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New Zealand distilleries' spirited show in Lonely Planet's Global Distillery Tour

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3 minutes to read

The New Zealand Whisky Company: Troy Trewin, Tom Holder and Greg Ramsey toast Kiwi whisky. Photo / Supplied

NZ Herald

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Publishers the *Lonely Planet* have just produced a guide to the world's best bars and distilleries, and they must have had a lot of fun writing it.

The *Lonely Planet* are known for advocating the best and most novel experiences to travellers through their guides. The worldly publishers have produced over 500 titles including a Mongolian language guide and Handbook to Honeymoons. But after you've finished hiking the sights of a new city, or pitched out of your white-water kayak and are just looking for a place to unwind the Lonely Planet's Global Distillery Tour could be the guide you're looking for.

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The award-winning Dunedin Distillery Double Wood Whiskey. Photo / Supplied

The Global Distillery Tour will be published this month with a range of itineraries around local spirits and regional cocktails.

Lonely Planet have travelled 33 countries to find the most exciting destinations for connoisseurs of whisky, gin and even mescal and tequila. Where were we when this job was advertised?

From the malts of the Scottish Highlands to mysterious production of pisco in Peru, the guide lists regional spirits along with food pairings and local attractions.

Kiwi distilleries are in good standing, with eight voted among the best liquor locations in the world.

Typical of a Kiwi enterprise, they are in truth both a national and an international bunch, with influences from around the world.

The top places for a tippie include **Puhoi Organic Distillery** – set up by a Ukrainian nuclear engineer whose polish vodka has the approval of Prince William – Nelson's **Liquid Alchemy**, founded by German coopers (barrel makers) , make sweet cherry liqueur.

Otago recognised as the heart of Kiwi whisky country - with **Cardrona Distillery** and Oamaru's **NZ Whisky Collection** earning a place on the list.

"It's a good time to be a distiller in New Zealand," said James Mackenzie, whose Oamaru collection produced the award-winning Dunedin DoubleWood whisky.

