

Kingston Single Malt Society

www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com

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

DECEMBER 7th, 2020

VOLUME 14; NUMBER 6a



MENU

Welcome & 1st Nosing: TAMDHU 12 YEAR OLD
(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

2nd Nosing: COMPASS BOX THE CIRCLE WHISKY
(introduced by: Ken Goodland)
Soup: Parsnip, Apple & Thyme

3rd Nosing: HART BROTHERS BENRIACH FIRST PORT PIPE
FILLED 11 YEAR OLD MALT
(introduced by: Sylvain Bouffard)

2nd Course: Baked Brie, Rosemary, Walnuts & Honey

Repos - 4th Nosing: HART BROTHERS GLEN MORAY BURGUNDY
WINE CASK FINISH 11 YEAR OLD MALT
(introduced by: Sylvain Bouffard)

5th Nosing: HART BROTHERS STRATHISLA FIRST ARMAGNAC
BUTT FILLED 9 YEAR OLD MALT
(introduced by: Sylvain Bouffard)

Choice of Main Course Entree:

Roasted Turkey, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Chorizo, Cashew,
Sage & Cranberry Dressing, Heirloom Carrots,
Gravy & Cranberry Sauce

Or

Pesto Crusted Salmon, Ratatouille, Saffron Risotto

6th Nosing: TAMDHU BATCH STRENGTH - BATCH No. 4
(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

Dessert: Chocolate Mint Cheese Cake

COST OF THE MALTS

TAMDHU 12 YEAR OLD LCBO 507558 | 750 mL bottle
Price: \$115.95 Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 43.0%
Alcohol/Vol.

COMPASS BOX THE CIRCLE WHISKY LCBO 507558 |
750 mL bottle **Price: \$175.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey
46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**HART BROTHERS BENRIACH FIRST PORT PIPE
FILLED 11 YEAR OLD MALT** Distilled: 06/2006;
Bottled: 06/2017 LCBO 511804 | 700 mL bottle, **Price:**
\$139.79, Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**HART BROTHERS GLEN MORAY BURGUNDY WINE
CASK FINISH 11 YEAR OLD MALT** Distilled:
11/2008; Bottled: 03/2020 LCBO 511835 | 700 mL
bottle, **Price: \$148.99**, Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 52.1%
Alcohol/Vol.

**HART BROTHERS STRATHISLA FIRST ARMAGNAC
BUTT FILLED 9 YEAR OLD MALT** Distilled: 11/2010;
Bottled: 06/2020 LCBO 511811 | 700 mL bottle, **Price:**
\$145.99, Spirits, Scotch Whisky, 53.8% Alcohol/Vol.

TAMDHU BATCH STRENGTH - BATCH No. 4 LCBO
796570 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$125.95** Spirits,
Whisky/Whiskey 57.8% Alcohol/Vol.

NOVEMBER - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 40 November attendees @ \$80)	= \$3200.00
November dinner 40 persons = \$55.00/ea	= \$2200.00
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt)	= \$1000.00
Cost of Single Malts:	= \$886.74
Cost of Pours per Person = \$22.16	
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= (-\$113.26)
Cost per person 26 attendees (All inclusive)	= \$77.17

Upcoming Dinner Dates

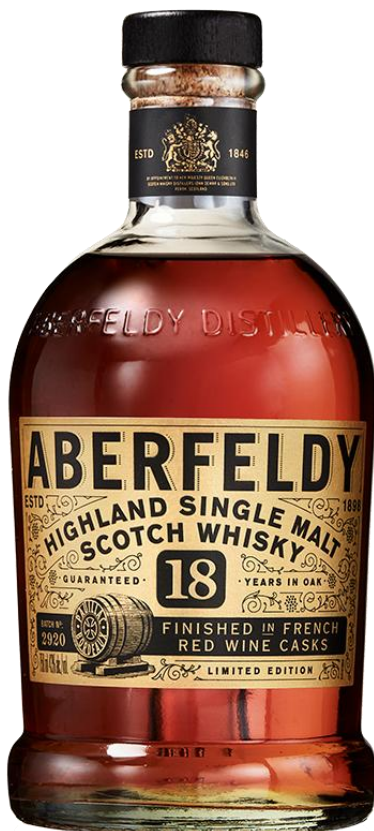
January 14th, 2021 - Bladnoch Dinner - Lowland
January 25th, 2021 - Kilchoman - Islay - Robbie Burns Dinner
February 8th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Islands
February 22nd, 2021 - Islay
March 15th, 2021 - Irish / Speyside / Highlands / Islay
April 19th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Islands / Islay
May 17th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Speyside
June 28th, 2021 - BBQ
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

Whisky

ADVOCATE

TOP 20 WHISKIES OF 2020

#10 • Aberfeldy 18 year old French Red Wine Cask-Finished (Batch 2920)



- Rank: 10
- Year: 2020
- Score: 93
- Price: \$120
- ABV: 43%
- Style: Single Malt
- Place of Origin: Scotland (Highlands)

Volume 90%

Aging scotch in a secondary cask is tricky, and tinkering with a whisky that has already achieved 18 years of age is even riskier. This well-matured Aberfeldy spent its final months in red wine casks from Bordeaux under the bold vision and deft hand of malt master Stephanie Macleod. As a result, it soars above its station. Never intrusive, the red wine finish suggests Fig Newtons and dried cherries, building upon Aberfeldy's classic honey-vanilla profile to evoke strawberry shortcake and flavors of jam and clotted cream on a fresh-baked scone. A complex, mature, and moreish whisky at an excellent price. —Jeffery Lindenmuth



- Rank: 9
- Year: 2020
- Score: 93
- Price: \$65
- ABV: 46%
- Style: Blended Malt
- Place of Origin: Scotland

Volume 90%

The much-beloved Peat Monster was recently given a new recipe designed to create greater depth and elegance. The peat influence, while still omnipresent, is now more subtle. On the nose it's gentle and fragrant, wafting over candied citrus, lemon-frosted cake, and raspberry, along with classic peated undertones of charcoal and iodine. The palate is creamy in texture, with pleasant notes of brine, seashells, ashiness, and a floral peat influence that swirls gently around rich vanilla, tropical hints of lime, smoked meats, and generous spice. The finish offers bitter chocolate, lemon hard candy, and a bang of spice and smoke. —David Fleming

#8 • Kilbeggan Single Pot Still



- Rank: 8
- Year: 2020
- Score: 93
- Price: \$45
- ABV: 43%
- Style: Single Pot Still
- Place of Origin: Ireland

Volume 90%

Among this year's strong field of new single pot still releases, Kilbeggan bottled a gem of an Irish whiskey that sparkled brighter than them all. The already historic whiskey style achieves a powerful air of authenticity. First it's distilled in the oldest working pot still in Ireland, and the 19th-century Locke family recipe incorporates 2.5% oats, a common addition at the time. Melon, candied peel, nutmeg, cinnamon, and honeysuckle aromas cascade into a palate made especially lush and creamy from the oats, with citrus peel, apricot, and roasted hazelnut flavors leading to a mellow, rounded finish, adeptly exhibiting a crisp articulation of pot still spiciness throughout. —Jonny McCormick

#7 • Elijah Craig Straight Rye



- Rank: 7
- Year: 2020
- Score: 94
- Price: \$30
- ABV: 47%
- Style: Straight Rye
- Place of Origin: Kentucky

Volume 90%

Elijah Craig always impresses with value, but until now has been confined to bourbon. This foray into rye whiskey sticks close to Elijah Craig's bourbon roots by using only the minimum-required 51% rye in its formulation; however, it does achieve a nice departure in flavor. Aromas include butterscotch, caramel-nut clusters, and peppery spice. The spice ramps up on the palate, carried forward by the full body, hearty proof, and mouth-coating texture, as cherry cola, baking chocolate, and darker fruits emerge. Priced a notch below comparable peers, this rye delivers powerful flavors that feel excitingly untamed, and will impress bourbon and rye lovers alike. —Jeffery Lindenmuth

#6 • Ardbeg 5 year old Wee Beastie



- Rank: 6
- Year: 2020
- Score: 94
- Price: \$47
- ABV: 47.4%
- Style: Single Malt
- Place of Origin: Scotland (Islay)

