## Trade Fairs – Recap

We have already attended several trade fairs this year, and it is always a pleasure to meet you there in person. Thank you for your many visits, the engaging professional discussions, and the valuable personal exchanges. We are already looking forward to the upcoming trade fairs. See you there!

## Internships

We currently have another intern working in our cooperage, and a second one will be joining us soon. We also had the pleasure of welcoming an intern to our office.
We are delighted to support the younger generation as they explore their future career paths.

**Issue 12**
**April 2026**

News from
the Cooperage

# EDERNEWS

# New Partnership! - UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Palatinate Forest – Northern Vosges

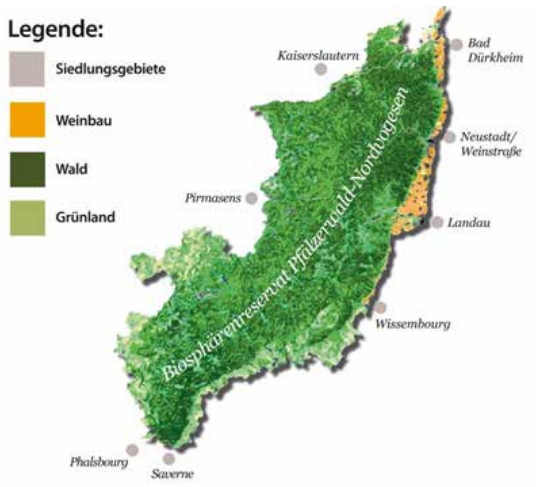
**Great news! We are now an official partner of the UNESCO Palatinate Forest–Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve.**

This partnership reflects our philosophy and reinforces our commitment to valuing forests and the importance of wood as a sustainable natural resource.
The Palatinate Forest is the largest contiguous forest area in Germany. With its diverse mixed woodlands, it serves as an outstanding example of biodiversity, providing a rich habitat and essential ecosystem for countless plant and animal species. Since 1992, this unique forest landscape has been recognized by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve.

The Palatinate Forest–Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve partnership represents a unique collaboration between German and French forest regions, officially established in 1998. Since then, it has remained Germany's only transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

**PARTNER**

**Biosphärenreservat Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen**




Source: https://www.pfaelzerwald.de/biosphaerenreservat/

## Construction Fair 2025 &

## Garden Fair 2026

At the trade fairs, we had the opportunity to provide fascinating insights into the work of our cooperage and joinery while showcasing a selection of our products. From handcrafted furniture to bespoke barrel solutions, our stand attracted considerable interest.

A particular highlight was our fully equipped hot tub. Featuring a water filtration system and a heat pump, it demonstrated how traditional craftsmanship and modern technology can be combined. A real eye-catcher that impressed many visitors.

## Delivery of Large Casks

We delivered 16 large round casks, each with a capacity of 10 hectolitres, using a total of four trucks. With great care and precision, the casks were loaded at our facility, carefully unloaded at the customer's site, and professionally assembled.

## Seminar – May 2026

Our barrel seminar is designed for industry professionals, including distillers, brewers, winemakers, sommeliers, and members of the trade press. Created by professionals for professionals, the seminar combines theory and hands-on experience in a practical and engaging format.

