

Make Innovation HAPPEN

**MIH Knowledge Article:
Could ageing alcohol underwater enrich the
Scottish drinks industry?**

Scotland
A LAND OF
food and drink

SCOTLAND
IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE

The logo consists of the word 'CAN DO' in a stylized, stacked format. The 'C' is in a dark teal box, 'A' is in a light teal box, 'N' is in a dark teal box, 'D' is in a yellow box, and 'O' is in a yellow box. The boxes are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with 'C', 'A', and 'N' in the top row and 'D' and 'O' in the bottom row.

Drink producers across the globe are experimenting with ageing alcohol underwater. Scotland's great coastline may provide the ideal environment for this technique. Could this process help boost the Scottish drinks industry? Wineries have been trialling underwater ageing techniques for a while. One of the first winemakers to experiment with underwater ageing was Spain's Raúl Pérez. In 2003, he sank bottles of Albariño, grown in the Rías Baixas vineyards, in the ocean for 60 days.

Since then, more producers from great wine producing countries like France, Italy, Chile, South Africa, Chile and Australia, have headed to the waters to age their wine.

Why underwater ageing?

Supporters claim the oceanic factors of: consistent temperature, lack of light, relative lack of oxygen, underwater pressure, and the movement from the tides, all have a positive effect on the quality and taste of wine.

The key to success is locating the bottles at the right depth and the right place in the sea, as the temperature of the water mustn't be too cold or too warm.

Fans of the process claim that wine aged underwater matures more quickly. Some believe that a cabernet sauvignon, for example, aged for three months underwater, has a similar taste as a two-year-old wine aged on land.

Does it work with beer?

Croatian winery, Coral Wine, has recently partnered with brewery, Pivovara 8, to trial ageing beer underwater. Thirty bottles of Pivovara 8's 'Kraken's Treasure Adriatic Sea Edition', spent almost half a year 20 feet underwater in the Adriatic. Now the company plans to age another 500 bottles the same way.

South Africa's Drifter Brewing Company, has also submerged some of its beers into the ocean, believing darkness and cold temperatures would produce a unique fermentation process for their Belgian-style tripel beer.

Generally, supporters of the process think it makes beer taste better. And the fact that it leaves bottles covered with sea scars make them great beers for special occasions. A number of breweries are now experimenting with this technique in the US and in Scotland. And trials are underway to see if ageing gin and whisky underwater has the same affects.

Innovation support for Scottish food and drink companies

Underwater-aged alcohol is still a niche market, but it could be an innovative way to set yourself apart from other companies and extend your product lines. If you would like to understand more about the aging process in Scotland get in touch and our innovation team will be able to help.

Make Innovation Happen is a single source of innovation support for businesses involved in the Scottish food and drink supply chain.

Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise work in partnership across academia, the public sector and the industry to deliver a comprehensive innovation support service.

Make Innovation Happen can help your business by providing:

- [Access to 'connectors'](#), who can offer support, advice and mentoring, as well as direction to appropriate support
- Ideas and insights on how to innovate through articles and events
- Funding through the [Collaborative Innovation Fund](#)
- Help to access other innovation services provided by Scottish Government, [Scottish Enterprise](#), Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Interface and others

To find out more about the support available, please get in touch with the Make Innovation Happen team:

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