

Kingston Single Malt Society

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A social club for the appreciation of Single Malt Whisky since 1998

SEPTEMBER 21st, 2020

VOLUME 14; NUMBER 3b



This evening's menu in the company of



MENU

1st Course: Bouillabaisse with Hornitos Black Barrel Tequila

Paired Nosings: LAGAVULIN 12 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019

DON JULIO REPOSADO DOUBLE CASK TEQUILA LAGAVULIN CASK FINISHED Ltd. Ed.
(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

2nd Course: Enie Pear Salad, Baby Kale, Craisins soaked in Glenmorangie Original 10YO,
Chia Seeds, Honey Balsamic Dressing

Paired Nosing: CRAGGANMORE 12-YEAR-OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019
(introduced by: Bill Gorham)

Paired Nosing: SINGLETON OF GLEN ORD 18 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019
(introduced by: Elsabe Falkson)

3rd Course: Prosciutto Wrapped Chicken Stuffed with Spinach, Chèvre and Sundried
Tomatoes. Grilled Lion's Mane Mushrooms and Romesco

Paired Nosing: TALISKER 15-YEAR-OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019
(introduced by: Tony Hopley)

4th Course: Chocolate Caramel Apple Crisp

Paired Nosing: CARDHU 2004 14 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019;
(introduced by: Dave Finucan)

COST OF THE MALTS

LAGAVULIN 12 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019 LCBO 13503 | 700 mL bottle
Price \$179.95 Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 56.5% Alcohol/Vol.

DON JULIO REPOSADO DOUBLE CASK TEQUILA
LAGAVULIN CASK FINISHED AGED LIMITED EDITION LCBO 484659 | 750 mL bottle
Price \$100.25 Spirits, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

CRAGGANMORE 12 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019 VINTAGES 13501 | 700 mL bottle
Price: \$139.95 Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 58.4% Alcohol/Vol.

SINGLETON OF GLEN ORD 18 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019 VINTAGES 13509 | 750 mL bottle
Price: \$209.95 Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 53.5% Alcohol/Vol.

TALISKER 15 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019 SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY VINTAGES 13506 |
700 mL bottle **Price: \$179.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 57.3% Alcohol/Vol.

CARDHU 2004 14 YEAR OLD SPECIAL RELEASES 2019 LCBO 13500 | 700 mL bottle
Price: \$199.95 Whisky/Whiskey 55.0% Alcohol/Vol.

Diageo reveals 2020 Special Releases

28th August, 2020 by Melita Kieley

Leading spirits producer Diageo has unveiled the eight Scotch whiskies in this year's Special Releases collection, including a 30-year-old from the demolished Speyside distillery Pittyvaich.



Diageo's Special Releases 2020 collection comprises eight single malt, cask strength Scotch whiskies

Diageo's 2020 Special Releases was inspired by the theme 'Rare by Nature' and were selected by master blender Dr Craig Wilson. The range comprises eight cask strength single malt Scotch whiskies sourced from distilleries scattered around Scotland.

The 2020 Special Releases will be available in limited quantities from specialist Scotch whisky retailers spanning Europe, the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa, select markets in Asia and in travel retail, as well as online via and malts.com this autumn.

Wilson said: "I've created this year's Special Releases Collection from some of my favourite distilleries across Scotland, with whisky enthusiasts in mind.

"For those who enjoy spicy flavours, my recommendation would be to try our Cardhu and for those who favour rich, intense and smooth flavours, my choice would be Mortlach 21-year-old.

"If you are curious about discovering something very rare, the Pittyvaich – the single ghost distillery in our Special Releases Collection this year – is an unforgettable dram."

Cardhu 11 Years Old



ABV: 56.0%

Region: Speyside

Cask: From refill, new, and ex-Bourbon American oak

Availability: Limited quantities worldwide

RRP: £85 (US\$113)

Tasting notes: Fruity top notes of green apple, green grape and pineapple on the nose, leading to a hint of lemon peel and a faintly

mossy base. The palate has a creamy-smooth texture with a buttery, hot and spicy flavour akin to hot-cross buns. The finish is quite long with some white pepper.

Cragganmore 20 Years Old



ABV: 55.8%

Region: Speyside

Cask: From refill casks and new fresh-charred casks.

Availability: Limited quantities worldwide

RRP: £130 (US\$173)

Tasting notes: A mellow nose with some quiet prickle, deeply wooded with fruity top notes of ripe pear, Ogen melon and green banana. The palate is rich and sweet, balanced by a drying and savoury mid-palate. The finish is long, dry with chilli spice.

Dalwhinnie 30-Year-Old



ABV: 51.9%

Region: Highland

Cask: Refill hogsheads

Availability: 6,978 bottles

RRP: £550 (US\$730)

Tasting notes: Sweet and fragrant on the nose with dried herbal notes, subtle butterscotch and boiled sweets. Sweet, spicy, clean and fresh on the palate, with a peppery-spice warmth. The finish is long and warming, but water will cool the heat.

Lagavulin 12-Year-Old



ABV: 56.4%
Region: Islay
Cask: Refill American oak casks
Availability: Limited quantities worldwide
RRP: £125 (US\$165)
Tasting notes: Unusually ashy top notes for Lagavulin on the nose, but with typical linseed oil in time. Fruity notes of boiled sweets, and sea air. On the palate, the flavour is sweeter than expected, smoky with a little sea salt. Long and smoky finish with a salty aftertaste.

Mortlach 21-Year-Old



ABV: 56.9%
Region: Speyside
Cask: Pedro Ximénez and oloroso Sherry-seasoned casks
Availability: 7,692 bottles
RRP: £575 (US\$764)
Tasting notes: Rich dried fruits, fresh-baked buttered scones and lime marmalade on the nose, leading to a intense, savoury palate with a 'kick' of chilli pepper. Drying overall, with rich tannins. The finish presents fruit and savoury notes.

Pittyvaich 30-Year-Old



ABV: 50.8%
Region: Speyside
Cask: First-fill ex-Bourbon casks
Availability: 7,056 bottles
RRP: £400 (US\$531)
Tasting notes: Tops notes of ripe tropical fruits, pear, papaya, pineapple and banana on the nose, leading to a lightly oily and very smooth palate. Vanilla and fruit acidity, drying lightly on the finish with some lingering spicy warmth.

Talisker 8-Year-Old



ABV: 57.9%
Region: Isle of Skye
Cask: Pot-still Caribbean rum casks
Availability: Limited quantities worldwide
RRP: £90 (US\$120)
Tasting notes: Sweet and maritime top notes on the nose, with hints of molasses and crystalline sugar, dry seaweed, salt and iodine and 'pear drop' boiled fruit sweets. The palate is salty and lightly sweet, before the Talisker pepperiness takes over. The finish is hot, peppery and drying, sweet and smoky.

The Singleton of Dufftown 17-Year-Old



ABV: 55.1%
Region: Highland
Cask: Refill American oak hogsheads
Availability: Limited quantities worldwide
RRP: £110 (US\$146)
Tasting notes: Honeycomb, spun honey and a trace of beeswax on the nose. A faint floral note of dried grass or wallflowers underneath. Creamy-smooth palate that is sweet overall, with a drying and slightly coating feel as beeswax reappears. The finish is quite long and warming with white pepper turning to chilli in the aftertaste.

Diageo Brings Forth Its Latest Special Scotch Single Malt Whisky Line Up

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / September 8, 2020

Diageo, through the numerous distilleries it owns in Scotland, each year releases its Special Releases Whisky Collection. Bottlings in this line up typically range in age and rarity as well as price. Of late they've been themed as well, and for 2020 eight cask strength bottlings have been chosen that center around a "Rare by Nature" tag line. The new 2020 Special Releases Single Malt Scotch Whisky Collection, according to those behind it, draws upon a number of notable considerations in its line up, including unusual age points, experimental maturation techniques and a first-ever release finished in pot-still Caribbean rum casks. The encore theme, meanwhile, "highlights the extraordinary nature that surrounds each distillery, with each whisky visually brought to life through intricate illustrations that decorate the bottles."



2020 Special Releases Single Malt Scotch Whisky Collection (image via Diageo)

"I've created this year's Special Releases Collection," said Dr. Craig Wilson, Diageo Master Blender, in a prepared statement, "from some of my favorite distilleries across Scotland, with whisky enthusiasts in mind. For those who enjoy spicy flavors, my recommendation would be to try our Cardhu, and for those who favor rich, intense and smooth flavors my choice would be Mortlach 21 year old."

"If you are curious about discovering something very rare, the Pittyvaich – the single ghost distillery in our Special Releases Collection this year is an unforgettable dram."

Plans call for these whiskies to be available in the US in extremely limited numbers at select retailers being in late fall. You'll find more specifics on each bottling below, including official tasting notes, based upon information provided by Diageo.

Cardhu 11 Year Old

- ABV: 56%
- Region: Speyside
- Limited quantities worldwide
- SRP \$111
- Cardhu, the Queen of Speyside malts, has a generous spirit that is as well matched to that of hard-working founder, Helen Cumming, as it is to that of the busy bees that pollinate the hillside heather through the long days of summer.
- Clean, elegant and perfectly poised, this Cardhu was made in small batches and matured in refill casks, as well as new and ex-bourbon American oak, drawing out tones of floral sweetness and spicy intensity in a playful exchange between wood and whisky.
- Notes of fresh orchard pear, green apple, grape and pineapple join a trace of lemon peel on the nose, with a gentle mossy base. The texture is creamy-smooth, the taste sweet then juicy, with a buttery richness. Of a good length, the finish is spicy, with lingering warmth.

Cragganmore 20 Year Old

- ABV: 55.8%
- Region: Speyside
- Limited quantities worldwide
- SRP \$171

- A Cragganmore of this age has never been released from the distillery, making this elusive malt a much anticipated expression. In addition sweet and mellow woody notes emerge from this small batch, patiently matured over 20 years in a mix that included new fresh-charred American oak casks.
- Cragganmore is a highly respected Speyside malt founded by a giant among distillers, John Smith. The ethereal aromas are among the most complex to be found in any malt, appearing and disappearing mysteriously like the ghostly flight of the Barn Owl as it quarters the wooded Speyside glens at twilight in search of its prey.
- Showing the sweet and spicy effects of part maturation in new oak, this expression explores the woods just as deeply. The mellow nose is sweet overall, revealing fruity top notes of ripe pear, soft melon and green banana, then more savory hints of soft glove leather and sanded hardwood. The texture is creamy-smooth while the taste is rich and not quite as sweet, delightfully balanced by a savory mid-palate. The finish is long, velvety and spicy-dry.

Dalwhinnie 30 Year Old

- ABV: 51.9%
- Region: Highland
- No. bottles available: 6,978
- SRP \$722
- This ultra-rare single vintage Dalwhinnie has an astonishing bright intensity for its age and comes uniquely from refill American oak hogsheads, all of which were casked in 1989. Three decades of maturity have bought a fine elegance to the vibrant distillery character, allowing its moorland aromas to peak. The result is smoothly sweet, yet also surprisingly peppery.
- From the highest distillery in Scotland, part of her coldest inhabited community, Dalwhinnie is a mountain malt. It is as well adapted to its location and as lively in taste as the nearby mountain hares that box for supremacy in spring..
- The aroma is gentle; sweet and fragrant with herbal scents, subtle traces of butterscotch and hard fruit candy, and a base of spicy wood. The texture is smoothly creamy, the vibrant taste richly sweet overall, with a drying, gradually building peppery-spicy warmth. The finish is long and delightfully warming.

Lagavulin 12 Year Old

- ABV: 56.4%
- Region: Islay
- Limited quantities worldwide
- SRP \$164
- This Lagavulin has been matured in traditional refill American oak casks selected to give a perfect expression of distillery character. Soaring in taste and intensity, the flavor is powerful and assertive yet subtly sweet.
- Lagavulin is an iconic Islay malt, its majestic spirit steeped in history for over two hundred years. Standing proud in a rocky bay crowned with a castle by the Lords of the Isles, who long ago ruled Islay, it reigns supreme today like the White Tailed Eagle that soars high above sea and shore nearby.
- The aromas of this modern day King of Islay are elusive, until familiar hints of ash and linseed oil emerge. A light fruity note follows, as does a clean, fresh whiff of the sea, like breathing in the air of Lagavulin bay. The texture is smooth, the big taste sweeter than expected, intense and deeply smoky, with a long and commanding finish.

Mortlach 21 Year Old

- ABV: 56.9%
- Region: Speyside
- No. bottles available: 7,692
- SRP \$755
- This Mortlach was matured for rich distillery character in small batches then carefully finished in Pedro Ximenez and

Oloroso-seasoned casks to build yet more levels of aroma and taste. At once smooth, sweet and savory, the many-layered outcome mirrors the complexity of the mysterious Mortlach 2.81 distillation itself.

- Called the “The Beast of Dufftown” for its robust, meaty nature, little known Mortlach may be the best kept secret in Scotch. Bold flavors are the mark of this special breed, distinguishing it as the monarch of its glen as surely as the bellow of a mature red deer stag.
- The aromas run deep, swirling with dark dried fruits and savory, meaty notes. The texture is super- smooth, the intense taste is sweet with rich fruit and cured ham, building to a lingering spicy- dryness. Long and impressive, the finish truly emphasizes this harmony of sweetness and spice, leaving the palate dry in a glorious afterglow.

Pittyvaich 30 Year Old

- ABV: 50.8%
- Region: Speyside
- No. bottles available: 7,056
- SRP \$525
- This elusive 1989 Pittyvaich from the last remaining stocks is the first ever to be finished in first-fill ex-bourbon casks. This finely crafted finishing has brought an exotic, rich vanilla sweetness to the light, creamy, fruity aromas and flavours of a less well known Speyside gem, until now familiar only to a knowledgeable few.
- A ‘ghost’ distillery that worked for only 18 years before falling victim to industry consolidation in 1993, the buildings of Pittyvaich have long since vanished. Its dwindling stock is as rarely sighted today as the shy capercaillie, a bird occasionally spotted in Scottish pine forests.
- Aromas of sweet oak, delicate ripe fruitiness and dried flowers leap from the glass. The texture is soft and silky, the sweet taste rich in notes of vanilla that perfectly match the classic green, creamy and fruity distillery character. It becomes drying in the development, while the smooth, warming finish closes with a final sweet flourish.

Talisker 8 Year Old

- ABV: 57.9%
- Region: Isle of Skye
- Limited quantities worldwide
- SRP \$119
- From a malt rich in maritime character, this adventurous release of Talisker is the first ever to be finished in pot-still Caribbean rum casks. They have enlivened the marine scents and peppery punch of this Skye distillery’s colorful character with the rich, dark and exotic sweetness of warmer climes.
- Founded in 1830, Talisker was the first distillery licensed on Skye and remains the island’s oldest working distillery. Famous for a full-bodied, rich character and powerful peppery finale, it is made by the sea, like the oyster beds that teem with life in the clear waters of the island’s west coast.
- Deep, caramel aromas are balanced by sea salt, dry seaweed and warm sand on a smoky barbecue base. The texture is smooth, the taste hugely rich and sweet before the classic Talisker heat builds with a dash of salt and chilli pepper to a smoky, peppery and drying finish.

The Singleton of Dufftown 17 Year Old

- ABV: 55.1%
- Region: Highland
- Limited quantities worldwide
- SRP \$145
- This unusual first-ever exclusively refill cask release of The Singleton Dufftown has been matured for seventeen years in refill American oak hogsheads, to showcase the fresh, spring-like nature of this slowly crafted single malt.
- The Singleton is renowned for the smoothness and balance of its whiskies, which match the liveliness and vigour of the

leaping salmon in the fast flowing rivers of the Highlands of Scotland. The Singleton Dufftown is particularly known for its elegant grassy and fruity aromas and tastes.

- The mellow aromas mark this as a classic Speyside malt, with a first sweet impression of honeycomb and beneath, a floral note of dry grasses with hints of fruit on an earthy base. The texture is creamy-smooth and coating, while the taste is sweet, rich and perfectly balanced. There is a warming, drying finish, with a peppery spiciness.

Fantastic 50th Award for The GlenAllachie



We are delighted to have won our 50th award in only 3 years with news of a prestigious Double Gold and five Golds at this year's International Spirits Challenge (ISC). Now in its 25th year, the ISC promote outstanding quality spirits from across the globe. The competition receives more than 1,700 entries from nearly 70 countries.

Two of the five Golds were awarded to the 12 year old and 21 year old of the MacNair's Lum Reek Blended Malt Scotch Whisky range. The Golds come just a few months after MacNair's Lum Reek 21 year old was awarded the World's Best Blended Malt at the World Whiskies Awards.

The three other Golds went to The GlenAllachie 12, 15 and 25 year old.



The GlenAllachie 18 year old was awarded a Double Gold Tasting Award in the Scotch Whisky category. The Double Gold medal was introduced by the ISC last year to highlight exceptional spirits across the ISC Tasting Award categories.

The 18 year old, which has rich notes of dark cherries, spices and subtle hints of dark chocolate, has previously won several awards, including a Double Gold at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition and a Gold at the Scottish Whisky Awards in 2019.



We have now won 50 awards since we purchased the distillery in October 2017. Earlier this year, Billy Walker won the prestigious Icons of Whisky Master Distiller/Blender of the Year Award, while in 2019 we were voted Scottish Distillery of the Year at the inaugural Scottish Whisky Awards.

Commenting on the latest award wins, Walker said: "Winning any kind of award is a proud moment, but to be awarded a Double Gold and five Golds at the ISC is fantastic news. Not only that, this takes us to 50 awards since acquiring the distillery back in 2017.

"Our core range is very close to my heart and I'm particularly proud of the 18 year old which has won the recognition of so many whisky enthusiasts and judges around the world. It doesn't seem that long ago since we started this new chapter in the life of The GlenAllachie Distillery, so it's been incredibly rewarding to see our spirit being recognised consistently at awards events like this."

GlenDronach reveals Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage

24th August, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The GlenDronach Distillery has created the Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage Scotch whisky to mark the release of *The King's Man* film next month.



Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage carries a price tag of US\$1,299

The new Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage was created by master blender Rachel Barrie in partnership with *Kingsman* film franchise director Matthew Vaughn. The release of the whisky follows the [launch of Kingsman Edition 1991 Vintage in 2017](#), which marked the release of the second film in the series, *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*.

The new expression is bottled at 50.1% ABV and made from a selection of six casks from 1989. The 29-year-old single malt was matured initially in oloroso Sherry casks followed by a final maturation in Pedro Ximénez casks from Spain.

Barrie said: "Working closely with Matthew, I have selected casks of the most exceptional character for this rare 1989 Vintage, with smouldering aromas of dark fruits and sherry-soaked walnuts, vintage leather and cedar wood. On the palate, dense autumn fruits meld with date, fig and treacle, before rolling into black winter truffle and cocoa.

"In the exceptionally long finish, notes of blackberry, tobacco leaf and date oil linger to conclude the rich tasting experience."

The 1989 vintage was inspired by the oldest whisky housed in the GlenDronach Distillery, a 29-year-old bottled in 1913, prior to the First World War. According to the distillery, three friends had each purchased a bottle before leaving for war, pledging to open them together on their return. However, only one of them returned home. The bottle remains unopened and was gifted to the distillery.

The King's Man, a prequel and the third film in the *Kingsman* series, is set during the First World War. The film will be released in the UK on 18 September.

Vaughn said: "There is an important line which says, 'Reputation is what others think of you, character is what you are'. Strength of character and dedication to upholding the highest values perfectly encapsulates the true spirit of both the Kingsman agency and The GlenDronach Distillery. I hope *Kingsman* fans around the world will enjoy this single malt as much as I enjoyed partnering with Rachel Barrie and The GlenDronach to create it.

"This expression is deep in meaning, paying homage to fallen friends who bravely fought during WWI, and the depth of character and integrity shared by both The GlenDronach and the Kingsman agency. This is none other than a whisky truly fit for a king's man."

The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage is limited to 3,052 bottles and bears the emblem from the *Kingsman* films. The gift box has been signed by Barrie and Vaughn.

The whisky is priced at RRP US\$1,299 and available to buy from specialist retailers globally from 1 September.

Glendronach Brings Kingsman Scotch Back For Another Single Malt Release

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / August 24, 2020

Scotland's The GlenDronach distillery, known for its excellent sherry cask whisky program, unveiled back in 2017 [a special release tied to the Kingsman movie franchise](#). This limited edition whisky became quite a hit at retail, and is now something of a collector's item on secondary markets. Now, with a new Kingsman movie sometime on the near horizon, a new single malt is also being revealed. The new The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage, according to those behind it, was "created in collaboration with Matthew Vaughn [Kingsman film franchise director], to mark the upcoming release of 'The King's Man' by 20th Century Studios and MARV." The GlenDronach Master Blender Dr. Rachel Barrie produced it from a selection of just six casks distilled in 1989, with primary maturation occurring in Oloroso sherry casks and a secondary finishing in Pedro Ximénez casks from Spain.



The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage (image via Brown-Forman)

"Working closely with Matthew," said Barrie in a prepared statement, "I have selected casks of the most exceptional character for this rare 1989 Vintage, with smoldering aromas of dark fruits and sherry-soaked walnuts, vintage leather and cedar wood. On the palate, dense autumn fruits meld with date, fig and treacle, before rolling into black winter truffle and cocoa. In the exceptionally long finish, notes of blackberry, tobacco leaf and date oil linger to conclude the rich tasting experience. "This expression is deep in meaning, paying homage to fallen friends who bravely fought during WWI, and the depth of character and integrity shared by both The GlenDronach and the Kingsman agency. This is none other than a whisky truly fit for a King's Man."

"There is an important line which says, 'Reputation is what others think of you, character is what you are,'" added Vaughn. "Strength of character and dedication to upholding the highest values perfectly encapsulates the true spirit of both the Kingsman agency and The GlenDronach Distillery."

"I hope Kingsman fans around the world will enjoy this Single Malt as much as I enjoyed partnering with Rachel Barrie and The GlenDronach to create it."

As it stands now plans call for this 29 year old single malt to be limited edition, with just 3,052 bottles having been "labelled, numbered and wax-sealed by hand, each adorned with an iconic, bespoke Kingsman insignia. The luxurious gift box also bears the signatures of both Dr. Rachel Barrie and Matthew Vaughn." It is bottled at 50.1% ABV, priced at \$1,299 per bottle and will be available at the beginning of September. You'll find official tasting notes for The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage below for your consideration. As a side note, it is said this bottling "is inspired by the oldest bottle of whisky housed at The GlenDronach Distillery – a twenty-nine year-old whisky bottled in 1913, just before the outbreak of the first World War. Three friends had each purchased a bottle before leaving for war, vowing to open them together on their return. Tragically, only one of them returned home. "Having never opened his bottle, his family later gifted it to the distillery, where it remains unopened and displayed in remembrance of fallen friends."

- Color: Tarnished copper
- Nose: Dark field berry and plum skin on a base of aromatic bitters, sherry-soaked walnut and vintage leather, with smoldering cedar wood on a slate and earthen floor.

- Palate: Dense autumn fruits melt with date, fig and treacle pulling, rolling into black winter truffle, raisin and cocoa.
- Finish: Blackberry, tobacco leaf and date oil linger into the rich, deep finish.

Aug 23, 2020, 06:30pm EDT

This 29-Year-Old Single Malt Is The Year's Best New Scotch Whisky
[Brad Japhe](#) Contributor



The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition

BROWN-FORMAN

[The GlenDronach Distillery](#) just unveiled its oldest single malt offering of the year. Kingsman Edition is a super premium expression consisting of liquid from a single distilling season in 1989. Its release next month is tied to the upcoming action film, *The King's Man*, directed by Matthew Vaughn and starring Ralph Fiennes. This is exceptionally exciting news for scotch connoisseurs out there. Or it should be, at least. Let us explain why.

If you aren't yet familiar with this Highland producer out of Huntly, Scotland, it's well past time for you to catch up. The GlenDronach produces some of the most sought after [sherried malts](#) on the planet. Earlier in the year, they snagged headlines with the latest rendition of their now-legendary 15-year-old Revival. It took home top honors as the [San Francisco World Spirits Competition](#), where it was named 'Best in Show Whisky'—across all categories of the brown spirit.

