



Riannon Walsh

President, CelticMalts, Inc & The Well Aged Whiskey Company (1995-present)
Founder & Master Blender, Brandywine Branch Distillers

As President of Cloonaughill Celtic Malts, Inc. and Cloonaughill Distillers Ltd./ Ireland, with a background ranging from nosing to production, Ms. Walsh has been a consultant and partner in the startup of several craft distilleries and independent bottlers of single malt whiskies and fine spirits in the US and British Isles. Her expertise as a 'nose' and Master Blender has resulted in independent bottlers of a range of single malts turning to Riannon for cask selection and blending consultation. As the bourbon trend in the USA escalates, she has turned her expertise and nose toward the bottling of well aged and handcrafted bourbon and rye whiskies.

Riannon's work in the industry over the past 25 years includes hands on experience in small batch pot still whisky production in both U.S. based and Scottish distilleries. Her appearance at private tastings and varied whisky events draws a national and international crowd of connoisseurs and novices who thoroughly appreciate her unique style which is a far cry from the tradition 'kilt and haggis' approach to experiencing single malts. Her ability to impart a complex and useful knowledge base on the production, tasting and marketing of dark spirits has resulted in numerous training contracts for various brands, small and large. Her ability to educate and entertain is not limited to a knowledge of single malts but expands as well to bourbons,, rye, blended whiskey and craft small batch gins.

In 2001 Ms. Walsh was written up by *Entrepreneur Magazine* as well as prominently featured as one of the world's 'Women to Watch in Whisky' in Britain's Whisky Magazine. In 2000 Riannon was asked to consult with the archaeologists at George Washington's Mount Vernon estate in the uncovering and mapping of one of America's earliest functioning distilleries. In 2003 she was approached by the producers of the History Channel's Modern Marvels television series to help develop and consult and to be interviewed for the 'Distilleries' program which to date is Modern Marvels most rerun show in their extensive series. Much of the show was filmed on location at the Whiskies of the World Expo in San Francisco which was founded and run for 11 years by Ms. Walsh and was North America's largest consumer oriented spirits tasting event for single malts, small batch bourbons and craft spirits at the time of it's sale in 2010.

Over the years, many publications including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Tycoon Magazine*, *London Times*, *Imbibe* and *Epicurean* have interviewed Ms. Walsh and written articles about her work as a Master Blender and her life in the whisky world. She has been an invited guest many times on radio & TV programs ranging from NPR programs to Wine TV.

Riannon consults and lectures on the history, development and production of whiskies. In the past she has lectured at the Smithsonian Institute, the New York Historical Society and the New York Irish Historical Society. With a strong focus on positioning single malts in the U.S. market, she provided strategic marketing consultation to producers of single malts and independent bottlers and was director of the CelticMalts Marketing Consortium from its inception in 2001 until its sale in 2009.

Ms. Walsh's independent stance in the spirit business as well as her nontraditional marketing approach have brought her into a highly visible position in this extremely competitive industry. She has written numerous articles about high end spirits and the unique personalities behind them for a selection of lifestyle publications.

Ms. Walsh is the founder and organizer of the hugely popular *Whiskies of the World Expo*, held annually since 1999 in San Francisco. As one of North America's largest consumer whisky events, this celebration hosted over 4000 consumers, 300 plus limited edition and high end whiskies and an internationally renowned speakers forum annually, among numerous other features during Ms. Walsh tenure as owner/organizer. The Expos received overwhelming response from all segments of the spirits and wine industries and discerning consumers of superior quality spirits. Riannon's special focus with the Expos was to educate the consumer as well as to support independent bottlers, micro distillers and craft spirit producers worldwide. (Note: Riannon sold the WoW Expo in 2010 and it continues under new ownership)

Riannon is the author of *Whisky Dreams: Having Your Dram & Eating It Too*. This book includes the utilization of single malt whiskies and craft distilled ryes and bourbons in fine cookery as well as chapters on whisky education and several vignettes that take the reader deeply and personally into the working world of Celtic distilleries. Riannon's whisky related articles have also appeared in such publications as *Whisky Magazine*, *Epicurean*, *Stratos* and *Patterson's California Beverage Journal* (now Tasting Panel Magazine). Additionally, she was the Publisher of *The Celtic Spirit Journal*, a widely read on-line publication during its lifetime directed toward consumer. The Journal is well known in the whisky world for its unusual and unique educational articles and its non commercial, independent status.

In his latest book, *Whisky; The Definitive Guide*, the world's best known whisky writer, Michael Jackson, honored Riannon with a rare acknowledgment in his introduction naming her as one of the most significant world whisky ambassadors. She is also included in the recently (2012) released *Women In Whisky* by Fred Minnick who interviewed her extensively for an intimate look at the whisky industry throughout his research gathering for the upcoming book.

Another of Riannon's impacts on the distilled spirits world comes in the form of the patented *CelticMalts™ Spirits Glass* which she designed in 2005. This uniquely designed accessory concentrates aromas and enhances the flavors and experience of all fine distilled spirits. It is a hand-blown yet quite affordable glass and available worldwide. It came onto the market in 2006 to rave reviews. In 2014 Riannon was contracted by Qualia Glass of NYC to design another 4 spirits glasses (2 of which are specifically for gin) for a new line of bespoke glassware marketed through her name recognition in the industry.

Over the past 25 years Ms. Walsh has been elemental in the startup and growth of several successful independent bottling companies and craft distilleries. She was also invited to be a founding investor in Compass Box Whisky, a craft blender with worldwide distribution and winner of numerous awards.

As founding partner and master blender for Brandywine Branch Distillers, Ms. Walsh is responsible for the creation, production and brand build of The Revivalist Gin portfolio.

In May of 2017 Ms. Walsh began development of a new venture, The Well Aged Whiskey Company, which will launch in early fall 2017 and will continue her pursuit of excellent spirits, resulting from years of experience, presented to the world in a most creative and forward thinking package!

Contact Information for speaking engagements; private tastings; consultation services for distillery and brand start ups and growth; independent bottling of fine whisk(e)ys; contract bottling and private cask ownership:

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