

Kingston Single Malt Society

www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com

A social club for the appreciation of Single Malt Whisky since 1998
September 19th, 2022 VOLUME 16; NUMBER 3b; No. 205



COST OF THE MALTS

LOCHLEA SINGLE MALT - FIRST RELEASE LCBO 836546 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$115.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

LOCHLEA SOWING EDITION; Bottling serie: First Crop; Vintage: 2018; Bottled: 2022; Calculated age: 03 years old; Casktype: Fresh 1st-fill Bourbon barrels; Number of bottles: 7000 LCBO 836546 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$115.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 48.0% Alcohol/Vol.

DAFTMILL 11 YEAR OLD MATURED IN EX-BOURBON AND FIRST FILL EX-SHERRY BARRELS SUMMER BATCH 2019 RELEASE Distilled: 2009; Bottled: 2020; Limited Edition of 1790 Bottles; Cask 016/2009, 020/2009, 022/2009, 023/2009 & 027/2009; VINTAGES 160122 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$225.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

DAFTMILL 12 YEAR OLD MATURED IN OAK BARRELS SUMMER BATCH 2019 RELEASE Distilled: September 30th 2006; Bottled: 2019; Limited Edition of 1680 Bottles; Cask 067/2006; 068/2007; 069/2006; 070/2006; 071/2006; 072/2006; & 073/2006; VINTAGES 160122 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$375.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

LINDORES ABBEY COMMEMORATIVE SINGLE MALT VINTAGES 805512 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$91.25** Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

LINDORES ABBEY AQUA VITAE VINTAGES 805512 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$65.00** Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

MENU

1st Course: Roasted Butternut Squash & Maple Soup

1st Nosing: LOCHLEA - FIRST RELEASE
(introduced by: David Jones)

2nd Nosing: LOCHLEA SOWING EDITION
(introduced by: David Jones)

2nd Course: Fried Gnocchetti, Sofrito, Parmesan

3rd Nosing: DAFTMILL 11 YEAR OLD MATURED IN EX-BOURBON AND FIRST FILL EX-SHERRY BARRELS SUMMER BATCH
(introduced by: Helen Driver)

4th Nosing: DAFTMILL 12 YEAR OLD MATURED IN OAK BARRELS SUMMER BATCH 2019 RELEASE
(introduced by: Helen Driver)

3rd Course: Espresso Crusted Sirloin, Sweet Potato Purée, Black Garlic Cream Sauce

5th Nosing: LINDORES ABBEY COMMEMORATIVE
(introduced by: Ken Stewart)

4th course: Peach-Ginger Upside Cake

6th Nosing: LINDORES ABBEY AQUA VITAE
(introduced by: Ken Stewart)

July 25th Dinner - KSMS Financial Statement

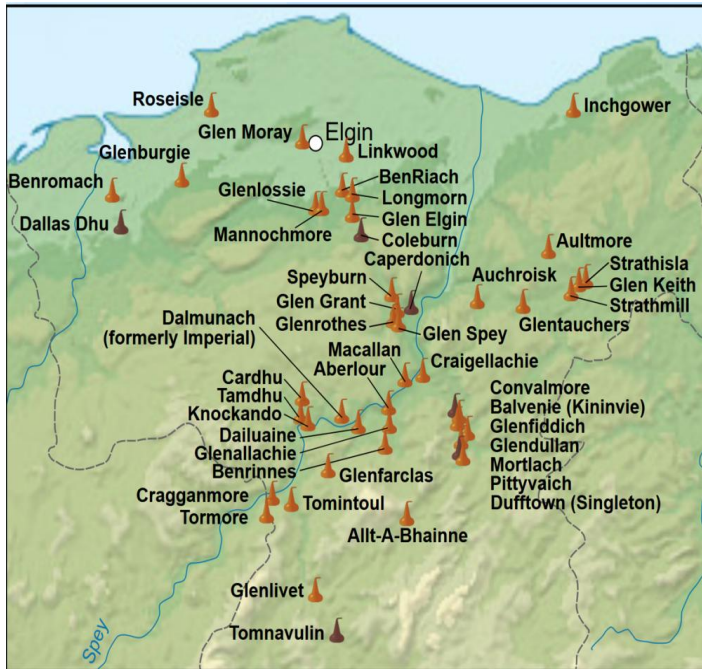
(Money from 33 July attendees @ \$90)	= \$2970.00
(Money from 5 July attendees dinner @ \$60)	= \$300.00
July dinner 38 persons =	= \$2128.26
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt)	= \$1141.74
Cost of Single Malts:	= \$1289.70
Cost of Pours per 33 Persons = \$42.99	
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= (-\$147.96)
Cost per person (All inclusive)	= \$89.95
Money for Heels	= \$445.00
Money Raised from Raffle	= \$0.00
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= \$297.04

Upcoming Dinner Dates

Monday October 17th, 2022 - Speyside
Monday November 14th, 2022 - Speyside / Islands (Kyle)
Monday December 19th 2022 - Christmas Dinner
- Single Malts of Scotland - Blind Tasting
Monday January 23rd 2023 - Robbie Burns - First Editions / Islay
Monday February 13th 2023 - Speyside
Monday March 20th 2023 - Irish / Speyside
Monday April 17th 2023 - Speyside / Islands (Skye)
Monday May 29th 2023 - Speyside / Islands / Islay
Monday June 19th 2023 - June BBQ - Speyside / Islands / Islay

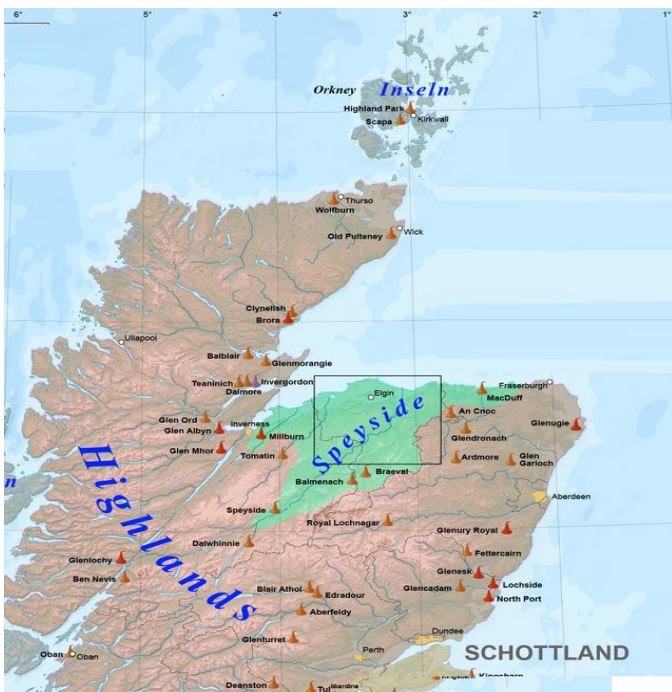
LIST & LOCATIONS OF SCOTCH WHISKY DISTILLERIES IN SCOTLAND

SPEYSIDE



Due to the sheer volume of distilleries, there's a huge amount of difference in the character of Speyside Scotch, from lighter grassy numbers, to the sweeter, richer, sherried type. The single malts from the area are notable for their refined smokiness and complexity. Johnnie Walker, one of the world's more popular Scotch brands, originates from here. Predominant Flavors: Varies, but generally smoky and deeply complex with hints of apple, nutmeg and vanilla. Notable Distilleries: Johnnie Walker, Glenlivet, Glenfiddich

THE HIGHLANDS



If you roughly drew a line between Edinburgh and Glasgow, everything above that would be the Highlands. Geographically speaking, it's the largest whiskey producing area, which includes the cities of Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee. They're much more spread out than in Speyside, but *there are over 30 distilleries*

in the area.

Known as medium bodied whiskies, they are typically lighter and more luxurious than their brothers Islay, but stronger than the ones in the Lowlands. Today there are many highland distilleries, some of which include Aberfeldy, Balblair, Ben Nevis, Clyneth, The Dalmore, Dalwhinnie, Glen Ord, Glenmorangie, Oban and Old Pulteney. On the islands, you can find Arran, Jura, Tobermory, Highland Park and Scapa, as well as Talisker still operating today. While many whisky connoisseurs believe the islands should have their own region, they are still technically classified as a part of the highlands.

If you found yourself gambling amid the thistle and quaffing a Scotch from here, the notes of peat, honey, and heather in a much more robust, dry body would shine through. But because of the sheer size of the land mass there is also a huge difference in flavor, like with Speyside. Distilleries nearer the coast – as you'd imagine – make batches with a salty taste.

Probably the most widely known brand from The Highlands is Glenmorangie.

Predominant Flavors: Because of just how large this area, the amount of variation is huge, but you can generally expect especially bold flavors, including heather and dried fruit.

Notable Distilleries: Wolfburn, Ben Nevis, Glenturret

THE LOWLANDS



Generally considered the lighter and most delicate whiskies, the Lowland distilleries often produce spirits with very little to no peat. Today the only distilleries still in operation are Auchentoshan, Bladnoch and Glenkinchie. However, a fourth distillery has recently opened called Daftmill, but its first release is still in production and is not expected to be released to the public until sometime in 2015.

This area is famous for utilizing the triple distillery method, which increases the alcohol content but leaves the final whiskey lighter, as it removes heavy components like oil and protein. You'll find it in the southernmost part of Scotland

There are, sadly, only three distilleries left in the area, all of which produce lighter single malts. Known as "The Lowland Ladies" for their fruity, floral flavor, they were originally popular with the English – who are, coincidentally, often considered by the Scots to be a people best suited to ladies' drinks.

Predominant Flavors: Floral tones like grass and honeysuckle pair with sweeter notes like toffee and cinnamon.

Notable Distilleries: Glenkinchie, Bladnoch, Auchentoshan

CAMPBELLTOWN



The small western coastal town of Campbeltown used to be the hub of Scotch distilling with early worldwide distribution. That is, until overproduction, American prohibition, and the depression hit sales hard.

With the majority of its bottles aged at the 10 year mark, the region is home to just three active distilleries which include Glen Scotia, Glengyle and Springbank.

Purists still consider Campbeltown one of the most important zones of Scotch production, purely because of their huge impact at the turn of the 20th century on popularizing the stuff. Single malts made there contain both the sweet and the savory, with briny, smokey notes jostling with fruit, toffee and vanilla.

There are only three distilleries left here, including old Glengyle, which was founded in 1872, shuttered in 1925, and was just reopened in its original location in 2004.

Predominant Flavors: Among the previously mentioned brine and smoke, enthusiasts also praise the area's distinctive (and, unless you have the palate for it, a bit off-putting) flavor of wet dog, also called wet wool.

Notable Distilleries: Glen Scotia, Springbank, Glengyle

ISLAY



This small island off the west coast of the mainland is only 25 miles long, but contains nine distilleries. To the uninitiated, their Scotch can be a bit intense,

given that it packs a powerful wallop due to the quality of its peat (soil made of decayed moss matter).

Considered the heavy-hitters of Scotch whisky, these spirits are usually heavily peated, often oily and even sometimes compared to iodine. Islay is home to a current eight distilleries which include Ardbeg, Bowmore, Bruichladdich, Bunnahabhain, Caol Ila, Kilchoman, Lagavulin and Laphroaig.

There are eight active distilleries and the industry is the island's second largest employer after agriculture

The level of smokiness a Scotch achieves is determined by the time and type of smoldering peat the barley is exposed to during its drying process. The peat on Islay, fed on a constant diet of rain and seaspray, is particularly pungent and adds a strong smoky, earthy taste with a touch of salty seaweed. If you think you can handle it, cop a bottle of Ardbeg to put some bag on your pipes.

Predominant Flavors: Although they don't sound appetizing, the mixture off brine, sea wood, smoke, and salt add a distinctive and intense flavor. It's an acquired taste.

Notable Distilleries: Ardbeg, Bowmore, Lagavulin, Laphroaig

Glenturret 50YO goes on sale for £40,000

30 AUGUST 2022 By Melita Kiely

Scotch producer The Glenturret has released its oldest whisky to date: a 50-year-old single malt, priced at £40,000 (US\$47,000).



The Glenturret 50 Years Old is the oldest release from the distillery to date. Only 150 bottles of The Glenturret 50 Years Old have been created.

The whisky was matured in a refill Sherry cask, which was filled in 1972.

It has been bottled at its cask strength of 40% ABV without added caramel colouring.

Tasting notes include aromas of aromatic candy, fresh apple and honeycomb. The palate is said to bring syrup sponge, dates, dried prunes and a touch of aniseed.

Sotheby's will auction bottle number one during its Whisky in Lalique sale (running from 30 August to 9 September), which will be the first whisky auction to exclusively offer Scotch in Lalique.

The first decanter will be the only bottle to come with artwork, created in collaboration with Method Studio, which commissioned Scottish artist Matthew Draper for the project. The high-end estimate for bottle number one is £60,000 (US\$70,320).

John Laurie, The Glenturret's managing director, said: "We are so excited to be releasing a 50-year-old expression for the first time ever."

"But to do it in partnership with the extraordinary creative talents, Lalique, Method and Matthew Draper, whose values both mirror our own philosophy when it comes to craftsmanship and the importance of making things by hand, is just incredible."

"The result is a rare and unique collector's piece, and the work that has gone into this project really does justice to the remarkable liquid that can be found inside."

The one-off artwork was created from pigments and inks that were harvested by charring and burning the 50-year-old cask staves – a variation on an ancient ink-making technique.

Marc Larminaux, artistic and creative director at Lalique, designed the packaging. Inspired by barley, the whisky is bottled in black crystal – the rarest and most expensive crystal available.

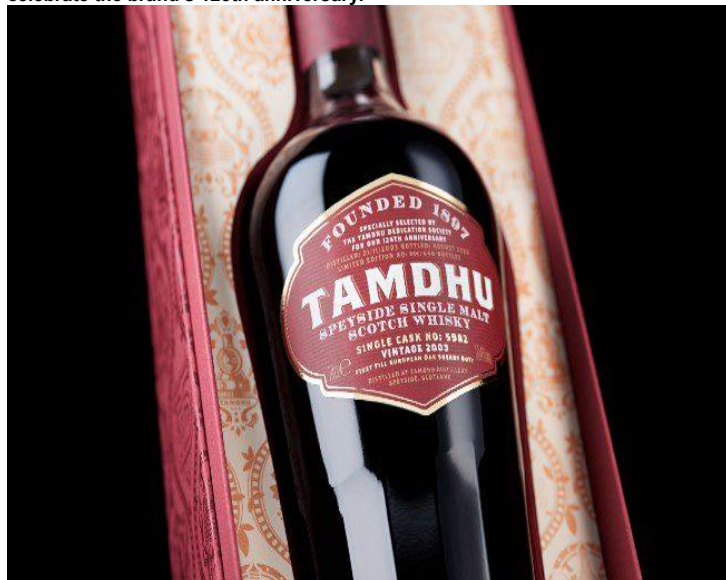
[Jonny Fowle](#), Sotheby's head of whisky and spirits North America and EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), said: "This 50-year-old whisky from The Glenturret represents so much more than just the depth of history at this distillery."

"It is an opportunity to be the first to collect The Glenturret's rarest bottles and the only opportunity to acquire the accompanying art piece made from the barrel itself."

Tamdhu marks 125 years with single cask whisky

31 AUGUST 2022 By [Melita Kiely](#)

The Tamdhu Dedication Society has selected a limited edition single malt to celebrate the brand's 125th anniversary.



Tamdhu Dedication Society Single Cask 2003 sits at 55.4% ABV

After a 'comprehensive' tasting with input from Dedication Society members and Tamdhu distillery manager Sandy McIntyre, Single Cask No: 5982 was picked to be bottled for the milestone occasion.

The whisky was matured in a first-fill European oak Sherry butt, resulting in a limited run of 640 bottles.

McIntyre said: "For our 125th anniversary, it was imperative that we consulted our most devout fans to bottle a single cask that celebrates Tamdhu's rich history, and toasts to its exciting future."

"The result, after much deliberation, is this Dedication Society bottling. As a whisky, it embodies all that is good about our distillation style and our dedication to full Sherry maturation."

Bottled at 55.4% ABV, the whisky will retail for RRP £349 (€406) per bottle. Tamdhu Dedication Society Single Cask 2003 can only be purchased online from [tamdhu.com](#).

Distilled on 21 November 2003, the whisky's tasting notes include vanilla aromas, stewed apples and liquorice. The palate is said to be full and balanced, with spiced fruit loaf, plum jam and dark chocolate. The finish offers dried fruits, soft spice, and Sherry notes.

Tamdhu is owned by Ian Macleod Distillers. In June, the brand released 600 bottles of an [18-year-old single cask whisky in China travel retail](#).

Last year, the Tamdhu unveiled the [sixth whisky in its Batch Strength series](#).

Dalmore 1991 whisky heads to auction

31 AUGUST 2022 By [Nicola Carruthers](#)

A bottle of 1991 Dalmore single malt will go under the hammer next month in support of a new organisation dedicated to retired service animals.



Glasgow-based Brave New Spirits bottled the Dalmore 1991 single malt. The single malt was bottled by Glasgow-based independent bottler Brave New Spirits. It will be auctioned by Christie's in London.

Drawn from a single Bourbon barrel, the Dalmore bottling offers floral and fruity aromas, with flavours of citrus and ripe apple.

The bottle will support the launch of the National Foundation for Retired Service Animals (NFRSA), a new charitable organisation that seeks to promote the welfare of retired service animals from across the police, fire and prison services.

The main aim of the NFRSA is to alleviate the financial pressure on the owners and handlers of retired service animals across the country by helping with ongoing vet bills and care.

The NFRSA's founder and chairman, countess Sara Bathurst, said: "We are deeply grateful to Brave New Spirits for their extraordinary generosity in offering this incredible gift."

"For whisky connoisseurs it will be the opportunity to enjoy a rare moment of exquisite amber, and for us it will mean we will be able to help so many brave animals from our emergency services, who have given years of their lives keeping us safe."