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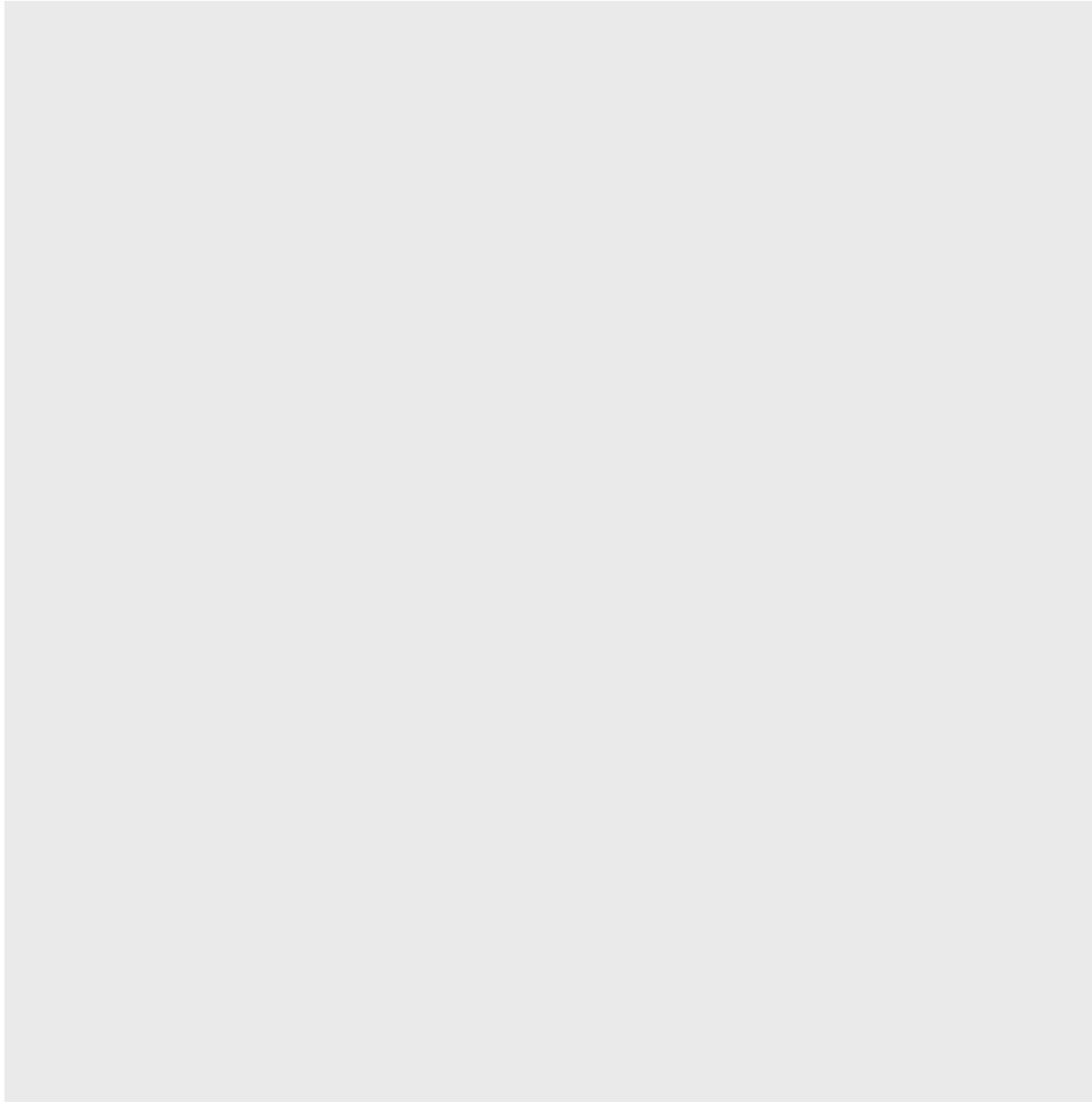
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"NZ distilling is still quite niche. People want to be artisans, to play around, spurred on by the craft brewing movement. It's a perfect storm, a convergence to reinvent an industry that had been missing for a long time."

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Lighthouse Gin: 'New Zealand's distillers are true artisans, making something special.' Photo / Supplied

