

The Spirit of Chichibu Cocktail Challenge 2025

“Where it belongs”

The Brief



WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of **The Spirit of Chichibu cocktail challenge** – a competition celebrating innovation, hospitality, and storytelling through crafting world-class cocktails.

Inspired by the visionary Ichiro Akuto, this challenge honours Chichibu's ethos: blending tradition and progress, local and global influences.

Time to create something meaningful – rooted in culture and craft – a celebration of innovation, hospitality, and storytelling through crafting of world-class drinks. This is your stage to shake, stir, and stand out – a drink that feels like it belongs in your **venue**, your **community**, and **personal** to you.

Jose Dymenstein
Director, Casa de Vinos



CHALLENGE TIMELINE

Registration Opens

25th August 2025
Kick off your journey with The Spirit of Chichibu! Registrations 25th August 2025. Secure your spot to showcase creativity, honour craftsmanship, and share your unique whisky story.

Social Media Challenge

1st September – 21st September
Share your in-venue cocktail on your socials. This is a chance to highlight the drink's story – linking ingredients, inspiration, and venue identity through compelling content that brings the serve to life. Tagging @casadevinos @chichibu_distillery #CdVadvocacy #casadevinos #TSCC2025

Judging

6th October – 17th October 2025
Judges are on the move! Expect anonymous visits during regular service as they experience your Chichibu cocktail firsthand. Evaluating flavour, story, and hospitality where it matters most: your venue.

Finals

9th November 2025
The spotlight is yours. Compete live at Whisky Abbey in front of judges and the public, representing the spirit of Chichibu in one unforgettable finale of craft and culture.

Registration Closes

14th September 2025
Final call to enter! Don't miss the opportunity to bring your Chichibu-inspired creation to life. Get your concept, cocktail, and entry details in.

Menu Live Period

22nd September – 31st October 2025
Time to share your creation with the world! Feature your Chichibu cocktail on your venue's menu/specials board – this phase celebrates real guest interaction and storytelling through every pour.

List the cocktail for a minimum of 4 weeks during this period.

Finalist Announced

31st October 2025
The finalists are revealed via Casa de Vino's social media (Facebook & Instagram).

Selected entries move on to the live stage, chosen for creativity, balance, and spirit.

Congratulations to those bringing the Spirit of Chichibu to Whisky Abbey this year!

Chichibu Matsuri 2026

Mid-February 2026
Win an all-expenses-paid* trip to Japan for Chichibu Matsuri 2026, including exclusive distillery tour of the Chichibu Distillery, and a meet-and-greet with Kanosuke founder Yoshitsugu Komasa in stunning Kagoshima.



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*Entries open to Australian bartenders aged 18 and over. Participants must meet all competition, travel, and visa eligibility requirements. All expenses paid includes flights, accommodation, transfers, and meals. Terms and conditions apply. Enjoy Chichibu responsibly.

The Challenge

“Where it belongs”



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ENTRY DETAILS

Rooted in craftsmanship and innovation, Ichiro's Malt & Grain from Chichibu Distillery invites you to tell a deeper story – one that blends Japanese philosophy with your local identity.

Crafted by Ichiro Akuto, this globally acclaimed whisky honours tradition while embracing modernity. **This year, your challenge is to create a cocktail that reflects not only the spirit of Chichibu, but also the soul of your venue.**

We want to see you explore the connections between place, culture, and flavour. Bring these elements together in a way that feels unmistakably yours:

- **Local Australian ingredients** to embrace your **sense of place and community**,
- **Japanese inspired ingredients** to reflect **Chichibu's deep craft and tradition**, and
- **Multicultural ingredients** to **honour the global blending** ethos behind Ichiro's Malt and Grain World Blended Whisky.

Equally important is venue integration – how your drink belongs on your bar. Whether it draws inspiration from your cuisine, service style, presentation, or even the name, your creation should feel uniquely tied to where it's served.

Let your cocktail tell YOUR story..