The award might be fresh, but the prestige is hardly anything new. For nearly 200 years, this distillery has been celebrated for their especially rich malts. The house style—deep, lasting notes of over-ripened dark fruit—is the result of extended maturation, primarily, in ex-sherry butts. This latest label is perhaps the Platonic ideal of that particular methodology.

Master Blender Dr. Rachel Barrie sought out a distinguished set of six casks from a renowned vintage. She actually claims to have enlisted the help of the film's director for the endeavor. The liquid they landed on spent the better part of three decades in Oloroso sherry barrels, receiving a final finish amidst the sweeter embrace of PX-soaked staves. It was poured into the bottle in 2018, radiating a brilliant burgundy sheen.

"Working closely with Matthew [Vaughn], I selected casks of the most exceptional character for this rare 1989 Vintage, with smoldering aromas of dark fruits and sherry-soaked walnuts, vintage leather and cedar wood," explains Dr. Barrie.

The lingering notes at the tail end of the sip are what truly set this drinking experience apart. Blackberry, tobacco, and candied plum dance around for what seems like days.



Bottle closeup of The Glendronach Kingsman Edition
BROWN-FORMAN

And its unusual age statement is no coincidence. The oldest bottle of whisky at The Glendronach is a 29-year-old label from 1913. Three friends each purchased their own glass of the liquid before flying off to The Great War. They vowed to open them jointly upon a joyous reunion. Sadly, the occasion never materialized; only one made it back. He never uncorked his bottle, and his family gifted it back to the distillery, where it remains sealed to this day.

“This expression is deep in meaning, paying homage to fallen friends who bravely fought during WWI,” Barrie confirms. Unfortunately, only 3,052 hand-labeled bottles of the 50.1% ABV scotch will make their way around the world in 2020. Even at a suggested retail price of \$1000, you shouldn’t expect them to stay on shelves beyond their September 1st arrival date; this is going to be catnip for collectors and connoisseurs. There is a solid consolation prize here in the form of [the brand’s flagship 12-year-old expression](#). Of course it’s not nearly as complex nor expressive as its Kingsman counterpart. But it still evokes that same PX and Oloroso influence—and at a fraction of the price. At \$50 it might actually be one of the most reasonably priced sherried malts in all of Scotland. And no matter what bottle of GlenDronach you end up with in the glass, disappointment is never included in the tasting notes. “There is an important line which says, ‘reputation is what others think of you, character is what you are,’” says Vaughn. “Strength of character and dedication to upholding the highest values perfectly encapsulates the true spirit of both the Kingsman agency and The GlenDronach Distillery. I hope Kingsman fans around the world will enjoy this single malt as much as I enjoyed partnering with Rachel Barrie and The GlenDronach to create it.” Should you be a fan of fine, [sherried malt](#), there could be little question of *that*.



The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition, available on September 1st.
BROWN-FORMAN

To Peat or Not to Peat: The Whisky Drinker’s Dilemma

In Partnership with [BenRiach](#)

[NICK HALL](#), 24 AUG 2020

Love it or loath it, you can’t deny that peat is the most divisive of all whisky elements. The smoky flavour can turn even the mildest of drams into a sophisticated and tailored experience, at the same time, prompting eyes to water and necks to recoil. But there’s more to peated whisky that meets the eye. In fact, your experiences with the flavoursome spirit might not be indicative of the true pleasure of peat.



What is Peat?

Rudimentary, we know, but it pays to understand what you’re looking for. In the early days of whisky production, peat was one of the most readily accessible fuels in many areas of Scotland. The accumulation of water in boggy areas wasn’t exactly ideal for drainage, instead, it slowed the decomposition of moss, grass and tree roots, culminating in the creation of peat. The spongy material collects in bogs that are often thousands of years old, meaning peat is broadly classified as a fossil fuel. But while this history is important, it’s what the famed Scottish distillers do with it that makes peat iconic.



What is Peat Used for in Whisky?

As anyone who has spent their fair share of time sipping whisky would know, distilleries largely rely on commercially malted barley nowadays. Some distilleries, like Speyside icon [BenRiach](#) still distil using maltings from their own on-site floor maltings, however, the process has become extremely rare. Malting allows the starches in barleycorns to become soluble so that the sugars can then be turned into alcohol. These barleycorns are then steeped in water and allowed to germinate before the process is halted in the kiln. It’s here where we see peat introduced for the first time.

Added to the kiln, peat produces a distinctly aromatic smoke that adds a new complexity to the whisky itself. The longer and more intense the exposure to peat smoke, the stronger the smoky mouthfeel will linger for the drinker. For the most part, damp malt is usually dried for approximately 30 hours. Some whisky distillers like Laphroaig dry their malt over peat fire for about 18 of these 30 hours, while others such as Glengoyne use only unpeated fire. The end result leaves you with a broad variety ranging from extremely smoky whisky to almost completely smokeless whisky. It’s a devilishly delicious and divisive characteristic that whisky aficionados rarely agree on. What they can concede, however, is that not all peated whiskies are the same.

Highlands Peat

Much like wine connoisseurs love to split the difference between grape varieties, so too do peated whisky fans. Along with the type of oak used to age, other factors that influence that flavour of the whisky include water source, soil, how the grain was processed and even the region in which the whisky was produced. In the highlands of Scotland, peat is used sparingly, and not just out of choice. As peat is found farther inland, the use often results in a rich, sweet smoke, more reminiscent of pipe tobacco and even barbecued meat. If that tickles your fancy, the [BenRiach 10-Year-Old Curiositas](#) is the ideal introduction.

The Speyside distillery has a unique cask formula that focuses on ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks, resulting in a warming fruity single malt, heavily elevated with peated malted barley. Traditionalists believe that peated malts achieve the optimum balance of peat-bittersweet and oak infusion after 10 years of maturation, which is precisely why [BenRiach](#) has gone with this process for its rare peated release, but this isn't always the case.

Islay Peat

The Scottish region of Islay is renowned for its unusually fierce style of peated whisky, which has since become infamous on the world stage. Distilleries such as Laphroaig and Ardbeg tend to differ in their peat use. The result is a decidedly more maritime finish, with pronounced elements of seaweed, iodine and brine, but with an unmistakable smoky finish. Even blended Scotches like Johnnie Walker use peated single malts to enhance the flavour, or in some cases, completely alter it.



Peat vs Smoke

Here is where things get tricky. While we commonly associate peat with smoke, and rightly so, that doesn't necessarily make the two terms interchangeable. In fact, if you truly want to dispel the myths around peat, you must consider how the phenomenon is observed as a whole.

Nose

Smokiness is an obvious element on the nose. We've all stood by a fire and smelt burning wood, but there is a distinct difference when it comes to peat. Peatiness can come across as a dank earthiness, indicative of moist, damp topsoil, and depending on if it is Islay peated whisky, notes of seaweed. On the nose, smokiness is more carbon-based, but peatiness is more organic.

Palate

We know from the food we eat that smoky flavours have a typically ashy or charcoal flavour. This is not characteristic of peated whisky. Instead, there is more of an earthy soil note, similar to root liquorice on the palate. You might equate this black jelly beans or dark flavours.

Finish

Here is where we see the biggest difference between smokiness and peatiness. Where smoky textures leave a dry aftertaste, peat can evoke a moist after-note, often followed by a green bitterness. If a peated whisky is worth its weight, this bitterness will be offset by the sweetness of the malt, similar to how the [BenRiach 10-Year-Old Curiositas](#) leaves behind a note of baked fruit to balance the earthy tones.



Peated vs Non-Peated Whisky

Whether you've dabbled in the world of peated whisky or not, you bound to stumble across a staunch advocate for the spirit style, but conversely, you're also likely to encounter some who firmly oppose it. It's the great smoky divide. But what if we told you the two sides of the spectrum could live in harmony?

While the [BenRiach 10-Year-Old Curiositas](#) is a jewel in the Speyside whisky distiller's crown, the label's most iconic single malt is an example of what can happen when peat is absent. Using that same ex-bourbon and ex-sherry cask formula, the [BenRiach 10-Year-Old](#) has a vibrant and fruit-filled flavour with a noticeable lack of smoke. The richness of the single malt shines through in a smooth, crisp barley finish.

There's unquestionably a difference between the two. From the smoky sophistication of the peated release to the smooth fruit-filled finish of the latter, every whisky lover has a preference. Choosing if you are a peated whisky drink or not is an exercise in individuality and one that could take you years to decide on. But just know, if your experience with peated whisky has yet to hit the spot, don't give up on it for good. There are regions to explore and distilleries to uncover, each offering their own unique take on the classic peat process.

To peat or not to peat? Now, that is a question.

The World's Best Scotch Whisky—According To The 2020 New York International Spirits Competition

[Brad Japhe](#) Contributor



Glenmorangie Signet Single Malt Scotch Whisky

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: BRAD JAPHE

On Monday, the results of the annual [New York International Spirits Competition](#) poured in. Now in its 11th iteration, the tasting distinguishes itself as the only such event judged by trade buyers. This

includes beverage directors at restaurants, head bartenders, purchasers for retail bottle shops. In other words, these are people who quite literally evaluate spirits for a living.

Another point of distinction: “Medals are awarded based on whether the judge thinks the product is worth the [suggested retail price]”, explains [Amanda Schuster](#), editor-in-chief of Alcohol Professor—the editorial arm of the competition, which also holds events in Berlin, Melbourne and Hong Kong. “Typically the judges are all in one room conferring by category. Sadly that was impossible this year, so they individually received samples—along with cheeses from the French Cheese Board—hand delivered by Adam Levy, the founder of the series. The judges had 2 days to submit results.”

Out of hundreds of entries only 42 spirits—across 7 categories—snagged the coveted ‘Double Gold’ top prize. Today we’ll be looking at the scotch winners, which might come as particularly surprising to some of the connoisseurs out there. The majority of them are blends, a style often dismissed as inferior to single malts. But there’s a reason that they remain far and away the most consumed category of scotch on the planet: they’re incredibly drinkable and often reasonably priced. A quick recap for newcomers. Whereas single malt scotch is derived from 100% malted barley, produced and aged at a single distillery, blended scotch comes from *many* different distilleries and combines that malt against a majority of grain spirit. It’s that last part that catches up the elite sippers out there. Grain spirit is often viewed as filler; a lighter, less robust style of liquid distilled from corn and other cereals at a high proof.

But as the following list confirms, there are some incredibly sophisticated blended scotches on the market. For the immutable maltheads, however, we think you’ll find plenty to enjoy in the two selections honored by NYISC below. Here are all five Double Gold scotches, accompanied by tasting notes and pricing for each.

[Ardbeg — Uigeadail \(\\$65\)](#)

Pronounced ‘Oog-a-dal’, this special vatting marries deep, unapologetic peat notes with the rich, raisiny tones of old ex-Sherry cooperage.

[Compass Box Whisky — The Story of the Spaniard \(\\$65\)](#)

Unlike the aforementioned ‘blended scotch’ this is a blended malt. It encapsulates single malt from various distilleries, minus the single grain component. This one particular example is full-bodied yet soft on the palate, exhibiting notes of citrus zest and pears poached in mulled wine.

[Cutty Sark — Blended Scotch Whisky \(\\$20\)](#)

Honey and lemon peel aromas give way to pears and porridge on the mid-palate. An ever so slight whisper of peat smoke is there if you try and find it. But really it’s all about a lightness of being; entirely pleasant for a \$20 bottle.

[Dewars — The Signature 25 Year Old \(\\$200\)](#)

\$200 might seem like a steep asking price for a blended scotch. But if this were a comparably aged single malt it would cost you at least twice as much. All that aside, this is a sophisticated sipping spirit that exudes thread of dark fruit and supple incense and Christmas spice in a lengthy finish.

[Glenmorangie — Signet \(\\$200\)](#)

For one week every year, Glenmorangie in the highlands of Scotland churns out a special distillate from highly-roasted chocolate malt. Years later the liquid is removed from a battery of designer casks and married to yield this specialty bottling. Notes of coffee and mocha dominate the nose. The taste confirms more of the same, though with the addition of dark chocolate and marzipan.



The Double Gold Scotch Winners from the 2020 New York International Spirits Competition

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: BRAD JAPHE

Master of Malt launches whisky subscription club

28th August, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Online retailer Master of Malt has launched Pour & Sip, a new monthly subscription service for whisky fans.



Subscribers to Pour & Sip will receive a welcome pack containing two tasting glasses

Described as a “flexible platform for drinks discovery”, Pour & Sip is a monthly subscription club that offers five different 30ml drams. The bottlings have been selected by Master of Malt’s in-house team of whisky experts.

The service aims to be inclusive and allow anyone of legal drinking age to enjoy the whiskies regardless of gender, ethnicity or background. Giovana Petry, Pour & Sip lead, said: “We’re so excited to share our new whisky finds and passion with everyone, making this an experience less intimidating. Every monthly box is distinct, different, and filled to the brim with flavour.”

New customers will receive a welcome pack containing a pair of tasting glasses, a ‘How to taste whisky’ card, along with detailed tasting notes and five 30ml samples.

Pour & Sip will also host online tastings twice a month, allowing subscribers the opportunity to find out more about each sample and ask questions.

Subscribers will also receive access to exclusive blog content and discounts on bottles on Master of Malt.

The service also offers flexibility to customers with the possibility to pause and resume deliveries at any time without an additional charge.

Consumers can sign up to Pour & Sip now, with the first welcome packs shipping in September. A monthly subscription is priced at £29.95 (US\$40).

Master of Malt also [operates The Dram Club](#), a monthly UK postal subscription service from its Drinks by the Dram concept.

The World’s Best Single Malt Whisky – According To The Scotch Whisky Masters

Aug 24, 2020, 05:45am EDT

[Brad Japhe](#) Contributor



25 Year Old Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whisky

TOMINTOUL DISTILLERY

In June, a panel of professional [UK-based scotch sippers](#) convened—digitally—to parse through hundreds of examples of their native whisky. A total of 52 medals were doled out across more than two dozen subcategories; everything from non-age-statement blends to Islay malts over 31 years in age. But only one ‘Taste Master’ distinction was awarded in this year’s competition. And it went to a 25-year-old bottle of [Tomintoul](#) single malt from the Speyside region of Scotland. Amazingly, more than two months later, that particular bottling still flies under the radar here in the US. As does the distillery that produces it. Let’s take a look at what make both so deserving of praise.

Built in 1964, Tomintoul lacks the historic lineage that benefits its neighboring distilleries. For example, some 11 miles up the road from the eponymous town you’ll find The Glenlivet—a full 140 years its senior—and producer of the most widely consumed single malt in the US. And while the facility isn’t aesthetically romantic by any stretch, it houses a pair each of perfectly pleasing wash stills and spirits stills; workhorses that combine to crank out some 3.3 million liters of distillate per year.

This liquid has *serious* character, the base for spirit which, once matured, the brand eventually markets as ‘the gentle dram.’ But it’s more than just lip service: this is beautifully balanced juice, subdued but never uninteresting. Which is probably why it’s no stranger to prestigious recognition. Jim Murray, author of the annual tasting tome known as *The Whisky Bible* had this to say about the 14-year-old flagship:

"Just how many variations on a honeyed theme can you get? Here I count at least five, each wave coming in after the other; medium length but sheer quality all the way. Bird's custard mixing dreamily with drier, playfully spiced, oaky vanillas... not a single weakness. Just magnificent whisky bottled the way it is meant to be."

Wow. This is nothing short of effusive praise. Particularly noteworthy in that he’s describing a scotch that can be [found Stateside at just under \\$50 a bottle](#). The joy of the brand—understated elegance—is something that perhaps doesn’t seem to be celebrated by many of today’s drinkers who are into loud flavors, whether they be from the barrel or from the level of smoke in the malt.

Tomintoul 25 is more symphony than *Spinal Tap*. The panelists for the Scotch Whisky Masters discerned elements of coconut, marzipan, allspice, gentle malt and gingerbread. These all tug for attention on the palate, but none are tempestuous enough to dominate the tasting experience. Instead, they all intermesh to form a compelling tapestry; a chorus that can be contemplated for more than a fleeting moment in a protracted finish.

Every time this bottle collects another piece of flair, you can expect its price on the shelf to inflate. As of now you can still find it [relatively easily for around \\$440](#). It’s not the [cheapest 25-year-old scotch](#) you’ll see in stores. But it’s by no means the [most bloated](#). Either way, it’s not going *down* in price from here. So if you’re eager to see what all the fuss is about, make your move post haste. If \$440 is too steep, then dip your toe in with either the 14 or 16-year-old expressions. Both are great indicators of the house style. And if you value yourself a scotch enthusiast, it’s a style that should certainly be represented in your own house.



16 Year Old Speyside Single Malt from Tomintoul Distillery
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: BRAD JAPHE

Nc'nean's first whisky sets world record at £41,004

19th August, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Highland distillery Nc'nean has broken a world record after bottle number one of its inaugural single malt whisky sold for £41,004 (US\$54,183) during an online auction.



Nc'nean's inaugural whisky, Ainnir, comes in a 100% recycled glass bottle. The first 10 bottles of Ainnir single malt [were sold on Whisky Auctioneer](#) in August to raise money for five charities. The bottles attracted more than 852 bids from 13 countries.

The sale of bottle number one of Ainnir quadrupled the previous record held for a first bottle from a new distillery to be sold at auction. In total, the auction raised more than £92,000 (US\$121,600), including a contribution of £8,560 (US\$11,311), the 10% buyers' commission donated by Whisky Auctioneer.

Iain McClune, founder of Whisky Auctioneer, said: "This is a fantastic result. The significant interest shown by our global community of whisky lovers and connoisseurs comes as no surprise, the first release from a forward thinking and exciting young distillery is an enticing prospect, as the generous bidding and record breaking price for bottle number one attests.

"We are incredibly proud to have hosted this auction and to contribute to the funds raised for Nc'nean's chosen charities. We hope that these donations will make a real difference to their important work during such difficult times."

All proceeds from the auction will be split between charities that support sustainability, the Morvern community and the UK hospitality industry, including Trees for Life, The Drinks Trust, The Ben, The Scottish Farm Land Trust and Morvern Community Trust.

Annabel Thomas, Nc'nean founder, said: "We could not be happier with the success of this auction. I'm really proud that Nc'nean has been able to give something back to support charities and the hospitality industry that have been particularly hard hit recently.

"Our maiden bottling has now completely sold out. Watch this space for the next chapter in the Nc'nean story, we have some exciting announcements ahead."

The "unpeated, smooth and elegant" no-age-statement whisky is made from organic Scottish barley and is a combination of five casks. It is bottled at natural cask strength (60.3% ABV).

There were only 1,320 bottles released of the inaugural whisky, which sold out online within 36 hours. The first 10 bottles are different from the rest as they feature a special silver detail.

Nc'nean, which is based on the west coast of Scotland, was founded by Thomas and Derek Lewis in 2013. The site runs entirely on renewable energy.

Johnnie Walker unveils trio of limited edition bottles

20th August, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Blended Scotch whisky Johnnie Walker has created three limited edition bottles for its Red Label, Black Label and Gold Label Reserve expressions to celebrate 200 years of the brand.



Johnnie Walker has created limited edition bottles to celebrate its 200th anniversary this year

Each bottle was named after the colour of its slanted label, but this has now been upgraded to an opaque wrap for the limited edition designs. Johnnie Walker founder John Walker opened a small grocery store in Kilmarnock, Scotland, 200 years ago. He eventually began to sell and make blended whisky.

His son Alexander launched Johnnie Walker's first commercial blend in 1867, called Old Highland Whisky. Today, the Johnnie Walker brand is owned by Diageo and is available in 180 countries.

Ali Reynolds, Johnnie Walker GB brand ambassador, said: "These limited edition bottles give a bold new look to our most iconic whiskies and perfectly celebrate Johnnie Walker's depth of character as we celebrate this incredible 200-year milestone."

"This striking new design is sure to stand out on shelf and appeal to both enthusiasts and those who are new to the Scotch scene. The new bottles also make an ideal option for gifting occasions as we showcase the innovative brand ethos and open the doors to a new generation of whisky drinkers."

All three bottles are available to purchase now from major retailers and online at shop.malts.com.

Last month, [Johnnie Walker unveiled four limited edition whiskies](#) also created to mark its 200th anniversary.

The brand will also debut a [plastic-free, paper-based bottle in 2021](#) after parent company Diageo partnered with venture management company Pilot Lite.

Angel's Envy bottles mizunara cask-finished Bourbon

20th August, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Louisville-based Angel's Envy has kicked off its new Founder's Collection of limited edition whiskies with the launch of a Bourbon finished in Japanese mizunara oak casks to mark its 10th anniversary.



Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished in Japanese Mizunara Oak is the first release in the Founder's Collection

Angel's Envy Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished in Japanese Mizunara Oak Casks is a blend of four-year-old and nine-year-old Angel's Envy Kentucky Straight Bourbon, which has been finished in Japanese mizunara oak casks for an additional two years.

This release is the first in the Angel's Envy Founder's Collection, which will include whiskies commemorating brand anniversaries, special events and milestones.

Wes Henderson, Angel's Envy co-founder and chief innovation officer, said: "Ten years ago today, my dad Lincoln and I filled our first Port barrels with the Bourbon that would eventually become Angel's Envy. In celebration, we wanted to release something special to honour my dad's incredible legacy, how far Angel's Envy has come and our exciting future ahead."

"We chose this release for the 10th anniversary because my dad, having taken on several consulting roles in Japan during his career, always had a deep appreciation for the country and its distilling community. This release, finished in mizunara casks made from this rare, 200-year-old wood, felt fitting for such a special milestone for Angel's Envy."

Bottled at 48.9% ABV, the whiskey is said to offer "notes of smoky wood, sandalwood, banana bread, cherry and ripe apples" on the nose. On the palate, it has flavours of vanilla, oak, chocolate, banana, cinnamon, apple and light black pepper.

The limited edition release has a suggested retail price of US\$349.99 for a 750ml bottle.

Initially, sales of Angel's Envy Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished in Japanese Mizunara Oak Casks will be limited to members of loyalty club Angel's Envy 500 Main.

A limited run of 1,200 bottles will be available for public purchase on 1 September at Angel's Envy distillery in downtown Louisville and select retailers in Kentucky.

The World's Best Bourbon - According To The International Wine And Spirits Competition

Aug 16, 2020, 04:20am EDT

[Brad Japhe](#) Contributor



Colonel E.H. Taylor Single Barrel Bottled-in-Bond Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey

BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

Last week the International Wine And Spirits Competition revealed [the results of their annual tasting panel](#). In most major categories, anyway (for the scotch rankings we'll have to wait patiently until September).

There were plenty of surprises—such as an aquavit from the Orkney Islands of Scotland. Or a [vodka distilled from rye](#) in Colorado. But let's focus instead on one particular name that is not at all shocking to see amidst a winner's circle: [Colonel E. H. Taylor Jr.](#)

In awarding the Single Barrel offering a near-flawless mark of 99 out of 100, IWSR judges applauded its "intense nose of bitter chocolate", riding a buttery smooth mouthfeel, with touches of peach and pepper in the mid-palate.

Another way of describing the liquid is that it is ultimate crowd-pleasing bourbon. How do we know? Well, because it keeps pleasing crowds of professionals. The E.H. Taylor, Jr. lineup now consists of 11 labels and virtually every one of them have climbed to the tops of connoisseur wishlists. In 2018, a Four Grain variant was named 'World Whiskey of the Year' by Jim Murray, in his highly-regarded [Whisky Bible](#). The one-

off retailed for a quaint \$70 when it hit shelves. Want one now? Sure thing. [It'll cost you about \\$1800.](#)



2018 World Whiskey Of The Year, EH Taylor Four Grain BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

So just who is Colonel Edmund Haynes Taylor, Jr. and why is his bourbon so universally renowned? First off, the man is considered a founding father of the modern bourbon industry. Many of the innovations he pioneered throughout the 19th Century affect the way that you taste American whiskey today. He championed copper tank fermentation, heat-cycling warehouses, and lobbied for the passage of the Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897.

