

Matt Bowles: My guest today is Martine Volmar. She is a writer, whiskey connoisseur, location independent entrepreneur, and the founder of Kirani LLC, an operational and technical consultancy that helps businesses seamlessly move from strategy to execution. Born in New York City to parents of Haitian descent, she represents queens to the fullest. Martine has been a remote professional and world traveler since 2009, often attending the world's top whiskey tastings. And she has now been to over 40 countries.

Martine, welcome to the show.

Martine Volmar: Hey, Queens in the house. About time you got here.

Matt Bowles: Queens is in the house; we have to talk about where we are today. Let's set the scene about where we're doing this interview. I wanted to do it in your home borough of Queens, New York. And here we are in your living room.

Martine Volmar: In my living room, surrounded by whiskey and art and books.

Matt Bowles: We are. I was so inspired when I walked in. Let's just describe this for folks. What are we looking at when we look around your apartment? Can you describe this?

Martine Volmar: I think my apartment is very me. I think if you go me outside and you haven't seen my space, I think folks might know me from whiskey. There are my whiskey friends. There are my book friends, there's my travel friends. Everybody has these little groups and you come in here and you're like, oh, this is how all this stuff makes sense together. That's what my apartment tells you. It's like, oh, I apparently live in a bar, but this bar has a lot of books and the walls are adorned with art, as life should be.

Matt Bowles: Yes, it is amazing. There are entire shelves, floor to ceiling with whiskey bottles. There is more whiskey in this apartment than I have seen in most bars that I have been to. I Mean, this is really impressive.

Martine Volmar: I have more whiskey than bars that are not whiskey bars.

Matt Bowles: Yes, you do.

Martine Volmar: I don't think I'm rivaling whiskey bars, but I'm definitely rivaling bars that aren't whiskey bars.

Matt Bowles: That is exactly right. And you have some incredible art on the wall. Can you talk about what some of these pieces are?

Martine Volmar: Yeah, I mean, a lot of my art, it's things that resonate, right. So, it's definitely a lot of pictures of black women just getting it done. And not just in that, like, we have to be strong black women, but, like, the humanity of us. And also, just the different pieces. Like, I have a painting from Haiti, and it's just the women at the market, which is like the classic, like, Haitian painting that you'll see in every Haitian household. There's, like, the women at the market. I like to be surrounded by black folks and black folks that are doing things, that have done things, and just little bits of it. There's music. I can look at a piece and be like, oh, I remember where I was when I got that. Or, I remember why I got that. I remember why this one kind of spoke to me, and things like that. So, it's stuff that. That's motivating because you're humans. You're up and down. Sometimes you're good, sometimes you're not. You need to be surrounded by things that will lift you up.

Matt Bowles: Absolutely. And your bookshelf, the same. I mean, absolutely incredible. I spent, like, the first 30 minutes in here just perusing and browsing your bookshelf, and I was like, oh, I remember when I used to have a bookshelf with a lot of the same books, actually. I'm like, oh, and you have actually pulled out the bell hooks book, who unfortunately passed away. Do you want to share a little bit about who bell hooks was and what her work meant to you?

Martine Volmar: For me, it's the ones that came before us, you know, like, one of the things you said is just me being a writer, but I'm a writer that writes mostly for myself and have put a little bit outside of the. Into the world, but not as much of it as I should. And I think when we look at black women writers and the ones that came before us that hold a mirror that tell us to take up the whole space and not to shrink ourselves, right. And I come up and we're of this. We're about the same age, so we came up in a time where it's like, you have to figure out what the game was and you did what you needed to do to play it.

And I think we've moved into this moment where it's like, now, why don't we just flip the board? Why do we have to conform ourselves to these things to fit in, to navigate? Why don't we just change the rules? Why don't we just change it? Why don't you just get up from the table? I don't even need to be at the table. I have my own room, my own table, my own house, my own everything. And I think a lot of these black women that came before us, these writers, you think about bell hooks, you think about Toni Morrison, you think about my North Star, Maya Angelou, they pave this way of just like, you don't have to be this one thing. You can be all of the things, and you show up as your full self in every room. If you're in the room, you belong there, first of all. And it's just that. So, bell hooks means that to me. It's just like the people you go to when they need somebody to kick your ass sometimes, you know, because she didn't pull punches.

Matt Bowles: A hundred percent she did not. I actually had the privilege of meeting Bell Hooks on two different occasions. I mean, the woman was extraordinarily prolific. I mean, she started writing in the very early 80s, I think her first book came out, and she published 40 books.

Martine Volmar: That's a lot.

Matt Bowles: I mean, extraordinarily prolific. And I came across her work for the first time probably in around the late 90s. And that was really significant for me. I mean, in terms of reflecting on white masculinity, in terms of reflecting on class privilege, in terms of reflecting on American privilege and in a global context and all of that. And so, for me, it was one of the main pivotal influences that led me to a lot of other people that I then would subsequently read. But Bell Hooks, I can really remember the first time that I came across her work, and I was like, wow. And it was really important to me. And I've been recommending it to a lot of other folks because I think it's very important for white folks, and white men in particular to read Bell Hooks.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, I think it's important for a lot of people to read a lot of things, right? You know, read Bell Hooks. Read from folks who are outside of you, who don't share your identity, who don't share your experience. However, that may be in all the different ways that intersects. Because I think it's really important. I think having the multi-phase lens of life is really important. And understanding that like your story is a singular story in a world full of billions of people. So, there are commonalities, there are differences. And you need to kind of understand that. Not that it erases conflict, but like understanding the roots of it is the only way to kind of get to the other side of it.

Matt Bowles: And you grew up in the borough of Queens, New York, which is probably the singular most diverse place on the planet of Earth. It is certainly the most linguistically diverse place.

Martine Volmar: I think we have like 6,700 languages spoken in Queens. Yeah, like that.

Matt Bowles: Something like that. And it is remarkable. And also, somewhere around half of the borough are foreign born residents of Queens. And so, when you walk around this borough, as I was doing today, it is just remarkable because it's like the entire planet of Earth condensed into one borough.

Martine Volmar: Yeah. I was trying to explain this to folks recently in Italy and they're just like, Italy has the best food. And I was like, you have good food, it's amazing. But what I like about Queens is I can travel the world here via food. I can go to China. My neighborhood is a bit of everybody, but it's Eastern European, Jewish or is a prevalent population here. Right. And then right next door you sleep into the Latin areas, right. So, it's going to be more South American and things like that. So, in the food that comes with that, like there's that's an Argentine butcher not too far away from here where I can go get some more seizure. And I go to the other side from a Jewish spot and get knishes in a proper matzo ball soup. Literally in the same little area you can do that. Like where I go to get my whiskey is in the much more conservative Jewish area.

So, stores in that neighborhood, sundown today, they're going to be closed. And you go to the whiskey shop. That whiskey shop has all of the Kosher wines. They also have all of the whiskey because you know, whiskey is kosher unless it's a finish in the wine thing. Well, we get to that, but it's just being able, able to hop to places and have different experience and really see the world. And I think that was so beneficial to my upbringing like I'm already dual cultured and landing in a place where I was immediately plugged into. You know, I meet folks from outside of New York and like, how do you even know all this Jewish stuff? I was like New York City public schools. Most of my teachers were Jewish. We had all the Jewish holidays. Like we understand it at that level also, we're eating all the foods. I meet desi folks. They're like, how do you even know the word desi? And I'm like, because I hung out with a lot of folks from that area of the world in high school. It's just one of those things. We got to see the world. Even if we didn't step away from the world, we still got to see the world a little bit. And I love that about Queens.

Matt Bowles: And can you talk a little bit about Haitian culture in particular and what it was like for your parents and your family and you growing up here in the role of Haitian culture in your life?

Martine Volmar: I mean, barter Queens that I grew up in had a lot of Haitians, so there's that right? We are kind of surrounded. And I think any immigrant kid will tell you this. Outside is whatever country your parents immigrated to. Inside, it's whatever country they're from. So, at home, it was Haiti and Haitian rules. And, you know, like, I don't think I had my first, like, sleepover until college. I was like, we can do sleepovers. I'm so excited. Like, where the hell did you come from? I was like, yeah, we didn't sleep over anybody's house that wasn't a cousin. That's just not done. So, inside the house, it was great, though, because, like, my cousins and I, we're complete trolls to each other. Nobody trolls you better than family because they know all your buttons, right?

And growing up would always be dissing a cousin because they said something or they did something, like, that's so Haitian, or, that's so American. The only people that know why saying that's so American that moment is an insult is someone who shares the identity. The only people who know what that's so Haitian in the moment means. Like, it's someone who shares the identity. Like, somebody outside of that. I would like. Wait, what? Like, but y' all are both. Yeah, it's like, yeah, we're both, but we're also neither completely

the other. It's kind of like making cake. Once you've mixed the ingredients and baked the cake, you can't separate them. So how do you pull out the Haitian part? How do you pull out the Queens part? And I say Queens because I'm from New York. People are like, wait for. You mean you're American? I was like, that's not what I said. I said, I'm from New York, from Queens. But that mixes into very specific experience.

But it also, for me, being Haitian American, but Also, just any immigrant. You grew up with two lenses because that's how the Haitians are going to look at this, especially from a certain generation, parents, generation. And then that's, like, how this society will look at it. And you had to navigate both at the same time. There was no learning one set of rules. And then you get into corporate America, which is very white. Now I have to figure out I have to have three languages of speaking and understanding and worlds to navigate. I think it's a really good experience in that you grow up being like, oh, people can have other stories. People can come. You know, I'm always interested of the why of people. Not necessarily. You know, I don't believe that means we have to give them a mic and listen to bs. Like, I don't need to be your audience.

But I'm a reader. I'm a lifelong learner. I'm going to research and try to understand why you're showing up the way you're showing up, even if I'm not going to give you the mic or the pleasure of an audience for your bullshit. Like, oh, that's what it's coming from. All right, bet. Got it. People don't know that, right? They don't know that about you. It's like, yeah, you're coming at me. And I can tell you don't read things. I'm coming from a lived experience, plus scholarly, kind of like, I read about it and I live things and I try to read more. And like I said, lifelong learner.

Matt Bowles: How did your interest in world travel develop, when you think back when you were growing up?

Martine Volmar: Easy. I was going back and forth between Haiti and New York my entire childhood. So that's how it started. Like, I grew up being on planes, always having a passport, like, always going. And if once we stopped going to Haiti as much, then it was going up to Boston to see the family have Canadian cousins, it was going to Montreal, so were always going. And the thing that would happen every summer is, like, some member of the family got the kids, right? So, like, every summer, I think up until I got my first summer job at, like, late high school, I was up in Boston, my Boston cousins. And while I was in Boston, we always went to Canada to see the Canadian cousins. And Boston side of the family is my dad's side, and New York is my mom's side. In Canada, it was both sides. So, I would go up with the Volmars and then end up seeing the Josephs, which is my mother, and seeing all of that. So, it's Just one of those things where I was always traveling as a kid.

Matt Bowles: I feel like a lot of kids, especially immigrant kids, do the travel thing to go back to the homeland to see the family. And it doesn't always necessarily correspond to wanting to go out and see the whole world and learn about all of these cultures and go to all of these different countries and continents and have all these experiences. And so, when you think about your travels now and you reflect back on 40 plus countries and all that, what was the impetus or the inspiration that made you want to go on your own as an adult and just see cultures that were totally different from yours, that no family connection at all?

Martine Volmar: I think it's the curiosity. I don't know if you saw it on my desk. I have a little post it that, that's my motto and it says, lead with curiosity, move with courage and act with kindness. It's a curiosity. I'm always curious. And my curiosity has more or less been focused on people and food also. I think it's food. And then the people came second. And I was like, if I beat different people, I'll have different kinds of

food. So, I got to go find the people and then they'll lead me to the food. I'm not going to say that's a little part of it. That's a big part of it. I want to eat the world, right? So, I'm going to go everywhere to find out all the different ways. And I talked about like the sort of dual that I grew up with, being dual cultured. That made me realize, like, well, how many more lenses are there and what are the things that are different and what are the things that are the same? I'm really landing in Vietnam and we're on the bus, we're going to drop us off to accommodations. Like I've never been here before.

But everything about it feels familiar. Everything about it feels like home. Like the energy of the place just felt very much like Haiti to me. And halfway around the world. Totally different culture. But there was something about it that was just like, oh, here it is. Oh, here's how we move differently. And you know, it's like, is the world organized like latitude or longitude? But if you think about the little band around the world, sometimes, like there's such commonalities that you're just like, oh yeah, that big mass of land did just separate. And I guess we must have kept some stuff. It's just insane. Like, why does every immigrant kid have the same story? Is it the type of person, is it that immigrates I always think that there's a protect, there's a certain kind of person that leaves their home to go somewhere else.

