

# Coleman's Rick Sigsby completes holy trinity of alcohol bibles

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Rick Sigsby considers himself as an alcohol enthusiast, not an expert.

The Coleman resident recently published his newest book, "Michigan's Holy Spirits: The Great Lakes Distillery Bible." The book is the third in a "holy trinity" of guides to wineries and breweries around the state.

"If you've got a wine bible, then you gotta have a beer bible. Spirits follow after that," he commented.

Sigsby, who has previously written a handful of novels, got the idea to write about Michigan's watering holes six years ago when he and his wife participated in a wine club in Bay City.

The subject of how Michigan wines were not properly represented came up and someone mentioned to Sigsby that it could be a potential book topic.

He began conducting some research on the subject, talking with winery owners and managers. What he found was astounding.

"There are wineries in Michigan that have won very prestigious international competitions against wineries all over the world."

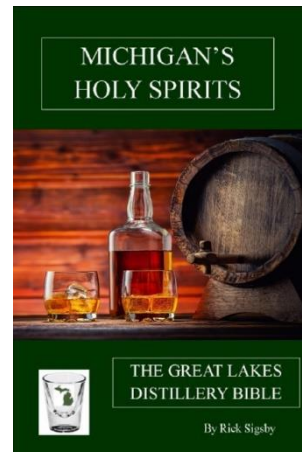
In 2013 he published his first guide, "Michigan's Holy Water: The Great Lakes Wine Bible." By then he realized the influence that wineries, breweries and distilleries had on the local level in terms of economics and social opportunities.

"They have quite an impact right here in Midland, which you wouldn't normally think of," he said.

The second installment in the trilogy, "Michigan's Holy Hops: The Great Lakes Beer Bible" was released in 2016. At the time, breweries were booming; when Sigsby sent in the first draft of "Holy Hops," 265 breweries were listed in the book's directory. Ten days later, approximately seven more opened for business.

"It kind of just exploded," he recalled.

For Sigsby it was only natural to cover the topic of spirits in his next guidebook. He began working on the tome 15 months ago and released the final version late last month. Although this book is nearly 100 pages smaller than its counterparts, it covers a wide range of drinks including whiskey, rum, bourbon, vodka and gin.



"Your palette just tells you the spirits that you like and that's what you have to go by," Sigsby commented.

The guides go beyond the drinks themselves and heavily focus on the establishments that produce them.

In his research, Sigsby made a point of visiting as many wineries, breweries and distilleries as he could to talk with the owners and operators.

"And no, I did not taste everything there," he added with a laugh.

Sigsby used his reporting skills and made his interviews with the companies' employees the main part of his books.

He quickly realized that the backstories were more fascinating than the drinks that they were about.

"What I found, there are just a lot of fascinating people out there," he said. "Everyone has a story. The key is you have to find out the part of their story that everyone wants to read about."

Sigsby learned many remarkable facts during his investigations, including how vodka from Ferndale was named best the world, that a priest and a nun founded a winery in Traverse City and how bottle labels discern where liquor is made.

"You have to look at the bottle. It has to say 'distilled by' ... not 'produced by,' not 'manufactured by,' not 'bottled by.' It has to be 'distilled by.' That's a big distinction and it means a lot to the Michigan craft distillers."

Each book has sections about history, myths and establishment locations. "Holy Spirits" has an additional chapter with favorite cocktail recipes provided by the interviewees.

"You got your own little Michigan bar guide."

Sigsby hopes his books are used for entertainment purposes, to help encourage readers to try Michigan-made drinks and appreciate what is available.

"I hope they take it, literally, with them. Put it in the glove compartment and take it with you because you just never know."

Sigsby's books are available for purchase on his website, [www.rsigsby.com](http://www.rsigsby.com) and Eastman Party Store, 5205 Eastman Ave., Midland. Sigsby will present his books at noon on Oct. 26 at Senior Services of Midland County, 4700 Dublin Ave. and at 7 p.m. on Nov. 2 at Creative 360, 1517 Bayliss St. in Midland.

<https://www.ourmidland.com/lifestyles/article/Coleman-s-Rick-Sigsby-completes-holy-trinity-of-13212467.php>