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Michael Collins was launched in 2006 in the USA by the late marketing guru Sidney Frank, of New York based Sidney Frank Importing. He and his minions are the very same folks that made Jagermeister an American college major and migrated Grey Goose in from France.

To bring you up to speed on this whiskey I would like to give you the Readers Digest version of how whiskey and civilization came about.

In the beginning, well actually around 10,000 BC or so, ancient man stopped hunting and gathering and running around like a wild man and began settling down to grow grains, get civilized and drive BMW's. Bread was the first product produced from those grains and a week later it was discovered that beer could be made from that unbaked bread dough as well as baked bread. Man had found purpose to his existence and woman was finally happy.

The discovery of beer is credited with the formation of cities. People settled in groups around the breweries because refrigeration, transportation and logistics hadn't been invented yet much less the wheel or the Segway and beer needed to be consumed before it went bad.

As everyone knows in order to distill whiskey you first have to make beer. Huh? Brewing and distilling both start with mashing which is the process by which the grains and water are heated which allows enzymes to break the down the starch into sugars creating a liquid called wort. At this point you can take that wort and brew it into beer or distill it into whiskey. Beer was preferred for thousands of years because it was ready in less than a week and just in time for that impending wild weekend party. Man did not evolve the patience to wait years for whiskey to mature until woman taught him how to be patient.

In 1174 the precursor of whiskey and Scotch aqua vitae (the water of life) was noted by King Henry II of England on a trip to Ireland. By the mid 1700's there were over 2,000 distilleries in Ireland and 16 bakeries. These people had their priorities straight. But after the great famine of 1845 the distilleries began disappearing and by 1887, very sadly, there were only 28 and today, more sadly, there are only 3 and Michael Collins is distilled and bottled in the Cooley distillery.

Michael Collins is a double distilled blend of malt Irish whiskey and grain Irish whiskey, aged 4 years in bourbon seasoned casks and bottled in Ireland.

It has an uncomplicated oaky nose with vanilla and citric notes accented by bright ethanol flourishes that settle down to semi-sweet vanilla highlights.

On the palate it is straight forward, pleasantly warm and clean with a subtle sweet/tart mouth feel and a clean smooth finish with a slight short lived fresh tingle on the tongue.

This is a very simple, uncomplicated, mildly sweet, straightforward down to earth whiskey. To me this is not a straight up sipping whiskey as it just can't hold my interest much past the second sip. It becomes even less interesting diluted with ice. HOWEVER, it makes an excellent mix and is the perfect whiskey to use in cocktails. It absolutely sings a beautiful harmony with ginger ale. Its sweetness and flavors match up with the tartness of cranberry juice deliciously. It cuts nicely through most fruity liqueurs and gives them a distinct and interesting whiskey edge. If it was less than \$20.00 per bottle it would be that much more interesting but at \$25.00 or so it's certainly got my attention.

By George Brozowski

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