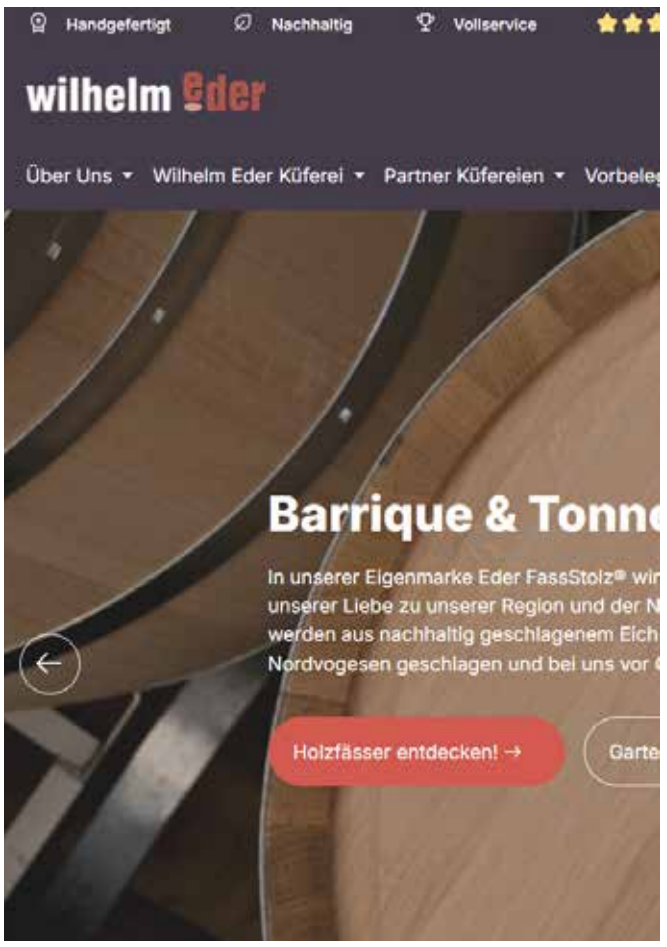
**Preliminary topics**
- From log to stave – the production process
- The craft behind barrel making
- Vat construction
- Wood and flavour development
- And more

Register now: faesser-shop.de/Wilhelm-Eder-GmbH/Seminar/

## New Look, Same Commitment

Our online shop, faesser-shop.de, has been given a fresh new look. Cleaner, more modern, and even more user-friendly—making your shopping experience easier than ever.

What hasn't changed is our commitment to quality, our customer service, and our passion for what we do.



# Inflationary Finishing - Thoughts on Fake Barrels and Booming Business Models

The world of spirits has seen an ongoing boom in barrel finishing over the past several years. In principle, there is nothing wrong with this—provided it is done properly. A long, genuine seasoning over many years can give a cask depth, character and authenticity. But this is precisely where the problem begins.

**When Seasoning Becomes a Marketing Tool**

The demand for technically flawless, visually perfect barrels with an impressive story behind them is enormous. Customers would ideally like to buy a 30-year-old cask that previously held Port, Sherry or Cognac—ready for immediate delivery.

In reality, however, this is hardly possible.

**The simple reason is that such barrels do not exist in the quantities required.**

Nevertheless, this wishful thinking has evolved into a business model. Barrel seasoning has become a commodity, while provenance has become a marketing argument—often with very little substance behind it.

**A Current Example from Practice**

Let me illustrate this with a project I am currently involved in: sourcing casks previously used for Pineau des Charentes.

Pineau des Charentes is not a traditionally fermented wine but a fortified wine produced by mutage. Fresh grape must is blended with young Cognac, immediately stopping fermentation. As a result, the natural sugars remain while the alcohol content increases significantly.

The finished Pineau des Charentes is then matured for an extended period, traditionally in used Cognac casks made from French or European oak. These casks are therefore far more than a by-product—they are an integral part of the product‘s style, aroma and authenticity.

I received the order during the summer of 2025, with delivery scheduled for February 2026. The customer required 450-litre casks.

Pineau des Charentes is a regional speciality from southwestern France with relatively limited production. It is certainly not a mass-market product comparable to wines found in supermarkets or discount retailers. If any comparison can be made, it would be with Sherry in terms of its niche position and traditional production.

Eventually, I located a small number of suitable casks. They had been stored in an old, damp cellar and were technically sound, but every single cask required complete restoration before it could be reused.

The price was high—perhaps even higher than expected—but the owner was fully aware of the originality and rarity of his stock.

**The Alternative: Industrial Barrel Seasoning**

At the same time, there are large wineries and bodegas, particularly in France and Spain, that have turned barrel seasoning into an industrial business.

They purchase truckloads of used red wine barrels, often from regions such as Rioja where they become available in large numbers.

These barrels are then filled with Brandy, Sherry, Port or Madeira for only a few weeks before being marketed as „original seasoned casks.“

Documentation is usually minimal or entirely absent. Whether a genuine maturation period actually took place—and for how long—is often impossible to verify. In many cases, even the legal ageing requirements applicable to products such as Cognac or Port are effectively ignored.

