

OUR HILLS
WHISKEY IS
HARD TO
PEAT



Distiller Sacha La Forgia with the award-winning Native Grain Whiskey which has been recognised on the world stage. Picture: Keryn Stevens

KATIE SPAIN

ADELAIDE Hills Distillery founder Sacha La Forgia is on a mission to redefine the identity of whiskey in Australia.

He just got one step closer, after winning two major awards in the World Whiskies Awards, including the gong for World's Best Grain Whiskey. It is the first time a whiskey made using Australian native grains has been recognised on the world stage.

Just one barrel (150 bottles) of the victorious Adelaide Hills Distillery 2020 Native Grain Weeping Grass Whiskey was made.

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At \$450 a bottle it's not cheap but that's the price of small batch history in the making. Weeping grass has grown in native in Australia for thousands of years. The plump grain from the east coast costs \$160 a kilogram and

when you factor in barrel ageing for two years (in an ex-cabernet franc oak barrel from Howard Vineyard) it's a costly process.

"Which is a big part of why no-one is making it," Mr La Forgia says. "Not many people are farming or harvesting weeping grass either."

The World Whiskies Awards, hosted annually by Whisky Magazine in London, are the premier global awards for the whisky industry. Mr La Forgia and his small team also won a gold medal in the Blended Malt Category for the yet to be released 78 Degrees Australian Whiskey.

TASTING NOTES

ADELAIDE HILLS DISTILLERY 2020 NATIVE GRAIN WHISKEY ADELAIDE HILLS

History, tradition and the future collide in Sacha La Forgia's latest triumph. All hail weeping grass, the native grain used as the base grain in this forward-thinking drop. The aromas are alluring. Warm cereal doused in honey, apricot kernels, a hint of toffee and a lick of caramel.

Dab a little behind the ears and it'll bring all the playmates to the yard. Delve deeper and there's more apricot, punchy ginger, spice and the life-affirming twang as it hits the palate, makes its way south and gently warms you from the inside out. Exquisite. \$450

- Katie Spain