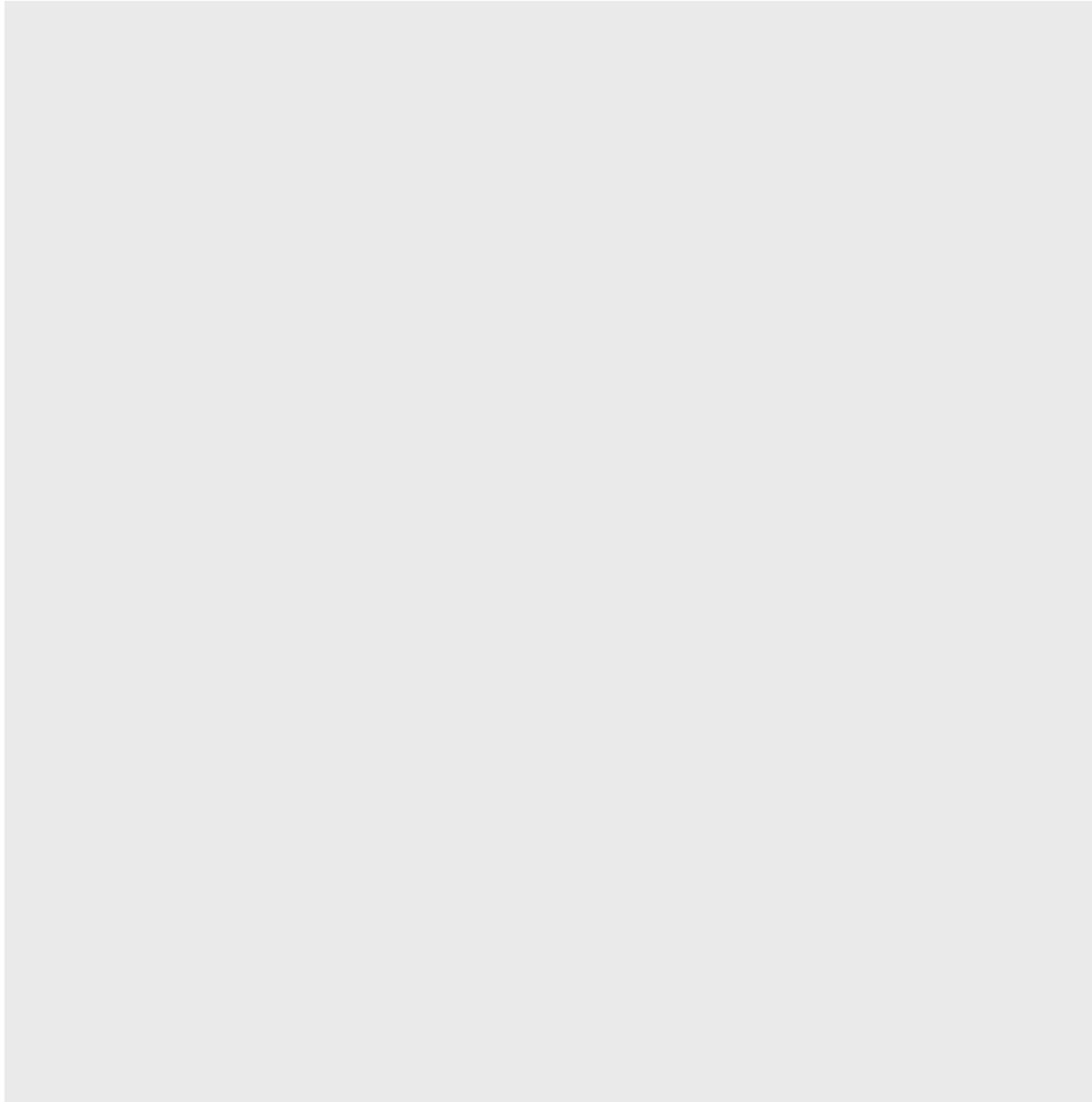
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Further south, it is the pure aquifers of Takaka that make it the spirits epicentre of New Zealand.

The South Island town at the end of Golden Bay has produced not one, but two of the top distilleries on the list. These are **Dancing Sands's** Manuka infused botanicals and the **Kiwi Spirit Distillery** - the source of New Zealand's own version of Tequila, dubbed 'TeKiwi'.

Among the top things to do paired with a spirits sampling are experiences that showcase Kiwi wildlife. In particular, a trip to Martinborough's **Lighthouse Gin** isn't complete without a drive to the nearby fur seal colony at the Cape Palliser tower from which it gets its name.

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Tasteful surrounds: The guide recommends a drive from Lighthouse Gin distillery to the nearby Cape Palliser.

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While commercial distilleries are tiny compared to the rest of the world, the guide recognises New Zealand's revolutionary decision to make hobby distillery 100% legal as the start of something special.

"The goal has never been world domination of the Pernod Ricard variety. New Zealand's distillers are true artisans, making something special for the educated minority," says Jaime Breitnauer, the *Lonely Planet* guide's contributor for New Zealand.

Lonely Planet's Global Distillery Tour is published this month, 264pp NZ\$32.99

The top 5 spirits of New Zealand

(According to the Lonely Planet)

- **Pink Gin**; Cardrona Distillery, Wanaka
- **Dunedin Double Wood Whisky**; Willowbank, Oamaru
- **Kiwi blue agave aka 'TeKiwi'**; Kiwi Spirits, Golden Bay
- **Barrel Aged Gin**; Dancing Sands, Golden Bay
- **Starka vodka**; Puhoi Organic Distillery, Auckland

Herald recommends

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