01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Texas grain. Restless curiosity.



BALCONES DISTILLING / WACO, TEXAS

Balcones began in 2008 in a converted welding shop under a Waco bridge. Distilling followed in 2009. Founder Chip Tate shaped the early company; Jared Himstedt was involved from the beginning and carried its experimental approach into later releases. Tate left in 2014. [1–3,6,9,19]

The name refers to the Balcones fault. The regional identity runs deeper than an address: blue corn, carefully chosen barley, copper pot stills and Texas weather all help frame the work. A larger warehouse home opened in 2016, and Diageo acquired the business in November 2022. A production pause was reported in 2025. [1,7,8,20,22,23]

Himstedt’s brewing background encouraged questions about grain and fermentation. His dated accounts describe curiosity as a practical method: change an ingredient or cask, taste the result, and let the experiment guide the next choice. Official releases identify him as head distiller through 2025. [9,15]

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

A workshop becomes a landmark.

1923 / 2008–2009

The future warehouse is built decades before the company. Balcones is founded in 2008 and begins distilling in 2009. [2,3]

2011–2012

Balcones buys the warehouse in 2011. Texas Single Malt wins Caskstrength’s Best in Glass tasting in London the following year. [2,5]

2014–2018

Conversion and Tate’s departure are separate 2014 events. The larger distillery opens in 2016; the tenth anniversary brings Texas Rye in 2018. [2,6–9]

2020–2023

Lineage joins the range in 2020; Diageo acquires Balcones in 2022. Cataleja marks fifteen years in October 2023. [1,10,12]

2024–2026

Mirador Eclipse and an art partnership precede a 2025 distilling pause. Diageo projected June 2026; a restart was not confirmed in this research. [14,15,22,23]



Downtown Waco

The Texas Fireproof Storage building at 225 South 11th Street is the later production and visitor home. The original workshop is a different site. Production and visitor activity have separate roles. [2,7,18,22]

Grain relationships

Lineage connects Texas-grown malted barley with Scottish Golden Promise. The whisky is distilled in Waco; grain origin and distilling location are different roles. [10,11]

Working with Texas

Larger casks can moderate oak extraction. Weather shapes decisions, but it does not supply a conversion from Texas years to Scottish years. [16]

03 / WHISKEY & STORIES

Different grains. Chosen oak.

Texas “1” emphasizes virgin oak and is currently listed at 106 proof. Lineage combines two malt origins and is 94 proof. Baby Blue uses roasted blue corn and used oak; Brimstone takes a separate scrub-oak smoke route. [3,4,11,17]

Cataleja moves Golden Promise malt through old sherry casks. Their eighty-plus years of history are the wood’s history, not the whisky’s age. Mirador Eclipse experiments with wine yeasts and used bourbon casks at 110 proof. [12–14]



Read the edition
The rye’s chocolate malt describes kilning, not added chocolate. Single-barrel proofs and recipes belong to their own releases. [9,21]

LINKED RESEARCH SOURCES

1. Diageo: acquisition, November 2, 2022
2. Balcones: legacy story and warehouse history
3. Texas “1”: current official product
4. Baby Blue: current official product
5. Caskstrength: Best in Glass 2012 results
6. The Spirits Business: Tate exit, December 2014
7. Drinks International: distillery opening, April 21, 2016
8. Eater Dallas: visitor opening, November 17, 2016
9. Jared Himstedt interview: ten years, March 21, 2018
10. Balcones release: Lineage, July 13, 2020
11. Lineage: current official product
12. Balcones release: Cataleja, October 24, 2023
13. Cataleja: current official product
14. Balcones release: Mirador Eclipse, April 8, 2024
15. Balcones release: The Other Art Fair, February 5, 2025
16. ISC / Nathen Gabriel: an experiment in barrel size
17. Brimstone: current official product
18. Visit Waco: Balcones distillery listing
19. American Whiskey Magazine: a decade of distilling, 2018
20. Difford’s Guide: producer identity and namesake
21. Balcones Texas Rye 100: official product
22. WhiskyCast: Diageo production pause and spokesperson response, 2025
23. The Spirits Business: production halt, September 24, 2025

Research reviewed October 19, 2026. Current listings and historic releases are distinguished. A production restart was not confirmed; conflicting corn-origin wording is retained in the full profile. Original watercolors are symbolic.