

From Texas to Niigata: The Spirit Guide Society Showcases the Differences Between Eastern and Western Whiskies

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Guiding a live audience through a flight of specialty whiskies, [The Spirit Guide Society](#)'s host Pedro Shanahan shares the distinctive flavors and processes of major Eastern and Western distillers. The two podcast episodes feature guest appearances by Winston Edwards of Balcones Distilling and Devin Hawley of Shinobu and Kujira Distilleries.

Pedro Shanahan is the bridge between representatives from some of the world's most celebrated distilleries [and The Spirit Guide Society](#)'s eager audiences. Each week, Shanahan sits down to talk with visitors from respected international distilleries and learn more about what makes our favorite liquors so unique. Each presentation and taste-testing is recorded and made available online for free as podcasts.



Recently, Shanahan had the opportunity to sit down with Winston Edwards of Balcones Distilling and with Devin Hawley of Shinobu and Kujira Distilleries to learn more about each of their distilling processes and the differences between Eastern and Western styles and flavors.

Apple Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-spirit-guide-society/id1437576244>
Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/4MhN0A7K9BPbTYgHTizc7A>

Balcones Texas Whiskey with Winston Edwards

Winston Edwards explains that the creators behind Balcones wanted to make blue corn whisky, which had never been done before. From that, Balcones Distillers were able to make up their own taste palate and pioneer the blue corn whiskey movement.

Balcones initially began melding flavors inside single, small barrels, but have since grown to use wine casks built in Missouri that are much larger than typical whiskey barrels and give off their own unique flavors. Today, the distillers at Balcones age their single malts in different cask styles, broken down by where the cask wood comes from geographically.

Guest Winston Edwards brought along a few of Balcones' flagship liquors for host Pedro Shanahan and his audience to taste while teaching them more about the chemistry behind the flavors.

"In Texas Single Malt, we're aging in a combination of American Oak, French Oak, and European oak," says Winston Edwards. "American Oak is kind of the DNA of the whiskey in a way because it ends up being about 2/3 of [our barrels]. And this is kind of what we're tasting right now--is the deconstructed version of the single malt, starting with the American Oak."

"Let's find out together!" Pedro Shanahan chimes in, addressing the audience. "Stick your nose in that glass, breathe in gently through your mouth, and tell me what you're reminded of."

Immediately, the audience gives responses like 'caramel,' 'vanilla,' and 'pecan.'

"So, you just have Texas on the brain?" Shanahan asks the audience to much laughter, and they all move on to the next sampling.

Apple Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/80-balcones-texas-whiskey-with-winston-edwards/id1437576244?i=1000444576532>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1o1LEITl0Xel9GuU6FdwWM>

Shinobu & Kujira Japanese Whisky with Devin Hawley

Shinobu Distillery is a copper pot kettle distillate that blends itself with spirits from the Cooley Distillery in Ireland. Representative Devin Hawley explains how these distillers bring big flavors of mizunara oak and rice whisky to their liquor, which are characteristic of their products.

In the case of Shinobu, whisky purchased from Ireland is aged for about three months in Japanese Oak, which gives it a highly-distinctive flavor of sandalwood and Japanese incense (opposed to classic vanilla and caramel notes). The oak they use in their aging process grew from a barrel shortage in WW2, is regulated and very rare, and imparts a truly unique blend of flavors.

Hawley shares facts like the alcohol percentage of their whiskies and the unique, fibrous materials in their barrels as samples are passed around the crowd. Pedro Shanahan begins his famous spiel to invite the audience to taste, but stops halfway through.

"Stick your nose in that glass, breathe in gently through your mouth--you already drank your whisky, man," Shanahan says in disbelief to an audience member as the room erupts in laughter. "You've appreciated it very quickly! That's cool, that's cool..."

And with the room still laughing, he segues into more taste-tests and insight to Shinobu Distillery from guest Devin Hawley.

Hawley moves to discuss two exciting whiskies from Kujira, an 8 Year Old and 20 Year Old Single Grain Whisky. Hawley divulges that the 8 year is not yet available for sale in the United States. Kujira originates from Okinawa and as Hawley explains, "There is some tradition behind it." "You would call it a single grain, it's actually made from 100% rice, in this case Indica rice, and there is actually..." Just then Pedro introjects, "Indica? No CBDs in this whisky alright!"

As the crowd roars with laughter, Hawley continues, "No, we don't want you to get too rowdy here."

To hear the complete episode and join in on the laughter, tune in at one of the following:

Apple Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/74-shinobu-kujira-japanese-whisky-with->

[devin-hawley/id1437576244?i=1000442655930](https://open.spotify.com/episode/6lwxQjfQY3YMOOwgnBjkel)

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6lwxQjfQY3YMOOwgnBjkel>

To learn more about different distilling styles around the world and emerging leaders in whiskey, rum, tequila, and mezcal, find full-length episodes of [The Spirit Guide Society on](#) Apple Podcasts and Spotify today.

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