

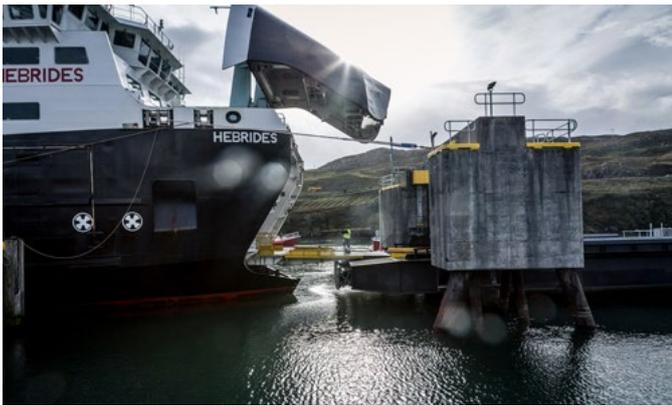
# Isle of Harris Distillers: The World's First Social Distillery

## Challenge

A remote place on the fringes of the Western Atlantic, at the edge of Europe, 3 billion year old rock strung out at the mercy of the elements. The Isle of Harris is a timeless place but with a declining population of just 1,916 souls.

Here a new whisky distillery would be built, forming Scotland's youngest whisky region. Such a project required not only vision but integrity, authenticity and trust from long before the first brick was laid.

MR TAYLOR'S BRAND EMPORIUM were engaged to work directly with the founders to imagine the future of this 'enterprise'; the distillery, its whisky and other distillates. Of greatest importance was how it might become a genuine part of such a pristine island & culture, whilst developing global support for its aims and products in the growing but competitive world of whisky.



## Thinking

We spent time on the island talking to fishermen, hotels, the island's only headmaster, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the Western Isles, painters, weavers, salmon farmers and builders. We immersed ourselves in the long history of Harris with its leading historians and commentators. We researched the rest of the whisky industry, its physical locations, brand portfolios and individual brand positionings.

We spent days with the founders on the island, discussing ideas and ideals we wanted to enshrine. Principles we needed to reflect and even promote to the world, based on our collective insights into Harris and its native inhabitant, the Hearach.

The resulting values for the distillery enterprise and its work shaped a unique, cohesive idea to live by. A thought that could bring island & islanders, distillery, visitors and advocates together... through genuine affinity:

**“We are building a distillery on the Isle of Harris in the Outer Hebrides, to be first and foremost a distillery about people and to benefit the Hearach”**

## The Social Distillery

A creator of sustainable employment, a catalyst for commercial growth, a symbol of optimism and change, a voice for Harris and a new, nourishing source of pride & belonging for the Hearach in all of us.

The Emporium then worked creatively with the team on the task of delivering that authentic idea through an end-to-end experience for the distillery itself and all key commercial, communications & consumer engagement initiatives:

- Distillery ‘canteen’ concept, food & beverage offering, sourcing policy
  - Tour content & style
  - Story-telling evolution & tone of voice
- Online digital membership, affinity and sales planning
  - Cask sales & marketing strategy
- Commercial retail strategy for store, including ranging, product sourcing and sub brand development
- Selection, briefing & creative development of all key communications agencies, including drinks packaging experts Stranger & Stranger, Size design and The Weather digital



# Impact

- Over 50% of 2015 advanced cask sales targets reached during 2014, delivering £1/4 million advanced income to the enterprise
- A cohesive experience from the distillery-from web to product packaging and every point of contact with visitors and advocates
- The first 'Tarbert 10' distillery workers found and hired, representing the essence of the The Social Distillery in attitude and outlook
  - A local weaver story-teller in place for communications to the four corners of the globe
- An island infused with budding pride and enthusiasm for the future of the distillery and its place on Harris, as a lasting source & symbol of benefit to the people of Harris, this most elemental of places

**“Mr Taylors Brand Emporium has been a genuine commercial partner since before the start of this enterprise. The vision, culture and brand have all been directly shaped by the strategic & creative thinking Mark has injected, which in turn has shaped everything from product policy and sourcing for the shop, food & beverage offering in our ‘canteen’, overall experience design for the visitor and of course the brand architecture and positioning for all our spirits, including The Hearach , our flagship Malt. In the process Mark has fully shared the passion of this project and helped drive the results we need to deliver a sustainable distillery for the future of Harris and its people.”**

*Simon Erlanger, Managing Director, Isle of Harris Distillers Ltd.*

## Key services delivered

Enterprise purpose & values, brand naming, brand architecture planning, retail strategy, ‘visitor experience planning’, agency selection/ evaluation, creative development input ( including design identity, packaging, web strategy and tone of voice)



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