Because no matter where you go and how much you want to be somewhere else, home is always going to be home, right? So maybe that's what it is. But it's just funny, like, why do, like I talk to other immigrant kids and you're just like, oh yeah, us too. Wait, you too? Like, you just whole other, you know. One of my friends' tweets, she's Vietnamese, we have conversations like, how are we the same person? How did we have the same experience growing up? Like, yo, did they talk? Is there like an immigrant parent, like WhatsApp chat that we don't know about? Also, why do the aunties all send you things on WhatsApp? The prayers on WhatsApp across every culture? Why?

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. Well, you and I, we know each other because we both did the Remote Year program and we're in the alumni network. Shout out to Remote Year. That was your Vietnam experience that you were talking about, was part of your Remote Year trip, right? I mean, just for folks that aren't familiar with Remote Year, this is a 12-month program which brings a community of remote professionals together who initially don't know each other. And then you travel the world for 12 months together across four continents and you live together for a year. Remote Year provides the accommodations and the airfare and the transportation and all of that kind of stuff. And then they have a program lead that goes with you the whole time and they have staff on the ground in each location and all of that. And you experience the world together for the course of a year. So, for your remote year, your 12 months end remote Year, what were sort of the biggest highlights for you when you think back?

Martine Volmar: Food. It was my first time in Asia and the 12-month program I specifically picked, and I picked it based on, I think there was only one city on there. I'd been to before and it had been like 10 years since I'd been there. So, I purposely picked it because I hadn't been to any of those places. And for me, like, I'm always chasing culture and I'm always chasing foods. I'm like, I want to eat well. So, highlights would have to be the places where I was able to actually connect with locals because it was like a bunch of us traveling, it was a very American group. And my whole thing is like, I don't get out of this country to hang out with y'all. Like, I don't want to. I want to be in a places where, like, I'm the only. And especially in places where, you know, like, I speak French, I speak Spanish. Spanish, French and English will get you through a lot of the world. And it was weird being in Asia. I was like, oh, is this how the rest of y' all feel, not being able to communicate? I don't like this.

So, I like to go in places where sometimes, at least temporarily, when I'm in a new culture where I'm the only. Because when you're the only, you're not catered to. You're just. You might be welcomed as a friend and things like that, but they don't change how they interact for you. If a group of Americans walk into a place, the place becomes American. Everything changes. But if one walks in, you really get to kind of just be someone at someone else's table. And I really like that experience. So, for me, it was absolutely the food cultures that were really different. I love Vietnam. It was interesting to go places where I'm a kind of a history nerd and international relations and all this stuff. So, it was really good to go someplace and be like, oh, I read about this. Oh, and here it is. And Cambodia was incredibly powerful for me because I was an international relations major that had a concentration in ethnic conflict. And you go to Cambodia and the genocide that happened there. I read way more about genocide than an average person should. That doesn't work anymore. Some kind of industry around that.

But it was interesting to meet people on the ground where, you know, like, this happened in the late 70s, like 76 around there. And it's us, like, it's our parents, and it would have been us as kids or just about getting born or toddlers, like, around that age, to meet people. And everybody you met, every single person you met, had someone on one side of that. And then in seeing how a country now has to come together on the other side of it, right. Usually when you talk about genocide, there's a very clear kind of ethnic, religious, something line. And that one there wasn't. There really wasn't. So, it was interesting. I'm fascinated by the reasons we come up with to destroy each other. But that was powerful to see and to really experience that. And you go under tours and whatever. Like, I mean, you go on some of these and you just like, okay, it's history. It's kind of interesting. You kind of move on. But to talk to people and who talk about, like, oh, here's my mom, who was da da da. And here's what that means, and here's how that's still impacting today. Like, we got to do better. We got to learn from that. And seeing how that's progressing is fascinating to me.

Matt Bowles: Totally agree. I went to Phnom Penh for a month as well, in Cambodia, and agree 100%. I mean, that experience shook me to my core as well, going through that. And you can go on a tour of the killing fields, which I did. And then you can also go on a tour of the school.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Which became the torture prison, which is now a museum. And then there were also survivors that you can meet while you are there and speak to them and talk to them, which is an extraordinary experience. And then one of the things that I took away from that moment, first of all, I mean, just in terms of your point about the recency, I mean, the people that were involved with committing this genocide were still being prosecuted into the 2000s. I mean, this is like an incredibly.

Martine Volmar: Still to this day.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, still to this day. It's an incredibly recent thing. One of the things, though, that I walked away with, which I really appreciated, is that they emphasized at the end, as you're leaving, that there's nothing culturally or religiously or ethnically specific about genocide, and there's nothing historic or like a long time ago about it either. And they gave examples of all different historical genocides, including the Native Americans, by the way, which I appreciated. And these are contemporary genocides that are currently going on now, as you read this. And they just listed out different genocides that are now being conducted around the world. And I thought it was just so powerful that they chose to show what happened in Cambodia and then to say, and what you need to take from this is to be aware and take a stand against

this happening in other places, because it's still happening, and it can happen again at any time in any country, between any people.

Martine Volmar: A really good analysis of this is. And I don't have that book on the shelf anymore because I think I'm pretty sure I said I gave the. To somebody to read. I do that a lot sometimes. I replace this with Samantha Power, who was the ambassador to the UN under Obama. She wrote this book called A Problem from Hell. And she goes through the genocide through the ages, and sort of the story of trying to get genocide categorized and defined by the UN and then post that. It's like, okay, well, we just have to agree on what it is, right? So, they do all this stuff, all these meetings to talk about what it is, and they finally decided on what it is, and then talks about, like, the genocides after that, how they kept saying, well, it's not that. Like, we defined it, but, like, we're going to chip away at the definition so that we don't act. And that's the thing sort of in life, it's, be honest with yourself about the things you care to act on and the things you don't care to act on. Don't explain it away and say how it's not X, Y and Z. Just say you don't care. You don't have to say it out loud. Say it to yourself. Be honest. I think that is the thing that moves me. Like, what am I not doing? That's why they keep happening, because we keep. And collectively, we still don't care 100%.

Matt Bowles: I also want to ask you about the place where you and I met in person for the first time.

Martine Volmar: Hey.

Matt Bowles: We're both traveling in Kenya, and we met up for some whiskey, in fact, in Nairobi. And I want to ask you about your Kenya trip and how your experience was there.

Martine Volmar: Kenya was amazing. Also, the Kenya Strip is how sometimes I wish I could plug in to places that deeply. So, I went to Kenya because one of my remote year friends who was in my group, hey, shout out us, AKA Immaculate. I'll tell you the story of why we call each other us. And it was her sister's wedding, and we were having this zoom call one day, and her sister, like, popped into the background. It was like, come to my wedding. And we're like, bet we're coming. Don't invite me to your wedding. Kidding around in Kenya and think, I'm not going to book a flight to come. I'm coming. I travel for weddings. It's a trip. It's a vacation.

So, we were actually in Kisii, which is on the other side of the country from Nairobi, in the village. And their parents have this house that's on this farm and seeing actual, like, tea plants, right? Like, I've been drinking tea for years. I don't think I'd actually seen a tea farm. Looks like. And it's like, oh, yeah, we're going to have goat for the wedding, and we're going to kill the goat. And I'm like, oh, wait, don't kill the goat. I'm that person that likes to know where my food comes from. I'm not squeamish about it. If you can eat it, you should know how it's killed. Now, I'm not going to do it because there are people for that. I'll cook it, though. So, it was kind of interesting to really just be plugged in, right? You know, like, I talked about how I like to be the one that's, like, invited to the table and sort of brought into and treated as family, but I don't want to be catered to.

And I think when you go someplace like that and it's like, hey, this is how we have breakfast. We go see grandma, and because, you know, everybody has, like, the incredible garden of the avocados. Okay. You talk about avocados pulled from the tree that morning. Every meat that we ate, like a chicken or whatever, got killed that day. Just being that close to your food is really fascinating to me. I think knowing where it comes from and knowing and seeing how the work is put into it, but really just getting to just be one of the people. It was just great to be of just one of the folks joking around with someone's family.

Kind of felt like I was a long-lost cousin for a second, and I had a lot of fun. Kenya was great. I was sad to go back to Nairobi because I was just like, a bit of the, like, Westernness comes back once you're in a city, right? Not saying that it's not the village doesn't have all the things, but there's a different feel to a city. I'm a city girl through and through, a thousand percent. And no matter the culture, a city is a city is a city. So, it was great to kind of, like, be on the other side of that without the distractions of a city. To really just like, be in the moment and see all of the things that city folks don't really plug into.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, I agree. Kenya was amazing, and that was a great crew that you were with, and we had such a fun night. I also want to ask about your experience in my homeland of Ireland.

Martine Volmar: The land of ire?

Matt Bowles: Where whiskey was invented, by the way.

Martine Volmar: You know, y' all started a thing, you know, who does it better? Okay, Team Scotland all the way. Hey, I'm try to go back to Ireland. They're going to be like, oh, team Scotland, huh? You don't need to be here.

Matt Bowles: But you went to the source. You went to Ireland. You visited; you saw where it all began.

Martine Volmar: The only place where Guinness tastes good.

Matt Bowles: That's true. Can I tell you that I studied abroad in Ireland in college, and I started drinking Guinness. Had my first Guinness ever in Ireland. I got onto it. I started drinking it the whole year. I take everybody that comes to visit me to the Guinness factory. The whole thing, right? I was like, Guinness is my stuff. I leave Ireland, come back here, I order a Guinness. I'm like, this does not taste like the Irish Guinness.

Martine Volmar: It doesn't.

Matt Bowles: Does not.

Martine Volmar: It's wrong even.

Matt Bowles: It does not. It tastes different in Ireland than it does outside of Ireland.

Martine Volmar: That is 1,000% correct, which is why I really only drink Guinness in Ireland.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, that's absolutely fair position. I would endorse that.

Martine Volmar: I may or may not have booked a flight via layover in Ireland so I could have a Guinness. I was, like, going to Paris. Oh, look at this. There's an option to layover in Dublin. Done. We'll have Guinness.

Matt Bowles: You have traveled pretty extensively, though, around Ireland. You've been up to the north, you've been to Belfast, you've been out west, you've been to Galway. How has your experience been overall?

Martine Volmar: So, I've been to Ireland, the Republic maybe, like, three times, and Northern Ireland once. And the very first time we went to Ireland, it was my girlfriends and I. There's, like, five of us. I think it was like five of us that roll through, and we were like, two cars, because we're just like. We don't want to be packed into one car. So, we booked two cars, and what we did is we flew into Dublin, and we're like, we're

going to go west. And we didn't book things until the day. So, it was one of the. I think it was probably one of my first unstructured trips where it's like, oh, wait, I'm booking the first night. So, we don't have to get there and figure out where we're sleeping. But after that, we booked the cars. We knew we had to get to Shannon by this date for our flight out, and that's it. And that was it.

So, we decided to just go straight west. Ended up in Galway. And when we're in Galway, the next, we stayed at this B&B. This is before 09, I want to say. So before, like, Airbnb was a thing. So, we would stay mostly at B&Bs back then. I still do B&Bs, depending on the amount of time I'm staying. If I'm staying somewhere for a couple of days, I try to find Airbnb. It's more if I have, like, an extended stay that I'd rather have my own kitchen. So, we go and we stay in Galway, and then we wanted to stay another night because Galway ended up being a fun town. And then they're like, no, we're all booked out. So, we found a spot in Salt Hill, and the reason that came up, and we'd like, okay, cool.

Back in those days, I was much more of a beer drinker than a whiskey drinker. I think that's right at the switch started happening, I was drinking more and more whiskey then, but I hadn't, you know, given up drinking beer. I still drink beer, but I can't handle the volume anymore. So, we used to go to Irish pubs a lot because they're just fun here in New York. I don't know. If you're not a New Yorker, you know about New York and Irish pubs, it's a thing. I can't speak to other cities, but in New York, it's a thing. So, we end up in Saw Mill, and we go into this one. So, one of our bartenders in New York had recommended. We're like, oh, tell us. We were asking all our bartenders, hey, we're going to Ireland. Give us your Irish tips. Like, where should we go? Whatever. We're not really planning. We just gathering information. So, if it comes up, we have it. So, this one guy was like, well, okay. Well, if you happen in Saw Mill, but I don't know why you'd be there. These two, I was like, we're like, just tell us. Okay, if we're there, we're. We'll give them a shout. If we're not, I didn't happen.

So, he tells us these two bars. We go into the first one, we're like, not quite our vibe. We're going to the other one. As we're walking in, I remember this woman's walking out, and she looks at us and she's like. Like, her face is definitely like, y' all lost. It's a local. Local pub, right? So, she's like, it's quiet in there, ladies. We're like, ah, it's fine. We just want to have a pint or two. It was after dinner, and then we're going to call it a night. That's it. So, we walk in, five of us women, and there's like four dudes at the bar and Stevie the bartender. And then we sit down, we're like, hey, we'll have pints of Guinness. Because we're in Ireland, and we'd been to the Guinness storehouse where they teach you how to build a proper pint and give you a little certificate. So, we're all like, we know the Guinness. We know the good Guinness.