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That last accolade set standards for high-quality bourbon, implementing a system in which 100-proof whiskey, born of a single distilling season and aged for a minimum of four years. All backed by the guarantee of the federal government, by the way. When you see Bottled-in-Bond on a product today, you are assured of just the same. And if you're lucky enough to get your hands on a bottle of E.H. Taylor's namesake label, you're getting liquid that aged in one of his century-old warehouses which now belong to Buffalo Trace. The Single Barrel that just took home the top prize at IWSC is hand-selected by master distiller [Harlan Wheatley](#) to be a prototypical sipping bourbon. Ice and mixers need not apply.

Although it technically retails for \$70. You're not going to find it for less than 3x that amount. And, frankly, it's still a bargain at \$235. This gem also earned a score of 97 points at the [Ultimate Spirits Challenge](#).

That's two points higher than the venerable 23-year-old Pappy Van Winkle. Last year it won double gold at the [San Francisco World Spirits Competition](#). It'll probably win three more medals before the year is out.

In June, Buffalo Trace [announced the release of its oldest age statement yet in the series](#): 18 year marriage. The 11th bottle to brandish the E.H. Taylor label was an exquisite merging of the distilleries 1 wheat and 2 rye mashbills. It was a caramel creamcorn bomb that was not long for this world. [Cask Cartel was last spotted slinging it at \\$5,000](#)—70x its retail price. And even though, they couldn't keep it stocked. All this is to say: should you come across 'EHT' in the wild, do not hesitate to make it yours. The complete lineup is included below, with links to respective tasting notes.

- [E. H. Taylor, Jr. Small Batch](#)
- [E. H. Taylor, Jr. Single Barrel](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Barrel Proof](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Straight Rye](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Old Fashioned Sour Mash](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Warehouse C Tornado Surviving](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Cured Oak](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Seasoned Wood](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Four Grain](#)
- [E.H. Taylor, Jr. Amaranth](#)
- [E. H. Taylor, Jr. 18 Year Marriage](#)



The newest entry into the Colonel E.H. Taylor series: 18 Year Marriage
BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

Diageo acquires Aviation American Gin

17th August, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Drinks giant Diageo has agreed to buy Davos Brands, which co-owns Aviation American Gin with Hollywood actor Ryan Reynolds, in a deal worth up to US\$610 million.



Actor Ryan Reynolds became a shareholder of Aviation Gin in 2018. The deal includes an initial payment of US\$335m, with a potential second payment of US\$275m dependant on performance over the next 10 years.

Davos Brands is the majority shareholder of Aviation American Gin, which is also part-owned by *Deadpool* actor Reynolds. As part of the deal, Diageo will also acquire other brands in Davos Brands' portfolio, including Astral Tequila and Sombra Mezcal. Ivan Menezes, chief executive of Diageo, said: "The acquisition of Aviation American Gin and the Davos Brands portfolio is in line with our strategy to acquire high growth brands with attractive margins that support premiumisation."

"We are confident that Aviation American Gin will continue to shape and drive the growth of super-premium gin in North America we are looking forward to working with Ryan Reynolds and the Davos Brands team to accelerate future growth."

Ryan Reynolds invested in Aviation American Gin in February 2018. The brand first launched as part of a collaboration between [bartender Ryan Magarian and House Spirits Distillery in 2006](#). Davos Brands [bought Oregon-made Aviation American Gin](#) in 2016.

In September 2018, Reynolds and billionaire businessman Sir Richard Branson entered into a partnership to [serve Aviation Gin on board Virgin Atlantic flights](#).

Reynolds has helped to create several humorous adverts for the brand over the last couple of years, including one [starring actor Hugh](#)

[Jackman](#) who playfully mocked Aviation Gin, and another in which Reynolds trolls fellow superhero actor [Henry Cavill's moustache in Justice League](#).

Reynolds said: "A little over two years ago, I became an owner of Aviation Gin because I love the taste of Aviation more than any other spirit. What I didn't expect was the sheer creative joy learning a new industry would bring.

"Growing the brand with my company, Maximum Effort Marketing, has been among the most fulfilling projects I've ever been involved with. We're so excited for the next chapter of Aviation Gin, which, I promise, will require just as little reading."

Aviation American Gin is the second largest and one of the fastest-growing brands in the super-premium gin category in the US.

In 2019, volumes of Aviation American Gin grew by more than 100%. This represented 40% of growth in the super-premium gin segment, according to IWSR 2019 data.

Great Drums bottles 30-year-old Girvan whisky

18th August, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Independent bottler Great Drums has released three limited edition Scotch whiskies, including a 30-year-old single grain from Girvan Distillery.



The limited edition single cask whiskies includes a 2020 Christmas bottling from Blair Athol

Founded by husband and wife Greg and Kirsty Dillon, Great Drums was launched with the aim of making "great whisky more approachable and available".

The firm has unveiled three new limited edition single cask single malt whiskies as part of its winter 2020 run. All of Great Drums' releases are non-chill-filtered and bottled without caramel colouring.

The first expression is an eight-year-old Knockdhu single cask whisky, which was matured in a first-fill ruby Port barrique. Limited to 183 bottles, the whisky has an ABV of 48.2% and was distilled in April 2012. The expression has notes of berry and dark chocolate along with a "thick, creamy mouthfeel". It is priced at £65 (US\$85) per 500ml bottle. This year's Christmas release will be a single cask single malt whisky from Highland distillery Blair Athol. The nine-year-old whisky offers "big winter fruit notes, some zesty orange and lime, and subtle, soothing spice and a hint of marzipan notes", and is said to imitate the flavour of Christmas cake. It is limited to 150 bottles and has been bottled at 46.2% ABV. The whisky is priced at £50 (US\$66) per 500ml bottle.

Great Drums also unveiled its oldest release to date: a 30-year-old single cask single grain from William Grant & Sons' Lowland distillery Girvan. The whisky was distilled just after Christmas day in 1989 and is limited to 96 bottles. The 54.5% ABV expression is said to offer fruity and buttery notes and a vanilla sweetness on the palate. It is priced at £180 (US\$237) per 500ml bottle.

The whiskies are available to buy in 200ml or 500ml bottles from the Great Drums website.

Yamazaki 55 Years Old sells for HK\$6.2m at auction

24th August, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Bonhams Hong Kong has set a new record for the most expensive Japanese whisky sold at auction after a bottle of Yamazaki 55 Years Old sold for HK\$6.2 million (US\$795,000).



Only 100 bottles of Yamazaki 55 Years Old were created

The expression is the oldest Japanese whisky to date and smashed its pre-sale estimate of HK\$580,000-HK\$780,000 (US\$74,834-US\$100,640). Suntory launched the single malt whisky in June this year through a customer lottery system. The whisky was only available to customers in Japan.

Yamazaki 55 Years Old (46% ABV) was distilled in the 1960s and is limited to 100 bottles. It was matured in a Japanese mizunara oak cask in 1960, and transferred into a white oak cask in 1964.

Daniel Lam, director of wine and whisky, Asia, said: "The stunning price sets a new milestone for the market of Japanese whisky, testament to collectors' desire and determination to acquire the very best the market has to offer.

"We are pleased to see a keen demand for Scotch whisky in today's sale as well."

Buffalo Trace Still Years Away From Its Whiskey Supply Catching Up To Demand

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / August 21, 2020

Venerable Kentucky bourbon distillery Buffalo Trace is in a race to catch up its already vast whiskey supply with what it says is a continually increasing demand from consumers for its various brands. To this end it is currently in the middle of a \$1.2 billion infrastructure investment but, even with this, it could be sometime before things even out.

As noted by the distillery team, in the past year has been installed "four new cookers, four new fermenters, opened a new high speed-bottling hall, and completed construction on three more barrel warehouses. Here are more details on each project:



Part of the Buffalo Trace aging warehouses expansion (image via Buffalo Trace)

"Just before the end of 2019, Buffalo Trace started cooking corn in its four new 22-foot tall cookers. The cookers are responsible for pressure-cooking the milled grain before the mash is cooled and fermented. The new cookers span three floors in height and give Buffalo Trace 80,000 gallons of cooking capacity, which is more than

two and a half times the volume of the old cookers. The roof of the 1930s era Mash House was removed to install the massive cookers into the building. New cookers for the other grains were also installed to cook rye, wheat and malted barley.

"Four new fermenters were also added last summer in the 1880s building that formerly housed the larger bottling operation. Each of these 93,000 gallon vats are slightly bigger than the twelve existing fermenters in use since 1933. A new cooling tower, which cools down the grains after they are cooked into mash, was also added.

"A new \$50 million high-speed bottling hall was completed in late 2019, located on site near the distribution center. The bottling hall is 110,000 square feet and offers improved efficiency, flexibility and overall quality for the Distillery's award-winning brands. Happily, it came online just in time to also package hand sanitizer, which the company started producing on March 27th in response to Covid-19. The hand sanitizer is being made for some of the world's largest organizations in healthcare, government, military, retail, airline, pharmacy and financial industries. The Distillery plans to continue to supply hand sanitizer for as long as the need is there.

"Three new barrel warehouses have been completed in the past year, EE, FF, and GG, joining four other newly filled warehouses. Each warehouse holds 58,800 barrels, costing about \$7 million each to build and another \$21 million each to fill with barrels. Barrel warehouses HH, JJ and II are in various stages of construction now. Fifteen new barrel warehouses will be built on the 200 acres of land known as the 'Whiskey Farm,' purchased adjacent to Buffalo Trace a few years ago. "Every warehouse at Buffalo Trace is heated during the winter months, a rarity for bourbon warehouses, but a tradition started by E.H. Taylor Jr. in the 1800s. The reason for heating the warehouses is to keep the bourbon moving in and out of the wood to yield more flavor and color as barrels mature during the cold Kentucky winters, rather than lying dormant when the temperature drops.

"Also in the works are eight more fermenters, a new dry house (the area where spent mash is dried and shipped out), a water treatment facility, a second still house, more barrel warehouses, and in the future, another craft bottling hall. Another craft bottling hall will allow Buffalo Trace to produce more single barrel and small batch bourbons.



Part of the Buffalo Trace expansion – new fermenters (image via Buffalo Trace)

"Tours resumed July 1, and guests are now able to see the expanded Visitor Center at Buffalo Trace, which backs up to the recently completed fermenter expansion and includes additional tasting rooms and more retail space. The expanded Visitor Center triples the size of the former space, to accommodate for the ever-increasing interest in bourbon tourism, which accounted for nearly 300,000 visitors to Buffalo Trace in 2019."

Even with all of this expansion, it was said, "demand for Buffalo Trace Bourbon and other whiskeys made at the award-winning Distillery continues to outpace supply, as most of its whiskeys age for eight years or more" and it is predicted by them that "it will be a few more years before their whiskey supply catches up with demand, as consumers' taste for its whiskeys continue to increase."

Given this, allocation for "favorite brands like Eagle Rare, Weller, Blanton's and E.H. Taylor are increasing faster with each passing year and at the same time Buffalo Trace has been able to unveil several new whiskeys, such as Weller Full Proof and Weller Single Barrel, Double Eagle Very Rare, Blanton's Gold in the United States, Old Charter Oak, and several others."

"We promise we are doing everything we can to make more, as evidenced by our progress we've made in the past year with our expansion," said Buffalo Trace Master Distiller Harlen Wheatley in a prepared statement. "But great bourbon does take time to age, and we

won't comprise age, taste, or proof just to fill more bottles. We're just asking our fans to remain patient as we wait for our stocks to mature."

Unmissable Scotch distilleries to visit

24th August, 2020 by Lauren Eads

Covid-19 might have scuppered a summer's worth of tourism for much of the UK, but with restrictions continuing to ease an increasing number of Scotch whisky distilleries are now reopening to visitors. Here, we look at 10 sites worth making a stop for.



The Macallan will reopen its distillery to visitors next month

It might not be business as normal, but there are plenty of distilleries open for business and waiting to welcome you once more, with a range of Covid-safe measures in place. The most important being that booking ahead is now mandatory in nearly all distilleries, as are face coverings and in some cases temperature checks on arrival.

More than [two million people visited Scotch distilleries](#) in 2018, according to figures from the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), which compiled the figures as part of its annual survey. While figures for 2019 have not been released, the SWA found that in 2018 visitor numbers had risen to 2,004,745 – representing a 6.1% year-on-year rise. The increase in visitor numbers at distilleries across Scotland represents a 56% growth in the popularity of Scotch distilleries since 2010. Results from the SWA's 2018 survey also revealed that spending at visitor centres was up by 12.2% to £68.3 million (US\$86.5m), with the average visitor spending £34 (US\$43) on each trip – a 5.8% year-on-year increase.

The pandemic might have put a substantial dent in the trajectory of Scotch whisky tourism, but with increasing numbers of distilleries continuing to reopen safely things are beginning to get back to normal, albeit at a slow and steady pace.

Glenfiddich Distillery – Dufftown, Moray



Website: glenfiddich.com

The Glenfiddich visitor centre in Dufftown first opened in the summer of 1969, and was described as the "first-of-its-kind" for the Scotch whisky sector. William Grant & Sons also operates a visitor centre for its Balvenie single malt Scotch brand in Dufftown, making it easy to visit both at the same time.

While the Glenfiddich Distillery and visitor centre was temporarily closed in March due to the coronavirus pandemic, it reopened relatively

early, on 15 July, with a number of new safety measures in place. The distillery and visitor centre are currently open under the reduced hours of Wednesday to Sunday from 9.30am to 4pm, with the team offering tutored tastings and tours as normal, with a number of restrictions. Advance booking is required for all visits and groups will remain in separate bubbles throughout with a temperature check carried out on arrival. Hand sanitiser stations will be located throughout and face masks will be required in some areas.

Several of the distillery's bar areas are also open, including the Robbie Dhu Terrace and Whisky Lounge, though advance reservations will be required. Guests booking onto the Robbie Dhu Terrace or Whisky Lounge will also be offered a complimentary highlights tour giving a brief introduction to distilling and access to some production areas where safety restrictions and availability allows.

Nc'nean Distillery, Morvern



Website: ncnean.com

The remote distillery of Nc'nean is located on the Morvern peninsula, some 12 miles down a single track road on Scotland's western coast. Annabel Thomas founded Nc'Nea after leaving her job in London in 2013. She then spent four years raising funds to build the distillery with production starting in 2017 and its first whisky launched this year. This month, the fledgling distillery broke a world record after bottle number one of its inaugural single malt whisky [sold for £41,004 \(US\\$54,183\) during an online auction](#). The distillery is known for its dedication to sustainability, as well as its experimentation with different strains of yeast. The team uses organic Scottish barley in a distillery powered by renewable energy and recycles 99.97% of its waste. As for visitors, Nc'Nea has been taking bookings for distillery visits since 3 August. This was initially restricted to those staying on the Morvern peninsula, but from 17 August the distillery has been open to all, reservations mandatory. Tours themselves have been free throughout August (with a £5/US\$6.50 charge for tasting) but the distillery itself remains off limits.

Nevertheless, visitors are still able to hear from the team about its process, its sustainability initiatives, browse the shop and taste its whisky while taking in its wild surrounding, home to sea eagles, otters and pine martens.

Dewar's Aberfeldy Distillery – Aberfeldy, Perthshire



Website: dewars.com

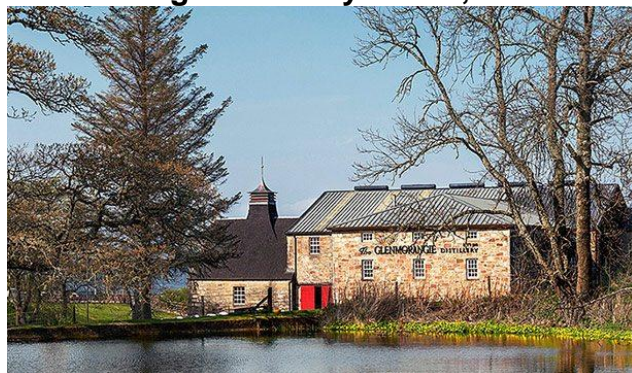
One of the world's biggest Scotch whisky brands, Dewar's is based in Perthshire, where its distillery encompasses both its flagship Dewar's and Aberfeldy whiskies, with the latter making up much of the Dewar's trademark blend. The distillery itself is on the banks of the Upper Tay, just outside Aberfeldy itself.

Whisky tours and tasting are now operating under new safety measures, with booking ahead required. The Aberfeldy distillery tour costs just £9 (US\$11.70), and includes a whisky tasting in the whisky lounge. The Cask Tasting tour (£16.50/US\$21.60) comprises the Aberfeldy tour plus the chance to taste an aged Aberfeldy single malt from the cask, and a complimentary glass. Finally the Whisky Connoisseur tour (£26.50/US\$34.70), includes the Cask Tasting Tour, plus a portfolio whisky tasting of the team's top whiskies.

This year Dewar's was [named The Spirits Business' 2020 Scotch Whisky Brand Champion](#). The Bacardi-owned brand increased its volumes by 6.4% to reach three million nine-litre cases in 2019, thanks to its consistent innovation and clever marketing surrounding the launch of three new whiskies. The first of the trio was released in March 2019 exclusively for the global travel retail market: Dewar's Double Double, comprising three whiskies aged for 21, 27 and 32 years. The series was supported by a four-part short film, created in partnership with actor Tuppence Middleton, best known for her roles in *The Imitation Game* and *Black Mirror*.

This was followed by the release of its Cask Finish Series, which started with the launch of Dewar's Caribbean Smooth Rum Cask, created by finishing eight-year-old Dewar's in ex-rum casks. The Cask Finish Series was extended further this year with the launch of eight-year-old, mezcal cask-finished Dewar's Illegal Mezcal.

Glenmorangie Distillery – Tain, Ross-shire



Website: glenmorangie.com/en-gb/experiences/distillery-tour

The Glenmorangie Distillery is set to reopen from 31 August and is now taking advance bookings for tours and accommodation at Glenmorangie House.

Enhanced safety measures and social distancing will be in place and tours will continue as normal, offering "unparalleled access" to the distillery and its warehouses. During its tours, visitors are taken through all stages of whisky production, from mashing and fermenting to distilling and maturation, and also taken to visit The Still House (nicknamed the Highland Cathedral), which is home to the tallest stills in Scotland. Their long copper necks are the same height as a fully grown giraffe.

Tours include The Original, featuring a distillery tour and tasting, and The Signet Tour, which offers an in-depth distillery tour alongside a visit to the Signet Room, where you can sample some of the team's rarest expressions. A tasting masterclass, hosted by director of distilling, whisky creation and whisky stocks, Dr Bill Lumsden, is also available to book in limited groups.

Deanston Distillery – Deanston, Perthshire



Website: deanstonmalt.com

Deanston, on the banks of the River Teith, was originally a cotton mill, built in 1785. The Adelphi mill grew to become a self contained community, with accommodation for 300 workers on site. By 1808, it had become known as Deanston village, and was the first industrial establishment to issue its own currency. Its coins were known as 'Deanstons' and were only redeemable in the village grocers and haberdashery.

When the cotton industry began to decline in the 1960s, its conversion to a distillery began, with the first bottle of Deanston Highland Single Malt released in 1974. In the years that followed, Deanston was chosen as the location for film director Ken Loach's whisky film, *The Angel's Share*. In 2012 the distillery opened its visitor centre.

Deanston reopened on 3 August amid the coronavirus pandemic, starting with its distillery shop. Some tours have already been reintroduced, albeit at weekends only. These include whisky tastings, distillery tours and a warehouse experience, where you can sample a dram straight from the cask. Temperature checks are required on arrival and face coverings will be required on parts of the tours, depending on location.

Glenlivet Distillery – Ballindalloch, Moray



Website: maltwhiskydistilleries.com/theglenlivet

The Glenlivet Distillery is situated in remote Moray, off the northern coast of Scotland. The distillery reopened on 29 July with safety measure including physical distancing, enhanced hygiene, temperature taking on arrival and mandatory face masks. Pre-booking is essential with tastings limited to a maximum of eight people and for over 18s only. The Glenlivet Collection Tasting (£15/US\$19.60) offers visitors an introduction to the process of whisky making and a tutored sampling of three whiskies: The Glenlivet 12, 15 and 18. For the more serious whisky fans there's The Glenlivet Distillery Exclusives Tasting (£30/US\$39), a one-hour experience which includes a tasting of four exclusive single cask whiskies from the Distillery Reserve range. Finally there's The Glenlivet Rare Tasting (£45/US\$59), a 90-minute tasting exploring the history of The Glenlivet and a guided tasting through its premium range of single malt whiskies, including The Glenlivet 21 Archive, The Glenlivet XXV and two exclusive single cask editions.

Highland Park Distillery – Orkney



Website: highlandparkwhisky.com/en/distillery

The Highland Park Distillery in Orkney reopened its Albert Street shop on 8 August, and the distillery has said it is aiming to reopen its tour offering from September, along with its visitor centre.

While this is yet to be confirmed, and the particulars of how the tours will be put on are yet to be revealed, the distillery has a wide range of tours that are well worth booking ahead for. Its Viking Soul (£15/US\$19.60) and Viking Heroes (£20/US\$26) tour offers an introduction to Highland Park, starting with a video about the brand's

viking roots, followed by a tour of its distillery and a tasting of two or four drams, depending on the tour selected.

There's also the Viking Harmony (£60), a tour and tasting of five single malts plus a souvenir glass, a signed and framed certificate and a book about the history of the distillery, and the chance to purchase an exclusive single cask bottling. The Viking Legends tour (£100) offers the same as the Harmony, but with the added luxury of a private tasting of the Valhalla Collection, comprising the Thor, Loki, Freya and Odin expressions.

The top flight experience though is the Orcadian Vintage (£325) which offers a behind-the-scenes tour of the distillery and the chance to sample directly from the cask, followed by a guided tasting of four Highland Park Vintages – 1968, 1970, 1971 and 1976.

Strathisla Distillery – Keith, Moray



Website: maltwhiskydistilleries.com/strathisla/tours

The Strathisla Distillery is billed as the oldest continuously operating distillery in Speyside, and was first founded as the Milltown Distillery by George Taylor and Alexander Milne in 1786. Ownership transferred to William Longmore by 1830, and by 1940 it had been bought by Jay Pomeroy, a fraudulent financier. In 1950 it was acquired by James Barclay, who retains ownership today, and it remains the key production site for the malts that make up Chivas Regal blended Scotch whisky.

Having temporarily closed in March, the distillery reopened its doors to the public on 7 August. Safety measures are in place, which include a welcome tent where the temperatures of each visitor are taken and face masks enforced.

Pre-booking is essential, with tastings and tours offered in groups of up to six people, and for over 18s only. All visitors will have the chance to taste some rare and exclusive drams only available at the distillery, and given the opportunity to create their own blended whisky. Its flagship tour, Chivas: The Blend, will be running alongside the Reserve Collection tour, priced at £30 (US\$39) and £50 (US\$65.50) respectively.

Ardbeg – Islay



Website: ardbeg.com/en-gb/visit-us

After an extended hiatus, Ardbeg on the wild Isle of Islay will be reopening five days a week from 2 September, offering pre-booked tastings from Wednesdays to Sundays. The shop and visitor centre will also reopen, however distillery tours will not yet be reintroduced and are unlikely to be running for a while, according to the distillery's latest announcement. The Old Kiln Café will also remain closed, along with the Seaview Cottage, which will not be open for booking for at least the

rest of the year. But guided tastings are still available, offering an insight into the Ardbeg portfolio, which must be booked at least 24 hours in advance.

While the distillery itself may remain free of visitors for some time yet, the team has been hard at work behind the scenes. Earlier this year, Ardbeg bottled a Pinot Noir cask-matured Ardbeg single malt to celebrate Ardbeg Day and 20 years of the Ardbeg Committee. The Pinot Noir casks used to mature Ardbeg Blaaack were sourced from New Zealand, with the limited edition Scotch launched on Ardbeg Day (30 May), an annual celebration that takes place on the final Saturday of the Fèis Ile music and whisky festival on Islay.

The release also marked 20 years since the Ardbeg Committee was established on 1 January 2000. Today, the committee comprises more than 100,000 Ardbeg followers worldwide. Members are often consulted on new whiskies and offered exclusive committee bottlings.

