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Whisky Man of the Year 2011 AND 2012

Wine & Spirit News

BENRIACH'S BILLY WALKER IS 2016 ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

BenRiach's Managing Director Billy Walker has been named Entrepreneur of the Year in the Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards 2016.

He received his accolade last night in front of an 800-strong audience at Edinburgh's EICC.

The award comes after BenRiach was acquired in April by Brown-Forman, producers of Jack Daniels, for £285m.

The Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards recognise those businesses and individuals in Scotland who are leading the way with innovation, enterprise and quality.

Mr Walker and his two South African partners Geoff Bell and Wayne Kieswetter built up the company over the last twelve years after acquiring the mothballed [BenRiach Distillery](#) on the outskirts of Elgin from Chivas Brothers.

Convinced that developing high-end specialist whisky was the way forward in a competitive market, they went on to add the Huntly-based [GlenDronach Distillery](#) and the [Glenglassaugh Distillery](#) in Portsoy to their portfolio.

The Edinburgh-headquartered company now exports 95% of its products and employs 165 people across its four sites.

Last year BenRiach announced plans to invest more than £25m in the business on the back of record results; pre-tax profits rose by 24% to £11.1m and turnover increased 17.6% to £41.5m.

The company was named Global Whisky Distiller of the Year at the 2015 Icons of Whisky Awards and was also highlighted as one of the country's most influential companies.

Billy Walker said: "It's an enormous compliment and a very pleasant surprise to receive this prestigious award. I'm delighted to accept it on behalf of the extraordinary people across our four sites who have helped me build BenRiach with their hard work, passion and commitment."