



New Zealand Whisky Guidelines and Definitions

Updated February 18, 2021.

Statement of Intention

Distilled Spirits Aotearoa and its community of whisky producers and distillers in New Zealand have adopted the following operating guidelines and definitions with the intention they be moved into public record and progressed within New Zealand legislation to become formally recognized regulations.

The adoption and legislation of these regulations serves to:

1. provide clarity for producers, distillers and consumers
2. protect and define a premium category for New Zealand whisky

Guidelines and Definitions

1. **New Zealand Single Malt Whisky** shall be defined as
 - a. Being made exclusively from 100% malted cereal grain, water and yeast
 - b. Substitutions to malted barley grain must be clearly stated on the front label *ie Single Malt Rye Whisky*
 - c. Batch distilled in copper pot stills
 - d. Mashed, fermented, distilled, matured and bottled in New Zealand
 - e. Distilled in a single distillery
 - f. Colouring may be added for the purpose of consistency and then only natural colouring (E150a) may be used
 - g. No additional enzymes may be added or used beyond what is already naturally occurring in the grain
 - h. Maximum distillation of 94.8% alcohol by volume so the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the raw materials used in, and the method of, its production
 - i. Matured in wooden casks of maximum 700 litres for not less than 2 years
 - j. Any packaging reflecting an age statement must state the age of the youngest whisky contained therein where age is the time the whisky has been matured in cask
 - k. Bottled at a minimum of 40% alcohol by volume



Distilled Spirits Aotearoa (NZ) Incorporated

New Zealand Business Number (NZBN): 9429047031708

Certificate of Incorporation: 2716891

Registered office: 16d Sunley Street, Westtown, New Plymouth 4312, New Zealand

Telephone: +64(0)21 222 9881 email: chair@distilledspiritsaotearoa.org.nz

DistilledSpiritsAotearoa.org.nz

2. **New Zealand Whisky** including vatted/blended malt, blended whisky, grain whisky shall be defined as

- a. Mashed, fermented, distilled, matured and bottled in New Zealand
- b. Vatted malt may only contain New Zealand Single Malts
- c. New Zealand Blended Whisky may only contain only New Zealand Malt Whisky and New Zealand Grain Whisky
- d. All of the fermentable sugars must be derived from cereal grain, enzymes permitted
- e. Colouring may be added for the purpose of consistency and then only natural colouring (E150a) may be used
- f. Maximum distillation of 94.8% alcohol by volume so the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the raw materials used in, and the method of, its production
- g. Matured in wooden casks of maximum 700 litres for not less than 2 years
- h. Any packaging reflecting an age statement must state the age of the youngest whisky contained therein where age is the time the whisky has been matured in cask
- i. Bottled at a minimum of 40% alcohol by volume
- j. Only whisky as defined in these rules can be called 'New Zealand Whisky'. Whisky imported to and bottled in New Zealand cannot be labelled as 'New Zealand Whisky'.

3. **PROHIBITIONS**

- a. Commercially produced liquid malt extract cannot be used in the production of New Zealand single malt whisky
- b. Ingredients intended to flavour the whisky such as sherry, wine, beer, honey, liquid malt extract, liquid smoke concentrate, sweeteners or spices etc are considered additional ingredients and are not allowed
- c. Wood chip may not be used or added to the cask during maturation
- d. No place names or geographical indicators, language or imagery may be used to imply a product is New Zealand whisky unless it complies with the 'New Zealand Whisky' definitions set out in the prior clause

Definition of terms:

1. Cask – a wooden vessel for holding liquid, constructed of wooden staves and ends made of wood, held together by hoops or bands.
2. 'Copper pot stills' refers to stills that are predominantly made of copper
3. Ingredients - brewing aids that are not considered additional ingredients and may be used ie: water adjustments of PH or mineral content, hulls or husks of other grains, antifoam are allowed.
 - a. Smoke is not considered an ingredient and can be used in the production of New Zealand whisky
 - b. The flavour that is derived from the previous contents of a cask ie sherry, wine, beer etc is not considered an ingredient and can be used
4. 'Aotearoa' means New Zealand and vice versa and the same definitions and guidelines above apply
5. The spelling 'whiskey' with an 'e' can be used interchangeably with 'whisky' and the same definitions and guidelines above apply