

# KITCHEN CLASS

*A love of whisky shines through in the range of drams and food on offer at this Vancouver partner bar*

Eric Fergie was a comparatively late starter when it came to the world of single cask single malts, but he's done his best to make up for lost time since having a whisky epiphany on his 30th birthday.

He's now gone as far as assembling more than 170 Society bottlings in his Vancouver partner bar, Fets Whisky Kitchen, one of the largest collections in the world.

He even managed to convert his whisky resistant wife and business partner, Allura, along the way. "I had my first cheap bottle of whisky when I was 16, but it wasn't great," says Eric. "It wasn't until my 30th that I decided to splash out on a good bottle and make a concerted effort to properly understand whisky. It was a Glendronach Traditional 12 year old, and that did it for me. There was no looking back!"

Eric's epiphany led to a new passion for Scotch, and when Fets moved to a larger location six years later, he started collecting and selling whisky.

"We now have 800 whiskies in the restaurant, and in my office I have 200 new bottles which we don't have shelf space for," says Eric. "So we've decided to undergo a renovation this winter to add more shelf space for the collection."

For Allura, it was a dram of Bruichladdich 1970 which did the trick.

"She wasn't into whisky until she tried that one, and that was her own epiphany," says Eric. "She's been exploring the world of single malts since then, and has very much been a partner in the development of the range of whiskies we have to offer. Her palate is also way beyond mine, she can put words to flavours which I don't have."

Fets Whisky Kitchen is now firmly established on the Vancouver spirits scene, with regular tastings and events for both Society members and the public, and was just voted best whisky bar in the city.

"There is a knowledge base here but people are keen to learn more, especially about cask strength whiskies and single barrels," says Eric. "That's why we showcase the Society bottlings. For us, it's all about sharing the knowledge."

As the restaurant name might suggest, Fets uses whisky extensively in its menu



("The biggest bar tab is in the kitchen," says Eric), with dishes such as southern fried chicken with a whisky gravy and west coast cod with whisky miso butter.

Fets also holds regular events, with its whisky and food pairings proving especially popular. "We take pride in buying our ingredients from sustainable sources and from local providers as much as possible," says Eric. "Apart from the whisky, of course – that comes from all over the world."

Indeed, Fets has a formidable display of US and boutique Canadian whiskies on its shelves, along with Japanese, Australian and Amrut from India.

"It's an exciting industry to be part of and Allura and I continue to collect what we can. Our epiphanies started us on this road and now it will never end. Some people might think of me as a hoarder, but hoarders don't share, and I always share." ●



♥ Visit Fets Whisky Kitchen online at [www.whiskykitchen.ca](http://www.whiskykitchen.ca). The SMWS in Canada also has partner bars at Brasserie Kensington in Calgary ([brasseriekensington.com](http://brasseriekensington.com)), ONE18 Empire in Calgary ([one18empire.com](http://one18empire.com)), and Little Jumbo in Victoria ([littlejumbo.ca](http://littlejumbo.ca))