



Taconic Distillery - Classic All American Bourbon Whiskey, Stanfordville, NY

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By Gene Kizhnerman

Taconic Distillery's home is the historic Hudson Valley which is filled with National Historic Landmarks and bountiful farms. It is also home to the first wine-producing region in the U.S. and a world-class culinary institute. Four hundred years of history and hospitality make the region an ideal location for production of our own native spirit. We had the opportunity to speak to the Founder of the Distillery, Paul J. Coughlin III.

Paul, tell us about yourself. How did you find yourself immersed in the world of whiskey?

PC: I enjoyed a successful 27-year career in the investment business and was searching for a new and exciting venture as I approached mid-life. Coincidentally, my family and I had purchased land in the Hudson Valley of New York and were looking for a way to farm or make use of the land. After considering all the options, we decided that growing grains and distilling them into spirits made the most sense. We sampled a bunch of bourbons, settled on a mash bill that we liked and jumped in from there!

What was your vision for Taconic Distillery? Was it a hobby or a business venture, maybe it was a mix of both?

PC: What started as a hobby quickly grew into a serious business venture. I have never worked so hard, but at the same time have had so much fun running a business.

Tell us about what whiskey you currently produce. Do you source the ingredients locally, if so, how important is it?

PC: All of our whiskies are produced from local New York grains. It is a feature that is important to us as New Yorkers and important to the local region where we operate.

How do you stand out with your whiskey in the current saturated niche whiskey market?

PC: We have a delicious product and great packaging.

How important is packaging in consumers' decision making? What has led you to the design you currently have?

PC: Packaging is critically important. You can have the best tasting spirit, but if the packaging doesn't appeal no one will pick it up and try it. The dog on our label (his name is Copper) helps our spirits stand out on store shelves. We were fortunate to have a graphic designer create a label we love.

What are the biggest challenges you're facing at the minute in getting your message out?

PC: Of course, as with any spirits business, distribution is key. We have been partnering with our distributors to get out on the road and spread the word. We do as many tastings and events as we can manage our growing markets.

Does the location and the climate affect the maturation process of the whiskey?

PC: Absolutely. Our location is subject to large swings in temperature throughout the year. These fluctuations contribute to the ageing process as the liquid expands and contracts in the barrels. To accelerate the temperature swings, we use 40ft shipping containers.

Paul, let's get personal, what was your first whiskey experience. Do you remember your first dram.

PC: I remember my parents drinking whiskey sours on special occasions when I was a child.

Describe your whiskey in 3 words.

PC: Pretty damn good!

Has anything shocked you in the world of whiskey over the years?

PC: The fact that whiskey appeals to such a broad spectrum of drinkers, whether they be young, old, men, women, urban, or rural has been pleasantly surprising to me.

What does the future for your distillery look like?

PC: Lots and lots of growth. Expansion into more states. We went from operating out of a 600 square foot barn to our new facility, which is 4,500 square feet and already becoming too small.