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Canada's Best Whisky, According To The 2026 Canadian Whisky Awards

The Canadian Whisky Awards crowned six standouts for 2026—from a 24-year-old flagship to maple, PX sherry, and triple-oak experiments that show Canada's range.

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Made in Canada' stickers placed next to price tags of Canadian Whiskey
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Canadian whisky is in the middle of a quiet surge. The category's traditional strengths—blending skill, grain versatility, and a distinctive rye-spice signature—are now being amplified by extended aging, more innovative cask management, and a wave of contemporary finishing programs. It's also becoming clearer year by year which bottlings rise above the noise and why.

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That is where the [Canadian Whisky Awards \(CWA\)](#) have become useful. Founded in 2010 by whisky writer and historian Davin de Kergommeaux, the CWA focuses exclusively on whiskies distilled and matured in Canada and judged by blind tasting. Winners are traditionally announced at a gala dinner in Victoria, British Columbia, held in conjunction with the [Victoria Whisky Festival](#), giving the awards both industry weight and consumer visibility. This year's gala dinner was held on January 15, 2026, in Victoria, B.C. Below are six Canadian whiskies that took top honors at the 2026 CWA.

J.P. Wiser's 24-Year-Old Canadian Whisky, 50% ABV, 750 ml.

[Wiser's 24-YO](#) was selected as the Canadian Whisky of the Year. This ultra-aged Canadian whisky was released as a "Millennium" concept and matured in multiple casks. Wiser's is a division of Hiram Walker & Sons Distillery in Windsor, Ontario. The mash bill is not disclosed.

The whisky offers aromas of baked orchard fruit, especially green apple, almond, cola, baking spices, and leather, with a wisp of smoke and well-integrated oak. It's smooth and complex on the palate, with layered flavors of green apple, ripe cherry, vanilla, baking spice notes of cinnamon and a hint of clove, baked rye bread, and old leather. The higher proof adds extra grip and flavor intensity. The finish is long and complex, initially hinting at sweetness that fades to dryness, with lingering notes of toasted oak, orchard fruit, and cinnamon spice.

Wayne Gretzky Estates, Maple Cask Canadian Whisky, 40% ABV, 750 ml.

[Gretzky's Maple Cask Canadian Whisky](#) was selected as the Canadian Blended Whisky of the Year. The whisky is produced under the Wayne Gretzky Estates winery/distillery umbrella in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It is a classic Canadian-style whisky made from locally sourced Ontario grains, distilled and matured separately, then blended and finished in maple syrup barrels.

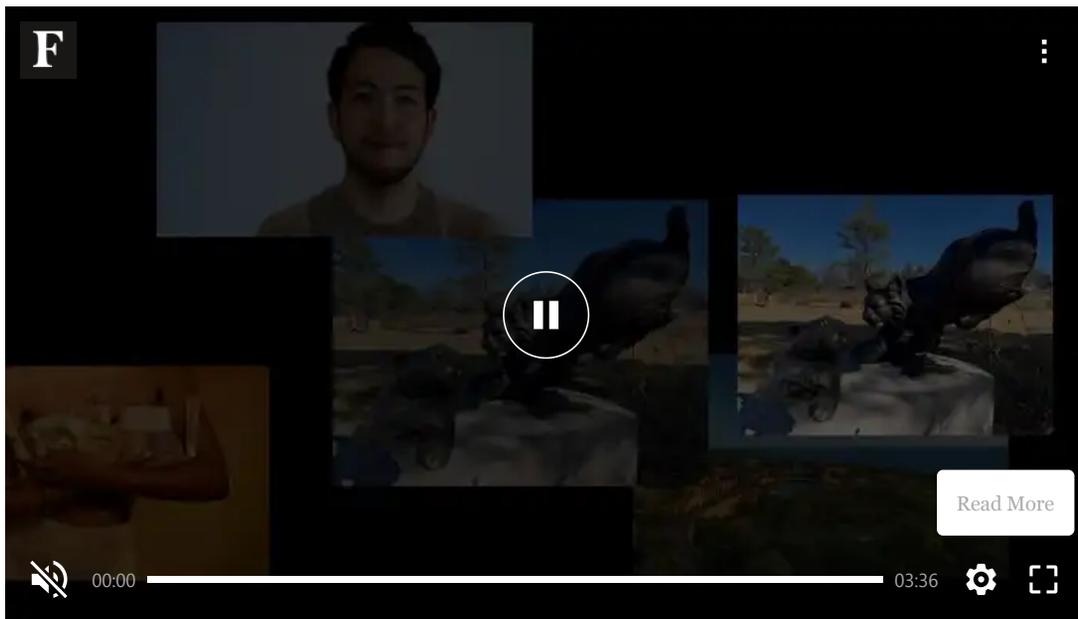
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The distillery does not disclose the specific mash bill, except to note that it is corn-based, with a significant “malted rye” component, and that it is based on “100% Ontario grains.”

