

## Editorial

You have probably noticed a few changes at your local home brew store. The \$60 million Australian and New Zealand home brewing industry is undergoing a metamorphosis.

Brewers are making spirits as well as looking for premium wine kits, while discerning drinkers are demanding the highest quality drops possible. The great news is that the industry is well positioned to deliver on all these demands.

New innovations in spirit making will allow whisky makers to experiment and create their own flavour profiles, just as brewers have been doing for years with malt, hops and yeast. Not only are there plenty of new quality spirit and liqueur flavours, there is also an exciting new beer release. Australia's brewing giants are taking notice and one of the great breweries has released their icon beer into the home brew market. This all makes for an exciting time in the industry.

In Canada it is a very different story where the premium wine kit market dwarfs the entire Australian home brew industry, with sales in excess of \$350 million. The market is so huge that Canada's largest winery, Winexpert, does not make finished wine at all and only makes wine kits.

Many Australian and Kiwi brewers are experimenting with these quality wine kits. It is a dynamic and innovative time and the DIY liquor market is booming as a result.

Most importantly, your local home brew store is the place to find these products and the best advice.

We hope you enjoy your next home-made masterpiece.

## The Craft of Creating the Perfect Whisky

The goal of creating a whisky in the style of the great Scottish distilleries is now a step closer for the home brewer with the launch of the Whisky Profile Kit from Still Spirits.

The whisky kit, which has all the whisky flavour notes, will allow the home brewer to experiment with flavours and create a drop with their own distinct taste and style.

The kit contains 15 flavour notes and additives including peat, oak, sherry, grain and fruity esters plus a recipe book and measuring equipment that will make up to 21 litres of different whiskeys. The book contains approximate formulations of famous brands and detailed descriptions of all flavour notes.



Here are some of the components that you can use to make your own distinctive, personalised whiskeys.

**Oak Cask** distinctively rounded oak cask flavour

**Sweet Vanillin** often found in barrel aged whiskeys

**Peat smoke** Strong almost pungent flavour prominent in Scottish whiskeys

**Astringent Notes** adds bite to the whisky

**Fruity Esters** adds a great deal to the whisky bouquet

**Cereal Notes** grainy flavours essential for grain-based spirits

**Carob notes** chocolate grain

flavour

**Cedar Oak** a drier oak flavour found in Irish whiskey

**Distillers caramel** imparts a warm golden colour

The kit also contains 4 whisky base profiles.

For more detail on the kits and recipes, visit [www.stillspirits.com](http://www.stillspirits.com).

Whisky Profile kits will be available in your local home brew specialist in May.

Still Spirits' home market is New Zealand where distilling at home is legal. Because it is not currently legal in Australia, Still Spirits' flavors will blend equally well with commercially produced and vodka or other neutral spirit.

## Where did wine kits come from?

The first wine kits were probably used in ancient Mesopotamia. Early inhabitants would store a mixture of grains and dried dates and when they needed them, would crumble this concentrated source of sugar into water and allow it to ferment with the natural yeast on the dates, producing the first wine kit.

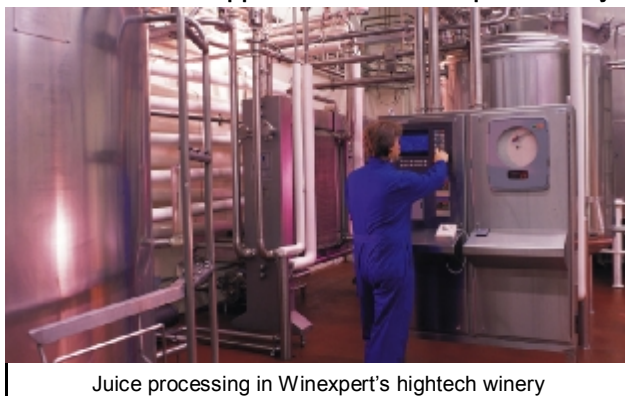
Some say that the practice became common during the United States prohibition era. Californian grape producers would transport bricks of dehydrated Zinfandel grapes to Chicago and New York. They came with a strong warning label:

### CAUTION

Do not add these grapes to five gallons of water and five pounds of sugar with yeast, or it will ferment into wine, which is **ILLEGAL**.

