



THE ART OF *Blending Whiskey & Color*

Some combinations are fundamental: champagne and strawberries; Starsky and Hutch; peas and carrots. But some pairings are more obtuse, yet inherently natural. For Bryan Nolt, founder and CEO of Breckenridge Distillery, who creates art out of corn, rye and barley, the confluence of bourbon and art was inevitable.

After all, it takes the perfect blend of ingredients, pure Rocky Mountain water and time to create one of most the highly awarded craft bourbons in one of the highest distilleries on the planet. In 2018, Whisky Magazine awarded Breckenridge Distillery the Icons of Whisky award for Brand Innovator of the Year, exemplifying the creativity and innovation that is inherent in each bottle.

On July 30, 2019, Breckenridge Distillery embarked upon a unique collaboration: its inaugural Collectors Art Series, which illustrates the art of blending whiskey through the art of blending color. Denver-based muralist Thomas “Detour” Evans created a “whiskey barrel mural” on 10 Breckenridge Distillery barrels to illuminate a unique blend of these two crafts for both art and whiskey enthusiasts to enjoy.

“PROPER BLENDING IS AN ART, NOT EASILY LEARNED, AND SOMETHING I’M SINCERELY PASSIONATE ABOUT,”

BRYAN NOLT, FOUNDER & CEO OF BRECKENRIDGE DISTILLERY.

“We wanted to emphasize this connection with another type of art that people could identify with and hopefully pause for a second or two, connect the dots, and really enjoy the art in their dram. Smell and taste are just as powerful as vision, and we think focus helps you to intensify these subtle pleasures.”

Choosing Detour for this first collaboration was almost a foregone conclusion. The eye-catching artist, who is known for his bold, colorful portraits, created a vibrant scene on the barrels that blends the beauty of Breckenridge with his signature portraiture that is both relatable yet inspiring.

“My philosophy with creating art on various platforms is all about trying to compose a piece that lends itself to amplify that platform,” Detour said. “So, for the barrels, creating a composition that has large color blocks, but also relates to the actual subject matter—so, Breckenridge-in-the-mountains type of the thing—and then having a figure, which can give you more of an attachment to it. That is the concept I was going for when creating on this platform/canvas.”

The finished barrel mural was on display to the public at the Breckenridge Distillery through September. The 100% grain-to-bottle whiskey was then released for sale at select Colorado locations in October. Each bottle was adorned with a special label highlighting the collaboration, artwork and the passion behind the Breckenridge Distillery.

“I think the artistry of making and blending whiskey parallels the passion of artists like Detour and the splendor his works deliver,” Nolt said. “This collaboration is simply about evoking those emotions through graffiti and the artistry of whiskey.”

The Detour series is the first in the Breckenridge Distillery Barrel Art Collectors Series. The second iteration of this series, featuring work from another artist, will premier in 2020. For more information about the Barrel Art Collectors Series and Breckenridge Distillery, visit breckenridgdistillery.com.

Written by Katie Coakley



Photo credit: Jessie Unruh/Breckenridge Distillery.