



Global spirits company Sazerac announces purchase of Sligo's Lough Gill Distillery

Restoration of Demesne, Capacity Expansion, and Creation of Irish Whiskey Homeplace in Future Plans

Louisville, KY (June 20th, 2022) Hazelwood Demesne Limited, owner of the Lough Gill Distillery, on the shores of Lough Gill in County Sligo, Ireland, announces its acquisition by the Sazerac Company, one of the world's largest distilled spirits companies with premium brands such as Buffalo Trace Bourbon, Paddy Irish Whiskey, Michael Collins Irish Whiskey, Pappy Van Winkle Bourbon, and Southern Comfort.

The Sazerac Company, known for taking historic sites such as its [Buffalo Trace Distillery](#) in Kentucky and its [Sazerac House](#) in New Orleans and restoring them to become world class operations, will fully develop the 100+ acre site, the original demesne of Hazelwood House, to create a world-class whiskey facility and visitor attraction, making it one of the most important tourism centres in the West of Ireland. Once complete, Lough Gill Distillery hopes to welcome up to 150,000 visitors annually and will create a homeplace for Sazerac's Irish Whiskeys, Paddy and Michael Collins.

Additionally, Sazerac will significantly grow the footprint of Lough Gill Distillery through increasing the distillery's capacity, adding warehousing capacity and expanding production and bottling lines. All current Lough Gill Distillery team members will remain with the business, and it is expected that Sazerac will increase employment after the expansion. As part of the acquisition, Sazerac will continue the development of the Athrú brand, including global distribution.

Commenting on the announcement, Mark Brown, president and chief executive officer of Sazerac said, *"With its rich history of distilling and storytelling, Ireland is an ideal homeplace for our whiskey business to flourish. In particular, the history of the Lough Gill Distillery, dating back to the 18th century, will be an integral keystone in the restoration and storytelling of this site. We look forward to preserving the history, delighting our future visitors by the stories we share, and further expanding the growth opportunities for Paddy, Michael Collins and Athrú Whiskeys."*

Commenting on the announcement, David Raethorne, founder of the Lough Gill Distillery said *“This is a major announcement for Sligo and a vote of confidence in the potential for Sligo to become a major player in the booming global Irish whiskey market. The acquisition will enable Lough Gill Distillery to fully develop as a world-class visitor destination and will have significant long term economic and tourism benefits for Sligo, which, for me, was always a personal goal. In addition, the maintenance and preservation works undertaken to date on Hazelwood House (a house of national importance) have played an essential part in saving it from dereliction. This acquisition will ensure that Hazelwood House will be enjoyed and appreciated by generations to come, another key objective of the project. The Sazerac Company announcement is a culmination of seven years of hard work and determination by the Board of Lough Gill Distillery and the wider team, delivering on our original 2015 vision, when we acquired the site. I would like to formally acknowledge the support of Sligo County Council and its CEO Martin Lydon, which was a key driver in the decision for Sazerac to invest in Sligo.”*

Commenting on the announcement, Michael Clarke, Cathaoirleach (Chairman) of Sligo County Council said *“This is one of the most significant Sligo investments in recent times. Becoming home to not one, but three, of Ireland’s whiskey brands (Paddy, Michael Collins & Athrú) will have a significant impact on our local economy, both from an employment and tourism perspective.”*

Martin Lydon, CEO of Sligo County Council stated *“It’s heartening to see the Sazerac Company, one of the world’s premiere distilling and aging spirits companies with a commitment to restoring historical sites, pledge to invest, expand, and restore Lough Gill Distillery. Today’s announcement is proof of the positive and sustaining eco-system for companies to invest in Sligo, supported by Sligo County Council.”*

In tandem with the acquisition, Lough Gill Distillery has also announced that former Bushmills Master Blender, Helen Mulholland, is joining the team.

In 2018, Helen became the first woman to be inducted into the International Whisky Magazine Hall of Fame and has recently become the first woman to receive a Chairman’s Award for her outstanding contribution to the development of the Irish whiskey industry.

Helen will lead Lough Gill Distillery’s team in the pursuit of crafting and blending what will become Ireland’s luxury single malt whiskey. Helen will take responsibility for selection and management of the casks for Athrú single malt whiskey, nurturing the Athrú portfolio of premium aged single malts, as well as new product development.

David Raethorne, Athrú founder, said *“We are delighted to announce the appointment of Helen Mulholland as Master Blender at Lough Gill Distillery. In her stellar career as a master blender Helen has become one of the heroes of Irish whiskey, and we are confident of even better things to come”*

Helen Mulholland said *“It’s a really exciting time for Lough Gill Distillery. I am very honoured to be joining the team as it becomes the home of Paddy, Michael Collins and Athrú whiskies. The distillery, its location and the incredible team already in place made this a very easy decision. I look forward to bringing my knowledge as a Master Blender to the table to enable us to make some really world-class Irish whiskies.”*

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About Sazerac

Sazerac is one of America’s oldest family owned, privately held distillers with operations in the United States in Louisiana, Kentucky, Indiana, Virginia, Tennessee, Maine, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Maryland, California, and global operations in the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, India, Australia and Canada. For more information on Sazerac visit <https://www.sazerac.com/>

About Lough Gill Distillery

Lough Gill Distillery sits on a 100-acre peninsula surrounded on three sides by Lough Gill. The distillery was founded in 2015 after the discovery of a vast warehouse complex, concealed by a forgotten 300 year old Palladian house in Hazelwood forest, Co. Sligo.

The warehouse complex has been sustainably repurposed into a world class single malt distillery, which was commissioned in 2019 after a four year development project. It uses state of the art equipment and energy capture technology to produce the highest quality single malt whiskey with minimal impact on the environment.

Three copper stills were handmade by Frilli, master craftsmen in Sienna, Italy to produce single malt to the Distillery specifications. The stills are capable of producing over one million litres of alcohol per annum (about 3m bottles), triple distilled in the finest Irish tradition.

About Athrú Whiskey

Athrú (pronounced Ah Roo) is Lough Gill Distillery’s luxury single malt Irish whiskey distilled from Irish heritage barley and water drawn from an ice age aquifer which runs under the distillery in Co. Sligo. Athrú is the Gaelic word for ‘transformation’.

About Hazelwood House

Hazelwood House was built in the Palladian style in 1722 by Richard Cassels for the Wynne family, who resided there for 200 years. Cassels went on to build many of the great Irish houses of the 18th Century, but

Hazelwood House is special in that it is the earliest of his houses to survive intact. He is recognised as one of Ireland's greatest architects.

For more information, please visit www.athru.com/about

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