The first wine kits began to appear in the 1970s. They featured cans of grape concentrate and packs of acid, nutrient and yeast which could ferment into a wine-like beverage, although it was not a tasty drop.

By the mid-1980s Doug and Ross Tocher, founders of Winexpert, knew they could do better. They mixed carefully processed concentrates with fresh grape juice and adjusted it for perfect balance as a finished wine. They placed it into sterile bags, preserving the flavours and aromas in the juice and the modern wine kit was born!



Juice processing in Winexpert's hightech winery

## How Winexpert kits are made

Winexpert purchases grapes from growers by specifying conditions at harvest (acid, pH, brix, and colour) and organoleptic qualities (flavour and aroma). These specifications are

very rigid as the kits must maintain consistency so consumers can make repeat purchasing decisions. After the grapes are harvested, they are taken to a winery, sulphited and crushed. At this point white and red grape processing diverges.

White grapes are pressed, and the juice is pumped into a settling tank. Enzymes are added to break down pectins and gums, to assist clearing after fermentation. Bentonite is added and the tank is crash-chilled below freezing. This helps precipitate grape solids, and prevents spoilage.

When the juice is almost clear, it is roughly filtered, the sulphite is adjusted.

The crushed red grapes are pumped through a chiller to a maceration tank, where special enzymes are added. These break down the grape skins, extracting colour, aroma and flavour. The tank is held at near freezing to prevent the must from fermenting. After a few days it is pumped off, pressed and settled much the same way as the whites.

Some juice is boiled at low temperatures in vacuum concentrators to prevent browning and caramelisation. This removes water, leaving concentrated grape juice. As some aromatic compounds can be carried away in this vapour, a fractional distillation apparatus on the concentrator recovers the essences, returning them to the concentrate after processing.

The juices and concentrates are shipped to the Winexpert facility

where they are pumped into nitrogen purged tanks, tested for quality and stability, and held at very low temperatures. This speeds up the formation of wine diamonds (crystals of potassium bitartrate from the tartaric acid naturally occurring in the wine), and preserves them until they are to be used.

After the quality control checks are passed, the juices and concentrates are blended into the formulations that make up the different kits. When the formulation is finally adjusted and approved, the must is



Stringent laboratory testing is done at all production stages

pumped through the pasteurizer, killing yeast and spoilage organisms. It then goes into the bag filler which purges the sterile bags with a double flush of nitrogen, and fills each bag to a very strict tolerance.



Filling & packaging

The bags are automatically capped and loaded into the kit boxes that are sealed, shrink-wrapped and packed on a skid for a quality assurance microbiological hold, where it is examined for signs of bacterial or yeast activity. If it passes, it is then shipped to the warehouse, and from there to dealers, and finally, to you, the winemaker.

The Canadian based Winexpert company is the world's largest manufacturer of premium wine kits.

Their top quality "Selection" & "Vintners Reserve" wine kits are now available from your local specialist brewing supplier. Also look out for their "Island Mist" kits which combine natural fruit flavours with premium varietal wines.

More at [www.winexpert.com](http://www.winexpert.com)



Absinthe, which originated in the first century AD, is flavoured with Wormwood and has a distinctively aniseed taste.

Other aromatic ingredients include liquorice, hyssop, fennel, angelica root, and star aniseed. Wormwood is a plant native to Europe and Asia with leaves that have a strong aromatic odour and bitter taste.

Thujone is the active ingredient that is rumoured to have caused hallucinations, also known as the 'Green Fairy'. However, the hallucinating was more likely caused by the toxic chemicals such as copper sulphate that were a part of early Absinthe recipes.

Early Absinthe consisted of dried leaves of wormwood steeped in wine, beer or distilled spirits. It inspired many prominent artists, writers and poets including Vincent Van Gogh, Oscar Wilde, Manet, and Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway supposedly wrote the masterpiece 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' under the influence of 'The Green Fairy'. It is believed Van Gogh

famously severed his ear under its influence.

Absinthe was first produced commercially in 1797 by Henry-Louis Pernod, who purchased the formula from a French exile living in Switzerland.

and violence. The Swiss, who outlawed Absinthe in 1910, were among the most notorious bootleggers during its prohibition with a thriving underground industry before the ban was lifted in March 2005.