Volume 90%

The youthful age statement may take many scotch drinkers by surprise, but don't let double-digit bias prevent you from enjoying this exciting yet easy-drinking peat bomb. Salt water and seaweed, smoke and sweet peat tussle on the nose, while vanilla, fresh berries, and ample nuttiness spread out and take hold. The structured, balanced palate is creamy, nutty, and spiced, showcasing brown-sugar bacon, smoked salt, milk chocolate, pepper, and well-integrated oak, all wrapped up like a cigar with flakes of ash and sustained smoke. This precocious youngster shows more complexity than some whiskies twice its age, making it a remarkable find. —*Susannah Skiver Barton*

#5 • Wild Turkey Rare Breed Barrel Proof Straight Rye



- Rank: 5
- Year: 2020
- Score: 94
- Price: \$60
- ABV: 56.1%
- Style: Straight Rye
- Place of Origin: Kentucky

Volume 90%

Rare Breed bourbon enjoys notoriety as a great value, and this new rye stands shoulder to shoulder with it. A gift for Wild Turkey fans from master distillers Jimmy and Eddie Russell, it's not chill-filtered, making it even more full-bodied and rich. Zesty aromas of mint, eucalyptus, pine, and cedar chest mingle with sliced orange, candied strawberry, and sweet pecans on the nose, and that profile carries over into the nutty, spiced, herbaceous, and citrus-sweet flavors of the palate. With water the full spectrum of flavors—and the harmonious interplay of grain and barrel—reveal themselves, leaving an unforgettable impression of perfectly controlled power. —*Susannah Skiver Barton*

#4 • Bulleit Blenders' Select (Batch 001)



- Rank: 4
- Year: 2020
- Score: 95
- Price: \$50
- ABV: 50%
- Style: Straight Bourbon
- Place of Origin: Kentucky

Volume 90%

Blender Eboni Major makes her mark with this limited-edition whiskey that incorporates three distillates, all at least 9 years old. The multiple flavor profiles and ages converge to create a hyper-charged bourbon with layers of flavor. A lively nose offers raspberry, chocolate, mint, confectioners' sugar, and candied pecans. The palate is bold, with flavors of cherry, spearmint, dark chocolate, nougat, pepper, and polished oak. More mint follows on the finish, along with bitter chocolate, dark berries, and spice. Each batch will have its own profile, and this incredible inaugural effort promises more greatness to come.

—David Fleming

#3 • Benriach The Smoky Twelve



- Rank: 3
- Year: 2020
- Score: 94
- Price: \$65
- ABV: 46%
- Style: Single Malt
- Place of Origin: Scotland (Speyside)

Volume 90%

Benriach is a sleeper of a single malt, but that's about to change. Part of a 2020 relaunch of its core line, this grabbed our attention with its sophistication, breadth of flavors, and lovely refinement. Much of the credit surely goes to master blender Rachel Barrie for creating a smoky whisky that both peat lovers and the peat-wary can enjoy. Rather than medicinal intensity, the peat is redolent of gentle, sweetly smoky fruits that integrate seamlessly with notes of vanilla, toasted almond, chocolate, blueberry, and bacon. It beckons like the wafting smoke of a warming autumn bonfire, then welcomes with its lush and velvety embrace. —Jeffery Lindenmuth

#2 • Knob Creek 12 year old



- Rank: 2
- Year: 2020
- Score: 95
- Price: \$60
- ABV: 50%
- Style: Straight Bourbon
- Place of Origin: Kentucky

Volume 90%

Until now, most Knob Creek has been bottled at 9 years of age or younger for good reason: There's no guarantee that bourbon will taste good after a dozen years in the barrel—let alone great. This one is richly complex from the start: York Peppermint Pattie, raisins, baking spice, dark chocolate-covered cherries, iced tea, and tobacco barn appear on the nose, followed by a chewy, full palate laden with cinnamon, allspice, and ginger, and perfectly balanced with sweet berry cobbler, chocolate ganache, and caramel. The finish goes on and on. Add in a fair price and excellent availability as part of Knob Creek's core lineup, and only one question remains: What are you waiting for?
—Susannah Skiver Barton

#1 • Larceny Barrel Proof (Batch B520)



- Rank: 1
- Year: 2020
- Score: 95
- Price: \$50
- ABV: 61.1%
- Style: Straight Bourbon
- Place of Origin: Kentucky

Volume 90%

Wheated bourbons, which feature wheat rather than rye as their secondary grain to corn, have attracted legions of devotees in recent years despite being relatively few compared to their rye counterparts. “Wheaters” like Pappy Van Winkle have achieved rock star status, putting them out of reach for many of us. So when we taste a widely available wheated bourbon that displays the soft, sweet, fruity profile of the style, we take note. Larceny Barrel Proof, our Whisky of the Year, delivers on wheated bourbon's appeal and then some. Big and powerful, it enters the ring at 61.1% ABV, but it's no lumbering heavyweight. It floats across the palate with stunning grace and subtlety, its wheated mashbill a delicate counterpoint to its formidable proof. It begins with a flurry of sweet bakery aromas: honey bun, angel food cake, and apple pie à la mode. The palate dazzles with notes of crème brûlée, chocolate, drizzled

caramel, honey-roasted peanuts, and lashings of baking spice, followed by a lengthy finish loaded with cinnamon, more chocolate, and robust spice. Water helps unleash layers of these flavors, but Larceny Barrel Proof is amazingly enjoyable even at full proof—no easy thing for a whiskey this big.

The original Larceny Small Batch debuted in 2012 as the modern heir to owner Heaven Hill's historic wheater, Old Fitzgerald. Following a few special appearances, this barrel-proof version launched to the general public in January 2020, offering wheated bourbon lovers an exceptional treat that's also widely available—at a very affordable \$50.

Larceny Barrel Proof is released in three batches annually, in January, May, and September. Each year, the releases are labeled with a code using a letter to indicate the sequence, and three digits indicating the month and year. This award goes to B520, but you'd be wise to give any of them a try. —David Fleming

Glendronach Adds A New Port Wood Single Malt To Its American Line Up

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / November 18, 2020

Scotland's The Glendronach distillery is a Scotch single malt whisky maker well known over the years for its use of sherry cask aging as part of its maturation program. It does make use of other casks as well though, something we took note of last year when [a port wood finish was first announced](#). This offering has now apparently made its way to American shores.

The Glendronach Port Wood, according to those behind it, was initially "matured in the distillery's signature Pedro Ximénez and Oloroso sherry casks, followed by a second maturation in some of the finest port pipes from the majestic Douro Valley in Portugal." It is bottled at 46% ABV and has no age statement.



The Glendronach Port Wood (image via The Glendronach)

"The Glendronach means 'valley of the brambles' in old Scots Gaelic," said The Glendronach Master Blender, Rachel Barrie, in a prepared statement. "We are delighted to celebrate this heritage with a Portuguese twist on our revered Pedro Ximénez and Oloroso sherry cask maturation, which uses the finest Spanish oak.

"This extra maturation in Port casks imparts a deep cherry wood color and enriches the layers of fruit in The Glendronach, with delightful waves of Victoria plum, brambles and sandalwood on the nose. Layers upon layers of rich fruit flavor open up on the palate with notes of roasted apple crumble and gingerbread, developing into baked orange and black cherry back-notes."

This whisky, which is non-chill filtered and of natural color, is being released for purchase through select domestic retailers, pricing around \$90 per 750 ml bottle. More official tasting notes are below.

- Color: Intense cherry wood
- Nose: Breathe in delightful waves of Victoria plum, bramble and strawberry jam with top notes of cherry blossom and honeysuckle on a base of sandalwood and ginger

- Palate: Layers upon layers of rich fruits. Sip blackberry and roasted apple crumble with freshly baked gingerbread, developing into a baked orange and black cherry back-note
- Finish: Savor orange peel, sultana and cherry cake lingering into the richly fruity finish

The Glenlivet Has A New 12 Year Whisky Inspired By Brand's Origins

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / November 30, 2020

The Glenlivet recently announced it was launching the new The Glenlivet 12 Year Old Illicit Still — the first in a series of limited-edition whiskies known as "The Original Stories" range that is said to "celebrate the brand's passion and originality." These releases draw inspiration from the what's described as the distillery's illicit past — specifically George Smith, who began illegally distilling whisky in the 1800s.

