rye whiskey that is in the marketplace at the present time and one that’s absolutely worth tracking down.” Highly Recommended

PRINT PUBLICATIONS



6 TASTING PANEL
Blends Tradition and Innovation
Roger Morris | JULY 2015

.....

8 TASTING PANEL
UP Front; Turning Wine into Whiskey
Richard Carleton Hacker | OCTOBER 2015

.....

11 ROBB REPORT Host's Guide: In Great Spirits;
Exceptional Libations to Give and Enjoy
Richard Carleton Hacker | 2015 Issue

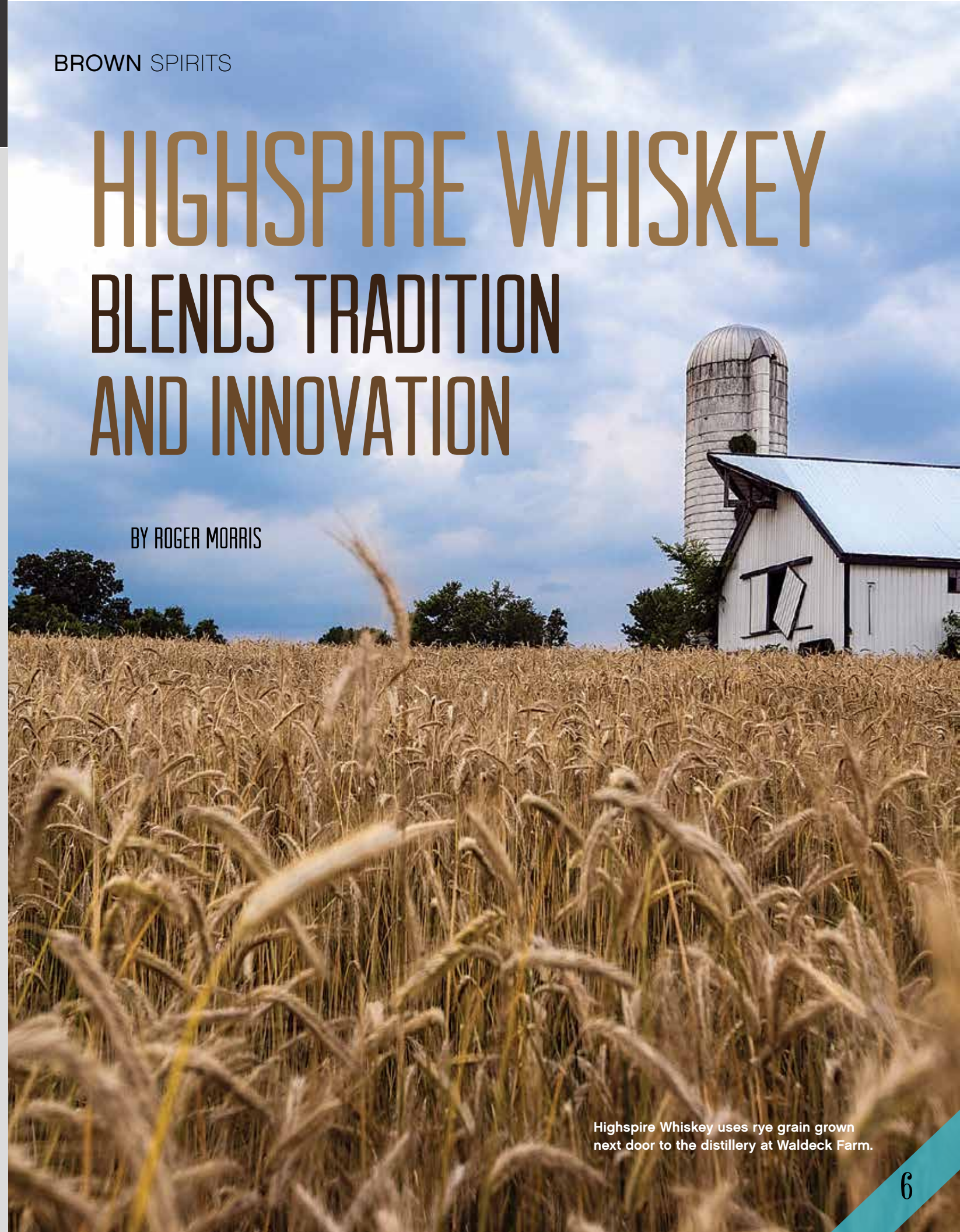
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BROWN SPIRITS

HIGHSPIRE WHISKEY

BLENDS TRADITION AND INNOVATION

BY ROGER MORRIS



Highspire Whiskey uses rye grain grown next door to the distillery at Waldeck Farm.