So, we ordered pints, sit down, and I don't know. A little bit later, one of the guys comes up to us. He's like, hey, so I've got to know, what brings you guys to Saw Mill? They're like, y', all, again, not like, how did you find this bar? And we're like, well, we're gymnastics team and we're traveling. Like, just ridiculous answers we started giving them. And he's like. And he rolls with it, right? He's like, oh, okay. Asking us follow up questions, are you here for a competition? And then he's like, okay, that was fun. But, like, really, how did you find it? And I don't remember what the second story is, but there's like two or three rounds of this. Like, ridiculous. Just spin. And then we're like, well, we know Jack Murphy from New York. He owns this bar that we go to a lot. And he told us if we happen to be in Salt Hill, that we should stop here. And he was like, what? His dad used to own this bar. What? Friends of the house, pint for the ladies. Da, da, da. Now we're having a good time. We're buying them rounds. They're buying us rounds. And then at some point, I was like, you know, after, you know, you have enough alcohol, and you're like, I went to the Guinness storehouse. I have a certificate. I can build my own pint of Guinness. And then Stevie's like, well, come on

back here and do it. So, I'm behind a bar building Pinterest of kiddos. They're supposed to close, and they close. So, we get a lock in. Like, I mean, lock in or for locals who know, like, you don't get a lock in at a bar out the gate. That is not a thing. You got to be trusted, because they can get in trouble.

So, we get a lock in. We're staying there again, having the time of our lives. And at some point, Stevie's like, okay, well, I really have to shut down and get home now. It's like 3am and then we're like, okay, cool, cool, cool. Again, everybody was buying rounds for everybody. So, we're like, all right, can we get out to app? Oh, no, it's been taken care of.

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Martine Volmar: No, tab. I'm like, wait. But, like, we ordered a lot of things and we bought round. What? No tab. So, when we got off, we were. That bar was, like, a little bit away from the B&B where we were staying. And then, of course, there were no taxis because it's three ham and it's a small town. So, Stevie drove us home, the bartender. Unbelievable how we become instant locals in a bar in Ireland, get a lock in and get driven home by the bartender.

Matt Bowles: Incredible. What a wonderful Irish story though, right? Irish hospitality.

Martine Volmar: Insanely Irish. At the beginning of that trip, we'd met this other dude and we were just messing with him, right? Well. And he was like, oh, you're going here, you should go there. And we were like, well, you should just come with us. We have space in the car. You should totally come with us. And let me tell you, this guy was literally trying to figure out his work schedule. Could he make it work? Whatever. It was like, I mean, yeah, well, totally happy if you want to join. We're like that crew that I traveled, it was totally the kind of crew be like, oh, you want to come through with? Let's go. But so, Jono, the guy who originally come to us to that bar and at that bar and was just like, nah, got to know why you're here. We ended up keeping in touch with him for years. Like, he visited New York and would come and hang out with us. He would get many a 3AM phone call when we were out at the bar here in New York being like, Jono, wake up. What are you doing? And I remember the next year because this was in September.

So, the next year I went to Hamburg for my birthday. And my birthday is in February. And we're like, Jono, you should totally come. It's like, close. He couldn't. It was me and my cousin that went. My cousin had happened to be on this trip with us too, so she'd met Jono, so he couldn't make it. And he was like, I'm sorry, I can't make it. So, I get to Hamburg or get to my hotel. And he somehow, like, worked it out with my cousin, had a bottle of champagne waiting for me and I was like, with a note being like, I'm sorry I couldn't make it on your birthday trip. I'm like, who are you?

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Martine Volmar: How is this really?

Matt Bowles: Wow, that's so amazing. I love that story.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, he was our buddy for years. I have to check every once in a while, like, if I'm going near Ireland, I always check in with him and be like, hey, what are you up to?

Matt Bowles: That's incredible. Well, I want to hear a little bit about this transition from beer to whiskey and especially becoming the whisky connoisseur that you are today. Take us a little bit on that journey. How was that for you?

Martine Volmar: So, it was around that same time there was this whiskey bar light I would call it, giving my whiskey level now. I think it just worked out that I always used to drink beer and do shots of Jameson. That was my 20s beers and shots of Jameson always. And then they were like, oh, try this whiskey and try this whiskey. And they just realized. One of my bartenders realized, two of them realized that I try anything when it comes to I will. I was like, oh, let me try it. If it's good, I'll drink it. If it's not, you're not getting me to drink it again. Like I don't drink vodka because I don't like it don't taste good. So, they would keep doing that. And then I got to the point and I remember this very specifically is 2008 where I made it my New Year's resolution to learn more about whiskeys. So, I was just like, hey, I'm going to try as many different whiskeys as possible. And guess what? I kept that New year's resolution since 2008, every year I just renew it.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. You have lined up. I did a row of whiskey bottles on the table in front of us now and you have agreed to sort of do a whiskey tasting with me. You are, by the way, for all the listeners, knowledge, me by far number one whiskey advisor, consultant, educator, expert person that I come from come to try to learn about whiskey. So, I am super excited for this and I just thought we should start off just kind of however you want to start off with this so that we can start drinking these amazing looking whiskeys that have been sitting here for a while now.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, they've been sitting, so they've breathed a little bit. So, they would have changed. Right? It's kind of like a bottle of wine breathing. Same thing happens with whiskey. You take it out of the bottle, it breathes a little bit. And actually, the fun thing to take note of is as you get through a bottle, how it can change too because it's been exposed to the air much longer. So, we're starting, we're going to have some fun. We're doing three scotches, one scotch in quotes and one Japanese whiskey.

Matt Bowles: Yay.

Martine Volmar: So, we're starting with. This was my birthday present to myself, 2021. I haven't decided what the 2022 gift is just yet. And because I couldn't take a birthday trip, so I decided to go special. So, this is Bruichladdich Black Art. It's a 26-year-old. Yeah. You just.

Matt Bowles: She's about to feed me some whiskeys that are way better than anything I've ever tasted in my life. So, this is incredible.

Martine Volmar: So, this bottling is last year's release. I have not actually looked at what this year's release is. So, this is the edition 8.1. 94. So Bruichladdich. This one is not peated, and the bottle is kind of cool. It's in this black bottle and just do whatever. So Bruichladdich is this distillery on Islay, which is in Scotland, which is my favorite type of whiskey comes from Islay. It's peated. It just smells like a campfire at the beach. And I love it. And the funny thing is that not even all their whiskeys are peated, but you still get that I'm at the beach, salinity going on to them. You know, there's good things of COVID and bad things of COVID So this is a good thing of COVID So this is a Glen Scotia from Campbelltown. It's not a region you hear a lot about. I've been hanging out with the Glen Scotia a lot this year, but this is their festival bottle.

So, the regions have a festival every year. So, Islay is a festival. The Highlands have a festival. Speyside has a festival. And normally distilleries have a special bottling for that. And normally the only way you get it is if you go to said festival. But because of COVID there were no festivals. So, some of these bottles ended up, like, just on the market and actually being exported. So normally I wouldn't have this. So, this is a Bordeaux cask finish of a Campbelltown from Glen Scotia 10 year. It is phenomenal. I'm on almost at my third bottle

of this. I have it backed up twice and giving one as a present. So, I went out and bought another one because the two bottles that were here couldn't be touched. For others, it makes sense. Y' all. Makes sense. Then this one is. We're getting into, like, fun, independent bottler things.

So actually, for the Scotch game, and we can talk about how, like, the whiskey world has changed so much with pricing and things like that, especially like Bourbon. Jesus. But the independent bottlers, for Scotch especially is where a lot of good juice for a good deal can be found. There's a lot of surprises, a lot of interesting stuff happening. So, it's basically where people go to the distilleries. They buy barrels, and sometimes they buy the barrels and proof it down and bottle it, and that's it. Sometimes they'll age it differently. Sometimes they'll finish it differently. So, they can do. Once you buy it, it's obviously yours. You can do whatever you want with it. So that's where we are. So, this is a PM Spirits project. So, it says single malt whiskey and not scotch.

And the reason is because though they got the juice from Scotland, they finished it in France. So, once you know, the whole thing's got to be in Scotland for it to be in scotch. This is not that. So, we can't call it a scotch, but it's a whiskey. It's also like, I call it the rose bottle. I don't know if you've seen all the rose bottles of this glass top. I was like, yeah, see the French. The only a French will put the whiskey in a rose' bottle. Hi, Frenchies. I hear you. We got a Komagatake from Mars.

Matt Bowles: Amazing.

Martine Volmar: Because you said, do you have any Japanese whiskey? I was like, I got a couple. And then my restarted with this three of my favorites of this year. Four of my favorites of this year. This is a Caol Ila. And Gordon MacPhail is an independent bottler that I love their Caol Ila bottlings. I don't know what deal they have with Kalila if how they still are able to pull, I swear, the best barrels from that distillery. And this is finished in Hermitage cas. It's super interesting. Got a little peek to it. Nothing crazy. We can get too crazy after we finish these five. There's a lot of whiskey in this house. And please note, I'm definitely team drink better, not more. Because I hate being drunk, so it's got to be quality. We're not going to waste our time on subpar things.

Matt Bowles: I am blown away by this whiskey selection. I think I'm going to taste better whiskeys than I have ever tasted before today. I am super excited about. About the diversity. You picked an intentionally diverse range of whiskies, so I'm super excited. Yes.

Martine Volmar: We're going to go. It's going to get weird.

Matt Bowles: So, which one should we start with? We start with this way.

Martine Volmar: Yes. This order.

Matt Bowles: Okay.

Martine Volmar: In the order that you read. Kind of okay.

Matt Bowles: In the order that we introduce the whiskeys is the order that we're going to be drinking.

Martine Volmar: Yes. And you guys can't see this, but we have the bottles lined up in the same way as the glasses. Try to keep the glasses in order so you don't forget. There's also a bit of water. So, the thing I always say if you're whisking is to Nose it. See what you get out of it. And then after that, take a little sip. The first sip is what we call the marination sip. You got to get your palate used to it, right? Like, so it's the

first taste, you're going to be like, ah, it's this. And then the second one is, I think, when you really taste it. So, after you do that a couple of times, if you get halfway through, then I would add like a drop or two of water just to see how it changes. And the first few times you try an expression, do that so you understand, like, oh, this is what this is. And then after that, drink your whiskey however you want. Might I side eye you if you add a bunch of ice to your whiskey a little bit? But you know what? I too, was once young and ignorant.

Matt Bowles: All right, so let's just clarify this, the Martin Volmar standard for drinking whiskey is never put a cube of ice into it under any circumstances. Correct.

Martine Volmar: Under any circumstances. Even though I used to. That said, drink your whiskey however you want. Once you've bought it, it's yours. Now, do not come to my house and try to do weird things with my good stuff. Tell me what you're going to do with it, and I will find you the appropriate whiskey to do that too.

Matt Bowles: All right, we are drinking all of these neat today. Okay, so we're going to try the first sip.

Martine Volmar: Yeah. This is the Bruichladdich Black Art. Hello, friend.

Matt Bowles: Okay, that is amazing. I love.

Martine Volmar: Tell me, what are you getting on the nose? What's hitting you?

Matt Bowles: That is amazing.

Martine Volmar: You're a wine drinker. You can do this part. What's the feeling? I like to tell a story when I talk about whiskeys. So, what's the feeling? So, a lot of the times I actually categorize my whiskeys by days of the week. So, I'll be like, oh, this is a Sunday morning whiskey. Like right before you have to go to church. But you don't really want to, so you need something to fortify you. But you can't look visibly drunk. So, what are you going to get to start your day right? Or it's like Thursday night whiskey out with the girls and that kind of turn up. So what? I like to tell stories that way. Cause I think you can connect to a story and can connect to a feeling. And then you start just assigning whiskeys to that story and that feeling. And then you've come up with your own category. That's all it is.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. I love that. Okay. So now that I've taken a couple sips of this whiskey, you recommend that I drop a couple drops of water into it.

Martine Volmar: Literally two drops.

Matt Bowles: What will happen when I do that?

Martine Volmar: It's going to drop the alcohol level a little bit, and it's going to open up the nose a little bit. So, you're not going to necessarily be like, oh, this is all alcohol now. And the flavor notes will change.

Matt Bowles: Okay. So, I have drop. We have droppers.

Martine Volmar: Like eyedroppers.

Matt Bowles: Like eye droppers, but they're made for whiskey. Made for whiskey and a glass of water. So, I have dropped exactly two drops of water in here.

Martine Volmar: Okay.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. It does change the flavor profile a little bit.

Martine Volmar: And you could add, like, a little more to see, like, what it does to it. So that's how you start playing and being like, oh, then you figure out, well, what's the point that I like it? So, you don't need the ice. You just maybe want a little bit of water to get you to the flavor and, like, knock the alcohol back.

Matt Bowles: So is that, in theory, why someone might put a cube of ice to put it in, and then the first couple seconds of the ice touching it, it changes it, and they want to taste that.

