

# Distillery modern Age



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## Ardbeg's First Graphic Novel Will Explore "Out of This World" Whisky Tales

Earlier this fall, Islay, Scotland, single malt distillery Ardbeg took its first foray into the world of graphic novels with the release of *Planet Ardbeg*, a 40-page sci-fi anthology created by three cutting-edge artists.



"This limited-edition publication is inspired by the flavors and origin stories of three Ardbeg expressions — Ardbeg Ten Years Old, Ardbeg An Oa and Ardbeg Wee Beastie — and features cameos from some of the Islay distillery's best-known characters," according to a company statement.

*Planet Ardbeg* was conceived by award-winning New York cartoonist Ronald Wimberly in collaboration with fellow artists Emma Ríos and Sanford Greene, each bringing their own distinctive voice and style to the project.

"Using Ardbeg's core range as their creative launchpad, together they have produced a triptych of fantastical tales as bold and unique as Ardbeg itself," added the company statement.

"*Guardians of Oa* by Sanford Greene, which draws its influence from the rounded balance and smoky power of Ardbeg An Oa, is an action-packed epic about a copper city coming under attack from a monstrous creature."

"Ronald Wimberly's *The Best Laid Schemes*, which channels the feisty and formidable flavors of Ardbeg Wee Beastie, is a fast-paced neo-western featuring giant botanicals and even bigger beasts."

"*Take it with a Grain of Sand* by Emma Ríos, captures the complex peaty essence of Ardbeg Ten Years Old, and tells of a mystical quest through a land lost to time."

## The Luxury Spirits Market: Key Growth Drivers

by The IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, [www.theiwsr.com](http://www.theiwsr.com)

The luxury spirits market is proving its resilience in the face of multiple headwinds, according to new data from IWSR

While China remains a key market for high-end international spirits — especially cognac — the country's luxury market leadership could soon be threatened by the U.S., where agave spirits have made strong gains. A proposed alcohol ban for Chinese civil servants and CCP officials would further curtail the outlook of China's luxury spirits market. Meanwhile, a resurgent travel retail channel will help drive cognac sales to 2026, enabling the category to claw back market share lost to rival categories such as malt and grain Scotch whisky.

The findings are part of the IWSR's newly published *Status Spirits Strategic Study 2022*, which analyses the performance of status spirits categories in key markets around the world.

Baijiu retains a dominant 84% value share of the global status spirits market — covering products with a weighted average price above \$100 — but consumption remains almost completely confined to China. Excluding baijiu, the global market for international status spirits grew by 35% in value terms during 2021, according to IWSR figures, leaving it 8% ahead of pre-pandemic 2019. Value expanded at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of +9% between 2016 and 2021.

Growth is expected to continue over the next few years fueled by the rebounding travel retail channel and positive trends in markets such as the U.S.

"While there are undoubtedly headwinds — including the cost-of-living crisis, ongoing Covid-19 restrictions in some places and the war in Ukraine — status spirits have proved resilient," said Thorsten Hartmann, Head of Custom Analytics, IWSR.

"The fundamentals for future growth are solid: increased wealth; a focus on spirits as an investment by consumers, retailers and brand owners; new audiences coming online; and digital engagement."

Gains are also being driven by an increasingly buoyant auction scene where sales are rising thanks to increased focus from auction houses and brand owners dealing with them direct as a primary route-to-market.

*continued on page 2*

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