

# Good Strategy, Like Good Whisky, Can't Be Rushed

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For the first half of my career I was very fortunate to work on some of the most famous Scotch Whisky brands in the world. I mean, who wouldn't enjoy travelling the world extolling the virtues of the water of life, right?

It's a misleadingly simple sector. A single malt, after all, has very few ingredients. Malted barley, yeast and water. That's it!

Well, not quite. It's not just these three raw materials that make for a fine tasting spirit. More important by far is the influence the wooden casks used to mature the whisky hold over the final character of the spirit. In fact, wood accounts for a huge part of a Scotch's identity, perhaps as much as 60 percent of the whisky's ultimate flavour.

But can the average person tell the difference? Yes, and here's the proof: the malted

barley, yeast, and water are cooked, fermented, and distilled exactly the same way for every whisky produced by each distillery. That clear spirit is what goes into every barrel. It's only the wood-the type of wood used, the way it's seasoned, the length of time it's aged, and the blend of the different barrels-that distinguishes one expression from another.

Making good strategy is much like making love to a beautiful wom...sorry, sorry, I mean making good whisky. We all start with the same facts from which we distill insights. But it's only when those insights are combined in the right way, with enough time to combine in a meaningful way that a successful strategy can be bottled and used to inform planning. Please give it the time it deserves.

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