Through international brokers, these casks find their way to distilleries around the world. There, they often serve one main purpose: storytelling. The narrative surrounding the barrel becomes more important than the actual sensory result.

**Quality Requires Knowledge—and Patience**

Fortunately, there are still producers who deliberately position themselves in the premium segment. They carefully select every ingredient—including their casks—and do not rely solely on invoices or the minimum legal declarations provided by suppliers.

Unfortunately, genuine expertise is often lacking. Only relatively few users fully understand the significant differences between the various categories of Port or Sherry. Sherry in particular offers an enormous sensory spectrum, yet these differences frequently go unnoticed—or remain unused.

**Truly Good Barrels Will Always Be Rare**

This brings us back to the original question: genuinely well-seasoned casks with authentic long-term maturation are rare.

They are expensive today and they will remain expensive, regardless of the current market situation.

The market is already beginning to correct itself. Many suppliers of so-called „fake barrels“ are gradually disappearing. What will remain are casks with a genuine history of long-term use and maturation. They will once again become something special—as a truly exceptional finishing cask should be.

**How Can You Recognise a Genuine Cask?**

One important indicator is a traceable history. If the life of the cask can be documented and verified, this is a strong sign of authenticity.

Even more important, however, is the sensory evaluation. A cask must be smelled, inspected and assessed. In my view, a thorough aromatic examination is more valuable than any written history.

Another useful indicator is weight. A well-seasoned cask typically weighs around 10% more than a comparable new cask.

Finally, always consider whether the wood species is plausible for its stated origin. A once-filled Bourbon barrel is always made from American oak.

A traditional Cognac cask, on the other hand, is made from French or European oak—never American oak.

Anyone who keeps these basic principles in mind will recognise genuine quality and will not be misled by an attractive story alone.

# Work in progress – Projects from Our Joinery & Carpentry Workshop

Every day, our joinery and carpentry workshop creates bespoke solutions that are as unique as our customers‘ ideas.
From the initial concept to the finished piece, we accompany every project with skilled craftsmanship, creativity and a genuine passion for working with wood.

**Project 1**

One particularly successful project that has already been completed is a custom-made lectern. Its subtle barrel-inspired design gives the piece a distinctive and elegant character.
Beyond its striking appearance, the lectern also offers well-thought-out functionality. An integrated reading light provides optimal illumination and can be powered either by a power bank or a standard mains connection.
Practical drawers provide ample space for presentation notes, a laser pointer and other accessories. The highlight, however, is the customer‘s logo, individually CNC-carved and carefully finished by our craftsmen in the client‘s corporate colours, giving the lectern a truly personal touch.

**Project 2**

Not every project has reached completion—many are still taking shape.
One particularly exciting commission is currently in its early planning stage and is still in the quotation phase. As with every bespoke project, everything begins at the drawing board. Together with the customer, ideas are developed, sketched and refined step by step until an initial vision becomes a carefully considered design, ready to be brought to life through traditional craftsmanship.

**Project 3**

Another project is already in production and perfectly demonstrates the versatility of the materials we work with.
The customer supplied us with beautiful cherry wood, which is currently being crafted into a tabletop. It will be framed with a particularly special material: bog oak.
This rare timber, which we keep in stock ourselves, is distinguished by its naturally dark colouring and creates a striking contrast with the warm tones of the cherry wood.
The table base will also be made from bog oak, creating a harmonious overall design. The accompanying photographs already show the current stage of production—a true work in progress that offers an exciting glimpse of the finished piece to come.

**Your Project?**

Whether completed, still on the drawing board or already taking shape in our workshop—every project tells its own story.

# The Cask as a Style Maker –
# Creative Cask Maturation

**How are attractive, modern spirits created for a new generation of consumers?**

The spirits market is changing—quietly, yet unmistakably. Consumers are drinking less frequently, but more consciously. Terms such as alcohol bashing, rising living costs and changing social habits are often cited as reasons for declining demand for traditional fruit brandies and eaux-de-vie. However, these explanations only scratch the surface.
**The real reason runs deeper:** consumer tastes have evolved, while many products have not evolved at the same pace.

This creates a particular challenge for small craft distilleries, where tradition, craftsmanship and regional heritage have always played a central role. What has worked for generations is not necessarily what tomorrow's customers will be looking for. Those who fail to adapt risk being left behind. Or, as the saying goes: those who do not move with the times will eventually be overtaken by them.

