

These Two Cousins Quit Their Day Jobs to Start a Women-Owned Whiskey Company. Here's How They Got Major Backing and Built a Thriving Community Based on Inclusivity.

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Anna Axster and Wendelin von Schroder have embarked on an unexpected entrepreneurial journey that intertwines their passion for whiskey with a mission for inclusivity. The founders of Lodestar Whiskey sat down with The Founders Series for a chat to tell us why they transitioned from the music industry to whiskey creation, and how they are breaking down barriers in the spirits world.

Pandemic Pivot That Turned Passion into a Business

"When the world locked down, we realized it was the perfect time to pursue something we truly loved," they shared. Their decision to pivot from entertainment to whiskey was fueled by a long-held passion and the desire to connect with a community of like-minded enthusiasts.

Lodestar Whiskey is more than just a product; it's about fostering a sense of community. Through tastings and events,

Wendelin and Anna cultivate a welcoming atmosphere, making whiskey accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

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Breaking Stereotypes: Whiskey for Everyone

Recognizing the stereotypes associated with women ordering whiskey, they aimed to fill a gap in the market with a brand that resonates with both newcomers and seasoned drinkers. Their blend of high-rye bourbon and American single malt is designed to be enjoyed without pretentiousness.

Small brands like Lodestar have unique advantages, particularly in terms of innovation. “Innovation is harder for big companies,” they point out, emphasizing their agility in responding to market demands. However, the three-tier system of distribution presents significant challenges for new entrants.

A Warm Welcome in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles market has embraced Lodestar Whiskey with open arms. Positive responses from consumers and bar managers highlight the brand’s success in connecting with its audience through a story of inclusivity and connection. “People seem to connect with the product, and they connect with the story,” they share. Lodestar is the first-ever whiskey backed by Diageo’s Distill Ventures award-winning Pre-Accelerator program.

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Looking Ahead to the Future of Lodestar Whiskey

Wendelin and Anna plan to expand cautiously, focusing first on solidifying their presence in California before venturing beyond. Their journey demonstrates that with passion, resilience, and a community-centric approach, changing perceptions in the whiskey industry is possible.

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