The auction will be held on 21 September at Christie's in St James, London, where the NFRSA will celebrate its national launch during an evening reception.

Earlier this month, Brave New Spirits [increased its global footprint](#) through a partnership with Switzerland-based distributor Smuggler.

Glenmorangie unveils Grand Vintage Malt 1998

31 AUGUST 2022 By [Melita Kiely](#)

A new 23-year-old single malt is joining the Glenmorangie portfolio: Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1998.



Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1998 includes some of the distillery's first whisky aged in new charred oak

The whisky comprises some of the first Glenmorangie stocks to be aged in new charred oak casks. Until this time, new charred oak had not been used by the whisky distillery.

The whisky matured in the new charred oak casks has been married with liquid aged in first-fill Bourbon barrels, and a 'subtly sweet' whisky finished in oloroso Sherry casks.

Bottled at 43% ABV, Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1988 will cost RRP US\$900.

Tasting notes include aromas of toffee, ripe pears, plums and baked apples, and gentle oak. The palate is said to be zesty with fruitiness, chocolate, raisins and figs. The finish brings sugared almonds, leather and dates.

Dr Bill Lumsden, director of whisky creation, said: "New in post in 1998, I had all sorts of ideas for new and delicious whiskies. And one of my first experiments was with new charred oak casks.

"At the heart of Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1998 is a parcel of that experimental whisky. Aged in those casks for 23 years, it gives the limited edition a wonderful spicy note and an amber glow.

"With aromas of apples and plums, and tastes of orange chocolate and clove, this whisky brings a new dimension to Glenmorangie's elegance."

In July, the Highland single malt brand revealed a ['playful' redesign of its core range](#). The new packaging was created to better reflect the flavours of each whisky.

That same month, Ardbeg – owned by The Glenmorangie Company – revealed it had sold a cask that was filled in [1975 for £16 million \(US\\$19.2m\)](#).

Famous Grouse appoints master blender

31 AUGUST 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Edrington has named Lark Distilling Co's Craig Johnstone as its new master blender for The Famous Grouse.



Craig Johnstone leaves Tasmania for Scotland to join The Famous Grouse. Scottish native Johnstone brings 19 years of industry experience to the role. He most recently served as whisky blender and wood manager at Tasmanian whisky producer Lark Distilling Co.

Johnstone also previously worked at Brown-Forman, Bruichladdich, Maxxium, the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, Glenkinchie and the Scotch Whisky Experience. His first role in the industry was as a tour guide at a Scotch whisky distillery.

The new position marks a return to Scotland for Johnstone, who has a degree in astrophysics.

Johnstone said: "This beloved Scotch whisky has played a prominent role in my life, part of so many celebrations with family and friends – just the aroma gives me a sense of being back home.

"I'm looking forward to delivering the high quality and character that is expected of The Famous Grouse and continuing the legacy of this well-loved whisky."

Johnstone will be based at the company's '106 Sample Room' in Glasgow, where a team of blenders nose up to 600 samples a day to create The Famous Grouse blend.

He will work with the Edrington team to develop new sustainability practices within the whisky-making and blending processes.

Edrington is aiming to achieve net zero by 2045 and has joined the Carbon Disclosure Project, which measures environmental impact.

Joakim Leijon, Edrington global brand director, added: "Craig is a talented master blender and his experience and passion for the brand and for exploring new ideas in sustainability will help us to build on the global success of The Famous Grouse and also rise to the challenge of our net zero ambitions." Johnstone follows in the footsteps of former master blenders, including Gordon Motion and [Kirsteen Campbell](#).

The Macallan owner Edrington reported a [45% increase in revenue](#) for the year ending 31 March 2022.

CASK STRENGTH RELEASE NO. 3



ABV : 64.1%

Volume : 700ml

Bottled straight from the cask, without adding water to reduce alcohol content, delivers the extraordinary depth, complexity and balance of flavours that's now the established hallmark of our Cask Strength series. Release No. 3 is no exception.

This third release has been created using an expertly balanced combination of three cask types – first-fill sherry seasoned American and European oak casks and a smaller quantity of refill casks for balance and depth. Using whisky made with a higher proportion of Orkney peated malt, our Master Whisky Maker, Gordon Motion, has achieved an intensely smoky character, coming through first on the nose with aromas of smouldering peat and lightly charred oak, balanced by honey-glazed lemons and crushed aniseed.

Discover what best suits your palate by experimenting with the amount of water you add as you release this whisky's distinctive notes of ripe mango, cloudy heather honey and whipped vanilla cream with a hint of aromatic violet. Pink grapefruit zest, freshly-baked sponge cake and a final gust of heathery peat smoke provide a long and distinctive finish.

We've been crafting our award-winning whisky at the Highland Park Distillery in Kirkwall, Orkney, since 1798. Age, experience and respect for tradition may define our whisky, but it's Orkney that sets it apart. Something magic happens here and the result is the wild harmony of flavours found in our whisky.

NATURAL CASK-DRIVEN COLOUR (NO ADDITIVES)

Deep gold

FLAVOURS

Lightly charred oak | Honey-glazed lemons | Crushed aniseed | Ripe mango | Cloudy heather honey | Whipped vanilla cream | Aromatic violet | Pink grapefruit zest | Rich sponge cake | Smouldering peat smoke

Highland Park unveils smokier cask strength whisky

02 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Melita Kiely

Orkney-based Highland Park has added a third bottling to its Cask Strength series – the smokiest single malt in the range to date.



The whisky is bottled at 64.1% ABV

Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.3 was made with a higher amount of Orkney peated malt, resulting in the smokier profile.

The whisky was mostly aged in first-fill Sherry-seasoned American and European oak casks, in addition to a small amount of refill casks.

Bottled at 64.1% ABV, Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.3 will retail for RRP £65 (US\$75) per bottle. It is available now from specialist whisky retailers including The Whisky Exchange, Master of Malt, and The Whisky Shop.

Gordon Motion, the brand's master whisky maker, commented: "With cask strength, you are at a great place to start exploring the taste that best suits your palate by adding water, ice or your preferred serve. It's your whisky and should be enjoyed your way."

"For me, a cask strength whisky really celebrates that balance between old and new, and I look forward to seeing how consumers enjoy the new whisky." Tasting notes for the new release include honey-glazed lemons, aniseed, ripe mango, heather honey, whipped vanilla cream, pink grapefruit zest, sponge cake and smouldering peat smoke.

Highland Park owner [Edrington reported a 'strong' fiscal 2022](#) in July.

A bottle of Highland Park also featured in a recent compilation of [award-winning Scotch whiskies all priced under £50 \(US\\$58\)](#).



The Dalmore Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky recently introduced a new, 14-year-old expression, made exclusively for the U.S. market. (image via The Dalmore)

With a royal heritage dating back to King Alexander III of Scotland, it is said The Dalmore Distillery has seen generations of distillers and blenders laying down its renowned single malt.

Today, [The Dalmore](#) is led by Master Whisky Maker Gregg Glass, accompanied by Master Distiller and Blender Richard Paterson OBE.

For the 14 Year Old, intense sweetness of the Pedro Ximénez sherry wine casks adds new layers of flavor to The Dalmore's house style and notes of citrus, liquorice and caramel. The distiller's notes also find tastes of figs, Medjool dates and maple syrup in The Dalmore 14 Year.

"The Dalmore 14 is a truly exceptional expression combining the beauty of The Dalmore Scotch Whisky from Scotland with the delicacy of rare sherry casks from Spain," said Glass in a prepared statement. "This whisky showcases delicious notes of citrus and rich caramel, harmoniously balanced. The sweet intensity of sun-drenched Pedro Ximénez sherry wine perfectly complements The Dalmore's distinctive house style of chocolate orange and subtle spice. Ideal to cherish"

The Dalmore 14 Year is the first release in the Principal Collection to be matured within what's described as hand-selected rare and aged Pedro Ximénez casks, from the sherry-makers at The House of Gonzalez Byass, in Spain.

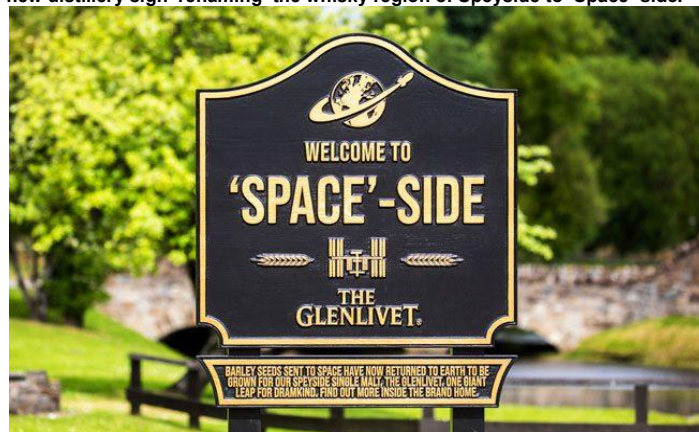
The Dalmore Principal Collection features 10 single malts, including The Dalmore King Alexander III, The Dalmore 18 Year Old, and now The Dalmore 14 Year Old.

The Dalmore 14 Year Old clocks in at 87.6 proof.

Speyside 'renamed' in honour of space experiment

01 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Georgie Pursey

The Glenlivet is celebrating the return of its barley seeds from space with a new distillery sign 'renaming' the whisky region of Speyside to 'Space'-side.



The sign marks the experiment as 'one giant leap for dramkind'

In an experiment conducted in collaboration with scientists at the University of Guelph, Canada, barley seeds were sent into space in May 2021 on a Space X rocket.

The seeds, which were donated by Chivas Brothers, were sent to the International Space Station to test whether they could withstand the effects of its extreme conditions, including zero gravity, extreme temperatures and cosmic radiation.

Led by School of Environmental Sciences professor and controlled environment systems research facility director, Dr Mike Dixon, the experiment was part of the university's ongoing research into growing crops in space. The goal of the trial is to ensure access to fresh produce for astronauts on long-term missions, as well as providing clean water captured from the transpiration process, providing oxygen and removing carbon dioxide. The results are now being analysed against the conditions the seeds were exposed to, which will help determine which deep space conditions they could survive.

Dixon commented: "Historically when humans have discovered new land, they have produced alcohol, including whisky. As a whisky enthusiast, I want to keep this tradition going as we continue to explore the possibility of life on other planets."

"We look forward to working with The Glenlivet and following the journey of the barley seeds back on Earth."

Following their return to The Glenlivet Distillery, the seeds will be planted, malted and distilled into an 'astronomical expression' of one of the brand's single malts as The Glenlivet continues its efforts to 'break conventions' within whisky.

Jayne Murphy, marketing director for The Glenlivet said: "We are always looking for new ways to innovate our single malt production and by partnering with the University of Guelph on their trailblazing space experiment, we had the opportunity to do exactly that."

"We are excited to see how the seeds will perform as they are planted, harvested, malted and distilled into one of our iconic single malts. We hope it will produce a new, extraterrestrial expression with a wonderful taste."

In January, [Nemiroff released a limited edition Moon Edition](#) which was made to celebrate Ukrainian Satellite Sich-2-30's launch into orbit, after it set off on the Space X's Falcon 9 rocket.

Last year, Nemiroff was named an official partner of robotics technology firm [Spacebit's 2022 lunar mission](#).

expression matured in American oak refill casks and freshly charred American oak casks.

A total of 3000 bottles are available at the distillery or via [malts.com](#) (if you live in the UK at least), released at 53% ABV and priced £ 150.

Glen Scotia Launching Limited "Distillery of the Year" Expression

[Gary Carter](#) - [Scotch](#) | August 30, 2022

[Glen Scotia](#) recently unveiled its new, limited-edition, 22-year-old "Distillery of the Year" expression, devised to pay homage to its long-running Campbeltown Distillery.

Fresh off being named Scottish Whisky Distillery of the Year at the Scottish Whisky Awards last fall, Glen Scotia poured over the tasks needed to bring this new 2022 release to market. Only 500 bottles will be available globally, and each 70cl bottle will carry a £475 price tag. The whisky clocks in at 54.8% ABV. The distiller's notes explain that this whisky carries the signature "Glen Scotia style," using liquid from exclusive reserves of first-fill bourbon casks, and the whisky offers the tropical fruit and oily coastal notes to be expected from a Campbeltown single malt.



Glen Scotia recently unveiled its new, limited-edition, 22-year-old "Distillery of the Year" expression, devised to pay homage to its long-running Campbeltown Distillery. (image via Glen Scotia)

The release comes presented in the brand's new premium packaging, this in a blue tube with a bottle that sports a shoulder coin and heavy base.

A handful of the bottles will be available via ballot from the Glen Scotia website. Limited to one entry per person, the ballot is open until Sunday, Sept. 4th by midnight.

Glen Scotia's single malt dates back to 1832, and it's one of three surviving distilleries in Campbeltown.

The distillery maintains much of its original design including the fermenters, the stillroom, and the dunnage warehouse dating from the 1830s.

Glen Scotia's master distiller, Iain McAlister, said that although they are one of the smallest distilleries in Scotland, "with the combination of our team's craftsmanship and our ambition to take Glen Scotia to the world, we are producing some of the best whisky to have come out of Campbeltown in many years. This is a result of those that came before us and their hard work and knowledge of the craft."

Laphroaig Càirdeas 2023 / Caol Ila Four Corners / Waterford Peated



Laphroaig Càirdeas – White Port and Madeira

The 2023 Càirdeas release from Laphroaig will be a mix of White Port and Madeira casks. Available only to the Friends of Laphroaig, this is the first of its kind to be released by the new master distiller Barry MacAffer.

Three quarters of the liquid is finished in second-fill Madeira casks for a *complex richness*, tempered by the final quarter coming from first-fill White Port casks. The whisky is bottled at 52.3% ABV.



Caol Ila Four Corners of Scotland

[Caol Ila](#) distillery is the fourth and final Diageo distillery to undergo a major transformation as part of a £ 185 million investment. Now this is celebrated with the launch of a Caol Ila 'Four Corners of Scotland', a 14 year old

Fettercairn adds to Warehouse Collection

02 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Melita Kiely

Whyte & Mackay-owned Fettercairn Distillery has released the fourth instalment in its Warehouse Collection.



Fettercairn Warehouse 2 Batch No. 004 sits at 48.8% ABV

Fettercairn's Warehouse Collection aims to showcase 'hidden gems' from the distillery's 14 dunnage warehouses.

Fettercairn Warehouse 2 Batch No. 004 was aged in first-fill ex-Bourbon barrels and re-charred Hungarian wine oak casks.

The whisky has been bottled at 48.8% ABV without caramel colouring or chill filtration.

Tasting notes include aromas of Madagascan vanilla, poached pears and cracked pepper, leading to flavours of toffee, honey and nuttiness. Drinkers may also find notes of passion fruit, sweet oak wood and soft spice.

Gregg Glass, master whisky maker, said: "At Fettercairn we have had an opportunity to take a different perspective on whisky making. The ingenuity of our unique copper cooling ring produces a brilliant and tropical new make spirit.

"Each warehouse is unique too, which allows myself – as whisky maker – to play with the influence on the whisky as it matures.

"Our Warehouse Collection offers a window into the unconventional approach that we take here at Fettercairn. In many ways we are still exploring different aspects of Fettercairn's tropical distillery character.

"Each experiment we lay down plays with the balance of nature, nurture and the character of each unique warehouse. BatchNo.004 is a one-off expression that showcases Fettercairn in a new, unexpected way, which we hope will delight admirers of our distillery."

The whisky will be available in markets worldwide, including the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and France from September.

Fettercairn Warehouse 2 Batch No. 004 will be priced at RRP £60 (US\$69).

In August, Whyte & Mackay unveiled the [2022 limited edition bottling](#) of its Fettercairn 16 Years Old single malt whisky.

Feragaia to open 'first' alcohol-free distillery

02 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Georgie Pursey

Alcohol-free 'spirit' producer Feragaia has completed construction of what it claims is the first working alcohol-free distillery in Scotland.

The opening of the facility in Glenrothes, Fife, will enable the brand to increase production, which previously took place at a private distillery in south Scotland.

Feragaia's co-founder, Bill Garnock said: "It is an honour to be opening the first working alcohol-free distillery in Scotland, just 15 miles from my family farm in the East Neuk.

"This is a bold step in our Feragaia journey, and will allow us to further deliver on our core values of provenance and process. The distillery will further strengthen transparency throughout the supply chain, creating an alcohol-free spirit that works in partnership with the wild forces of nature that inspire us.

"Authenticity guides every batch of Feragaia and this development reflects our passion and drive to be rooted in originality."

The new distillery will unify 'innovative' infrastructure with traditional distillation techniques to bring together the 14 botanicals used to create the liquid.

The product goes through multiple distillation runs before being blended by hand, and cut with Scottish water.



Feragaia was founded in 2019 to challenge negative preconceptions around alcohol-free drinks



Feragaia means 'wild earth' in Latin and Greek

Having recently achieved B Corp status, the distillery will follow stringent environmental policies. This will include measuring the chemical and waste-free manufacturing process to create as circular a business as possible.

Feragaia also aims to support the surrounding area by sourcing local ingredients, with an aim to create multiple job roles.

"Fife has played a key role in the history of spirit innovation, and remains a leading player in the world of premium spirit production," Garnock added. "To open our own Feragaia distillery here is an exciting next chapter for Feragaia, and for Fife."

In November 2021, [Feragaia received £1.5 million \(US\\$1.74m\) investment](#) from Scotland's leading conservationist, Andres Povls.

Irish Distillers to create 800 jobs with €250m investment in new Midleton distillery

The money will support the delivery of what the company describes as a new, purpose-built, state-of-the-art distillery which is expected to be operational in 2025



What the new distillery will look like.

MON, 05 SEP, 2022 - 13:15

NEIL MICHAEL

Irish Distillers is to invest €250m to build a new distillery in Midleton, Co Cork, which will create around 800 construction jobs over three years.

