

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

CHARBAY Whiskey Release II

Tall, sleek, numbered, and wearing a sexy gold medallion inscribed with **CHARBAY** California around its neck, [CHARBAY Whiskey Release II](#) is a limited edition for dedicated whiskey connoisseurs from [CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery](#). Flavored with hops, CHARBAY Whiskey Release II is an exceptional winner that stands out when you want to celebrate life at its finest.



Just reading the front label on the bottle of CHARBAY Hop Flavored Whiskey that bears the signature of Miles Karakasevic is enough to whet the palate and start the imagination dreaming. The bottle states "Release II, Barrels 3-7, Copper Alambic Charentais Pot Stilled, Bottle No. (our bottle was number 557 out of 1495 bottles), Distilled and Bottled by Miles & Marko Karakasevic, 12th and 13th generation Artisan Distillers," and reading the back label we learned even more. When was the last time that you learned that much information about a spirit from its label?

It was not surprising then to learn that CHARBAY is family owned and operated; Miles Karakasevic and his wife Susan started the company in 1983 as a continuation of Miles' family history. Today, it remains a small company of 8 passionate people, with Miles and his son, Marko, the creative talent behind CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery, whose family has been making spirits since 1751. To say that the family is ardent about their products is an understatement; having a conversation with Marko, a 13th generation distiller is hugely educational, and greatly enjoyable. While other children were out riding bicycles, at 10 years of age, Marko was helping his father Miles, a Master Distiller, and learning the art of the craft. Apprenticing with his father with family history, pride, and tradition at the forefront, along with an imaginative approach, has been a driving force in the success of CHARBAY.



Speaking with Marko, he stated "across the world whiskey is made from corn, wheat, rye, and barley, and is malted and fermented differently, so in 1999 when we were thinking about creating a whiskey, the amazing microbreweries of Northern California came to mind. If whiskey is made from distilled beer, which it is, I thought that it was time to ramp it up, and why not make it from really good beer that I like to drink. We chose Pilsner, hops and all, and distilled two-row barley beer with hops. It came out completely different than anything else that I had ever tasted in the world of whiskey. What we learned from making the first batch of whiskey in 1999 is that there is room in the world of whiskey to create your own style. I did not want to make sour mash or scotch style whisky, which is not my style. At CHARBAY, we are doing things for ourselves, making products that we want to drink. Our whiskey has a fruity, floral, spiciness to it that no other whiskey has as we use finished, bottled pilsner beer as a base. During distillation, you concentrate flavors, sometimes 20 to 1 reduction, so we use the best possible ingredients to start."



CHARBAY Whiskey Release II is a single malt made with 100% European Two-Row Barley grown and malted in British Columbia, with choice hops (Nugget, California, and Eroica) added just before distillation to add floral and spice notes, and unlike Scotch whisky, does not use peat. Another distinction is that CHARBAY Whiskey is double distilled in an Alambic Charentais Pot Still, whereas the vast majority of whiskey is made in column stills, they use a classical 7-fraction distillation method for purity and smoothness, and they are the first to create a single malt whiskey distilled from Pilsner beer.

From 20,000 gallons of Pilsner they only produce 1,000 gallons of whiskey that is first aged for six years in custom-made new American white oak barrels charred to #3 Gator Skin, followed by a select five barrels that receive additional aging in stainless steel for three years resulting in a smooth and flavorful whiskey that is 55% ABV.

Armed with the CHARBAY history as our guide, we let our senses run wild as we opened the bottle and poured a wee dram, or perhaps a teensy bit more, into two tasting glasses to experience the whiskey. The first thing that we noticed was the rich amber color, which is visually stunning. We gently swirled our glasses to let the aromas waft in the air eliciting a fragrant nose with floral, sweet, and fruity notes. Its perfume was captivating, and when tasted, its complex flavors really evolved on the palate as the whiskey opened up in the glass and blossomed to create a memorable experience with spicy notes and a delectably long velvety finish. As the evening progressed, notes of honey, butterscotch, and vanilla made their appearance, and the enticing exotic spiciness continued until the last drop was gone in our glasses.

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This is a whiskey that must be savored slowly and enjoyed at the end of a wonderful meal or to celebrate special moments in our lives, where you can taste the passion, love, and the tradition that went into its making. With a limited production of only 120 cases, there is an urgency to purchase this incredible spirit before it is gone. With a luxury price tag of around \$325, this is a gift for whiskey collectors, and may be just a little too good to share except with true aficionados.

Although we would certainly not dream of making cocktails with this exceptional spirit, it did not hinder us when it came to thinking along culinary lines. What could be better than a perfectly grilled steak to enjoy with CHARBAY Whiskey Release II? So, we thought why not add a hint of whiskey to marinate the steak and then finish it with a small dollop of whiskey butter; the result was a meat lovers' dream.



Steak with Charbay Whiskey Release II

To create your own dream, you will need the following:

Ingredients for 1 portion:

1

Steak, your preference as to cut

1

Tablespoon

CHARBAY Whiskey Release II

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1

Tablespoon

Unsalted butter

1

Teaspoon

CHARBAY Whiskey Release II

Method: Drizzle the steak with 1-tablespoon of the whiskey, as well as salt and black pepper, and marinate for a few hours in the refrigerator. Remove from the refrigerator and set aside for 20 minutes. Mix 1-tablespoon softened butter with 1-teaspoon Whiskey and set aside. Grill until the steak to your preference

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of doneness, and finish with the whiskey butter.

Serving suggestion: Serve the grilled steak with onion rings, Gorgonzola mashed potatoes, and asparagus.

Located in Northern California in Napa Valley in St. Helena, CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery is open for tours by appointment Tuesday through Saturday, so if you are planning a trip to Napa Valley, be sure to call them for a tour where you will be warmly greeted by Sunny, the family's dog.

Until you can personally visit CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery, for additional information on where you can purchase CHARBAY Whiskey as well as their complete product line, please contact them or visit the website, www.CHARBAY.com.



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