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In conversation with Chris Read at Shelter Point Distillery

January 11, 2026 by Valerie van der Gracht

In conversation with Chris Read, Brand Experience Manager
Shelter Point Distillery

I posed a few questions to Chris Read just ahead of the [Victoria Whisky Festival](#) which runs through Thursday the 15th, Friday the 16th, Saturday the 17th and Sunday the 18th 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*

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

Everything we produce is made on-site. Much of the grain we use is grown on site, it is milled, fermented, distilled and bottled on site.

· Where do your grains and water come from?

Our water comes from an aquifer beneath the distillery, naturally filtered and completely consistent. Much of our grain comes from the 380 acre farm that surrounds the distillery, all other grains are sourced from within BC.

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

The vast majority (circa 99%) of the grain we use is barley, mostly malted barley. The remaining grains used are rye & wheat.

· What type of stills do you use and why?

We use two pot stills, a 5000l wash still and 4000l pot still. These were manufactured for us by Forsyths in Forres, Scotland. These stills were chosen as the goal of the distillery was to produce whisky in an authentic Scottish style, making the most of the local terroir and cool climate to produce smooth flavourful whiskies. Pot stills enable the creation of a rich flavourful 'new-make' spirit which provides a great starting point for our whiskies as they age in the casks.

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

We primarily use ex-bourbon barrels, although we also have virgin American Oak barrels, and a range of European Oak barrels too. Our warehouse includes barrels that have previously held products from BC Wineries, Sherry, Port, Rum and Tequila. These special finishes are used to produce stand alone products and also to contribute to our continuous vatting process to our core products.

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

No. All Shelter Point products have nothing added to them, our only ingredients are grain, water and yeast, and are not chill filtered.

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

We lose around 5% due to evaporation.

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

It depends a bit on which product you are trying but Shelter Point products are becoming known for a delicious fruity note, a smooth mouthfeel and a long finish. Our coastal location also allows an hint of saltiness to feature in some of our whiskies.

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

For a smoke/peat lover we'd recommend our Smoke Point whisky, although our Classic Single Malt has a hint of smoke too. Our Ripple Rock is aged in virgin oak casks which provides a rich caramel/raisin sweetness and our 10 Year Old Estate whisky also has wonderful sweet hint. Our Black Tail rye whisky has a nice peppery note on the finish and if you can find a bottle of our Evans Family Reserve Caribbean Rum. Finish there is a rich, spice note there.

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

All whiskies will be affected by adding a few drops of water, releasing a little more aroma and influencing the flavour.

· How many bottles/cases do you produce per year?

Our production is driven by customer demand, and exact numbers are proprietary. However 2025 was an exciting year for us as our Classic Single Malt was launched in Ontario, which is a very large market and we also expanded our coverage in BC and Alberta.

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

Yes, Shelter Point Distillery will celebrate its 15th birthday in 2026, so a special 15 Year Old release is being developed. We will also be releasing single malt finished in some Burrowing Owl Coruja casks as well as a our first PX Sherry finish.

· What makes your spirit different or unique from others?

We are very fortunate to make whisky in a very special location. We are on the coast, so our maturing barrels benefit from the marine influence as they age. We source our water from our own aquifer, so we benefit from the consistent flavour and minerality that that brings. The farm is the source of much of our barley which allows us to produce whiskies like our Estate 10 Year Old which is made entirely from barley grown within 1km of the distillery building. Our coastal location has the benefit of providing not just a flavour influence, but also the perfect climate for maturing whisky, our winters are not too cold, and our summers

are not too hot, so the whisky aging in the barrels does not go through extremes of temperature, helping to create smooth, mellow flavours.

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. Limited number of tickets still available.

[Purchase tickets here.](#)



Founded in 2011, Shelter Point Distillery has been committed to distilling high quality single malt whisky from the outset. It is with great pride that we have released our 12 Year Old Single Malt. Showing depth and a complex character this special whisky is rich in fruit, baking spices, vanilla and caramel sweetness with a hint of chocolate. Replete with the signature Shelter Point creamy mouthfeel the finish is long and smooth..

ABOUT US

At Shelter Point, we are distilling and bottling some of the most exciting single malt whiskies made anywhere. For the last decade, our 100% Canadian take on single malt whisky has been a game-changer, raising eyebrows and glasses while winning accolades and the respect and admiration of some of the world's leading whisky writers and aficionados.

Our sole focus is on the execution of the finest expressions of single malt whisky for you to enjoy. Only the highest quality Canadian two-row barley, grown in British Columbia, is selected for malting. We employ a traditional approach: slow fermentations and double-distillation produce a new-make spirit full of flavour, ready for maturation in an array of woods selected from around the world for their unique flavour specialties. Sitting on the edge of the ocean in our unique setting in northern Vancouver Island, the spirit interacts with the elements as much as with the wood. Distinctly Vancouver Island. Uniquely Shelter Point.

Photo credit: Allison Kuhl

Drinks

10 Year Old Estate whisky, 15th birthday in 2026, barley, Black Tail rye whisky, Burrowing Owl Coruja casks, Classic Single Malt, Distinctly Vancouver Island, European Oak barrels, Evans Family Reserve Caribbean Rum, ex-bourbon barrels, farm, Forsyths in Forres, Hotel Grand Pacific, malted barley, PX Sherry

finish, Ripple Rock, Shelter Point Distillery, Smoke Point whisky, special 15 Year Old release, Tickets, Uniquely Shelter Point, Victoria Whisky Festival, virgin American Oak barrels

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