

Whisky World Cup kicks off Friday

By RJ Vogt | Wednesday, 27 April 2016

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Drinking and football are a timeless pair, but James Erskine, the founder and whisky guru of the [Yangon Whisky Club](#), has taken the pastime a step further – by getting rid of the football part altogether.

That's the simple math of the YWC Whisky World Cup, which pits 20 nations against each other over five "Group Stages" and a "final" to determine who can lay claim to having the best whiskies in the land. Erskine has arranged for a representative whisky from Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Taiwan and Wales for the group's April 29 meeting.

"The people who come to the whiskey tastings, they're a very disparate bunch," he said yesterday in an exclusive interview with *The Myanmar Times*. People are interested in different whisky styles. So I thought, let's do this. Let's set ourselves a challenge to get as many different whiskies from as many different countries as possible."

That's what he's done, negotiating duty-free connections and serendipitous relations to bring in as many firewater varieties as he could. He noted the Finnish brand was particularly rare, coming from a small distillery attached to a restaurant. One of the regulars at the weekly meetings is married to a Finnish woman, whose parents were fortuitously planning a Myanmar visit and were able to procure a bottle on their way out of town.

"I've gotten better with sourcing them," he said.

The world cup will convene at a different location for each group stage, with the first stage heading to Mahlzeit as a tip-of-the-hat to Germany's presence in the week's competition. Drinkers have three votes that they can spread across one or two whiskys. Winners will advance to a grand final on July 1.

For more information and to book your spot, visit the [Facebook page](#) for Yangon Whisky Club. Tickets are US\$25 per person, or \$100 for all five tastings.