Martine Volmar: Well, two things. They want that and they want it cold. You want water in it, and you want it cold.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: That's it.

Matt Bowles: But then what happens is it's too much.

Martine Volmar: It gets watered down.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: So, I mean, there are definitely a highball can be that. It can be, like, whiskey with, like, water. Like, that's a thing.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: And that can be a way for you to start your drink session. Right. You know, you have a highball whiskey with, like, water, skewer, soda, whiskey with whatever.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: Or just, like, sparkling water, like, you know, water. That's a fun thing to try.

Matt Bowles: Right?

Martine Volmar: And then that's just like, oh, I'm getting the soft, soft notes of the whiskey.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: And people who blend whiskeys are sometimes adding a lot of water to it because they don't want the alcohol to get in the way they're trying to get the flavor note.

Matt Bowles: So, these are all single malt?

Martine Volmar: These are all single malts, yes. I don't think I pulled a blend at all. I did not pull a blend.

Matt Bowles: Okay, so first of all, this first one we just had is what you described as a peated.

Martine Volmar: It's not peated. Bruichladdich is normally peated.

Matt Bowles: Oh, I see.

Martine Volmar: I have a few bottles of Bruichladdich up on the wall. They also make Octomore Series and the Octomore series are really peated. So, I actually have one of my favorite Whiskeys, the Octomore

6.3. And that thing has 300 plus PPMs, like the parts per million of like peat. This is how peaty it is. So, something that's actually labeled. You'll see some bottles. I have one up here that says, like Belacan, heavily peated. Generally, that means it's at least 50 ppm. So, we're talking about one that's 300 plus. That's just its own category.

Matt Bowles: Okay, so can we go back a couple steps and can you give a basic overview of whiskey? What is it? What are the different types of whiskey? What are the different regions that make good whiskey?

Martine Volmar: Whiskey is distilled beer. You make a beer, you distill it. That's whiskey. It's made from grains. Single malts are made from malted barley. And bourbon is made from mostly corn. And like the rule for bourbon, it has to be 51% corn. The balance of the mash bill and the mash bill is like, ratio of grain that you're using can be something else. So, you hear somebody say, like a high rye bourbon, it means that it has the 51% corn. Tick the box. But then the balance could be rye. Normally, bourbons and ryes will have a little bit of melted barley because that helps to kickstart the process. You have bourbons, you have ryes. Those are American whiskeys. You have scotch, which are Scottish whiskeys. Then there's the world whiskey category, right?

So, then there's Taiwan Kavalan. In Taiwan, there are the Japanese whiskeys, there are Indian whiskeys that are really good. Amrut is making some incredible whiskeys. You all got the Amrut spectrum. Phenomenal. Good luck finding a bottle of that. That's really. Stay out of that. That. There's Paul John, also from India. So, there's even in parts of the United States, like, a lot of the whiskey is coming back. I mean, it's kind of a big business. Everybody's getting into it. So, everybody thinks in the U.S. Whiskey. Kentucky. No, it's all over the country now. And once upon a time, it had been all over the country, right? So like Pennsylvania, Maryland used to be really big GRY producers back in the day.

So, we're kind of having this resurgence of people kind of claiming that back. So, the different kind of whiskeys are. Are if it's a scotch, it's got to be made in Scotland. It's Made with malted barley. It's like water grain thyme, right? Like that's always whiskey. Like water grain thyme. Make your beer, distill it. For bourbon, it's got to have 51% corn. For rye, it has to be 51% rye. There are other things that officially make it a bourbon. For something to be called a bourbon, it has to be made in the United States, not in Kentucky. People get that question around all the time. In the United States for something to be called a scotch. The whole thing has to happen in Scotland. So Japanese whiskeys, actually, they've just come out with like, legally kind of defined. This is what a Japanese whiskey is for. This whole time, it's kind of been like this open, wild west. Like you guys do what you want and you call it a whiskey. But actually, a lot of Japanese whiskeys are made very similarly to scotch. Can't call it a scotch, though.

Matt Bowles: And the Japanese whiskeys and the Asian whiskeys, are those newer in terms of their prominence and respect on the international whiskey scene?

Martine Volmar: I think scotch is the old dude of the party, like the old uncle. But Japanese whiskeys have been around. Like they didn't just start.

Matt Bowles: Sure.

Martine Volmar: But you know, you win some awards, all of a sudden people are like, oh, my God, it's a thing. So Japanese whiskeys and world whiskeys in general is where I need to turn my eye in terms of, like, understanding the depth of it. Yeah, I've been hanging out with scotch for a long. I started with bourbon and ryes. So, if you talk to me circa like 2010 or whatever, or 2012, I would have been like, and then this

bourbon and then this rye. And then all of these things. And now if you talk to me, I'm like, so scotch, though. So, I kind of like deep dive into one category and then move on. Not that I don't, you know, there's still bourbons and ryes on my shelf, but I don't have, you know, I probably have like hundreds of scotches. I don't have as many of those guys. Right. It's what I'm going to drink in the next little while. There are so many different kinds of whiskey. And I. I just always tell people, like, just find your door. Yeah, you find your door and it's like Alice in Wonderland. You go down into just Marvel.

Matt Bowles: I was in Tokyo and I went out to this place called the Whiskey library. And it was an all-whiskey bar. They served nothing but whiskey. And the menu is what they call the whiskey Bible. And they told me that they had 10,000 bottles of whiskey in that physical establishment. And this was the whiskey bible. Now I walk in there, I know incredibly little about whiskey.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: And so, there's these guys at the bar, they're walking by, they're drinking whiskey. Right. And they spoke English. Because they were there. They're all Asian guys, but I feel like some of them are Asian American and they were there on vacation or something like that. So, they spoke English. So, I'm like, between them and the bartender, I'm asking for recommendations. And of course, the prices are all over the board. I mean, they had things that were astronomically.

Martine Volmar: And bars like that. You really want to ask the price. Normally a lot of, a lot of regular bars, you could be like, ah, it's fine. I can probably handle it. Those bars and ask the price.

Matt Bowles: Totally. And it's actually really interesting. And I was asking for value, right?

Martine Volmar: Right. Yes.

Matt Bowles: For this price range, if I'm willing to pay up to this much, what is the best? What is the best value? And it was interesting because these guys were like, listen, let me tell you what I would recommend for that price. And this is where I discovered Kavalan from Taiwan.

Martine Volmar: Phenomenal.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. The guy was like, like, this is my favorite whiskey at this price point. Since I order it, I have bottles of it at my house. At this price point, this whiskey will blow your mind. It's called Kavalan. It's actually from Taiwan. It's not Japanese, but trust me, this is it. So, I order it and it blew my mind. I've been telling everybody about it ever since.

Martine Volmar: I know you walked in, you're like, you have some Kavalan? I was like, yes, I do. I'm not opening those bottles. Absolutely not.

Matt Bowles: You did say that. Although lucky for me, you had some insane bottles already open

Martine Volmar: If it makes you feel better, this one cost more than any of my capital.

Matt Bowles: I'm very appreciative.

Martine Volmar: But it was already open.

Matt Bowles: All right, so moving on to the second one here.

Martine Volmar: This is my current every day. I love, love, love this dram. This is a Glen Scotia. It's a 10-year-old finish and Bordeaux cast. It is a bit higher on the abv. So, when you add the water, depending on how it's landing for you, you might want to add a little couple more drops. I don't care. I like a high proof. So, this is at 56.1 ABV. So that one's big.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, that is. I can taste the difference.

Martine Volmar: But the Bordeaux, which is a very Much a very big wine you're tasting that it wraps it in a nice little pretty bow. This one's, like, so much fruitier. So much like just. Ugh.

Matt Bowles: Wow. Yeah.

Martine Volmar: This is every morning whiskey.

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Martine Volmar: Actually, good thing to know is in the morning is actually the best time to do tastings because your palate is refreshed.

Matt Bowles: Really?

Martine Volmar: You haven't killed it. Yeah. Like no coffee. You do your whiskey tasting.

Matt Bowles: Interesting. So, did you say I should do more than two drops in this one?

Martine Volmar: Always start with two.

Matt Bowles: Okay.

Martine Volmar: Taste it and then see what we land. And then you can add a couple more. You can't take water out. You can always add.

Matt Bowles: Okay, yes, fair enough.

Martine Volmar: We can also add more whiskey. We just drink half of that. Did I just not pour you enough?

Matt Bowles: We can always add more whiskey. I like that approach, Martine. I appreciate that. Remember, you can always add more whiskey.

Martine Volmar: You can't take the water out. You can add more whiskey.

Matt Bowles: I love that. So, I have to ask you now about the spelling of the word whiskey. Is there an E? Is there not an E? Is there sometimes an E? Is it always appropriate to spell it with either or is it sometimes appropriate to only use one?

Martine Volmar: I mostly only use one. Depends, right? So, scotches are spelled with the Y. No e. Irish and American tend to be spelled with the E. I forget which brand. I was asking that question earlier, and I didn't look it up because I do have that bottle here. There is one brand in the states that spells it with just the Y, but that's generally the rule. And the others, like Japanese, also spell it with the Y. But I think it's because they're taking their thing from Scotland. Not so much from. From the States. So that's where we are with it. I don't know. There's a definitive rule around it more than it is a general practice. So, you hated that dram? Totally, huh? It sucked.

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Martine Volmar: She just took that to the head. Yow.

Matt Bowles: I just moved back. I took my opening sip. I took my second sip. I double water, dropped it.

Martine Volmar: So, what did you think about it, Mr. There's no more whiskey in your glass?

Matt Bowles: I thought it hit a lot harder than the first one. The first one was like, oh, my goodness.

Martine Volmar: That's what we started. The first one. The first one is like a symphony that's been playing together for 100 years.

Matt Bowles: That's what it was. It was like a symphony that came together for 100 years. That's exactly what that first one was. That was crazy.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: The first one was crazy.

Martine Volmar: It's insane. People were just like; I don't even understand what to do by myself.

Matt Bowles: I was trying to figure that out when I was drinking it. I was like, damn. I don't think I've had a whiskey like that before.

Martine Volmar: When you have a truly balanced whiskey.

Matt Bowles: Oh, my gosh.

Martine Volmar: And you see all the notes, right? It's a symphony that's played together for 100 years, but you can still hone in on the violins. You can still hone in on the drums.

Matt Bowles: So, one of the things I'm going to do is I'm going to link up in [the show notes](#) of this podcast, the whiskies that we're tasting. And I want people to be able to see what they are. And then if they want to go and try them, buy them.

Martine Volmar: I mean, there's two of them you might find.

Matt Bowles: Well, this one maybe the other three inaccessible.

Martine Volmar: This one is whatever is on the shelf right now. Is it? Okay, so once it's gone, it's gone. This one's the same thing. But normally because of the price point of this one, you tend to find it.

Matt Bowles: What is the price point of that first match? Somebody can find that bottle.

Martine Volmar: So, The Brooklyn is 500.

Matt Bowles: 500 for the bottle.

Martine Volmar: For the bottle, the Glen Scotia is like just under 100. No, these are about 100 or around there. Same here. So, like 100, 110, maybe a little bit below this guy was 250.

Matt Bowles: The Japanese one is about 250 a bottle. The other three are about 100 a bottle. And then the first one we tried

Martine Volmar: was 500 and 100 a bottle is about average for a Scotch. Like, that's not an expensive Scotch. It's not a cheap one. But it's not. Like, I also have. Have \$30 bottles on there.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: One of my favorites, Bowmore, small batch made, rest in peace, because they don't make it anymore, was 35 bucks. And I used to drink it all the time until I went to buy another one, and they're like, that was it. I was like, y' all could have warned me. I would have bought more.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: So, price doesn't always dictate to your point about, like, buying for value with whiskey or even buying for age. So, yes, this is a 26-year-old, but that's not what makes it good.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: My favorite bottle from Bruichladdich is only five years old. So, it's just like, what are the flavor notes? How is it coming together? What about it? You know, sometimes it's like the symphony that's played together for a hundred years. And sometime it's like a jam session of musicians who are just riffing off of each other and just met the first night both for fun.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: What are you in the mood for?

Matt Bowles: Totally. All right, so this third one we're

Martine Volmar: about to try, this one, this is a six-year-old and it's a six-year-old that has a really interesting story because it's scotch that they pulled and then they finished it from Isle of Iran and then they basically distilled it in Scotland. Didn't age, it, didn't do anything. It's a new make. Send it to France. The French took it, split it up in three different foolproof single casks. So, they put. I'm reading it because I never remember the first fill ex-bourbon cask, a first fill ex Sherry Hogshead and a first fill peated ex bourbon. And then they mix it at the end. So, it's got a little bit like that. Three different kind of personalities that they then brought together. And it's just for a six-year-old, so it's interesting to me. I want to hear what you think about it before I color your perception.