The Macallan Distillery – Craigellachie, Moray



Website: themacallan.com/en/distillery

The Macallan's stunning new distillery and tour has quickly become a must visit attraction within the world of whisky. But fans will have to wait a little longer to visit, with the distillery set to begin a phased reopening from 26 September 2020.

Edrington opened its new £140m (US\$188.4m) Macallan distillery and visitor centre in June 2018, enabling it to increase production of the single malt Scotch whisky to increase by a third. The new site, located on the Easter Elchies estate near Craigellachie in Moray, is part of Edrington's £500m (US\$655.3m) investment in the brand, which will be spent on the whisky and warehousing, with particular focus on The Macallan's Sherry-seasoned oak casks.

The site was designed by leading architect Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners and built by Elgin-based Robertson. The design of the roof takes inspiration from ancient Scottish hills while "minimising the visual impact" on the Speyside countryside. The undulating timber roof structure, thought to be one of the most complicated of its kind in the world, comprises 380,000 individual components.

In more normal times, visitors can expect to experience a number of different tours through the high-tech site, taste its whiskies, dine in the Elchies Brasserie and relax in The Macallan bar, which offers panoramic views of the surrounding hills of Speyside.

WHISKY LIFE

The Whisky Lover's Quentin Tarantino Companion

JULY 30, 2020 | [TED SIMMONS](#) AND [SAM STONE](#)



Some filmmakers seem to have a special penchant for whisky, using it over and over again in character development and during crucial plot points. Quentin Tarantino films are characterized by their snappy dialogue, reverence for bygone cinematic eras, and graphic violence, but just there within the frame is another frequent theme: whisky. Sometimes it's a subtle reference, and other times it plays a key role in the action, but when whisky shows up in Tarantino's movies, it's always with purpose. (Warning: Spoilers ahead.)

What you drink is part of who you are, and Tarantino uses this idea to tell us about his characters. For example, in "Inglourious Basterds," General Ed Fenech (Mike Myers) isn't a major presence, but one detail we learn is that his drink is "Whiskey, straight. No junk in it." His drink style reflects his commanding style: to the point with no dilution. Beyond whisky, characters reveal key traits through their drinking habits. Ordell (Samuel L. Jackson) drinks Screwdrivers throughout "Jackie Brown;" the simple cocktail of vodka and orange juice shows a man who uses sweetness to cover his hard edge. In "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood," Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt) drinks Bloody Marys—an apt choice for a stuntman who's often bloodied himself. There's even something to be said about the way someone makes their cocktails: Budd's (Michael Madsen) Margarita in "Kill Bill Vol. 2" is every bit as sloppy as he is.



Tarantino reveals character traits of Cliff Booth and Rick Dalton through the cocktails that they frequently drink. (Photo by Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.)

Tarantino's characters most often drink right before chaos ensues. That sloppy Margarita comes just prior to Budd's untimely demise. Major Warren (Jackson) takes a brandy break in between shooting General Smithers (Bruce Dern) and the climactic fight of "The Hateful Eight." Joe Cabot (Lawrence Tierney) sips Rémy Martin cognac with both Mr. White (Harvey Keitel) and Mr. Blonde (Madsen) as he details the bloody heist about to occur in "Reservoir Dogs." In "Pulp Fiction," Mia (Uma Thurman) invites Vincent (John Travolta) inside for one more drink before she makes a potentially deadly mistake. The time for a drink comes just before the time for violence. Tarantino, like his characters, takes a beat before the guns blaze.

It all amounts to this: What you drink is a piece of your story. And whisky has been one of many through lines within the stories that Tarantino tells. The reasons for this aren't clear; Tarantino has rarely discussed whisky or its use in his films, but he undeniably has an affinity for drinking culture. His music supervisor Mary Ramos [told Variety](#) that "Once Upon a Time...In Hollywood" is "a love letter to cocktails," and in describing a bar scene from "Death Proof," Eli Roth [details](#) the director's commitment to accurately capturing Irish Car Bomb shots and the drunken antics that ensued. There is also the fact that Tarantino hails from Tennessee, rich with a whiskey history of its own, and frequently shows those roots: In "Inglourious Basterds," Lt. Aldo Raine (Pitt) references bootlegging and making "moonshine liquor" in his native Tennessee.

In an archival interview from the early 1980s published to The New Beverly Cinema [website](#) in early 2020, a personal anecdote from Tarantino reveals a telling bit of insight into his relationship with whisky: "At the beginning of '95, before the Academy Awards, I was taken duck hunting by John Milius, Steven Spielberg, and Robert Zemeckis. John and I sat in a duck blind all day, sipping whiskey out of a flask, talking about movies and shooting the tail feathers off of ducks." Duck hunting is a far cry from the outrageous violence of most Tarantino films, but it seems that even in his real life, the whisky and the action go together.

WHISKY IN QUENTIN TARANTINO FILMS

7. The Hateful Eight (2015)

Tarantino's lengthy Western doesn't have direct whisky references, but there's one tiny innuendo. Early on, when John Ruth (Kurt Russell) and

company arrive at Minnie's Haberdashery, they warm themselves with some coffee. "Do you want a lil' snakebite in your coffee?" Ruth asks his prisoner. She nods, and he pours liquid from an unlabeled bottle into her cup. This could very well be whisky; after all, it is 1877 Wyoming. The bottle's lack of a label, though, implies not whisky, but something less legal: moonshine. Considering an actual snake bite appears in "Kill Bill: Vol. 2," it seems an intentional Easter egg from Tarantino. —Sam Stone

6. Django Unchained (2012)

When Django (Jamie Foxx) and Dr. Schultz (Christoph Waltz) first meet Calvin Candie (DiCaprio), Candie's lawyer, Mr. Moguy (Dennis Christopher), escorts Django to the bar. "Get freeman Django here whatever he wants and I'll have sweet tea and bourbon," the lawyer says. Joining them later on, Candie orders a Polynesian Pearl Diver, an aptly cumbersome drink for the fanciful man. The first advertisement for bourbon whiskey [appeared in 1821](#), so Moguy's order fits in historically, but Candie's is perplexing: The rum-based tiki drink didn't exist until the 1930s. Tarantino often plays fast and loose with historic events, so we'll mark this one up to artistic license. —Ted Simmons



It should come as no surprise that in "Django Unchained," drink orders appear shortly before a violent sequence—both Tarantino hallmarks. (Photo by AF archive / Alamy Stock Photo)

5. Jackie Brown (1997)

There's a bottle of Bushmills on the filing cabinet in Max Cherry's (Robert Forster) office, but the real whisky moment comes earlier in the film. Louis (Robert De Niro) [drinks an unidentified whisky](#) at Ordell's apartment, a hearty pour over ice, resting his glass on the coffee table. The whisky glass is shot alongside Melanie's (Bridget Fonda) feet, among the many reference points for [the theory](#) that Tarantino has a thing for feet. The juxtaposition here causes Louis to move his glass—and leads us to consider what Tarantino is saying about the things he finds intoxicating. —Ted Simmons

4. Pulp Fiction (1994)

The movie that cemented Tarantino's status as the next big director in filmmaking, "Pulp Fiction" has two explicit whisky references, both during Mia and Vincent's platonic dinner date. The first comes when Vincent arrives at the Wallace compound. Mia is still getting ready and tells Vincent to make himself a drink. He pours a few fingers of McCleary blended scotch, a fictional brand. (You'd think that Marsellus [Ving Rhames], kingpin that he is, would have nicer stuff on his bar.) Later, at Jack Rabbit Slims, Mia orders a \$5 dollar milkshake. "You don't put bourbon in it or nothing?" Vincent incredulously asks the waiter, Steve Buscemi dressed as Buddy Holly. When they return later and Mia makes her regretful mistake, the glass of whisky from before is still on the table, always in frame. —Ted Simmons

3. Death Proof (2007)

Perhaps the most overlooked of Tarantino's movies, "Death Proof" features a good deal of whisky and even more in the way of cocktails and other drinks. An [early bar scene](#) in Texas features pours or mentions of Chartreuse, Long Island Iced Teas, a Bombay Sapphire Gin and Tonic, and a virgin Piña Colada, ordered by Stuntman Mike (Kurt Russell), who says that he's a teetotaler.

At the same bar, Jungle Julia (Sydney Tamiia Poitier) orders a round. "Warren! Six shots of Wild Turkey." There's an overhead view of the drinks being poured, then a close-up of the bottle. "Death Proof" is meant to mimic the exploitation films of the 1970s, low-quality B-movies that cashed in on current trends, and this gratuitous product placement—what could have been used to help finance the film—adds to the overt cheesiness of it all.

When the movie jumps 14 months, relocating to Tennessee, there's another whiskey cameo. Wounded, Stuntman Mike pulls off onto a dirt road and reaches for a bottle of Four Roses in his glove compartment. He takes a swig, then pours some on his arm. He takes another swig

but spits it out as the second group of women come back and rear end him. Whatever happened to being a teetotaler? The whiskey appears just before Stuntman Mike receives an overdue beating, but the brand could be a subtle reference to the women he terrorizes in the film, both groups of four, or a callback to one of his previous victims, played by Rose McGowan. —Ted Simmons

2. Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood (2019)

Tarantino's latest movie is as stuffed with whisky and cocktails as it is big names. Early in the film, fading TV star Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his best friend and stunt double, Cliff Booth, take a meeting with casting agent Marvin Schwarz (Al Pacino). We get to know all three through their drink preferences. Booth sips a Bloody Mary, and Dalton orders a Whiskey Sour. Schwarz, meanwhile, is shown in a flashback serving his wife a Mint Julep, silver cup and all, while pouring himself a cognac.

Later, Dalton is back at the Whiskey Sours, making himself a big batch at home, reciting his lines while sipping from a large beer stein. When, the next day, he flubs his lines on set, he blames himself for overindulging. The excess is emblematic of the loose grip he has on his career. "Eight goddamn f—ing whiskey sours...I couldn't stop at f—ing 3 or 4? I had to have 8?! Why?" he yells at himself in his trailer after the sordid take. The scene, which [DiCaprio improvised](#), is a moment we can all relate to: feelings of regret from the previous night.

Perhaps the most significant cocktail in the film though is the pitcher of Margaritas Dalton fixes to celebrate the end of his time working with Booth. Margaritas appear in other Tarantino films, including "Death Proof" and "Kill Bill Vol. 2," when Budd carelessly blends some in his trailer. Here, Dalton sips straight from the blender as he tells a car full of hippies to get off his street. Those people are the Manson Family and, as was the case with Budd, the Margaritas appear before a significant action sequence begins. —Sam Stone



Michael Fassbender drinks scotch in each of his "Inglourious Basterds" scenes. (Photo by AF archive / Alamy Stock Photo)

1. Inglourious Basterds (2009)

The ["Tavern Scene"](#) is not only one of Tarantino's most iconic movie moments, but one of the most memorable in contemporary cinema. It's set up earlier in the film, when Lt. Archie Hicox (Michael Fassbender) is summoned by General Ed Fenech, who invites him to have a drink. "If you offered me a scotch and plain water, I could drink a scotch and plain water," Hicox says. It's a clever bit of foreshadowing as in his next on-screen appearance, he will likewise have a scotch—but it will be his last.

In the tavern having a standoff with Major Hellstrom (August Diehl), Hicox, posing as a German soldier, gives himself away by the way he orders three whiskies, using the wrong combination of fingers. The bartender brings the whisky over, a 33 year old bottle from the Scottish Highlands, along with fresh glasses so as to not contaminate the pricey dram. Hellstrom tells Hicox that he's exposed himself as a spy. "You're no more German than that scotch," he says. This leads to Fassbender reciting one of the most famous whisky quotes in film: "There's a special rung in hell reserved for people who waste good scotch," he says. "Seeing as I'll be rapping on the door momentarily [he finishes his glass] I must say, damn good stuff, sir." Moments later, bullets fly. Beyond the quotables, of which there are many, it's an interesting note that both scenes involving the British Hicox also include whisky. There is a connection to be made with the impending shootout, but it also casts the British officers in an intentionally sophisticated light, particularly Fenech's note about "no junk in it." These are men who appreciate the finer things in life; in Hicox's case, right down to his final breath. And as for the aged whisky, it's another artistic flourish from

Tarantino. Such a rare bottle likely wouldn't have been around during World War II, though the oddly specific age statement makes us wonder what other symbolism the whisky is meant to convey. —Ted Simmons

The 15 Best Whiskeys to Drink in 2020

Whether you like it neat or on the rocks.

Written by
[Jonah Flicker](#)

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In the big world of whiskeys, there's a bottle out there for every taste, price point, and preference. Nowadays, you can find whiskey made in every corner of America, indeed every corner of the world, each with its own specific character and identity. Whether you're looking for the perfect whiskey to pair with a cocktail, something really smoky and assertive, or a smooth sipper, we've got you covered. Here are some of the best bottles of whiskeys available.

Best Overall: Four Roses Single Barrel

Four Roses is a Kentucky bourbon that ticks all the right boxes—it's affordable, has a variety of different expressions to choose from, and it tastes great on its own or mixed in a cocktail. Mike Vacheresse, the owner of [Travel Bar](#) in Brooklyn, N.Y. (which features over 450 different whiskeys), is a fan of the Single Barrel expression. "Four Roses Single Barrel is the benchmark for me for all other bourbons in terms of proof, flavor, and cost," he says. "Its high rye mash bill gives [it] a pleasant spicy note, and it has a big mouthfeel and an incredibly smooth finish." Master Distiller Brent Elliott uses two mash bills and five yeast strains to create a total of 10 different recipes to make this flagship bourbon, while each Single Barrel release uses just one recipe to highlight a unique feature of the whiskey.

Best Irish: Redbreast 12 Year

While there are cheaper Irish whiskey blends available, Redbreast is worth the splurge. There's no blend here—instead, it's a single pot still Irish whiskey, meaning it's made from a mash bill of malted and unmalted barley and produced at one distillery in copper pot stills. The whiskey is aged for 12 years in a combination of ex-sherry and bourbon casks, imbuing it with rich red berry, spice, and sweet vanilla flavors. "Redbreast is the pot still showcase," says Vacheresse. He considers it an excellent whiskey teaching tool and the perfect introduction into the Irish pot still category.

Read Next: [The Best Irish Whiskeys](#)

Best Japanese: Hakushu 12 Year

Japanese whiskey, particularly from Suntory, can be very costly and hard to get, but this bottle from the Hakushu distillery in the Japanese Alps is phenomenal. It features crisp notes of unripe melon and apple, along with just a hint of smoke. This 12-year-old whiskey makes a delicious (if expensive) highball, although you might want to save this to sip. Lynnette Marrero, bar director for [Llama Inn](#) and [Llama San NYC](#), calls it "delicious, grassy, a little smokier than other Japanese whiskeys."

Best Rye: Pikesville Straight Rye

Two styles of rye whiskey dominate the whiskey market these days: rye made from a 95 to 100 percent rye mash bill, or the Kentucky-style mash bill that usually contains just above 50 percent rye, the minimum legally required to be classified as rye whiskey. Pikesville, which falls into the latter category, was originally made in Maryland and is now distilled in Kentucky by Heaven Hill. "Pikesville is my favorite rye because it provides a great symphony of flavors from the rye spice, baking spices, the high proof (110), and maturation from the six years in the barrel," says Paul Gonzalez, head bartender for the [Allegory Bar](#) at D.C.'s Eaton Hotel. "The strong taste of cherries, vanilla, and baking spices give it a really fun take on a cherry Coke." Try this in a classic cocktail like a [Manhattan](#).

Read Next: [The Best Rye Whiskeys](#)

Best Scotch: The Balvenie DoubleWood

Among a slew of single malt scotch to choose from, with various regions showcasing different styles and flavors, The Balvenie stands out as one of the best. The distillery was an early adopter of cask finishes with its DoubleWood 12, which is matured in ex-bourbon barrels and finished in sherry casks. "The beauty of this bottle really shines in the notes that explode from the second aging in Oloroso sherry barrels," says Pamela Wiznitzer, a consulting bartender. "That

rich, round finish gives this scotch a bit more chewiness and lasting linger that I love with every sip."

Best Peated Scotch: Laphroaig 10 Year

Peated scotch is infused with smoky flavors by drying the malted barley used in the mash bill, using peat as a fuel source. And within the category of peaty scotches, there are also really divisively peaty scotches. Laphroaig, which is distilled on Islay (where Scotland's best known smoky scotch comes from), has been best described as acrid, medicinal, and saline. The core bottling is this dependable 10-year-old, but the range goes far beyond that with some ultra-aged expressions and the annual Cairdeas release, which is finished in different cask types each year.

Best Sherry Cask Scotch: The GlenDronach Allardice

For at least part of the aging process, many Scottish distilleries use sherry casks in addition to ex-bourbon barrels to add bold, dried fruit and spice flavors to the whiskey. But some distilleries exclusively age their whiskey in these seasoned barrels, like The GlenDronach. "The 18-year-old Allardice may not be the most famous single malt in the world, but it is perhaps one of the most perfect," says Daniel Burns, lead bartender at [Elixir Saloon](#) in San Francisco. "Its deep sherry notes and flavors of toasted nuts and jammy fruit last seemingly forever on the palate." The 18-year-old whiskey is matured entirely in Spanish Oloroso sherry butts, no color is added, and it delivers one of the best full-flavored sipping experiences.

Best Bourbon: Wild Turkey 101

The basics of bourbon are simple: it must be made from a mash bill of at least 51 percent corn, aged in new charred oak containers, and produced in the U.S. If you're going to drink bourbon, why not drink something priced for the bottom shelf that tastes like the ones on top? Wild Turkey 101 is reasonably priced and provides flavor and proof well above your average 80-proof bottle. "The high proof provides the burn that makes you respect it," says Gonzalez. "The iconic flavor of baking spice and toasted pecan, with a pleasant funkiness, sets it apart from a lot of other bourbons in its class."

Best Barrel-Proof: Stag Jr. Bourbon

Barrel-proof whiskeys get as close to drinking straight from the barrel as most people can get, with an ABV often exceeding 60 percent. The higher proof offers an unadulterated whiskey-drinking experience with an amplified range of flavors. One notable bottle is Stag Jr., part of Buffalo Trace's highly sought after annual Antique Collection. This collection includes the excellent George T. Stag bourbon, but this younger version is easier to obtain and usually just as good. "Stag Jr. is so unfairly under the radar," says Vacheresse. "Whiskey drinkers are blown away when they are introduced to a few different batches side by side." This bourbon is bottled at a barrel proof of 128.6, yet it drinks fairly easy with notes of caramel and candied cherry throughout.

Best Canadian: Lot No. 40 Whisky

From one of the lesser-known Canadian whiskey brands, Lot No. 40's highly-regarded bottle is a 100 percent rye whiskey. This single copper pot still whiskey is distilled in small batches at Hiram Walker in Windsor, Ontario. Look for a little bit of spice here, but overall, this is a smooth sipper with notes of cocoa and caramel that pop in the palate.

Read Next: [The Best Whiskey Decanters](#)

Best for Sipping: Aberlour A'Bunadh

This scotch has something of a cult following, and with good reason: it's a high-proof, sherry cask single malt that is consistently delicious. "This is a rare example of a single expression being recognized and sought after by consumers, while the rest of the brand lineup is mostly [underrecognized]," says Vacheresse. Add a bit of water or drink it neat—however you prefer, Aberlour A'Bunadh does not disappoint. Take your time with this as you sip to unveil layer after layer of flavor.

Best Under \$50: Evan Williams Bottled-in-Bond

Good whiskey doesn't have to cost a fortune, especially when it comes to bourbon. One of the best cheaper bottles is from Heaven Hill's Evan Williams. The regular black label expression is just fine, but take things up a notch with the Bottled-in-Bond version. As mandated by law, it is 100 proof and aged for at least four years, delivering a surprising amount of flavor at what can only be considered a steal. "This is one of the best value bourbons on the market," says Gonzalez. "[It] has huge notes of roasted peanuts with a slight hint of vanilla, and a bold, sweet, and nutty flavor that compliments the high proof."

Best for Old Fashioneds: Woodford Reserve Double Oaked

Woodford Reserve launched its Double Oaked expression in 2012, and after initial aging, this bourbon is further matured in barrels that are lightly toasted and then heavily charred. This gives the whiskey a full, almost smoky flavor that brings a cocktail to another level. "It's a full-bodied whiskey with loads of vanilla, caramel, fruit, and spice notes, all of which are enhanced by their inclusion in the classic Old Fashioned," says Burns. "Double Oaked also has a nice rich, creamy mouthfeel that works super well with a muddled sugar cube, well soaked with bitters."

Read Next: [The Best Whiskey Glasses, According to Experts](#)

Most Innovative: Bruichladdich Islay Barley

Scotland's Bruichladdich distillery is always experimenting with new innovations. "Their philosophy on whiskey is simple but effective: they care about what they do, and it comes through in their product," says Brendan Bartley, beverage director of [Bathtub Gin](#) and [The 18th Room](#). Wiznitzer agrees, noting, "This distillery (in my opinion) turns out some of the most innovative consumer bottlings in all of Islay." The Islay Barley 2011 release is a true experiment in terroir. It's an unpeated whiskey distilled from a mash bill of barley grown on six Islay farms in 2010, highlighting the flavors of stone fruit, green apple, and citrus zest that the climate and soil bring to the grain.

Best Tennessee Whiskey: George Dickel Bottled in Bond

Cascade Hollow Distillery makes what is probably the second best-known whiskey in Tennessee, George Dickel Tennessee Whisky. In 2019, Dickel released its first bottled-in-bond expression to great acclaim for its flavor and affordable price tag, especially given that it's a 100 proof, 13-year-old whiskey. Like most Tennessee whiskeys, this Dickel expression is filtered through maple charcoal before barreling, a process that is said to "mellow" the whiskey. With cherry, chocolate and oak notes, this is a great sipper and would taste fantastic in a cocktail as well.

Why Trust Liquor.com?

[Jonah Flicker](#) is an experienced writer who has been covering spirits and traveling the world visiting distilleries for the past six years. His work has appeared in many different national outlets covering trends, new releases, and the stories and innovators behind the spirits. His first love remains whiskey, but he is partial to tequila, rum, gin, cognac, and all things distilled.

Lagavulin's Distillery Manager Is Taking Over at Ardbeg

AUGUST 25, 2020 | [SUSANNAH SKIVER BARTON](#)



Mickey Heads (left, with Laphroaig master distiller John Campbell) is retiring from Ardbeg after 13 years as distillery manager. (Photo by Martin Hunter)

Islay is a small island, just 239 square miles, and—with nine working distilleries and counting—whisky is the heart of the community. Hundreds of *lleachs* (Scots Gaelic for someone from Islay) are employed in the whisky business, and clichés about it being like family are actually true, as multiple generations may work alongside each other at the same place—or at another distillery just down the road. So when someone retires, even from one of the island's most important jobs, there's likely a well-qualified local ready to take their place.



Whisky industry veteran Colin Gordon will take the reins at Ardbeg in October 2020.

And that's what is happening at [Ardbeg](#), whose longtime distillery manager, Mickey Heads, is set to step down on Oct. 1. He'll be succeeded by Colin Gordon, a veteran of the scotch whisky industry who has spent the last eight years working for [Diageo](#)—first as site operations manager for the Port Ellen Maltings, which supplies malt to the majority of Islay's distilleries, and most recently as distillery manager at [Lagavulin](#) since 2018. With a wealth of knowledge about whisky's core ingredient, grain, and experience across Islay's industry, Gordon is well-prepared to assume the mantle at Ardbeg, even as the distillery's expansion—which adds two new stills to double capacity—comes fully on line in the second quarter of next year.

NOT A GOODBYE

Heads has worked in the whisky business his entire career, including a stint at Ardbeg decades before he took over the distillery manager position in 2007. Under his keen eye, production has ramped up in an effort to keep pace with the demand for the distillery's whiskies, which are prized for their intense peatiness and oily, robust character. And, working with head of distilling and whisky creation Bill Lumsden and head of maturing whisky stocks Brendan McCarron, Heads has been instrumental in the development of numerous well-received releases, including [Ardbeg Supernova](#), [Ardbeg An Oa](#), and the recently launched [Ardbeg Wee Beastie](#).

