

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The story of two cousins, friends, and colleagues that have forged a new path in the world of whiskey

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Over the years cousins Anna Axster and Wendelin von Schroder developed a taste for whiskey through their combined travels and family gatherings, which formed the inspiration for them to craft their own spirit. Striving for high-quality liquid, while always being approachable, the whiskey and brand embodies the laid-back California lifestyle where the brand is based. Lodestar Whiskey was born out of the universal truth that special moments are always better when shared.

Here, it's time to find out more about the new brand before its official launch this fall, in discussion with the two co-founders.

American Whiskey (AW):
Firstly, how did you come up with the concept of Lodestar Whiskey?

Lodestar Whiskey

(LW): As cousins, friends, and colleagues, we spent over a decade working together in music and film. Having acquired a taste for whiskey

backstage and in countless venues, bars, and restaurants across the country, we started really understanding what flavor notes we liked. We also noticed that we, as female millennial consumers, did not feel very represented in what was out there. We had long wanted to create a whiskey that wholly represented us, and when the pandemic hit and everything in entertainment came to a screeching halt, we realized there was no better time.

What we loved most about our work in entertainment was bringing people together to connect over shared experiences. We developed a flavor profile we loved and we feel is approachable, put it in a bottle, and set out to create a brand that invites everyone to the party.

AW: What has led you to this point in your careers?

LW: Like so many others, the pandemic put a lot of things into perspective for us. Many unexpected things happened and as natural connectors we were greatly affected by the reality of not being able to mingle and come together anymore. The perspective we gained was that it was time to pursue what we were so passionate about – to create a whiskey that is inclusive, high quality, accessible, and to bring people together around that. That's where the name came from. A lodestar is a star you navigate by or a person or principle that inspires you. Inclusivity, community, and joy are our lodestars, and it was fitting to have this be the name of our liquid and brand. We like to think that when life gave us lemons, we made whiskey. >>





OPENING PAGES: The Lodestar team
THIS PAGE: Sharing the joy of whiskey

AW: Lodestar has been supported by Diageo's pre-accelerator program. How did you get involved with it?

LW: We learned about Distill Ventures, Diageo's drinks accelerator, from another female founder and we applied for their pre-accelerator program in February 2023. We were excited to be accepted into the program and officially started in July.

AW: What has that involvement meant for your brand?

LW: The funding from Diageo makes it possible for us to be able to put some of our plans into action so we can prove our concept. The team at Distill Ventures has been very supportive in everything from marketing strategy to supply chain questions and much more in between. The pre-accelerator program is specifically for underrepresented founders, and it's been really great getting support from a team that is aware and understanding of the specific challenges we face.

AW: How would you describe your spirit?

LW: Lodestar Whiskey is a blend of straight high-rye bourbon and American single malt whiskey. Caramel, vanilla, and citrus flavors dominate the forward notes,

with baking spice and nutmeg adding warmth and complexity, and the single malt providing that long, smooth finish.

Versatility and approachability were important to us when we created the flavor profile and Lodestar can be enjoyed neat, on the rocks (at 90 proof it does not water down too quickly), and it's also delicious in a cocktail. We created a spirit that can satisfy the palates of many – both seasoned whiskey drinkers who love a good bourbon, as well as consumers who are new to the category.

AW: Following on from that, could you share your process of creation?

LW: Over a long time, we discovered and honed in on what we love in a whiskey. Specific flavors, as well as viscosity, and a versatile serve strategy were important to us from the beginning. We set out to learn about the distilling process and visited many distilleries in order to educate ourselves. Through that process we realized that blending would be the path to achieving the flavor profile we had in mind – even potentially blending different styles of American whiskey. Once we found the right distilling partner, we worked with them on the components – really the right barrels of bourbon and American single malt – and we fine-tuned the blend. We're very happy with

it and can't wait to finally share it with people.

AW: What are your plans moving forward, following on from the launch?

LW: After our initial launch in California, which we have called home for many years, we are looking forward to slowly expanding to other markets in the US and reaching existing and new whiskey lovers with a spirit they love to drink, share with their friends, and bring to a party. We don't want to rush anything and are keen on an organic approach to growing the brand.

AW: What do you hope to achieve with the creation of this spirit?

LW: We hope to invite more people into the whiskey space through the approachability of our liquid and brand. We also hope to build community around the joy of coming together and sharing in a delicious drink, be it around a dinner table, in your local bar or restaurant, or on a weekend away with best friends. We want to bring people together in an inclusive and joyful way and we believe Lodestar can be enjoyed by everyone and embodies the laid-back lifestyle of our California base and the universal truth that life's special moments are always better when shared. ■