The whisky became available earlier this month for around £45, or about \$60 USD. Its bottle is designed to look like the oldest bottle in their archives, sporting "copper highlights that represent the hand-crafted stills used to illicitly produce the whisky in the 1800s." It's non-chill-filtered and has an ABV of 48%.



The Glenlivet 12 Year Old Illicit Still (image via The Glenlivet)

What's characterized as "the signature Glenlivet floral and fruity style" was turned up for this limited edition.

"The Glenlivet has always been about moving things forward and setting new standards," said Ian Peart, Pernod Ricard UK Commercial Director, [in a prepared statement](#), "and we're confident the launch of The Glenlivet 12-Year-Old Illicit Still limited-edition will inspire whisky enthusiasts with its modern interpretation of George Smith's visionary spirit."

Each year, the brand noted, a new Glenlivet 12-Year-Old Illicit Still will be released that aims to reveal the originality at the heart of the brand. Each whisky will offer a different tasting experience and come in a uniquely designed packaging.

For those that don't know the story of George Smith, it is said he illegally distilled his whisky in handcrafted, small copper stills in a hidden bothy in the remote Glenlivet Valley. He even smuggled the whisky across the Scottish Highlands to avoid the excisemen. Said whisky reportedly "reshaped conventions at the time and is the origin of Speyside's signature fruity and floral style."

The GlenAllachie Distillery Adds A 21 Year Old Cask Strength Whisky

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / November 18, 2020

Scotland's The GlenAllachie distillery, located in the Speyside region, is bringing forward new cask strength whisky in time for the holiday season. A 21 year old expression, it is being launched as a small batch release during a year in which this whisky maker recently netted its 50th award cumulative from the last several years.

The new The GlenAllachie 21 Year Old Cask Strength, according to those behind it, is the first batch of what will be an annual offering to lovers of its whiskies. It heralds from five Pedro Ximénez (PX) puncheons and hogsheads from 1997 and 1998 which have been hand-picked and married together by master distiller/blender Billy Walker.



The GlenAllachie 21 Year Old Cask Strength (image via The GlenAllachie)
 “There are some whiskies which are simply a pleasure to create; our 15-year-old which we launched in 2019 was one, and this new 21-year-old is undoubtedly another,” said Walker in a prepared statement. “Sherry casks of this vintage are scarce, so I have been carefully monitoring each since we bought the distillery in anticipation of releasing a very special and beautifully aged expression at its peak. These casks have now achieved the perfect balance of sherried depth and complexity, which we have bottled at natural cask strength to showcase the full experience that these casks deliver.

“Whisky lovers can anticipate a single malt which reveals an indulgent combination of fruit cake and treacle, alongside stewed plums, dark chocolate shavings and sweet cinnamon pancakes.” Just 1,600 bottles of this release are being offered globally, bottled at 51.4% ABV and priced at £199, or around \$265 USD. It is non-chill filtered and of natural color, in this case being what’s said to be an intense mahogany color that’s drawn from contact with the PX casks. Official tasting notes are as follows.

- Nose: Waves of dark chocolate, heather honey, mocha and orange zest, with notes of grapefruit and cinnamon
- Taste: A rich mix of fruit cake, heather honey and treacle, fused with stewed plums, dark chocolate, orange peel, cinnamon and ginger.

Solid Standards 1: The GlenAllachie 12

BENNOVEMBER 18, 2020



While the best whisky is always the next one and the hunt for it certainly part of the fun, it is also nice to have some solid standards as regular go-to's. It is good to know what to count on, if one is searching for a nice present, looking out for a good bottle to share and enjoy with others who are not that much into whisky (yet), or figuring out what to purchase from the shelves of a nearby store or bar whence on vacation.

Solid standard malt whiskies are part of the core range bottlings of their distilleries and are hence widely available. They are nothing special, fancy, or pricey – at least by the industry's and seasoned whisky drinkers' standards – but they tend to deliver, being as solid as they are. Which standard malts become one's favourites is certainly a matter of personal taste and preferences, but solid standards seem to have something to offer for everyone. Arguably, they lay the foundation on which a distillery's high or nascent reputation is built, while dull or lousy standards earmark a distillery's beginning or ongoing decline. Furthermore, solid standards serve as good entry points into the world of single malts as they commonly display the basic profile of their distilleries. Ardbeg 10, Lagavulin 16, or Springbank 10 are some of the most prominent standards out there and cases to this point. Several other core range bottlings should be added to this list, and I will do so over time in what is to become kind of an occasional series.

But what makes a standard solid? What are some basic criteria to consider? And how can a single whisky acquaint one with its distillery? I will address the first two questions in a summary manner, offering some general observations. Then, I have a closer look at a single distillery and one of its core range bottlings to explore one whisky and its surrounding stories in more detail. As the first entry into my occasional solid standard series, I delve into the not-so-recently revamped GlenAllachie 12.

A solid standard

What are good or solid standards? If in doubt, ask your local dealer or bartender. Support your local retailers, get in touch with and learn from each other. South American rivers are certainly a great sight, but they do not offer the joy of actual conversations and interhuman exchanges. Guides and notes on the web can offer good advice but are not always readily available and the amount of information can become quite overwhelming if one searches for a standard malt. Yet, as a rough guideline, there are some basic features that most solid standards seem to share.

First, let us go by the numbers. With their price being frequently set somewhere around 45 euro or pound, solid standards are quite affordable by the industry's standards and placed towards the lower end of the single malt price spectrum. They state their age on the label and are commonly at least ten years old so that they have passed a certain threshold and reached a more mature stage in their maturation. They come with an ABV of at least 43% and thus go beyond the required 40% minimum; and the three or more per cent matter, as they strengthen the intensity of the whisky's flavours. Preferably, they have no colouring added and were not chill filtered to preserve their full body and flavours.

Second, let us go by more qualitative criteria. Renowned solid standards have gained a good reputation among whisky drinkers over the years with some of them counting as actual classics and some being marketed as such. But the proof of the pudding is not in its surrounding tales or marketing buzz but in its actual delivery. Solid standards are anything but unpleasant; dull or lousy ones are. The solid ones are easily quaffable, they do not thin out too quickly thanks to their above-average ABV, they are quite nuanced thanks to some good casks added into their mixture, and they offer some complexity to explore. Solid standards will not disappoint on their delivery which is why they were able to gain a good reputation in the first place. The renowned classics are hence a good option to go for, but this might have you missing out on some rising stars that are already solid but not that established yet like the GlenAllachie 12.

Billy Walker and GlenAllachie

Having awakened BenRiach and GlenDronach from their deep slumber by capitalizing a letter in their midst and by breathing some (wood) magic into their whiskies, Billy Walker has made quite a name for himself as a whisky entrepreneur and blender. Hence, whisky bloggers and drinkers were quite curious what he and his partners were up to when they purchased what was back then the Glenallachie distillery (with a lower case a) from Chivas Brothers in 2017. Besides capitalizing the a in the middle, the new consortium implemented some further changes as they sought to put GlenAllachie on the single malt map, Billy Walker's reputation carrying the whisky which was – so far – rather unheard of. The

GlenAllachie launched its new core range in 2018, and there have been quite a few single cask and special wood finish releases since then, the virgin oak series being the latest addition to the list. Overall, reviews of the core range have been quite positive in their assessments and tended to agree that there was quite an improvement in comparison to earlier releases. Meanwhile, the reception by the community has also been quite positive but not entirely over the moon either. Personally, I did not have Glenallachie on my map before the takeover. I had tried a few independent bottlings here and there in the past without really getting caught up with them. Accordingly, this was a rather blank canvas for me with a Speyside label attached to it, which is to say that I expected a whisky with an overall delicate, floral, sweet, and fruity profile.