Though he'll no longer be running the distillery day-to-day, Heads will stay involved as chair of the [Ardbeg Committee](#), the group of dedicated super-fans who number over 120,000 worldwide, for the next three years. He's a familiar face around the distillery and constant presence at Ardbeg Day during [Fèis Ile](#), and will remain on Islay in his retirement. No doubt he'll be back at Ardbeg from time to time in his capacity as chair, so this isn't goodbye just yet!

Beam's Latest Little Book Expression Is A Blend Of 3 American Whiskeys

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / August 26, 2020

Freddie Noe, eighth generation Beam distiller and son of current Beam master distiller Fred Noe, has been on a whiskey journey of his own in recent years [though the Little Book whiskey series](#). This annual release has given him a chance to flex his creative whiskey muscles, showcasing his passion for blending and his curiosity for the different types of tastes that can be achieved through the blending process. [Little Book](#) is now onto its fourth year, and for this time around Freddie Noe has brought together in the new "Lessons Honored" American whiskey an interesting component mix of a 4-year-old Kentucky Straight Brown Rice Bourbon, an 8-year-old Kentucky Straight "high rye" Rye Whiskey and a 7-year-old Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey. More specifically to each, according to the brand:

- The Kentucky Straight Brown Rice Bourbon, which delivers complex notes of oak and fruit to the blend, reminds Freddie of the first distilling project he handled on his own, after years and experiences under Fred's guidance.

- The “high rye” Rye Whiskey is an ode to Booker’s Rye, an award-winning product created in 2017 and one of the first commemorative releases that Fred and Freddie tasted and selected together. This component lends a sweetness paired with rye spice that lingers across the entire palate.
- The extra aged Kentucky Straight Bourbon rounds out the blend with rich flavors reminiscent of Beam’s Small Batch Bourbon Collection and preferred by Fred. Though he didn’t know it at the time, Fred actually helped select this final component when Freddie sought his opinion on several different samples.



Little Book Chapter 4 “Lessons Honored” (image via Beam-Suntory)

“This year’s release is an ode to my dad and the lessons he has passed down to me about bourbon and life, all of which I hope to pass down to my own children,” said Freddie Noe [in a prepared statement](#). “A lot of them go back to honesty and integrity. He taught me to be true to myself, which is something that’s very important in our family, and to know when to slow down and be patient. Dad’s values carry over into our whiskey brands, and I’m proud to honor him with this special blend. “Going into the selection and blending process for this year’s release, I had a very clear idea of how I wanted to honor my dad and the story I wanted to tell with this whiskey. I knew right away these were the whiskeys I wanted to work with, so I spent most of my time perfecting the blend to balance the flavors to create a whiskey that would make Dad proud. “I think I did just that – all the way down to the blue neck tag which represents our favorite sports team, the Kentucky Wildcats.” As it stands now plans call for Little Book Chapter 4 “Lessons Honored,” bottled at 122.8 proof, to go on sale this month in limited quantities nationwide for around \$125 per 750 ml bottle. Limited official tasting notes suggest “flavors of full-bodied brown sugar, rich charred wood and dried cherries. The finish is soft and decadent, leaving a warm caramel taste on your tongue, followed by a spicy finish.”

Gordon & MacPhail bottles 47-year-old Coleburn whisky

2nd September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Independent bottler Gordon & MacPhail will release four single malts to mark its 125th anniversary this year, including a 47-year-old whisky from Coleburn Distillery.



The 47-year-old whisky from Coleburn Distillery is priced at £1,500

The Gordon & MacPhail 1972 from Coleburn Distillery in Speyside will be the first of the commemorative whiskies to be released. Coleburn Distillery, situated just four miles from the company’s Elgin home, was founded in 1897 and produced whisky until it closed in 1985.

There are 363 bottles of the “sweet, intense and complex” 47-year-old whisky available, priced at RSP £1,500 (US\$2,000). The liquid was fully matured in cask 3511, a refill Sherry puncheon, and bottled at cask strength (62.4% ABV). The resulting liquid is said to have a sweet aroma with butterscotch notes.

The palate offers apricots flavours, cooked apples and mint giving way to a medium finish with autumnal fruit and a slight herbal finish.

Stephen Rankin, a fourth-generation member of the Urquhart family behind Gordon & MacPhail and the company’s director of prestige, said: “The whiskies we have chosen to commemorate our 125th anniversary are all truly unique and seldom seen in the market.

“They are bottled from the last remaining casks we have from these distilleries, and marks an emotional moment for my family as they leave the Gordon & MacPhail warehouse after being left to mature by my grandfather many decades ago.

“These single malts represent not only the skills and expertise in whisky maturation built and passed down through generations, but also the passion we have in advocating the discovery of rare whiskies from some of Scotland’s lesser known, but much sought after, distilleries.” All four whiskies will come from casks from a closed distillery or made on Lomond stills that are no longer in production. The casks are held in Gordon & MacPhail’s Elgin warehouse.

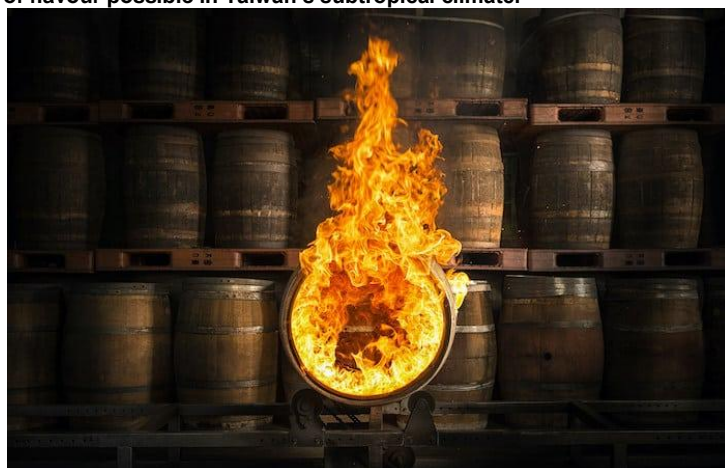
The remaining single malts will be released during 2020.

New Kavalan Whisky Will Have STR, Peated Qualities

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / September 2, 2020

The Kavalan whisky brand in Taiwan has amongst its various bottlings the iconic Kavalan Solist Vinho Barrique which, five years ago, claimed the World Whiskies Award’s “World’s Best Single Malt.” It is also the first whisky from here [to undergo the Shave, Toast, Rechar \(STR\) barrel technique](#). Now a new expression is in the works that will take advantage of this styling as well.

The as yet unnamed whisky, according to the distillery, has been aged in specially crafted STR casks. Produced from a peated barley base (a first for Kavalan), the STR process it will be going through was developed by the late Dr Jim Swan and the brand in Taiwan in 2006. It is said that “in their search for extraordinary flavour, they developed an exacting recipe for toasting and recharring wine barrels to remove the acidity associated with wine cask maturation and to enhance the depth of flavour possible in Taiwan’s subtropical climate.”



Can there be another STR whisky as iconic as the Vinho Barrique? (image via Kavalan)

Breaking this down a little more, based upon information from Kavalan, “first gentle shaving of the casks removes any undesirable wine flavours and acid compounds. Then, toasting releases organic compounds from the wood, bringing out all its fruity vanilla notes. Finally, recharring with an intense fire enables the eventual release of pleasant flavours such as rich caramel and chocolate overlaid on a delicate background of complex fruitiness.”

“I’ve been asked many times since the WWA win when we would release another Made-in-Taiwan STR whisky,” said Kavalan CEO Mr Lee [in a prepared statement](#). “Now after years of experimenting, we sincerely hope the second STR whisky will pass on the excellent performance of Vinho, becoming the spotlight for whisky fans around the world.”

As it stands right now plans call for this second STR whisky to be launched in October in Taiwan as part of an exclusive 4-bottle set for Christmas.

Lagavulin distillery welcomes new manager

4th September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Diageo has appointed Pierrick Guillaume as the new manager of Lagavulin distillery on Islay.



Pierrick Guillaume is the new distillery manager at Lagavulin
Guillaume is currently the distillery manager for fellow Islay distillery Caol Ila, a position he has held since 2017.

He has worked at Diageo for eight years and has also held roles at the Mortlach and Talisker distilleries.

Guillaume said: "It is a great honour to be asked to take on the role of Lagavulin distillery manager. Lagavulin is a whisky that is revered around the world and it's a great privilege to be joining the outstanding team that makes this exceptional Scotch whisky and I can't wait to get started."

Samuel Hale will succeed Guillaume as distillery manager of Caol Ila. Hale is the current manager of Diageo's Port Ellen maltings on Islay. Last week, [Diageo revealed its 2020 Special Releases](#) collection of Scotch whiskies, including bottlings from Lagavulin, Talisker, Mortlach and Pittyvaich.

Jack Daniel's master distiller Jeff Arnett departs

4th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Jeff Arnett, master distiller of Tennessee whiskey brand Jack Daniel's, has stepped down after 12 years in the role.



Jeff Arnett was named master distiller of Jack Daniel's in 2008

Arnett was appointed to the position of master distiller for Brown-Forman's Jack Daniel Distillery in April 2008. He has spent nearly 20 years working at the distillery.

"When Jeff became the master distiller, we said that he would carry on the long tradition of folks who have made the world's best whiskey for more than 150 years, and that's exactly what he's done," said Larry Combs, Jack Daniel Distillery's senior vice-president and general manager.

"He has worked tirelessly on behalf of the distillery and brought with him the creativity and the expertise that makes Jack Daniel's the most valuable whiskey brand in the world. We thank him for his leadership not only at Jack Daniel's but in the whiskey industry and wish him all the best."

Brown-Forman said Arnett has been instrumental to the growth of Jack Daniel's, the world's biggest-selling American whiskey brand.

According to [Brand Champions data](#), Jack Daniel's sold 13.4 million nine-litre cases in 2019.

In the master distiller role, Arnett was responsible for the whiskey-making operations in Lynchburg, Tennessee.

He had created a number of innovations for the brand including super-premium whiskeys such as Sinatra Select, Single Barrel Barrel Proof, Single Barrel Heritage Barrel and experimental range [Tennessee Tasters' Selection](#). He was also behind flavoured line extensions such as Honey, Fire and [Apple](#), and created [Jack Daniel's Tennessee Rye](#), the first new grain bill from the site since Prohibition.

Before taking on the master distiller position, he oversaw quality control and the Jack Daniel's Single Barrel programme. During his time at the distillery, Arnett worked across warehousing, maturation, distillation, charcoal mellowing management, barrel quality and bottling. He was also on the master tasters' panel.

"The last 20 years at the Jack Daniel Distillery have been an incredible chapter in my life and I look forward to spending some time to think about what the next chapter will hold," said Arnett. "I wish everyone in Lynchburg the best and I am appreciative of the support and confidence they have shown in me to represent Jack Daniel's to the world during my time there."

"It has been an honour and privilege to be one of only a handful of people to have served as the master distiller of this wonderful brand known around the world as simply 'Jack'."

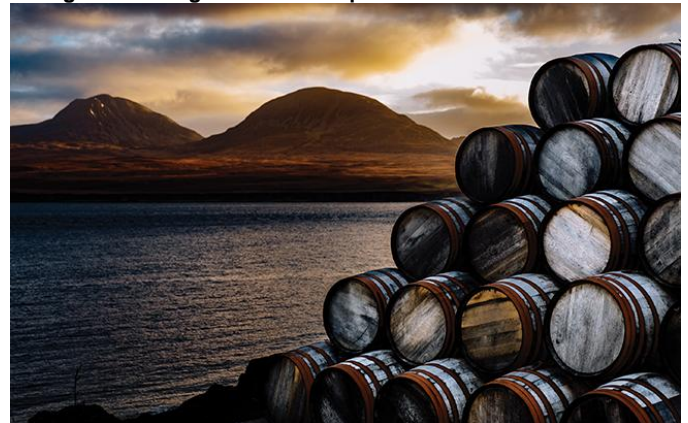
Arnett has also served on the board of the Tennessee Distillers Guild since 2016, most recently as vice president.

Brown-Forman did not confirm what Arnett will be doing following his departure. The firm said an announcement on his replacement will be made in the coming weeks.

Scotch whisky gains extra protection in Spain

4th September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Trade body the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has signed an agreement with the Spanish Civil Guard to further protect the category from illegal marketing and sales in Spain.



Scotch will now benefit from more protection in Spain

SWA chief executive Karen Betts and general director of the Civil Guard María Gámez Gámez have signed the General Protocol for Action.

The Spanish Civil Guard is a law enforcement body that covers custom duties and tax matters in Spain.

This is the first arrangement of its kind with a national enforcement authority outside of the UK. The conditions of the agreement include any suspect samples in Spain will be sent to Scotland for testing by the Scotch Whisky Research Institute.

It also involves a requirement for training members of the Civil Guard by the SWA's legal team.

The SWA said Spain was Scotch whisky's fifth largest global market by volume, with exports worth more than £180 million (US\$239m) in 2019. Spain is the top three Scotch whisky export market by both volume and value in Europe.

Alan Park, legal affairs director at the SWA, said: "The Civil Guard is a highly effective organisation and this is a very positive step towards the

continued protection of Scotch whisky in one of our most important export markets.

"The Spanish Civil Guard's cooperation with the SWA has been extremely valuable in helping us to tackle the sale of products over the years that seek to take unfair advantage of Scotch whisky's reputation. We are delighted to formalise our working relationship with an enforcement authority outside the UK, in the first formal national agreement of its kind."

Brown-Forman to invest in Jack Daniel's after sales struggle in Q1

4th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

US drinks firm Brown-Forman will invest in a new campaign for Jack Daniel's after the flagship variant recorded a double-digit decline in Q1 due to the closure of the on-trade.



Net sales of the flagship Jack Daniel's variant dropped 10% in Q1. Earlier this week, Woodford Reserve owner Brown-Forman [reported its first quarter sales for fiscal 2021](#), which fell 2% to US\$753 million.

While the Jack Daniel's family of brands recorded a 3% net sales growth, the core variant struggled to maintain sales, falling by 10% due to an 'unfavourable channel mix shift' in the US and developed international markets, the group said.

Speaking during a conference call for the results on 2 September, Brown-Forman CEO Lawson Whiting said the group was not happy with the growth rates for the Jack Daniel's range over the last few years.

"The shift from on-premise to off-premise consumption in the developed markets drove the brand's underlying net sales down further," Whiting told analysts during the call. "However, overall, the brand remains quite healthy and is gaining share in the majority of its top 10 markets."

Whiting pointed to the fact that the core Jack Daniel's is "one of the largest on-premise brands in the world" and "in every bar" across the globe. The closure of the on-trade in markets across the world due to the pandemic saw the brand's sales decline.

He explained: "That's why that number is down somewhere around 7% down for the quarter on a global basis, a lot of that is on-premise. In the US itself, 30%-ish of its volume is in the on-premise and that went down drastically."

Whiting said the firm will "rely further" on new campaigns to improve the brand's growth. He said the group had hired a new advertising agency in January, however plans were on hold due to Covid-19.

"Bringing out an entire new campaign with a whole bunch of money behind it is in our plans for the next six months," he said.

Noting the challenges of the current climate, he said: "You've got to find ways to get to consumers that are outside of the bars. But I think we will be pretty effective in communicating that and getting that to them."

Furthermore, Whiting said "a lot of new work from the Jack Daniel's family" will come out soon.

RTD potential

One bright star of Brown-Forman's first quarter results was the Jack Daniel's ready-to-drink (RTD) portfolio, which recorded a 37% net sales increase.

RTDs are "having a moment right now, but it's a business we've believed in and invested in for a long time", said Whiting, noting that this part of the business has become "meaningful" for the company. He said: "Globally, Jack Daniel's RTDs are now over 10 million cases with Australia, the US, Germany, and Mexico all over one million cases. Jack RTDs were created to expand occasions where Jack could be enjoyed and focus was really on the key cocktail serves such as Jack &

Cola, Lynchburg Lemonade, and Jack & Ginger Ale. These RTDs serve as an important consumer recruitment vehicle due to the category's light and really accessible flavour profile.

"Through innovation, we feel we can meet consumer taste and pack preferences as they really do vary by market."

The malt-based Jack Daniel's Country Cocktails range, which launched nearly 30 years ago, remains the majority of the group's RTD business in the US, and "is on fire" said Whiting. The group's spirits-based RTDs business is "still pretty small" in the US at less than 50,000 cases," he noted.

The firm's Tequila-based New Mix RTDs in Mexico are now more than seven million cases, Whiting said. "This business is also doing well in the environment we're in. I believe that we're well positioned with the right offerings at the right time to meet the increase in popularity of these ready-to-drink cocktails."

Spirits growth

Whiting also said the premiumisation trend has accelerated during the pandemic. "We've seen growth rates of premium and super-premium brands accelerate greatly in the US since March."

"Consumer spending has remained strong in many developed markets and the spirits industry is benefiting," he added. "We do believe consumers are looking for everyday luxuries, and this is great for super-premium spirits."

Citing Nielsen trends in the US, Whiting said: "Spirits have remained very strong since the beginning of the pandemic and have really maintained those high rates of growth through the summer."

"The long-term trend of spirits taking share from beer and wine continues. I think as long as people are largely unable to spend on travel and other forms of entertainment, we think that the spirits' strong growth will continue predominantly in the off-premise."

You Can Sip Whisky At This Montreal Bar Every Tuesday & Feel Like You're In Scotland

It's the classiest way to spend your evening.

[Gabi Sandler](#)

17 hours ago



[burgundylion | Instagram Burgundy Lion](#)

Calling all whisky-lovers! And all non-whisky lovers, too. [Burgundy Lion](#) in Montreal's Little Burgundy neighbourhood is now doing whisky tastings every Tuesday night to help [keep us warm](#) as the cool weather starts to creep in. Burgundy Lion has been doing public and private tastings for a while now and has decided to officially make Tuesdays whisky night at the pub.

Home to 750 Quebec whiskys — the largest collection in the province — the team at Burgundy Lion is sure they can [find the right](#) one for you.

Editor's Choice: [A Group Is Trying To Get Every Single Montrealer To Leave Food Outside On 1 Day This Month](#)

In fact, they look at it as somewhat of a challenge.

Toby Lyle, co-owner of Burgundy Lion, told me he prefers it when someone comes in who says they don't like whisky or have never found their exact brand.

He says it can be harder than someone who knows more about whisky but is so rewarding.

"The idea behind whisky night is to expose as many people as possible to the drink that we love so much," Toby told me.

He also shared that over the last few years, he's definitely seen a change in who exactly is ordering whisky. A drink that used to be thought of for older people, especially men, is now enjoyed by young people and tons of women.

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[embedded via](#)



Whisky night or Sláinte Tuesdays ("Sláinte" means "[health](#)" in Irish and Scottish Gaelic) will allow guests to try a flight of three whiskys. You can even create your own personal flight from a long list of options. The cost of the tasting depends on the tasters that you choose to include in your flight.

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[embedded via](#)



To help guide with what may seem like an intimidating world of one of the world's most popular spirits is one of the team's in house whisky expert, Simon Parent.

[@picmead](#)
[embedded via](#)



And if you're like me and are wondering what exactly you call a whisky expert (A [whisky-sommelier](#)? A whisk-connoisseur?), the team has coined the term "Uisghophile" — a lover of "uisgh" or whisky. The team hopes to start bringing in other experts from a variety of distilleries and backgrounds to take the love of the drink even further. So whether you're new to the world of whisky or a self-proclaimed uisghophile, head over to the Burgundy Lion to find your newest drink of choice.

Sláinte Tuesdays At Burgundy Lion
When: Every Tuesday
Address: 2496, rue Notre-Dame O., Montreal, QC
Why You Need To Go: To find just the whisky for you

Sep 3, 2020, 12:46pm EDT

The World's Best Whisky—According To The International Wine And Spirits Competition

[Brad Japhe](#) Contributor



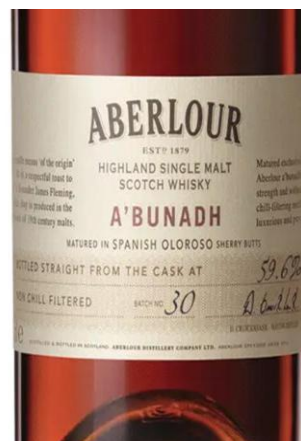
The Award-Winning Aberlour A'bunadh Single Malt Scotch Whisky
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: BRAD JAPHE

There are a lot of spirits competitions out there these days. Indeed, it seems like every week we're reporting on [the results of a new one](#). There's good reason for it, too: never before has there been so many incredible labels of liquor on the shelf. And never before have we enjoyed such robust access to the excess. All this judging is a natural response to a landscape that's become increasingly dense and daunting for general consumers to navigate. The prevailing trends show no signs of reversing. So pretty soon we might even need a competition for the best competitions! If ever such a day arrived, it's a safe bet that the [International Wine and Spirits Competition](#) would take home a 'double gold'.

Originally founded by a wine chemist, the IWSC celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019. Its enduring relevance is a testament to rigorous methodology and unwavering objectivity. In the spirits section it now counts among its tasting panel some of the most prominent names in the industry: distillers, writers and tastemakers—all converging in a double-blind environment in an earnest attempt to suss out the best of the best.

In the days ahead IWSC will be announcing its victors for the 2020 scotch whisky categories. We look forward to reporting that news as it breaks. But in the meantime, it's worth looking back on the reigning champion...

Aberlour A'bunadh is a cask strength, sherry-matured single malt out of Speyside. A perennial sensation among connoisseurs, it was way ahead of the curve when it initially dropped—all the way back in 1997! Back then, blended scotches were still seen as superior by many drinkers. Even for those preferring malt, a 120-proof whisky was quite an exceptional rendering of liquid; most of its contemporaries ranged between 80 to 100 in proof. And since it was never chill-filtered, it was prone to some unsightly settling within the bottle. It still couldn't distract from the brilliant burgundy hue imparted by its Oloroso sherry cooperage.



A closeup on a label of A'Bunadh (pronounced: A-boon-ack)

ABERLOUR DISTILLERY

Ultimately, though, the appearance is mere afterthought. All of its production attributes are focused on accentuating the full flavor of the malt. In that, the label has succeeded like few others. After 23 years and 67 batches, it's still as relevant as the day it debuted. As the IWSC plainly made clear in 2019, awarding it an incredible 99 out of 100. To put that in perspective, only *one* other spirit out of hundreds of entries matched the score: a [45-year-old expression from The Dalmore](#) that initially sold for \$12,500. Since only 500 bottles of *that* liquid were produced, we won't even bother getting into its tasting notes.

A'bunadh, by contrast, is readily available. [It typically retails in the US for well under \\$100 a bottle](#). Pronounced 'a-boon-ack', it is Gaelic for 'the original'. Each release comprises a small batch of barrels aged between 5 and 25 years, demonstrating rich and complex dark fruit tonalities (think raisins and fruitcake). But you don't have to take my word for it. Here's what the judges had to say in awarding it top honor:

"A wonderfully sweet, fruity, floral and perfumed set of aromas really gets the juices flowing. There are some sumptuous runny-honey and complex nutty notes, along with heavy leather, treacle, cola and spice. Ginger and creamy vanilla custard top things off in this great whisky." This isn't the first time that this particular bottling has been recognized by IWSC, either. In 2016 A'bunadh took home gold. And its birthplace, the legendary Aberlour distillery, has been bestowed dozens of awards by the competition throughout the years. So don't be surprised if you come back here in the days ahead to learn it has defended the crown. But whatever the tasting panel lands on, one thing is for certain: if it's award-winning, it's worth sharing.



45-Year-Old Single Malt, a bargain at its retail price of \$12,500.
THE DALMORE

Son sells 28 years of birthday whisky to buy first home



Image captionMatthew Robson was given a bottle of 18-year-old whisky every year for his birthday which is now worth £40,000

A man whose father gave him 18-year-old whisky every year for his birthday is selling the collection to buy a house. Matthew Robson, from Taunton, was born in 1992 and over the course of his life his father Pete has spent about £5,000 on 28 bottles of Macallan single malt.

The collection is now worth more than £40,000 and has been put up for sale.

The 28-year-old said it "probably wasn't" the best gift for a young boy but with "strict instructions never to open them" they had become a nest egg.



