



Photo contributed

Matt Jones, bourbon specialist Beam Suntory-Canada, and Tish Marcus, brand ambassador for Canadian Club, pour drinks at the 2016 Victoria Whisky Festival consumer tasting. Marcus is presenting a Beam Canadian Club dinner for women only at the 2017 festival.

Popular festival highlights the art of whisky tasting

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Victoria News

Frank Hudson knows a thing or two when it comes to tasting whisky.

Being one of the organizers of the popular annual Victoria Whisky Festival, Hudson has tasted more than 100 whiskies from all over the globe — and he maintains they all taste different.

“When you’re tasting whisky, you’re going for the smell and what’s the whisky taste like with water, without water, and what’s the development of the whisky once you taste it and what’s the finish like?” said Hudson, who doesn’t have a favourite whisky.

“It really depends on the mood, it depends on what kind of a meal I’m having. It’s like wine. You have different favourites at different times.”

Now in its 12th year, the Victoria Whisky Festival is a popular event that often sells out the first few days tickets go on sale during the first week of November.

This year’s festival will include more than 250 whiskies showing a variety of styles and flavour profiles from more than 50 distilleries from Scotland, Ireland,

England, Canada, the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, India and France.

According to organizers, interest in whisky has grown since the festival was launched and the festival has now reached capacity, being recognized as one of the best in North America.

Canadian whiskies have also been gaining popularity at home and abroad, receiving the same acclaim from connoisseurs as those from Scotland, the U.S. and other countries.

This year, the B.C. craft distilling industry is set to shine with a number of events focused on growing the craft distilling industry close to home.

With about eight distilleries in B.C., including three in Victoria, the province’s micro-distilling industry is still very new, noted Hudson, making it an exciting time to watch the industry develop.

As for what makes a good whisky? Hudson said it really depends on the person tasting it.

“That’s the wonderful thing about being interested in whisky. There are so many different types you can try and whiskies are different things to different people,” said Hudson, noting distillers have really upped the

ante in their products over the past decade.

“There’s a wide range of whiskies with different tastes from all over the world and at this festival you get the opportunity to try many of them.”

The three-day volunteer-run event, which takes place Jan. 19 to 22 at the Hotel Grand Pacific, also includes master classes, consumer tastings and a grand tasting. It will also host the Seventh Annual Canadian Whisky Awards featuring internationally recognized whisky writer Lew Bryson as the keynote speaker. The awards celebrate the best in Canadian whisky from across the country, awarding medals in several categories as well as major awards.

While most events are sold out, tickets are available for the Canadian Whisky Awards by calling James Burrough at 250-380-4455.

Proceeds from the festival are donated to charitable organizations. So far around \$250,000 has been raised during the 12-year run of the festival.

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