

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Mot Hennessy acquires first US craft whiskey-maker

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Woodinville Whiskey Company is based in Woodinville, WA. Image credit: WWC

By STAFF REPORTS

Mot Hennessy, the wine and spirits division of French luxury conglomerate LVMH, has acquired a United States-based whiskey distiller.

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Earlier this month, Mot Hennessy announced that Woodinville Whiskey Company would be joining its wine and spirits portfolio, though financial terms of the transaction were not shared publicly. Craft whiskey marketing is currently witnessing a boom of global interest, and by purchasing a small-batch distiller, Mot Hennessy will be better situated within the trending category ([see story](#)).

Whiskey a go-go

The Woodinville Whiskey Company (WWC) was founded in 2010 by friends Orlin Sorensen and Brett Carlile. The duo will continue to oversee the distillery's operations.

"We are very proud about what we have accomplished since founding Woodinville Whiskey Company just a few years ago," said Mr. Sorensen in a statement. "As we considered the many strategic opportunities before us, it was clear that being part of the Mot Hennessy portfolio and distribution network will allow us to reach our goals much more quickly.

"Brett and I are thrilled to continued leading the business and to be part of the accelerated growth we expect to achieve as part of Mot Hennessy, and its parent LVMH, the world's leading luxury goods company," he said.

Based in Woodinville, WA, WWC quickly gained interest and fans, but was focused on only its local state market.



WWC's award-winning Straight Bourbon Whiskey. Image credit: WWC

WWC's hometown boasts more than 100 wineries, microbreweries, distilleries and cider-makers and attracts more than 300,000 annual visitors.

In 2014, WWC opened a state-of-the-art distillery and tasting room. WWC's barrel warehouses in Quincy, WA sees whiskies aged for five years in climatic conditions ideal for the aging process.

WWC's 5-year-old Straight Bourbon, launched in 2015, was named 2016's "Whiskey of the Year" by the American Distilling Institute. In 2016, WWC's 5-year-old Straight Rye was named "Best Rye Whiskey" for 2017 by the American Distilling Institute.



Woodinville 100 percent Rye Microbarreled Whiskey. Image credit: WWC

Mot Hennessy's involvement with WWC will help the distiller expand distribution and assist with strategic opportunities to build awareness for the brand.

"We are convinced that Woodinville fit very well within the Mot Hennessy portfolio," said Christophe Navarre, president and CEO of Mot Hennessy, in a statement. "Orlin and Brett have done a great job to establish Woodinville Whiskey as an iconic brand in Washington state with significant potential for expanded distribution through our U.S. and international networks.

"While we are no strangers to whiskey, without Glenmorangie and Ardbeg single malts, we have much to learn from Orlin and Brett about American distilling and look forward to this important new partnership," he said.

