01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Koʻolau Distillery

Windward Oʻahu / Water, shared service and an island spirits family

Koʻolau's story begins in Kailua, where a working distillery brings Hawaiian water, local whiskey making and blending into the same small business. Old Pali Road and Tradewind Gin appear in the State of Hawaiʻi's manufacturing directory, connecting the company to a broader community of island makers. [S25]



Founded: 2018. **Home:** Windward Oʻahu.
Identity: Veteran-owned distillery. [S01]

A shared ambition becomes a business

Eric Dill and Ian Brooks became friends while serving in the Marine Corps. Their retirement ambition took shape around Hawaiʻi and whiskey. Beverage professional Heather Pence became an early business partner, helping them navigate a new industry. Dill's first-person account places the local Old Pali Road launch in February 2019. [S29]

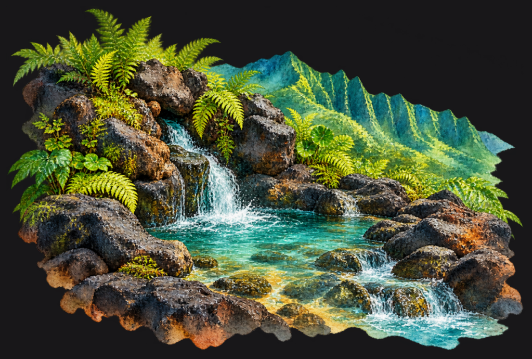
A craft learned through experience

Olivia Babiec began distilling in Philadelphia before joining Koʻolau in June 2021. In a 2023 team interview, she recalled the internship that redirected her hospitality career toward spirits. That path helps explain the company's interest in giving others practical experience through its own training opportunities. [S30]

Watercolors are symbolic interpretations, not exact buildings or documentary portraits.

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

A young distillery finds its rhythm



2019 / Visitors welcomed. Tourism officials announced Whiskey 101 tours for September, inviting visitors to understand the new whiskey through its making. [S03]

2020 / Service in a shortage. The company announced sanitizer donations for essential workers. Kōkua Sun Care supplied empty bottles, helping turn distillery capability into a community response. [S04]

2022 / Beyond whiskey. Māhealani Moonshine and Tradewind Gin expanded the spirits family, adding clear-spirit and botanical directions alongside Old Pali Road. [S06]

2023 / A gathering place. A founders interview described the tasting room opening that year. The venue connected distilling with local collaborations and hospitality. [S31]

2025 / A cocktail travels. The bottled Old Fashioned combines whiskey, local macadamia-nut syrup and chocolate bitters in a 60-proof prepared drink. [S13] [S09]

Working spaces and island connections

Kapa‘a Industrial Park is the distillery’s production and visitor home. The setting is practical and local: a place where spirits are made, bottles are finished and people gather. The distillery’s directions identify the backside of Building 50, a useful reminder that this story belongs to a working neighborhood. [S27]

Selected chapters. Announced tours and retrospective opening accounts retain their qualifications.

03 / WHISKEY, STORIES & SOURCES

Corn, water and the choices between



The standard Old Pali Road combines 90-percent-corn, 10-percent-malted-barley local distillate with aged American whiskey, bottled at 86 proof. Its complete blend percentages and mainland source remain unverified. [S10]

The ingredient account begins with Hawaiian water and corn, then follows local distilling into blending with mature whiskey. Water gives the process a continuing island connection, even where the finished whiskey includes a component made elsewhere. [S14]

Private Reserve Straight Bourbon has a separate identity. The current producer listing describes its second release in 375-milliliter bottles at 86 proof and says it is made entirely in Hawai‘i. Its specific age and launch date are not supplied. [S11]

The barrel program offers a closer view of decisions over time. Participants work with the distilling team on a recipe, proof and cask size, follow saved samples during aging and take part in bottling. Custom labels and etching complete a personal connection to the finished spirit. Following those stages reveals how choices accumulate, from the first agreement to the bottle eventually taken home. [S15]

Research notes & linked sources

Researched October 20, 2026. Specifications belong to named releases. Historical process descriptions and current products remain distinct. Original watercolors are symbolic interpretations.

[S01] Story & team
[S02] 2019 preview
[S03] Tour announcement
[S04] Sanitizer response
[S05] Business award
[S06] 2023 visit
[S07] HPR interview
[S08] 2023 medals
[S09] Event archive
[S10] Old Pali Road
[S11] Private Reserve
[S12] Pearl Harbor
[S13] Bottled cocktail
[S14] Ingredients
[S15] Barrel program
[S16] SkillBridge
[S17] Tasting room
[S18] Community
[S19] Eric Dill
[S20] Tradewind Gin
[S21] Barrel-aged gin
[S22] Māhealani Moonshine
[S23] KaLā Vodka
[S24] Founders interview
[S25] Hawai‘i Made
[S26] Gold Star retreat
[S27] Directions
[S28] Spirits family
[S29] Dill’s early story
[S30] Team interview
[S31] Owners interview