

CHANUKAH

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LIVING

DRINK IT

Here's to lighting the menorah



ANDREW WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY

Rabbi Odom Brandman of Chabad Lubavitch of Buckhurst Hill in Essex, England, says the first blessing for what is believed to be the world's first-ever whisky menorah.

Rabbi Odom Brandman knew he wanted to do something different for this year's menorah lighting at Chabad Lubavitch Jewish centre in Essex, England, to mark the first night of Hanukkah.

But what to do? Last year's menorah was made of 1,800 cans — and food was donated to help the hungry. Other Chabads in England and New York had done “the standard ones made of Lego or jelly beans,” Brandman told the *Star* over the phone. This year needed to be different.

And then it hit him: Scotch!

“The idea came to me almost as a joke,” says Brandman. “In the Chabad world, this is something that is, as far as we know, totally unique.”

Local dental technician Desmond Solomon made the two-metre menorah out of clear piping. And with the help of Tullibardine Distillery in Perthshire, Scotland, which donated 65 litres of single malt, the candelabra was filled.

On Dec. 13, the menorah was lit, the first “T'chaim” said and then the first bottle of scotch drained off and auctioned to help the Chabad community centre. Members are paying what they can to buy the rest, with all the money going to the centre. Brandman hopes to raise about \$3,500 (Cdn).

And what will he do to top that next year? “That is a very difficult question,” Brandman says. “A lot of people have asked me that and I say we haven't finished this Hanukkah yet.”

How about a menorah filled with pure Canadian maple syrup?

“If you can hook us up with a supplier who can donate it, yes,” was Brandman's enthusiastic reply.

Linda Barnard