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Whisky Tourism in High Spirits as Visitor Numbers Grow

- Distilleries attract over 1.2m visitors, spending £22.4m -

Visitor numbers released today by ScotlandWhisky - the national whisky tourism initiative - reveal Scotch Whisky's growing importance to Scotland's tourism industry.

Following the most extensive survey of distilleries ever undertaken, ScotlandWhisky announced today that **1,233,696 visitors** toured a distillery in 2007. This is a **2.6% increase** in visitors over the last three years.

Visitors also made an increasingly important contribution to the local economy, with more **£22.4 million¹** spent at whisky visitor attractions across Scotland, a **17.8% increase** over the same period.

Chris Conway from ScotlandWhisky said:

“These figures are a testament to Scotch Whisky's importance to Scotland's tourism experience. Scotch Whisky is recognised worldwide, but can only be produced in Scotland. Using Scotch to encourage tourists to come and explore Scotland is a real advantage to the country, bringing visitors and economic benefits to many communities from Islay to Speyside.”

Today's figures show that the average spend per visitor at a distillery is **£18.70**, which is over three times the national average of **£6.07²**. This demonstrates the disproportionately highly beneficial impact on the economy that Scotland's fifty distillery visitor centres and Whisky themed attractions create.

¹ This figure includes sales of tour tickets, retail sales from distillery shops and café sales.

² Moffat Centre's Visitor Attraction Monitor 2007

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As well as their economic impact, distilleries are also adding to tourists' positive experience of Scotland with well over **60%**³ of distillery visitor centres being rated four or five star by VisitScotland's quality assurance team. Nearly **23%** of the five star visitor attractions in Scotland are distilleries.

Chris Conway went on to say:

"These figures, though impressive, only take into account sales at distillery visitor centres; if we were to augment them with tourist sales at ScotlandWhisky Embassy hotels and Whisky bars⁴, as well as other local attractions, we would be talking of an even greater impact that Scotch Whisky brings to Scotland."

-ENDS-

Notes for editors

73 hotels and restaurants are now officially recognised as Scotch Whisky 'Embassies', having met specific quality criteria, including staff trained in Scotch Whisky. Further information about ScotlandWhisky and its Embassy network is available at www.scotlandwhisky.com.

ScotlandWhisky is supported by The Scotch Whisky Association, The Scotch Whisky Experience, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, VisitScotland and its membership.

If you would like an interview with Chris Conway or any further information or photography, please contact:

Tel: 0131 478 7120

c.conway@whisky-heritage.co.uk

³ VisitScotland Quality assurance figures

⁴ Embassy hotels and bars are businesses, specially selected by ScotlandWhisky, which have great Whisky bars and staff who have passed a day long course and exam in the sales and appreciation of Whisky. For more information see <http://www.scotlandwhisky.com/trade/873840/>