



The Essential Scratch Sniff Guide to Becoming a Whiskey Know-It-All: Know Your Booze Before You Choose

Richard Betts , Crystal English Sacca , Wendy MacNaughton

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A clever distillation of America's favorite libation, by the *New York Times* best-selling authors of *The Essential Scratch & Sniff Guide to Becoming a Wine Expert*

Whiskey fever is sweeping the nation. Every day, craft distilleries are popping up in remote counties and urban centers, offering a wealth of great choices to consumers—and just as many puzzlements. Does the introduction of a simple “e” to go from whisky to whiskey mean anything? What’s the difference between Scotch and Rye? What’s Canadian whisky anyway? And what about the whiskeys of Scotland, Japan, and Ireland? Where's a humble Joe to start? In this witty kid-style book on an adult topic, Richard Betts boils down his know-how into twenty pages, cooling our “brown-sweat” anxieties and dividing whiskey into three simple categories: Grain, Wood, and Place. While most whiskey tomes are about as fun as a chemistry lesson, Betts makes the learning slide down easy, reassuring us that this exalted spirit is just distilled beer and, through a nasal romp, helping us figure out which kinds we love best. Humorous illustrations and scratch-and-sniff scents (vanilla, sandalwood, grass, and more) help would-be connoisseurs learn their personal preferences. Language label and Map to Your Desires included.

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From Reader Review The Essential Scratch Sniff Guide to Becoming a Whiskey Know-It-All: Know Your Booze Before You Choose for online ebook

James Turnbull says

Nice coffee table book. The scratch and sniff portion doesn't work all that great. Some had no smell at all. Just has a coolness about it. If you just want the knowledge, google it.

Lorraine says

Josh's mom got him this for Christmas. It's essentially a board book about whiskey with some scratch and sniff stickers in it (corn, cedar, raisins, vanilla, etc).

There's not much to it. There is a handy map/wheel diagram tucked in the last page that lists a bunch of different whiskeys and where they fall in terms of geographic region and taste profile. I also learned that Japan is making good whiskey and that they are aging it in barrels that smell like sandalwood and cedar which sounds divine.

Totally not worth the \$22 price listed on the back of the book.

David Cain says

This is a fun book that covers the basic topics that one should know in order to properly approach the world of whiskey. Connoisseurs will not learn a whole lot here, but it's certainly nice to give some thought to whiskey styles that aren't in one's regular rotation. Not all of the scratch and sniff worked for me (some odors were really just too faint), but the majority were easily identifiable and gave a more or less accurate impression of the constituent parts of different styles. This is a really short book, so some of the explanations gloss over the finer points, but if you're looking for a dissertation on the details of whiskey production then of course you would start elsewhere. Overall, this is a fun idea with good execution. It will introduce newbies to the wider world of whiskey and point them in the right direction the next time they're at the liquor store or bar.

Brian says

bring on some samples!

Michael Anderson says

A lightweight outline of whiskey (or whisky) making, ingredients, and types. Very short and entertaining. It's a board book, so there's limited information, but I learned a few things.

Scott says

Cute! Whisk(e)y at its simplest. Love the chart!

Natalie Pietro says

Am I the only person who picked up with book and tried to sniff the whiskey glass. When someone writes scratch & Sniff on the cover I expect the glass of whiskey to smell like whiskey. Don't tease me like that. The scratch and sniff is found periodically through out the book. Small clear circles that are hard to find. Mostly senses such as rye, malt, cinnamon, sandalwood, and peat just to name a few. Most didn't smell at all as others were common and to strong. Still a fun concept. I did like the fun artwork and quick paragraphs about the different country's spirt making traditions. Did you know the Japaniese make a killer whiskey. The pull out whiskey map at the end of the book was handy too but lead me to what I already knew was my whiskey of choice. This large board book will bring out the child in you. This book will not make you a whiskey expert. It will make you seem like you know a thing or two about whiskey and make you feel like a king when you sip your whiskey. Drink up my fellow friend.

PJ Wenzel says

Perfect for newbies to whiskey - includes a very helpful pull out chart in the back that is worth the price of admission.

Lwgallaway says

I loved. fun short book meant to be an introduction, not an expert's guide. The novelty is fun, and the drink wheel is probably going to be the must useful part.

Joanna says

fun!

Ralph Wark says

This is a fun little scratch and sniff book about the aromas that go into whisky making world wide. While it does go into the differences there's not much to it, except the "How do you like your whiskey?" map tucked

in the back. It helps you decide which whisky to get depending on your preferences.

Of course, you have to like whisky. A good gift for the scotch drinker in you life, which is exactly how I got it, for Christmas. Takes about 15 minutes to read.

Bill Marsano says

The Sniffs Don't Work But the Book Stinks

By Bill Marsano. This book is aimed at the sort of person who believes he can become a whiskey expert--as the author glibly promises--simply by reading a 10-page book that is 95 percent pictures and (this is what's called the beauty part) without taking the trouble to actually TASTE whiskey. If you are that sucker, this is your book. But it's hardly a book. It's really what's known in the trade as a "board book" because its pitifully few pages are pasted onto thick slabs of cardboard to make them suitable for children. If you think of "Goodnight, Moon," you've got the picture). Author Richard Betts says he is an MW, or Master of Wine, and his big idea, couched in gushing, cheerleader prose, is that if you smell the various grains whiskey is made from and decided which smells you like, you will then know which whiskey you'll like. Well, that's poppycock, but never mind: the scratch-sniff dots, of which there are a dozen scattered around the book, didn't actually give off much smell to me or to three friends who tried them. And there's a weird inconsistency: there are smell dots for corn, rye and barley, but not wheat, for example. Then there's a tendency to dumb-down to the point of actual error. Richard Betts MW says that single malts are made 100 percent malted barley, which is true, but critically forgets to say that each is made by a single distillery. THAT'S why they are called SINGLE malts. He notes that blended scotches contain other grains but entirely overlooks the category of Pure Malts (aka Vatted Malts), which are blends of single malts. In sum: the way to learn about whiskey is to taste it, preferably with friends, and to explore such far-better books as Fred Minnick's "Bourbon Curious" and Lew Bryson and David Wondrich's "Tasting Whiskey: An Insider's Guide." Both are worth reading, whereas Betts's wasn't worth writing.—The former wine & spirits editor of Hemispheres magazine, Bill Marsano posts fitfully to his blog, pouredwithpleasure.

Brad Dunn says

It's 20 pages, but incredibly fun. The illustrations are awesome.

Adam says

Very short but informative book on whisky. The scratch and sniff element is good :)

David says

If by "know-it-all" the author means a Cliff Clavin type, then yes, you'll be a whiskey know-it-all. I believe

though that the title is meant as hyperbole because marketing demands it. That's not to say that the book isn't educational, far from it. There's a great deal of entry level information here, and I certainly learned a few things, and I'm sure that with what I gained I could certainly fake the rest (For the record, I have never considered myself a whiskey know-it-all).

The scratch & sniff tabs were a neat idea, but half of them didn't work. I found the wheel of whisky chart in the back of the book to be more useful, showing where various brands and varieties fit and thus leading to suggestions of others to try.

3.5 stars rounded down to 3 because of the scratch & sniff failure.
