01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Savage & Cooke

Mare Island. Wine-cask imagination. A new steward.

Dave Phinney brought a winemaker’s eye to whiskey at Savage & Cooke. Its story moves from selected mature barrels to locally distilled spirits, then to a new owner and a changed identity for the Mare Island site.

Venture: 2016
Distillery opened: 2018
Home: Mare Island, Vallejo
Acquisition announced: December 20, 2024



A wine perspective, applied to whiskey

The early Burning Chair and Second Glance sheets describe sourced whiskey shaped by selection, maturation and wine-cask finishes. Later house bourbon and rye added another route: local grain distilled on Mare Island. Both chapters matter. A founder’s name or shared finishing technique does not make every release the same liquid. [3, 16, 19]

The people behind the early chapter

Phinney founded the venture. Jordan Via supplied distilling and blending expertise, including the DIGITS collaboration with Scottie Pippen. Historical records identify Lauren Blanchard in the original management team. These credits describe the earlier operation; the later acquisition is a separate ownership chapter. [1, 13, 14]

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

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

A working island, changing roles



2016 / 2018 The venture begins, followed by the documented Mare Island opening. [1, 2]

2020 The distillery temporarily redirects work to hand sanitizer and hires furloughed hospitality workers. [13]

2021 DIGITS launches with Scottie Pippen, Phinney and Via; Home School adds bottled cocktails. [14, 20]

2023 A new core trio combines house-distilled bourbon and rye with sourced American whiskey. [16]

Spring 2024 Bloody Butcher and Howling Mob bring distinct heirloom-corn recipes to limited bottled-in-bond releases. [7, 8, 17]

December 2024 / 2025 Purple Brands announces the acquisition. Redwood Empire later confirms its move to Mare Island. [10, 11]

Read the place by its role

Mare Island: production, maturation and hospitality in historic brick buildings. **Winters:** grain fields described for the heirloom bourbons. **Alexander Valley:** proofing-water source in technical sheets. **Napa / Sta. Rita Hills:** wine-cask connections with distinct roles. [3, 7, 9, 10]

Announcement, opening and transition dates retain their different meanings. Architecture and objects are symbolic interpretations.

03 / WHISKEY, STORIES & SOURCES

Read the grain. Follow the cask.

House Bourbon lists 75% corn, 21% rye and 4% malted barley. House Rye lists 51% rye, 45% corn and 4% malted barley. Their partial Cabernet and Grenache finishes differ. [4, 5]

The Burning Chair’s 2023 sheet describes an 88-proof sourced blend. The later American Whiskey has a different recipe from Second Glance. Guero 15 Year names Tennessee distillation and a Pinot Noir finish. Specifications remain release-specific. [3, 6, 9, 19]



The 2024 acquisition release reveals an earlier connection: Redwood Empire already used the plant for supplementary production. It acquired the distillery and spirits brand assets, then confirmed a 2025 move. This is continuity in a working facility, alongside a real change of ownership and public identity. [10, 11, 12]

Research notes & linked sources

Research checked October 20, 2026. Sourced and house-distilled releases stay distinct. Strength discrepancies and historical staff roles are qualified in the full profile.

[1] Founder & team
[2] Opening & transition
[3] Burning Chair sheet
[4] House Bourbon
[5] House Rye
[6] American Whiskey
[7] Bloody Butcher
[8] Howling Mob
[9] Guero 15 Year
[10] 2024 acquisition
[11] Redwood history
[12] Current visitor site
[13] 2020 company release
[14] 2021 DIGITS launch
[15] DIGITS document
[16] 2023 trio report
[17] 2024 bonded release
[18] Historical news
[19] Second Glance sheet
[20] Home School launch