Image captionPete Robson said the whisky "wasn't the only present" he gave his son Matthew for his birthday



Image captionMatthew said he was under "strict instructions, never, never to open" his whisky birthday presents

"Each year I received it as a birthday present," Matthew said. "I thought it was quite a quirky little present as I was slightly too young to start drinking.

"But I was under strict instructions, never, never to open them and I tried my hardest and succeeded and they're all intact." His father Pete, who is from Milnathort in Scotland, said the first bottle of 1974 whisky was bought to "wet the baby's head".

"I thought it would be interesting if I bought one every year and he'd end up with 18 bottles of 18-year-old whisky for his 18th birthday," he said.

"It wasn't the only present he got from us. It was just meant to be a unique present but it was a little bit of luck that we kept it going."



Image captionWhisky broker, Mark Littler, said has been "a lot of interest already" in the collection

Since then, experts say Macallan has become collectable and Matthew is hoping to sell his collection for £40,000 and use the money for a house deposit.

It is being sold by whisky broker Mark Littler, who has described it as a "perfect set".

"The value of Macallan has risen massively over the last five to 10 years," he said. "To have such a vast collection of bottles is the real selling point of these."

He said there had been "a lot of interest already" in the collection, mostly from buyers in New York and Asia.

Latest Glencadam Scotch Single Malt Celebrates The Sherry Cask
By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / September 1, 2020

Scotland's Glencadam Distillery, founded in 1825 and located in the Highlands region, is normally an operation whose whisky is used for blending. They have some single malts there as well however, and now one of the newest focuses upon "the long history that the distillery has with sourcing casks from the world famous sherry region, Andalucia in Spain."

The new Glencadam Reserva Andalucia, [according to those behind it](#), is a Scotch single malt whisky that is first aged in ex-sherry and ex-bourbon casks from the ancient dunnage warehouses at the distillery. Glencadam master distiller Robert Fleming then selects a number of these, marries them together and then finishes the whisky in "exceptional Oloroso Sherry butts, which Robert had personally chosen from some of the finest sherry bodegas in Andalucia."



Glencadam Reserva Andalucia (image via Glencadam)

The resulting whisky, bottled at 46% ABV, is a non-age statement release that reportedly "retains all the sweet and spicy character that makes Glencadam so unique, balanced with a delicious, smooth and honeyed finish." You'll find more official tasting notes at the end of this article for your consideration.

Plans call for [Glencadam Reserva Andalucia](#) to be released globally starting this month. No immediate price was mentioned, and it should be noted this is a limited edition release.

- Color: Ripe golden barley
- Nose: Initial aromas of ripe soft fruits, soft nougat and oaky vanilla with a background of freshly made fudge
- Palate: Smooth and creamy with sultanas, orchard fruits and toffee apple sweetness
- Finish: Long lasting and silky smooth with honey, muscovado sugar and green tea lingering on the tongue

A Whiskey Writer Shares His Favorite Bottom Shelf Bourbons

[CHRISTOPHER OSBURN/TWITTER](#) SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

Christopher Osburn has spent the last fifteen years in search of "the best" — or at least his very favorite — sips of whiskey on earth. In the process, he's enjoyed more whiskey drinks than his doctor would dare feel comfortable with, traveled to over 20 countries testing local spirits, and visited more than fifty whiskey distilleries.

Just because you aren't willing to pay the equivalent of a car payment for a bottle of booze, that doesn't mean you need to settle for low-level [whiskey](#). The whiskey world (and specifically the [bourbon](#) market) is ripe with [affordable deals](#). Sure, you might want to enjoy a glass of the likes of Pappy, Weller, and Blanton's, but you should also be able to sip on a glass from a bottle of [bourbon](#) that costs less than \$20. Since this month is National Bourbon Heritage Month, we figured that the time was right to highlight our favorite bottom shelf (or closer to the bottom than the top) [bourbons](#) to enjoy this and every other month of the year.

Jim Beam White Label

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Jim Beam, Clermont, KY (Beam Suntory)

Price: [\\$18.99](#)

The Story:

There's a reason Jim Beam White Label is the #1 selling bourbon in the world. It's cheap, easy to drink, and the same every time you crack open a bottle. This high rye mash bill bourbon is distilled at low

temperatures and matures in new, charred American oak barrels for four years before finding its way into the iconic white-labeled bottle.

Tasting Notes:

There's a chance you've never nosed Jim Beam before drinking it. Well, we're here to tell you that you should. If you do, you'll be met with subtle rich vanilla, charred oak, and sweet corn. The first sip brings forward more toasted wood, leather, butterscotch, and sweet cream. The finish is sweet, long, and ends in a peppery flourish.

Bottom Line:

You might buy this bottle for mixing, but you shouldn't sleep on it as a bargain sipper. It's mellow enough to be enjoyed with a few ice cubes.

Old Grand-Dad

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Jim Beam, Clermont, KY (Beam Suntory)

Price: [\\$20](#)

The Story:

You might have sipped on a glass of Basil Hayden's in the past. This premium bourbon from Jim Beam has a strong connection with the much cheaper Old Grand-Dad. That's because the man who adorns the bottle is none other than Basil Hayden himself. Old Grand-Dad is one of Jim Beam's "Olds" expressions along with Old Tub, and Old Overholt.

Tasting Notes:

The first sniff brings forth peppery spice from the high-rye content as well as cinnamon and sweet vanilla. From the first sip, you're met with dried fruits, toasted oak, rich caramel, and hazelnuts. The finish is long, warming, and ends in a mix of spice and subtle smoke.

Bottom Line:

This is definitely a bargain bourbon. But, it might be a little too spicy for some novice drinkers. It's best mixed into an old fashioned or Manhattan.

Heaven Hill Green Label

ABV: 45%

Distillery: Heaven Hill Distillery, Louisville, KY

Price: [\\$12.99](#)

The Story:

The biggest knock against Heaven Hill Green Label is the fact that it's only available in Kentucky. While you can find random bottles in other states, this Bluegrass State-exclusive is as mysterious as it is drinkable. If you're one of the people who have even tried this 6-year-old bourbon, consider yourself lucky. But, if you can find it, you're in for a bargain at under \$15.

Tasting Notes:

You might not want to nose this super cheap bourbon. But, if you do, you'll be greeted with sweet vanilla, rich oak, and the musty, nostalgic smell of a barrelhouse. The first sip brings forth caramelized sugar, cinnamon, corn sweetness, and a hint of maple syrup. The finish is long, bursting with warmth, and full of charred oak and butterscotch flavors.

Bottom Line:

Use this bottle for mixing. Sure, you can sip on it, but that's not really what it's for. Mix it into a Mint Julep, put your feet up, and just enjoy the evening.

Evan Williams Black Label

ABV: 43%

Distillery: Heaven Hill Distillery, Louisville, KY

Price: [\\$16.99](#)

The Story:

Legend says that Evan Williams opened the first distillery in Kentucky in 1783. This bargain bourbon bears his name in remembrance of the man who changed the alcohol world on the banks of the Ohio River.

While it's inexpensive, it's not noticeable in the flavor. Due to the whiskey spending longer than necessary in the barrels, it has a mellowness that far surpasses its price tag.

Tasting Notes:

The nose is full of herbal, sweet vanilla, and salted caramel aromas. The first sip brings forth a symphony of butterscotch, cooking spices, pecans, licorice, and dried orange peels. The finish is medium in length and long in heat with a subtly spicy finish.

Bottom Line:

Even though this whiskey is cheap, it's smooth enough to fit the bill as a sipper on a chilly fall evening. Toss in a single ice cube and enjoy the changing of the seasons.

Very Old Barton

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Barton Distillery, Bardstown, KY

Price: [\\$12.99](#)

The Story:

Likely the best bargain in the bourbon world, Very Old Barton's name is as confusing as its price tag. While it has "very old" in the title, it's not very old at all having been aged for between four and six years at the Barton Distillery and comes in 80, 86, 90, and 100 proof. Even with all of the other bourbons Barton's produces, you definitely shouldn't sleep on its highly rated, much cheaper relative.

Tasting Notes:

This high corn content is noticeable from the first nosing. You'll be met with fresh corn, sweet cream, and charred oak. The first sip yields an immediate vanilla sweetness that moves into a rich chocolate, spicy cinnamon, and dried fruits. The finish is long, sweet, and warm with a subtle hint of pepper at the very end.

Bottom Line:

Get a bottle of old Barton's and make it a mainstay on your home bar. You definitely won't regret stocking a bottle for mixing or sipping. It works well for both.

Four Roses Yellow Label

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Four Roses Distillery, Lawrenceburg, KY (Kirin Brewing)

Price: [\\$19.99](#)

The Story:

[Four Roses](#) is well known for its Small Batch, Single Barrel, and Small Batch Select. But, while these are great bottles, none of them is a bargain like Four Roses Yellow Label. For under \$20, you can get a bottle of bourbon made up of whiskeys aged between 4 and 12 years. How this high-quality, award-winning, supremely mellow, highly sippable bourbon remains so affordable we'll never know.

Tasting Notes:

From the first nose, you know that you've opened a special bottle. You're immediately met with aromas of rich honey, cinnamon, and toasted oak. The first sip brings up cinnamon apple, brown sugar, and caramel along with creamy butterscotch. The finish is long, warming, and ends in a pleasing hint of spice.

Bottom Line:

Four Roses Yellow Label is another great bottle to stock your bar. That's because it's a dual-threat. It's perfect for slow sipping and shines in your favorite whiskey cocktail.

Buffalo Trace launches 2020 Antique Collection

10th September, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Kentucky distillery Buffalo Trace has unveiled the five limited edition whiskeys that form its 2020 Antique Collection, 20 years after the series made its debut.



The 2020 Buffalo Trace Antique Collection features five limited edition whiskeys

First launched in 2000, the Antique Collection features five limited edition releases bottled from rare stocks at the Buffalo Trace distillery in Frankfort, Kentucky.

This year's whiskeys include a George T Stagg release, which is bottled at 65.2% ABV and is said to have flavours of "creamy vanilla with lightly smoked oak on the palate". Made using Bourbon from barrels filled in the spring of 2005, the evaporation loss during ageing for this year's batch was 59% – higher than previous releases.

The 2020 William Larue Weller bottling is an uncut, unfiltered, wheated Bourbon, bottled at 67.25% ABV. The whiskey was distilled in the winter of 2008 and boasts flavours of a soft caramel chew, spearmint and cinnamon.

This year's Thomas H Handy Sazerac Rye whiskey is uncut and unfiltered, and comprises spirit distilled in the spring of 2014. Aged in warehouses K, M, and N, the 64.5% ABV whiskey offers notes of cinnamon, anise and honey.

The latest Eagle Rare 17 Year Old release is bottled at 50.5% ABV and was distilled in the spring of 2002, before ageing on the first floor of warehouse P. The limited edition release has a nose of ripe cherries, vanilla cream and oak, followed by a taste of caramel and coffee and a long finish of oak, pepper and fresh herbs.

Finally, the 2020 Sazerac Rye 18 Year Old bottling has flavours of oak, caramel and dark chocolate, with a finish of coffee, black pepper and cherries. The barrels for this whiskey were filled in the spring of 2002 and rested on the third floor of warehouse K. It is bottled at 45% ABV. The 2020 Buffalo Trace Antique Collection whiskeys will be available in limited quantities starting in late September or early October. Each bottle carries a suggested retail price of US\$99.

Benriach unveils new core whisky range and redesign

10th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Speyside distillery Benriach has revealed a new core range of single malts and a refreshed look for the series.



Benriach's core range includes new recipes for Original Ten and The Twelve

The range comprises 10-year-old expressions Original Ten (43% ABV) and Smoky Ten (46% ABV), and 12-year-old bottlings The Twelve and The Smoky Twelve, which are both bottled at 46% ABV. In addition, the series features 21-year-old, 25-year-old and 30-year-old bottlings, which all carry an ABV of 46%. The range comes with a new design inspired by Speyside's natural location.

The core range features new recipes for Benriach's Original Ten and the "richly Sherried" 12-year-old (RRP £44/US\$57), the latter of which will include Port and Bourbon casks. Original Ten (RRP £38/US\$49) has matured for 10 years in Bourbon barrels, Sherry casks and virgin oak. Meanwhile, the 10-year-old and 12-year-old Smoky expressions have been distilled during the distillery's smoky season.

The 10-year-old Smoky bottling (RRP £42/US\$55) was matured in a combination of Bourbon barrels, toasted virgin oak and Jamaican rum casks, offering "layers of sunripe fruit, aromatic smoky sweetness and toasted oak spice". The "creamy and smooth" Smoky 12-year-old (RRP £48/US\$62) was matured in three casks – Bourbon, Sherry and Marsala. Benriach master blender Dr Rachel Barrie said: "The new range perfectly marries tradition and innovation that is central to Benriach's story. Inspired by the 1994 bottling of the Original Ten, with its fruit-laden complexity and smooth, rounded taste, the new range reimagines the 1898 origins of Benriach, brought to life in the 21st century through fusing distilling styles with extraordinary casks."

"In the new Original Ten, a more richly flavoured, rounded malt character might be discerned, whilst The Twelve balances richly Sherried malt with added layers of fruit complexity, reaching a pinnacle at 12 years old."

"The new Smoky Ten and Smoky Twelve explore the sweet smokiness of Benriach, enriched through innovative combinations of rum, virgin oak and Marsala casks interwoven with more traditional Bourbon and Sherry."

"The new Benriach range is for those open to new possibilities, building on a wealth of experience and tradition. I invite the drinker to join me on this creative journey, as we explore the rich rewards of single malt whisky."

Older variants

The 21-year-old (RRP £145/US\$189), 25-year-old (RRP £325/US\$423) and 30-year-old (RRP £650/US\$846) expressions offer an “extremely rare opportunity to discover the exquisite integration of flavour resulting from decades of maturation”. The whiskies have been matured in distinctive oak casks that bring “complex layers of refined and mellow smoke”.

The 21-year-old bottling is described as having an “elegant” level of smoke, while the 25-year-old offers “mellow layers of honey malt and caramelised smoke”. Meanwhile, the 30-year-old has a complex level of smoke.

Benriach will also release a new small batch, limited edition Malting Season expression to mark the site as one of two Speyside distilleries to practice traditional floor malting. Benriach’s seasonal peated spirit production will also inspire a new Smoke Season bottling, which “explores the full intensity of Benriach’s fruit-forward smoky spirit, amplified through bespoke cask selection”.

Benriach Smoke Season will launch later this year and Malting Season will be available in spring 2021.

Barrie will also continue to select individual casks to be bottled as part of the Cask Edition programme.

In addition, Benriach will continue to offer a travel retail range featuring the 10-year-old Triple Distilled, Quarter Cask and Smoky Quarter Cask expressions.

The new Benriach range will be available globally from September 2020.

Eight New Scotch Single Malts Surface From A Trio Of Related Distilleries

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / September 10, 2020

Distell is a company many Americans likely don’t know anything about, but if you live in South Africa, where they are headquartered as a large spirits company, you probably have heard of them. Amongst the many holdings Distell has are the likes of several Scottish whisky distilleries, including Tobermory, Deanston and Bunnahabhain. It is from these three the parent company has announced that a range of new limited edition expressions are being unveiled.

These eight new single malts, according to those behind it, herald from four brands (Tobermory includes the Ledaig label) and range across different cask types and ages. To begin with, “the artisan Tobermory Distillery on the island of Mull, known for its ties to art in nature and colourful island influences, has revealed three vibrant new expressions. First off is the Tobermory 2007 Port Pipe Finish (ABV 55.8%), matured first in refill hogsheads before transferring to Port Pipes for its final four years, followed by two of the distilleries Ledaig peated expression; the Ledaig 1998 Marsala Finish (ABV 58.6%), matured for 21 years with four of those spent in Marsala wine casks, and the third and final Collectors Edition 2007 Pedro Ximenez Finish (ABV 55.5%).



Some of the whiskies from Distell's 2020 special collection (image via Distell)

“Deanston Distillery, hailed for its industrious spirit and sustainable production processes, has also introduced three distinct new expressions. A 2002 Organic Pedro Ximenez finish cask strength (ABV 49.3%); a Deanston 1991 Muscat Finish (ABV 45%), and finally, the Deanston 2002 Pinot Noir (ABV 50%).

“Finally, to round off the collection, global favourite Bunnahabhain Distillery, the most northerly of the Islay distilleries, looking over the Sound of Islay, has unveiled two stunning new expressions. First is the Bunnahabhain 2008 Manzanilla Matured (ABV 55.4%), boasting a unique marriage of coastal infused flavours after carefully maturing in former Manzanilla sherry casks for 11 years, alongside the Bunnahabhain Moine 1997 Pedro Ximenez Finish (ABV 50%), – a peppery peated cask-strength single malt.

“All of the new expressions are natural in colour and non-chill filtered so their full flavours can be enjoyed as nature intended.”

“Our annual collection of limited-editions always bring the distillery team’s talent and craft to the forefront,” said Julieann Fernandez, Master Blender at Distell, [in a prepared statement](#), “with unique takes on our beloved core classics. And this year’s expressions are truly special.

“Having been slumbering away in their casks at our distilleries around Scotland, these stunning malts are finally ready for our loyal fans to experience them. With a combined age of nearly 150 years across the eight expressions, we’ve been waiting a very long time to hear what you think.”

Pricing information for the releases was not immediately available, and it is said all these limited-edition bottlings will be available for purchase worldwide.

Octomore unveils new series of peated whiskies

15th September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Islay-based distillery Bruichladdich has unveiled a new series of heavily peated Octomore Scotch whiskies – Octomore 11s.



The new Octomore 11s series will launch on 1 October

Set to launch on 1 October, the Octomore 11s range includes three expressions that will be available to purchase from specialist retailers and online via [bruichladdich.com](#).

Single malt Octomore 11.1 was matured for five years in first-fill ex-American whiskey casks from Jim Beam, Heaven Hill and Jack Daniel’s. Malted to 139.6 PPM (phenol parts per million), Octomore 11.1 has been bottled at 59.4% ABV without chill filtration or caramel colouring. Malted to 139.6 PPM, Octomore 11.2 was matured in two separate casks: 25% of the whisky was aged in Pauillac ex-wine casks, while the remaining 75% was aged in ex-American whiskey casks before being transferred into St Julien wine casks for 18 months.

All in all, the whisky was aged for five years on Islay before being bottled at 58.6% ABV without added colouring or chill filtration. Unlike the other Octomores in the range, Octomore 11.2 will be available online via [bruichladdich.com](#) and in global travel retail. The third whisky in the new series will be Octomore 11.3 (malted to 194 PPM), which was matured for five years in first-fill American whiskey casks from Jim Beam, Heaven Hill, Buffalo Trace and Jack Daniel’s. The whisky was bottled at 61.7% ABV without caramel colouring or chill filtration.

Furthermore, Bruichladdich has bottled a 2020 edition of Octomore 10 Years Old to sit alongside the Octomore 11s series. A total of 77 casks were combined to create the 10-year-old whisky, which was malted to 204 PPM.

The whiskies were matured in a mix of virgin oak, and first- and second-fill ex-American whiskey casks from Jim Beam, Heaven Hill, Buffalo Trace and Jack Daniel’s. Octomore 10 Years Old (2020 Edition) was bottled at 54.3% ABV without chill filtration or caramel colouring.

These 50 Year Old Scotches Have Stood the Test of Time

SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 | [JONNY MCCORMICK](#) | FROM [WINTER 2019](#)



For the whisky drinker, few moments will ever rival that of tasting a 50 year old scotch. And right now, we are witnessing the release of the last bottles from casks laid down in the 1960s—a decade defined by tumultuous changes in the world: the Civil Rights protests, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, the assassination of J.F.K., the Moon landings, and Hendrix playing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at Woodstock. Although blended scotch was king at the time, the 1960s also marked the inception of the single malt Scotch whisky revolution. And today, there are more 50 year old single malts to choose from than ever before.

Only an infinitesimal number of special barrels have gone the distance of 50 years, and their rarity and longevity always command top dollar. Current offerings of 50 year old scotch, like [Dalmore](#), can cost as much as \$60,000 a bottle, making others, like [Benromach](#), look like a veritable bargain at \$14,500. Therefore, you will likely belong to one of two groups: those who can afford 50 year old scotch, or those who aspire to afford 50 year old scotch. To the first group, congratulations to both of you, and to the latter, squeeze up at the back so everyone can hear.



Dalmore 50 year old

Despite its exclusivity, 50 year old scotch has much to teach us all. It might seem that patience is the only requirement for a scotch to persist for 50 years or more, but the scarcity of drams of this age owes more to wood management than to overeagerness. To gain a deeper understanding about why so few casks make it to 50, consider the spectrum of whisky maturation. An age statement of 50 years refers to the time a whisky spent in a wooden cask, a clock that stops as soon as it's dumped and bottled. At the point of filling new make spirit into a cask, the spirit has 100% distillery character and 0% maturation character. Broadly speaking, a whisky will reach its zenith when it achieves the preferred balance between distillery and maturation characteristics. Some whiskies hit peak maturation after 8, 12, or 16 years in cask, but what makes a 50 year old whisky special is how that cask takes a different trajectory.

A [refill cask](#) is more likely to go the distance than a fresh [first-fill](#) cask. The latter will hit its peak maturation at a younger age, and if that cask is left to stew for decades, the result could be a bitter whisky

overpowered by off-putting wood tannins and little enduring distillery character.



Only 200 bottles of Macallan 50 year old were produced.

The chances of reaching 50 years are further diminished by the fact that when casks mature inside a Scottish [warehouse](#), 1% to 2% of the whisky evaporates each year, known as the angels' share. In addition to losing volume, the alcohol strength gradually falls. When nurturing a cask for this length of time, it's vital that the evaporative forces don't drain the cask too quickly or that the alcohol by volume doesn't sink below the legal minimum of 40%. Below this floor, it can no longer be sold as whisky. As the lower threshold becomes a risk, blenders can either choose to bottle it, or they might choose to merge a few old casks together to boost the strength and volume, thus reducing further evaporation. However, the cask now takes on the age of the youngest whisky.

Those few casks that maintain sufficient alcohol to be called scotch may yield only a few dozen bottles. Cognizant of these factors, it becomes easier to appreciate the true rarity of these great old whiskies. But it's not merely scarcity that contributes to their greatness. As the level of the liquid falls and air consumes more space inside the cask, greater oxygenation can add to the whisky's maturity and complexity. It is likely that aging whisky extracts different alcohol- and water-soluble flavors from the oak in different phases of maturation as its strength wanes in these golden years.



Balvenie Fifty: Marriage 0197

Casks of this age are in fact time capsules, reflecting a barley harvest from summers long ago, lost distillery practices sacrificed to modernization, expansion, and efficiency, and the legacy of the people who once toiled in the distillery but who are now just figures in grime-smearing overalls squinting at the camera in archival photographs. That's what's magical about 50 year old scotch.

“Any scotch that has matured for 50 years tends to develop nuanced flavors that are impossible to recreate in a short space of time,” says Jonny Fowle, spirits specialist at [Sotheby's](#). “Fifty year old scotch might not always be dark in color and rich in flavor, but they all have that *je ne sais quoi*. They represent a forgotten era in Scotch whisky

distillation, and each one is a piece of history.” Fowle welcomes the growing choice of 50 year old Scotch whiskies and doesn’t think their recent proliferation makes them any less desirable at auction. “Fifty year old releases always do remarkably well at Sotheby’s. They are still very scarce and released in extremely limited quantities, so they’re a must for the avid collector.” Nor does he believe that they are solely collector’s items, “I have been lucky to taste some remarkably old whiskies, but never forget that these whiskies were designed to be drunk: We should be doing just that,” he adds.

IT WAS 50 YEARS AGO TODAY

[Highland Park Distillery](#) has changed very little since 1964; operating instructions dated 1937 hang by the kiln. The stills have been replaced, but always with those of an identical size and shape. Efficiency has improved, and better yielding barley species have come along, but Gordon Motion, Highland Park’s master whisky maker, doesn’t believe newer varieties make a huge difference to the spirit’s character. Then, of course, there’s the Orkney peat. “It’s been the same for the past 9,000 years,” confirms Motion matter-of-factly. “So I’m not expecting that to have changed since the last millennium.”