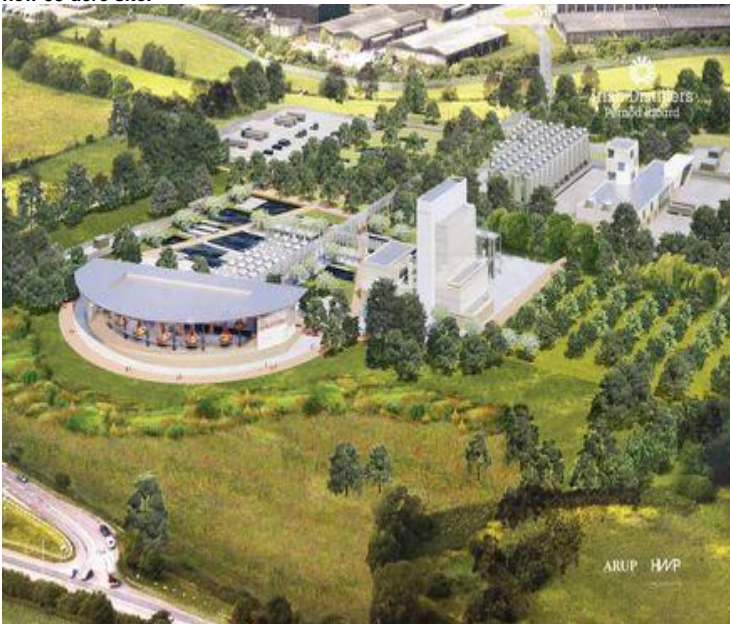
The money will support the delivery of what the company describes as a new, purpose-built, state-of-the-art distillery which is expected to be operational in 2025.

Once up and running, the new distillery will create up to 100 new jobs for East Cork.

The new distillery will be situated on a site adjacent to the existing Midleton Distillery and will generate up to 800 construction jobs over three years. The new distillery will be a carbon neutral operation, facilitated by the implementation of new Mechanical Vapour Recompression technology to reuse waste heat and the use of biogas produced on site.

A planning application is expected to be submitted to Cork County Council towards the end of 2022 and, if successful, construction will commence in 2023 with plans for the distillery to be operational in 2025.

Subject to a successful planning application and meeting all licensing requirements, the new distillery will distil pot still and grain whiskey with grain intake, brewing, fermentation, and distillation facilities incorporated into the new 55-acre site.



Once up and running, the new distillery will create up to 100 new jobs for East Cork.

Speaking at the announcement, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said: "The continued success of the Irish whiskey industry is something that we can be incredibly proud of as a nation.

"Irish Distillers has played an integral role in the development of the industry. Whiskey has been distilled in Midleton for nearly 200 years, and the €250 million investment will deliver hundreds of more jobs into the future, both during construction and once the distillery is operational.

"Today's announcement is an extremely positive development for Midleton and the wider region and will further solidify Midleton's reputation as the home of Irish whiskey."

Nodjame Fouad, Chair and CEO at Irish Distillers, said: "Today is a momentous day for Irish Distillers and the team at Midleton Distillery.

"We are immensely proud of the continued strong performance of our full portfolio of Irish whiskeys, led by Jameson which sold over 10 million cases in our 2022 financial year."

Leo Clancy, CEO Enterprise Ireland, said: "Midleton is synonymous with whiskey, and is globally renowned for its products.

"Enterprise Ireland is delighted to work with Irish Distillers.

"This planned investment will also have an important impact on the local community.

"It also demonstrates Irish Distillers continued long-term commitment to Ireland and their sustainability ambitions."

These New Unique Cask Finish Scotches Will Add Variety To Your Bar Cart

[Gina Pace](#)

Aug 31, 2022, 11:23pm EDT



Cask finishing can add unique flavor dimensions to Scotch.

GETTY

Finishing Scotch in a secondary barrel that held something else, like sherry, port or rum, has been growing in popularity as a tool for whisky makers to add in layers of flavor. The Balvenie was one of the first to start using this process, pioneered by Malt Master David C. Stewart back in 1983.

As whisky makers continue to innovate, the secondary casks selected have become increasingly unique. Americans have long been interested in premium Scotch, and the popularity of high-end bottles has grown over time. After the lifting of retaliatory tariffs in 2021, [luxury Scotch sales have soared 34 percent](#) in the first quarter of 2022, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

This summer alone, there have been three releases that have caught my eye using rare casks to add a special touch.



The Balvenie French Oak 16 Year Old

[The Balvenie French Oak 16-Year-Old](#)

While there have been some limited releases in recent years, the new French Oak 16-Year-Old is the first permanent extension of the Cask Finishes Range in nearly 10 years, which includes the [DoubleWood 12-Year-Old](#), the incredibly popular [Caribbean Cask 14-Year-Old](#) and [Portwood 21-Year-Old](#).

The 16-year-old (\$175) fills in a gap in age statements not currently available in the Cask Finishes Range, said Neil Strachan, the west coast brand ambassador for The Balvenie.

“Some people think the perfect age for whisky is 16 to 18 years old, because it has the balance of a pop of alcohol and the depth that age brings,” he said. The casks chosen for this project previously held Pineau wine from French Charentes vineyards, the first time the distillery has used them. Pineau des Charentes is a fortified wine made with unfermented grape juice and Cognac eau-de-vie. It’s usually drunk as an aperitif and is only produced in a small region in western France, and is mostly consumed locally. It comes in red and white varietals, but Balvenie used casks that held red. The casks impart citrus notes, like lemon and grapefruit, as well as subtle ginger spice and amps up the characteristic honey flavors in Balvenie. The result is a more delicate and bright influence than something like the rich sweetness of a Pedro Ximénez sherry cask.



Benriach Cask Edition 1998: Marsala
COURTESY BENRIACH

[Benriach Cask Edition 1998: Marsala](#)

Benriach has released single cask editions before, but this is the first time three of them have come to the United States. The whiskies, which are 12, 23, and 24 years old and finished in Pedro Ximénez, Marsala and Oloroso respectively, are each available in different areas of the country.

“Our ‘sleeping beauties’, as we often call these casks, continue to be sourced from all over the world, enabling us to creatively explore the full flavor possibilities of Speyside single malt,” said Master Blender Rachel Barrie.

“Each cask will tell its own story of a journey of flavor where the spirit is married with oak, over years and through the seasons, to really create a unique moment in time never to be repeated again.”

The Marsala edition is a standout, and only 264 bottles are available (\$330).

Benriach is a sweet Speyside Scotch known for its orchard fruit character.

Aging it in a Marsala cask adds additional stone fruit overtones and amps up the vanilla and maple notes.



Craigellachie 13 Years Old Armagnac Cask Finish
COURTESY CRAIGELLACHIE

[Craigellachie 13 Years Old Armagnac Cask Finish](#)

Craigellachie is a Speyside malt, but it doesn’t adhere to the regions typical light and fruity style, and is instead frequently described as “muscular.”

For Craigellachie’s first release in a new Cask Collection series, Malt Master Stephanie Macleod picked Armagnac, the lesser-known cousin of Cognac, to finish the 13-year-old spirit that was first aged in former bourbon barrels.

“Craigellachie is a distinctly bold and brooding malt,” Macleod said. “Full-bodied and meaty — so we are using these cask types to complement and elevate the signature character of the distillery, not mask it, to add an extra dimension of flavor and intrigue.”

Armagnac producers don’t make typical heads and tails cuts when making the spirit, so it ages with more volatile compounds, making it rougher at first but giving it more complexity as it gets older. But combining a meaty spirit with another formidable finishing barrel has a softening effect on the Craigellachie: the pineapple notes become more syrupy, and apple flavors get a baked cinnamon addition. At \$65, it is great value.

Littlemill Distillery Releases Rare 45 Year Old Whisky

[Gary Carter](#) - [Scotch](#) | September 2, 2022

[Scotland's Littlemill Distillery](#) recently partnered with renowned photographer Stefan Sappert to launch a rarified single malt, a 45-year-old whisky that commemorates the distillery’s 250th anniversary.

Founded in 1772 in Bowling, West Dunbartonshire, the distillery was lost to a fire in 2004. Since then, Master Blender of Loch Lomond Group Michael Henry has been the guardian of the last remaining casks, drawing on the limited reserves for the Littlemill 250th Anniversary Release.

“Littlemill was lost before its contribution to whisky could ever be fully acknowledged and applauded,” Henry said. “However, we are lucky to have the remaining few casks under our care, a stone’s throw from where the original distillery once stood, and it felt only right to mark this significant milestone with a very special limited release.”



Scotland's Littlemill Distillery recently partnered with renowned photographer Stefan Sappert to launch a rarified single malt, a 45-year-old whisky that commemorates the distillery's 250th anniversary. (image via Littlemill)
Released last month, this Littlemill expression is its oldest age statement to date with 250 individually-numbered bottles available globally, each priced £9,500.

To mark the historic milestone, Littlemill collaborated with Sappert to honor two important moments in the brand's timeline, the establishment of Littlemill and its innovators who shaped whisky production, and the development of photography, both happening in the late 1700s.

A statement from the whisky maker explained that Stefan's traditional photographic technique, silver on black glass, combined with state-of-the-art production creates dramatic and atmospheric imagery. His portfolio includes international stars Alice Cooper, Joss Stone, Sting, Rod Stewart, and David Duchovny.

In this collaboration, Stefan worked with Master Blender Henry to create a special collectible for the Littlemill 250th Anniversary Release, which also gives enthusiasts a chance to own a piece of the lost distillery's legacy.

The whisky itself was taken from a single distillation on Oct. 4th, 1976. It was re-casked in 1996 into American oak hogsheads, before maturing in first-fill Oloroso sherry hogsheads for a final six months before bottling.

"Double distilled in Littlemill's bespoke straight neck pot stills which were designed to give a triple distillation style character, this is a lowland single malt whisky of exceptional character," Henry noted. "In keeping with our records of how Littlemill was treated, I have given the liquid a final six-month finish in first-fill Oloroso sherry hogsheads. You can taste the history in every precious drop, from elderflower, chamomile and lemon zest, to the silk-like creme caramel and tart green apple, and the warming ginger and cinnamon spice finish."

In homage to Stefan and his photographic process, the Littlemill 250th bottle cabinet draws inspiration from a Victorian bellows camera box with a traditional lens, designed by Morans Wood Components and Scottish crystal studio Glencairn..

Inside, each hand blown crystal decanter, also by Glencairn, is inspired by a camera aperture and is topped with a hand-turned and finished gold-plated collar and stopper.

As part of the collaboration, Stefan manufactured 250 silver on black glass photographic plates. Perched in a drawer under the decanter, the plates recapture an image of the River Clyde near Littlemill's doorsteps. Each individually numbered plate is exclusive to its new owner, bearing Stefan's signature and fingerprints on the reverse.

"The art of whisky-making is fascinating. Like wet plate photography, it captures a moment that requires an equal amount of patience, dedication, passion, and most importantly, time," Stefan said. "My work uses one of the oldest photographic processes that links directly to the 1770s, where the basis of creating permanent photographs was discovered and when Littlemill was founded. I work with an old wooden camera and a historic lens that is over 160 years old. The result is not just a digital image, but a genuine piece of art."

Non-chill filtered and bottled at its natural color and natural strength of 41.8% ABV, the Littlemill 250th Anniversary Release is available for purchase via enquiry through the Littlemill website at www.littlemilldistillery.com, and through specialized retailers.

Littlemill 250th Anniversary Release tasting notes:

- **Nose:** Floral elderflower and chamomile with grapefruit and lemon zest, deeper sweet notes of toffee with marzipan, almond and vanilla.
- **Palate:** Silk-like mouthfeel floats over the tongue, crème caramel and vanilla syrup with tart green fruits of apple, pear and lime, gentle cinnamon and nutmeg spice.
- **Finish:** Long with mouth-watering green fruit, some dry oak tannin then warming ginger and cinnamon spice.

Berry Bros adds to Nordic whisky line

06 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Alice Brooker

London-based Berry Bros & Rudd has revealed the second batch of releases in its Nordic Cask whisky range.



The additional whiskies comprise the world's first Nordic blend whisky, said the producer

Berry Bros released the [inaugural bottles in its Nordic Cask collection](#) in August last year, which included whiskies from Norway's Myken, Sweden's High Coast, Finland's Kyrö and Fary Lochan in Denmark.

The new bottlings added to the series include the world's first cross-Nordic blend, according to the producer.

Made up of five casks from Nordic distilleries, Vindöga Blended Nordic Malt Whisky (59% ABV) is vatted from ex-Sherry-matured casks.

The remaining whiskies in the series include casks from Stauning 2017 Cask (58.9% ABV), from Denmark; Teerenpeli 2013 Cask (59.9% ABV), from Finland; Thy 2017 Cask (57.6% ABV), from Denmark; and Smögen (60% ABV), from Sweden.

The bottles were selected by Jonny McMillan, Berry Bros & Rudd reserve whisky manager.

He said: "We've found Nordic distillers to be deeply respectful of whisky's rich and proud heritage. Often drawing inspiration from their projects from Scotland and Japan, they show willingness to inject their spirit of locality.

"Be it using local grains, indigenous materials for smoking or simply producing a distillate with a sense of place. Berry Bros & Rudd is proud to include in this release the first cross-Nordic blended malt, Vindöga.

"Blended with input from each of the distillers and our good friend Thomas Øhrbom from *Whisky Saga* whom we worked with to create the final vatting, we hope the release further grows the region's collaboration and inevitable global attention."

Berry Bros & Rudd is streaming a live virtual tasting on 15 September at 7pm (BST) on social media platforms Facebook and YouTube.

Limited edition tasting kits are also available to purchase online for RRP £35 (US\$40.62).

In January this year, we sat down with [Doug Mclvor, the reserve spirits manager](#) of the London drinks merchant.

Old Enough to Drink: The Best 21 Year Old Whiskies to Try

AUGUST 1, 2022 | [JONNY MCCORMICK](#)



Since single malt scotch is often aged in used barrels, whisky makers can let it rest for 21 years or more without fear of it becoming over-oaked. (Photo by Jeff Harris)

Whether you are celebrating a birthday or another special occasion, you can't go wrong with any of these 21 year old whiskies, all of which scored 90 points or more in our Buying Guide. This list offers a wide array of styles, including single malt scotch, blended scotch, blended malt, blended grain, Irish single malt, single pot still, and Japanese whisky. Aged with care and sometimes with multiple cask types, all of these whiskies make for a toast-worthy pour. **OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST 21 YEAR OLD WHISKIES TO DRINK NOW**



[Bushmills](#)

[21 year old Madeira Finish Irish Single Malt](#)

96 points, 40%, \$250

This whiskey underwent its final two years of maturation in madeira casks, which bring incredible depth of flavor to this exceptional triple distilled Irish single malt. Chocolate, sultana, dates, forest honey, nuts, and banana bread.



[Dewar's](#)

[Double Double 21 year old Blended Scotch](#)

94 points, 46%, \$40/375 ml

Dewar's blends parcels of aged malt and grain, blends and ages the parcels, then blends them, ages the blend, and finishes the blend in oloroso casks. Chocolate, vanilla, black cherry, coffee grounds, gingersnaps, smoke, and spice.



[Knappogue Castle 21 year old Irish Single Malt](#)

94 points, 46%, \$200

Two vintages of triple distilled single malt Irish whiskey matured in bourbon casks were married together for this limited release. Honey, floral, vanilla pod, wood spices, orange, kumquat, and lime.



[Glenfiddich 21 year old Reserva Rum Cask Finish Single Malt Scotch](#)

93 points, 40%, \$210

William Grant & Sons is a rum-finished whisky specialist, and this expression represents the pinnacle of their expertise. Lime zest, vanilla, meringue, pepper, and soft oak.



[GlenDronach 21 year old Parliament Single Malt Scotch](#)

93 points, 48%, \$252

Matured in oloroso and PX casks, this is named after the parliament of rooks that nest in the trees beside the distillery. Sweet sherry, leather, nuts, peach, clove, ginger, licorice, and chocolate.



[Jura 21](#)

[year old Tide Single Malt Scotch](#)

93 points, 46.7%, \$200

Jura matures this whisky in bourbon barrels, then finishes it in new American oak casks which accentuate the notes of ginger and spice. Baked apple, chocolate chip cookies, woodsmoke, ginger, honey, and clove.



[Redbreast](#)

[21 year old Irish Single Pot Still](#)

93 points, 46%, \$290

A remarkable single pot still whiskey from Ireland's Midleton Distillery, matured in a mixture of sherry and bourbon casks. Honey, vanilla, orange, apple, banana, creaminess, and pot still spices.



[Hibiki 21](#)

[21 year old Japanese Blend](#)

93 points, 43%, \$350

Designed to show the art of blending, this fine whisky from the House of Suntory draws on rare stocks from across the company's distilleries. Vanilla, dried fruits, incense, mizunara oak, citrus, honey, and ginger.



[Glenlivet](#)

[21 year old Archive Single Malt Scotch](#)

92 points, 43%, \$240

This one is composed of whiskies from bourbon and sherry casks drawn from the Glenlivet warehouses. Sherry, fruitcake, maple syrup, Brazil nuts, old leather, oily, toffee, raisin, and oak.



[Benromach 21 year old Single Malt Scotch](#)

92 points, 43%, \$200

Gordon & MacPhail reopened Benromach Distillery in 1998, so this expression, matured in first-fill sherry and bourbon casks, contains some of the oldest whisky made under the family's ownership. Cinnamon, orange, and black coffee.



[Glengoyne](#)

[21 year old Single Malt Scotch](#)

92 points, 43%, \$235

A bottling that has long been regarded as a classic among sherry cask matured expressions. Red apple, dates, dried fig, baking spices, toffee, red currant, sultana, and cinnamon.



[MacNair's](#)

[Lum Reek 21 year old Blended Scotch](#)

92 points, 48%, \$220

A blend of Islay and Speyside whiskies. The name comes from the traditional Scottish toast to a long and prosperous life: "Lang may yer lum reek." Bold smoke, zesty citrus, vanilla, marmalade, caramel, spice, and chocolate.



