01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

# Smoke Wagon

NEVADA H&C / Indiana whiskey. A Las Vegas point of view.

Smoke Wagon pairs Indiana whiskey with a Las Vegas identity. Nevada H&C shapes the brand through selection and blending, connecting source barrels with a particular palate and Western presentation. [12, 15]

**At a glance**
Brand home: Las Vegas [15]
Bourbon debut: 2016 [4]
Source relationship: MGP [12]
Core craft: selection and blending [5]



## The partnership comes first

Jonathan Hensleigh and Aaron Chepenik trace their friendship to an Eagle Rock bar in August 2004, followed by their Griffin partnership. [1] April 2011 Nevada legislative minutes already identify them as Nevada H&C co-owners. This predates the often-repeated 2012 founding shorthand. [2]

## A palate with a purpose

Chepenik describes blending through contrast: sweetness, texture and oak must work together. Uncut Unfiltered carries that approach into whiskey with no added water. [5] Hensleigh appears in the earlier legislative record discussing the business and its Las Vegas lease. [2]

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

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

# Two landscapes. Different roles.



**2012** The partners visit Indiana to source high-rye bourbon. [3]

**2016-2017** Small Batch debuts in 2016. [4] The first archived Uncut batch follows on December 11, 2017, at 116.50 proof. [7]

**2019-2020** Straight Bourbon arrives in fall 2019. [6] Chepenik's younger cask-strength idea develops in October 2020, eventually becoming today's Desert Colt. [8]

**2024-2025** Advanced Spirits announces a barrel agreement in September 2024. [12] Shaw-Ross announces national distribution in May 2025. [3]

**2026 / current notice** The website anticipates a facility move; a completed public opening remains unconfirmed. [15]

## Read the place by its role

Indiana supplies the bourbon's distilling provenance; Las Vegas supplies the brand's home and producer identity. [3] Silver Dollar belongs to another chapter: the company's corn vodka is copper-pot distilled in Las Vegas and silver-filtered. Its production details do not describe Smoke Wagon bourbon. [14]

The complete website follows thirteen illustrated milestones and the wider producer story.

03 / WHISKEY, STORIES & SOURCES

# A blend is a set of decisions.

**Blend or individual barrel?**
Small Batch combines vintages at 100 proof. [4] Private Barrel instead preserves a single selection, with details such as warehouse, floor, age and picker. [11]

**Rye has its own recipes**
The family includes 51% rye, 45% corn and 4% barley, alongside 51% rye and 49% malted barley. Blender's Select combines the two. [9]



**A name with Western roots:** The producer explains Smoke Wagon as revolver slang. Sage imagery supplies another Nevada connection. The name describes the brand's symbolism rather than promising smoked or peated whiskey. [10]

## Research notes & linked sources

Research: October 14, 2026. Dates distinguish company activity, sourcing and brand debut. Proof belongs to the batch. Financing and distribution are separate relationships, not evidence of an acquisition. [13, 16] Sources below retain the fuller supporting accounts; the complete website provides the expanded history and qualifications.


[1] The founders' H&C story
[2] Nevada Assembly, April 2011
[3] Shaw-Ross announcement, 2025
[4] Small Batch
[5] Uncut Unfiltered
[6] Straight Bourbon
[7] Uncut batch archive
[8] Desert Colt development
[9] The rye family
[10] The story of the bottles
[11] Private Barrel
[12] Barrel agreement, 2024
[13] Advanced Spirits' services
[14] Silver Dollar American Vodka
[15] Nevada H&C official home
[16] Shaw-Ross portfolio