The GlenAllachie 12 – review

The GlenAllachie 12 was officially launched in July 2018. The whisky has been matured in a mixture of virgin oak, Pedro Ximénez and oloroso sherry casks, so it should display some sherry cask influence. The GlenAllachie 12 comes without added colouring or chill-filtration and is bottled at 46%. Since its initial launch, the team at GlenAllachie has increased the amount of sherry matured liquid going into the mixture so that its profile has changed a bit over the batches. A full bottle will set you back about £41.25 via the Whisky Exchange, Master of Malt will demand £39.25, but samples are also widely available. I have finished my first bottle of this a while ago, and I liked it. For this review, I am tasting a sample kindly provided by a friend. He has purchased the bottle earlier this year so that my sample should contain more sherry matured liquid than the bottle I had on my shelf.

Colour: amber (light hue).

On the nose: floral honey sweetness with some vanilla, apples, and a fresh touch of citrus; the sherry casks add some raisins, café au lait, and milk chocolate into the mixture which is rounded off by a few cloves – quite pleasant on the nose and several notes to unpack without the whisky losing its profile.

In the mouth: sets off with a mouth-coating floral honey sweetness, vanilla and apples accompanied by some touches of café au lait and milk chocolate; the palate dilutes a bit over time, as the 46% are apparently not sufficient to carry the delicate aromas through to the end, but the palate does not water down entirely either; the finish is of medium length and warm, the floral honey and café au lait linger on, while the fresh citrus touch makes a reappearance towards the end.

Conclusions

A solid dram that has a nice profile and combines different flavours without losing its coherence. The floral honey sweetness and café au lait are the most prominent aspects throughout, but other notes make their appearance as well. If you are looking for a delicate, sweet, and floral malt with a sherry edge to it, this is a great option; and it is a nice introduction to Speyside malts. Given the decent price, this is a good bang for your buck; and it is a solid standard that ticks most of the boxes I suggested above. Score: 5/10

A Wee Bonus for Comparison:



The GlenAllachie 10 Cask Strength Batch 3 – review

Why not go for a comparison as I happen to have some GlenAllachie 10 Cask Strength Batch 3 left on my shelf? A bit younger than the 12 with roughly the same mixture of casks and a higher ABV, this one should make for an interesting comparison. The basic facts for the GlenAllachie 10 Batch 3 are: 10 years old, cask strength with 58.2% alcohol by volume, matured in bourbon, virgin oak, and sherry casks, no colouring, no chill-filtration, bottled in 2019 and priced at £54.83 from Master of Malt. Batch 4 is available from Master of Malt for £55.95.

Colour: amber (a bit darker than the 12).

On the nose: more intense, the floral notes are there but covered by a heavier sherry influence, the same floral honey sweetness with some vanilla, apples, and a few cloves, the café au lait and milk chocolate are more prominent in this one, and the fresh citrus touch is rather to the orangey side; again a pleasant nose with several notes to unpack. In the mouth: floral dark honey sweetness coated by milk chocolate, prominent café au lait notes, some apples and raisins, a few cloves, oranges and cinnamon; given the higher ABV, this one is more intense throughout; the finish is warm, floral honey sweetness and milk chocolate with an orangey touch linger on.

Conclusions

This one is also delicate, floral, and sweet but has a more intense sherry edge to it. The higher ABV makes the GlenAllachie 10 stronger if not a bit harsh in its delivery and might be a bit overwhelming, but I like it. Perhaps, this one is not that much of a standard given its high ABV and varying batches. In comparison, both GlenAllachie display a delicate, floral, and sweet profile. The sherry casks have worked well in both presentations by adding a pleasant edge to the whisky.

Score: 6/10

GlenAllachie Distillery Drops More Cask Strength, Single Cask Whisky Offerings

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / November 25, 2020

The GlenAllachie Distillery in Scotland recently launched Batch 4 of its cask strength 10-year-old single malt and the third installment of single cask bottlings. Batch 4 comes in a limited release of 2,600 cases worldwide at a suggested retail price of around £59 (about \$80 USD) and is bottled at 56.1%.

It's a mixture of Pedro Ximenez and Oloroso sherry punches and a small number of virgin oak casks. It has a balance of what's described as fruit, dark chocolate and spice with underlying sweet honey notes.



The GlenAllachie Distillery launched Batch 4 of its cask strength 10-year-old single malt, and released a third installment of single casks (image via GlenAllachie)

The third installment of single casks, meanwhile, has six cask strength single malts selected by Master Distiller Billy Walker.

The single casks include a 31-year-old Oloroso hogshead, a 15-year-old Virgin Oak, a 13-year-old First Fill Bourbon Barrel, a 12-year-old Rioja Barrel and an 11-year-old Sauternes Barrel — all at cask strength and non-chill filtered.

“There’s something magical about bottling whisky straight from the cask – without any water or colouring being added, this is whisky in its purest form,” Walker said [in a prepared statement](#). “Batch 3 of our cask strength 10-year-old has set the bar high, but we’re excited to share this new bottling which has a perfect balance of fruit, dark

chocolate and spice with the underlying classic sweet honey notes of the GlenAllachie."

Walker said these single casks show how the different types of wood create new flavors in each product. The 31-year-old is said to have, for example, dark chocolate, orange zest, grapefruit and ginger flavors from the wood and slightly smaller Oloroso hogshead. GlenAllachie's Virgin Oak series also shows a limited edition range of Speyside single malt whiskies that go through a second maturation in specialty casks of different oak species. That release came out in early Oct. with three limited-edition whiskies: the 12-year-old French Virgin Oak Finish, the 12-year-old Spanish Virgin Oak Finish, and the 12-year-old Chiquapin Virgin Oak Finish.

You'll find more official details on each below.

GlenAllachie 10-year-old Cask Strength Batch 4 – 56.1%; around £59 (about \$80 USD)

- Colour: Rich Mahogany.
- Nose: Dark chocolate, vanilla pods and treacle, with rich notes of orange peel and cinnamon.
- Taste: Lashings of raisins, treacle, dark chocolate, layers of heather honey, cinnamon and orange peel.

GlenAllachie 31-year-old Oloroso Hogshead cask # 6118 – 51.1%; around £530 (about \$710 USD)

- Colour: Rich Mahogany.
- Nose: Heather honey, mocha, nutmeg, pineapple and eucalyptus.
- Taste: Waves of dark chocolate, mocha and almonds, followed by orange zest, grapefruit and ginger.

GlenAllachie 15 year-old Virgin Oak cask # 5182 – 57.6%; around £106 (about \$145 USD)

- Colour: Sunset Bronze.
- Nose: Lashings of heather honey, vanilla pods and plantains, with notes of orange zest and ginger.
- Taste: Layers of heather honey, butterscotch and almonds with dark chocolate, orange zest and ginger.

GlenAllachie 13-year-old First Fill Bourbon Barrel # 111860 – 58.6%; around £96 (about \$130 USD)

- Colour: Sunrise Gold.
- Nose: Orchard fruit, peaches, butterscotch and ginger.
- Taste: Brimming with heather honey, butterscotch and figs, with notes of ginger and grapefruit.

GlenAllachie 12-year-old Ruby Port Pipe # 1867 – 52.3%; around £90 (about \$120 USD)

- Colour: Rich Ruby.
- Nose: Lashings of honey, treacle and grape must, with sweet spice and hints of dark chocolate.
- Taste: Waves of heather honey, vanilla and treacle, fused with cinnamon, rosehips and mocha.

GlenAllachie 12-year-old Rioja Barrel # 3966 – 56.6%; around £90 (about \$120 USD)

- Colour: Golden Bronze.
- Nose: Waves of red berries, grape must, almonds and orange zest.
- Taste: Rich heather honey, sultanas and apricots, with barley sugar, orange zest, grapefruit and a hint of aniseed.

GlenAllachie 11-year-old Sauternes Barrel # 3728 – 59.0%; around £86 (about \$115 USD)

- Colour: Straw Gold.
- Nose: Heather honey, peaches, apricots and notes of ginger.
- Taste: Brimming with heather honey, peaches and apricots, fused with hazelnuts and grapefruit.

Glen Scotia Victoriana

By Jeff on April 20, 2020

The Campbeltown distillery of Glen Scotia has recently revamped their bottling lineup, and the Victoriana is the new "premium" non aged stated offering. "Inspired by Victorian times", and bottled at 51.5% ABV, this whisky has been finished in heavily charred oak casks.