Matt Bowles: I like it better than the second one. I mean, I know that nothing is going to be as good as the first symphony of people that have been playing together for 100 years. That cost \$500 a bottle that you just gave me a sip of that probably cost. I don't even know how much for like a sip of this whiskey, which was insane and just blew my mind. So, I feel like nothing is going to compare to the first one. But compared to the second one, I like the third one better.

Martine Volmar: It's a lower proof too.

Matt Bowles: Okay.

Martine Volmar: Although you finished the second one, so I don't think that's saying anything.

Matt Bowles: No, no, I'm going to finish them all. I like them all. There's not any that I'm like, oh, I don't like that. But if you're asking me like, which do I like better, I'll be able to tell you that.

Martine Volmar: Okay.

Matt Bowles: This third one I like better than the second one. This is not nice.

Martine Volmar: So, this one is more of a straight whiskey. There's no influence of wine or anything in it. So not so fruity. A little bit more herby, I think.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. The lower proof I can taste as well.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: The second one like lights you up when you drink it.

Martine Volmar: Well, you finish it before that happens as well. You start for a couple of drops and you add a little bit more. And you try to get to the point where you're like, oh.

Matt Bowles: Well, I did do that. I added two, then I took it, then I added two more. So, I had four total drops in there. I didn't want to, like load it down with like a half a cube of ice or something. I wanted to respect what it's supposed to be.

Martine Volmar: This is an everyday bottle. This is the kind of bottle, like if you did put it on the rocks, I'd be like, all right, whatever. I mean, you're making wrong decisions in life, but who am I to stop? If you went near this with an ice cube, I would kick you out of the house immediately.

Matt Bowles: Right? Yeah.

Martine Volmar: All right, so we have a little bit of peated happening here. I'm going to have a little water because a little Pete, but it's not a lot. It's just light touch.

Matt Bowles: So, let's talk a little bit about these flavor profiles and the different types of flavor profiles that you might find in whiskey. So, what does it mean if it's peated? What should people be tasting for?

Martine Volmar: So, whiskey gets its flavor from like every step of the process, right? So, the grain obviously imparts flavor. The barrel that it's put in imparts flavor, but also what you do to the grain of the event. So, a peated whiskey is use malted barley. So, what they do is in Scotland, peat, which is, I don't know, thousand-year-old dirt. But basically, they take that, they cut it up into little bricks and that's what they would use in the fireplace and whatever. So, you go some places around winter and you smell it in the air. It's like, you know, as a peat box. You look at these rows and rows of green fields and right underneath it is just thousands of years of things decaying into the earth. They use that as fuel. So where other people would use firewood, that's what's used. So, you use that to then smoke the barley. And there's a very specific amount.

So, you might be like, hey, smoke it to X, X, X. And that's going to give you more of the Pete or less of the Pete into the final product. And then the other place where it pulls your flavor is going to be from the barrel. So, a lot of scotch actually is finishing ex-bourbon barrels because the rule for bourbon is you have to put it into a new oak barrel every single time you want to reuse a barrel. It's not bourbon anymore. It has to be a new oak barrel. So, then you have all these barrels that are used. What are you going to do with them? Scotland's like, yow, we don't get that rule over here. Send them over. And I think that happened. They used to use sherry for a while, and then there was a war. They got mad at each other, so they weren't getting the sherry from Spain.

So, then they switched to the Americans and got all of the battles from there. So, they still use sherry. So, sherry's is like a big thing. You can tell when you have a sherried whiskey because it's like, big. It's fruity. For people who are just getting into it or who are a little intimidated, it's a little bit more approachable, I think. Think I would give a sherry bomb to someone who's just starting. I'd call them adult juice boxes. Not an insult, but because when were you ever mad about a juice box as a kid? But it's a different category. It's not bad or good whiskey. It's what are you in the mood for? Right? So sometimes you want a sherry bomb. Sometimes you want something that's a little lower abv. Sometimes you want something that's going to, I don't know, kick you in the face a little bit. What are you in the mood for? You going to a punk rock show? Going to hip-hop show? You going to the symphony? Is it the opera? What are you in the mood for? I had to bring in the hip hop because he really wants me to be a hip hop head. And I'm not.

Matt Bowles: She went there on me.

Martine Volmar: I had to. I had to because you brought it up so much. I was like, I'm get you.

Matt Bowles: I was like, we're in Queens. You grew up here in the 90s. This sacred ground for East Coast New York City has.

Martine Volmar: It's my soundtrack. That's it. Hip hop is my soundtrack. That's all it is.

Matt Bowles: I feel you.

Martine Volmar: So, we're going to go to Komagatake. We're going to go to Japan. We're gone jump from France and we're going to go to Japan.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it.

Martine Volmar: So, it's going to be a little different. I super love the things that Komagatake does. Next time you're in New York, we'll go to my whiskey bar. Because they have a few different expressions that I cannot find on the shelf anywhere that are chef's kiss.

Matt Bowles: I am primarily, I think, in the Japanese context, familiar with the Suntory's and the Yamazakis. I do not think I have tried this one before, but it smells amazing.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, Mars does a lot of good stuff.

Matt Bowles: When I go to Japan now, I am just so excited to drink whiskey there because it's so insanely good.

Martine Volmar: It's insanely good. And they're also whiskey drinkers, so they bring in all this stuff.

Matt Bowles: Oh, that's really nice.

Martine Volmar: This is probably the heaviest one we've had for me.

Matt Bowles: It's really nice. And I like the bouquet. Do you call it a bouquet?

Martine Volmar: Sure. Call it what you want. That's the whole point of whiskey. You call it what you want. You use the words that make sense to you.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: We don't have to be pretentious about it.

Matt Bowles: I'm excluding the first whiskey because, as I said, I don't think I'll ever taste a whiskey that was that good, because that was insane. But I think that I am so far progressing on the I prefer this whiskey scale. Well, okay, so the third one I liked more than the second one. And I believe this I like better than the third one.

Martine Volmar: So, this one's richer. It's got a bit more spice. It's also got a bit more sweet to it. And, like, if you look at the legs on it. Look at that. This thing's oily as hell. It is coating that glass.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: The other ones weren't as heavy.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: This one almost has no legs.

Matt Bowles: Maybe. Also, it's just romantically taking me back to Japan.

Martine Volmar: And this is at 50. So, this is 100% proof. This is more than this one and

Matt Bowles: this one, but not more than the second one.

Martine Volmar: Now, this one was at 56.

Matt Bowles: Right. I mean, the Japanese whiskeys, they're just so elegant. Like, they're just amazing.

Martine Volmar: There is an ease to Japanese. And I say that if you think about Japanese food.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: It's very delicately balanced.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: So, for me, this actually falls a little bit outside of what I think of as Japanese whiskey. It's a little heavier. It's got a little bit of spice. It's not quite as delicately balanced. But a lot of the times for me, why in the past, having gotten into Japanese whiskeys and again, I feel like they've been doing a lot more experimenting, more around my palate, is it's too easy. And if it's too easy, you just keep drinking and you're like, oh, shit, we just killed the bottle. How did that happen?

Matt Bowles: It's amazing.

Martine Volmar: And that's not a bad thing. That's just a like, hey, I have to work and have a life and pay bills and not be killing bottles of whiskey.

Matt Bowles: Japanese whiskey is just too good.

Martine Volmar: It's like, you know, certain whiskeys you like. Nah, this goes down a little too easy. I needed to kick back a little bit so I remember what I'm drinking so I can be a functioning member of society. Right.

Matt Bowles: But this is definitely not smoky or PD or any of those things.

Martine Volmar: No, but it's, like, rich. You could almost have this with think of, like, winter desserts. Right. I almost want this with, like, a sticky toffee pudding or, like, baking spices. Like, it's giving you that things are baking in the house, and I'm going to have a dream that goes with it.

Matt Bowles: Yes. Yeah. I just love just Japanese whiskeys. There's something about just the bottle and the writing on the bottle. And my whole experience just drinking whiskey in Japan has just been so marvelous that I also feel like there's, like, a sentimental, emotional reconnect. I'm like, oh, my gosh.

Martine Volmar: So, I have a weird one that I'm going to give you. Well, I actually, I'm not going to color your thing. I would be interested to see how. What you think of it. I do have another Japanese one on the shelf.

Matt Bowles: Oh, my gosh. Well, we can always get more whiskey. Wasn't that you were.

Martine Volmar: We can always get more whiskey. If you come to Martine's house, there was always more whiskey. I'm always excited to have people over that, like, enjoy whiskey because it's so much more fun if you actually like the thing.

Matt Bowles: So, let me ask you this, when you are talking with people that are very early in their whiskey journey, and let's just say they tell you, Martin, I don't like whiskey, how do you handle that? How do you approach that? Because maybe they've only had, like, Jack Daniels or something.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, I don't like Jack Daniels. There are some Jacks actually do. Like, I, for a long time was like, I don't like jack. And then I had a one like, actually this a couple months ago at a whiskey thing, I was like, I'll try this expression. I was like, oh, I guess I can't say I don't like Jack anymore. So that's the other thing too. Like, different brands and distilleries will put out different expressions. So, you keep trying, and then over the years they might change it. So, you keep trying. You might find that they thing. So, the thing I say, it's like, if you think you don't like whiskey, my next question is, well, what do you like? Right? Is it beer? Like, if you're a rum drinker, you like whiskey, you haven't found your door. Now. If you're a vodka drinker, I don't know what to do with you. I'm just going to be like, yep, walking away. I don't know that life. Don't know what it is. That's a very different kind of thing. If you're a tequila or mezcal drinker. If you're a mezcal drinker, especially you like whiskey.

Matt Bowles: Oh, yeah.

Martine Volmar: So, a lot of the times it's. There's so much in this category. There are so much different types. What's a scotch? What's a whiskey? What's a. What are all the things. And people just kind of get overwhelmed and its decision, like frozen, like it's too many. It's kind of like if I walk into a whiskey bar that has 10,000 bottles, I freeze.

Matt Bowles: Right?

Martine Volmar: Not because I don't know what I want. I don't know what's well because I want it all. And I can't have 10,000 whiskeys because death. So, then it becomes like, okay, right. All right, that's 10,000. I can maybe do like eight if I do 1-ounce ports. Okay. Where do I want to go now? What's the experience I want to have now?

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: So, it gets to that and I think if you think you don't like whiskey, find somebody who loves it, who's into it, and then be like, here's what I think. Here's the flavors I like. You can always match you to

flavors, and then we'll find your door. I always taught people with the Balvenie 14 Year Caribbean Cask, always. I didn't start with that because I currently am out of that bottle. I know it's sad I ran out of whiskey, but when I do that, that bottle, I love it because it's got all the notes playing very nicely together. So, it's got a little bit of spice, it's got a little bit of sweet, it's got a little bit of everything. It's not too high in alcohol, so it's a good one.

So, people are like, oh, no, it's too strong. Okay, you want something sweeter? I'm going to take you to a bourbon. When somebody says it's too strong, usually it's like, eh, it's not sweet enough. Yeah, add sugar, all of a sudden, it's fine. Fine proof doesn't even matter at that point because I can give you something that's high proof, that tastes like it's not hyper, and you can have something that's a lower proof, that tastes like its high proof. So, it's just. What have they done with the grains? What are they done with the barrels? Like I said, all of those are moments of flavor. And you can kind of like play with the dials of what shows up.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: It's finding your door. And once you find your door and you know, oh, I like this. And don't worry about, you know, like I said, like, well, what are you getting under nose? You're like, I don't do. No, I was like, well, figure out your categories. Like I said, I do days of the week and I do a story.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: The black art, it's like a symphony that's been playing together for 100 years. You know what a symphony sounds like? You know, when you've heard one that sounds beautiful, that are so in sync, like, you know, you know what that is. And you get that feeling. You get the goosebumps.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: Right. So, once I say that done. I know what that feeling is.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. That bottle is crazy.

Martine Volmar: So, then you know, okay, that's that. So, when you have another one that's like close to that, oh, that's a symphony. Or that's what I create your own category. And then once you have that and you start putting things in your little categories, then you can see what the whiskey world is talking about.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: How are they talking about the bottles you like? Then you start linking that up and then you can get into the like, oh, I'm getting this.

Matt Bowles: And it's similar to wine.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Which is that there's a massively diverse array of them. And just because you tried one that you didn't like and you tried some wine, whatever, like janky, cheap type of whatever wine, you're like, oh, I don't like wine. No, you didn't like that bottle of wine, but perhaps if you try this other one, you might enjoy it. And the same with whiskey.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: But getting someone to guide you on your journey, I think is a really good piece of advice.

Martine Volmar: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: If you go into a wine store and you tell the sommelier that works there, I once had this wine and this is the one, and I like this one. Can you recommend something else that's similar? Or tell them, I don't like these types of wine. Can you recommend something that I might like? You know, giving them any information at all and allowing an expert to help to select some things that you might like in that category. Which is why I love hanging out with you so much, because you keep putting these insane whiskeys in front of me. Like, oh, yeah, you might like this. Like, oh, yeah, I do, actually.