ENTRY DETAILS

- Your cocktail must include a minimum of 30ml of Ichiro's Malt & Grain Whisky.
- It must not exceed 2 standard drinks.
- Share your journey in three key posts via your social media tagging @casadevinos & @chichibu_distillery on FB and/or IG.
- It must be available on your bar's menu or specials during the Menu Live in Venue period.
- Use a considered balance of local, Japanese inspired, and/or multicultural ingredients, aligned with your concept.
- Highlight your venue connection – how the drink belongs to your space, your culture, your service.
- **Submit:** a image, full recipe, method, ingredient breakdown, and a short concept/story.



SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE

“Capture and share your inspiration, creation, and community connection by using social media to tell the story of your venue and the spirit of Chichibu.”

Throughout the competition, we want to see your process unfold. Share your journey in three key posts:

Inspiration

Share what inspired your drink and the **connection** to Chichibu, your ingredients, or your venue’s identity.

Creation

Capture your cocktail coming to life. Showcase **technique, flavour development**, and behind-the-scenes insights.

Connection

Show how your serve lives on your menu, how it translates ichiro’s malt through **you, and the venue**.

Tag:

@chichibu_distillery

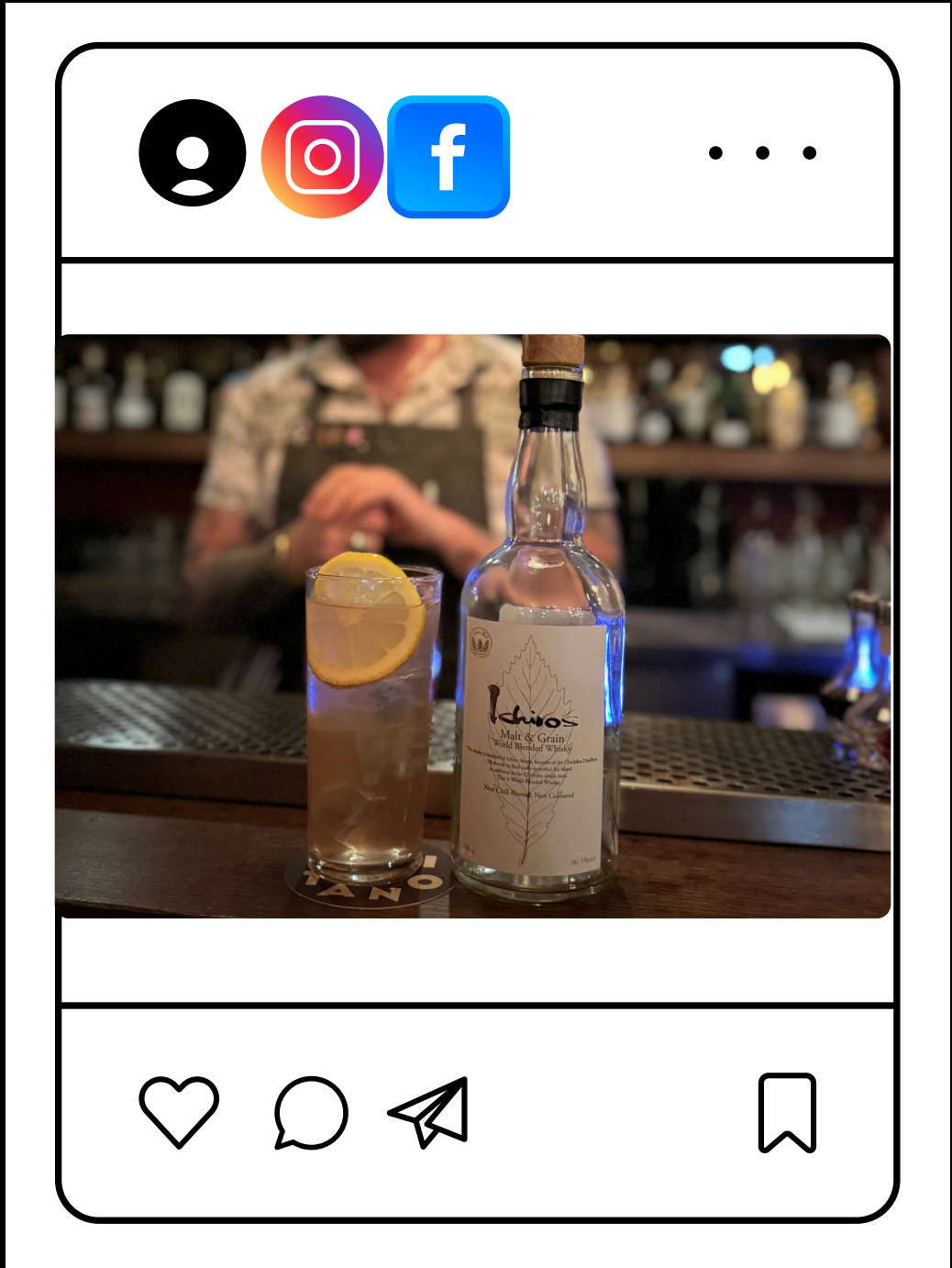
@casadevinos

Hashtag: #CdVadvocacy #casadevinos #TSCCC2025

Stay creative, stay visible, and bring your venue’s spirit into the spotlight.



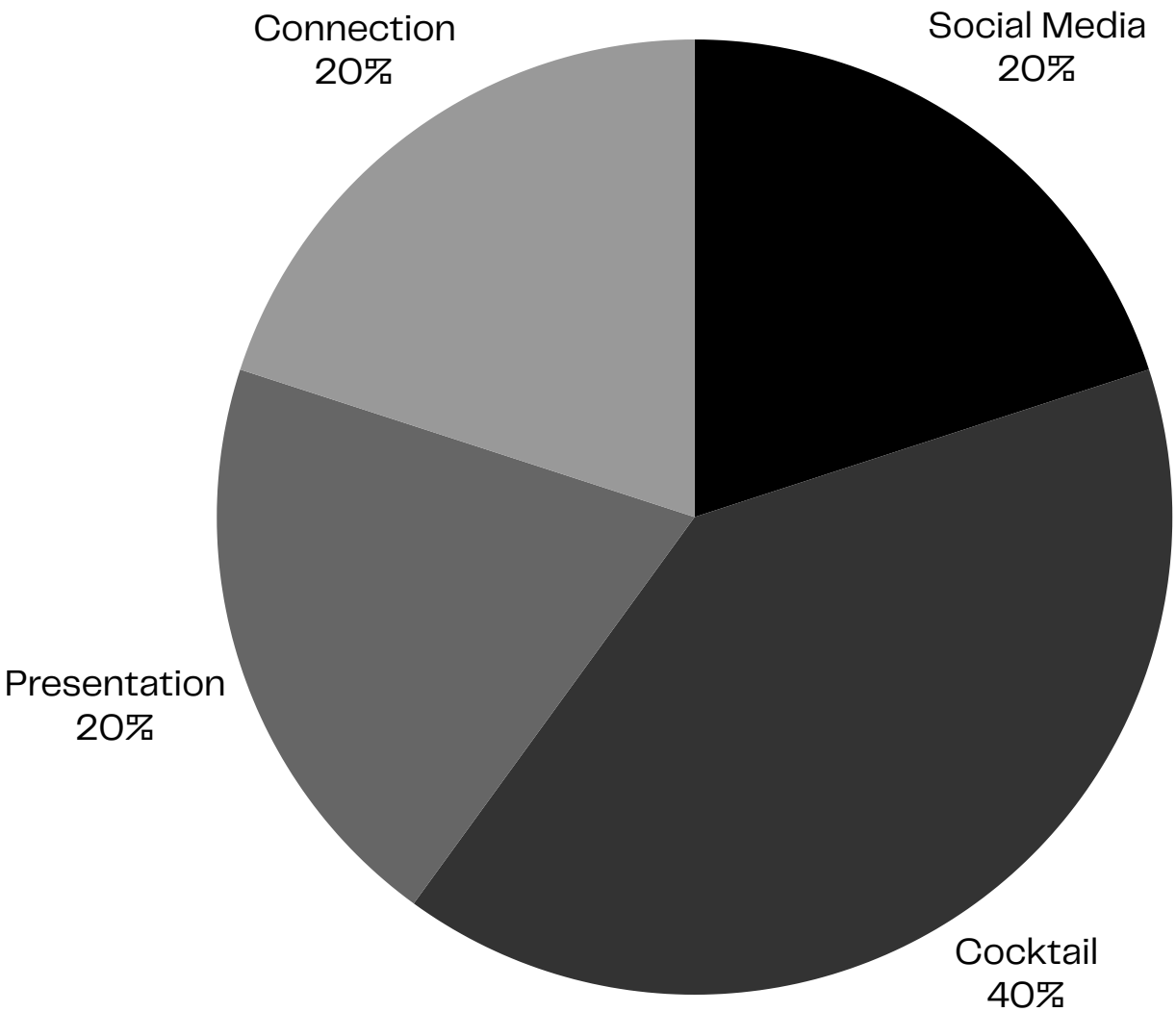
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#To be eligible for judging, all competition-related Instagram and Facebook posts must be published from public accounts. Private or inaccessible profiles will not be considered for social media scoring. Ensure your content remains visible throughout the judging period.