AUSTIN HOPE USES LESSONS LEARNED IN WINEMAKING AND APPLIES THEM TO DISTILLING



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KINDRED DISTILLED SPIRITS

Austin Hope of Hope Family Wines in Paso Robles, CA turned his sights on brown spirits with Highspire Whiskey.

Ever since he was a teenager, Austin Hope has had a standard reply whenever someone has told him he can't do something or that an idea of his won't work: "Why not?"

Through the years, that attitude has served Hope well at Hope Family Wines in Paso Robles, where he launched Treana high-end blends at a time when expensive blended table wines were very un-sexy; was an early proponent of Rhône grape varieties in Paso; and had the courage to introduce Troublemaker premium multi-vintage table wine, one of the few vintners in the world to do so.

Now, Hope has turned that same philosophy to the spirits world with his Highspire Whiskey, which has had a gradual rollout during the first part of this year. "They told me a lot of things wouldn't work in making whiskey," Hope says, "but I'm not afraid to break rules to stay true to my vision."

So far, his vision of producing a premium brown spirit using lessons learned in the winery is succeeding quite well. Hope's inspiration came from an Irish immigrant, Robert Wilson, who began making the very popular Highspire Whiskey along the Susquehanna River in Highspire, Pennsylvania almost 200 years ago. But, in spite of Highspire's success, the brand did not survive Prohibition.

Highspire was brought back to life over the past three years by Hope and his Kindred Distilled Spirits, which is located in the heart of Kentucky's Bourbon country, using rye grain grown next door to the distillery at Waldeck Farm, resulting in estate distilling from barn-to-barrel.

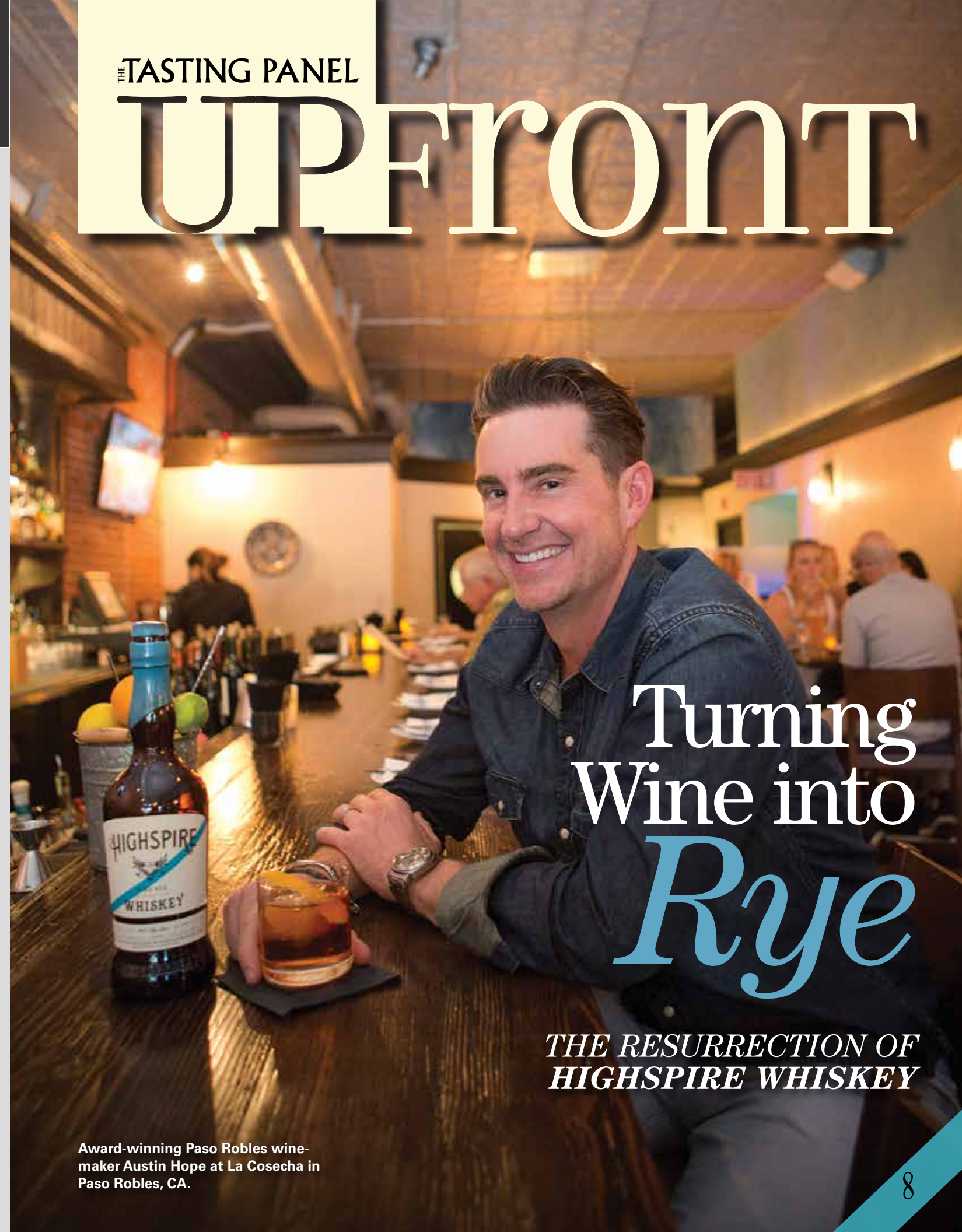
Hope draws on his experience as a winemaker by emphasizing quality raw ingredients, using only one variety of rye grain, fermenting it longer and at cooler temperatures for better aromatics and aging the finished product in red wine barrels with extra staves added to impart more flavor. "If you are using the best grain, 130 days of aging is enough," Hope says. He also says he will continue to experiment with making Highspire, which has now gone through three batches—each with a smooth, yet rich flavor.