[Royal](#)

[Salute 21 year old Snow Polo Edition Blended Grain Scotch](#)

91 points, 46.5%, \$155

This is Royal Salute's first blended grain. Its ABV matches the latitude of St. Moritz, where snow polo was first played. Caramel, vanilla, pepper, stewed fruits, orange, chocolate, honeycomb, and marzipan.



[Glencadam](#)

[21 year old Scotch Single Malt](#)

91 points, 46%, \$215

This whisky from Glencadam Distillery, which will celebrate its bicentenary in 2025, is an unsung marvel. Marshmallow, coconut, apple, apricot, almond, lemon curd, ginger, and tobacco.



[Balvenie](#)

[Port Wood 21 year old Single Malt Scotch](#)

91 points, 40%, \$225

While Balvenie has flirted with other versions of 21 year olds, this expression is the definitive bottling and an exemplar of port pipe maturation. Red grape, vanilla, milk chocolate, nuts, plum, and subtle smoke.



[Arran 21](#)

[21 year old Single Malt Scotch](#)

91 points, 46%, \$250

Currently the oldest expression in Arran's core range, this whisky was fully matured in sherry butts. Toffee, baked apple, tropical fruit, sweet spice, peaches in syrup, and milk chocolate.

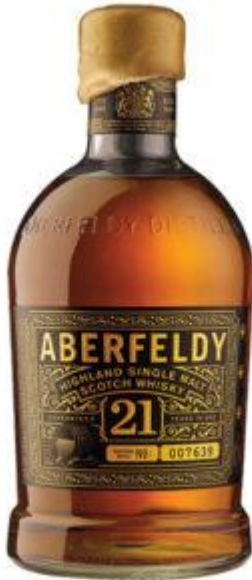


[Glenfarclas](#)

[21 year old Single Malt Scotch](#)

91 points, 43%, \$130

Few whiskies offer better value for money than age statement Glenfarclas, and this lively, expressive whisky also delivers on the palate. Just don't expect a sherry bomb. Honey, pear, cinnamon, toffee, apricot, and spice.



[Aberfeldy](#)

[21 year old Single Malt Scotch](#)

91 points, 40%, \$190

A luxurious dram matured in bourbon and sherry casks from Dewar's flagship distillery. Heather honey, granola, vanilla, ground almond, waxy, pepper, citrus, and dried fruit.



[Benriach](#)

[The Twenty One Single Malt Scotch](#)

91 points, 46%, \$200

Peated and unpeated whisky matured in four different cask types—bourbon, sherry, virgin oak, and Bordeaux red wine. Sweet smokiness, mint, vanilla, red berries, dark chocolate, and licorice.



[Glen Moray](#)

[21 year old Elgin Heritage Portwood Finish Single Malt Scotch](#)

90 points, 46.3%, \$180

The two-year port finish adds layers of dark chocolate and fruit to the aged stocks initially matured in American oak. Raspberry, ginger, vanilla custard, sultana, honey, coconut, chocolate, and oak.

But you don't need to drop serious coin at the bar to come away with an amazing experience. Kalleward loves talking whisky, whether discussing unheralded gems from Campbeltown or lesser-known Highland expressions that often redefine a patron's perception of single malt scotch. "I like exposing people to these whiskies that they've never heard of," he says. "It's an awakening that's incredible to watch."



The National Tavern at Reynolds Lake Oconee
[THE NATIONAL TAVERN AT REYNOLDS LAKE OCONEE](#)—GREENSBORO, GA.

At first glance, the Bourbon Reserves list at The National Tavern will make you think you've passed through a time warp. It's a collection of desirable and elusive American whiskeys—a list that includes E.H. Taylor 18 year old Marriage, Blanton's Gold, Elmer T. Lee 100th Anniversary, a full vertical selection of Pappy Van Winkle, and plenty more. Needless to say, bourbon enthusiasts are likely to be shocked to see so many rare whiskeys available at one bar.

Yes, the menu clearly states that the 34 whiskeys are limited, meaning some of those offerings won't last long. Even so, patrons are certain to find something that will quicken their pulse, especially given the tavern's prices. Generous three-ounce pours of Abraham Bowman 16 year old, William Larue Weller, and Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve 20 year old cost \$25, \$35, and \$65, respectively. Even Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve 23 year old will set you back only \$100 for a pour.

"I always price products based on what I pay for them and not the secondary market," says Oliver Wilcher, Reynolds Lake Oconee's director of restaurant services. "We all have bucket lists in our lives, and for some people, getting to taste some of these hard-to-get allocated whiskeys is one of them. At the end of the day, it's about the experience, and those are the good memories we want to build as much as possible." The tavern is also a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence recipient.

[THE OAK ROOM AT THE LODGE AND THE RIVER BAR AT THE CLOISTER AT SEA ISLAND RESORT](#)—SEA ISLAND, GA.

There are two primary resort hotels at Sea Island, The Cloister and The Lodge, and both offer exceptional whiskeys. The Lodge's Oak Room's menu is more extensive, with 137 bottles, including Old Forester 150th Anniversary and Glenmorangie Grand Vintage 1997. The River Bar at The Cloister offers 89 bottles, but a handful of standout expressions, like Ardmore 30 year old, Glenfiddich 1978 Rare Collection, and Macallan Fine & Rare 1952, make it a top-notch spot for a dram.

When asked to single out a few significant bottles across the resort, lead bartender Nic Wallace points to three vintages of Macallan Fine & Rare—1950, 1952, and 1990. "These are snapshots in history," he says.



The Oak Room at Seal Island Resort

Embrace the Drink at These Golf Course Whisky Bars

AUGUST 16, 2022 | [SHAUN TOLSON](#)



After a round at Pebble Beach, grab a Hakushu, Macallan, or Knob Creek at the golf course's Tap Room. (Photo by Randy Tunnell)

A bucket-list round of golf deserves an equally exceptional post-round pour. Yet, when it comes to whisky collections, America's most exemplary golf resorts are not all created equal. Here's a look at five esteemed golf clubs and resorts with exceptional whisky lists.

[THE WINERY BAR AT THE AMERICAN CLUB RESORT](#)—KOHLER, WIS.

The Winery Bar doesn't specialize in what its name suggests. Yes, you can order more than two dozen wines by the glass, and The Immigrant Restaurant, recipient of Wine Spectator's Best of Award of Excellence, which is adjacent to the bar, offers an extensive wine list by the bottle. But when you're seated in one of the 10 chairs at the bar, the headliner is whisky—with a collection of nearly 300.

"It's such an exciting time to be a whisky drinker," says managing bartender Peter Kalleward, who points specifically to a number of unique scotch offerings on the menu, among them selections from independent bottler That Boutique-y Whisky Company and some limited releases from Gordon & MacPhail, including a 21 year old single malt from Old Pulteney. In fact, scotch enthusiasts will revel in the opportunity to sip their way through expansive vertical tastings of Glenfiddich (12 bottles), Balvenie (16 bottles), and Macallan (17 bottles). Just know that some of those offerings—like Macallan 1985, two Glenfiddich 1975 Vintage Casks, and Balvenie 1973 David Stewart Collection—carry four-figure price tags per pour.

Whether you're selecting a tippie at The River Bar or in the Oak Room, make sure you ask if any off-menu bottles are available. "The minute we put some of these things on the menu they're gone within a week," Wallace says, alluding to Pappy Van Winkle and the Buffalo Trace Antique Collection. "Some of these bottles don't make the list just so that we can ensure that they can stick around for a few months."

THE TAP ROOM AT PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS—PEBBLE BEACH, CALIF. There's more than meets the eye at Pebble Beach when patrons glance at The Tap Room's spirits menu. Sure, indulgent pours like Hakushu 18 year old and Bomberger's Declaration (from Michter's Legacy Series) jump off the page, but the more allocated whiskeys—yes, we're talking about you, Pappy—are sometimes available, too. This also applies to whiskeys that are released throughout the year in limited capacity, such as Blanton's, so be sure to inquire.

"When we get allocated items, especially if it's a one-bottle allocation, it tends to not last very long once word gets out," says Wendy Heilmann, the resort's director of wine and spirits. "Some are so extremely popular that we go through an entire bottle in one evening."

On the scotch whisky front, the resort recently received allocations of the latest Harmony Collection release from Macallan—Rich Cacao—and it plans to create a specialized truffle pairing to further elevate the experience. Yet, according to Heilmann, some of the most popular bottles at the bar are private barrel selections of Knob Creek and Maker's Mark, both of which are utilized to create specialty cocktails that often serve as the exclamation points following a bucket-list round of golf. "You get a one-of-a-kind golf experience," she says, "and a one-of-a-kind Manhattan in The Tap Room afterward."

TOWER SUITE BAR AT WYNN—LAS VEGAS LAS VEGAS, NEV.

Following a unique round at the Wynn Golf Club—the 6,722-yard course is discreetly tucked behind the Wynn and Encore towers right along The Strip—golfers can find equally enthralling whiskey options, provided they know where to look. Those who are seeking a noteworthy selection of bourbons and ryes should venture to the Tower Suite Bar, just a short walk from the pro shop.

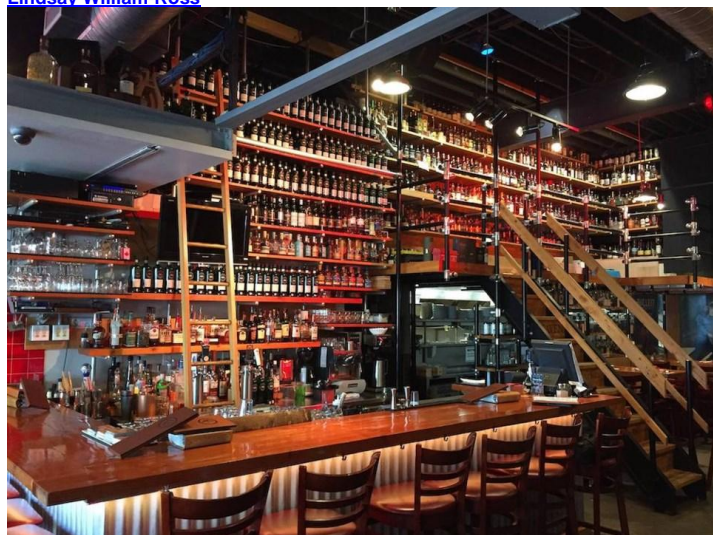
The bar's private collection is comprised of more than five dozen exemplary bottles, most of which are celebrated American expressions that can accommodate a wide range of budgets. Pours of Elmer T. Lee, E.H. Taylor Small Batch, High West A Midwinter Night's Dram, and Old Fitzgerald 15 year old, among others, can be had for less than \$60. Rarer whiskeys are also available for those willing to pony up. Two ounces of Michter's 20 year old bourbon, for example, will set you back \$295; while the same size pour of O.F.C. 1995 comes with a \$650 price tag.

According to Wynn Las Vegas's resident mixologist Mariena Mercer Boarini, the bar rarely exhausts its reserves. Such is the advantage of being a luxury resort in Las Vegas, though the bar's tucked-away location also helps to explain how those bottles of sought-after whiskey stick around. "The Tower Suite Bar is definitely a hidden gem here at the resort," she says. "It was designed to be an adventure-seeker's bar for its whiskey program."

'It's been a heck of a ride': Vancouver whisky bar at centre of legal battle to close after 36 years

What will become of one of the world's largest whisky libraries that's long called Vancouver home?

[Lindsay William-Ross](#)



Fets Whisky Kitchen, which endured a government raid in January 2018 and a protracted legal battle with the province, has revealed the business will shutter soon. Fets Whisky Kitchen/Facebook

It may be home to "one of the world's largest whisky selections," but after a 36-year run (and a couple of name changes), [Fets Whisky Kitchen](#) will be closing permanently.

Owners Eric and Allura Fergie posted the closure notice on social media as September got underway, indicated Fets Whisky Kitchen's last dinner service will be Friday, Dec. 23.

"Our lease is up early next year, and we have decided not to renew. We feel it's best to resign while we are on top of our game and will proudly work with our staff to make everyone's final visits as memorable as their first," explain the Fergies.

The couple also note that they delivered the announcement to the full staff as well.

Fets began in 1986 as Fettucini's Café at 1179 Commercial Dr. A move to its current location, 1230 Commerical Dr, took place in 1996, as did a name tweak to Fets Bar & Grill, and in 2013 they rebranded as Fets Whisky Kitchen.

In recent years, Fets has been known for its legal battle with the B.C. liquor control board. In early 2018, the provincial government conducted four simultaneous [Prohibition-style raids on establishments](#) in Victoria, Nanaimo and Vancouver and confiscated tens of thousands of dollars worth of liquor. They were targeting bottles of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society's unique (and expensive) whiskies; the bottles were shipped to B.C. under proper channels and all appropriate taxes paid, however, the licensees bought them through private retailers instead of government stores, which is not allowed. Among those being raided was Fets Whisky Kitchen.

The raid led to several years of legal back and forth between the Fergies and the B.C. government, which did not get any mention in the couple's closing notice.

"It's been a heck of a ride!" write the Fergies. "We have had the pleasure of working with many amazing people over the past 36 years. We have forged many great relationships over the years, and we will miss seeing everyone on a regular basis. Too many memories have been made here to count but we have cherished our time operating one of Vancouver's longest continuously family-owned and operated restaurants."

With an end-of-year closing in sight, Fets will mark the last few months in business with several whisky dinners.

The closure does leave one lingering question for Fets' owners: "Hmm, what to do with one of the world's largest whisky selections?"

With files from The Alchemist Magazine

Celebrity spirits: the good, the bad and the embarrassing

[LUCY SHAW](#)

[SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 9:00 AM](#)

With the news that [Nigel Farage](#) has released his very own gin, Lucy Shaw takes a look at some successful celebrity spirits collaborations and what happens when things go wrong.

A perfume or aftershave used to be the celebrity side hustle of choice. Now every star worth their salt-rimmed Margarita glass wants to zhuzh up their lifestyle empire with a booze brand. Everyone from Michael Jordan to [Bob Dylan](#) have skin in the game, but levels of involvement vary wildly, and so do success rates. "It's quite easy to tell which celebrities are genuinely passionate about the spirits they get involved with, which tends to be evident in the liquid and packaging," says Tom Gamborg of drinks marketing agency Skål, who singles out The Rock as a star who cares about his Teremana Tequila brand, which became a lockdown hit among his 335 million Instagram fans.

The trend has mushroomed to such an extent that there's an app called [GrapeStars](#) dedicated to hawking celebrity drinks, where you'll find Jay-Z's D'Ussé Cognac and Dan Aykroyd's [Crystal Head Vodka](#) alongside more under-the-radar bottlings – Kenny Chesney Blue Chair Bay Rum anyone?



Conor McGregor – "a very unique athlete"

When celebrity spirits brands go wrong

But while the appeal for celebrities is clear, drinks brands need to tread carefully when it comes to collaborations, as their reputations are at stake if their high profile pal gets into hot water. Last year Entertainment Arts Research pulled out of a \$12 million deal to acquire [Ambhar Tequila](#) amid sexual assault allegations against its majority shareholder, *Sex and the City* star Chris Noth.

Meanwhile, porn star and rum pusher Ron Jeremy was indicted last August on 34 counts of sexual assault involving 21 women. Not surprisingly his partners at One Eyed Spirits have sought to distance themselves from Jeremy, rebranding Ron de Jeremy as Hell or High Water. A statement from the brand

read: "Continuing with the brand is not a sustainable option for us at One Eyed Spirits. The joke is over."

In contrast, mixed martial art fighter Conor McGregor's multiple assault and reckless driving charges haven't yet dented the popularity of his Irish whiskey brand [Proper No. Twelve](#). McGregor's tireless promotion helped to turn the brand into the fastest-growing Irish whiskey in the US. Last year he sold his majority stake to Proximo Spirits for a reported \$600m. Proximo Spirits' SVP of marketing, Lander Otegui, admits that the whiskey's success is entirely down to the fighter's involvement. "Conor is a very unique athlete. His popularity in sports, and as a celebrity overall, and his path to success from humble beginnings has created a highly engaged fan base that are open to trying the whiskey," he says.



George Clooney – "perfect smile"
Going loony for Clooney

So is there a recipe for success when it comes to creating a celebrity spirit? Being a wildly charismatic A-listers certainly helps. Ryan Reynolds has turned Aviation Gin into a £465m brand through his tongue-in-cheek approach to publicity, while the sale of George Clooney's small batch [Tequila](#) brand [Casamigos](#) to Diageo for a cool \$1 billion in 2017 has become the gold standard for celebrity sips. Everyone wants to 'do a Clooney', but not all celebrity brands are created equal.

"Successful brands have authenticity that stretches way past a press release. You had little doubt that Clooney and his mate actually lived the life in the photos and drank the Tequila. He even did his part to expand the brand by attending new account openings. Can you imagine turning up to a distributor pitch and George is flashing his perfect smile at you?" says Kevin Shaw (no relation), owner of drinks packaging design agency Stranger & Stranger, who has worked with a number of celebrity clients, some of which have been easier to handle than others. "Some celebs are perfectly respectful, collaborative and lovely to deal with and others think that, as 'artists', they can design anything and view designers as Mac monkeys. You can see the result in the look of some of their brands," he says.



Pharrell Williams with his "doomed liqueur brand Qream"
Authenticity helps

Nowadays, slapping your name and/or face on a label won't cut the mustard, and inauthentic collaborations that are clearly cash grabs will be called out, as influencer Kendall Jenner learnt the hard way. "The branding of her 818 Tequila draws off stereotypes of Mexican culture in a way that's forced and uneducated. Tequila is deeply rooted in the identity of Mexico and plays a significant part in its social and cultural rituals. Jenner's 818 dismisses these elements and uses the Tequila only to boost her own image," says Rowena Curlewis, CEO of drinks packaging consultancy Denomination.