JUDGING CRITERIA

“The finalist entries should not only taste and look exceptional, it should tell a meaningful story, grounded in place, and shared with purpose.”



Social Media (20 Points)

Entries should showcase how the cocktail lives within the venue and how it connects to both local and Chichibu values. This is about digital hospitality: storytelling that invites others in.

- How well does the post express the story behind the serve and its connection to place?
- Does it reflect the balance of tradition and innovation found in Chichibu’s philosophy?
- Is the drink visually and emotionally engaging in a way that captures its cultural roots?

Connection (20 Points)

The heart of this challenge is the connection. Why have you selected this style of drink?

- How deeply does the drink reflect the venue’s cuisine, community, or cultural story?
- Is there a clear sense of belonging - a reason the drink could only exist in your venue?
- Does the cocktail naturally blend the venue’s spirit with Chichibu’s global-local philosophy?

Cocktail (40 Points)

Ichiro’s Malt & Grain isn’t just an ingredient - it’s a signature. Your cocktail should showcase the whisky, not hide it. Integration means letting its character shine.

- Is the flavour of Ichiro’s Malt & Grain showcased and honoured in the drink?
- Does the cocktail speak to Chichibu’s ethos of blending craft, culture, and character?
- Is the use of the whisky purposeful - not just present, but central?
- Does the cocktail achieve a harmonious balance of flavours, while allowing Ichiro’s Malt & Grain to shine at its core?
- Can the cocktail, including any homemade elements be realistically recreated by other bartenders while still maintaining its quality, integrity, and alignment with Chichibu’s ethos?

Presentation (20 Points)

Chichibu stands for precision, elegance, and soulful craft. Judges will consider whether the drink is executed with the same care - from garnishing to guest experience - and how well it lives within the atmosphere of the venue.

- Is the serve executed with intention and consistency?
- Does the presentation reflect a sense of ceremony or celebration, in line with Japanese hospitality values?
- Does the drink elevate the guest experience while staying rooted in authenticity?



FINALISTS

To celebrate talent across the country, bartenders will be selected as State Finalists based on the strength of their entry and how well it embodies the spirit of Chichibu.

As we look to nurture and grow this competition into a national competition, this year we have expanded selection from VIC & NSW to VIC-TAS/QLD/NSW; with a minimum 2 spaces guaranteed to be allocated to interstate finalists.

These finalists will earn a place on the live stage at Whisky Abbey 2025, where they will be recognised not just for creativity, but for how deeply their drink connects to their venue, community, and culture.



FINALISTS CONT

Celebrate at Whisky Abbey, where this year's finalists will take the stage just as last year's champions did. Experience the energy, creativity, and spirit of Chichibu brought to life in an unforgettable showcase of talent and tradition.