Highland Park 50 year old

All things being equal, time in the cask presents the great divide. “In our older whiskies, we get a distinct ethereal note coming through,” he shares. “It reminds me of shellac used for French polishing, with characteristics of cedar and camphor wood.” Two sherry hogsheads of Highland Park laid down in 1964 were combined in 2010, topped off with some 1960 from the first Highland Park 50 year old, and left to mingle in a refill cask for 8 years, an instance of marrying the casks to preserve the whisky’s alcohol strength. This was bottled as the [Highland Park 50 year old 2018 release](#). The light sherry character of these hogsheads was ideally suited to a long and slow development of flavors.

[Just Getting Into Single Malt Scotch? Start Here](#)

Highland Park is lightly peated in comparison to most Islay whiskies, and its peat is quite floral in character, but over five decades, the volatile phenols reduce to leave a delicate peat note in the background. “It’s a very slow oxygenation process that drives the changes in flavor in a whisky of that age,” explains Motion. Evaporation continues as the whisky ages. “Effectively, you’re ending up with a *jus* as the flavors become more concentrated.”

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

It’s American oak that marks a departure for the latest edition of [Glenlivet Winchester Collection 50 year old](#) from its two sherried predecessors. The whisky was laid down by master distiller Bob Arthur in 1967, and bottled under the watchful eye of master distiller Alan Winchester. The youngest whisky was distilled on December 11, 1967, when Winchester was still in elementary school in Aberlour. The floor maltings had been closed a year earlier, so this whisky was made from malted barley supplied by Robert Hutchison’s in Kirkcaldy. Under Captain Bill Smith Grant, the distillery employed around 50 people in 1967, including farm workers. There was no steam heating, no pre-heating, and a traditional mashing process. Coal-fired stills were in operation, as the distillery did not convert its two pairs of stills to liquid butane until 1972, before adding a third pair of stills the following year.



Glenlivet Winchester Collection 50 year old was distilled in 1967 and is priced at \$25,000.

Such whiskies are a rare snapshot of the distillery 50 years ago, allowing the drinker to peer back in time. Winchester has sampled a number of 19th– and early 20th–century Glenlivets and found them to be characterized by fruity aromas, much like today. Winchester’s nose interrogates each glass for traces of peat, although he seldom finds it. “We knew they burnt a lot of peat, but the peat was different in those days, as they stored it for three or four years before use,” he explains, indicating that it dried out to a coal-like substance that was far less aromatic. He believes that whisky can mature for so long that the peat fades away completely. Winchester has another theory that whiskies of this age, at low volume and low strength, lead to an acceleration in wood extraction; the whisky is so weak, it takes out more water-soluble compounds from the cask, leading to greater woodiness. Even Winchester can only speculate on the reasons these particular casks survived to such a ripe old age, to be bottled today, but he seems delighted that they did. Without being glib, Winchester appreciates Glenlivet Winchester Collection 1967 50 year old’s incredible velvety smoothness, one of this whisky’s most remarkable qualities. “Smooth is a word I don’t normally use, but I think it’s quite amazing in this 50 year old. It’s got that lovely, coated mouthfeel because it’s not chill-filtered, and it lets through the sweetness, the ripe peaches, milk chocolate, and that fruity, floral distillery character.”



Tamdhu 50 year old

ONE SMALL SIP FOR MAN

In the summer of 1969, Scottish Malt Distillers filled a refill sherry cask at Benromach Distillery. A month later, man first walked on the Moon. By 1983, NASA was pushing the space shuttle program to four missions a year, but scotch whisky was in trouble, and numerous distilleries fell silent, including Benromach. When [Gordon & MacPhail](#) bought the dilapidated site in 1993, the distillery building was nothing more than a shell. In 1998, a new Benromach Distillery was opened on the site, which was the same year that the international space station launched into orbit. By 2009, Benromach launched its own [10 year old whisky](#). And this year, that 1969 cask was finally

disgorged as Benromach 50 year old, the oldest whisky in the distillery's current range.

Benromach was the first distillery in Scotland to have oil-fired direct stills, but by the late 1960s, shell-and-tube condensers had replaced the worm tubs and the stills were switched to indirect firing. Benromach transitioned from floor maltings to buying commercial malt in 1968, so the peatiness dwindled as the stocks of house malt were used up. Distillery records from the 1960s are meager, but the gentle smoke on the Benromach 50 year old causes us to consider whether the inclusion of some of the final floor malted barley appears here. Perhaps it is a last glimpse: a final taste.

We know the equipment that made the 1969 whisky was also lost to history, cannibalized for parts, with the open-top mash tun sent to [Royal Lochnagar](#), and the pair of large, broad shouldered stills transplanted to [Glen Ord](#). Distillery manager Donald Macdonald lived on-site, one of just six to ten people needed to operate Benromach in 1969. Today his home is named Benromach House and contains the distillery office of Keith Cruickshank, the current distillery manager. "I was 1 year old when this whisky was made, so it's a privilege for me to represent a legacy whisky made by others in previous decades," says Cruickshank.



The equipment that was used to make the 1969 Benromach 50 year old was disassembled in the years since, and its parts were sent to different distilleries.

Gordon & MacPhail, the [renowned Scotch whisky bottler](#), has over 8,000 casks resting in its Elgin warehouse, the place where both the Benromach and [Caol Ila 50 year olds](#) matured. Any cask over 30 years old is sampled and assessed every two years by Stuart Urquhart, operations director and a member of the fourth-generation family business. He appraises the balance of distillery and cask characteristics, the diminishing alcohol strength, and the potential for longer-term aging while being on the lookout for bitterness from overpowering wood tannins. "I'm deciding if this will be a 35 or 40 year old, but some will go on to 50, 60, or 70 years-plus. It's all about making sure you get the right sort of cask: If it's too active, they'll never get there."

A lot of their oldest whiskies were matured in well-used transport sherry casks, vessels with great potential for very long aging. But even for Urquhart, perfect maturation remains a moving target. "Our Private Collection Caol Ila 1968 was never planned to be a 50 year old, but it had reached the right point: Originally, it was going to be a 55 year old," he says.

Stocks are continuously replaced as new whiskies are bottled, critically benefiting the slow maturation of the oldest casks by maintaining an ambient temperature. Gordon & MacPhail has continual plans for old whisky releases for its classic range of Strathisla, Longmorn, [Glenlivet](#), [Mortlach](#), and [Linkwood](#). Fabulous whiskies 50 years old and older may be much more available in the future. Urquhart humbly admits, "We're in the unique position where we'll do 70 year old whiskies every year for the remainder of my career."

PAST THEIR PRIME

Fifty year old whiskies go through such a rigorous selection process that it's highly unlikely a bad one will get bottled. Gordon Motion recalls a distillery manager (not from Highland Park) once pressing a 1960s cask sample into his hands and enthusing about its greatness and encouraging him to consider putting it out as a single cask release. Motion recalls, "I sniffed it and thought, 'Wow, that smells fantastic.'" The following week, Motion returned to the promising sample, and thought that he had better taste it. "It would have taken your fillings out," he says bluntly. "It was so bitter."

"We have some casks in the sample room that have gone beyond the point where we would be happy releasing it," comments Stuart Urquhart. One cask yielded only a single bottle, which Gordon & MacPhail uses for educational purposes, but it was never released. "It smelled fantastic, but the wood had completely destroyed everything to do with that whisky," he says. "We're looking at the quality side, and if it goes over beyond the point we're happy with, we'll never release it." THESE OUTSTANDING SCOTCHES HAVE ACHIEVED THE HALF-CENTURY MARK



Bowmore 50 year old

Balvenie Fifty: Marriage 0197—\$38,000, 110 bottles produced

1967 Glenlivet Winchester Collection 50 year old—\$25,000, 150 bottles produced

1969 Benromach 50 year old—\$14,500, 125 bottles produced

[1968 Gordon & MacPhail Private Collection Caol Ila 50 year old](#)—\$9,500, 199 bottles produced

1964 Bowmore Vaults Legends Collection Black Bowmore 50 year old—\$25,000, 159 bottles produced

[Highland Park 50 year old \(2018 release\)](#)—\$15,000, 274 bottles produced

[Dalmore 50 year old](#)—\$60,000, 50 bottles produced

[Macallan 50 year old](#)—\$35,000, 200 bottles produced

[Glenfiddich 50 year old](#)—\$30,000, 50 bottles released per year

Tamdhu 50 year old—\$18,000, 100 bottles produced

New Aberfeldy Scotch Whisky Gets A French Wine Cask Finish

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / September 15, 2020

The Aberfeldy Scotch single malt whisky distillery was built back in 1898, drawing its water source for whisky distillation from the nearby Pitilie Burn. It is owned today by Bacardi, and includes as part of its regular portfolio 12-, 16- and 21-year-old expressions. Joining those now is what's described as the brand's latest limited expression, an 18 year old finished in French wine casks.

The new Aberfeldy 18 Years Old French Red Wine Cask whisky, according to those behind it, was initially aged 18 years in a combination of first fill bourbon, refill and re-char casks. This was then followed up by a second maturation period of up to 5 months in French wine casks from Pauillac, a French appellation in the Médoc wine region of Bordeaux, located in the département of Gironde, on the left bank of the Gironde estuary.



Aberfeldy 18 Years Old French Red Wine Cask (image via Bacardi)

Of additional note to this region, according to the brand, is that “having the deepest gravel in the Médoc, with some chalk and clay, soils and microclimates play a vital role in Pauillac. In Bordeaux, proximity to the river is also all-important. Vineyards located at the river’s edge bask in a microclimate, and this is where the highest quality wines in Bordeaux are found.

“The style of Pauillac wine is what many think of as textbook Bordeaux wine; a balance of power and grace with notable flavours of cassis, blackberry, tobacco, cigar box, spice, earth and cedar wood aromas coupled with firm tannins.”

“Pauillac casks are the aristocrats of the Médoc,” said Aberfeldy Malt Master, Stephanie MacLeod, in a prepared statement. “They provide notes of black cherries, blackberries and a cedar wood spice.

Aberfeldy’s wonderfully soft signature honey and creamy vanilla notes are invigorated with swathes of plush ripe fruits and lovely nutty aromas to create an incredibly elegant and fruitful whisky.”

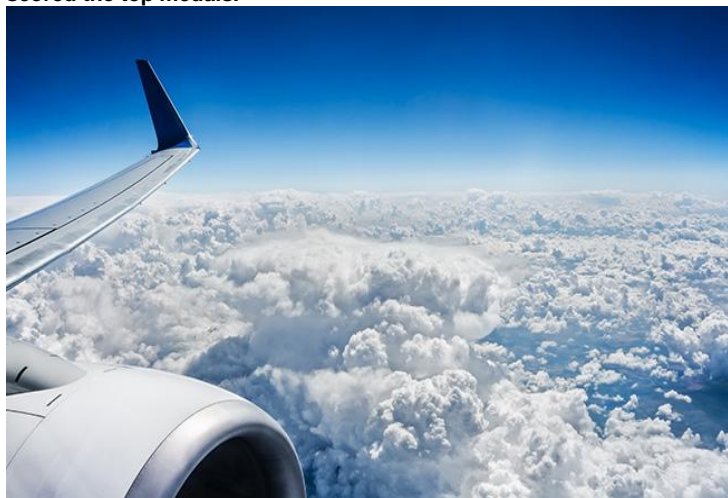
Given the nature of wine casks from this region, it is said MacLeod “carefully monitored maturation and flavour development in the casks until the desired flavour profile had been achieved. Pauillac is a robust wine, so the goal was to use this cask type to complement and elevate the signature character of Aberfeldy, not mask it.”

Aberfeldy 18 Years Old French Red Wine Cask is bottled at 43% ABV and will price at £95, or around \$125 USD. It will initially be available through the distillery exclusively through mid-October, at which point afterwards it will go on sale in the US, China, Taiwan, Germany and France.

The Travel Retail Masters 2020 results

9th September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

In our annual tasting the judges were filled with wonderment at what can be discovered in global travel retail. These were the products that scored the top medals.



The regular hustle and bustle of airports may be absent at present, but there is still a treasure trove of top-quality spirits to be discovered in duty free. From limited edition bottlings to experimental endeavours, producers continue to appreciate the huge opportunities this niche sector presents.

To determine the standard of products available in global travel retail, *The Spirits Business* hosted The Travel Retail Masters 2020 last month. The tasting was open to all spirits brands available in travel

retail. Like our other recent competitions, this blind tasting took place in the judges’ homes in the UK in keeping with physical distancing measures. The entrants were once again packed and shipped by Wine Sorted to guarantee total anonymity during the tasting.

The competition was chaired by me, Melita Kiely, editor of *The Spirits Business*, and I was joined on Skype on the first day by David T Smith, spirits writer and founder of the Craft Distilling Expo, and for the second day of tastings by Bernadette Pamplin, spirits writer and judge. **ELEGANT AND EASY TO SIP**

Smith and I started with a flight of vodkas available in travel, and stumbled across two Master medallists. The first was awarded to MV Group Production Lithuanian Vodka Original, which Smith thought was “simple, elegant and easy to sip”.

A second Master was bestowed upon Royal Mash, praised for its “dark roasted grain notes, rye bread and little citrus”. Oslo Håndverksdestilleri also walked away with a Gold for its Norwegian Wood vodka, while Tovaritch Spirits International picked up a Gold for its flagship Tovaritch! bottling.

“I’m a big fan of travel retail,” enthused Smith. “These tasted like so much care and attention has been given to products in travel retail. It’s really nice to see people who like vodka being catered for in this part of the market.”

As we moved onto Gin, another medal was awarded to Oslo Håndverksdestilleri, this time a Master for Vidda Tørr Gin. Smith described aromas of “citrus on the nose” leading to an “oily texture and a little sweetness” on the palate. “It was full of meadowsweet,” he added. “The first thing is immediately in the glass there is so much intensity coming through, floral, spicy, cinnamon, vanilla, it’s very complex. The texture is smooth, then you get more of that floral taste, some spice, then it builds to pine, cedar and juniper towards the end – so you know it’s still gin. The big flash of intensity catches your attention, like a showcase gin, which I think you want from a travel retail gin, but it still shows what gin should be.”

In the World Whisky flight, a highly deserved Gold medal was awarded to Bulgarian blended whisky Black Ram, which was described as “soft, with a touch of oatmeal cookies, golden syrup”. Smith said: “This was smooth and complex with a little residual smoke. It’s a solid whisky.”



A large flight of Scotch whiskies brought an impressive Master medal haul with it – five, to be exact. The Glenmorangie Company took home a Master for Glenmorangie Grand Vintage 1995 with its “rich fruity nose, a little Sherry” and “plump fruity flavours, some oat and golden syrup”. Littlemill Vintage 1992 also secured the top award for flavours of “candied ginger, raisins, stewed apples and a hint of dark chocolate”. Glen Scotia Vintage 1991 also picked up a Master, hailed for being “very elegant” with “raisin sweetness, cherries and a gentle, mellow smoke”. Douglas Laing’s Big Peat Global Travellers’ Exclusive was also deemed Master-worthy, presenting notes of “smoked cheese and smoky bacon – powerful but balanced by some dark chocolate notes”. Completing the Master run in this flight was another Douglas Laing bottling: Scaleggs Global Travellers’ Exclusive. This was described as “so complex. Rich, juicy with raisins and cherries and toasted almonds – sublime.”

“When it comes to Scotch in travel retail, there are some things that are all-round people pleasers; whatever you like with Scotch, you’ll enjoy those,” noted Smith. “But it’s also the place to get geeky, esoteric and more focused on the type of Scotch you like, and discover Scotch you may not discover in the mainstream.”

Six Gold medals were also awarded in this flight, along with two Silvers. Smith said: “There was a really nice mix of people pleasers and more unusual whiskies for people who want something a little different. Travel retail is not the place where average products get buried, that’s for sure.”

Pamplin and I partnered to sample a flight of Tequila, and discovered a Master medallist in the form of Corralejo Añejo Tequila. Pamplin found this to be “subtle on the nose, but with really lovely flavour on the palate”. Tasting notes included a “surge of aniseed/ absinthe vibes, menthol, wormwood bitterness. Complex, lovely and interesting”. Stablemates Corralejo Reposado Tequila, Corralejo Blanco Tequila, and Corralejo 99000 Horas Añejo were all awarded Golds for their outstanding quality. Corralejo 1821 also took home a respectable Silver medal.



QUALITY AND CREATIVITY

“I always get excited about travel retail because it has to be something a bit special, so the drive for that is showing some great quality and creativity behind that,” Pamplin said. “This flight has absolutely delivered, it had a good selection and range, and the producers were really going out there to show what Tequila can do.”

As we moved from Tequila to Rum, a Gold medal was handed to Ron Prohibido 15, with its “beautiful nose, some complexities, vanilla Bourbon sweetness on the finish and coffee”. Ron Prohibido 12 received a Silver medal in this flight – “this is rum is Coffee Crème throughout”, enthused Pamplin, while also noting a touch of marzipan on the finish.

Smith and I completed our blind tasting with a round of Liqueurs, and found our final Master medallist of the first day: Coole Swan from Ireland. The judges said it was “rich, creamy and decadent, with hints of strawberry and white chocolate”. Smith also noted the cream liqueur had good alcohol integration and “great texture”. There was also a Gold medal for Lithuanian liqueur The Nines Sweet, said to “balance sweetness, cinnamon and clove” on the palate.

Once all the products had been assessed, all three judges took to the extremely enjoyable task of retasting all the Master medallists to determine the 2020 Travel Retail Taste Master. The decision was an extremely hard one to come to as the judges felt equally excited about two winners. But while there was no denying the highly commendable quality of Vidda Tørr Gin, it was agreed the 2020 Travel Retail Taste Master title should go to Glenmorangie Grand Vintage 1995.

Smith concluded: “The overall standard is incredibly high in travel retail, both in terms of variety and the desire to want to try something different. Even if you’re just getting to know a spirit category, going and looking at some travel retail products can broaden your horizons, and it is definitely worth adding an hour to your time at the airport – when we can fly again – so you can check it out properly. There is so much great stuff to discover here.”

The Story Behind The Balvenie’s Latest 19-Year Old Release Will Have You Question Everything You Know About Whisky

In Partnership with [The Balvenie](#)
NICK HALL, 16 SEP 2020

Over the years, we have delved deep into a good dram or two, polished off our fair share of fine whisky and lived to tell the tale. If there is one thing we’ve learned through our extensive research, it is this; not all whiskies are created equal. In fact, the very essence of what makes the celebrated drink so popular is its distinctiveness. Every whisky has its unique history and for Speyside icon The Balvenie Single Malt, it’s one of prestige and pursuit.



100% Estate Grown – Every Ingredient is The Balvenie Through & Through To explain what makes the whisky masters so unique, you need only look to The Balvenie’s latest release, [The Edge of Burnhead Wood](#). For the first time ever, the label has crafted a whisky made entirely from distillery ground ingredients; that being barley grown on-site, grain turned by hand and casks toasted exclusively by The Balvenie coopers. It’s whisky the way it’s meant to be made, and it should come as no surprise.



A Legacy That Has Earned The Right To Innovate

For close to 130 years, The Balvenie has stood tall on the world whisky stage. A lineage of fine single malts has seen the label win countless awards for its signature spirit, but this isn’t just a story about a hand-crafted single malt, it’s a tale about the hands that made it. Calloused and weathered, they belong to a team with centuries of collective experience helping the Scottish whisky icon. As one of the last remaining distilleries to boast a full-time malting floor, The Balvenie can honestly hold the rare title of truly hand-crafted. While existing Balvenie fans will know the level of detail and traditional craftsmanship that goes into each bottle, surprisingly it’s the blend of innovation heritage that really sets the distiller apart. A feature that only comes with experience. “Our traditional methods of whisky production are important to us at The Balvenie but we also like to use the tradition, experience and knowledge to create and innovate. The people of the distillery and their ideas are how we do that,” brand ambassador Ross Blainey explains ([@thewhiskyspecialist](#) on Instagram). “I don’t think it’s enough to know how a whisky was made, you want to know why, what were the thoughts before they began the process, what made them think of that. To understand The Balvenie, you need to know the characters of the story. It’s the human aspect that makes The Balvenie so unique. When you drink a whisky, you’re drinking this whole story; there is years’ worth of history in that bottle.”

Nineteen years specifically, if you’re talking about The Edge of Burnhead Wood, the much anticipated fourth release in The Balvenie’s famed Stories Collection.



The Edge of Burnhead Wood

Released in August in Australia, The Edge of Burnhead Wood celebrates the story of The Heather Trials, a project born from the opportunist mind of former Balvenie Estate Manager Dave Stewart. When The Balvenie veteran saw the distillery's Conval Hills encased in purple flowers, he recognised an opportunity. Filling a sack with the cropped flower, known as heather, he returned to the malting floor with an idea. Along with former distillery manager Ian Millar and Malt Man Robbie Gormley, Stewart dampened the heather, so as not to disintegrate it entirely, placing black coals on top of red hot ones, before layered it with dry heather. The thick plume of blue/grey smoke that burst from the kiln was used to dry barley for a one-off batch of experimental whisky. Nearly two decades on from that fateful day, the time has come for The Heather Trials to make their way down under. Through the winding trails and steep Speyside hills comes The Edge of Burnhead Wood, a lively, vibrant single malt whisky aged in first-fill bourbon casks for 19 years. "When you have a straight bourbon cask whisky, they've always got this bright, fresh, fruitiness, almost with a citrus taste," Blainey says. "That differs from the Double-Wood (The Balvenie's signature release) which is finished in European oak casks, the new 19 builds on that brightness and a little dryness from the oak for balance. But there is this other really interesting note in there that I almost can't put my finger on, it's just different!" But there's more to this new whisky than meets the eye. Like Blainey notes, the true essence of The Balvenie is taking what they've learned over years and using it to craft something entirely new, and yet ultimately familiar. For The Edge of Burnhead Wood, the use of heather is extremely rare, offering a new complexity to the heritage brand's iconic single malt. Even better, this release is the first-ever expression of The Balvenie made entirely with ingredients grown on its Dufftown estate. With a taste that evokes flavours of honey, cloves and caramelised baked dates, the sweetness of The Edge of Burnhead Wood is cut with an oaky dry finish, creating a complex new experience for Balvenie fans. It almost seems counter-intuitive; a traditionally-run distillery that produces hand-crafted whisky taking risks on a wildflower and an estate manager's vision. "We want that, if there is a good idea, let's run with it and give it a shot," Blainey explains. According to Blainey, that air of innovation is what The Balvenie lays claim to. The label's iconic Double-Wood cask-finishing process came from the mind of Malt Master David C. Stewart, a move that revolutionised the whisky industry. More than thirty years on, Stewart and The Balvenie team are continuing to script new chapters in the Speyside distillery's story. "You don't have to be new to be innovative and creative," Blainey says. "Some of the old guys are great at it because they know what's been done, they can think of things that haven't; the advantage of all that experience is being able to have a really good idea of what innovations will work." The Edge of Burnhead Wood is the latest in a long list of exciting new releases from The Balvenie, but as we all know, you don't start a fresh story on the final page.

[Buy it here](#)



The Stories Collection

Opening with The Sweet Toast of American Oak, The Balvenie's four-edition Stories Collection is an ode to the makers behind the distillery's most unique whiskies, many who have gone unheralded in the past. "This idea of celebrating the stories behind the whisky opens it up from being a drop of whisky in your glass to something that grows and becomes more of a journey," Blainey says. "It's about what those people who made it were thinking and doing at the time, where did the idea come from? Behind the word hand-crafted, there's a real person who has spent their life honing their skills to create our whisky." Each bottle in the range tells the tale of a different Balvenie legend, celebrating the pioneers that have taken whisky making tradition and turned it into lifelong ambition. From the story of a mix-matched dark barley delivery that heralded a 26-year-long whisky experiment, to the emergence of a new whisky icon in Apprentice Malt Master Kelsey McKechnie, The Balvenie Stories Collection takes whisky beyond sensory experience. Inviting fans in to hear tall tales earned through lives spent toiling in the Speyside distillery, this collection celebrates the stories behind the single malts and the people that make them larger than life. "When you think about what hand-crafted really means, to us, it's about the people," Blainey says. "You can learn to be a cooper and it will take you four years, but it takes the passion and love to do it for 50 years, like Ian McDonald, our head cooper. The same goes for David C. Stewart, our Malt Master; you can learn to become a Malt Master (if you're lucky), but to do it for almost 60 years; it's that level of commitment and passion that makes The Balvenie what it is." Experience has truly opened the door for innovation with The Balvenie and it's not lost on the drinker. There is a history in each glass, one that is continuously developing and maturing, pushing the boundaries of what traditional whisky-making is. "When things aren't really written down, it's the stories that survive," Blainey says. "The distillery is literally built on the stories that people tell there."