Absinthe was traditionally served through two sugar cubes as they rested on a purpose-designed spoon on top of a glass. Today barmen pour a shot into a glass, soak a spoon of sugar in the glass and light the spoon so the sugars caramelize, before up to 3-4 parts of water is added.

## The Absinthe Story

Absinthe was banned in much of Europe in the early 20th century when linked to hallucinations, depression



Van Gogh's painting with the "green fairy" shimmering around the lanterns.

Top shelf Absinthe contains Wormwood so should be consumed in moderation. The recipe on the bottle also includes instructions on producing the spirit at 50% by volume. Commercial Absinthe comes in strengths from 50% to 85%. Be careful with any spirit over 50% in strength as the body can absorb it faster than it can metabolise the alcohol which can cause serious alcohol poisoning and, in severe cases, death.

## The History of Gin

Gin was first produced in Holland as a cheap medicinal remedy during the 1600s. It caught on quickly throughout Europe before spreading to tropical locations where it was used to disguise the taste of the malaria cure, quinine.

While gin originated in Holland, it was the English who introduced it to the masses. The early English version of gin was sweeter and lighter in flavour, and cheap to produce compared with other distilled spirits. This version quickly became the 'opiate of the poor' and was known as 'Mothers Ruin'. This new drink was imbibed at London gin houses. The move to rename them gin palaces did little to change the unsavoury reputation of these establishments.

Gin, in its basic form, is juniper flavoured spirit. The botanicals that are added to gin, including orange, coriander, cardamom and cinnamon create the differences in taste. The most common styles are the London style or the Dutch style, Genever.

The London style is produced from two distillations. The first is from a reflux still which produces very clean

neutral spirit, and the second where the botanicals are softened in alcohol and distilled with a Pot still so the delicate flavours and aromas are captured in the spirit. This is the world's most common gin, and is most popular in countries including India, the United States, New Zealand and Australia.

Genever and gin are derivatives of the French word for juniper, genievre. The Genever style of gin is predominantly produced and consumed in northern European countries. This gin's base is malt wine and juniper. Malt wine distillate is produced from cereal grains and fermented to an alcohol content of about 12% with wine yeast. The grains are then mashed before fermentation. The malt wine is then repeatedly distilled with the final distillation incorporating juniper berries and other botanicals included in the secret recipe.

Still Spirits offer several gins including;

### Classic Gin

A distinctive refreshing gin of outstanding character. This very concentrated essence produces a clean

tasting gin with a strong juniper flavour and a delicate touch of coriander.

### Top Shelf English Gin

A dry English-style gin for the connoisseur with a rich juniper aroma and delicate lemon peel taste.

## New flavours from the Top Shelf

Still Spirits have developed some more really classy flavours to add to their "Top Shelf" range. You can now make amazingly authentic spirits & liqueurs from these new essences.

**Absinthe** described above.

**Southern Haze** for Southern Comfort lovers.

**Scotch Heather** like Drambuie.

**Reverendine** for Benedictine lovers.

**Grande Paris** like Grand Marnier.

**Marula Cream** from the amazing South African Marula berries.

**Caranilla** a caramel liqueur with gorgeous vanilla notes.

Comprehensive descriptions of all of these flavours and other new product information can be found at

[www.stillspirits.com](http://www.stillspirits.com)  
[www.liquorcraft.com.au](http://www.liquorcraft.com.au)

# The Castlemaine Perkins Story

In the late 1880's, Castlemaine could lay claim to being Australia's first national beer brand. Two Irishmen, Nicholas and Edward Fitzgerald, not content with the success of their small brewery at the gold mining township of Castlemaine in Victoria in the 1850s, expanded to establish Castlemaine Breweries throughout the colonies.

The first Queensland Castlemaine brew was available in 1878 and the press lauded its praises for weeks. For example, the then "Brisbane Courier" described the brew as a "delicious ale of the brightest amber, pleasant to taste, with a peculiarity of flavour not easily described and an aroma of an appetising nature by itself". In 1879, "The Queensland Punch" carried the following advertisement.

## CASTLEMAINE BREWERY, BRISBANE

This Establishment is now in working order, replete with every modern improvement.

The Proprietors, Messrs. FITZGERALD, QUINLAN & COMPANY respectfully solicit a share of public patronage.