Martine Volmar: Now you're figuring out what you like.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. But when you go into a whiskey bar or you go into a wine bar, or you go into a wine store, or you go into a store where there's someone who's an expert in the category, they really. And they're interested in it.

Martine Volmar: Find somebody who loves it, not somebody who's just, like, there. Find somebody who loves it. Experts can be anybody from someone who's, like, studied it for years to someone who's just further along in the journey than you. Right. Because they've kind of walked the path enough that they know, like, oh, is the thing.

Matt Bowles: Totally.

Martine Volmar: And just approach it with just curiosity. So, as you mentioned, like, 2008, I made it my New Year's resolution to try as many as possible.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: That's what got me to know, like, what's the thing that hits for me?

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: And every time I go to a whiskey bar, the first thing I do is look, any bar. Not even just whiskey bars.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: What do they have that I haven't tried? Oh, I don't know that one. I don't know that one. Those are the ones I'm ordering every time.

Matt Bowles: And I find too, like, through traveling. And I want to ask you about this with your whiskey experience as well. But, like, for me, with wine, for example, I was just this month. In fact, yesterday, I was standing in a wine vineyard in Mendoza in Argentina.

Martine Volmar: I've stood in a wine vineyard in Mendoza, Argentina.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, you have? It's a fun time drinking wine and

Martine Volmar: then getting on bicycles afterwards. Highly recommend.

Matt Bowles: And a month before that, I was in the Piedmont region of Italy drinking either Barolo or Barbaresco, both made from the Nebbiolo grape. Two of pretty unequivocally, I would say, the top five, if not top three wines in all of Italy, and getting people to talk to me about them and try different, different ones and different styles and different ages and different vineyards and all of this. And you go and you're sitting there in these extraordinary scenic vistas, looking at these wine vineyards, and then you're drinking some of the best wine you've ever had in the world that you've ever had, and then you're learning about it while you're drinking it. And so, for me, I love that. You and I both love France. I have been wine tasting in Bordeaux and in Burgundy.

Martine Volmar: I've done the Burgundy with insiders. So it was at cabs that are not open to the public.

Matt Bowles: I got to hear about this.

Martine Volmar: Oh, my God. There was a cab that we went to. I called the Disco Cab. Literally, they had Saturday Night Fever, like, disco floor. They had installed a disco floor in their cab, and they had a baby grand. And I was like, what kind of parties go on here? And how do I get an invite?

Matt Bowles: People need to understand that have never been to the Burgundy region of France. You're talking about, first of all, the birthplace of the pinot Noir grape 5,000 years.

Martine Volmar: It's my favorite. The midnight, like, it's so minerally and salty and gorgeous. It's my favorite.

Matt Bowles: Medieval villages that might have 400 residents, but 40 wineries. And you're going down into these basements in these medieval buildings, doing tastings in these cellars, and they got bottles with cobwebs on them. And I mean, it's crazy.

Martine Volmar: It's insane. It's nuts. Yeah. I had a non-public Burgundy tour, and it was my favorite. I want to do that again.

Matt Bowles: But when you go and then you have the travel experience, and then you pair the travel experience with the tasting and the education from the experts who've been doing this their entire life, and they're talking to you about it, and they're giving the history and they're talking to you about the tasting and all that kind of stuff. I mean, it's just amazing. How can you not learn?

Martine Volmar: And they're passionate about it.

Matt Bowles: So passionate.

Martine Volmar: It's one of those things. And you're seeing more of the this. Well, where I have, I see it the most. And not saying it's not happening anywhere is like in the American whiskey scene, where a lot of people are like, oh, bourbon's a thing. American whiskey is a thing. That's a good investment. I'm going to get into the industry, too. You have all these smaller producers, or actually a lot of. They're buying the juice and re bottling it. Because you got to age your whiskey for a few years before it comes out. Right? So, getting into whiskey is really expensive because it's a lot of upfront cost with no revenue.

So, buying juice and bottling it, that's not an issue. I mean, a lot of my things for Scotch is independent bottlers, which is basically buying juice and bottling it. But you are seeing the people who are into it because they think it's a money thing. And you're seeing the people who are into it because they're passionate about it. And there's a difference into whether or not you even interested in their product. And

there's a difference in the product. If you're just like, well, I thought this was just a good business idea because I'm an entrepreneur and this is the next thing that I want to work on. Cool. Invest in it. Hire people who are passionate about it. Never put anybody in front of consumers who aren't passionate about it.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: We can tell. And when you say dumb shit, like, well, we got to do lower ABV because women, I'm like, okay, what does that mean? Well, there's this prevailing, I mean, general whiskey industry. They don't know how to market to women, but it's this prevailing view that us delicate women need lower ABV whiskeys because we can't handle the high proof stuff.

Matt Bowles: ABV meaning alcohol.

Martine Volmar: Alcohol by volume. So, this 56.1 that you were like, whoa. And I was like, I down like it was juice. There's a view that we can't handle it.

Matt Bowles: Give us the sort of assessment of the gender dynamics within the whiskey space.

Martine Volmar: The way that our world is very much like white supremacist, patriarchal. It's like it feeds into everything. And the whiskey space has always been like, if you ask a random person, like, who drinks a whiskey, right. It's an old white dude with an ascot. He probably has a cigar. There's probably a Chesterfield sofa. That's who you're thinking immediately. If I just said, who's a whiskey drinker? That's who pops into your head.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: Every single time. That's who pops into your head. Right?

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: And how do they market to, say, black folks? If you look at not even just whiskey, but spirit.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: Oh, popping bottles at the club. How do you market to women? Oh, well, let's put pink on it. Let's make it sweeter. If you can't, you're just like spirits. Wine, whatever. There's a skinny girl margarita. Why is that a thing? Wine. Oh, the girls are having wine night. The boys are having a whiskey night.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: I know more about whiskey and drink more whiskey than a lot of the men I know.

Matt Bowles: You know more about whiskey than any of the men that I know.

Martine Volmar: But, like, I remember one thing. What's in Malaysia? Were you in KL?

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: Okay. You know the, the bar street?

Matt Bowles: Yeah. With the whiskey bar.

Martine Volmar: With the whiskey bar.

Matt Bowles: Of course, I know.

Martine Volmar: So, like, not even just that. So, I'm walking this. So, Richard, who is in my group, this is Brett. I'm walking down the street and he likes fruity cocktails. Ain't nothing wrong with a fruity cocktail. But that's his palette. I'm a whiskey drinker, right? So, we're walking down the street on this bar, and he's like, cocktails for the ladies. And Richard's life, he's like, well, no, she wants the straight whiskey. I'm the one that wants the cocktail.

Matt Bowles: Cocktail, no doubt.

Martine Volmar: And it's the things that are gendered in our society for just dumb reasons, right? It's dumb. It's like, if you think of it from just a pure business perspective, why are you cutting out so much of your market share? Because you just are thinking, you need to talk to me differently.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: Cultural competence doesn't mean that we need a different language. It just means understanding culture.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: It doesn't mean I need it pink.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: If I see one more thing pink, I will stab someone. It doesn't mean I need it sweeter.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: There are people who like things sweeter. That's not a gendered thing. When you think about marketing, when you think about engagement, all of the ways that society is built and all of the racist, patriarchal that comes with it, it's in things that just doesn't make sense. If you're going to be really capitalistic, it's dumb to even have that in there,

Matt Bowles: Right?

Martine Volmar: Oh, so you're just going to leave money on the table? Because if you're a brand of whiskey and some. Any kind of tasting or anything I go to for your brand, brand, and you tell me like, oh, well, we made this lower proof because we wanted to make sure the ladies liked it. I will never buy your brand again.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: And I'm usually the person big ferrying people along. So, I'm not going to necessarily get on the Internet and talk bad about your brand. But somebody asked me like, oh, should I try this? No.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: It's unnecessary. It's like, well, you know, people are the marketing. Most people, when people tell you like, oh, it's not what people want. I started up in advertising. Marketing tells you what you want and then sells it to you.

Matt Bowles: Right?

Martine Volmar: That's how it works. So anytime they tell you, oh, that's not what people. That's. They can convince you.

Matt Bowles: Right?

Martine Volmar: And convincing you is not even about, like, giving you something that you don't want. It's finding your door.

Matt Bowles: Right?

Martine Volmar: You think you like this? Okay, cool. Were. Here's this. Here's this. Do you know how many women who I've met who just like, I don't think I'm a whiskey drinker. I'm like, nah, they told you weren't. They told you should have wine. Come with me. One of my best stories. I went to Whiskey Live one year. The first time I went to Whiskey Live 2016 because I was in remote year.

Matt Bowles: Can you say what Whiskey Live is and where it was?

Martine Volmar: Okay, so Whiskey Live is this whiskey tasting event. I say salon because I go to the first one. It goes to the French one. So, I have to say salon, you know, and it happens around the world actually. So, there is actually a Whiskey Live that happens in New York. I don't know. It's in the New York one. It's kind of like finance bros getting drunk. And its exact scene of just like men who are just like, I come with a penis. Therefore, it comes with whiskey Knowledge village. And I don't have time. So, I like going to the Paris one because it's whiskey nerds. Like, people are just generally nerdy about it and they love it and they're just like folks go. It's still mostly men, of course, it's the industry. But they show up with like little notebooks and they're writing the little notes about it. And I just think that's fun.

So, the first time I went is because I was in Bulgaria. So, the while I was in remote year, the thing that I would do every month is land. The first day you get to your apartments, you get your keys. Depending on when we landed was the morning. Was it the afternoon? Afternoon, whatever. Find the nearest grocery store, stock up the apartment. Find a nearest whiskey store, stock up the apartment. I always had what I called my traveling bar or bar of the month. And it wasn't like, not this insaneness. I would have one or two bottles that I kept in the house every month on remote year. So, I always went and bought two bottles of whiskey. I'm here for a month. Sometimes you don't want to go out. I'm going to be home. People come over, have a dram. I always want to have some whiskey on hand.

So, when we got to Bulgaria, I did this here. I found a place; it was actually called the Whiskey Shop. And I go in, start talking to these guys and like, oh, yow. They were super excited of just like, oh, you've really into whiskey. And they're like, oh, wait, are you going to Whiskey Live? And I was like, in Paris, when is that? And it was like the third week that we were going to be There the third weekend. And I was like, no, I wasn't planning on it. But you know what? Let me check flights, whatever. You know how remote year is. It's like somebody says a thing, all of a sudden, you're checking flights and then you're in a different country.

Matt Bowles: 100%

Martine Volmar: From a casual conversation, the whole trip is booked.

Matt Bowles: I'm out one night in Kuala Lumpur and people from our group are like, yow, the Formula 1 Grand Prix is in Singapore next weekend and we're going. And I'm like, I don't know anything about car racing or the Formula one or whatever. You don't need to. We'll tell you everything you need to know. Trust me, you want to attend this event even if you don't know or appreciate car racing. It is an experience to be had. Just come. I said, done, done. I'll be there. Then I'm in Singapore a week later. 100% It's exactly how it works.

Martine Volmar: That's exactly. You can't have this conversation. People who don't travel because they just think it's pretentious. And you're like, no, the way you're like, should we go to that bar? Is the way we talk about, should we go to that country?

Matt Bowles: So, like, oh, by the way, it's \$48 round trip to go from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. Like, it's like much less than a night out in New York. I mean, it's like, it's much less.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, it's cheaper than a greyhound.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, 100%.

Martine Volmar: So, it was. I was like, well, let me check flights. So, I checked flights. And I was like, okay, not too bad. And I was like, ah, it. I'm going to go. And when I was in New York, before I went on this trip, I'd met one of my capoeira peeps here. He's French, he's from Paris. One of his friends had come from Paris to visit him. And that guy Olivier, he's a big whiskey head. So, when he came to New York, Pierre's like, yow, Martine is all about the whiskey. I'll tap her, see if she wants to come with us. And, you know, whatever. So, we met. Then I checked flights. Cool flights are good. Let me check Airbnb's. And then I hit up Olivier. I was like, hey, so I'm going to Whiskey Live. Apparently, I'm booking a flight. He was like, get the VIP ticket done. Because he's like, oh, yeah, I always go. Two-day VIP ticket. Done purchase, get.

So go to Whiskey Live. The first day I'M hanging out mostly with Levy and his crew, so it's like me and the French dude, dudes, like, all day. So, one of the guys. There are two guys that own this whiskey shop in Bulgaria. So, they'd bought two of their girlfriends at the time with them. So, one of them, I think, was kind of a whiskey person. The other one wasn't. She was like, the girlfriend, and she's like, I don't think I like whiskey. And. And I was like, come with me. So, like, we lose the guy, steal the women. And the one woman. I was like, okay. From what you're saying, I think you're a bourbon person. I don't normally do the bourbons when I go to whiskey stuff outside the country, because. Because I. I can have bourbons at home. Let's go. So, I get home to the bourbons. She tries the bourbons. We find her something she likes. I take the other one around. She's like, I don't know that I got her by the end of it. She loves peated whiskeys. And, you know, like, for, like, years after that, she's like, send me a note. Like, oh, my God, thank you so much, you know?