Last years finalist include:

Joshua Crawford – Winner of the inaugural challenge (centered)



Kristian Leombruni



Macy Tran



Joey Tai



Alan Buckley



Joshua Crawford



Tibo Menut



Richard Liu



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ELIGIBILITY

- Open to professional bartenders currently working in Australia.
- Participants must remain employed at an eligible Australian venue throughout the competition period.
- Entrants must be eligible to travel to Japan; visa requirements apply.
- Finalists must be available and eligible to compete live on stage at Whisky Abbey 2025 on Sunday, 9th November.

RESOURCES

Melbourne

Date: 25th August
Time: 2pm
Location: Whisky and Alement (TBC)
270 Russell St, Melbourne VIC 3000

Sydney:

Date: 21st August
Time: 1PM
Location: Bar Besuto
1 Underwood St, Sydney NSW 2000

Mornington:

Date: 28th August
Time: 2pm
Location: Bon Vivant's Companion
150 Main St, Mornington VIC 3931

Brisbane:

Date: 1st September
Time: 2pm
Location: Savile Row
667 Ann St, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006



PRIZE

WIN: WIN THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME
- 4 NIGHTS IN JAPAN

1 night in Tokyo

2 nights in Chichibu, during Chichibu Matsuri Festival, with an exclusive distillery visit & meet and greet Ichiro Akuto, founder and President of Chichibu Distillery.

1 night in Kagoshima – distillery visit to Kanosuke distillery

Prize includes flights, accomodations, distillery visits, tickets to Chichibu Matsuri Festival & meals with the traveling companion from Casa de Vinos.

Prize is not transferable, and cannot be redeemed in other forms.



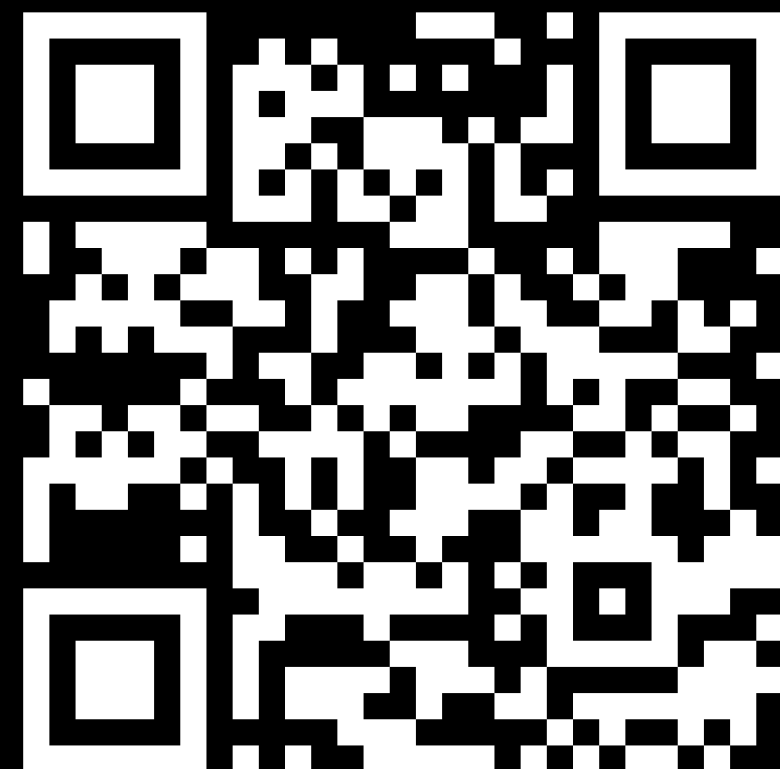
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SUBMISSION



REGISTRATION FORM



SUBMISSION FORM



TERMS & CONDITIONS

Promotion Name: The Spirit of Chichibu Cocktail Challenge 2025

Eligible States/Territories: VIC/TAS, NSW, QLD

Promotion Period:

Start: 25th August 2025, 00:01 AM

End: 9th November 2025, 11:59 PM

Registration Period:

Start: 25th August 2025, 10:00 AM

End: 14th September 2025, 11:59 PM

No entries will be accepted outside this period.