"The reception has been much better than I expected," Hope laughs. "I had expected more pushback. We are already in eight states and expect to be in another two or three by the end of the year." Highspire has its own sales team, which has shown that there was room for another premium, artisan rye, even in today's crowded marketplace.

"We've actually had to slow down to catch up," Hope says. ■■

THE TASTING PANEL

UPFRONT



Turning Wine into Rye

THE RESURRECTION OF HIGHSPIRE WHISKEY

Award-winning Paso Robles wine-maker Austin Hope at La Cosecha in Paso Robles, CA.

UPFRONT

UpFront with
Highspire
Whiskey

by Richard Carleton Hacker



Highspire Rye coming to life on the bottling line at the distillery.

Award-winning Paso Robles winemaker Austin Hope often refers to himself as both a dreamer and a traditionalist. I also happen to know he is a creative innovator, as evidenced by his Hope Family Wine's award-winning releases over the years, including Treana, their flagship Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah blend. Or Troublemaker, an atypically blended red crafted from multiple vintages and varietals and christened with Austin's boyhood nickname. But, in spite of all his winemaking accomplishments, I've never heard Austin say he could perform miracles. And yet, I've recently seen him turn wine into rye whiskey.

Metaphysics aside, the prospect of a Paso Robles winemaker making a rye is unheard of, but that didn't stop Austin, who admits he doesn't follow rules very well. He even created the Kindred Distilled Spirits company to market his new whiskey.

The result is Highspire (\$47.99, Caskers.com), a whiskey matured in record time—would you believe 120 days? —thanks to a proprietary process Austin calls “Swiftly Aging,” in which his 100% rye distillate is aged in used Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah American oak wine barrels specially selected for Highspire by Austin's winemaker, JC Diefenderfer. But that's only part of the technique; a separate 18-inch-long stave, one of three variations custom-toasted to Austin's specifications by the Independent Stave Company of Lebanon, Missouri, is then placed into each barrel (although the winery uses both French and American oak, only American oak is used for Highspire). Because the wine barrels are toasted, not charred, the deep golden color of the Swiftly Aged rye primarily comes from the staves.

The mashbill of 95% unmalted and 5% malted rye is also a factor in Highspire's prematurely mature flavor, which many equate to a three-year-old whiskey. In addition, the spirit is distilled two-and-a-half times in a hybrid pot and column still, plus a pot still, which both date from 1947. What emerges after only four months of barrel aging is a young whiskey that doesn't taste anything like a young whiskey. Moreover, the rye's full, meaty flavor is enhanced with subtle essences from the staves. The ex-red wine barrels also lend a hint of aromatics to this surprisingly complex spirit. The result is a whiskey brimming with thick rye and cherried oak, plus a hint of citrus. Adding a cube of ice releases soft and floral undertones, making this a gentle, 80-proof whiskey to be enjoyed straight and easily adapted to classic and specialty cocktails.

“I enjoy drinking brown spirits, but I really enjoy drinking rye,” Austin says. “So about five years ago I started thinking, *I would really like to make a rye whiskey.* I began thinking more about it, and tasting a lot of ryes.”



Carole MacDonal—owner/managing partner of La Cosecha Bar and Restaurant in Paso Robles—and Austin Hope sip on Highspire Whiskey cocktails Monte Cristo and Brooklyn I Love You.