For every Clooney success story there are many more flops in the celebrity spirits world, from teetotal Donald Trump's short-lived Trump Vodka and Pharrell Williams' doomed liqueur brand Qream (who drinks cream liqueurs in nightclubs?) to Danny DeVito's ill-conceived limoncello, which he struggled to import into the US. Yes, celebs with deep pockets can engineer introductions with heavy hitters everywhere from Kentucky to Jalsisco to craft their own high-end liquid, then flash more cash to secure the right distribution deals, but money will only get you so far. "Unless the celebrity truly invests their own time and toil into it, the product doesn't resonate with consumers. If a celebrity isn't willing to put in the marketing time and spirits creation time, it's a bust," says American whiskey specialist, Fred Minnick.



Steven Soderbergh's Singani63

Here to stay

Glory hunting celebs may opt for the easy route of entering a white hot category like bourbon or Tequila, but those that back unsung spirits have the chance to be transformative. It doesn't get much more niche than Bolivian grape brandy, which *Ocean's Eleven* director Steven Soderbergh is shining a light on through his Singani 63 brand. "When a celebrity like Soderbergh gets behind a little-known spirit, it helps to elevate the entire category," says *VinePair* co-founder, Adam Teeter.

While many would like to see the back of the celebrity spirits trend, the appetite for these bottlings shows no sign of stopping. "Celebrity sells, and spirits are no different. Fans closely follow what their favourite celebrities are up to, and will likely support any business ventures they pursue. As long as the quality is there, we can expect an enduring future for celebrity spirits," believes Melita Kiely, editor of *The Spirits Business*. Shaw of Stranger & Stranger agrees: "Their pulling power, especially on social, is hard to put a price on, and the margins in the spirits sector mean you can throw some serious percentage points at the deal. The power of fame is here to stay, so we're going to be seeing more of these endorsements, a lot more." You have been warned.

Diageo unveils travel retail-exclusive Talisker Surge expression
by [Hannah Tan-Gillieshannah@moodiedavittreport.com](mailto:Hannah.Tan-Gillieshannah@moodiedavittreport.com) Source: ©The Moodie
Davitt Report 30 August 2022



Made by the sea: The whisky is now available in key European airports with UK, Asia Pacific and Australia launches to follow

Talisker Surge Single Malt Scotch Whisky offers a surge of powerful spice notes and maritime flavours
Diageo-owned single malt Scotch whisky brand Talisker has unveiled a new travel retail-exclusive expression called Talisker Surge. It is now available in key European locations including Frankfurt Airport, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and Hamburg Airport.

In September, Talisker Surge is launching in UK travel retail at London Heathrow, London Gatwick and Edinburgh airports. It will also roll out to more European airports in Istanbul, Copenhagen, Oslo and Paris.

Talisker Surge is launching in Asia Pacific travel retail from October, with a Hainan roll-out planned in November. This will be followed by an Australia launch in December.

To celebrate the launch, Diageo is showcasing Talisker Surge with a disruptive global campaign that aims to transport shoppers into Skye, the homeland of Talisker Single Malt Scotch Whisky.

The campaign is kicking off in Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, where Diageo is hosting a dedicated Talisker Surge sample bar throughout October and November. The Talisker Surge activation, which will include tasting sessions and a feature spirits wall, will run across key airports through the rest of 2022. Talisker Surge has an ABV of 45.8% with an RRP of US\$115 for a 70cl bottle. The liquid is finished in American Bourbon casks creating an extra layer of spice that gives the whisky a subtle smoky flavour with hints of sweetness. On the nose, Talisker Surge offers immediate brioche and banoffee notes. This is blended with sweet maritime aromas, fresh ginger zest, oak smoke and peppery spices.

“

This channel exclusive launch underlines our commitment to innovate and invest in the category and offer global travellers something special to gift their loved ones or enjoy themselves. This is something they simply cannot buy anywhere else.

Diageo Global Travel Marketing and Innovation Director Dafydd Pugh Williams

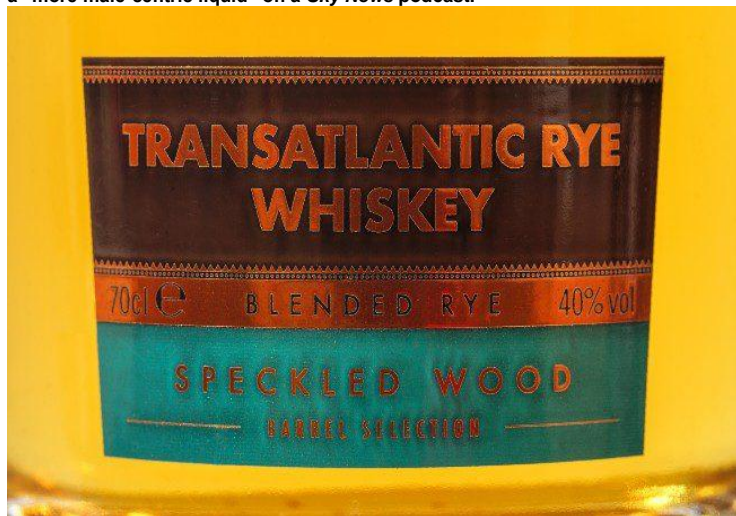


Travellers can experience Talisker surge at the Heathrow Airport sample bar in October and November

Silent Pool under fire for gendered whisky comments

07 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Alice Brooker

UK-based Silent Pool Distillers faced backlash after commenting that whisky is a “more male-centric liquid” on a *Sky News* podcast.



Silent Pool Distillers recently released Transatlantic Rye Whiskey

On 2 September, the latest episode of *Sky News' Ian King Business Podcast*, titled ‘*Going nuclear, slowing footfall, Surrey whisky*’ was released.

Ian McCulloch, founding director of Silent Pool Distillers, sat down with King to discuss the producer's [recent launch of a limited edition blended whisky](#). Forty-seven minutes and 55 seconds into the podcast, McCulloch said of the whisky: “It’s different to other offerings that are out there, it’s the first time that Surrey has come up with a whisky offering.”

He continued: “We had a lot of people visiting the site... gin tends to appeal to ladies often, and you get the guys standing there going: ‘Yeah, gin – great. But if you ever make whisky, do let me know.’”

“And that’s one of the reasons we’ve done it. There’s something for everyone. I don’t want to end up making an inappropriate remark but it is a more male-centric liquid; we’ve got a lot of customers we can now satisfy.”

[Becky Paskin](#), founder of the [Our Whisky Foundation](#), posted on Twitter:

“Cannot believe the founder of @SilentPoolGin has publicly said today they only launched a whisky to appeal to men.”

Paskin continued to explain her reasoning in subsequent tweets: “Gendering drinks is such dangerous territory. Brands should lead with purpose, not gender. Drinks gendering is the root cause of so much sexism in the whisky (and beer) industry. Hey @SkyNews @IanKingSky I’d love to come on and set the record straight about this issue. Name the day.”

Paskin then posted a quote reading: “Gin is not just for women. Whisky is not just for men.”

Silent Pool apology

McCulloch posted an apology through Silent Pool's Instagram in response to the backlash.

He said: “I wholeheartedly apologise for my misjudged comments in a recent live interview. It was never my intention to alienate or offend anyone and it doesn’t reflect my own, or Silent Pool Distillers’ values.

“I appreciate how these words have been interpreted and I’d like to state that we create spirits to be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of gender.

“We have always valued feedback and will continue to innovate our brand and products for our customers.”

Heineken gains approval to buy Distell

12 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

South Africa's Competition Commission has approved Heineken's takeover of Distell if it meets certain conditions.



Distell's Amarula liqueur brand will be sold to Heineken

Last November, brewing giant Heineken [agreed to buy a 65% stake](#) in South African drinks group Distell for €2.2 billion (US\$2.5bn), excluding the Scotch whisky business.

Heineken agreed to purchase Distell's flavoured alcohol beverages (FABs), and wine and spirits operations, with the exception of certain spirit brands, as well as Namibian Breweries.

The Distell brands that will be excluded from the Heineken deal include Scotch whisky brands Black Bottle, Bunnahabhain, Deanston, Scottish Leader and Burn McKenzie, as well as gin brands Gordon's and Tobermory.

South Africa's competition regulator has now recommended that the Competition Tribunal approve the merger subject to conditions.

The Commission found that the agreement would likely prevent or lessen competition in the FABs and cider market as the merged company will be a dominant supplier of FABs, with a market share above 65%, and would be the largest supplier of ciders in the country.

As such, Heineken has agreed to sell its Strongbow cider business in South Africa to address the competition concern.

The merged group also must agree to invest more than R10bn rand (US\$585.2 million) over a five-year period to maintain and grow the production capacity of its operations and related facilities in South Africa.

Furthermore, it must implement an employee share ownership scheme, establish a R400m rand (US\$23.4m) supplier development fund, and donate R200m (US\$11.7m) to promote local initiatives in the country. Other conditions include investing R175m (US\$10.2m) in a tavern transformation programme, and the creation of a South Africa-based innovation, research and development hub within five years. Furthermore, the Competition Commission said the combined company has agreed to maintain its current total employee headcount for five years after the merger.

Proposed deal

Dutch firm Heineken and Amarula liqueur owner Distell [first entered into discussions over a potential takeover deal](#) in May 2021.

The transaction would mean an internal restructure of Distell to create two new businesses: Newco and Capevin.

Newco will combine Distell's portfolio of spirits, wine, cider and ready-to-drink beverages with Heineken's Southern Africa and export markets business. Capevin will include the company's remaining assets, including its Scotch whisky business.

As part of the agreement, Heineken will own a minimum 65% stake in Newco, while Distell's largest shareholder Remgro will retain control of Capevin.

In August, Distell saw [revenue rise by 20.8%](#) for fiscal 2022, led by its single malt portfolio and Amarula liqueur.

Baileys debuts s'mores-inspired liqueur

13 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Diageo-owned cream liqueur brand Baileys has released a limited edition marshmallow-flavoured variant inspired by s'mores.



Baileys is providing US drinkers with a nostalgic treat in the form of its s'mores-flavoured liqueur

The new Baileys S'mores Irish Cream Liqueur taps into the popularity of s'mores, a campfire treat typically consumed in the US and Canada.

The liqueur combines flavours of toasted marshmallows and sweet graham crackers with a 'rich chocolate' finish to replicate the taste of s'mores.

The new variant can be served neat, with whipped coffee or in a marshmallow shot.

"As s'mores are more popular than ever, we're thrilled to introduce Baileys S'mores to help consumers (21-plus) enjoy the nostalgic treat while providing new and unique ways to indulge," said Stacey Cunningham, director of Baileys and liqueurs, Diageo North America.

The expression is available across the US for a limited time, priced at RRP US\$24.99 per 750ml bottle.

The brand has also partnered with Los Angeles-based s'mores bakery S'moreology to create a limited edition skillet kit that has been designed for autumn gatherings.

The set contains all the ingredients needed to create a s'mores dip, including a mini cast iron skillet, Baileys-infused marshmallows (alcohol-free), chocolate bars, graham crackers and marshmallow skewers, alongside two mugs for creating cocktails.

A limited number of kits are available to buy online from [goldbelly.com](#), priced at US\$99.95.

Big interview: John Glaser, Compass Box

13 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Melita Kiely

Scotch whisky brand Compass Box has always done things its own way, thanks to the ingenuity of its founder, John Glaser. As the company moves to the next stage in its development, SB meets the man with a vision.



John Glaser, founder of Compass Box

**This feature was originally published in the June 2022 issue of The Spirits Business*

When the US imposed punitive tariffs on Scotch whisky in 2019, the government specifically targeted single malts – not blends of any sort. For a company dedicated to blended whisky, such as Compass Box, it mercifully granted a 'free pass' from a tax that grossly affected exports in 2020. The decision to clamp down on single malts is demonstrative of the subcategory's perception compared with its blended counterpart, notes Compass Box founder and whisky maker John Glaser.

"The administration that put these tariffs in place thought, 'well, single malts are the best; they must be the most expensive', not thinking that there may be blended Scotch whiskies and blended malts, and other categories of Scotch whisky, which are equally good, equally expensive, or more expensive," says Glaser. "People have this perception that single malts are the best."

But Glaser sees the beauty in blends. Since he launched Compass Box in 2000, his goal has been to showcase all that is great about the blended Scotch whisky category.

From wine to whisky

After university, Glaser was determined to become a wine maker in his US homeland – a desire that greatly influences his approach to whisky-making today. But a wise word of advice from "a great friend and mentor of mine, Peter Holt" saw Glaser step out of the "long line of people trying to become wine makers in California" and into business school. From there, he secured a job in marketing with the world's biggest blended Scotch whisky brand, Johnnie Walker.

The self-confessed "wine geek and beer home brewer" was not a Scotch whisky drinker at the time – but after being sent to Scotland, Glaser was soon enamoured with the 'water of life'.

Glaser reflects fondly on working with "legends in the industry", including recently retired Johnnie Walker master blender Dr Jim Beveridge, and Diageo master blender Maureen Robinson. "Blending really did capture my imagination as a creative platform," Glaser explains.

"Over the course of various projects I was involved in, I was asking lots of questions about why do we do this, and why do we always use that, why do we re-use refill casks so much? Why hogsheads and barrels? Why do we chill filter? Why do we colour whiskies with this caramel stuff? And so on and so forth."

Then, during a holiday to the Bahamas with his wife, Glaser had his 'eureka!' moment, and realised his ambition to set up his own Scotch whisky company.

"This was around 2000; whisky was in the doldrums – the whole industry was in the doldrums," he recalls. "Global sales were flat or declining, depending on the year back then. Most of the big whisky companies had way too much ageing inventory in their warehouses. But I thought, there's something here with Scotch whisky that the average person under the age of, say, 40 has no idea about."

"There's something really extraordinary and compelling, and magical, a deep cultural history that nobody gets, nobody understands. I thought I could bring this discovery to the world by doing it on my own rather than with all the money we had at Johnnie Walker."



The art of making whisky: Compass Box's Artist Blend

Compass Box's first release was Hedonism, which is still available today. Interestingly, Glaser chose to begin with a 100% grain whisky. "Certainly, back then, grain whiskies bottled on their own were very few and far between, and there were zero major brands of grain whisky at the time," he recalls. The goal was to help Compass Box stand out from the Scotch whisky market – not just with the liquid. Glaser was keen to move away from what he describes as "labels that look like they were designed in the time of Queen Victoria", and show how things can be done differently, but done well.

Mixed reactions

Reactions from the trade were mixed, to say the least. Glaser flew to the US to showcase Hedonism in New York and at the San Francisco whisky festival, before taking on London with "bottles of Hedonism in my rucksack, walking from bar to bar and from store to store", and then heading up to Scotland. Reactions, safe to say, were mixed.

England, he says, was slower to warm to Glaser's disruptive approach. "I got more of, 'is this some marketing gimmick? What's going on with this label that has a picture of a woman's head with all this stuff coming out of it? What's going on?'" he recalls. Meanwhile, in Scotland, producers were more willing to see if Glaser's approach could be just what they needed to pull them out of the "doldrums".

"In Scotland, a lot of people said, 'hey, you know what, our national drink is not doing very well. We'll take anybody, even an American who's trying to create something different with a sincere, unique approach to Scotch whisky, and integrity in terms of quality,'" Glaser notes.

Glaser sees wine as more transparent than Scotch, and he has been a crusader for greater transparency in whisky. At times, his devotion to the matter has landed him in hot water. For the first 15 years of Compass Box, he says, each bottle carried the name of the distillery where the liquid was sourced, plus percentages of each component of the blend, and more. That was until Glaser was reported to the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA).

"To the credit of the Scotch Whisky Association, they had to do their job and tell us we couldn't do that, and that's when we started the campaign," Glaser explains, referring to the 2016 Scotch Whisky Transparency petition. The goal was to persuade the industry to change the rules and allow producers to list more than the youngest liquid in the bottle on the label.

Changing the rules required agreement between all 27 member states of the European Union. "And then Brexit hit, and they all got even less interested in changes," Glaser says. However, he remains resolute that greater transparency is imperative to the category's future success.

"It is an idea that absolutely still has merit because age is not everything; older is not necessarily better, it's just different," Glaser insists. "It gives more interested drinkers an idea of what to expect."

Glaser does, however, see "a lot more openness now" when it comes to transparency, particularly with smaller or independent producers.

"There's more that we as an industry need to do," he adds. "The outdated legislation, which prohibits people from talking about the age of anything other than the youngest whisky in a bottle, needs to change. There's just no logic there, no rationale for keeping it. It's just inertia on behalf of the industry. Unless, of course, there are companies in the industry who feel that the law protects them from having to disclose everything they have."



Fruit of the land: Orchard House was released last August

However, he isn't convinced by the recent updates to the regulations allowing for a broader variety of casks to be used to mature Scotch whisky.

"Now we're talking about the ability to change Scotch whisky legislation when the powers that be behind the Scotch Whisky Association want to change," he says. "It hasn't made any difference to us. It's just not my thing, Tequila casks with Scotch whisky in them, I don't get it; I don't get the deliciousness or how they match."

In each of his bottlings Glaser looks for a whisky that is "compelling". Recent launches include August 2021's [Compass Box Orchard House](#), described as a fruit-forward malt whisky, and a first for the company. Liquid was sourced from a number of distilleries known for their fruity flavour profiles, before being aged in a mix of Compass Box casks, including water-rinsed, first-fill ex-Bourbon barrels, oloroso Sherry-seasoned butts, and French oak custom barrels.

Blurring the boundaries

This year, [Compass Box Experimental Grain Whisky](#) came to market with the aim of blurring the boundaries of the Scotch category. Containing a portion of spirit made from peated malted barley, the 100% malt whisky differs from others because it was distilled in a column still, rather than a pot still. As such, it must legally be defined as a grain whisky in accordance with Scotch regulations.

"It's all about making whisky that calls you back after you've had a sip or two," Glaser continues. "And you can have compelling whiskies that are five years old or 25."

April 2022 brought major developments for Compass Box, when former Bacardi executive Maurice Doyle was named as the company's CEO. Doyle boasts almost 30 years' experience in marketing and commercial leadership in the global premium drinks industry. His appointment will allow Glaser to focus more on areas where "I think I bring the most to the party", which is whisky making.

The news coincided with the announcement that London investment firm Caelum Capital had [become majority shareholder of Compass Box](#). The acquisition, financial details of which were not disclosed, will help fund the firm's desire to seek out compelling whiskies, experiment and innovate.

