



### In the still house

The wash is pumped to the still house to be distilled twice. The first round of distillation takes place in a wash still, of which Laphroaig has three of identical size. They can hold approximately 12,000 litres each, but are charged at 83.5% of their capacity (10,500 litres). Steam pans inside the still provide the heat. This method prevents burnt residue, so no rummagers<sup>15</sup> are required. Since alcohol has a lower boiling point than water, it evaporates earlier. The alcohol fumes rise through the neck and the slightly ascending lyne arm of the still into a cooler, called a condenser. The result is a liquid containing approximately 15% alcohol, referred to as “low wines” and is caught in a vessel called the low wines receiver. The leftovers in the wash still are called pot ale. They are pumped to the effluent plant next to the mash house to be treated before poured into Laphroaig Bay, following environmental regulations. A typical run of the wash stills takes five hours.



### Old stills, old habits

Today the stills look rather different than the ones in use around the 1920s. The old stills did not have valves or inspection windows as the current ones have. Instead, to check the level inside, a wooden ball on a string or a bamboo stick was used to “sound” the wash or spirit still. The rummagers were connected with a belt-drive to a small steam engine. The spirit safe underwent changes too as can be seen on this page. The black-and-white photo shows a model built around 1900. In 1972 the old spirit safe was replaced and transported to Tormore Distillery in Speyside. The colour photo of the new safe was taken in April 2007.