Nose: Lovely aromas of toasted nuts, raisins, sweet toffee. There is a tiny hint of smoke here, along with vanilla and fresh ocean air.

Palate: Dark, syrupy, and chocolaty. There is a very soft gentle peat smoke here, but it doesn't reveal itself until the 2nd or 3rd sip. Adding water at this point subdues the heat of the younger components of the whisky, and brings out orange rind and toffee flavours. If you look for it, you can find hints of charcoal & ever-so-slightly burnt toast.

Finish: The burnt spiciness continues through the finish, however moderated by a generous vanilla & lingering cocoa.

Overall: I received a miniature of this whisky as a gift, and to be honest, I really wish I had a full bottle of it. While not presenting itself as a "stand-out" dram, it is pleasant enough, but for [\\$99 at the LCBO](#) the price is a bit too high for a NAS bottling that has clearly has some younger components.

Review - Ardbeg Wee Beastie 5 years old

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020

The Ardbeg Wee Beastie is the newest addition to the core range of single malts from the Islay-based distillery and has been released as scheduled, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, so as 'to give people a little good news'. The whisky is just 5 years of age and is the youngest and feistiest Ardbeg to be made available in recent times. Wee Beastie is the latest Ardbeg whisky to be named after one of Islay's many historical legends that range from mystical sea creatures to elusive and reclusive hill dwelling half-beings. The Wee Beastie has been a secret project led by Dr. Bill Lumsden, the Director of Whisky Creation at Ardbeg, and uses both ex-bourbon and ex-Oloroso sherry casks for maturation.

The Ardbeg distillery is located on the southern coast of Islay and was founded in 1815 by John MacDougall, although records show distilling on the site as far back as 1794. The recent history shows no production for large parts of the mid-1980s and 1990s, plus the majority of 1996 and 1997. Moët Hennessy took over at that point and renovated and revitalised Ardbeg's fortunes. The distillery has an annual production of just over one million litres per year, although this is currently being expanded, and boasts an award-winning visitor centre and cafe. "I am in no doubt that people will love this tongue-tingling expression. The casks chosen for its creation make it ideal for enjoying neat or as the mouth-watering main ingredient in a powerfully smoky cocktail. It is a monster of a dram... with a formidable bite!"

Dr. Bill Lumsden

The Ardbeg Wee Beastie is bottled at 47.4% ABV and is non chill-filtered and of natural colour. It is available in specialist whisky retailers and Ardbeg Embassies in selected markets worldwide. The recommended price is £39/ \$48 US.

Our tasting notes

The colour is golden yellow and the nose is vibrant, fresh and punchy. The peat smoke is the dominating factor and is acrid and peppery with it. A combination of damp leaves, moss, lots of ash and soot plus hints of wood glue, green chilli and lime zest give this strength. Underneath are sweet pears, honey, vanilla, apricot jam, robust malt and a hint of white chocolate.

On the palate this whisky has plenty of power. The vibrancy and freshness from the nose continues with the peat smoke again dominates and has an abundance of heat - this is reminiscent of a combination of hot ash, soot, white pepper, green chilli and a hint of gingerbread. Underneath is a distinct burnt maltiness, which made us think of charred cookies, and the leafy/mossy element from the nose. Sweet characteristics are very much in a supporting role here, but are essential in maintaining some sort of balance. Notes of poached pears with milk chocolate mingle with vanilla fudge and manuka honey. These are accentuated by hints of fresh lime zest, menthol and liquorice.



The finish is very long and fresh as the fiery peat smoke and spices linger for what seems like ages. Underneath the acrid and bitter smoke

are notes of cocoa powder and gingerbread that also linger well, especially once the sweet fruits, fudge and honey-like characteristics fade.

What's the verdict?

The Ardbeg Wee Beastie is very good. It packs plenty of power and the peppery hot peat smoke is everywhere. This is exactly what you would expect from a young Islay single malt. But once you fight through that, you find a delicious combination of sweet and fruity elements that create a bit of balance, depth and complexity.

It is brave to put a 5 years old age statement on the whisky, rather than a 'no age statement' as found elsewhere in the Ardbeg range or from other distilleries releasing similar products. Hats off to Ardbeg for that and also for putting it at a higher than required ABV for such a product with no chill filtration. Well done for bringing it in under £40 too, which is good for the current market. You get a lot of whisky for your money, especially if you are a fan of the big smoky style.

Review - Glen Moray Madeira Cask Project

THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020



This whisky is the third addition to the Elgin Curiosity Range of single malts from the Speyside distillery of Glen Moray. The Glen Moray Madeira Cask Project is bottled at 13 years and 10 months of age and features seven rare ex-Madeira sweet wine hogshead casks that were hand selected by Kirstie McCallum, the Head of Whisky Creation at Glen Moray. These were filled on 26 May 2006 and were then fully matured in Warehouse No.1 at the distillery, where many experimental casks are kept. Madeira casks are uncommon in the Scotch whisky industry and are often used for a short finishing period rather than full maturation. This third edition follows the Cider Cask and Rhum Agricole Cask Projects.

The Glen Moray distillery is located on the outskirts of the city of Elgin, next to the River Lossie. The buildings began life as the West

Brewery in 1828 and was later converted to become a whisky distillery in 1897. It is currently owned by the French drinks company La Martiniquaise, who took control in 2008. They have overseen a massive expansion programme, both in terms of increasing the annual production capacity to six million litres and a major revamp of the single malt range. This has resulted in a remarkable upturn in fortunes for the brand over the last decade.

"This new expression so very special. Ex-Madeira casks are typically used to 'finish' more conventionally matured whisky but almost 14 years of maturation in the casks have given a great balance of flavours between the wood and spirit. It is like a dessert in a glass." Kirstie McCallum.

The Glen Moray Madeira Cask Project 13 years old is bottled at 46.3% ABV and is non chill-filtered and of natural colour. There are just 1,468 bottles and these will be available via selected specialist whisky retailers. It is exclusive to the UK. A bottle will cost £65.

Our tasting notes

The colour is deep golden yellow and the nose is packed with delicious sweet aromas. Toffee and milk chocolate are evident first and then heather honey, golden syrup and sweet over ripe pears. Underneath are further aromas of baking spice (especially cinnamon and all-spice), plus sultanas and something floral and perfumed. This is most reminiscent of honeysuckle.

On the palate this whisky has an immediately richness and decadent feel with plenty of viscosity and texture. There are juicy sultanas and

super sweet pears to begin with and these notes evolve to include golden syrup and crumbly brown sugar also. Then come toffee and honey. The combination reminds us of stepping in to an old fashioned sweet shop. The baking spices from the nose then come through to give balance and stop the whisky becoming too sweet. Cinnamon, nutmeg, all-spice and a pinch of white pepper are all detectable. Finally, notes of white chocolate and cocoa powder appear to add a further intricate layer of flavour.

The finish is long and warming with the sweetness and increasingly influential spicy characteristics lingering well. There is a hint of toffee and gingerbread that also come through. The addition of water makes the whisky feel creamier and softer with the juicy dried fruits becoming more prominent. A twist of candied orange peel also appears.

What's the verdict?

This Madeira Cask Project is a fabulous whisky and Glen Moray have done very well to create this. It feels intricate and luxurious, and offers plenty for you money. Glen Moray seems to always offer good value. The combination and balance of the sweet and spicy elements is close to perfection. Do not be surprised if this single malt appears in our Top 10 whiskies of the year for 2020. We have ordered our full bottle before it is all sold out. Have you?

Bartenders Name Their Favorite Highland Scotch Whiskies For Fall

CHRISTOPHER OSBURN TWITTER NOVEMBER 11, 2020

If you're new to [scotch whisky](#), you'd be forgiven for not knowing that there are five (and by some counts six) distinct regions where it's produced. They're the isle of [Islay](#), Campbeltown, Speyside, Lowland, and Highland. The sixth region is the islands, but some of those distilleries get lumped in with the [Highland region](#).

The Highland region, as might reasonably be expected, is mostly located in the northern portion of Scotland (with a small area removed for the whisky-rich region of Speyside). That's where we turn our attention today. It includes well-known distilleries like Oban, Aberfeldy, Dalmore, Glenmorangie, and Tullibardine.