Meanwhile, their dudes own a whiskey shop, but hadn't bothered to figure out what their door was because the women, they don't drink whiskey. So, it's like, within a couple of, like, you know, sentences with me, they're like, oh, no, you really know you. So, they're excited, but it's like, everybody can be that passionate about it if you share it, right? And not just, like, give them the things you like. Of course, I'm going to give you the things I like, but figure out what's their door, right? So, by the end of it, the one woman, I was with her the whole day, at the end, she went and found them. She was like, yeah, you guys are not fun. She's fun. She finds me the things I like. You had to convert the folks.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing.

Martine Volmar: Now we're coming up to one of my faves for this year. This is in my top 12/13 of the year. This is Gordon MacPhail. I have probably in this house right this moment. At least five different expressions of Gordon MacPhail bottlings of Calila. So, Caol Ila is another distillery that I love and is dear to my heart. And it's from Isla. Same as Bruichladdich. Their stuff tends to be, like, big on the nose with Pete, but really soft on the palette. This one is bottled in 2018. Put in the first filled bourbon and refill American cast. And it was finished in Hermitage cast for the last three years. This one, I think is beautiful and I think is a good bookend to the Brooklyn. Let me see your face when you try it.

Matt Bowles: Oh, yeah, that's nice. Okay. So, the first one was of course, the best. And then after the first one, they went in ascending order, meaning this last one that we're trying now, the fifth one is the second best.

Martine Volmar: So, this one's got a lot of spiciness. The hermitage is not as fruity as like the Bordeaux was. Right. It's got spice. It's got all this other fun stuff happening.

Matt Bowles: Oh, that's amazing.

Martine Volmar: Yeah, no, I love this one.

Matt Bowles: That's a really special one. That is nice.

Martine Volmar: These two I've been just lapping bottles with all year. The second I'm out and I actually have like, at a spot where I go, I was like, you do not sell out of this. If you get to the point where you get to your last few bottles, they are mine.

Matt Bowles: It's amazing. So, I want to hear a little bit more about your whiskey specific travels. You just, for example, got back from a couple months in Europe, which was a whiskey centered trip. Can you talk about that?

Martine Volmar: So ever since at first the Bulgarian guys were like, hey, we're going to Whiskey Live. And I was like, I'm going to go to Whiskey Live too. I go every year except for 2020 for obvious reasons. Goddamn covet. Please note, I did still buy my buy my ticket because I was hoping we would get out of it. That was a lot of hope. But it's still late 2020. They had the Christmas, so I bought it anyway for 2021 and it worked out. And I actually already have my tickets for Whiskey Live next year because you get in December and they're much cheaper guys. Save money. Where you can. I go to Whiskey Live Paris every year. So that's my, like, event that I love to go to. I've gone to Scotland a few times on whiskey trips. I have the luck, and I say luck because it is luck. So, in Scotland in the UK actually, they have zero tolerance for drinking and driving. So, I have two friends who will always volunteer to go to Scotland with me. And one of them doesn't drink whiskey and one of them doesn't drink. So, I go to Scotland with my own dd. And then you go to tasting and they're like, here's for you. Here's for you. And then I get two. It's a good time.

The last time I went to Scotland was 2019, June, I think. Yeah. So, it was me and my friend Deb and my friend Sharda. We go to Scotland together. Deb doesn't drink whiskey. I've been trying. I've been trying to find her door, and I've yet to find her. I find. I found places where she said, I can tell this is good. I still wouldn't necessarily opt for it. I'm like, okay, I feel like we're moving in the right direction here. She didn't take this one, so I'm still trying to find her door. I want her to be a risky person so badly, and she's not. And actually, the funny thing is her dad is. So, her dad is one of my whiskey drinking buddies because his rest of

his families are just. They're wine people also. They're very much wine people. So, the rest of the family will partake of the wine with him, but no one really does the whiskey. So, when I show up, he's like, yes, it's a whiskey night.

And then I'll bring, of course, fun things. So, he's super excited about that. But, like, we went there and the one day we were going to the distillery. We're going to Balvenie and Glenn Fitz. We stop by Balvenie for a bit. Me and Charlotte take the car, go to Balvenie. We hadn't booked a tour and you needed to. So, the woman was like, okay, not. Hold on. She goes and gets us, like, some super exclusive, like, little dram. She's like, you'll have to share. We're like, we don't care. We had it. It was so good. She, like, hooked us up for, like, the tasting part without it. Like, again, we shared dram, so it was tiny. Tiny. And then we go to Glenfiddich. So, we drove the car there, and Deb decided to walk the five. There was a trail that you could take. She walks the five miles into town. By the time we're done with the tour and the tasting, she's sitting up there waiting for us, and she drives us home. So, get a DD when you go to Scotland. Okay.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. And how was your time in Italy? Tell me about why you love Milan and what your experience is like in Italy.

Martine Volmar: Milano. I'm trying to remember the first time I went to Italy was because I was going to Paris. And so, this is kind of. I feel like a nomad thing is if I'm going to Europe. I find it. Well, pre Covid anyway. Now I try to get direct flights, but pre covered. I just find the cheapest flight to Europe because the jumper flights are like \$2. So, it's like, oh, you want to end up in Paris, but the cheapest flight by like a hundred dollars or more is Milan. You fly to Milan, then you do a jumper flight to wherever you're trying to get to. That is just the way to do it.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: With COVID and the delays and all that stuff. I would definitely recommend now just pay the money and do the direct flight no matter what. But outside of COVID find the cheapest flight get there. Jumper flight.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: So, the first couple of times I went to Milano, that's what I did. And I found this little bar. And it's actually. We'll get to that part of the story, but this little bar called Bad Cafe in Navigli. Have you spent any time in Milan?

Matt Bowles: I've been to Milan a couple times, but all of them very short, so not substantial time.

Martine Volmar: Okay, so Navel is the area where like along the canal, there's like all of these bars and restaurants. You may or may not have been there. So, I have really good food and bar senses. That was my thing. I was known for that in remote year. Martin will find the good cocktail bar, Martin will find the good whiskey bar, and Martine will find us whatever fine dining establishment. I used to do fancy Fridays establishment where we're eating at this month and would have made right. It's a gift. I will also find a street food. I have a good radar for food and drink.

Matt Bowles: You got game?

Martine Volmar: Yes. That with my game lands. So, I go to mag and they do just great cocktails and the vibe of the place is amazing. So, every time I go to Milan, I make a point of going there. It's not like the

Ireland trip where I was an instant regular. It was like, oh, this was fun. I had a good experience. I will be back. I don't know, you know, I think I followed them on Instagram and things like that, but it wasn't like, oh, we now know each other. European hospitality is very different from American hospitality. Italian hospitality probably beats it. I'm talking about like restaurants and bars, not like somebody's house. That's very different. But I think that's probably the closest to American. And I think it's better. You know, Americans do it because they want to.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Martine Volmar: There. It just feels like we want to make sure you're not leaving our house. Without a good experience.

Matt Bowles: Right.

Martine Volmar: So, my birthday is in February. February of 2020. It was my 40th birthday. I'm one of the few people that got a birthday because I came back from my birthday trip and then the world shut down. So, my birthday trip was to Milan. And they had been. I've been following. Like I said, I've been following the Mad crew. And I know they own a couple of bars. They own this other bar called 1930, which is on the top 50 of the worlds. Actually, just top 50 list just dropped last week. They moved up to number 20. And 1930 is one the of speakeasy is like, you have to know folks. You have to whatever. So, I called the number. They're like, are you a member? I was like, no. They're like, well, you can't reserve. So, I was like, well, I follow one of the dudes, like, owns it on Instagram, so I'm going to just slide in his DMs and ask questions. And I was like, hey, it's my birthday. I really want to have that thing.

And I don't even care about anything else. I was like, I saw this on your Instagram. I want that for my birthday. How do I make it happen? And he's like, got you. When do you want to go? How many people are you? You're good. That's not how they work. I think it was like, it's my 40th birthday. Sometimes you got to ask. If it's a no, it's a no. You can't ask the, like, expectation that, like, you're entitled to it, but you can always ask the questions. If it's a no, okay, move on. Make different plans. But if it's like, like, ask the questions. And they just were super kind. Again, with the hospitality. They were amazing. And every time I've gone back to Milan since then, like, it's just been a good time. It's, you know, this last trip, this reason I was in Milan for two weeks. I was supposed to go to Portugal. I didn't leave. I just stayed post. Covid, I wanted to get out of New York, but I also realized, like, I didn't want to jump around. I just wanted to be somewhere else. It was less traveling than I just wanted to be somewhere else. So, I was only on vacation. I was gone for two months. I was on vacation for two weeks of it. And like, the last two weeks in Milan, I was working. So, I was like, get up, take my laptop, go to one of their bars, slash restaurants, cafes. I was like down the street. I think I specifically picked an Airbnb that was down the street from them.

So, it was like a two-minute walk, set up my laptop, have my espresso, my cafe, un caffè doppio per favore, like every day, have lunch, go back to the Airbnb and actually start my work day because I always keep New York hours, work through the thing. And it was just great. And they were just really hospitable and it was just great. Like, you feel welcome, you can come and sit and chill. It was just good to just be again, right. And not have the weight of all this stuff that is percolating in the air that you can't get away from. Like, it's heavy. And sometimes you just want to put that heaviness away and just be. And I think that's what Milan gives me is just a time to just be. And part of it is you mentioned, like, American privilege, even black American privilege sometimes just gives you some space where I don't get that space when I'm in America as a black person, but I get it at other places.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it's really interesting. I mean, that ties back actually reminds me of some of the stuff that James Baldwin used to write about when he was an expat living in France.

Martine Volmar: Oh, my God, I forgot to say that. So, part of this trip is after I left Paris at the beginning, I did whiskey live, drink all of my life away. I made a point of going to St. Paul de Vence, which is where he spent the last 15 years of his life. And because I like, I want to see what about this place called James Baldwin. So, I was in St. Paul de Vest for five days, and it's this tiny little town that gets a bunch of tourists during the day, it's quiet at night, but there's nothing going on there. But there's a magic to it. I'm like, oh, I get it. Like, as someone who likes to write, I could totally see myself tucking in there for a couple of months to write.

Matt Bowles: You've read a lot of Baldwin. I've seen a lot of Baldwin's books on your shelves.

Martine Volmar: What do you mean?

Matt Bowles: And let me actually ask you, I mean, from your experience as you know, obviously from reading so much Baldwin, he of course, was born and raised in New York City, and then he started traveling the world and living outside the U.S. for extended periods of time and looking back and reflecting back on the racial dynamics in the U.S. from outside the U.S. which was a different vantage point than reflecting on them from inside the U.S. And I'm curious for you, you as a traveler, how has your experience been as an international traveler or an expat, reflecting back on the racial dynamics in the United States from outside the United States?

Martine Volmar: It doesn't leave you. You get a little bit of space sometimes. One of the things that happened in Remote Year is I went to Scotland in July of 2016, which is my second month of Remote Year. And that is when Philando Castile was murdered in Alton Sterling. And that's when I realized you can't run away from it, because it hit me just as hard as if I'd been here. Every time one of these deaths happen, you mourn it like it's your brother or sister, because you understand that it's also you. I just feel like I live on death row and I just haven't decided my execution date yet when I'm here. So, when you're over there, it's like you don't feel that part. But then you still feel all the things and all of the mourning and all of the grief life. But you also feel the guilt because you got to escape it a little bit. Not damn. I mean, sure got his own racist. But the American privilege comes in, and the fact that you're a visitor and you're not staying comes in. You get treated differently when you're not staying.

And I remember just being in Scotland, which I love, you know, me and Whiskey were like this. And I just was like in this space where I'm like reading everything, watching the thing angry and grief and all this stuff. And my friend was just like. I got there like the day before, and she was like, put the phone away. Get off the laptop. Let's go out. Let's go do a thing. Let. And I was just in the space that makes me happy. And I couldn't be happy. And I was so angry. And then I going back to like a group of mostly white people who just didn't feel was an unfortunate event. And that is the thing that I would say, like, Remote Year was a milestone year for me. That's when I went to. I will no longer surround myself with people who can't feel it. And I get it. It's not your story doesn't affect you. I can't have that around me because you have to understand that I'm on that list. And if you can't feel it because it is in someone. I don't know any of these people. I don't know them, but I mourn them like I do. And if you can't feel that again. And we all are tasked with different paths to walk, but we get to decide who walks along us for even part of the road.

Matt Bowles: A 100%.

Martine Volmar: And I can't have people around me who don't feel it, who don't see it, who explain it away, who don't think it's that bad. I think I stopped talking to someone because they were just like, it's not that bad, and it wasn't anything that serious. But I was like, oh, that's how you view things, about how bad they are. And I'm viewing things of how quickly they can escalate. Again, because I study genocide, it doesn't take that much. People think it's really far away from zero to genocide. It isn't. It really isn't. So, when you're dismissing the small things, what that tells me is as it gets bigger and bigger and bigger, you will continue to explain it away. I can't trust you, and I can't trust you to have my back. Then I can't be around you. I need to have people around me that will have their head on a swivel and read the room the same way and understand the dangers coming.

