

The Copeland Distillery

Background

Located 20 minutes from Belfast and just yards away from the historic harbour in Donaghadee, County Down overlooking the Copeland Islands, lies the Copeland Distillery. Producing a range of Irish gins, rums and whiskey, Copeland is one of Ireland's newest and most innovative distilleries.

Established in 2016 by Gareth Irvine using funds raised via crowdfunding, Copeland moved into its current home in 2019, revitalising the former cinema and Ards bottling Company site which lay unoccupied for more than 20 years.

The 6500 sq. ft. distillery, built at a cost of £1m, is now home to their award -winning Classic Irish and Navy Strength gins, innovative cask-aged rums and a new range of malt and pot-still whiskey which are currently maturing prior to release from 2024. Visitors to the distillery can take advantage of distillery tours, learning more about the Copeland range of spirits or just sit and watch how the spirits are made from the comfort of the distillery coffee shop.

Everything Copeland do is based on four core values: Taste, Innovation, Heritage and Community. The business has invested in three copper stills, two whiskey and one gin still, and grown the distillery team to 15 staff in just under 3 years. And wherever possible, they source local botanicals and ingredients to reflect our locality and commitment to quality including Sea Pink Maritima which is foraged from the Copeland Islands.

Their range of spirits have been created to reflect the history of the local area – rums to commemorate the contrabandists and bootleggers from times gone by and Irish whiskeys to celebrate the history of Donaghadee harbour and distilleries of old. But key to them all are flavours which stand out from the crowd. From cask-aged rums and gin, trophy-winning Classic Irish gin, juniper-prominent fruit distilled gins or their new Merchants' Quay blended whiskey, Copeland's focus is on flavour which surprises and delights.

Copeland gin portfolio includes their Classic Irish gin, which won the Best Contemporary Gin Trophy, and an Outstanding Gold medal at the International Wine & Spirit Competition in 2022, is now the house gin pour in numerous bars and hotels across the island of Ireland. And their Jones 1778 Navy strength gin, which is aged for over 5 months in a mixture of American bourbon and Oloroso sherry casks, was the winner of a Masters award at The Gin Masters 2021, the World's most highly regarded spirits blind tasting competition.

In late 2020, Copeland was one of the first distilleries in Ireland to develop and launch a new range of rum, to celebrate the history of smuggling and contrabandists of the Copeland Islands. Marrying a blend of heavy rum from Barbados with rum produced in the distillery, and aged in a mixture of Kentucky bourbon and Pinot Noir red wine casks, the distillery now produce a range of rums including their award-winning Smugglers' Reserve (40% abv) and Overproof rum (57% abv).

The distillery has also been distilling malt and pot still whiskeys since mid-2019, maturing them in a range of different casks which are due to be released from 2024 onwards. And while they wait for them to mature over the next 3-4 years, the business launched a new blended whiskey called Merchants' Quay in 2021 – an unique blend of three different whiskeys, matured in four different casks, to give a smooth rich Irish whiskey with a delicious sherry finish.

Over the last 3 years the business has grown to sales of over 150,000 bottles per year and has successfully entered a number of new export markets. In the USA, Copeland has already secured distribution across 10

states, with a further 5-6 states due to come on in Q2 2023, and supplies its spirits range to distribution partners in Canada, Sweden and Australia. With additional export markets targeted for 2023, the business is looking to grow to over 250,000 bottles p.a. by 2024.

In June 2024, The Copeland Distillery released a 5-year-old Single Grain Irish whiskey – the second permanent addition to its Merchants’ Quay blended Irish whiskey range. Aged in single-use American Bourbon barrels, and finished in Muscatel and Pedro Ximenez wine casks, the 5-year-old whiskey has been carefully curated by the distillery team in the harbour town of Donaghadee, Co. Down.

Product Range

Copeland’s Flagship Classic Style Irish Gin

Copeland Raspberry & Mint Gin

Copeland Rhuberry Gin

Copeland ‘Jones Navy Strength’ Gin

Copeland 'Merchant's Quay' Whiskey

Copeland Smugglers Rum

Copeland 5-year-old Single Grain Irish whiskey

Customers

Over 200 independent on & off-Trade accounts throughout Northern Ireland with a foothold also being made in the Republic of Ireland predominantly in the Dublin area.

Tesco NI

M&S NI

Sainsburys NI

Lidl

Musgrave Group

Aldi RoI

The Celtic Whiskey Shop, Dublin

GB

Peninsula Food and Drink, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Estonia

USA

Japan

Awards held

- UK Packaging Awards 2021: Label of the Year for 'Smugglers’ Reserve Rum products.
- International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) 2021: Silvers for Blended Irish Whiskey and Irish Gin and Jones Cask Finished Gin and Bronze for Smuggler’s Reserve Rum

- International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) 2020: Gold for 1778 Cash Finished Navy Strength Gin & Bronze for Copeland Gin
- Belfast Telegraph Business Awards 2018: Emerging Business / Start-Up Award

Contact this supplier

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Image Gallery

Pic 1 range in boxes
 Pic 2 range in boxes
 Distillery 1 Copeland Whiskey
 Distillery 2
 Pic 2 Coastal Spirit
 Whiskey range
 range in boxes