



Oregon's Urban Distilleries: A Cocktail Connoisseur's Guide to Portland

by [CraiSBower](#) Friday - last edited yesterday

There are more than 52 breweries in Portland. Yes, a brewery for every week of the year. Then come the urban wineries, popping up in all the hippest corners of this hipper-than-hip city. But, never a craft culture to rest on its hops and grapes, there's a new drinking trend in town: the craft distillery. There are so many start-ups here that folks have labelled their little stretch of eastside Portland "Distillery Row." Take a look at our whiskey lover's guide to Portland for the city's top offerings.

Visitors to the 1.5-mile long [Distillery Row](#) can access a "[Distillery Row Passport](#)" that contains a map, tasting notes, free tasting coupons and discounts at neighbourhood establishments. The passport even provides discounts at the industrial neighbourhood's independent hotels. Of course, should you stay across the river in downtown Portland, you can leave the car in the car park given Portland's comprehensive [Tri-Met MAX](#) light rail system.



Eastside Distillery © [Eastside Distilling](#)

Firing up a still is fine, but what comes out the other end makes or breaks a distillery. Much as Portland takes pride in its outlaw cultural nature, moonshine can still taste like, well, moonshine.

One sip and we learn that [Eastside Distilling](#)'s Burnside Bourbon wasn't concocted in the bathtub. The spicy, yet smooth, finish provides a perfect sipping whisky. The same can be said of [House Spirits](#)' Aviation Gin, a tart blend of juniper berry, cardamom and orange peel. House Spirits' [Stumptown Coffee](#) liqueur captures our provincial palate in a single digestif.



House Spirits Distillery © [House Spirits](#)

A cocktail tourist will be pleased to find the [New Deal Distillery](#), where several vodkas, including the Gold Medal winning [Hot Monkey Pepper-flavored Vodka](#) shares the shelf with New Deal Gin and a ginger liqueur. New Deal's Portland 88 Vodka is also winning its share of taste tests.



New Deal Distillery © [New Deal Distillery](#)

True to Portland's essence, PDX spirit concocters remain perpetually in search of new alchemy with old secrets. [Vinn Distillery](#) produces rice-based spirits based on family recipes that originated seven generations ago. [Stone Barn Brandyworks](#) whip together seasonal fruit brandies, grappa, and several liqueurs including the award winning Quince Liqueur. Visitors are also encouraged to sample the Barn's whiskies in a variety of signature sours.



Stone Barn Brandyworks © [Stone Barn Brandyworks](#)

If you still the gin, the speakeasy will follow. Portland's latest saloon already feels like a century old establishment. The [Multnomah Whisk\(e\)y Library](#) is hidden at the top of a dark stairway in Portland's trending West End neighbourhood. The overstuffed chairs, large brick fireplace and dark stained accents set the perfect ambience for an evening spent among sniffers and friends.



Multnomah Whisk(e)y Library © Dina Avila Photography

With a brewery on (almost) every corner and an urban winery in each neighbourhood, the Portland area has become more than comfortable setting the standard for drinking tastes. It comes as no surprise that the urban distillery movement sweeping the country has its roots in these very same soils.

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*Have you sampled Portland's urban distillery scene? Which are your favourite establishments?
Let us know in the comments below.*

Written by [Crai Bower](#)