And what traveling gives me is to seeing other folks who have their own marginalization and how that plays out, but also gives you space from your own and kind of gives you the space to process it and to think about, like, what are the engagements that get us from A to B and moves us forward. So, it allows me to not fall into despair and to fall into action. My angel said, be angry, but don't be bitter. Anger is a catalyst to action. Bitter just eats you up. And I find that I need the travel not to fall into bitter. I need it. I need the space from it. I need the break so that I can be renewed about. Like, what is the action I can then take?

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. I think I want to just end the interview on that note because that was so perfectly stated. I don't even want to go any further, and I just want to be able to just drop the mic. On that note, we finished all of our whiskeys, and at this point. Martine, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

Martine Volmar: Let's do it.

Matt Bowles: Let's do this thing. All right, what is one book that has significantly impacted you over the years you'd most recommend people check out?

Martine Volmar: Oh, this thing is still hard.

Matt Bowles: It's a massive bookshelf in front of me here. And I can attest that there are an enormous number of amazing books that you could choose from. So, if you were to pick one that you want people listening to this to go and grab and read, what would you say?

Martine Volmar: So, there's a few. I'm going to say two books.

Matt Bowles: I'll give you two.

Martine Volmar: I break my rules. And I think both those books speak to my weird fascination with genocides and dystopian ness. But really just understanding how things can move quickly and understanding, like, our own role in it, really get into, like, I don't think they're good or bad people. I just think we do good or bad things. And questioning yourself constantly is really important to make sure you're not participating in. So, two books. Octavia, [Parable of the Sower](#), if you like sci fi, like dystopian novels, get into that. And the other one is, it's not on my bookshelf right now. And I feel like I bought that book several times, but I keep giving it to people, so it never stays on my bookshelf for very long. It's a heavy read, but it's a quick read. Philip Gourevitch, [We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow Will Be Killed for Families](#), and it's about the genocide in Rwanda.

Matt Bowles: It is an intense and an amazing.

Martine Volmar: It's an amazing book.

Matt Bowles: Powerful book.

Martine Volmar: It's like when you see a movie. And I remember when he's going to see a movie once. And this is a French film, not the Victor Hugo musical version, but like this other movie that came out, and it was about the banlieues of Paris. And I saw it at the movie theaters here in New York, and it was the first time I'd ever had that experience where the movie ended, everybody stood up and left, and it was dead quiet. Like, it just grabbed you to that extent. Like, it just felt disrespectful to be talking and chatting. Like, what do you want to have dinner? And quiet. We all walked out quietly. There wasn't a plan. We're just like, what just happened? So, I like books and movies and things that just make you stop and not just passively be in things, but actively process and impact like that.

Matt Bowles: Martin, if you could have dinner with any one person who's currently alive today, so it's a real possibility that you've never met and you could pick, like, anybody, who would you choose?

Martine Volmar: Oprah, because she was really close to Maya Angelou. And Maya Angelou is my north star. I love that.

Matt Bowles: All right. Knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Martine?

Martine Volmar: Jump more. Jump into it. Jump off the cliff more. Don't play it so safe.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. All right, Martine, what are your top three favorite whiskeys in the world?

Martine Volmar: Okay, so whiskeys that are my favorites. And this changes. So, some stuff is just what's going on right now. Some of them are on this table. Octomore 6.3 from Bruichladdich. Always forever be just, hey, friend, this Kalila Gordon MacPhail bottling of Calula 13 year in the Hermitage cask. That shit is just beautiful. Number three. You know that Ardbeg 2019 Supernova was a whole lot of fun. You know what, I'm going to give it the title for number three right now.

Matt Bowles: Amazing.

Martine Volmar: It might change if you ask me tomorrow.

Matt Bowles: That's all right. We're asking you tonight and we are going to link these up in [the show notes](#) so folks can go check out your favorite whiskeys and try to buy a bottle and experience it for themselves. All right, Martin, with all of your travels around the world, what are your top three favorite whiskey bars establishments? We've had whiskey that you'd most recommend people check out.

Martine Volmar: All right, one of them is right here in New York City. Copper and Oak. That's my house. Love it. It's in Low east side and that is its home. They have a really good selection. The service is Phenome, Copper and oak for life. Another one, also in the United States, which is just so prolific. And I also loved how they responded to Covid, how they pivoted to make sure their staff was supported. So not that I get down there much, but in D.C. Jack Rose, phenomenal bar, exceptional collection, but also gives a shit about their people. And then the other one is the Quake, which is in Craig Lachie. It's the folks that make Copper Dog. It's in this hotel in Scotland in this little tiny, tiny town. And I've just had a really good time there. It's in Speyside.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. All right, of the 40 plus countries you've traveled to and lots of places within those countries, what are your top three favorite travel destinations you'd most recommend that people should definitely visit and check out?

Martine Volmar: Okay. I recommend everybody go everywhere. First of all, that's the caveat. The second thing is it kind of depends what you're looking into. So, I'm very much more of a city traveler. Although I've done the beach stuff. If I do the beach stuff, it's because there's some beach activity going on. I'm a city traveler. Like, I go from city to city, so I'm going to base it based on food. My best eating cities. KL. Phenomenal.

Matt Bowles: Insane.

Martine Volmar: Insanely phenomenal. And I think people overlook it because Bali's right there and all these other places are right there. And that just feels like more Eat, Pray, Love. But. And it's a city and it's got traffic, and it's just a lot of balls. But God damn. Is the food good?

Matt Bowles: The food is ridiculous.

Martine Volmar: It's so good. It's so good. I'm going to go say Cambodia and Phnom Penh, even though that is not an easy city. I think it's important that we stare at the atrocities. I think it's really important and just connect with people at that level. And then, oh, you got to go to Mexico City and have tacos. Like, what are you even doing with your life? You're not doing that.

Matt Bowles: Agreed.

Martine Volmar: Holy Jesus Christ in heaven. I don't even really do religion anymore, but Jesus Christ in heaven. You need to go to Mexico City and you need to eat all the tacos. All of them. Go to all the spots, figure out your favorite, have all the different kinds, rank them, do whatever you need to, but get on a flight, go to Mexico City, eat all the tacos.

Matt Bowles: I love that recommendation. I agree entirely. Mexico City is amazing. All right, Martin, last question. To close it out, I want to know your top three bucket list destinations. These are places you've never been highest on your list. You most want to go.

Martine Volmar: I really want to go to Japan. I actually randomly sat across the way from, like, this chef in New York. And we got to talking, and I was taking up the cat. Japan's on my list because. Whiskey. Because he's like. And he's like, the way you talk about food, you absolutely actually have to go to Japan. It will change everything that you think about food.

Matt Bowles: 100%.

Martine Volmar: And I was like, I'm sorry. I'm a foodie. What do you mean? It's going to change everything that I think about food?

Matt Bowles: Just different.

Martine Volmar: Like how?

Matt Bowles: Just different.

Martine Volmar: I'm really curious to understand that statement. I was curious before it was on my list. It was high on my list before.

Matt Bowles: Martin, let me tell you this anecdote. The first time that I went to Japan, I've now been three times. I actually went back three separate times for one month each. In the 18 months before COVID because it was just so extraordinary, and I wanted to see different parts of the country. The first time I went, I went to Tokyo and I went by myself and I went for a month, and I was meeting my Airbnb host. He's like, oh, I'll meet you at the Metro stop. I'll walk you to the unit to take you in. I said, okay, great. So, I meet him at the Metro stop, and we're walking to the unit. And he was not Japanese. He was foreign national who'd been living in Japan for quite some time. And I said to him, are there any restaurants right here in the area that you'd highly recommend that you check out? And he looks at me and he goes, listen, man, you're not in the United States anymore where you need to use Yelp and search for restaurants and see what the star ratings are. You're in Tokyo. Just walk into a restaurant and it'll be amazing. If it's not, it'll be out of business in a week. I was like, damn, it's insane. It's next level. And it's not only the Japanese food that's at the next level.

Martine Volmar: It's all of the food. It's because they just have a very high standard for everything. Also, the snacks are fucking great.

Matt Bowles: Anything.

Martine Volmar: We had Japanese snacks and, like, desserts here. And I will go and just get snacks just for no reason.

Matt Bowles: All of it. The coffee scene, the espressos. I mean, everything in Japan is just at a higher level. It's just insane. Okay, so that's number one. Go ahead.

Martine Volmar: So, Japan's number one. This was the COVID trip. That was it. So, we're supposed to go to Senegal in the Gambia. So, Senegal has been on my list forever, since I was surfing and I realized you could surf in Senegal. I've wanted to go to Senegal.

Matt Bowles: Oh, my gosh. I went to Dakar for a month in 2019. It was absolutely magical in every way.

Martine Volmar: It's really high in my life.

Matt Bowles: It's incredible. I've been telling everybody about it. When people are saying, name your top this and that places. I'm saying, go to Dakar in Senegal it is magical. Yeah, it's an amazing choice.

Martine Volmar: It's totally on my list. I have a lot on the list. I also really want to take the train from Ethiopia to Djibouti. Like, I've always wanted to go to Djibouti because I'm a 12-year-old and I just like Saint Djibouti. Haven't studied the country. Don't really know what it's there. Want to go there so I can say, I've been in Jabiri. I'm sure there's good food because eastern Africa has really goddamn good food from the ones we've gotten here. We get Ethiopian here. It's a little bit. Had Eritrean as well, but I don't know. I want to see what's going on in eastern Africa. It's not a good moment right now, but these things cycle. So, I imagine it'll get to a point where it's a moment again and then I can go there. But in the meantime, Senegal will happen. Japan will happen. I also kind of want to go to some random country like Georgia. I don't know what's there, but I just want to go to Georgia and be like, hey, what's up? Find a grandma. I kind of want to collect grandmas from everywhere around the world. I'm obsessed with grandmas. Obsessed. And I would

like a grandma from every country. There's like 192, whatever countries. I would like a grandma from everyone.

Matt Bowles: One of the women on my remote year program, [Brooke Siem](#), who's actually. I've actually interviewed her on The Maverick Show. She did this incredible project because she is a chef, and I met her actually. You met Brooke? Yeah, because she had a bakery here in New York and all this whole thing. So, she did this project which she was calling Cooking with Grandmas. In each city we went to on remote year, she would find grandmothers and cook with them and learn from them and document. It was amazing.

Martine Volmar: That's what I've wanted to do forever. Like, everybody who knows me like, really well. It's just, like, knows that I'm obsessed with a grandma. If grandma tells me a thing, I'm like, what do you want? Do you need me to do the dishes? What are. Am I just chopping things for you? What's going on? Right, like, done here? Let's do it. So, I would like a grandma from everywhere.

Matt Bowles: I love that. That's amazing. All right, Martine. This has been amazing and delightful on so many levels. I want you to let folks know how they can and find you, follow you on social media. Learn more about whiskey. How do you want people to come into your world?

Martine Volmar: Come into my world via [IG](#). That's where I probably am the most prolific in terms of actually posting and being out in these streets. Unless you see me at a whiskey bar. If you see me at a whiskey bar. You'll post up but you can find me on IG at *nomadkirani*. That's where I opine about whiskey. There's a bunch of whiskey content, there's a bunch of whiskey videos and there's a bunch of me being on a soapbox about various social justice issues and random like I'm a New Yorker, not an American post. So, it's where you see kind of a complete this is my sense of humor that is a little sarcastic, a little dark, a little fun.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. We are going to link all of that up in [the show notes](#). So, you can just go to one place at [themaverickshow.com](#). Go to [the show notes](#) for this episode and there you will find Martin's social media handles as well as all of the things that we have discussed on this episode, including the bottles of whiskeys that are potentially available for you to check out. If you want to sample some of the stuff that we've been drinking.

Martine Volmar: He didn't tell me I had to post stuff that you can actually find.

Matt Bowles: Not all of it, just some of it. I know there's some rare, unusual bottles that I just got premium access to which I greatly appreciate. But of the types of things that we were tasting, we will post links to whatever may be available in case folks want to start off with trying to expand their whiskey palette and start the whiskey journey and try some good stuff.

Martine Volmar: Start some good stuff. If not, hit me up on IG. I'm always down for whiskey. Finding your door. Like I say, we got to find your door.

Matt Bowles: That is an awesome invitation. So, DM Martine and she'll help you find your whiskey door. Martine, this was amazing. Thank you so much for being on the show.

Martine Volmar: Thank you for having me. This was fun. Welcome to Queens.

Matt Bowles: Queens get the money.

Martine Volmar: Still not a hip-hop head.

Matt Bowles: We're working on that. We're working on that. I'm going to find your door, Martin.

Martine Volmar: My door is the 90s too.

Matt Bowles: We got the same door. All right, good night, everybody.