



## **TRAILBLAZING NEW LIGHT SHINES IN SCOTCH WHISKY AS PORT ELLEN DISTILLERY IS REBORN**

**DIAGEO'S ICONIC "GHOST" DISTILLERY RETURNS AFTER 40 YEARS, RE-  
ENVISIONED TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF WHISKY EXPERIMENTATION**

**PORT ELLEN, ISLAY, 12:00, 19th March 2024:** In a landmark moment for Scotch whisky, Port Ellen Distillery, on the world-famous whisky island of Islay, reopened today with a bold vision to be a trailblazing light for the future of whisky distillation.

Perhaps the most legendary of all the so-called "ghost" distilleries that closed in Scotland more than 40 years ago, the rebirth of Port Ellen has been eagerly anticipated across the global whisky community. Port Ellen represents the final chapter in the £185 million investment by parent company Diageo, which has also seen the reopening of the other famous "ghost" distillery Brora, as well as investment in the company's Scotch whisky visitor experiences.

Drawing on Port Ellen's extraordinary heritage as one of the most pioneering distilleries of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the new distillery has been designed from the ground up to push the boundaries of innovation, experimentation and sustainability.

The striking new distillery building features ultra-modern design with an unobstructed line of sight through the glass stillhouse to the stunning coastline of Islay, across the bay to Carraig Fhada lighthouse.

At the heart of the distillery are two pairs of copper stills. The first pair - The Phoenix Stills - are precise replicas of the original Port Ellen stills and will distil the classic smoky liquid that has made Port Ellen single malt one of the most highly sought after whiskies in the world. The second pair - The Experimental Stills - will take the art and science of whisky exploration to levels of precision never before seen in Scotch whisky distillation.

# PORT ELLEN

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ESTABLISHED 1825

The Experimental Stills are linked to a signature Ten Part Spirit Safe –a truly innovative piece of distilling equipment - that allows the Port Ellen whisky makers unprecedented opportunity for experimentation. While standard distillery spirit safes allow for three cuts of the spirit run – the head, the heart and the tails - the Port Ellen Ten Part Spirit Safe allows multiple cuts to be drawn from the heart of the run, accessing previously unexplored flavours and characters, and takes the whisky-making art to new levels of intricacy and complexity. The distillery has a dedicated on-site laboratory and a full-time laboratory technician to analyse and catalogue the new experimental whiskies that emerge.

In line with Diageo's commitment to be carbon neutral in its direct production business globally by 2030, Port Ellen will be carbon neutral from the start, with every part of the distillation process optimised so that water and heat are both recycled, and all energy produced by a renewable-biofuel boiler. For example, by choosing biofuel we have avoided vast amounts of carbon emissions, and after minimising the emissions very significantly, we work with reputable suppliers to offset the low levels of residual emissions using verified, high-quality carbon offsetting schemes.

**Ewan Andrew, Diageo President of Global Supply Chain & Procurement, and Chief Sustainability Officer**, officially announced the opening during a ceremony at the distillery.

He said: *"This is a landmark moment for Diageo and for Scotch Whisky. Port Ellen is rooted in the land and the people of Islay, yet it is a name that resonates around the world as a watchword for quality single malt Scotch whisky."*

*"Port Ellen has a proud heritage of leading innovation and experimentation and we have been true to that legacy in the reborn Port Ellen, creating a distillery grounded in tradition but prepared to be a trailblazing new light in the firmament of the Scotch whisky universe."*

**Ali McDonald, Master Distiller at Port Ellen** said of the return: *"It is an honour to take up this new position at the helm of an iconic distillery and build on Port Ellen's pioneering past. Port Ellen holds a very special place in the hearts of passionate whisky aficionados, and to see spirit flow off these stills once again is an incredible moment for the Islay community and wider whisky world. We are deeply committed to pushing the boundaries of Scotch through experimentation. I'm excited to see what we can now create."*

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**Aimée Morrison, Port Ellen Master Blender**, spoke of the future of the distillery and its whisky: *“Port Ellen will be defined as a distillery that will push boundaries, with our on-site laboratory giving us the opportunity to delve into scientific research, offering us a deeper look into this Islay malt. We will better understand how the nuanced flavours from cask-to-cask shine in different ways; with the rolling smoke weaving its way through the heart of Port Ellen. Collectively we will endeavour to maintain the undeniable quality of Port Ellen, create whiskies for the future and take the amazing opportunity to learn as much as we can about the enigma of smoke.”*

From today, Port Ellen Gemini, a new special release to celebrate the rebirth of the trailblazing Islay distillery, is available to purchase. Presented in spectacular crystal decanters, Port Ellen Gemini presents twin 44-Year-Old Scotch Whiskies, drawn from three exceptional 1978 European oak casks.