For many years, the direction was obvious. Barrel-aged spirits were modelled after established classics such as Cognac, Brandy, Grappa or Whisky. These styles unquestionably deserve their place. Yet they are not automatically the answer to what today's consumers are searching for.
Because enjoying spirits is no longer simply about alcohol—it is about flavour, experience and individuality. Consumers are looking for products that surprise them, tell a story and fit naturally into new occasions, particularly within modern cocktail culture.And this is precisely where an enormous opportunity arises for craft distilleries.
What happens when producers dare to move beyond familiar paths? What if a traditional cherry brandy is no longer matured exclusively in conventional casks, but instead spends time in a seasoned Madeira cask—or even a former rum barrel? What if a plum brandy develops dark fruit characteristics from an Amarone cask, or a pear spirit gains an almost honey-like richness through maturation in a sweet wine barrel?

The result is a spirit that feels familiar, yet tastes entirely new. A product that is no longer reserved solely as a digestif after dinner, but one that finds its place behind the modern cocktail bar.

Fruit spirits already possess everything required for exceptional cocktails. They are aromatic, expressive, naturally dry and free from added sugar. Used like highly complex eaux-de-vie, they introduce an entirely new dimension of regional identity into mixed drinks. Suddenly, a cocktail no longer has to rely on internationally recognised base spirits—it can express the character of its own region.
Within this context, the role of the cask changes fundamentally. It is no longer simply a passive vessel for maturation but an active contributor to the final style.

Chestnut provides structure and a delicate bitterness that works beautifully in bold, spirit-forward cocktails. Black locust (robinia) contributes floral notes, softness and subtle honey-like aromas, making it ideal for elegant, lighter styles. Previously seasoned casks—whether Sherry, Port or Marsala—bring layers of dried fruit, oxidative complexity and remarkable depth, characteristics that shine particularly well in concentrated cocktails.
Then there are the familiar Bourbon and Whisky barrels, offering vanilla, caramel and gentle toasted notes that create an approachable bridge between innovation and consumer expectations. They often provide the perfect starting point—but they are certainly not the limit of what is possible.

The possibilities become even more exciting when less conventional woods enter the picture. Cherry wood contributes an elegant sweetness alongside delicate almond and floral notes. Black locust has already established itself in the wine industry as a serious alternative for contemporary flavour profiles.
Mulberry and ash, meanwhile, deliberately step beyond the familiar. They open the door to experimentation, entirely new flavour experiences and products that resist direct comparison with anything already on the market.

All these options lead to an important shift in perspective. Maturation is no longer viewed simply as a process of ageing—it becomes part of product development. Instead of asking how a spirit will taste after ageing, producers begin asking how it will ultimately be enjoyed.
A pear spirit matured in a sweet wine cask can be developed specifically to become the perfect foundation for a Pear Old Fashioned. A plum brandy from an Amarone cask may become the ideal base for a contemporary bitter aperitif cocktail.

Small casks play a key role in this approach. They enable rapid extraction, intensive flavour development and, above all, flexibility. They encourage experimentation, small production batches and bold creative decisions.
At the same time, they create a direct connection with the hospitality industry. A small cask displayed behind the bar is far more than a maturation vessel—it is a statement piece, a conversation starter and a visible demonstration of craftsmanship and creativity.
Taking the concept one step further creates genuine partnerships with bartenders. The distiller no longer supplies only a spirit, but an entire concept: the cask, the spirit and the cocktail are developed together as one coherent idea.

**Occasionally, a single material changes everything.**

Take walnut wood, for example. Dark, spicy and complex, it introduces notes of walnuts, dark chocolate and roasted coffee. It contributes very little sweetness or vanilla, instead offering dry tannins and remarkable depth. Such a cask calls for equally distinctive spirits: pomace brandies that begin to resemble an amaro, or stone fruit distillates whose kernel notes evolve into rich marzipan-like flavours with impressive complexity.
These are products that no longer fit neatly into traditional categories—and that is precisely their greatest strength.
Naturally, this approach also requires producers to move beyond conventional systems of evaluation. Not every one of these spirits will win a traditional gold medal.

