

20 White Dog Whiskeys Reviewed including Makers Mark, Heaven Hill and Buffalo Trace

Sep 13, 2011



Woodinville, High West, Double and Twisted, Glen Thunder, Few Spirits, House Spirits, Popcorn Sutton

Last year we published a piece entitled “[Putting White Dog Down](#)“, a sobering counterpoint to the intense media buzz surrounding this category. Since that point, the category has continued to grow and the offerings in this space have increased exponentially. The category has also become quite muddled with products getting released as white dog, white whiskey, unaged whiskey, new make, straight from the still, white lightning, and perhaps the most controversial, moonshine.

While, at the end of the day, we prefer our whiskey aged, the category has some interesting entries as well as a couple of mangey dogs that should be avoided.

[Glen Thunder Corn Whiskey](#) (90 proof) – by far the sweetest and most pleasing of all the unaged whiskey we’ve tried. The nose is bursting with sweet corn and it’s right there in full from the entry through the finish. It’s hard to believe that this unaged whiskey is 90 proof as it’s so beautifully sweet and smooth. This whiskey is almost like if you could bottle corn on the cob with honey over it. By far our favorite un-aged whiskey on the market.

[Doubled & Twisted Light Whiskey](#) (99 proof) – this light whiskey isn't unaged, it's unoaked, as it's been stored in stainless steel casks for four years. Made from double hopped, bottle-ready IPA, it's one of the more interesting light whiskeys we've tried. The nose has solid hop notes along with a subtle sweet undertone. The entry is packed with flavor including hop notes that jump right out of the glass. Also, there are the other malty beer notes from the IPA and an undercurrent of sweetness. The hops carry through a very long and delicious finish that leaves you wanting more.

[Dark Corner Distillery Moonshine](#) (100 proof) – don't let the fact that Dark Corner has labeled their corn whiskey as "moonshine" dissuade you, this is one of the better corn whiskeys on the market. The nose has a superb corn bread dough note which is combined with the grassiness of a corn husk. The entry is so soft and easy it'll get you checking the bottle to confirm that this is indeed 50% alcohol. The taste is true corn along with vanilla and a nice black pepper kick. Dark Corner has done a great job capturing everything we love about corn and put it in an unaged-whiskey that we actually love.

[House Spirits](#) White Dog (100 proof) – made from 100% malted barley, it has one of the strongest malt flavors of the unaged whiskeys we've tried. The fact that it's at 100 proof gives it some really nice body and the finish shows off some phenomenal craftsmanship in the quality of distillation. There are enough layers of complexity of flavor with the maltiness, sweetness, light spice, and subtle heat to make this interesting enough to sip straight. It also does very well over ice.

[High West](#) Silver OMG Pure Rye Whiskey (98.6 proof) – OMG stands for Old Monongahela (in western Pennsylvania), and it's a style of whiskey made entirely from rye (80% rye and 20% malted rye). The nose has nice honey notes combined with cereal grains. The entry is very flavorful with baking spice, lemon and pine. There's a lot to dig through here and it's all carried on a nice sweet note. The proofing is pitch perfect with the perfect amount of heat to balance it all out. The finish is very long for a white whiskey and it leaves a nice savory grain note on the palate. This is an unaged whiskey that's got enough going on to please an aged whiskey lover.

[Popcorn Sutton](#) Tennessee White Whiskey (93 Proof) – if anyone can lay claim to "moonshine," it's this whiskey made from legendary [Popcorn Sutton](#)'s recipe. But even that "moonshine" is called whiskey when it's legally released and the tax is paid on it. Even so, it's still got the great irreverent outlaw mystique that surrounds it, which of course adds to the fun factor. Made from a mix of corn and sugar, this whiskey has a nice balance between sweet and spicy. It's got a little bit of fire to it, but in a good way. It's exactly what you'd expect to taste if someone offered you "really, really good moonshine."

[Woodinville Whiskey Co.](#) Headlong White Dog Whiskey (80 proof) – this is the 80 proof version of what Woodinville sells in their Age Your Own Whiskey Kit. The nose is very sweet and caramel. Caramel notes usually come through via the maturation process, so it was unexpected to get this note on an unaged spirit. The entry is very smooth and sweet with caramel notes from the nose on the taste accompanied by soft cocoa and an undercurrent of coffee. The finish is medium long and maintains many of the sweet notes of the spirit. Headlong White Dog Whiskey is one of the more affable unaged whiskeys we've tried and also one of the sweetest where the sweet isn't a corn-heavy sweet.

[Few Spirits](#) White Whiskey (80 proof) – is designed specifically to be consumed as an unaged whiskey. The nose has nice corn notes to it with the suggestion of malted barley beneath. The entry has corn right up front and then leads way to some cherry and tarragon notes with an undercurrent of black pepper. The finish is medium long with the sweeter notes lingering on the palate. The Few Whiskey is one of the cleaner unaged whiskeys we've tried, with a finish that would be quite friendly for vodka drinkers looking to trade up.

[Buffalo Trace](#) White Dog Mash #1 (125 proof) – this is the mash used to make the aged Buffalo Trace Bourbon. Although it's a corn-heavy mash, the nose has strong malt notes that remind us of brewing beer. The entry is sweet with light corn notes and graham cracker. The spice from the rye comes in at the mid palate and the beer malt flavor on the nose comes through. It's got a nice finish that combines all these flavor elements with just the right amount of heat. Surprisingly drinkable at 125 proof.

Buffalo Trace White Dog Wheated Mash (114 proof) – this is the spirit used to make WL Weller and Pappy Van Winkle. It's got a much softer nose than the White Dog Mash #1 and it smells more like wet wheat than malty beer. The entry is much softer and has a very full wheat and cereal grain flavor (think Wheaties). The finish is fairly long and slightly sweet with just a bit of heat. It's hard to believe this is 114 proof as it's eminently drinkable.