Promoter: Casa de Vinos PTY LTD

ABN: 78 075 570 669

283 Coventry St, South Melbourne VIC 3205

Eligible Entrants

Participation in the Promotion is open to residents of Australia, in all eligible states and territories, who meet the entry requirements and are 18 years of age or older.

- Open to professional bartenders currently working in Australia.
- Participants must be working in Australia at an eligible venue for the whole duration of the competition.
- Participants must be eligible to travel to Japan. Visa eligibility applies.
- Finalists must be eligible to compete on stage at Whisky Abbey 2025 (Sunday 9th November).

Details of Prizes – Main Prize

Win the trip of a lifetime — Four (4) nights in Japan:

- One (1) night in Tokyo
- Two (2) nights in Chichibu – during Chichibu Matsuri Festival, with an exclusive distillery visit & meet and greet with Ichiro Akuto, Founder and President of Chichibu Distillery
- One (1) night in Kagoshima – distillery visit to Kanosuke Distillery

*itinerary subject to change

Details of Prizes – Finalists

- Two (2) interstate winners will receive flights from their home state to Melbourne, one (1) night of accomodation in Melbourne, and two (2) meals on the 9th of November at Whisky Abbey 2025; airport transfers not included.
- Finalists in VIC will receive one (1) unit of Ichiro's malt/Chichibu selected by Casa de Vinos, and two (2) meals on the 9th of November at Whisky Abbey 2025.

Prize includes:

Flights, accommodations, distillery visits, tickets to Chichibu Matsuri Festival, and meals with the travelling companions.

Prize is not transferable and cannot be redeemed in other forms.

Total Prize Value: Up to \$5,000 AUD

The Promoter encourages responsible consumption of alcohol. See: alcohol.gov.au for guidelines.

Method of Entry

To enter, an entrant must, during the promotional period:

- Complete the registration form.
- All form fields are required; incomplete entries are invalid.
- Post a minimum of three (3) social media posts (stories not included) during the social media period
- Cocktail must be available and live in venue, presented on a menu for a minimum of four (4) weeks on a menu, specials menu or specials board.
- Finalists must be available to attend and compete live on stage at Whisky Abbey on 9th November 2025 at 1 St Heliers St, Abbotsford VIC 3067.

Finalists

To recognise regional creativity and participation, the Promoter will select finalists based on the strength, originality, and venue integration of their entry, as it relates to the overall spirit of the competition.

A minimum of two (2) interstate finalists will be selected as part of this competition, unless less than two (2) submissions are received outside of Victoria.

State Finalists will earn a place on the live finals stage at Whisky Abbey 2025, and will be considered part of the national finalists. Selection will be based on both creative merit and how strongly each drink reflects venue identity, community, and cultural alignment with the Chichibu philosophy.

Final selection is at the sole discretion of the Promoter and its appointed judging panel. All other standard entry and eligibility criteria apply.

Eligibility Steps

- Your cocktail must include a minimum of 30ml of Ichiro's Malt & Grain Whisky.
- It must not exceed 2 standard drinks.
- Share your journey in three key posts via your social media tagging @casadevinos & @chichibu_distillery on FB and/or IG.
- It must be available on your bar's menu or specials during the Menu Live in Venue period.
- Use a considered balance of local, Japanese, and/or world ingredients, aligned with your concept.
- Highlight your venue connection — how the drink belongs to your space, your culture, your service.
- Submit: full recipe, method, image, ingredient breakdown, and a short concept/story.

Purchase requirements

The venue of the competing entries must purchase 1 unit of the any of the following either direct from Casa de Vinos, or from Paramount wholesalers during the promotional period for every member they submit.

- Ichiro's malt and grain
- Ichiro's malt mizunara wood reserve
- Ichiro's malt wine wood reserve
- Ichiro's malt double distilleries
- Ichiro's malt and grain limited edition
- Any Chichibu single malts inclusive of single cask bottles
- Any Ichiro's malt single cask bottles



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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