

*Wine, Dine and Lifestyle in Vancouver  
and BC Wine Country*

# My VanCity

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## In Conversation with Brennan Colebank, Stillhead Distilleries

January 9, 2026 by Valerie van der Gracht

In conversation with Brennan Colebank, the Founder and Master Distiller at Stillhead Distillery

I posed a few questions to Brennan Colebank just ahead of the [Victoria Whisky Festival](#) which runs through Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>, Friday the 16<sup>th</sup>, Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 at the 5-star Hotel Grand Pacific located on Victoria's beautiful Inner Harbour. *Note: A limited number of tickets still available*



*In Conversation with..*

*Do you ferment and distill all the alcohol on-site?*

yes

*Where do your grains and water come from?*

Our rye and wheat come from South Peace Grain in Dawson Creek, corn from a farm in Lavington. Water is from the tap from the Cowichan River aquifer.

*What is the percentage of different grains for your whiskies?*

Most of our whiskies are 100% rye grain, and we have a bit of Bourbon style that is 60% corn, 30% rye, 5% malted barley and 5% wheat.

*What type of stills do you use and why?*

We use a 500L Arnold Holstein hybrid pot column still, allowing us to make everything from vodka to brandy.

*What is the 'wood story' for your casks?*

We use mostly four types of casks, Garry oak, new American oak, ex-Islay Scotch Whisky and Pedro Ximenez sherry. Garry oak is unique for rye whisky, sourced locally from salvage and from Oregon. Our new American oak casks are lightly charred for a balanced wood/spirit focused whisky, and we can refill to create a lighter whisky for our Whisky Cream and other products. Ex-Islay Scotch whisky barrels bring a smoky element to our Islay Cask Rye Whisky. PX sherry brings out a sweet and dried fruit element that complements our herbal spicy rye well.

*Do you add any colorings, flavourings, or other additives to your finished products?*

Never

*What is the amount of spirit lost to evaporation during aging at your facility?*

5% to 10% per year

*What are the typical aroma and flavour profiles I can expect from your whisky?*

I don't like to suggest flavours as I worry it will ruin the fun of discovery, but for profile we focus on fruity characteristics to balance the classic flavours of herbs and spice from the rye grain.

*Which of your expressions would you recommend for someone who enjoys peaty/smoky, sweet/caramel, or spicy?*

We have three that almost fit those categories perfectly: Islay Cask Rye Whisky (new), Sherry Cask Rye Whisky, and Bartender's Rye Whisky for the spicier expression.

*How does adding a few drops of water affect this specific whisky?*

It will affect them all differently. Sometimes adding water to intensely flavoured cask strength whiskies, where the presence of alcohol hampers nosing or tasting the flavour, will just dilute it enough to allow the flavours to be more discernable.

*Do you have any new or experimental releases in the pipeline?*

We just released our new Islay Cask Rye Whisky this month, which is a 100% rye single grain whisky which has been aged full term in Scotch Whisky Cask from the isle of Islay, known for making peated whiskies. The casks create a completely unique smoky flavour not commonly found in rye whisky.

*What makes your spirit different or unique from others?*

We are one of few 100% rye whiskies in the world and focused on changing the perception of rye around the world. We focus on creating fruity flavours in our whisky, using the most high-quality casks, and bottling at higher strength without chill filtering or colouring.

Learn more about the Victoria Whisky Festival [here](#).

Tickets available at Strath Liquor Merchants located at 919 Douglas Street, Victoria, BC. No orders will be accepted by telephone. A limited number of tickets still available.

[Purchase tickets here.](#)



Stillhead Distillery Inc.

Founded by the Colebank family, Stillhead Distillery Inc. opened its doors in October of 2017. After working 15 years in the tech industry, Master Distiller Brennan Colebank left his job to pursue his dream career blending the two things he loved most: chemistry and spirits. Five years later, the Stillhead team has grown from a family of 4 to a team of 9, with each year introducing more internationally award-winning spirits. Their flagship Wild Blackberry Gin uses handpicked, local berries from the Cowichan Valley. They continue to innovate with their exclusive and limited release special cask finished whiskies, utilizing barrels from Kentucky, Scotland, Spain, Portugal and Hungary. 2023 will see the release of their ongoing flagship "Double Oak Whisky", as well as a maple syrup cask finished whisky, among others.

About Stillhead

Our vision at Stillhead is to embody the essence of island living in our brand and all of our spirits. By adding distinct Vancouver Island ingredients to our products, we've provided a way to showcase our home and express the spirit of this wonderful area we call home, in every bottle.

Distilling Creativity

At Stillhead we pride ourselves on being inclusive, fun and passionate about all things clear spirits and whisky. We love good spirits, good company and "good" puns. Our mission is to create bold and expressive

spirits that give others the chance to experience a taste of the little island we call home.

📁 Drinks, Events

📌 Brennan Colebank, Founder and Master Distiller, Hotel Grand Pacific, Stillhead Distillery, Strath Liquor Merchants, Victoria Whisky Festival

< Mitch and Murray Productions Presents North American Premiere of Phoebe Eclair-Powell's "Harm"

> Wine Paris 2026: the countdown is on — Bourgogne wines invite you for an exclusive program.

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## TRENDING



[PACIFIC INSTITUTE OF CULINARY ARTS HOSTS WOLFGANG PUCK OSCAR POP-UP DINNERS MARCH 4th & 5th](#)

February 23, 2026

[Debut of BEARFACE BEAR-BON™ Whisky This March](#)

February 23, 2026