

DIAGEO TO LAUNCH PREMIUM BLENDED IRISH WHISKEY ROE & CO

PLANS ANNOUNCED FOR EXCITING INVESTMENT IN WHISKEY DISTILLERY AT ST. JAMES'S GATE

Irish Whiskey is the fastest growing spirit in the world with global sales increasing by over 300%

Diageo is to launch a new premium Blended Irish Whiskey, Roe & Co, the company announced today. The move by Diageo into the premium Irish Whiskey category comes as the company announced plans for investment in a whiskey distillery in the once Power Station at St. James's Gate. The total project investment comes to €25 million (£18.6 million) over three years.

As seen in other spirit categories in recent years, Diageo identified a clear opportunity in Irish Whiskey to drive overall category growth via premiumisation. Responding to this, Roe & Co was born. The brand has been created to reflect modern, contemporary luxury, in everything from pack to liquid, and with a focus of making Irish Whiskey more prominent in Europe's booming cocktail culture. Roe & Co is made from the finest hand-selected stocks of Irish malt and grain whiskies and aged in bourbon casks. It has the signature smoothness of Irish Whiskey with remarkable depth of flavor - a luxuriously smooth blend, with a perfect harmony between the intense fruitiness of the malt and the mellow creaminess of the grain whiskies.

Roe & Co is named in honour of George Roe, the once world-famous whiskey maker who helped build the golden era of Irish Whiskey in the 19th century. His distillery, George Roe and Co extended over 17 acres on Thomas Street in Dublin and was once Ireland's largest distillery. As neighbours for hundreds of years George Roe and Co and Guinness were the two biggest names at the heart of Dublin's historic brewing and distilling quarter. Diageo will now build on this rich heritage with the creation of a new distillery by converting the historic former Guinness Power House on Thomas Street. The new St. James's Gate distillery, will be situated just a stones throw away from where the George Roe and Co distillery once stood and subject to planning approval will begin production in the first half of 2019.

Using her 30 years of experience, Diageo's Master Blender Caroline Martin and her team set about meticulously sourcing and selecting stocks of the very finest Irish whiskies. Having trialed over 100 prototype blends since December 2014, Caroline has created an extraordinary expression of Irish Whiskey. The high proportion of first-fill casks gives notes of creamy vanilla balanced with its hints of fruit and soft spice and a remarkable depth for such an elegant and refined whiskey. Roe & Co is non-chill filtered and bottled at 45% ABV. The first blend of Roe & Co will be available in key European cities from 1st March 2017 as part of Diageo's growing Reserve portfolio.

Speaking about the launch Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD said: “Irish Whiskey is experiencing a renaissance and is truly an Irish success story. It is seeing a return to the success it experienced in its golden era in the 19th Century and is now the fastest growing spirit drink in the world with global sales increasing by over 300% and record exports of over €400 million* in the last ten years. This commitment and investment by Diageo comes at an opportune time for the sector which is experiencing unprecedented global demand. €25 million investment in this project over 3 years will support the local economy, create jobs, and bring a welcome new addition to the City’s tourism offering. The Irish Whiskey market has a great story to tell and today’s announcement marks an exciting new chapter in its development”.

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovations, Mary Mitchell O’Connor TD said, “It is great to see Diageo continue to invest in and further enhance the historical Dublin 8 area to create a fantastic attraction for tourists and locals alike. The proposed distillery will play a major role in the overall regeneration of the Liberties through the repurposing of the St James’ Gate Power House.

“Irish produced whiskey has never been as popular, garnering international acclaim and recognition. Diageo’s decision to move into the premium Irish whiskey category and its plans to invest in a new distillery will further enhance Ireland’s reputation as one of the finest premium whiskey producers in the world”.

Commenting on the launch, Tanya Clarke, General Manager of Reserve Europe said: “This is a wonderful project for us at Diageo, highlighting the opportunity we see to develop the premium segment of Irish Whiskey and contribute to the category’s growth as it sees new investment and entrepreneurial interest. In crafting Roe & Co we explored the demands of today’s consumers for more premium drinking experiences and the desire of bartenders for an adaptable, flavourful whiskey that works in both traditional and new cocktails.”

Colin O’Brien Operations Director of Diageo said: “The planned distillery will provide employment in the coming years – both at construction and operation stages. It will complement what is already the country’s most popular tourism offering, The Guinness Storehouse. This investment further demonstrates Diageo’s commitment to the growing vibrancy of The Liberties, one of the City’s most dynamic districts and the home of Irish Whiskey during the original golden age of Irish distilling. We are excited that the planned distillery will help revive the proud tradition of distilling in the Liberties.”

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Roe & Co is made from finest hand-selected stocks of Irish malt and grain whiskies, aged in bourbon casks. Using her 30 years of experience, Master Blender Caroline Martin has created a versatile, premium whiskey. Roe & Co is a luxuriously smooth blend with a perfect harmony between the intense fruitiness of the malt and the mellow creaminess of the grain whiskies. The high proportion of first-fill casks gives notes of creamy vanilla balanced with its hints of fruit and soft spice and a remarkable depth for such an elegant and refined whiskey.

Roe & Co is non-chill filtered and bottled at a higher than usual ABV of 45%. Perfect in a cocktail, with a mixer or on its own Roe & Co will initially be available in the hottest bars around Europe.

*Irish Whiskey Association December 2016

In 2015 food and drink exports reached €10.9 billion, marking continued year on year growth. Irish Whiskey experienced double digit growth and record exports of €400 million. Global sales of Irish Whiskey have increased by over 300% in the last ten years and have been growing by double-digits since the mid-1990s.

TASTING NOTES

On the nose Roe & Co is creamy, delightfully fragrant and remarkably rounded with notes of soft spice and mellow spun sugar along with warm hints of woody vanilla. The quality and perfect balance of the blend is immediately apparent on the palate through its velvety texture and sweet flavours including spiced pears and vanilla. The finish is lingering and gentle, ending with a light creaminess. The sweet pear notes readily apparent in Roe & Co are a wonderfully apt tribute to the once-great Dublin whisky distillery of George Roe & Co. Among the remnants of George Roe's distillery are its old windmill tower, known as St. Patrick's, and a magnificent pear tree dating from 1850.



ABOUT DIAGEO

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands including Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B, Buchanan's and Windsor whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness. Diageo is a global company, and our products are sold in more than 180 countries around the world. The company is listed on both the London Stock Exchange (DGE) and the New York Stock Exchange (DEO). For more information about Diageo, our people, our brands, and performance, visit us at www.diageo.com. Visit Diageo's global responsible drinking resource, www.DRINKiQ.com, for information, initiatives, and ways to share best practice.

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