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### When Leaves Turn Brown So Does the Booze: Three New Whiskeys for Autumn

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When the days grow shorter and the nights grow colder, when baseball gives way to football and the sweaters come out of mothballs, it can only mean one thing -- it's whiskey season again. Of course, there's nothing wrong with a snifter of Scotch or a perfect Manhattan on a sweltering July evening. But for me, autumn is whiskey weather. Time to put away the fruity pseudo-tinis and faux-jitos and get down to some serious drinking. This year, in addition to all the old favorites that have gotten us through many a previous autumn chill, there are three new whiskeys on the market that will cast a warm glow on your taste buds.

#### Whipper Snapper:

Already available is a weird and wonderful new concoction from Ransom Spirits, the Oregon-based distiller which brought us the mind-blowingly brilliant Old Tom gin last year. This year's baby, WhipperSnapper Oregon Whiskey, is... well, what is it, anyway? Is it a bourbon? A Scotch? Sort of and sort of. The two main components of WhipperSnapper are malted barley (the same stuff they make Scotch from, although this barley is from Oregon) and un-aged or "white dog" Kentucky corn whiskey (from whence comes bourbon). The resulting alchemy, about an 80/20 ratio of corn to barley, is then aged in barrels that have housed French pinot noir and American whiskey, as well as new unused barrels. The aging process is relatively short -- generally less than two years, hence the "Whipper Snapper" name -- and then various barrels are selected and combined for each bottle.

The end result is something akin to an incredibly vibrant young Scotch, while you also get the sweet and unrefined vibe of the white dog. At 84 proof, it goes down dangerously smooth neat or on the rocks. I suppose you could mix it with soda, but it's so damn good on its own that you needn't bother. Because it's not peaty, WhipperSnapper would make a great gateway drug for those timid souls who are scared off by the pungent aroma and powerful flavor of Islay single-malts. But it still makes for a damn fine libation even if you like the "hard stuff" like Lagavulin or Laphroaig.

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