Buffalo Trace White Dog Rye Mash (125 proof) – this is the raw spirit used to make Sazerac 6, 18, Van Winkel 13, and Thomas Handy. The nose has a slight spice backed by the malty beer note present in the Mash #1 (but not as pronounced) and distinct cereal grains. The entry is very spicy with the cereal grains from the nose along with an interesting fishy note. The finish is fairly long and spicy. Of the three Buffalo Trace White Dogs, this one is the most challenging to drink straight.

[Maker's White](#) (90 proof) – still only available at the Maker's Mark distillery in Bardstown, Kentucky, this is the raw spirit used to make Maker's Mark, bottled at the same proof. Although it's

unaged, it still manages to be distinctly Maker's Mark and has a lot of the core mid-palate notes that you'll find in the aged version of this spirit, including a fantastic cinnamon ribbon of flavor. Maker's White is sweet without being overly sweet, and it's missing the funk that often accompanies unaged whiskey. The addition of those great cinnamon notes adds a wonderful complexity and makes this one of the more drinkable 'raw spirits' on the market.

[Rock Town Distillery](#) Arkansas Lightning (125 proof) – bottled at cask strength, this whiskey has some real kick to it, but even at 125 proof it still maintains the smooth, sweet qualities of the corn and wheat mash bill. The nose is unmistakably corn but not singularly so. There's the slightest bit of funk to it but not unpleasantly so. Solid heat, sweet and spicy with a nice mouthfeel and a solid finish.

[Heaven Hill](#) Trybox Series New Make (125 proof) – this is the raw spirit used to make Evan Williams Single Barrel Vintage Bourbon. With a corn heavy mash bill, it has a very clear cooked corn on the cob note on the nose. There's also an interesting peanut undertone that complements the corn. There's a strong kick to the entry due to the high proof, but it's never overly sharp or hot. The corn notes are clearly there from the get go, and in the mid palate so is the peanut. Things get a little spicy from the proof towards the finish and it's that spiciness that dominates. It really needs a little water or ice to be drinkable, but I think we're going to throw it into our Woodenville Whiskey Barrel and see what happens.

Heaven Hill Trybox Series Rye New Make (125 proof) – this is the raw spirit that magically transforms into the amazing Rittenhouse Rye Whiskey, which is a bold and mature giant. Here it's a little more like a wild child. There are corn notes on the nose but not the sweet corn of the other New Make. Here it's more like a spicy corn muffin. The corn is present in the taste but it's the rye that dominates, with some wet dog funk that accompanies some unaged whiskey and helps give the category the nickname "white dog". It's an interesting experience tasting what ultimately becomes Rittenhouse, if only to help understand the massively important role that maturation has in turning a wild child into a full grown, mature whiskey.



Pritchards, Hudson Corn Whiskey, Broadbent Iowa Corn, Death's Door, Moonshine, Ole Smoky

[Benjamin Prichard's](#) Lincoln County Lightning (90 proof) – most corn whiskey is made from yellow corn, but Prichard's uses white, which has a higher sugar content. The nose is light and clean with a hint of the white corn. The entry is lightly sweet with white corn and green apple notes. It picks up some spice and heat in the mid palate and has a nice long, spicy finish.

[Hudson New York Corn Whiskey](#) (92 proof) – made from 100% corn, the nose on the Hudson New York Corn Whiskey is deliciously corn, reminding us of honey butter on a cornbread muffin. The entry is all corn, but more a harvest or Indian corn. There's a bite that comes in at the mid palate and stays through a medium long finish. A solid corn whiskey.

[Death's Door](#) White Whiskey (80 proof) – the nose on the Death's Door White Whiskey has a fruity, grape-like quality to it. It's a little vapory. The entry is also slightly fruity and then it quickly fades into a nice sweet, grain note. The finish is fairly sweet and long. Of all the white whiskey we tried, Death's Door is probably going to be the easiest step-up whiskey for a vodka drinker. It presents a lot like a vodka but with some amped up flavors. There is not much complexity here but it is an extremely affable and easygoing white whiskey.

[Ole Smoky Tennessee Moonshine](#): Corn Whiskey (100 proof) – it's important to recognize that Ole Smoky is a corn whiskey and not actually moonshine. Moonshine refers to a spirit or whiskey that is

produced without a distiller's license and where the federal tax hasn't been paid. Clearly the tax here has been paid. So, really it's a corn whiskey (and it says as much on the label on the top of the mason jar). Ole Smoky has a sweet corn nose without any vapors. The entry is nice and sweet but it picks up a bite in the mid palate that accompanies a sugary note. A great start but not a stellar finish.

[Broadbent Distillery](#) Iowa Corn Whiskey (80 proof) – distinctly different than most of the other unaged whiskeys in this class, Broadbent Iowa Corn Whiskey pulls in a lot of different notes from the corn than just corn. The nose has soft, sweet caramel notes. The entry reminds us of peanut brittle and caramel corn. In the mid palate the spice comes in as the sweet notes transition out, and the finish is fairly long and hot. It's surprising that a spirit with such an affable start would finish with so many edges.

[The Original Moonshine](#) (80 proof) – the front of the bottle claims that it's 100% corn whiskey, but tasted blind, you'd never know that this spirit had much of any corn in it. The nose is fumeey and estery, and the taste follows suit. The Original Moonshine is distilled four times and that's a pretty significant mistake, as they've stripped out all the wonderful things that corn brings to the table, leaving it closer to slightly sweet and hot mediocre vodka than anything else.