While you can't go wrong with a whisky from any of the five scotch-producing regions, Highland malts are known for a diversity of flavors due to its wide range of topographic and geographic features.

"While I'm typically partial to the Speyside single malts, I do appreciate the diversity of flavor profiles from each region in Scotland," says Anna Mains, brand ambassador to [Monkey Shoulder](#). "The Highland whiskies are so interesting because their single malts have such a huge range of flavor notes."

Thanks to its vastness, you can find highland single malts that are smoky, peaty, briny, sweet, or even floral in nature. It's truly a unique area that's ripe to be explored through your whiskey glass.

Since you're not likely to travel to the Scottish Highlands anytime soon, we figured that the easiest way to enjoy this region was to grab a bottle or two from some well-known distilleries. To help us pick the right offerings, we asked a handful of our [favorite bartenders](#) to tell us their go-to Highland malts.

Oban Distiller's Edition

Juan Fernandez, bartender at [The Ballantyne, A Luxury Collection Hotel](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina

Oban Distillers Edition. The Distiller's Edition goes through a second maturation of Montilla Fino sherry casks which leads to a rich toffee, caramel, almost Werther's Original taste on the palate, with a medium smoky finish.

It may not appeal to all, but it definitely does to me.

The Dalmore Cigar Malt

Bill Whitlow, owner of [Rich's Proper Food & Drink](#) in Covington, Kentucky

I don't drink a lot of Highland malts, but whenever I go to a Scotch tasting and they have The Dalmore Cigar Malt, I definitely hang out around that table. Actually, I really enjoy everything I have tried from The Dalmore.

You can't go wrong with The Dalmore 12. It's a perfect gateway into the world of Scotch.

The GlenDronach 15 Year Revival

Anna Mains, brand ambassador to [Monkey Shoulder](#)

I'm a huge sherry fan, particularly Oloroso sherries. Scotches ages really well in ex-sherry casks. The GlenDronach 15 Year Revival is aged in ex-Oloroso and Pedro Ximenez sherry barrels. The dark fruit and

nutty characteristics I love so much in Oloroso really shine in this whisky and make for one hell of a dram.

Highland Park 12 Viking Honour

Blake Jakes, director of beverage for [The Kennedy Bar](#) in Pensacola, Florida

Highland Park 12 Viking Honour. It's an easy choice. It works so well on its own, with a little water, or in a nice cocktail with some citrus. It's bright, spicy and just the right amount of peat. Truly an exceptional whisky and it's not going to break the bank.

Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake

Lee Noble, head bartender for [Art in the Age](#) in Philadelphia

Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake was a game changer from Dr. Bill Lumsden. I really enjoyed the ingenuity behind that concept. It's sweet, rich, and pairs perfectly with a piece of cake or as a slow sipper on its own.

Oban 14

Josh Curtis, bar director at [Carbon Beach Club](#) in Malibu, California

Oban 14 is easy drinking with a large cube of ice because of its counterbalance of honey and oak. It's smooth, sweet, subtly smoky, with just a hint of ocean brine and seaweed that can be attributed to the distillery's proximity to the ocean.

Aberfeldy 12

Patricia Verdesoto, head bartender [Jams](#) in New York City

Aberfeldy 12 year is my favorite single malt Scotch to have behind the bar, not to mention one of my personal favorites in general. It is beyond versatile, which is so important to me. Aside from Aberfeldy being absolutely delicious on its own, it works in so many cocktails throughout the seasons. While the initial smokiness of a quality Scotch may be a deterrent to many first-time drinkers, Aberfeldy has managed to find that sweet spot between smoothness and peat.

On the nose, you get a nice caramel, espresso aroma with a hint of smokiness that experienced most Scotch drinkers are expecting. As the weather changes, Aberfeldy is the perfect addition to your favorite hot toddy recipe. For me, I pour it in some chamomile tea with a touch of local honey and it never fails to warm me up.

Craigellachie 13

Ben Potts, owner, and bartender at [The Sylvester](#) in Miami

I generally reach for a nice, honeyed Scotch like Craigellachie due to its versatility and flavor profile. If I had to pick one of its expressions, I would go with Craigellachie 13 because of its almond and vanilla flavors tempered with a subtle hint of smoke.

Glenmorangie La Quinta Ruban

H. Ehrmann, owner of [Elixir Bar](#) in San Francisco

Glenmorangie La Quinta Ruban is my flavor of the day. It changes regularly, but I was gifted a bottle for my birthday a couple of years ago and I just got back into it. Such great classic Highland grain and spice, with the delicious fruits from the port cask. A great bottle for any day.

Talisker Storm

Crystal Chasse, beverage director at [Talk Story Rooftop](#) in Brooklyn
Talisker Distillery is on the Isle of Skye, which — according to many designations — makes it a Highland Scotch. Talisker Storm is one of my go-to scotch. Bold, smoky notes with pepper and oak shining through and supported by a refreshing salinity. It is also reasonably priced for scotch, making it a great bottle to share.

thereby leaving other [wonderful bottles of whisky](#) lingering on the shelf. So trust that we're not, in any way, telling you not to keep loving these bottles.

In fact, we've provided tasting notes and links for buying each expression so that you can judge for yourself and argue with us (in a friendly manner!) in the comments. We've also offered alternate options that we like a whole lot more.

Ballantine's Finest



BALLENTINE

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$20](#)

The Whisky:

Ballantine's Finest is a blend of 40 single malt and single grain whiskies from around Scotland. Ballantine's has been around long enough for it to be called a classic and remains one of the [best selling](#) scotches on the planet.

Tasting Notes:

Malts and toffee mingle on the nose with a billow of smoke. The taste really leans into the sweet malts that were clearly peated yet carry a caramel edge. It has a warm, albeit short end.

Bottom Line:

This is cheap and easy-ish drinking but can be astringently smoky and alcohol-forward. Their 12 Year takes off the rougher edges and is only [\\$10 more](#).

The Famous Grouse



FAMOUS GROUSE

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$24](#)

The Whisky:

The Famous Grouse is an old-school blend that got its start in a Scottish grocery store where grocers often blended their own whiskies to sell. The juice is now a mix of single malts and single grains with a focus on parent company partners Highland Park and The Macallan.

Tasting Notes:

There's a Christmas cake nose that's spicy, fruity, and malty and supported by a note of citrus. The palate keeps those notes rolling with an additional whisper of oak. The end is short and creamy with a distant wisp of smoke.

Bottom Line:

This is a solid mixing whisky but rarely used that way. We'd argue that there are [more interesting](#) barrel finishings of The Famous Grouse — [from the Cask Series](#) — in the same price range that offer deeper flavor profiles.

The Most Overhyped Bottles Of Scotch Whisky (Plus Alternates We Recommend)

[ZACH JOHNSTON](#) TWITTER LIFE WRITER

NOVEMBER 15, 2020

Calling out the [most "overrated"](#) or ["overhyped"](#) whiskies (or overrated/overhyped anything for that matter) is a tricky task. We all have the bottles of [whisky](#) we love for tradition's sake alone. Sometimes, these preferences have been [passed down](#) generation after generation. To have someone sh*t on something so personal isn't just annoying, it's deflating.

That's not what we're here to do. Our number one rule is: Like what you like and don't apologize for that. Our number two rule is: Every palate is different and you have every right in the world to disagree with the [whisky writers, judges, and experts](#). In fact, that's just another layer of what makes drinking fun — the analysis, the disagreement, and the resulting banter.

This isn't about talking down to anyone's choices or even saying that any of these whiskies aren't [finely crafted](#). This is more about calling out expressions that gobble up more than their share of the spotlight,

Dewar's White Label



DEWAR

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$25](#)

The Whisky:

Dewar's ranks up there among the [biggest selling](#) scotches in the world. The juice in the bottle is a blend of 40 single malts and single grains with a focus on Aberfeldy.

Tasting Notes:

Honey apples with a grassy note open this one up. The sip leans into the honey sweetness with the addition of oak, vanilla, and a touch of spice and smoke. The finish relishes on that honey sweetness as it fades out.