With a new release that is somehow unlike anything we've ever seen before, and yet so unmistakably Balvenie, there may yet be stories to

write. The Edge of Burnhead Wood is available in select bottle shops and bars across the country now for AUD\$475.

Richard Paterson steps back to focus on Dalmore

16th September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

As he celebrates 50 years with Whyte & Mackay, master distiller Richard Paterson has decided to step back from his day-to-day involvement across the company's whisky portfolio to focus on The Dalmore.



Richard Paterson will focus on The Dalmore going forward

Paterson joined Whyte & Mackay on 14 September 1970. By stepping back to focus on The Dalmore, Paterson will also be able to pursue other personal interests.

Paterson and Whyte & Mackay are preparing to launch six new single malts in 2021 as part of a collection called The Decades of the Dalmore. It will be part of an ongoing series of releases.

"I have been fortunate to have enjoyed each and every one of my 50 wonderful years," Paterson said. "I have had the opportunity to work with many incredible people down through the years, and incredible whiskies too of course.

"I am truly proud of what we have achieved together as Whyte & Mackay. For myself, I have the great honour to care for the truly extraordinary whisky we create at The Dalmore. I look forward to sharing some very special releases of The Dalmore in 2021."

Whyte & Mackay's portfolio includes single malt Scotch whiskies The Dalmore, Jura, Fettercairn and Tamnavulin. The group also owns a number of blended Scotch brands, such as John Barr, Claymore and the company's namesake Whyte & Mackay.

In February this year, Dalmore released [51 decanters of a 51-year-old single malt](#), priced at RRP £55,000 (US\$71,700) per bottle.

Last year, Paterson partnered with Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura to create a [49-year-old bottle of Dalmore whisky](#), which was auctioned for charity.

Murray gives Canadian rye top spot in Whisky Bible

16th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Writer Jim Murray has named a Canadian rye expression the 'world's best whisky' in his new *Whisky Bible 2021*.



Alberta Premium Cask Strength was named the World Whisky of the Year by Jim Murray

Murray releases his *Whisky Bible* every year, which reveals the bottlings that have secured top marks across categories such as blended Scotch, Japanese and European.

For the latest edition, Murray named Beam Suntory's Canadian bottling Alberta Premium Cask Strength World Whisky of the Year.

Made from a mix of malted and unmalted rye, Alberta Premium Cask Strength is bottled at 65.1% ABV and was given a score of 97.5 out of 100. It is made at Calgary-based Alberta Distillers from 100% prairie rye mash bills and Rocky Mountain water.

Murray said of the whisky: "A succulence to the oils, balanced perfectly by ulmo and manuka honeys ensure for the most chewable Canadian mouthful possibly ever and yet this is constantly salivating, from the very first nanosecond. Truly world-class whisky from possibly the world's most underrated distillery. How can something be so immense yet equally delicate?"

"For any whisky lover on the planet looking for huge but nearly perfectly balanced experience, then here you go. And with rye at its most rampantly beautiful, this is something to truly worship."

Alberta Premium was previously named Canadian Whisky of the Year by Murray in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

"It is such an honour to be named World Whisky of the Year by Jim Murray and we are thrilled for our Alberta Distillers team," said Albert Baladi, president and CEO, Beam Suntory.

"To receive this prestigious accolade is a testament to the team's dedication and passion for crafting a premium spirit of the highest quality, and comes at a time of Canadian whisky resurgence around the world."

The last and only time a Canadian whisky scooped up the top award was in 2015 when Murray [named Diageo's Crown Royal Northern Harvest Rye](#) the 'world's best whisky'.

Murray said the last time he gave a Canadian whisky the accolade, police in Toronto were called as drinkers brawled over the remaining bottles on the shelf.

Last year, all [three of the top accolades were given to American whiskeys](#), all hailing from one producer. Sazerac scooped all three of the top spots and its 1792 Full Proof Kentucky Straight Bourbon from Kentucky-based Barton 1792 Distillery was named the 'world's best whisky' by Murray.

Other accolades

Meanwhile, Sazerac nabbed the second place spot with one of its Bourbons, while an Indian whisky snagged the third place position. New Orleans-based Sazerac scooped up the second place spot for its "mind-blowing" Staggy Jr Barrel Proof Bourbon. Murray praised the expression for its finish of "cocoa, dark liquorice and so much toastiness".

Indian whisky Paul John Mithuna from the Paul John Distillery in Goa secured the third place spot in the *Whisky Bible 2021*, marking the first time a south Asian whisky has secured one of the coveted positions. Murray enjoyed the whisky's "sensational chocolate and spices complexity".

The Paul John Distillery is owned by Bangalore-based John Distilleries, which produces the Paul John single malt and Officer's Choice whiskies. Buffalo Trace owner Sazerac [owns an equity stake](#) in John Distilleries.

In the 2021 edition, Speyside producer Glen Grant took home Scotch Whisky of the Year for its 15 Year Old Batch Strength 1st Edition with Murray praising the Moray distillery's "extraordinary and unique charm".

Other sectional winners include:

Scotch Blend of the Year – Ballantine's 30 Year Old

Scotch 10 Years & Under – Annandale

Irish Whiskey of the Year – Middleton Barry Crockett Legacy

American Rye of the Year – Thomas H Handy Sazerac

Japanese Whisky of the Year – Nikka Whisky Single Malt Yoichi Apple Brandy Wood Finish

European Whisky of the Year (multiple cask) – Puni Aura Italian Single Malt

Murray tasted 1,252 new drams for the 2021 edition of the book, which is available to buy from whiskybible.com priced at £14.99 (US\$19.40).

Glenturret reveals new core whisky line and redesign

17th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The Glenturret has unveiled a new core collection of Scotch whiskies and a refreshed look for the series, as it discontinues its previous range.



The new core Glenturret range features the founding family's coat of arms

The Glenturret in Perthshire, which claims to be Scotland's oldest working distillery, [originally planned to launch its rebrand in June](#). However, it was pushed back to September due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The new core range includes four expressions: Triple Wood, 10-year-old Peat Smoked, a 12-year-old and a 15-year-old. There are also two limited edition whiskies, a 25-year-old and 30-year-old.

The range was created by The Macallan's Bob Dalgarno, who joined The Glenturret as whisky maker last year.

"I saw Glenturret as a great opportunity to work alongside an understated yet highly skilled team who influence the creation of the distillery new make spirit as only their hands can," said Dalgarno. 'Alongside this was the challenge of creating a new range of whiskies with a different cask and character profile. Building on previous experiences and having the freedom to influence and develop, respecting the history whilst writing new chapters was a perfect fit.' Ian Renwick, distillery manager at The Glenturret, said Dalgarno's appointment was a "recognition of the scale of our ambition and a testament to our transformative work over the past eight months".

The new range is also the first [under the distillery's new owner, Glenturret Holding](#), a joint venture formed in April 2019 between luxury goods company Lalique Group and Swiss entrepreneur Hansjörg Wyss, Lalique's second-largest shareholder. The Glenturret, home to The Famous Grouse Experience, was previously owned by Edrington and was sold in December 2018.

John Laurie, managing director of The Glenturret, said the rebrand had been in development for more than a year.

He explained: "You only get one chance at a first impression, even though the distillery is the oldest working distillery in Scotland, in recent memories and during the recent boom in the global single malt market, The Glenturret brand was a subsidiary to The Famous Grouse Experience.

"This for all intents and purposes has made us the oldest new kid in town. This strange background has added a complexity to our launch plans, we needed to create a brand vision that was relevant to today whilst respecting our unparalleled history and heritage."

Each expression comes in a new, heavier rectangular bottle with a broad shoulder to embody The Glenturret's "elegance and stature". The packaging also carries The Glenturret crest, which was inspired by the Murray family's coat of arms. The Murray family founded the distillery and has played a key role in The Glenturret over the past 250 years. The Glenturret's previous range, which includes the Triple Wood, Sherry Cask, and Peated bottlings, has been discontinued. A small amount of remaining stock is available for retailers. The original new make spirit is still used to make the refreshed range.

Core range

The new Glenturret Triple Wood (43% ABV) has been aged in three casks: American, Sherry and Bourbon. It has notes of sweet fruit and caramel, ginger cake and vanilla. It is priced at RRP £47 (US\$61).

The Glenturret 10 Years Old Peat Smoked offers fresh citrus fruit, vanilla and light spice, along with sea salt and heather. It is bottled at 50% ABV and priced at RRP £52 (US\$67).

Meanwhile, the 12-year-old whisky is described as having notes of rich fruit cake, walnuts, sweet apple, ginger, and lemon tea. It has an ABV of 46% and is priced at RRP £60 (US\$78).

The 15-year-old expression (55% ABV) offers vibrant lemon zest, toffee apple and spice. It is priced at RRP £110 (US\$143).

Limited to 204 bottles, the 25-year-old brings notes of fruit sponge, lemon and caramelised apple. It also has layers of cinnamon and

vanilla, soft oak and ginger. It is bottled at 44.5% ABV and priced at RRP £980 (US\$1,271).

Finally, The Glenturret 30 Years Old offers tropical fruit, vanilla, green apple, pear and oak. It is bottled at 45.7% and limited to 750 bottles, priced at RRP £1,600 (US\$2,000).

The new Glenturret range will be available at select hotels, restaurants, bars and retailers across a number of markets including the UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, China and Taiwan. It is also available to buy online from The Glenturret website. The Glenturret also hopes to open its renovated visitor centre in December this year. Laurie also said there may be an additional product launching at the end of the year.

The distillery aims to produce 215,000 litres of alcohol this year with the capacity to produce 500,000 litres annually in the future. Renwick is currently working on a project looking at the best way to achieve the expanded capacity while preserving the site's traditions and spirit character, and taking into consideration the environmental impact.

Lagavulin launches Islay Jazz 2020 whisky

18th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Diageo-owned Scotch brand Lagavulin has released a limited edition 22-year-old single malt whisky to mark this year's Islay Jazz Festival.



Limited to 2,004 bottles, the whisky is only available to buy from the Lagavulin Distillery

The Lagavulin Jazz 2020 whisky celebrates the 22nd anniversary of the Islay Jazz Festival this year, which will be held in an online format on 3 October.

Since 2011, Lagavulin has released a whisky every year for the festival on its island home of Islay. Held in partnership with Jazz Scotland, this year's event will be hosted from 7pm BST on the Lagavulin and Friends of the Classic Malts Facebook pages.

[New Lagavulin Distillery manager](#), Pierrick Guillaume, will host the digital festival, alongside Ewan Gunn, Diageo's global whisky master. The event will feature musical performances, an exploration of the connection between jazz and whisky, and a showcase of whisky-based cocktails.

Guillaume said: "The Islay Jazz Festival has become a pilgrimage for many whisky and jazz lovers around the globe and we hope our friends will join us for the online event to celebrate 22 years of the festival. "This will be my first festival having taken over as distillery manager of Lagavulin and although we are unable to host the event in Islay, we wanted to continue to honour the occasion by creating a remarkable bottling."

The 2020 edition was matured in refill American and European Oak casks, some of which have been seasoned with wine. There are 2,004 bottles available which carry an ABV of 52.6%.

Guillaume added: "This year's 22-year-old bottle is a glorious and unique Lagavulin from an interesting mix of casks that have given an extra twist of rich, smooth and sweet fruitiness to the palate and finish." The Lagavulin Jazz 2020 whisky will be available to buy from 3 October from the Lagavulin Distillery on Islay, priced at RRP £405 (US\$526) per 700ml bottle.

Whisky Review: Kilchoman Loch Gorm 2020

By [Cindy Capparelli](#) / September 18, 2020

Kilchoman's yearly release of heavily-peated, sherry-rested whisky is appropriated named '[Loch Gorm](#),' after Islay's largest freshwater lake. Loch Gorm's peaty bottom dyes its waters the color of tea, which can be seen from the distillery's windows.

Islay's natural beauty isn't usually what we talk about, and it's becoming an increasing concern. This tiny chip of Scotland, just under [240](#) square miles, is slowly buckling under the weight of so many tourists.

The main two issues are these: Islay's [infrastructure](#) was built to handle its 3,200 or so residents, and most of the [money](#) generated by the whisky industry leaves the island. Kilchoman has helped on both fronts, rebuilding the main access roads to its buildings, and being one of only two [Islay-owned](#) distilleries.

The fact remains, however, that Islay sends £200 million yearly alcohol duty to the UK treasury and levies no part of that for themselves. Various schemes are being floated, like a five-pence duty on all whisky leaving the island. Nearby [Shetland Island](#) is home to an oil and gas terminal, and they have taxed every barrel of oil coming through since the 1960's.

Whisky is only growing. At the moment, nine working distilleries call the island home. More are planned, and some have the corporate marketing dollars to ensure droves of visitors. Cautious ballparks put Islay production increasing by one-third by 2024. All this says nothing of gin. [Bruichladdich's](#) sideline, [The Botanist](#), is forecast to increase bottling by 290% over the next seven years.

It would do all our whisky-loving hearts good to see the distilleries, especially the ones with deep pockets (my eye's on you, [Lagavulin](#)), invest in the island that makes it possible for them to create such world-renowned whisky.

Speaking of that precious dram, it's about time to taste the new Kilchoman Loch Gorm. It's all matured in 21 oloroso sherry casks from [bodega José Miguel Martín](#), and blends 13-year, 12-year, 11-year and nine-year [whiskies](#).



Kilchoman Loch Gorm 2020 (image via ImPex Beverages)

Tasting Notes: Kilchoman Loch Gorm 2020

Vital Stats: Kilchoman Loch Gorm is 92 proof and made from 100% malted barley. It's aged in oloroso sherry casks and is a blend of nine-to-13-year-old whiskies. Only 15,500 bottles are to be released globally, listed at around £70, or about 90USD.

Appearance: This whisky is a very clear deep gold that beads and forms fat tears.

Nose: On the nose, it's campfire and smoked meats, undergirded by white flowers, dust and malted milk.

Palate: Fiery fireplace at first, the flavor quickly softens to a fruity sweetness on the mid palate with light saline. Roasted nuts and lingering black tea round out the finish.

10 Bourbon-Spiked Dessert Recipes and What to Drink With Them

words: [KATIE BROWN](#)

Fall is here, and with it comes some of our favorite things: Cozy sweaters, crunchy leaves, and, of course, the return of some beloved cool-weather flavors. And while many people associate fall with pumpkin, apple, and gingerbread, we at VinePair are excited to indulge in another seasonal staple: [Bourbon](#).

But why not have it all? From seasonal whiskeys, to sweet and spiced cocktails, there are endless ways to sip bourbon during the cooler months. This year, however, we're getting creative — combining the spirit with the fall desserts we adore, all in one go. After all, who doesn't love multitasking?

These tasty recipes combine our two favorite fall pastimes: The sweet pursuit of decadent desserts and the heat and comfort of cooking with bourbon. From apple bourbon bundt cake, to banana bourbon layer cake, these booze-soaked delicacies prove that bourbon is just as nice to eat as it is to drink.



Pair with: Wheated bourbon, such as [Larceny Small Batch](#)



For a dessert straight out of a bourbon lover's dream, try these browned butter and bourbon blondies. These mess-free squares travel well and are perfect for sharing — or saving. To spice up the dessert, try sipping wheated bourbon alongside these blondies. With its lighter flavor profile, this slightly sweet spirit is a perfect match for these luscious squares.

[EASIEST CARAMEL APPLE CLAFOUTIS \(BON APPETIT\)](#)

Pair with: Vin Santo, such as [2008 Felsina Vin Santo](#)



This one-skillet apple dessert is ideal for baking newbies, requiring minimal prep and cleanup compared to traditional pie. Apples and bourbon are this dessert's secret weapons, adding a level of spice and acidity to this otherwise sweet dish. Try pairing this dish with an equally fruit-forward dessert wine, such as Vin Santo. This balanced Italian dessert wine adds to the apple-pie sweetness without overpowering it.

[BOURBON-CREAM CHEESE BROWNIES \(MY RECIPES\)](#)

Pair with: Flanders red ale, such as [Rodenbach Classic](#)



Bourbon-infused cream cheese is sandwiched between layers of brownie batter in this decadent treat. The rich chocolate and cheese pair beautifully with a tart Flanders red ale such as [Rodenbach](#). The sour and sweet character of this Flemish beer refreshes the palate while adding oaky, fruity flavors.

[MAPLE-BOURBON BANANA PUDDING CAKE \(FOOD AND WINE\)](#)

Pair with: Hefeweizen, such as [Wallenpaupack Brewing Company Hawley Hefeweizen](#)



This low-effort cake is rich and syrupy and adds a couple of drams of bourbon for its characteristic sweet, warm vanilla notes. As the cake bakes, a bourbon and maple syrup sauce forms on the bottom, making for a dessert that's half cake, half pudding, and all delicious. To ease up on the viscous nature of this dish, pair a slice of cake with a tall [glass of hefeweizen](#), which lifts and enhances the cake's banana flavors.

[BANANA BOURBON LAYER CAKE \(MARTHA STEWART\)](#)

Pair with: Port wine, such as [Zuccardi Malamado Malbec Port](#)



This boozy cake is so tasty, it's bananas. In a rich take on a New Orleans staple, the Bananas Foster, bourbon, banana, and butter are flambéed on top of a layer cake. The fiery excitement results in a moist, syrupy dessert that's sure to impress your guests. [Port](#) wine's spicy undertones even out the sweetness of this rich dessert.

[BOURBON APPLE CRISP SHOOTERS WITH BOURBON CREAM \(BETTY CROCKER\)](#)

Pair with: Apple brandy, such as [Laird's Single Barrel](#)



Take a shot and eat it, too, with this sippable version of an apple crisp. As both dessert and after-dinner cocktail, it's an ideal date-night treat or weekend reward, and it requires only 15 minutes of preparation. Sipping this shooter alongside a small glass of [apple brandy](#) (shot glass optional) both cleanses the palate between sips and stretches out the experience of the apple crisp.

[CHOCOLATE FUDGE PECAN PIE TART \(HOW SWEET EATS\)](#)

Pair with: Brown ale, such as [Anderson Valley Black Rice Ale](#)



This chocolatey pecan pie may put the traditional version to shame. Bourbon is combined with chocolate, pecans, and a whole lot of butter to make this grownup take on a Thanksgiving favorite. [Brown ale's](#) lightly chocolatey, roasty, and nutty flavors meld with those in the

chocolate fudge, while its carbonation lifts the fudge flavors so you can appreciate the next bite.

[GLUTEN-FREE BOURBON CARAMEL SAMOAS](#) (MINIMALIST BAKER)

Pair with: Gluten-free IPA, such as [Glutenberg IPA](#)



Delight your adult and childhood taste buds with this gluten-free, dairy-free take on the Samoa. Unlike the [Girl Scout](#) cookie, this so-called “healthier” version is topped with [bourbon caramel sauce](#) — made from only four ingredients. (Bourbon, unless made with 100 percent corn, is made using gluten-containing ingredients such as malted barley and wheat. However, [distillation removes gluten proteins from the spirit](#).) To complete your gluten-free dessert experience, pair these cookies with a gluten-free [IPA](#). The citrusy aromas and flavors from the hops are a great complement to the caramel sweetness.

[PUMPKIN BREAD WITH BROWN BUTTER AND BOURBON](#) (NEW YORK TIMES COOKING)

Pair with: Moscato d’Asti, such as [2018 Marengo Strev Moscato d’Asti](#)



If it wasn’t already clear, pumpkin is fall’s BFF. From pumpkin spiced lattes, to [pumpkin beers](#), the flavor has taken the culinary world by storm. This take on classic pumpkin bread adds bourbon to the mix for an extra hearty and spicy taste. Sweet, fruity [Moscato](#) d’Asti offers a satisfying contrast to this savory dessert.

[BOURBON PEACH COBBLER](#) (FOOD NETWORK)

Pair with: High-rye bourbon, such as [Old Grand-Dad Bonded](#)



This fruitful cobbler has peach, cinnamon, and bourbon flavors. It’s also relatively easy to make — taking about an hour to prepare, bake, and devour. High-rye bourbon is a great match for this recipe, as its subtly spicy bite balances out the sweet and fruity flavors of this dessert.

Upcoming Dinner Dates

Monday September 28th, 2020 - KSMS/Daft Brewery Event
October 5th, 2020 - James Neil - Beam Suntory
October 19th, 2020 - Speyside / Islands
November 16th, 2020 - Mike Brisebois - Distell Night -
Bunnahabhain / Deanston / Tobermory / Ledaig
December 7th 2020 - Christmas Dinner
January 25th, 2021 - Robbie Burns Dinner
February 22nd, 2021 - 18 Year Old - Adulthood Arrives !!
March 15th, 2021 - Irish / Speyside / Highlands
April 19th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Islands / Islay
May 17th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Speyside
June 28th, 2021 - BBQ (Final Exam)
July 19th, 2021 - 10th “Matt” Night
Friday August 27th 2021 - 14th Annual Premium Night
September 20th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside /
Highlands / Islands / Islay
October 18th, 2021 - Speyside / Highlands
November 15th, 2021 - Speyside
December 6th 2021 - Christmas Dinner

Membership and Dinner prices for 2020-2021

Membership Fee:	\$50 (singles) \$75 (couples)
One Time Initiation Fee:	\$15
Standard Dinner Fee:	\$80 (member) \$85 (non-member)
Christmas Dinner Fee:	\$80 (member) \$85 (non-member)
Robbie Burns Dinner Fee:	\$80 (member) \$85 (non-member)
June BBQ Dinner Fee:	\$80 (member) \$80 (non-member)

Reservation policy

- The agreement with the Kitchen's requires that we provide seven (7) business days notice for them to guarantee accommodation for our requested numbers. To accommodate the Kitchen's needs and meet our contractual obligation with them; our members are requested to respond to the emailed invitation seven (7) 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 23rd, 2019 dinner date as an example:
 - Dinner invitations will be sent out Friday August 23rd, 2019. Please respond to me (rdifazio04@gmail.com). 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).
 - Unless otherwise stated accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm.
 - Once the RSVP date has been achieved I will e-mail a spreadsheet informing everyone of their status and amount due.

Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm and Monday September 23rd, 2019 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$70). 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 23rd, 2019 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$70). A member will be responsible for their guest's cancellation (\$80).
- If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm and Monday September 23rd, 2019, their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.

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.

Dinner Payments

- Please consider sending your payment by e-transfer prior to the dinner. The password will be "KSMS2020RDF", 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.

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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Scotch Whisky

Company	Product	Medal
The Glenmorangie Company	Glenmorangie Grand Vintage 1995	Master &Taste Master
Littlemill Distillery	Littlemill Vintage 1992	Master
Douglas Laing & Co	Big Peat Global Travellers' Exclusive	Master
Douglas Laing & Co	Sallywag Global Travellers' Exclusive	Master
Glen Scotia	Glen Scotia Vintage 1991	Master
The Glenmorangie Company	The Accord	Gold
The Glenmorangie Company	The Tribute	Gold
The Glenmorangie Company	The Elementa	Gold
Loch Lomond Whiskies	Loch Lomond 18 Years Old Inchmurrin	Gold
Loch Lomond Whiskies	Loch Lomond 14 Years Old Inchmoan	Gold
Loch Lomond Whiskies	Loch Lomond Madeira Wood Finish	Gold
Glen Scotia	Glen Scotia 16 Years Old	Silver
The Glenmorangie Company	Glenmorangie 19 Years Old	Silver