"Unless a person who starts a business is independently wealthy, or fabulously wealthy, you need people to invest in your business. That's what Caelum Capital represents for us. We have a very small megaphone, if you will, and have had for 22 years."

"I didn't start this business to make myself a lot of money. I started this business because I love Scotch whisky, and I see a way of bringing Scotch whisky to the world that most other people don't see. Caelum Capital will give us the foundation to focus on what we're really good at," Glaser explains.



Range behaviour: Compass Box's line-up

For Glaser, Scotch whisky faces two key challenges. The first is the category's marketing past, which Glaser describes as the industry's attempt to make Scotch "this aspirational drink of successful men that goes back decades". The second issue is the category's pricing past, "particularly in markets like here in the UK", he notes. Glaser explains how "heavy discounting" began in the 1980s, when Scotch whisky sales and global shipments to established markets started to fall.

"Producers tried to make up for falling sales by discounting in order to maintain the volumes," he says. "Small gin brands are more expensive than most of the whiskies on the shelf. It might take 10 years to make 'whisky X' that's on sale from £27 to £20, and it takes a day or so to make this gin, which is selling for £37 right next to it. There's something wrong there."

Nevertheless, Glaser is not too fretful about this particular end of the market, as he is certain those who buy Compass Box products see the value in the whiskies, and the packaging designs.

"We put the names and stories and the information we provide around our bottles," he says. "Every single Compass Box product is sort of one big poetic biosphere. I don't worry about the Scotch whisky industry or how the category is doing because, you know, 80% of it is cheap brands that we don't care to compete with. They're in a different category, as far as I'm concerned."

In 2021 Compass Box enjoyed its "best year ever in 22 years", Glaser adds excitedly, made even sweeter by the "precarious position" the business found itself in when the Covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020.

Looking to the next 22 years, Glaser has a simple, albeit global, ambition. "In a folder are all the things that are important to me in my life," he reveals.

"Every morning, if I'm not travelling, I look at this piece of paper and one of things on this paper is that in time, Compass Box is regarded by most whisky lovers around the world as one of the admired brands, a brand that inspires them. That's what's important to me, and that's what we're trying to build for the future."

The Speyside Whisky Trail

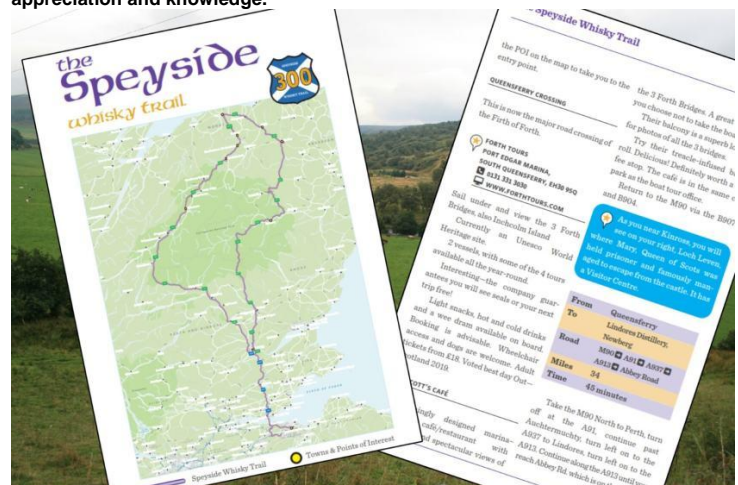


With travel opening up again around the world, and particularly in the UK, whisky tourism is slowly getting back into the swing of things. And no whisky pilgrimage to Scotland would be complete without swinging by Speyside and dropping into a distillery or two. Or three. Or twenty. In fact, for those looking to make a specific trip of it, Alastair Rooney's new book, "The Speyside Whisky Trail" is the perfect guide for discovering a lot about Scotland and visiting 20 distilleries along the way.

The Speyside Whisky Trail is the second book by Alastair Rooney that presents a travel guide that's aimed at the whisky tourist. The first book, the North Coast 700, was previously reviewed by Whisky & Wisdom (you can read our review [here](#)), and a third book – the Islay Whisky Trail – is currently in the works.

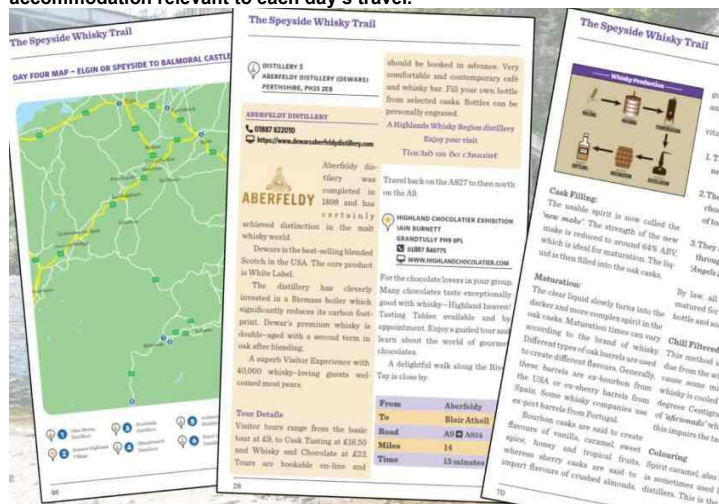
The Speyside Whisky Trail is a curious, eclectic, and multi-faceted read that combines many different features. It is, first and foremost, a guide and travel itinerary for visiting 20 whisky distilleries in a loop that sets off from Edinburgh up into Speyside, and finishes at Balmoral four days later. However, reminiscent of the old "Let's Go" travel books of the 1990's and 2000's, it also presents a healthy and helpful slice of Scottish history; some background and insights into Scottish culture (including a guide to Scottish phrases and slang); a food and accommodation guide (including tips and recommendations for various pubs, hotels, restaurants, and even fish'n'chips outlets); and plenty of information about whisky in general (e.g. terminology, production, and even details on costs and taxes!) It seems a "light" read in the hand, and yet is remarkably comprehensive in the aspects of whisky and Scotland that it covers and explores.

For the mild whisky enthusiast, or perhaps a novice just starting to explore the subject of whisky, the Speyside Whisky Trail is the perfect "go to" reference. By the time you complete the suggested itinerary or even just rely on the book as a whisky textbook, you'll leapfrog into a higher plane of whisky appreciation and knowledge.



The list of 20 suggested distilleries to visit on the route is an interesting mix of old and new, small and large. For example, things start off in Edinburgh with Holyrood Distillery, jumping over to Lindores Distillery on the approach north to Perth. There's the obligatory stop in Pitlochry (Blair Athol is nominated, noting that Edradour is currently closed to the public) as well as a jump sideways to Aberfeldy, before getting up into the heart of Speyside. The expected heavyweights are all featured (Glenlivet, Glenfiddich, Glenfarclas, Macallan, etc), but also some newer-name inclusions such as Ballindalloch. Once peaking at its northern-most point with Elgin and the Glen Moray

distillery, the suggested route home then takes you east across to the distilleries of Keith and Huntly, before returning south on the eastern side of the Cairngorms and finishing at Royal Lochnagar. There's some background information on each of the 20 featured distilleries and details for their respective Visitor Centres and tours, and also helpful guidelines for the travel times between each destination. And there's also lots of tips and recommendations for other attractions, eateries, shops, and accommodation relevant to each day's travel.



The Speyside Whisky Trail is, all in all, not just a travel guide, but a great whisky reference to boot....and it'll fit nicely in the side console of your car as you're driving around Speyside. To grab your copy, you can purchase the book [here](#), either as hardcopy or in digital format for Kindle. Keep your eyes peeled later this year for the upcoming Islay Whisky Trail book which will complete Alastair Rooney's trilogy. Cheers, AD

The Best Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whiskies Under \$100, Ranked

ZACH JOHNSTON/INSTAGRAM LIFE WRITER
SEPTEMBER 2, 2022

Speyside whisky is one of the [most revered styles](#) on the planet. It's also one of the most ubiquitous [regional styles](#) from a relatively small area. All of Speyside is situated inside [Scotland's Highland region](#), yet Speyside is home to about 50 distilleries and responsible for around 50% of all Scotch whisky made. That alone means it's high time to highlight some serious Speyside single malt [Scotch whisky worth checking out](#), especially for beginners. While "Speyside" sounds pretty black and white, it's a lot greyer than, say, a [peated Islay whisky](#). The term "Speyside" is pretty loose since, [legally](#), any brand in Speyside can call their whisky either a "Speyside" or a "Highland" whisky, based on their own whims. To clarify, any Speyside whisky can be called a Highland one, but not the other way around. [The Macallan](#) is famously in the dead center of Speyside but labels their juice as "Highland" whisky. Aberlour — right outside of Speyside's whisky capital, Dufftown — labeled its whisky as "Highland" until very recently. Now it's a "Speyside" whisky. Marketing teams have more power over labeling than you'll ever believe. But we're not here to talk marketing semantics and legal details. We're here [to talk whisky](#), damn it! Speyside is a special place for whisky thanks to a relatively drier climate (for Scotland) that's close to barley fields, seaports, and a supply of very soft water. Speyside famously has a very low mineral content in its aquifers, making for a super soft and supple whisky.

Moreover, [Speyside's whiskies are \(very\) generally unpeated](#), and lean into soft orchard fruits (especially apple and pear), dried fruits, soft spices, nuttiness, and honey sweetness. Naturally, there are a million variables at play, from mildly peated whiskies to special barrel finishings, but that's the general gist.

Now that you know what a Speyside whisky generally is, let's find you [the perfect beginner's bottle](#) for your bar cart. I like all of these bottles, so the reviews are going to be positive across the board. It's on you to look at the tasting notes and decide where to dive in.

10. Glenfiddich 12



WILLIAM GRANT & SONS

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$47](#)

The Whisky:

This is an entry whisky to Speyside and single malts in general. The juice is aged in a combination of used American and European oak before it's married, rested, proofed with Speyside's iconic water, and bottled.

Tasting Notes:

This dram is creamy like a vanilla pudding with a bright pear orchard vibe, some mild toffee, and hints of sweetgrass next to mild oak. That leads towards a very easy and soft woodiness with a touch of candied pear and more vanilla cream before hints of soft cinnamon spice poke up in the background with those soft malts. By the end, it's clear how light and approachable this whisky is as that pear, vanilla cream, and mild spice slowly fade away, leaving you with a silken mouthfeel and just enough malts and toffee.

Bottom Line:

This is a great place to start a Speyside journey. The malt is deeply hewn and carries the signature flavors of the region. I find it a little watery on the finish, so I tend to mix cocktails with this more than using it as a sipper. It's a great foundation to build a nice drink on.

9. Aultmore 12



BACARDI

ABV: 46%

Average Price: [\\$66](#)

The Whisky:

This tiny whisky is part of their Last Great Malts range from Dewar's. The juice is a rare release from a distillery that releases bottles every few years (this bottle dropped back in 2014).

Tasting Notes:

The nose bursts forth with notes of ripe apples and pears next to a seriously creamy vanilla base with touches of orange blossoms and soft cedar bark. The palate wraps those apples and pears into a soft and buttery puff pastry with plenty of soft spice and brown sugars as the vanilla thickens into a pudding with the florals, becoming slightly more dried towards the mid-palate. The finish hoists those stewed apples and pears onto center stage as the mild spice gently fades away.

The Bottom Line:

This is a great pick if you're already a fan of Dewar's blended whiskies. It's a clear progenitor of that flavor profile that's wholly distinct. It's also a little rarer, which makes it a nice grab if you're looking for something a little less instantly recognizable.

8. The Balvenie DoubleWood Aged 12 Years



WILLIAM GRANT AND SONS

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$70](#)

The Whisky:

This is the whisky that launched the “double aging” trend back in 1982. This unpeated single malt spends 12 years mellowing in ex-bourbon casks before it's transferred to ex-sherry casks for a final maturation of nine months.

Finally, the whisky is vatted in a “tun” where it rests for three to four months before proofing and bottling.

Tasting Notes:

Soft and floral honey mix with a hint of vanilla extract, sweet red berries, and wine-soaked oak. The palate meanders through light touches of marzipan with a hint of cinnamon and fields of plum trees with a whisper of tree bark and leather lurking in the background. The finish lets the spicy malt kick in with a dose of hot cinnamon and honey tobacco.

Bottom Line:

This is another great, subtle entry point to the region. The palate basically hits all of the classic notes while staying light and inviting. That said, this is much more of a cocktail base than a sipper too. This with a little egg white, honey syrup, and citrus makes a hell of a sour.

7. Speyburn Arranta Casks



INVER HOUSE DISTILLERS

ABV: 46%

Average Price: [\\$45](#)

The Whisky:

Arranta translates to “bold” and this whisky leans into that. The juice is aged for an undisclosed amount of time in first-fill ex-bourbon casks (that means this whisky was the first thing to go into those casks *after* they were emptied of bourbon). Those barrels were then vatted, proofed, and bottled without filtration.

Tasting Notes:

Pear candy and honey lead the way on the nose toward woody spices, light leather, and a hint of sour apple skins and stems. The palate is sweet and malty with a drive from pear flesh to pit, skin, and tree with floral honey and wet coconut leading to a hint of creamy vanilla sauce dusted with cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice. The end leans into pears soaked in honey and nutmeg with a hint of old porch wicker and worn leather gloves on the finish.

Bottom Line:

This is a nice pour that works as well as a sipper as it does as a cocktail base. When I say, “sipper,” I mean that in an on-the-rocks application. It's just an easy drink all around, with a nice depth to it and a little extra kick thanks to those slightly higher ABVs.

6. The Glenrothes Whisky Maker's Cut



THE EDRINGTON GROUP

ABV: 48.8%

Average Price: [\\$83](#)

The Whisky:

The bulbous bottle from The Glenrothes is all about the sherry. The expression spends an undisclosed amount of years in first-fill sherry casks. When those barrels are just right, the whisky is then batched and vatted before being proofed down only slightly.

Tasting Notes:

The nose bursts forth with butterscotch. Once that fades, hints of worn leather, orange peels, and nutmeg mix underneath that butterscotch nose. The palate is nutmeg-forward with a spicy orange zest kissed with dark chocolate and vanilla. The end feels a bit like eggnog laced with orange zest and vanilla with a spicy warmth.

Bottom Line:

This is a nice example of a bold sherry cask on a Speyside whisky. Those layers of orange zest and dark chocolate run deep with a decent sweetness from top to bottom. That said, I tend to use this for on the rocks or highballs with a dash of Angostura bitters (which adds a nice accent to the spices).

5. GlenAllachie Aged 15 Years — Taste 4



THE GLENALLACHIE DISTILLERS CO LIMITED

ABV: 46%

Average Price: [\\$98](#)

The Whisky:

This Speyside single malt is aged in ex-Oloroso and Pedro Ximenez sherry casks for, you guessed it, 15 years. Those barrels are selected for their distinct flavor profile and vatted, proofed, and bottled without filtering.

Tasting Notes:

Apple juice slowly boils down to a cinnamon-spiced apple sauce on the nose as a hint of dry firewood sneaks in. The palate is part warm malts and part sweet orchard fruit with a hint of burnt orange and more of the dry wood. The end is light but carries a hint of warm spice and sweet fruits.

Bottom Line:

This is another great sherry-casked whisky. This is a tad subtler than the bottle above but carries a very similar flavor profile, hence they're right next to each other on this list, and both are kind of the middle of the road taste-wise.

4. The Singleton of Glendullan 18



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$93](#)

The Whisky:

This Speyside whisky rests mostly in ex-bourbon casks. The final product adds in a few barrels from Europe to mellow out the heavier bourbon barrel flavor notes. That blend is then cut down to a low 80 proof for bottling.

Tasting Notes:

The nose opens with hints of cedar and winter spice underneath caramel candies, roasted almonds, and a hint of stewed orchard fruits. The palate primarily carries on those flavors with a subtle hint of bourbon vanilla and spicy tobacco warmth attached to the maltiness with an echo of dark chocolate-covered hazelnuts. The finish leans into the cedar and tobacco with a slightly mineral water base.

Bottom Line:

This isn't as washed out on the finish as a lot of other 40% ABV whiskies. That's kind of a miracle. The overall vibe is very accessible, making this a very solid and easy sipper with a rock or two.

3. Mortlach 12



DIAGEO

ABV: 43.4%

Average Price: [\\$61](#)

The Whisky:

The Beast of Dufftown hails from a tiny yet beloved Speyside distillery. The actual whisky is also made on their smallest still, nicknamed "Wee Witchie." That juice then goes into ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks for 12 years. Finally, those whiskies are married, proofed, and bottled.

Tasting Notes:

This is subtle yet engaging with a nose of almost burnt toffee next to bright red berries, mild spice, hints of oak, and a bit of cedar. The palate leans into the berries by becoming jammy with more of that toffee and a mild sense of spicy tobacco arriving late. The end is long-ish with a plummy chew next to that tobacco and malty spice.

Bottom Line:

These top three are all great picks and each carries a unique profile. When it comes to Mortlach, you're getting an introduction to a whisky drinker's distillery. A glass of this over some rocks is a great sip. A cocktail made from this is a great cocktail. This is versatile juice that brings serious depth.

2. Aberlour A'bunadh



PERNOD RICARD

ABV: 56.2% (varies)

Average Price: [\\$95](#)

The Whisky:

A'bunadh (ah-boon-arh) means "the original" in Gaelic and the juice in this Highland bottle represents that for Aberlour. The whisky is matured in old Oloroso sherry casks exclusively. The juice then goes into the bottle at cask strength, unfussed with.

Tasting Notes:

That sherry plumminess is evident right up top, with hints of bright orange oils, clumps of dark chocolate, honey, and nuts, and a hint of oak. The taste shines with notes of dark, ripe cherries, prunes, more bright orange zest, dark chocolate, and a good measure of svelte vanilla. The slow finish leaves you with a creamy mouthfeel next to bitter chocolate next to sweet cherries and plums, all of which lead towards a warming spice on the tongue at the end.