Bottom Line:

This is a perfectly fine blend for mixing. If you're looking for a sipper though, their longer aged versions get that job done and only cost [\\$10 or so](#) more.

Glenfiddich 12



GLENFIDDICH

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$34](#)

The Whisky:

This Speyside single malt is behind every bar and on every liquor store shelf, pretty much worldwide. Glenfiddich ages their whisky in a combination of ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks before bottling in their signature three-corner green bottles.

Tasting Notes:

Spicy caramel apples and oak mix with a hint of toffee up top. The sip brings the bourbon vanilla with butterscotch maltiness and more of that apple. There's a floral note deep in there somewhere that emerges just as the sweet sip fades out rather quickly.

Bottom Line:

This is a perfectly serviceable bottle of booze. However, Glenfiddich is doing much more interesting things now with bourbon and beer barrel finishes at slightly higher [price](#) points that deserve a bit more attention in our estimation.

Johnnie Walker White Walker



DIAGEO

ABV: 41.7%

Average Price: [\\$40](#)

The Whisky:

This bottle was released back in 2018 to celebrate [Game Of Thrones](#) ending its run. The juice is a blend with a focus on Diageo single malts from [Cardhu](#) and one of the northernmost Scottish distilleries, Clynelish. The bottle is meant to be frozen, revealing a special logo when cold enough to drink.

Tasting Notes:

Grain and smoke hit your first but there's a metallic nature to the nose. There's a bit of tart apple next to a hint of spice. The smoke is dialed way back and comes with a whisper of vanilla.

Bottom Line:

Look, this is a gimmick. Also, freezing the whisky really mutes any flavors that might be there. In the end, there are plenty of other [Johnnie Walkers](#) you can drink for the same price that eschews the gimmick and, frankly, doesn't need to be frozen to drink. Even if you want to stick with the GoT theme, Diageo has an [entire line](#) of killer [single malts](#) that trump this bottle.

Ardbeg Wee Beastie



ARBEG

ABV: 47.4%

Average Price: [\\$50](#)

The Whisky:

Islay's Ardbeg is a smoky single malt classic. Their new 2020 release, Wee Beastie, is a five-year-old whisky that was aged in ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks before marrying and bottling.

Tasting Notes:

This is a hot and smoky whisky. The peat and alcohol warmth is very present on the nose and in the palate. Orchard fruit and vanilla try and peek through the smoky heat. The sip hints at fatty smoked bacon with a slight seaside brininess as it fades back into a big cloud of peaty smoke.

Bottom Line:

This is a brand new expression so it got a lot of hype this year. We think it got more than it deserved. [Ardbeg 10](#) is a classic and this bottle (plus the five extra years that the 10 enjoys in the barrel) makes it clear why.

Highland Park 12



HIGHLAND PARK

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$56](#)

The Whisky:

A perennial best-seller, the Orkney Island's Highland Park sort of bridges sweet and smoky scotches. Their 12 Year is matured exclusively in ex-sherry casks, with one-fifth of these being first-fill sherry.

Tasting Notes:

The nose is sweet, grassy, smoky, tart, floral, and full of vanilla. Those notes carry on without a clear focus on any one aspect, except maybe the honey sweetness. The end is swift with a nod to lemon, peat, and fruit.

Bottom Line:

The lack of focus on this dram knocks it down a few pegs in our book. Also, there are tighter single malts in the 12-year range that cost less (see Glenfiddich above). That all being said, Highland Park has a [very wide range](#) of whiskies with higher agings and various finishing techniques that we prefer.

Laphroaig 10



LAPHROAIG

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$58](#)

The Whisky:

Laphroaig is another classic Islay peat-monster distillery. This juice is designed to capture the brine of the sea and marry it to the deep peaty smoke of the malts.

Tasting Notes:

It should come as no surprise that hefty billows of peaty smoke greet you. The oily sip edges towards pears, plaster, vanilla, and a hint of toffee sweetness. The end has a nice spicy warmth with vanilla as the smoke completely surrounds your senses in a murky cloud.

Bottom Line:

Again, we're not saying this is crap whisky. It's just a bit pricy for an entry-point whisky that's best used as a mixer and not a sipper. However, if you're a peat-seeker, this might be exactly your jam.

Aberlour A'Bunadh



ABERLOUR

ABV: 59.6%

Average Price: [\\$102](#)

The Whisky:

Aberlour is one of those distilleries you either know about and adore or have never heard of. Their A'Bunadh — which means “original” in Scottish Gaelic — is an unadulterated version of their whisky which is bottled at cask strength. It's become one of the most sought-after single malts for single malt hunters (which doesn't help the price of this on the shelf).

Tasting Notes:

Christmas cake cut with plenty of spicy orange zest and nutty sherry notes great you. The sip delivers on those notes with the addition of dark cherries, dark chocolate, and a good dose of oak. The end amps up the spice, chocolate, and oak as it fades at a fairly easy pace.

Bottom Line:

This is a fine sipper but actually works better as a mixer, especially for [whiskey sours](#). For us, \$100 for a mixer feels like a bit much. Still, this is a fine whiskey... just one that we really wish we could pay \$50 for.

The Dalmore 18



THE DALMORE

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$230](#)

The Whisky:

The Dalmore is an interesting Highland distillery. Like most of the distilleries around Scotland, it's very old and distinguished. Their 18 Year is a juice that's aged for 14 years in ex-bourbon and then transferred to sherry casks that are made especially for The Dalmore in Spain.

Tasting Notes:

There's a sense of that bourbon vanilla next to orange zest and dark chocolate on the nose. The palate carries on with the dark chocolate and orange, adding in notes of bitter coffee and potpourri florals next to a hint of black licorice. The sip has an earthy spiciness and sweet syrup finish.

Bottom Line:

This is a big swing, but there's almost too much going on here. The dried florals, licorice, chocolate, and syrup just don't vibe. And for this price? You can snag The Dalmore 12 instead. It's a bit more dialed even though it's younger and [far cheaper](#).

Isle of Raasay unveils inaugural whisky

17th November, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Scotland's Isle of Raasay Distillery has bottled the first legal single malt whisky from the Hebridean island.



The whisky is packaged in a bottle featuring fossils and rocks from the island
The distillery has created 7,500 bottles of The Isle of Raasay Single Malt – Inaugural Release 2020, which was matured in first-fill Tennessee whiskey casks and finished in first-fill Bordeaux red wine casks.

Alasdair Day, Isle of Raasay Distillery co-founder, said: "This is a really historic moment as the first legal Isle of Raasay Single Malt leaves the island for the first time.

"We are very proud of our lightly peated island single malt, and our beautiful bottle that is made with clay moulds of Raasay's rocks and fossils. It's like a piece of the island in your hands."

Bottled at natural colour and without the use of chill-filtration, the new expression has flavours of almond, hazelnut and sweet spice. The red wine casks add savoury spice flavours and "another layer of complexity and flavour" to the whisky.

The single malt is packaged in a bespoke bottle that features fossils and rocks from the island moulded into the glass. The inaugural release is bottled at 52% ABV.

Priced at £99 (US\$131) per 700ml bottle, The Isle of Raasay Single Malt – Inaugural Release 2020 will be available in the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland, the Philippines, South Africa, Canada, South Korea, Japan, and China.

Glengoyne unveils its oldest whisky

17th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Scotch brand Glengoyne has released a 50-year-old expression as its oldest whisky to date and will offer one bottle for free via a ballot.



Glengoyne 50 Year Old is bottled at 45.8% ABV

The online ballot is open to groups of five or more friends or family to submit an entry with a description of their perfect moment for savouring the 50-year-old whisky together next year. Entrants have until 14 December to submit their moments.

Robbie Hughes, master distiller at Glengoyne, said: "When we first filled hand-selected oak casks with our sweet, fruity, new make spirit back in the late 1960s, The Beatles were only just breaking up, Richard Nixon was US president, and *Sesame Street* debuted on television. A lot has changed while we've been waiting patiently for this unique release.

"At Glengoyne we believe that patience is always rewarded. This year we've all had to sacrifice spending time with our loved ones or delay celebrations. That's why we want to make these moments extra special in 2021 with a memorable whisky that, after waiting so long for just the right moment, is truly ready to be opened and savoured."

