



S P E Y



## EXPERTS SAY SMALL STEPS ARE KEY TO WHISKY'S GREEN REVOLUTION

Small changes which can be made today could be just as crucial as radical change further down the line if the whisky industry is to meet tough environmental targets, according to experts.

The whisky industry has set the ambitious goal of achieving net zero by 2040, five years earlier than the Scottish government's net zero targets. But with Scotland's 148 whisky distilleries requiring large amounts of energy, totalling around 3.7 terawatt hours (TWh) of energy every year<sup>1</sup>, a huge challenge lies ahead. However, at the 'Building Better Whisky' event at the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival on Thursday 2nd May, a panel of experts representing everyone from maltsters to architects will discuss what can be done to improve sustainability practices in the industry to meet 2040 sustainability targets, and what this means for both business and consumers.

One of the expert speakers, principle renewable energy consultant at Locogen, Jack Byres said,

*"With technology moving so quickly there's a temptation to wait to see if something better is going to come along but just waiting is essentially deciding to do nothing. There are definitely things distilleries could do today. For example, if you're thinking of improving energy efficiency by going down a heat pump route, the core technology is not going to change at all. You might just get more efficient models, in which case, fine, you can upgrade it further down the line."*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sdi.co.uk/news/green-whisky-the-distilleries-turning-to-hydrogen-for-net-zero-in-scotland>



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It is said that it requires one litre of oil to produce one litre of whisky. Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the environmental impact of their purchases, and whisky is no exception.

Expert panellists including those who produce the malt, make the whisky, and build the distilleries, will take guests through the process of producing greener whisky. The event explores innovative ways that distillers can reduce the carbon footprint of their whisky through the farming of the barley, greener distilleries, and alternative energy sources, while also providing wider benefits to the communities around them.

Gareth Roberts, co-founder of the event organiser, sustainability specialists Organic Architects, commented;

*“Our hope is that the industry can feel reassured that drastic change isn’t always the way forward, but smaller more achievable changes can be the solution. With consumers being more aware of the environmental credentials of the products they buy, we need to understand how we can all make positive and lasting changes to be more eco conscious”.*

Another of the experts on the panel is Sales and Marketing Director of malting specialists Crisp Malt, Colin Johnston, who added,

*“We are currently analysing the first ever major survey of barley farms to see how different farming practices can reduce the carbon footprint of barley. By sharing best practice, the farmers we work with can make an immediate difference to the way they farm the grain for malting. This is just one example of the ways in which we can make changes swiftly, because we know more efficient farming methods are already employed at some farms.”*

The ‘Building Better Whisky’ panellists include: Gareth Roberts, co-founder of Organic Architects; Colin Johnston, sales & marketing director at Crisp Malt; Graham Taylor, founder & managing director at Crafty Distillery; Jack Byres, principal renewable energy consultant at Locogen; and Matthew Pauley, an assistant professor in distilling at Heriot Watt. Each brings unique expertise in sustainable design, malting, craft spirits, and brewing science respectively.

Hosted by historic Innes House, the event is open to the public, where guests will also get the chance to taste whisky produced using the latest green technology in Innes House’s brand new whisky bar. Tickets for the event on Thursday 2nd May can be purchased on the Spirit of Speyside website; <https://tickets.spiritofspeyside.com/sales/events/2024-festival/building-better-whisky>

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Organic Architects was established in 2009. Based in Helensburgh on the west coast the company is led by a team which includes former National Trust conservation architect Andrea Wise, architect and eco-distilling specialist Gareth Roberts, as well as distillery construction specialist Bari Reid who is based on the Isle of Mull. Organic Architects was amongst the first architects to design a number of the new wave of craft whisky distilleries projects in the UK and internationally. They have become leading experts in environmentally friendly distilling and integrating complex process engineering with new and refurbished buildings.