

Adelphi Distillery



Adelphi street today

Name:	Adelphi
Region:	Lowland
Founded:	1826
Status:	Closed 1902 – reopened 1993
Water source:	Loch Katrine
Equipment:	2 Wash stills, 2 Spirit stills
Production capacity:	500,000 gallons per year
Ownership:	Charles and David Gray > Messrs A. Walker and Co.

Founded in 1826, the Adelphi Distillery is now Scotland's most acclaimed independent bottler of single casks of rare malt whisky.

The Adelphi Distillery was built in 1826 by the Gray brothers, Charles and David, and used to stand at the north-west corner of the infamous Gorbals, between the Gorbals Cross and the Clyde. The site of the distillery was previously a two-acre orchard, long before Glasgow became an industrial heartland of the British Empire, and no doubt contributing to the city's moniker as the 'dear green place'.

The Gray family operated the distillery throughout its existence, but around 1880 its ownership was acquired by Messrs A. Walker and Co, who already owned two big distilleries in Liverpool and Limerick respectively. Walkers injected new capital and expanded the works to include a large Coffey still to make grain spirit. In 1886, the Coffey still and four pot stills were all in full production, with an annual output of 516,000 gallons. It had ten 16,000 gallon washbacks, with two more under construction. Three wash charges held 45,000 gallons in all, the wash stills 6,000 gallons each and the spirit stills 4,500 gallons each. It had six steam engines – the largest massive brute of 80 horse power – and six boilers ranging in size up to 28 by nine feet in diameter. The whole was dominated by huge circular chimney with a flared top.

Adelphi was one of the largest distilleries in Scotland at the time of Barnard's visit, producing in excess of 500,000 gallons (2.3m liters) per annum and was one of the few producing both malt and grain whisky on the same site. The distillery also had warehouses at Port Dundas and most of its malting was also done there, again emphasizing the importance of that area to Glasgow's distilling history.

Unlikely as it seems. Loch Katrine Adelphi was one of the first victims of Edwardian rationalization after the late-Victorian boom. It was bought by DCL in 1902 and between then and 1907 distilling ceased. Its history since then is vague, but the distillery buildings were not in fact demolished until 1968–70, with the chimney coming down in 1971. The bonded warehouses stayed in use for many years, though they too are now gone and indeed Inverkip Street itself is no more.

An 1895 map (NLS, OS large scale Scottish town plans, 1847–1895, VI.11.21) names Adelphi as Loch Katrine Distillery and it was licensed as Loch Katrine Adelphi in 1870. Adelphi Street is named on the map running along the bank of the Clyde just to the north of the distillery and this is now a public walkway. The name Loch Katrine perhaps came from this loch being the water source for producing whisky at the distillery, the pipeline to supply Glasgow having been opened in 1859. The distillery was bought by the Distillers Company Ltd in 1902 and was closed in 1907. The distillery buildings remained until they were demolished in the late 1960s and the final landmark, the chimney, came down in 1971. I have heard of one story about a major accident in 1906 when an additional building to accommodate two new washbacks, which Barnard had noted as under construction when he visited, collapsed and flooded the street with wash. This may have led to the decision to close the distillery.

In 1993, the great-grandson of Archibald Walker, Jamie, revived the Adelphi name as an independent bottler.