

Kilcholman Distillery



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Name:	Kilcholman (pronounced kil-HO-man)
Region:	Islay
Neighbors:	Burichladdich, Bowmore, Bunnahabhain, Caol Ila
Founded:	2005
Status:	Operating
Water source:	Allt Gleann Osamail burn
Equipment:	1 Wash still, 1 Spirit still
Production capacity:	120,000 liters per year
Ownership:	Anthony Wills

Kilchoman is the first distillery to be established on Islay in over 124 years. The distillery was built in 2005, with the first run of new spirit coming off the stills later that year. It is one of the smallest distilleries in Scotland with an annual production of approximately 120,000 liters of alcohol.

Kilchoman is one of only six distilleries to carry out traditional floor maltings, but the key difference at Kilchoman is that the barley is grown here on the farm, whereas other distilleries purchase barley from around the country.

Anthony Wills, the founder and managing director of the Kilchoman Distillery Co Ltd ran his own independent single cask bottling company for 8 years when he came up with the idea of building a farm distillery. The interest in malt whisky has been growing steadily since the early 1990's, and enthusiasts and connoisseurs have become more and more interested in purchasing limited edition releases from various distilleries – so why not the ultimate farm distillery – ‘taking whisky back to its roots’. Whisky distilling started on farms all over Scotland and, especially on the west coast, and it was no accident that Islay became famous for whisky production. Islay is very fertile and therefore growing barley was no problem, it had plenty of water and peat for drying the malt.

Islay was chosen as the location for the distillery because of its reputation worldwide for producing top quality malts, and also because Anthony knew the island well having married into a family that had owned an estate on the Island for 60 years.

Rockside Farm was chosen because of the ideal buildings available and because the farm grows the best malting barley on the island.

Raising the funds proved the most challenging aspect of the project and having raised £1million from private individuals, the local enterprise board and bank, a further £3.5million was required within 2 to 3 years of starting the project. We have been very fortunate that our shareholders have been very supportive and have dug deep to make sure the project became a success.

The interest and enthusiasm for the project has been received from people far and wide.

Trivia about Kilchoman

1) In the past many distilleries had charming stories about a distillery cat that would hunt for mice. Instead of employing the traditional distillery cat, Kilchoman went for a distillery pig – Lucy. Anthony Willis seems confident in Lucy's pest control abilities.

2) The visitor center at Kilchoman was already finished when most distillery equipment wasn't installed yet. It tells the story of farm distilling on Islay in the 18th and 19th century from its illicit beginnings to legislation. The shop sells a range of Kilchoman merchandise, including miniature bottles of Kilchoman as well as a range of fresh and smoked venison and beef from the Islay Fine Food Co. The café serves fabulous homemade soups...