



SPIRIT OF THE WEST

Welcome to Utah's High West Distillery, a pioneering whiskey producer that blends dedication to detail with a love of America's rough-hewn heritage

A love of whiskey was just part of the reason behind David Perkins' decision to establish the first licensed distillery in Utah since the 1870s. "It's also about a passion for whiskey as it relates to the American West," he explains. David's ardor for the traditions of the Old West motivated him to name his venture the High West Distillery and transform the adjoining building—a former livery stable—into a Western-style saloon.

Located in Park City at the foot of Quit 'N Time ski trail, High West proudly lays claim to being the world's only "ski-in gastro-distillery." Its distinctive traditional copper pot glows in the front window as a welcoming beacon to passersby.

However, although Park City is an enticing place in winter, summer brings attractions of its own. "They say the winter gets you here and the summer keeps you here," says David. "There is something going on every weekend—a balloon festival, a bicycle race, or a vintage car rally."

High-quality tastes

Positioned 7,000 ft up in the mountains above Salt Lake City, High West's saloon and restaurant have been designed with careful attention paid to every aspect. With its focus on locally sourced food and Rocky Mountain-inspired cuisine, High West has been named best restaurant in Park City three years in a row. Its bar was also nominated two years running for Outstanding Bar Program in the James Beard Foundation Awards, and its Executive Chef and General Manager, James Dumas, was a semifinalist in 2013 for the Beard Best Chef, Southwest award.

Despite this deluge of plaudits, the atmosphere is relaxed and informal, with an emphasis on fun—as evidenced by the foot-stomping beat of American roots music

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that often emanates from the saloon—and, of course, its food. "We here at High West are all foodies, and we love to teach the appreciation of whiskey with good food," says David.

High West's own aged whiskey distillate will soon be ready for commercial distribution, once it has properly matured. In the meantime, the team has been sourcing whiskeys and creating unique blends, such as Bourye, the world's first commercial blend of bourbon and rye whiskey. High West's Rendezvous Rye, which combines a six-year-old and a 16-year-old rye, was ranked among *Malt Advocate* (now known as *Whisky Advocate*) magazine's top 10 new whiskeys of 2008 and received a Double Gold Medal at the San Francisco Spirits competition that same year.

David's previous career as a biochemist only served to enhance his understanding of the science behind making great whiskey. John Hansell, Editor of *Whisky Advocate* magazine, when naming David its "Whisky Pioneer of the Year," wrote: "Perkins is delivering properly aged whiskey, blended masterfully from existing stocks. No one else in America is doing this, and he's doing it well, pioneering in new territory."

New West pioneers

At the heart of the High West project is David and his wife Jane's devotion to preserving the Old West's heritage and awe-inspiring beauty—with a pioneering touch. All High West's products benefit from the distillery's spirit of innovation. Its Vodka 7000'—named after the distillery's lofty altitude, for instance—is made from a base of oats rather than the

usual potatoes or other grains, and has garnered an enthusiastic following. High West also commercialized the world's first barrel-aged cocktail, a Manhattan that was blended in a whiskey barrel and aged for four months.

Its American Prairie Reserve blended whiskey is named after the 5,000-sq-mile conservation area of the same name in northeastern Montana, and the company has pledged to donate 10 percent of the after-tax profits to its upkeep.

"Our inspiration is whiskey's role in the formation of the West," says David. "From the painstaking renovation of High West's home to keep it on the National Historic Register, to our products that tell a story about the West, we are dedicated to pouring our efforts into promoting and preserving the land we love—the American West."

www.highwest.com

