

# Book Reviews

## Distilled Spirits: Tradition and Innovation

Edited by J.H. Bryce and G.G. Stewart

Publication: January 2004

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*Distilled Spirits* is a compilation of presentations given at the Worldwide Distilled Spirits Conference, which was held in Edinburgh in September 2002; the conference was organised by the Scottish Section of the Institute and Guild of Brewing.

The event was a bold and successful initiative conceived to provide a new focus for discussion of technical knowledge relating to the production processes for the international spirits market. In the calendar of conferences and meetings it replaced the Aviemore Conferences on Malting, Brewing and Distilling, which had been held at four yearly intervals during the period 1982–1998. The distilling element of the Aviemore Conferences was almost entirely limited to Scotch whisky, and it was the declared aim of the Edinburgh programme to break out from this somewhat narrow field.

The Worldwide Distilled Spirits Conference followed a predictable format with lectures, posters, visits and social functions and was attended by about 175 delegates from fifteen countries.

The editors of this publication, James Bryce and Graham Stewart, from the International Centre for Brewing and Distilling at Heriot-Watt University, have included 34 chapters drawn from 26 lectures and 20 posters. The poster material has been rewritten to provide a full narrative, so that it is impossible to tell from the book which contributions were lectures and which were posters. This is a welcome approach, as so often excellent poster work at conferences is reproduced directly in sketchy poster format, or even lost completely. To the editors' great credit, they have enhanced the style of publication from the rather basic layout of the Aviemore Conference Proceedings; this new volume is well set out on quality A4 size paper with excellent diagrams, photographs and a good index. The book includes a CD-ROM of the contents.

We have chapters covering gin, vodka, rum, shochu, cachaça, and aniseed flavoured drinks as well as Scotch, Bourbon and Indian whiskies. Brandy and tequila are the only conspicuous absentees, though a lecture on tequila

was included in the conference programme. Although more than half of the chapters have authors from the UK, there is representation from France, Spain, Japan, USA, Canada, Brazil and India – so the international commitment was well met.

In keeping with the nature of the event the topics vary greatly, with some detailed research papers, some scientific reviews and some general interest papers covering markets, and definitions.

The theme of tradition and innovation is specifically covered in relation to Scotch whisky in the first chapter, which was the opening lecture of the conference; the next three chapters continue to examine the tensions presented by these seemingly opposed forces in both production and marketing. This opening leads into the subject of definitions, covered by The Scotch Whisky Association and The Gin and Vodka Association of GB, and the newer analytical techniques now available to authenticate products.

The contents then move on to examine the use and potential of recent technological developments. Included are the selection of raw materials, the role of enzymes and yeast types, and new instruments for the measurement of starch quality and the continuous measurement of alcohol. This section also includes two chapters on fuel alcohol production from authors based in the USA and Brazil. The strange lack of interest in this topic in Europe, and especially in the UK, continues more than a year after these papers were written.

Distilling around the world is the general theme for the latter half of the book and future developments in Asia, Japan, USA, Brazil and the Caribbean are addressed as well as Scotland. National products and boundaries are irrelevant in many of the technical innovations highlighted.

The final chapter examines the global scene where innovation in production and marketing operate in the context of corporate and sociological change, with particular reference to health and legislation.

There are a number of important contributions in *Distilled Spirits* and I would single out particularly the elegant summary of the understanding of Scotch whisky flavour by authors from the Scotch Whisky Research Institute, new work on the role of lactic acid bacteria and limit dextrinase by authors from The International Centre for Brewing and Distilling and the glimpse into the future of barley genetics provided by authors from the Scottish Crop Research Institute. However that reveals my very Scottish slant on things and readers with different backgrounds will focus on other topics in this stimulating book.

With *Distilled Spirits* coming so soon after the publication of *Whisky: Technology, Production and Marketing* (Academic Press 2003) the last six months have provided a significant increase in technical publications relating to spirits. An important gap in technical literature is being filled, though there is room for much more.

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The other good news is that the Scottish Section of the Institute and Guild of Brewing is already planning the next Distilled Spirits Conference in Edinburgh in 2005.

Reviewed by Frank Robson  
MA, BSc, MSc.

## Fermented Beverage Production

### Second Edition

Edited by A.G.H. Lea and J.R. Piggott

Publication: June 2003

Publisher: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers

Hardcover: ISBN 0-306-47275-9, 428 pp. Price: \$165

Paperback: ISBN 0-306-47706-8, 462 pp. Price: \$69

Editors Andrew Lea and John Piggott have updated the first edition of the book *Fermented Beverage Production*. This second edition is an excellent introduction to the 'Science and Technology' of fermented beverages and features three new chapters on sparkling wines, rums, and Latin American beverages. As can be seen from the contents list below, the book covers a wide variety of beverages including products such as Cachaça and Pisco.

#### Table of contents

1. Production of fermentable extracts from cereals and fruits *A. Paterson, J.S. Swanston and J.R. Piggott*
2. Alcoholic beverage fermentations *D.R. Berry and J.C. Slaughter*
3. Beers: recent technological innovations in brewing *D. Iserentant*
4. Cidermaking *A.G.H. Lea and J.-F. Drilleu*

5. White wines *A. Ewart*
6. Red wines *R. Boulton*
7. Sparkling wines *P. Howe*
8. Fortified wines: Sherry, Port and Madeira *H.P. Reader and M. Dominguez*
9. From the vine to Cognac *R. Cantagrel and B. Galy*
10. Armagnac and wine-spirits *A. Bertrand*
11. Whiskies *J.R. Piggott and J.M. Conner*
12. Rum *D.A. Nicol*
13. Vodka, Gin and other Flavored Spirits *R.I. Aylott*
14. Liqueurs & Speciality Products *D.W. Clutton*
15. Cachaça, Pisco and Tequila *J.B. Faria, E. Loyola, M.G. López and J.P. Dufour*
16. Filtration and stabilization of beers *G.H. Freeman and M.T. McKechnie*
17. Flavor chemistry *V.C. Cole and A.C. Noble*

The book is well illustrated with diagrams and graphs to clarify the text and each chapter stands on its own. The book contains many useful tables, for example, in the chapter on 'Liqueurs & Speciality Products' there is an excellent 16 page table that lists the liqueur product, its country of origin and describes the key ingredients.

The stated aim of the book is to provide a technical snapshot of the major alcoholic beverages today and it does that very well. This book will be a very useful addition on the bookshelf of anyone working in the fermentation industry and will be especially useful to students studying fermented beverages.

Reviewed by Inge Russell  
Ph.D., D.Sc., FIBiol, FIBrew