Port Ellen distillery will welcome the whisky community, connoisseurs, collectors and invited guests to experience the wonders of the new distillery. Available to book from June, the experiences range from a full day private immersion for connoisseurs, to shorter introductions to the production process. Port Ellen will also open its doors on the first Saturday of every month for anyone on Islay to visit and witness Port Ellen spirit be crafted once again.

The distillery brand home also features works by award winning artists, including multiple Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (of which Diageo is a long-term supporter) scholars Lucy May Schofield, Fung + Bedford, Eleanor Lakelin, and Harry Morgan, Daniel Brophy and Object studio.

**-ENDS-**

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## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About Port Ellen:**

Port Ellen distillery was established in 1825.

In 1836 management of the distillery was taken on by John Ramsay, who became a legendary figure on Islay and throughout the Scotch whisky industry for his pioneering approach.

Under Ramsay's guidance Port Ellen became an early single malt to be exported to the United States in 1865. He was also associated with experimenting in continuous distillation techniques at the distillery, experimenting with the use of early spirit safe technology and pioneering the bonded warehouse system, cementing Port Ellen's reputation for innovation. Ramsay also contributed significantly to the development of Islay, extending and improving the pier at Port Ellen for the benefit of the whole island.

Upon his death in 1892 ownership of the distillery passed to John's wife Lucy Ramsay, who was a pioneering woman in Scotch whisky, running the distillery until her death in 1906. The Ramsay Halls in Port Ellen are named in commemoration of John and his family.

In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the distillery became part of Distillers Company Ltd and closed in 1983 at the same time as many across Scotland because of a falling demand.

In 2017, Diageo announced plans to bring Port Ellen, and its fellow "ghost" distillery Brora, back into production. Brora was reawakened in 2021.

### **About Port Ellen Gemini:**

Port Ellen Gemini will be available in selected markets with a recommended retail selling price of £45,000 (inclusive of duties and taxes in the UK). Port Ellen Gemini Original has an ABV of 54.9% and Port Ellen Gemini Remnant has an ABV of 53.6%.

### **About Port Ellen Distillery Experiences**

#### **PORT ELLEN OPEN DAYS**

- Port Ellen will hold an open day every month to ensure that passionate followers from around the world will have a chance to see inside the re-envisioned distillery and witness Port Ellen spirit be crafted once again.
- This will be a chance to meet the team, see inside the still house and learn of the latest experiments that have taken place.
- Running from June 2024, dates will be released up to a year ahead, bookable online. This will be a complimentary experience.

## **PORT ELLEN REBORN**

- The Port Ellen Reborn experience is for those looking to learn more about the incredible production process at this cutting-edge distillery.
- New insights will be unearthed into the world of Scotch with guests having the opportunity to draw Port Ellen liquid direct from historic casks, experience a tasting in the warehouse as well as nosing experimental new make spirit, making it possible to glimpse the innovation at the distillery.
- A public tour accommodating up to twelve guests, it is a 90-minute experience priced at £200pp. Available to book online.

## **THE ATLAS OF SMOKE EXPERIENCE AT PORT ELLEN**

- The Atlas of Smoke is Port Ellen's mission to push the boundaries of experimentation in Scotch Whisky by investigating the mysterious flavours and dimensions of smoke. This experience offers Port Ellen devotees a next level immersion with a personalised guided tour by the experts on the ground.
- Guests will taste the stunning new Port Ellen Gemini twin whiskies, as well as draw direct from an historic cask, nose some of our experimental new make spirit and savour an additional dram.
- This private tour allows up to eight guests for a full day and is bookable only via the Diageo Private Client team which you can send an enquiry on via the website.

## **About Diageo**

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands across spirits and beer categories. These brands include Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B and Buchanan's whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness.

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