Their constant efforts will be directed to manufacture here ALE AND PORTER equal in general quality to the famed Castlemaine Ale, so popular for many years past in the Southern Colonies.

The Castlemaine Brewery was an immediate success. Expansion led to the 1928 takeover of their rival, the Perkins Brewery, hence the emergence of "Castlemaine Perkins".

The pace of change increased in the early 1960's with the introduction of 375ml beer cans in 1961 and their glass equivalent, the famous "stubby" the year after. In 1979 in response to community concern about drink-driving, the Brewery produced the State's first equivalent reduced alcohol beer, XXXX Lite, now called XXXX Gold.

Castlemaine Perkins started exporting in 1941 to Australian troops in the Middle East. XXXX is now exported to some 40 countries. It has become the most recognised lager in England, and as it is now brewed in the UK for keg sales, a cold pint of XXXX can be had in many an English pub.

Castlemaine XXXX has long been a part of Queensland heritage and tradition. It is the "biggest private sponsor of sports in Queensland including the XXXX State of Origin team and the Queensland and Australian Rugby League and Rugby Union teams.

The millions spent on the Castlemaine XXXX brand is big news for home brewing with the release of the Castlemaine Perkins Lager home brew kit. This is the first home brew product released under the Castlemaine Perkins brand whose huge profile has already attracted plenty of interest amongst Australia and New Zealand's 800,000 brewers.



Castlemaine Perkins has long been synonymous with brewing quality and craftsmanship and we can assure you this beer is an Australian Classic. It is a delicately hopped golden lager with special attention given to the subtle malt flavours. We love this beer so much we have come up with a couple of great recipes to make in the style of Fourex Bitter and Fourex Gold. If you are an Australian beer lover you will not be disappointed. Check out the recipes below.

For a full transcript of the Castlemaine Story check out [www.liquorcrafter.com.au](http://www.liquorcrafter.com.au) or [www.brewcraft.com.au](http://www.brewcraft.com.au)

## Recipes

### Fourex Gold

#### Ingredients

- Castlemaine Perkins Lager
- Dextrose 100g
- Corn syrup 200g
- Cluster hop pellets 15g
- Saflager S-23 yeast

#### Notes

- Final volume 21L
- Ferment below 20°C if possible
- OG 1032, FG 1010, Alc 3.5%

### Fourex Bitter

#### Ingredients

- Castlemaine Perkins Lager
- Brewcraft # 15 Beer Enhancer 1kg

- Pride of Ringwood hop pellets 15g
- Saflager S-23 yeast

#### Notes

- Final volume 21L
- Ferment below 20°C if possible
- OG 1046, FG 1012, Alc 5.2%

### Beamish Red

Classic Irish red-amber ale

#### Ingredients

- Beermakers Lager
- Black Rock light liquid malt 1kg
- Crystal grain (crushed) 400g
- Fuggles hop pellets 15g
- Safale S-04 yeast

#### Notes

- Do not use the enzyme

supplied with the beer kit

- Final volume 22L
- OG 1048, FG 1013, Alc 5.4%

*Take note of the fermentation temperatures for Saflager yeast. There's a great idea for keeping your fermenter cool in the "Brewing hints" page of [www.liquorcrafter.com.au](http://www.liquorcrafter.com.au)*

*The brewing method for these recipes is described in detail in the book, "Brewing Crafts" by Mike Rodgers-Wilson. However, most brewers will be able to make these beers without instructions.*

*Recipes that carry the name of commercial beers are not exact copies of those beers but they do have enough similarity in maltiness, colour and aroma to remind you of the original.*

## More information

We would love to be able to put more into this newsletter but as you can see, it's crammed full already.

However, don't despair, here are some excellent websites that have masses of information about all aspects of making spirits, liqueurs, beer and wine at home.

[www.brewcraft.com.au](http://www.brewcraft.com.au)

[www.brewcraft.co.nz](http://www.brewcraft.co.nz)

[www.stillspirits.com](http://www.stillspirits.com)

[www.liquorcrafter.com.au](http://www.liquorcrafter.com.au)

[www.sahomebrew.com.au](http://www.sahomebrew.com.au)

[www.westbrew.com.au](http://www.westbrew.com.au)

[www.winexpert.com](http://www.winexpert.com)

[www.maltshovel.com.au](http://www.maltshovel.com.au)