



[Home](#) [Burgers \(A Hamburger Today\)](#) [Pizza \(Slice\)](#) [Drinks](#) [Sweets](#)

Drinks

[Choose a Drink](#) ▾ [Where to Drink](#) ▾ [Recipes](#) [Techniques/How-Tos](#) [Talk](#)

Behind the Scenes at Bully Boy Distillery

Posted by [Jessica Leibowitz](#), September 23, 2011 at 11:00 AM



[▶ SLIDESHOW: Behind the Scenes at Bully Boy Distillery](#)

[Photographs: Jessica Leibowitz]

Although Bully Boy Distillery's official unveiling to the Boston public was just a month ago, the brand of spirits sure is burgeoning. Will and Dave Willis (yep, they're brothers) work in a small, shiny warehouse in the Newmarket district of Roxbury, Massachusetts, doing everything from selecting the organic wheat to hand-labeling each and every bottle.

Their current children: organic white (unaged) whiskey, white rum, and organic vodka. And they're expecting, too: a red winter wheat whiskey and a darker Boston rum cook away in wine barrels as we speak.



Area Four's very clean-tasting White Boy Manhattan: Bully Boy white whiskey, Cocchi Americano, and Regan's bitters.

While distribution's still limited to the greater Boston area, Bully Boy spirits are already integrated into cocktail menus at a number of Boston and Cambridge restaurants, including Area Four, Island Creek Oyster Bar, and L'Espalier.

[Come along with us and check out the Bully Boy Distillery setup!](#)



An All-American brand: Bully Boy was the name of Dave (left) and Will's great-grandfather's horse. "Bully" was slang for "swell," invented by their great-grandfather's college roommate, Teddy Roosevelt.



The selection process: It all starts with the selection of ingredients. Will and Dave use organic hard red winter wheat from Aurora Mills & Farm in Maine for both their whiskey and vodka. They go through approximately one ton every three weeks. Per batch, that's about 16 bags of wheat and 150 gallons of water.



What about the rum?: The rum contains blackstrap molasses from New Orleans. It takes about one hour to mix the ingredients in plastic fermenting tanks. Will and Dave closely monitor each batch to make sure it's fermenting for the appropriate amount of time



To the stills: After five days, it's then pumped from the tanks into the stills via a gravity feed. Once the alcohol is removed from the still, it's either bottled or fed into barrels for aging.

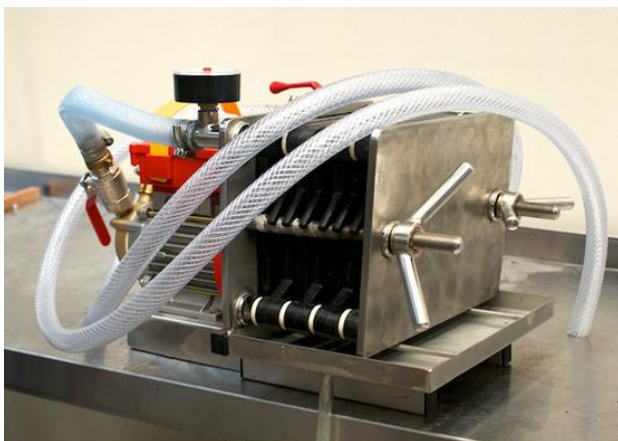
Wine barrels: The rum goes into reconditioned wine barrels and it will take on a little bit of sweetness and character from the wine that's left in the wood.



The barrel-aged whiskey is currently in the early stages of the aging process. It starts off in New American oak, and then is moved along to used barrels to mellow the flavor. At the end of the 1 to 1.5 years in barrels, Will and Dave expect that they will blend different barrels together to make the final product.



Mini Aging: These small barrels allow Will and Dave to test the flavor profile of the whiskey after only one week.



Vodka filtering: Bully Boy uses an activated carbon filter via a gravity feed. This allows them to filter approximately 100 liters at a time. After filtering, the vodka goes in the freezer overnight and becomes viscous. Then, it's filtered again via plates of compressed paper.



The details count: Each bottle is hand-numbered by batch and by bottle, an early decision the boys are happy to know they might soon regret as their business expands.

<http://drinks.seriousseats.com/2011/09/behind-the-scenes-bully-boy-distillery-in-boston.html>

<http://drinks.seriousseats.com/2011/09/behind-the-scenes-bully-boy-distillery-in-boston-slideshow.html>