But perhaps medals are no longer the most important measure of success.
Ultimately, the more relevant question is this:

**Do you want to win awards—or do you want to sell your product?**
Creative cask maturation also offers another advantage that is often underestimated. Many desirable flavours develop naturally through the interaction between spirit and wood. Sweetness, depth and structure emerge without the need for added sugar. The result is an authentic product with a clear and honest identity.

And that is the real key: mindset.

Rather than becoming trapped in discussions about categories, producers can consciously pursue new directions—and describe them exactly as they are. Barrel-aged fruit spirit is not a compromise; it is a deliberate choice. It is an invitation for consumers to discover something genuinely different.

**The future of craft distilling does not lie in preserving the past unchanged.**
It lies in boldly exploring what is possible—in combining craftsmanship with creativity, heritage with innovation. Creative cask maturation is not simply another trend. It is a tool. And for those willing to use it, it represents an extraordinary opportunity.

Let us seize that opportunity—and together set new standards for the future.

# Deluxe Hot Tub

Our cooperage manufactures your beautiful Deluxe Oval Hot Tub (2,500 litres) from sustainably harvested Douglas fir sourced from the Palatinate Forest and naturally seasoned over several years.

The Deluxe Hot Tub comes fully equipped with everything you could wish for. From comfortable seating to a heat pump, every essential feature is included.

ArtNr. 3173

# Work Anniversaries

**Igor**
For the past five years, Igor has been an indispensable member of our warehouse team, ensuring the smooth handling of incoming and outgoing goods.

**Tom**
Every barrel begins its journey with Tom. As the manager of our sawmill, he has been cutting our timber—rain or shine—for the past ten years.

**Flo**
Flo has been part of our team for ten years and has proven himself as a true all-rounder, contributing his skills in the warehouse, the joinery and, most recently, in our cooperage.

**Adela**
For ten years, Adela has been the heart of our accounting department, keeping our finances and invoices perfectly organised.

**We would like to thank all our anniversary employees for their dedication, loyalty and many years of valued service.**

# Eder Meets Brauchbar

Character in Every Glass: A Negroni matured in one of our oak spirit casks, resulting in a beautifully rounded cocktail with elegant tannins, remarkable depth and exceptional balance. The project was initiated by our cooper, Jens, whose expertise gives this barrel-aged cocktail its distinctive signature.

As Markus Eder aptly puts it:
„Every sip leaves you wanting another."

# Wilhelm Eder Oak Barrel 500 l„Ursprung"

Our „Origin" barrel collection represents a return to exclusive craftsmanship using locally sourced materials and traditional manufacturing in regional workshops. Each barrel combines premium Palatinate oak with exceptional cooperage craftsmanship and is available only in limited annual quantities. Every cask bears its own individually stamped production number.

Designed specifically for the maturation of red wines with a pure, mineral-driven style, the „Ursprung" barrel preserves freshness and varietal character without compromising fruit expression.

ArtNr. 3193

# Tree Planters

Our tree planters are handcrafted in our cooperage from premium Douglas fir and finished with durable hot-dip galvanised steel hoops.

This product range has been specifically designed for professional landscaping applications, including parks and gardens, where large trees and substantial plants require robust, long-lasting planters.

ArtNr. 2640.3

# Upcoming Events

**Seminar – From Tree to Barrel**
Bad Dürkheim
5–6 May 2026

**Master Distillers' Conference**
Bad Dürkheim
7 May 2026

**Construction Fair**
Bad Dürkheim
6–8 November 2026

Dates are subject to change. For the latest information, please visit our website.

wilhelm eder

## Imprint

**Wilhelm Eder GmbH**
Bruchstrasse 60
67098 Bad Dürkheim
Germany

**Tel.:** + 49 (0)6322 955 98- 0
**Fax.:** + 49 (0)6322 955 98 - 29
**Email:** info@wilhelm-eder.de
www.faesser-shop.de

**CEO:** Markus, Nicholas und Jonas Eder
**Register:** Ludwigshafen am Rhein HRB 11236 Dü
**Vat ID** DE149368938

@wilhelm_eder
Wilhelm Eder
@EderGmbH
Fässer-Shop