He also began visiting distilleries, talking with distillers and asking questions. Finally, it was in the small town of Crestwood, Kentucky, where he met Steve Thompson, a former president of Brown Forman Distillery Company, that Austin's dream of making rye whiskey became a reality. Thompson was now Managing Director of Kentucky Artisan Distillery, a cooperative that provides distillation, aging, and bottling for boutique distillers. It was exactly what Austin was looking for, so he became an owner of the company. But wanting to be involved with every facet of his projects, it wasn't enough.

“I want to grow my own rye,” Austin told a somewhat bemused Thompson. “I want to do a different kind of product, something that is young, and showcases the grain. I want to take the philosophy from winemaking, where it's all about the grape, and translate it into ‘It's all about the grain.’”

After researching grain sizes, aromas and flavors, Austin settled on Ryman rye. But rather than purchase it from an outside source, Austin convinced

farmer Tim (Deibel of Waldeck Farm, a historic 19th century property less than a mile from the distillery, to plant what has become an authentic Kentucky rye, thus making Highspire practically an estate whiskey.

At one point, Highspire was a very popular pre-Prohibition rye, started in Highspire, Pennsylvania in 1823 by an Irish immigrant named Robert Wilson. Although Prohibition killed Highspire, Austin has brought it back to life as a completely new and unique spirit.

“Highspire is a new class of whiskey,” Austin says. “After all, we're getting new drinkers every day. So we've got to break through the wall and give them something different.”

That's why Austin is also aging some of his rye longer. So it's possible to eventually see a five or ten year old Highspire. Plus, he is now involved with a Kansas City vodka, called Loaded, which just won a Silver Medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. It's not surprising.

After all, when it comes to innovative spirits, you'll invariably find there's Hope. ■■

Robb Report HOST'S GUIDE

PUBLICITY

PARTY LIKE
A **MAD** MAN
Retro Revels &
Sixties Excess

Stir Up the Classic Cocktail Culture



IN *Great* SPIRITS

EXCEPTIONAL LIBATIONS
TO GIVE AND TO ENJOY.

Highspire whiskey

By Richard Carleton Hacker
Photography by Cordero Studios
Styling by Alicia Buszczak

AMERICA'S FINEST

Highspire Rye

Austin Hope, president of Hope Family Wines, is best known for his award-winning Paso Robles vintages, but his renown may soon reach whisky enthusiasts thanks to Highspire Rye Whiskey, his unique interpretation of a once-popular brand that flourished before Prohibition. California has outlawed the distillation of grain-based spirits, so it's fortunate that Hope opened his distillery in Kentucky, at one of the first micro-distilleries in the state at the time, where he uses a hybrid pot-and-column still (circa 1947) to make a 100-percent-rye whiskey. Once distilled, the spirit is aged in ex-red wine barrels made from American oak, but only for 120 days, thanks to a custom-charred barrel stave that is added to each cask and accelerates the aging process. The result is a young whiskey with a deep golden color that tastes decidedly older than it is. (\$45)

The smoky bouquet of an Islay single malt, the underlying sweetness of a small batch bourbon, the nuances of oak and agave that characterize an extra añejo tequila—these are among the many sensory discoveries that accompany the enjoyment of exceptional spirits in their purest form. With the holidays—and copious celebrations—on the horizon, the reasons to raise a glass are many. When such moments arise, one would do well to make sure that glass is filled with a liquid worthy of the occasion. From mature Scotch whiskies to distinguished aged rums, the following spirits are certain to fill the holidays with good cheer.

THE WHISKEY AUTHORITY



THE WHISKEY AUTHORITY (TWA) MISSION:

Operated by New York-based Spirit Journal, Inc. and supported by brand members, THE WHISKEY AUTHORITY provides **unbiased, credible, and cutting-edge information** about all whiskey categories directed to beverage trade audiences.

WHAT HE SAYS By F. Paul Pacult | April 12, 2016

TWA #1: Keens Steak House: New York, New York

“

I love rye, I love rye whiskey, but I think this is a **really interesting whiskey.**

This is a **very nifty whiskey**, I like this one.

I think very interesting, **innovative**, intrepid, **very adventurous** and showing some really good judgment

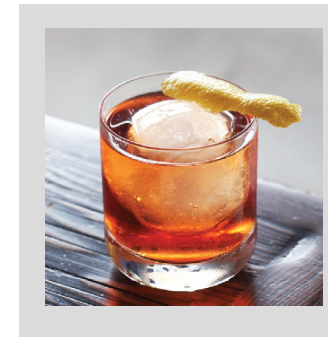
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ACCOLADES



★★★★
"HIGHLY RECOMMENDED"
F. Paul Pacult's Spirit Journal
March 2016



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A NEW CLASS OF WHISKEY