Bottom Line:

This whisky has the biggest flavor profile on the list, but it misses out on the number one slot because it's not necessarily the most unique profile. This is classic, thick, and deep. It's amazing on its own but makes on the best Manhattans money can buy (or a Rob Roy if you will). All of that said, you need to be ready for a big and bold whisky with serious depth. There's no lightness here, but there are some serious rewards for your senses.

1. Cragganmore Distiller's Edition



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$89](#)

The Whisky:

Cragganmore is an iconic Scottish distillery. The whisky is matured in sherry casks for 12 years. It's then transferred into American oak casks that held port for a final maturation phase before proofing and bottling.

Tasting Notes:

Fennel leads to dried fruits — sultanas, prunes, dried fig — and fresh apples on the nose with a hint of tartness and skin. The taste, on the other hand, leans into sweet oak, pear candies, fresh figs, and a softness that's almost hard to believe. The end is full of sweet fruits — think ripe pears, green tomatoes, and star fruit — and has just the right touches of soft oak, oily vanilla, and savory green herbs as it fades towards a final note of wet wicker right after a rain storm.

Bottom Line:

This is everything you want from a Speyside whisky plus a wonderful whole other galaxy of flavors. Overall, this (and the Aberlour above) are the bottles I have on my bar cart right now with backups at the ready. This over a single rock is bliss.



12 Most Expensive Whiskies Ever Sold at Auction

JACOB OSBORN, 5 SEP 2022 | GUIDE

Ever wondered what \$2 million worth of booze will get you? While your first thoughts might have gone to flowing rivers of ale and champagne waterfalls, the reality is a little more on the quality side, rather than quantity. In fact, when it comes to the most expensive [whisky](#) in the world, seven-figure sums are pretty much the standard, and it's a universal fact. Whether it be [Scotch](#) releases from [The Macallan](#) or rare and aged drams from [Japanese whisky](#) icons such as [Yamazaki](#), the high-end whisky market is growing in value seemingly by the day, which is great news for investors, but not ideal for drinkers. Call it a hunch but we have a feeling that the overwhelming majority of these ultra-rare bottles aren't being bought to be consumed, instead, remaining stowed away in some billionaire's vault or cellar. To break the seal is to compromise the spirit's value and therein lies the paradox, to drink or not to drink?

RELATED: [Best Scotch Whisky Brands](#)

Most Expensive Whiskies Ever Sold

For those of us who enjoy whisky with a passion, this all might come as something of a relief. After all, you can't be tempted to drink the stuff if you can't afford it. Perhaps all these expensive whiskies are best left in the hands of those lucky few, who can drop hundreds of thousands of dollars on a single bottle and then treat it like a rare painting as opposed to a consumable spirit. On the other hand, [Yamazaki's 55-Year-Old Single Malt](#)—which ranks among the most expensive whiskies in the world—was recently made available to the tune of 200 bottles. Those who've tasted the limited edition spirit report a surprisingly smooth taste that's not overpowered by oak, an impressive feat given how much time it spent in the cask. We imagine that other record-breaking whiskies are similarly nuanced and delicious in spite of their prolonged maturations, though we'll probably never know for sure. So what is the most expensive bottle of whisky ever sold at auction? Pour yourself a dram of something special and read on to find out.



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Fine and Rare | Image Sotheby's

1. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Fine and Rare

Long-running distillery The Macallan is the prevailing champion when it comes to record-breaking bottles of expensive whisky. This coveted 60-year-old statement was actually distilled over 90 years ago and it's amongst the precious few to receive the Fine and Rare label. It was expected to fetch somewhere between £350,000 and £450,000 at auction in 2019, but secured a whopping £1,452,000 instead (which roughly equated to about US\$1.9 million at the time).

"This is the most iconic of all bottles of Scotch whisky," Sotheby's wrote about the release. "The essential centrepiece of any great collection and, for whomever opens the bottle and enjoys it with their friends, perhaps savouring it over time, with the potential to have over forty-five 15ml pours, this bottle provides the ultimate opportunity to taste the "holy grail" of all whiskies – a once in a lifetime experience."

To give you an idea of just how insane collecting has become in recent years, a previous 60-year-old Macallan became the world's most expensive whisky back in 1987, when it sold for....wait for it...£5,000. The value of this ultra-rare spirit has clearly and steadily increased in the time since, which can only make one wonder what it will sell for 10 or 20 years from now. It's something to sip on, for sure.

Brand: The Macallan

Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Fine and Rare

Age: 60-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Auction House: Sotheby's

Hammer Price: £1,452,000

Date Sold: 24 October 2019

[Check it out](#)



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Michael Dillon | Image: Christie's

2. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Michael Dillon

A year before its brethren broke auction records in 2019, this 60-year-old Macallan did the very same thing. It was likewise bottled from cask 263 after

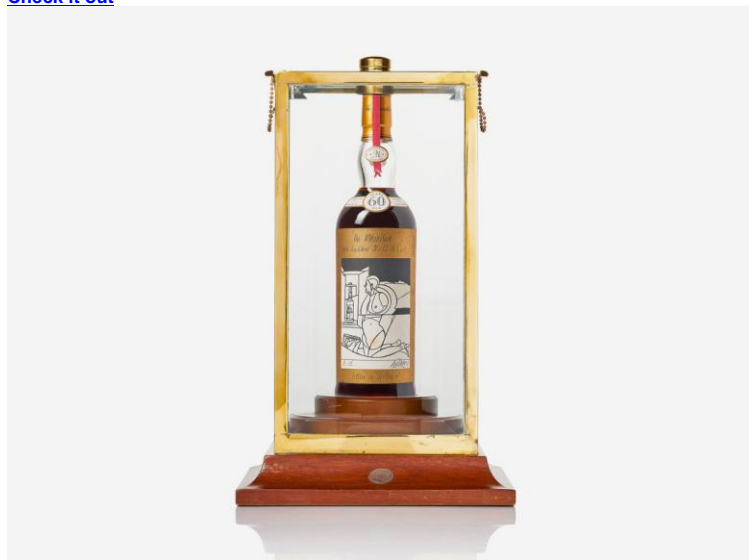
spending six decades in ex-sherry casks. Providing further distinction is the bottle's label design, courtesy of Irish artist Michael Dillon. Best known for his historical decorations, Dillon hand-painted the Easter Elchies House of The Macallan and the Scottish Highlands on the label in immaculate detail. Perhaps most remarkable of all, despite featuring a depiction of Easter Elchies House, Macallan's spiritual home, the bottle is so rare that [even the distillery itself was unaware of its existence](#) until it was offered at auction.

Brand: The Macallan
 Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Michael Dillon
 Age: 60-Year-Old
 Country of Origin: Scotland
 Region: Speyside
 Auction House: Christie's
 Hammer Price: £1,200,000
 Date Sold: 28 November-29 November 2018
[Check it out](#)



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Fine and Rare | Image: Whisky Auctioneer
 3. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Fine and Rare
 They don't call The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old the "holy grail of whiskies" for nothing. Continuing a trend, this single malt came out of the same cask as its record-breaking peers and fetched a cool £1,000,000 at auction (overcoming a cyberattack in the process). Behold the rich, dark colour of the ancient liquid inside and then wipe that bit of drool off the side of your mouth.

Brand: The Macallan
 Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Fine and Rare
 Age: 60-Year-Old
 Country of Origin: Scotland
 Region: Speyside
 Auction House: Whisky Auctioneer
 Hammer Price: £1,000,000
 Date Sold: April 2020
[Check it out](#)



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Valerio Adami | Image: Bonham's

4. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Valerio Adami

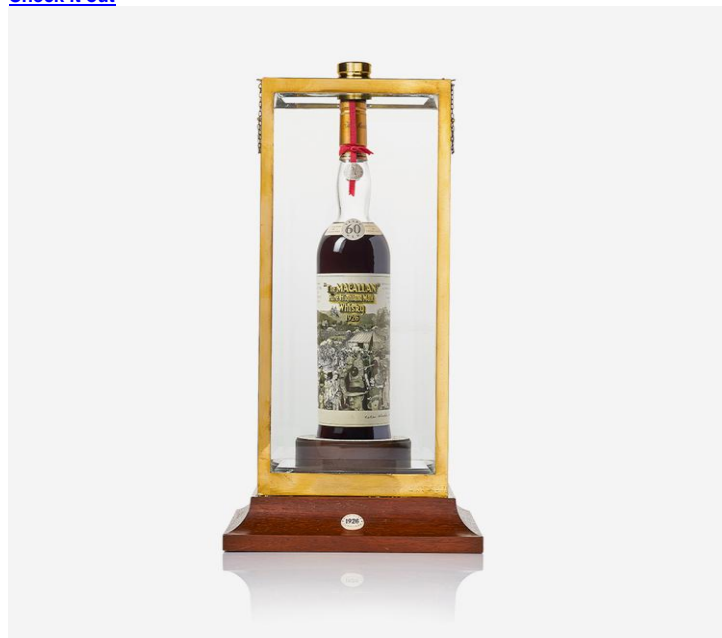
The fourth most expensive whisky in the world should come as no surprise if you've been reading this list in order. This particular bottle of The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old was 1 of 12 to feature an incredible label design by Italian painter Valerio Adami. It was sold by the distillery through auction house Bonhams.

Brand: The Macallan
 Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Valerio Adami
 Age: 60-Year-Old
 Country of Origin: Scotland
 Region: Speyside
 Auction House: Bonhams
 Hammer Price: £848,750
 Date Sold: 3 Oct 2018
[Check it out](#)



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Valerio Adami | Image: Bonham's
 5. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Valerio Adami
 Months before selling the fourth most expensive whisky in the world, Bonhams auctioned off the *fifth* most expensive whisky. As you might have guessed, it's another "holy grail" bottle of The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old, with Valerio Adami's unmistakable artwork on the label. The sale went down in Hong Kong and fetched the equivalent of US\$1,100,175.

Brand: The Macallan
 Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Valerio Adami
 Age: 60-Year-Old
 Country of Origin: Scotland
 Region: Speyside
 Auction House: Bonhams
 Hammer Price: HK\$8,636,250
 Date Sold: 18 May 2018
[Check it out](#)



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Peter Blake | Image: Sotheby's

6. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Peter Blake
 Bonhams' 2018 Fine & Rare Wine and Whisky Auction saw the sale of not one, but two record-breaking bottles of expensive whisky. The second was this 60-Year-Old Macallan with limited edition artwork from Sir Peter Blake. A true living legend, Blake once famously designed the cover of The Beatles' 1967

masterpiece “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.” Perhaps you’ve heard of it? His label design takes a similar approach by mashing up all sorts of characters and details.

Brand: The Macallan

Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Peter Blake

Age: 60-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Auction House: Bonhams

Hammer Price: HK\$7,962,500

Date Sold: 18 May 2018

[Check it out](#)



The Yamazaki 55-Year-Old | Image: Bonhams

7. The Yamazaki 55-Year-Old

At long last, we get to an outrageously expensive whisky not named The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old. Matured in a combination of oak casks and distilled to 46% ABV, the mighty Yamazaki 55-Year-Old is as legendary as a Japanese single malt can get. Perched beyond its gold-dusted bottle is an exquisite spirit of deep amber colour and brilliant taste. Some folks have actually tried this rare beast and they describe a powerful nose of sandalwood and fruit, a smooth but complex flavour profile, and a sweet aftertaste.

Brand: Yamazaki

Age: 55-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Japan

Region: Osaka Prefecture

Auction House: Bonhams

Hammer Price: HK\$6,200,000

Date Sold: 21 Aug 2020

[Check it out](#)



The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Peter Blake | Image: Bonhams

8. The Macallan 1926 60-Year-Old Peter Blake

The Macallan’s predominance continues with this uber-expensive single malt, which was bottle number 7 out of 12 to feature label artwork from Sir Peter Blake. It was described by the auction house as being “almost inconceivably smooth with a luscious hint of dry-sweetness in the malt.”

Brand: The Macallan

Bottling: 1926 60-Year-Old Peter Blake

Age: 60-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Auction House: Bonhams

Hammer Price: £615,062

Date Sold: 21 Aug 2020

[Check it out](#)



The Yamazaki 55-Year-Old | Image: Sotheby’s

9. The Yamazaki 55-Year-Old

Yamazaki’s ultra-luxurious whisky was priced around AU\$90,000 and limited to just 200 bottles when it hit the marketplace back in 2020. On the auction block, bottles such as this one have fetched far greater numbers. Someone out there may very well be smacking themselves over the decision to crack theirs open!

Brand: Yamazaki

Age: 55-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Japan

Region: Osaka Prefecture

Auction House: Sotheby’s

Hammer Price: US\$600,000

Date Sold: 17 June 2022

[Check it out](#)



Karuizawa 52-Year-Old Zodiac Rat Cask #5627 | Image: Sotheby’s

10. Karuizawa 52-Year-Old Zodiac Rat Cask #5627

Japan’s Karuizawa Distillery closed in 2001 and its whisky has since become a cult legend. One of just 41 bottles, this 52-year-old statement was matured in a single ex-sherry cask. If it’s like anything else from the brand, one should expect a truly intense flavour profile with notes of concentrated fruit, dark chocolate, and brown sugar.

Brand: Karuizawa

Bottling: Zodiac Rat Cask #5627

Age: 52-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Japan

Region: Miyota
Auction House: Sotheby's
Hammer Price: £363,000
Date Sold: 18 March 2020
[Check it out](#)



The Yamazaki 50-Year-Old | Image: Bonhams

11. The Yamazaki 50-Year-Old

Yamazaki returns with the 11th-most expensive whisky in the world, which spent 50 long years maturing in Japanese Mizunara oak. It takes the distillery's signature profile up a few notches by way of its velvety mouthfeel and rich flavour with hints of smoke. Yum.

Brand: Yamazaki

Age: 50-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Japan

Region: Osaka Prefecture

Auction House: Bonhams

Hammer Price: HK\$2,695,000

Date Sold: 17 Aug 2018

[Check it out](#)



Karuizawa 1960 52-Year-Old: The Dragon | Image: Sotheby's

12. Karuizawa 1960 52-Year-Old: The Dragon

The now-defunct and near-mythological Karuizawa Distillery closes out our list with the oldest whisky they ever produced, a 52-year-old single malt known as The Dragon. It rides in on dense fruit flavour and builds toward notes of succulent smoke, which carry through to an impeccable finish.

Brand: Karuizawa

Bottling: The Dragon

Age: 52-Year-Old

Country of Origin: Japan

Region: Miyota

Auction House: Sotheby's

Hammer Price: £363,000

Date Sold: 18 March 2020

[Check it out](#)



Yamazaki 55-Year-Old | Image: House of Suntory

Why is Whisky So Expensive?

As one of the most universally loved creations in the world, whisky has amassed the kind of following that few other man-made inventions could rival. A statement of status, along with an ode to cultural heritage, whisky, particularly from Scotland can fetch a pretty penny, and looking at the amount of time and effort involved in creating it, it's not hard to see why. As a general rule, the reason that most whisky is expensive is down to a few key elements:

- **Brand** – In the whisky world, brand heritage goes a long way. For a number of fans, the label on the bottle is as important as the elixir that lies within, as it marks a significant step in the iconic industry's next chapter. As this list shows, brands such as The Macallan and Yamazaki have managed to create a unique and dedicated fanbase, eager to pick up any bottle.
- **Age** – Somewhat unsurprisingly, the majority of the release on this list of the world's most expensive whiskies are well over 50 years of age. This plays a significant role in a bottle's valuation, as the number of releases still available on the market reduces as things get older. Similarly, any bottle that has sat in the maturation cask for over 50 years has likely seen a few different distillers pass through the ranks, so it's quite unusual that it would be left so long without being bottled and released.
- **Rarity** – Finally a whisky's rarity also factors into its price. Like anything in business, supply and demand dictates that when a product is well-loved and hard to get, prices must increase. Therefore, it's safe to say rare bottlings, with significant age and released by an icon like The Macallan are likely to fetch an enormous figure if and when they finally go to auction.



Yamazaki 55-Year-Old | Image: House of Suntory
Whisky as an Investment

More recently, the whisky market has seen a rapid changing of the guard. Where expensive bottlings were previously seen as special occasion offerings, bought by wealthy elites to be opened when a milestone achievement rolled around, increasingly, bottlings are being snapped up by savvy market analysts looking for an investment opportunity. Put simply, collectible whiskies are those with a value that is expected to rise over time, and have become more lucrative to interested parties over the past decade or so.

According to ReserveBar, selling spirits through e-commerce in wine and spirits was expected to reach USD\$25 billion in sales by 2025, however, the global pandemic accelerated this trend. With more people drinking at home, the number of sales going through online channels grew significantly. Still, the overwhelming majority of rare bottlings have made their off the platform and into the hands of traditional auction houses such as Bonhams and Sotheby's. [In an interview with Forbes](#), Worldwide Head at Sotheby's Wine, Jamie Ritchie revealed that rare spirits had grown from just one per cent of the auction house's sales in 2016 to 19 per cent in 2020, spurred by the ongoing pandemic-related economic concerns. As the world struggled with financial stability, some investors looked to digital currencies such as Bitcoin to manage their wealth, while more traditional investors moved back toward tangible assets as a means of protecting their financial status.

"At Sotheby's, we showcase the world's greatest collections of wines and spirits in unique and innovative ways to maximize price," Ritchie told the publication. "In 2019, we took individual bottles valued at \$4-6 million and sold it as a collection for \$10 million. We also achieved the highest price for any wine or spirit, which was \$1.9 million for the Macallan 60-year-old Fine and Rare."

It's a trend that is quickly gathering pace, with whisky investment becoming a more common practice, particularly as a spate of Asian investors recognise the strength of the market. Recently, an ultra-rare set of [Black Bowmore whiskies sold through Sotheby's Hong Kong's Wine & Spirit Sale Series](#) netted a whopping USD\$563,000 (AUD\$750,000), while a whisky collector in Asia dropped a staggering £18 million (AUD\$28 million) on a [1975 cask of rare Ardbeg Scotch](#). Here in Australia, a Perth-based whisky fan [sold off a history-making 9,070 bottles from his private collection](#), generating a whopping AUD\$6.4 million.

