

WHISKY:EDITION

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St. Kilian Handfilled (2025) ex Dry Gin Heimat Distillers

What am I, actually? You experience a similar existential crisis with St. Kilian Handfilled 2025 ex Dry Gin Heimat Distillers. This whisky, available exclusively as a hand-filled edition only at the distillery in Rüdenu, is the result of a daring experiment in which a Franconian single malt was matured in a former gin cask from the Swabian Heimat Distillers. What happens when whisky is transferred to a cask that previously contained Mediterranean botanicals, fresh apples and juniper? The answer is a wonderfully confusing identity crisis.

TYPE	COUNTRY	DISTILLERY	AGE
Single Malt	Germany	St. Kilian	NAS
ABV			
59.7% Vol.			

TASTING NOTES

NOSE

When you first bring the glass to your nose, something strange happens. Your reflex says "whisky", but your nose whispers "gin?!" The fruity juniper dominates so purely and unadulteratedly that you have to pause for a moment. Is there really whisky in the glass, or has someone accidentally poured in a bottle of Heimat Dry Gin? The oak hides bashfully in the background, as if apologising for its presence. Floral herbs dance across the olfactory stage like Mediterranean meadow grasses on a summer afternoon. Sage, thyme, perhaps a hint of lavender? Everything you would expect from a good gin is there, but what about the whisky? Well, it seems to be taking a break. On the second attempt, when you give your nose a second chance to sort itself out, a more grainy note comes through, almost like a genever, the Dutch predecessor of gin. But here too, the botanicals have long since taken command. The cask has not only brought its gin past with it, it has literally burned it into the distillate.

PALATE

The confusion continues on the palate, but with a milder, rounder character than the nose suggests. The fruity sweetness opens the door, followed by... surprise! ... primarily juniper again. But this time mild and round, embedded in a creamy texture that is actually reminiscent of whisky. Vanilla shimmers through like a shy promise of the original cask ageing, while rose water adds an almost perfumed note. This combination is peculiar, but not unpleasant. It's as if a gin is flirting with a whisky, both too polite to let the other take the lead. The 59.70% ABV is surprisingly well integrated, not aggressive alcohol, but a warming presence that holds the whole thing together. The sweetness is definitely present, but it is constantly counterbalanced by the botanical character of the former gin cask. You expect typical whisky aromas such as caramel, toffee or chocolate to follow, but instead herbs and juniper come through again. It's like trying to listen to classical music, but someone keeps playing jazz in between.

FINISH

Let's be honest, the finish is a little thin for a cask-strength whisky. One would wish for more length, more persistence. Instead, the dram fades relatively quickly, but not without one last statement: the juniper lingers, still, again and again. It is almost persistent, how this botanical character runs through all three phases. A slight dryness joins in, warming but without much complexity. The youth of the whisky is clearly noticeable here. It lacks the depth that a mature single malt would bring. The cask has completely transferred its gin character, but it has not given the whisky time to develop its own mature personality.

THOUGHTS

MARCEL

This whisky is a genuine adventure for anyone seeking an unconventional experience. The dominant gin botanicals deliver an exciting explosion of flavors that break with whisky tradition but make it all the more fun. For purists, it might be a shock; for the adventurous, a real hit!

SASCHA

A fascinating experiment with a clear dominance of gin botanicals, though this comes at the expense of the classic whisky structure. The balance between cask character and distillate remains uneven, leaving the overall impression somewhat underdeveloped. Despite the high alcohol strength, it lacks depth and lasting persistence.

RATINGS

MARCEL 80/100 Excellent	SASCHA 79/100 Very good	VALUE FOR MONEY 0/5 No rating
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