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A whiskey distillery, in Utah?

Three guesses where Utah's first and only ski-in whiskey distillery will be built?

Why Park City, of course. With its rough-and-tumble silver mining history and attraction for out-of-state schussers headed for neighboring resorts at The Canyons, Deer Valley and Park City Mountain Resort, this alpine burg is a natural.

After all, a lot of these folks like beer, wine and spirits with their meals. Heaven forbid, they might also like some Rendezvous Rye (named for the famed mountain man gathering) with their cigars, too.

In any case, the High West Whiskey Distillery owner David Perkins has plans to turn a century old former livery stable at the base of the Town Lift in park city into a real live distillery and saloon.

Plans call it to be finished by May of 2009. The company is now making spirits from a distillery in Salt Lake City.

But how could this happen in Utah, you might ask.

Well, according to the Wine Enthusiast, Perkins was more than a little surprised to learn that the state had a law allowing distilleries, though no one had ever applied for one. So he did and after six months actually received one.

Perkins and his wife, Jane, moved to Park City in 2004, and have become whiskey entrepreneurs.

"I've liked whiskey all my life, and about five years ago a light bulb went off in my had," said David Perkins told Wine Enthusiast writer Risa Wyatt. "People enjoy going to wineries and breweries. There's one extra step in distilling that's kind of sexy -- and nobody knows anything

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about it."

To learn whiskey making, Perkins said he worked with master distillers from Four Roses in Kentucky and Bruichladdich in Scotland. With a background as a biochemist with major drug companies, he was prepared to learn the art of distilling.

"You use yeast or bacteria to create a pharmaceutical drug -- and you use yeast to create ethanol," he said.

Perkins oversees every detail about the products, from the rough-hewn bottles designed on 19th Century miner hooch bottles, to the final blends of both whiskey and vodka.

For more details on Park City's High West, go to www.highwestdistillery.com.

Posted by **Brian Clark** at December 22, 2008 11:11 AM