SMWS owner reports 25% H1 sales rise

14 SEPTEMBER 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

The owner of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS) saw revenue climb by a quarter in the first six months of 2022, led by 'significant growth' in the UK, Europe and China.



The SMWS has 17,700 members in its home market, the UK, as of June 2022. The Artisanal Spirits Company (ASC), owner of the SMWS, reported a revenue increase of 25% to £9.9 million (US\$11.4m) for the six-month period. Profit rose by 21% to £6.2m (US\$7.15m).

The company's revenue [increased by 21% in 2021](#), led by 'exceptional growth' in China.

The SMWS is a membership organisation which bottles and sells single cask, single malt whisky and other spirits from more than 20 countries.

The firm's total membership climbed by 24% to more than 35,600 during the first half of this year.

David Ridley, managing director of ASC said the group "delivered significant membership growth, whilst simultaneously continuing to build our business in terms of appreciating whisky stocks and infrastructure to support our future growth ambition for the medium to longer term".

The company noted 'robust growth' in its European membership (up 33%) since the launch of the new EU route to market at the end of 2021.

The owner of SMWS said its membership saw a return to growth in China during the third quarter and 'acceleration in growth' in the US, which represents its second-biggest market for members at 5,500 (up 15%).

UK membership numbers soared by 31% to 17,700, while Australia grew by 28%, and Japan and China were both up by 15%. The rest of the world, which includes franchise markets in Denmark and Switzerland, increased by 7%.

Ridley said: "We continue to benefit from structural tailwinds as premiumisation, digitalisation, experience and convenience combine to

accelerate the appeal of our proposition to our expanding global membership base."

The ASC also noted a 'healthy' supply chain and good stock availability across its markets.

The firm has made a £2.4m (US\$2.7m) investment in new spirit stock, bringing the total number of casks to 15,700.

The company said it is on track to meet its full-year revenue performance in line with market expectations. The firm is predicted to reach £21.6m (US\$24.9m) in revenue by the end of 2022, up from £18.2m (US\$21m) for the 2021 full year.

Ridley said the company is on track to double its revenue from 2020 to 2024. He added: "Furthermore, and as evidenced by the continued growth by many of the global spirits majors, whisky continues to demonstrate its strong and enduring credentials."

"ASC's unique portfolio of curated, limited edition whisky benefits from natural price elasticity which, in turn, provides strong gross margin appreciation and a natural inflation hedge."



Spirits of the North: The Not-So Wild West of Canadian Liquor Taxation Laws
[SEPTEMBER 13, 2022](#) - [WOMENSWHISKYWORLD](#)

One of the questions I am often asked is to clarify Canadian spirits taxation laws, how they function regionally and nationally. The spirits taxation scheme in Canada is refreshingly noncomplex, however what can become contentious is when the affect of these laws trickle down to the distillery and agricultural level; the direct impact these laws have on spirits producers and distributors, and those who grow the grains used to create our favourite drams.

The first thing to understand is that spirits' taxes are administered and enforced provincially falling under the [Canadian Federal Fair Trade Agreement](#). This agreement supports the [Canadian Agreement on Internal Trade \(CAIT\)](#), an agreement that is protected under the Canadian Constitution. The section of our Constitution securing the freedom of movement of persons and goods within Canada is [Section 6 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms \(CCRF\)](#) more affectionately known as The Charter. In the year of our Lord 1982 The Charter ascended into Canadian law during HM Queen Elizabeth II twelfth visit to Canada. In my lifetime, I have only known a Canada that is loving and tolerate towards all persons of every race, sexual orientation, age and gender (CCRF [Section 7](#)), making Canada one of the safest and most welcoming nation-state's in the world. I am exceedingly proud to be a Royal Canadian Navy Veteran.

Getting back to whisky, the CAIT is an agreement passed in 2017 by every Canadian Province and Territory, which serves to improve the quality of life for all Canadians protecting our right to freedom of movement of persons and goods anywhere within Canada subject to provincial legislative requirements at law. Basically, this means that us Canuckers have the legal right to go on a road trip to visit our families who might live 2000km several provinces away nearly half way across the country. Moreover, owing to Section 6 of The Charter we possess the legal right to transport commercial goods from any part of Canada to any other part of the country. For example, a sea container coming off a merchant ship in the Port of Halifax Nova Scotia on Canada's east coast can be placed onto a train and transported 1200 kilometers to a truck depot ([Intermodal Center example](#)) in Montreal Quebec. This same sea container is then moved onto the back of a semitruck for highway transport a few hundred kilometers east to Sherbrooke, Quebec in La Belle Province. If you live in Canada or if you have the opportunity to visit our beautiful country and can take a moment to enjoy train spotting or watch the large merchant ships coming into port and travelling down river then you understand that commercial transportation of goods within Canada is the result of our embracing Constitution, which provides safety and security for every Canadian.

"It is the objective of the Parties to reduce and eliminate, to the extent possible, barriers to the free movement of persons, goods, services and investments within Canada and to establish an open, efficient and stable domestic market. All Parties recognize and agree that enhancing trade and mobility within Canada would contribute to the attainment of this goal."

Reference: *The [Canadian] Agreement on International Trade PART I – GENERAL*

Chapter One, Operating Principles, Article 100: Objective

Every province's taxation scheme is slightly different but the concept across the country is the same: get the goods where they're supposed to be on time,

in good repair, and at a reasonable cost to distributors and consumers. Of course, a reasonable cost is subjective and requires a fairly delicate balance between taxation needs of the province and the quality of life for distributors and consumers, a tricky balance to achieve one which inevitably makes no one happy. Such is life for the tax collector. I can only imagine how many bottles of excellent whisky are consumed per year by people in these roles coping with trying to keep the rest of us the least unhappy as possible under prevailing circumstances. Perhaps, there's some method to the madness after all? I can tell you that as a whisky blogger having a good excuse to partake in a fine bottle of Scotch, rye or bourbon certainly comes with its many perks.

Taxation Rates of Spirits by Province and Territory

- British Columbia: 10% on retail price of bottle
- Alberta: Greater than 60% alcohol by volume is \$18.33/Litre, and greater than 22% & less than or equal to 60% alcohol by volume is \$13.76/Litre (if you're curious about taxes on spirits below 40%abv click [here](#))
- Saskatchewan: This province is the same as B.C.
- Manitoba: approximately 80% on retail price of bottle
- Ontario: 61.5% on retail price of bottle
- Quebec: 72 cents per Litre
- New Brunswick: 5% on retail price of bottle
- Prince Edward Island: 25% on retail price of bottle
- Nova Scotia: 15% on retail price of bottle
- Newfoundland and Labrador: 15% on retail price of bottle
- Yukon: 12% on retail price of bottle
- Northwest Territories: \$28.00 per Litre
- Nunavut: "Nunavut is one of the only jurisdictions in Canada that does not currently levy a tax on alcohol either directly (as Bill 56 proposes) or through a wider sales tax (like an HST or PST). The proposed tax would be levied on consumers as a percentage of a product's retail price." ~ Quote from [Government of Nunavut](#) website on Liquor Tax

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We have three types of taxes in Canada: Provincial Sales Tax that varies by province and averages around 7%; Government sales tax at a rate of 5% in all provinces and territories, which is applied to alcoholic beverages; and, Harmonized Sales Tax, which is usually 15% except in Ontario where it is 13%. HST is in lieu of GST/PST, which are combined in other provinces (reference Table 1 below). The HST is quite interesting as it pertains to the sale of alcohol because there are two ways to apply HST when it comes to beverages. The first method of applying HST is "taxable," which is as simple as it sounds, adding HST to goods when at the cashier. For example, in Ontario a commodity that retails for \$10.00 CAD ends up costing you \$11.30 at the register due to a 13% HST tax. However, alcohol is different. Although, you are charged HST on alcoholic beverages the HST tax rate is 0%. You read that right, zero percent HST. In Ontario a bottle of whisky sitting on the shelf listed for \$35.00 CAD will cost you \$35 at the register. This rate of 0% HST on alcohol is described by the [Canada Revenue Agency](#). The purpose for having a "zero rated" tax is to provide a tax benefit to some consumers, a tax credit: "A zero-rated supply has a 0% GST/HST rate throughout all of Canada. For example, basic groceries are taxable at the rate of zero (0% GST/HST) in every province and territory. The rate for other taxable supplies depends on the province or territory...This means that you do not charge GST/HST on these supplies, but you may be eligible to claim input tax credits (ITCs) for the GST/HST paid or payable on property and services acquired to provide these supplies."

Reference: Canada Revenue Agency – [Which \[Tax\] Rate to Charge](#) , and [Zero Rated Supplies](#)

Province	Type	PST	GST	HST	Total Tax Rate	Notes:
Alberta	GST		5%		5%	
British Columbia	GST + PST	7%	5%		12%	More info
Manitoba	GST + PST	7%	5%		12%	As of July 1, 2019 the PST rate was reduced from 8% to 7%.
New Brunswick	HST			15%	15%	As of July 1, 2016 the HST rate increased from 13% to 15%.
Newfoundland and Labrador	HST			15%	15%	As of July 1, 2016 the HST rate increased from 13% to 15%.
Northwest Territories	GST		5%		5%	
Nova Scotia	HST			15%	15%	
Nunavut	GST		5%		5%	
Ontario	HST			13%	13%	
Prince Edward Island	HST			15%	15%	
Quebec	GST + *QST	*9.975 %	5%		14.98%	
Saskatchewan	GST + PST	6%	5%		11%	
Yukon	GST		5%		5%	

Table 1 Reference: [Retail Council of Canada](#) – Canadian tax rates
Current as of 13 September 2022

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I live in Ontario currently having moved here from British Columbia in the late 2000s. What's been really interesting for me since living in Ontario is the zero-rated HST on alcohol. What that means is back home when I would pick-up a \$13.00 bottle of wine from the shelf when I got to the cashier I had to pay \$14.56 taking into account the 5% Government Sales Tax and 10% Provincial Sales Tax. Whereas, in Ontario a bottle of local rye retailing for \$33.50 on the shelf costs me \$33.50 at the cashier. I'm not sure how other Ontarians feel about this but having moved here from out of province I rather like knowing exactly what I'll be forking out at the cash register. For me, it's a convenience and a small yet meaningful comfort in my life.

What Local Distilleries and Farmers Think About All This Tax

One of the primary frustrations I've heard some Canadian spirits producers share with me in confidence are the difficulties they experience due to high spirits taxation rates whereby the only way the distillery can turn a meaningful profit is producing and selling large volumes of spirits to compensate for the amount of tax reaped by the province. For whisky consumers this isn't terrible because that means we have plenty of spirits available for purchase. With these large numbers flying around the natural question to ask is how come we are being taxed so much on alcohol in Canada when it makes life more difficult for distilleries? The primary reason for higher taxes on alcohol in Canada is to reduce occurrences of public drunkenness, contribute to lowering cancer rates in the community, and to improve the populations' overall health and well-being. To further enhance these initiatives some of the taxes from the sale of every bottle of alcohol are redistributed at the provincial level into programs and infrastructure that improve the well-being of society. One such example in Alberta involves taxes from liquor markup going into the province's General Revenue Fund, which funds several projects across the province including child intervention services, environment and parks, the energy sector and health care (reference [Alberta Government – General Revenue Fund](#)). Of course, all of these are excellent reasons to utilize higher taxation rates as a means to discourage overconsumption of alcohol within Canada's public. However, in a world where maintaining a healthy and enjoyable standard of living was becoming increasingly more difficult high tax rates proved frustrating for our multi award winning spirits producers who strive forward to keep Canada's spirits sector thriving, something they are superior at achieving. I haven't spoken directly with farmers, but from what I have read the spirits industry is an important client for Canadian agriculture. The Canadian spirits industry is said to support close to 9000 full-time Canadian farming jobs and puts \$5.8 billion annually into Canada's GDP (Reference: [Ottawa Life Magazine](#)). Perhaps, due consideration ought to be given at the provincial level to determine reasonable yet meaningful ways for alleviating present taxation hardships on distillery owners in favour of quality of life for these Canadians? I think so.

Fortunately, higher tax rates on spirits hasn't negatively impacted the quality of new make coming off Canadian stills. Canadian whisky has a historical reputation for producing smooth comforting whiskies that were ideal for farmers and loggers working long hours on the farm or in one of our many dense forests. Canadian whiskies also have a historical reputation for raising spirits, pun not intended, in the office where many a business deal was conducted over drams poured from a lead crystal decanter enjoyed in a velvety earthen leather chair. In modern times, Canada retains its classics such as J.P. Wiser's, Canadian Club and Crown Royal, the crowd pleasers warming the cockles of our Canadian hearts from my French-Irish Canadian

grand-père's low ball glass on ice to the boardrooms with 50 years aged CC neat. Award winning Canadian whiskies are continuing to appear on the market including bottles such as the Pike Creek 22, which won World's Best Blended Limited Release in this year's World Whiskies Awards.



WORLD'S BEST BLENDED LIMITED RELEASE

Best Canadian Blended Limited Release

Pike Creek

22 Years Old Pedro Ximénez Cask Finish

CANADA

"Grasses and leaf mulch on nose, with honeysuckle, brown sugar and an impression of liqueur. Furniture polish, fresh paper, sherry, walnut, vanilla, honey and brown sugar emerge, too. The palate is very sweet, with maple syrup and dark rum notes. Then comes oak and butterscotch, toasted nuts, baked pear and mild lemon. Toasted grain porridge with brown sugar, vanilla, caramel, peach and a little black pepper spice. The sweetness lingers long."

Reference: World Whiskies Awards 2022 – [WORLD'S BEST BLENDED LIMITED RELEASE](#)

It isn't exactly the wild west here in Canada when it comes to spirits taxation laws despite what you may have heard. Some people tend to exaggerate the context of high taxation likening it to some government conspiracy aimed at the consumer and distillery owner. Not so. Rather, Canadian taxation laws cut to the heart of our caring and compassionate Canadian culture, one that recognizes both the need to protect public health whilst respecting our inherent right to self determination. If you're of age go ahead and drink if you want to and do so responsibly out of care and conscientiousness to yourself and others around you in the community. As with everything in government there is always room for improvement. I am overall fairly satisfied with the Canadian spirits taxation laws and the manner in which they uphold our Constitution demanding the fairest and most equitable treatment for all. Researching this topic and writing about it has reminded me yet again why I am utterly grateful to be Canadian. On that note, I'm going to get up from my chair, walk to my liquor cabinet in the living room, take out a bottle of Canadian rye and pour a dram to celebrate what I think is the greatest Constitution on earth along with all of the rights and privileges that come with living in the land of the True North Strong and Free. To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for a safe Canada under The Charter. Slàinte
God bless The King and long may He reign.

Reservation policy

- The agreement with the Kitchen's requires that we provide five (5) business days notice for them to guarantee accommodation for our requested numbers. To accommodate the Kitchen's needs and meet our obligation with them; our members are requested to respond to the emailed invitation five (5) business days prior to the respective dinner to guarantee a seat at the dinner. Following the RSVP date members will be placed on a waitlist.
- For these individuals the process will be as follows, using the Monday September 19th, 2022 dinner date as an example:
- Dinner invitations will be sent out Friday August 29th, 2022. Please respond to me (rdifazio04@gmail.com) in the form of an e-transfer. I will then acknowledge that you have a seat. Please understand that if you do not receive a response you are not guaranteed a seat at the respective dinner. In such circumstances (e.g., computer glitches) please e-mail me again or call me (613-532-5285).
- Once payment is received I will send a confirmation and your seat will be guaranteed reserved.
- An RSVP only does not guarantee the seat and if there is a waiting list, you run the risk of losing your seat.
- Unless otherwise stated accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 9th, 2022 @ 6pm or until capacity is achieved.
- Please keep in mind until further notice our maximum attendance will be capped at 40. So delays run the risk of you missing out.

Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Friday September 9th, 2022 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Friday September 9th, 2022 @ 6pm and Monday September 19th, 2022 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$100). It is the responsibility of the member who cancels their (or their guest's) reservation to find a replacement. If I am

asked to find a substitute and one is found, then the member will be asked to pay for 50% of their dinner cost.

- Anyone who fails to attend the Monday September 19th, 2022 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$100). A member will be responsible for their guest's cancellation (\$110).
- If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Friday September 9th, 2022 @ 6pm and Monday September 19th, 2022 their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.

Dinner Payments

- Please consider sending your payment by e-transfer to me at: rdifazio04@gmail.com prior to the dinner. The password will be "KSMS2022RDF", to whatever your security question is. Receiving payment in advance will allow everyone the opportunity to socialize before the dinner as well as reduce the accounting work required after.
- For e-transfers, Members are responsible for collecting from their guests, and then forwarding one payment in total by e-transfer.

Assigned / Reserved Seating

- Assigned Seating will be offered for the January, June, August, and December dinners.
- Reserved Seating will only be considered if it is a group consisting of a single member plus 3+ guests or a couple member plus 2+ guests.

Perfume / Cologne and Whisky

- Our enjoyment of fine whisky at KSMS starts with a nosing - for many a definitive and delicate moment in their relationship with a new dram. The power of aroma is unquestionable. From defining life experiences to the recall of special memories, the sense of smell is as individual as a fingerprint and has the ability to evoke some of the most precious, rewarding and distinctive moments. Unfortunately strong perfumes can mask and distort other aromas and smells and interfere with the ability to register and recognize subtler fragrances.
- To be fair to all we ask all our members to please refrain from wearing scented products and perfumes to our KSMS evenings.

Just a note because we care.

Please understand that for the purpose of each event you are advised to drink responsibly and refrain from excessive consumption. The dinners hosted by the Kingston Single Malt Society are sampling events. By agreeing to pay and thereby attend the dinner you agree to release from legal responsibility and hold harmless Kingston Single Malt Society, its President Roberto Di Fazio, and any other volunteers from liability or claims arising from these events.



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