

I was very fortunate to attend the inaugural whiskey tasting event for Shipyard Distillery based in West Gosford on the 8th December. The tasting was also the platform for the Founders' Club, where members could buy into an experience of whiskey tasting, new releases, and of course, damn good whiskey!

Shipyard Distillery is the first whiskey distillery on the Central Coast.

Peter Clarke, the head distiller and one of the partners in the operation, took the assembled group through the process of how their spirit is made, detailing the brewing process and the casks they use for aging the product. He is one of the youngest qualified distillers in Australia. He obtained his qualification from the Institute of Brewing and Distilling in February last year.

Shipyard Distillery started operations in 2016 with the assembly and trialling of a still made and shipped from Portugal. Peter explained that the distillery produces single-cask sour-mash and single-malt whiskeys, creating Central Coast history one cask (20 litres) at a time.

Through the course of the presentation, samples of both types of whiskey, of two different ages, were tasted. Tasting techniques were important to appreciate the difference in all the samples. Breathing the whiskey odours through your mouth and nose, then tasting the product by swirling the whiskey in your mouth before swallowing, brought out the smoothness and flavours of each of the products.

The site is also the home of Onyx Coffee Spirits. Onyx cemented a name for itself last year at the International Wine and Spirits Competition, and the San Francisco World Spirits Competition for its espresso martini cocktail rtd. The product is the highest-awarded coffee-cocktail in the world. They also produce Onyx Espresso Martinis on tap!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWT4xlqF2Ag>

Their next tasting day is on February 16.

For more information on Shipyard Distillery and the founders club go to <https://shipyarddistillery.com>

Frank Sammut



Peter Clarke next to his still.