

A shortage of Bourbon

ARE you one of those whiskey drinkers with a taste for American Bourbon? Well, perhaps you might need to consider renewing your acquaintance with some Irish or Scottish brands because Bourbon is getting scarcer and more expensive.

The problem is two-fold. First of all, sales of Bourbon in the United States and all over the world are at a record high and rising.

Nobody is really sure why but the distillers are happy to go with the flow and sell as much of their product as they can.

However, the second problem is causing serious difficulties for the industry.

Specific conditions must be met in order for a whiskey to be classified as Bourbon, most notably that the spirit must be aged in new, charred oak barrels.

However, several harsh, wet winters in the US have resulted in a serious shortage of suitable wood for the barrels.

Quite a few companies have invested in expensive steel tanks to hold their liquor until they can get supplies of oak lumber for the barrels.

But, say the industry experts, another couple of bad winters on the trot could send the Bourbon trade into meltdown.

World-famous thriller writer Raymond Chandler spent most of his boyhood summers in Waterford city and Tramore and declared: "There is no bad whiskey. There are only some whiskeys that aren't as good as others."

Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin and he believed: "A good gulp of hot whiskey at bedtime is not very scientific, but it helps."

Film actor Ava Gardner was considered to be one of the most beautiful of all the Hollywood stars and she had a dream that, sadly, did not materialise: "I wish to live to 150 years old but the day I die, I wish it to be with a cigarette in one hand and a glass of whiskey in the other."

George Bernard Shaw was world famous for his thoughts on everything but he was quite succinct about whiskey: "Whisky is liquid sunshine," he insisted.

James Joyce, lauded the world over for 'Dubliners' and 'Ulysses' and he had the following to say: "The light music of whiskey falling into a glass—an agreeable interlude."