The whisky features aromas of caramelized maple syrup and maple candies, baked nut loaf, cooked cereal grains, baked apples, raisins, and seasoned oak. The palate is smooth, with pronounced viscosity and mouth weight, and a dessert-like sweetness of maple candy and toffee, along with baking spices, with a gentle rye-like pepperiness beneath the sweetness. The finish is long and sweet, with lingering notes of candied nuts, spices, and caramelized maple candies.



Pike Creek 22-Year-Old PX Cask Finish Canadian Whisky, 45% ABV, 750 ml.

[Pike Creek](#) was a double winner at the 2026 CWA, taking Best Limited Expression and Best Whisky Aged Over 15 Years. The brand is part of the J.P. Wiser’s/Hiram Walker & Sons portfolio, and features various finishing experiments built on a Canadian corn-and-rye foundation.

The 22-Year PX finish frames corn sweetness and texture with rye spice and depth, finished in Pedro Ximénez (PX) sherry casks under the direction of Dr. Don Livermore.

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viscous, with pronounced mouth weight and a sweet “dessert-like structure,” showcasing flavors of dried fruits, vanilla, cinnamon, cornbread, and spicy rye notes. The finish is long, sweet, and sherried, with lingering notes of dried dark fruit, cocoa, oak spices, apple, and vanilla echoes.

Crown Royal Chocolate Flavored Whisky, 35% ABV, 750 ml.

[Crown Royal Chocolate Flavored Whisky](#) was chosen as the Flavored Whisky of the Year.

The expression is among the latest additions to Crown Royal’s range of flavored whiskies. It is a limited, seasonal flavored Crown Royal release built on the brand’s characteristically smooth Canadian whisky base, with chocolate-forward flavoring.

Crown Royal’s whisky production is centered in Gimli, Manitoba, alongside Lake Winnipeg, and uses prairie-sourced rye, corn, and barley. The distillery does not disclose the mash bill for this flavored expression, but it is presumably based on Crown Royal’s standard blend of rye, corn, and barley.

The whisky offers aromas of chocolate fudge and cocoa-dusted truffle, backed by vanilla and a light oak note. It’s smooth and velvety on the palate, with a candied sweetness and flavors of cacao, caramel, toffee, and subtle oak spices. The finish is long and sweet, with lingering notes of dark cocoa, vanilla, and seasoned oak.

Forty Creek Cinnamon Bun Cream Liquor, 15% ABV, 750 ml

[Forty Creek’s Cinnamon Bun Cream Liquor](#) was awarded Cream Whisky of the Year.

It’s not a straight whisky; it’s a whisky-based cream liqueur from Forty Creek (Kittling Ridge) in Grimsby, Ontario. It’s designed for dessert pours and as a cocktail ingredient.

The Liquor’s base is Forty Creek whisky, along with dairy cream and artificial flavorings consistent with the cinnamon-bun profile.

The nose delivers precisely what the label promises: aromas of cinnamon, flaky pastry,

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BEARFACE Triple Oak Canadian Whisky, 42.5% ABV, 750 ml.

[BEARFACE Triple Oak](#) was selected as the Corn Whisky of the Year.

The distillery presents this expression as a single-grain Canadian whisky, built on corn spirit, matured for seven years in ex-bourbon American oak, then layered through French oak red-wine casks and air-dried, multiple-toasted virgin Hungarian oak, to build spice and add a faint smoky edge.

The brand doesn't disclose the mash bill; it describes it as "single-grain sourced Canadian corn spirit." Presumably, it is 100% corn or corn-forward.

The whiskey features aromas of honeyed cornbread and sweet pastry notes, along with honey, marzipan, crème brûlée, vanilla, dried red fruits, candied cranberries, orchard fruit notes of apple and pear, spice notes of cinnamon and cardamom, orange zest, brown sugar, and subtle smoke notes.

The whisky is smooth and sweet on the palate, with a clear progression from dessert notes to drying spice and citrus peel. The wine-cask layer contributes tart red fruit and color, while the Hungarian oak adds "rye-like" spice. The finish is smooth, smoky, and spicy, with lingering notes of orange zest, cardamom, brown sugar, and toasted oak.

Taken together, these six winners offer a snapshot of where Canadian whisky is headed. The through-line is not a single flavor profile but a consistent philosophy: build a solid base whisky—often corn for texture and sweetness, rye for flavor and spice—then use time, blending, and selective cask influence to add dimension. Wisner's 24-year-old shows how elegance and complexity can be achieved through extended maturation, while Pike Creek's PX finish shows how finishing can deepen rather than disguise a well-made Canadian foundation.

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on concept. In short, the 2026 CWA results reinforce that Canada’s best producers treat style categories as opportunities for craft—proof, wood, and blending choices made with intent—rather than as marketing lanes.

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The Top Canadian Whiskies From The 2025 World Whisky Awards

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