The 50-year-old whisky has notes of Demerara sugar, walnuts, sweet pipe tobacco, red apples and cloves on the nose. The palate offers a 'rich, spicy oak burst, then molasses, treacle and liquorice take centre stage', followed by a long finish.

The new 45.8% ABV expression joins the Highland distillery's Fine and Rare range, alongside the new 30-year-old whisky and a 25-year-old bottling.

The whisky is packaged in a crystal decanter that features an engraved goose emblem to represent the geese that migrate to the Glen every winter. Each solid oak and gold presentation box comes with a 25ml sample of the 50-year-old and an individually hand-numbered book signed by Hughes.

To enter the ballot, visit ballot.glengoyne.com. The whisky will be available globally from next week in key markets and from the Glengoyne distillery shop and website, priced at £22,500 (US\$30,000). There are only 150 decanters of Glengoyne 50 Year Old available globally.

In September this year, Ian Macleod Distillers [unveiled a new brand identity](#) for Glengoyne using 100% recyclable packaging

Plans submitted for £10m carbon-neutral rum distillery

17th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Entrepreneur Matthew Clifford has submitted plans to build a new £10 million (US\$13m) carbon-neutral rum distillery and visitor centre in Cornwall, which will be powered by geothermal energy.



The geothermal-powered distillery project includes a Eden-style biome
Former offshore helicopter pilot Clifford has founded the Cornish Geothermal Distillery Company (CGDC). He has submitted plans to the Cornwall Council for a new 100% sustainable rum cask maturation facility, visitor centre, cooperage and geothermal energy centre.

The 'ultra-high-tech' Eden Project-style biome will include Clifford's patent-pending carbon-neutral rum cask maturation pods. It has the ability to hold up to 3,600 casks of rum for around five to 10 years as the spirit matures.

The biome can accurately recreate the temperature and humidity profiles found around the world, including tropical, desert or the colder northern hemisphere. The dedicated site using this controlled and technological method is thought to be a world first.

The plans have been submitted following CGDC's investment of more £150,000 (US\$199,000) on probing pieces of land in the United Downs area, including motor racing track the United Downs Raceway. Clifford has worked with Geothermal Engineering, based at United Downs in Cornwall's historic mining hub, and other local partners, on the development. The site will use heat from Geothermal Engineering's United Downs Deep Geothermal Power Project, the UK's first geothermal power project.

As part of the project, Geothermal Engineering's team has drilled more than 5km into the granite bedrock to use the deep geothermal heat as renewable electricity in 2022.

"We've been working on our deep geothermal distillery project for the last two years and it is hugely exciting to finally share our plans for this initial 'catalyst' stage," said Clifford. "We aim to combine our absolute passion for rum with much-needed investment and quality full-time jobs in this part of Cornwall, utilising local skills and businesses.

"We will be sharing our vision with the communities close to United Downs, so that they have the opportunity to give us their thoughts and impart local knowledge, which will be invaluable to this project."

The project is expected to create around 30 jobs.

6 Spectacular Age-Statement Single Malt Scotches to Try Now [LIST]

NOVEMBER 11, 2020 | [SAM STONE](#)



Single malt scotch is a vast category of whisky, covering five legislated regions and a broad spectrum of flavors. Many factors contribute to these differences in flavor—climate, region, finishing casks, use of peat, and more. One important factor is age. Age doesn't necessarily reflect on a whisky's quality, but it can still give clues about what to expect in the glass. A 5 year old single malt will taste different from a 25 year old single malt, and though not all single malts bear age statements, many of them do.

Whisky Advocate's [Fall 2020 Buying Guide](#) includes an array of single malt scotches bearing age statements, from 5 to 25 years old. They span the different regions of Scotland, and as you'll see in the reviews, each packs its own unique flavors. Whether you're seeking a bottle with a specific age statement to celebrate a birthday or anniversary, or just looking to try new, high-scoring scotch, these whiskies are all winners. For even more scotch reviews, check out the full Fall 2020 Buying Guide!

6 AGE-STATEMENT SINGLE MALTS FROM THE FALL 2020 BUYING GUIDE



[Ardbeg 5](#)

[year old Wee Beastie](#)—92 points, \$47

Full-on Ardbeg on the nose! Hot tar, lemon juice, charcuterie, thick peat smoke, ginger, and a hint of Jaffa oranges. The palate is oily and well-integrated, with black pepper, coal tar soap, cloves, vanilla, and orchard fruits. Spicy in the lengthy finish, with more tar, peat, and salty oak. —Gavin Smith



[Glenallachie](#)

[10 year old Cask Strength \(Batch 2\)](#)—89 points, \$90

Mellow on the nose, even at cask strength, with vanilla, lemon curd, honey, and warm ginger cookies. Strawberry jam notes emerge in time. An initial flavor of berry on the palate, then malt, honey, and slightly bitter oak. The finish features black pepper, more ginger, and jam-like notes. (2,400 bottles for U.S.) —Gavin Smith



[Glenlivet 12](#)

[year old Double Oak](#)—88 points, \$45

The nose yields orange and lime, canned pineapple, and light caramel notes. Elegant, with some substance on the palate, with vanilla and brittle toffee underpinned by vibrant orchard fruits, honey, and milk chocolate. The finish features more milk chocolate, gentle oak, and ginger. Best Value —Gavin Smith



[Balblair 15](#)

[15 year old](#)—90 points, \$120

Initially aged in bourbon casks, this then spent an unspecified period of time in first-fill European oak butts. Rich fruit notes on the nose, marzipan, and light sherry. Sweet floral notes in time, with fondant cream and vanilla pods. Viscous palate delivery, with sweet sherry, cinnamon, baked apple, figs, caramel, and hot chocolate. Orange and allspice on the nutty finish. —Gavin Smith



[Tomintoul](#)

[25 year old](#)—90 points, \$500

A 2015 addition to the Tomintoul range of single malts carrying age statements, this expression was matured in bourbon casks like the rest of the lineup, but has a slighter higher ABV than most. Toffee, peaches, and newly polished furniture on the nose. Pleasing rounded mouthfeel, with Jaffa orange, honey, malt, black pepper, and developing tannins. The finish yields more malt, lively spices, green apples, black tea, and nutty oak. —Gavin Smith



[Macallan 18](#)

[18 year old Double Cask](#)—92 points, \$330

Deep notes of wood polish on the floral nose, with toffee and a whiff of cloves. The palate is slick, with Christmas pudding, orange, caramel, oak, and dark chocolate. Black coffee, citrus fruit, ginger, and black pepper in the lengthy finish. —Gavin Smith

How to Taste Bread Flavors in Whisky

OCTOBER 14, 2020 | [JONNY MCCORMICK](#)



Whisky is often redolent of the warm scents of a neighborhood bakery. Whether it's notes of baking cookies, buttery pastry, sweet sticky buns, or a toasty baguette, these heady aromas can transport us back to childhood memories of tasty treats. The way whisky can evoke aromas and flavors of fresh-baked goodies is understandable given that whisky is also made from grains and fermented with [yeast](#). However, no single compound is responsible for the complex aromas and flavors of baked goods that often span sweetness, cereal notes, toast, and spices.

As with bread, the cereal variety weighs heavily on our impression of baked goods: [Wheat whiskeys](#) and [bourbons](#) with wheat may display a soft, bready character in contrast to the bold and spicy notes of rye. If higher kilning temperatures are used, cereals can offer more toasted and burnt bready notes as well as chocolate nuances.

Beyond grain, oak staves, especially those of used bourbon casks employed by distillers worldwide, contribute to the impression of baked delights, lending vanilla, burnt sugar, and toasty notes. Malty notes from maltol, 2- and 3-methyl butanal and other compounds, buttery or butterscotch flavors from diacetyl, vanilla notes from vanillin, and coconut flavors from oak lactones all contribute further in directing our specific impression of baked goods, from coconut macaroon to tarte Tatin.

Wood extractives are modified by further chemical reactions during maturation; the aromatic aldehyde coniferaldehyde, derived from the lignin in the oak, smells of graham crackers and the crust of freshly baked bread. Furfural yields an almond-like or marzipan flavor that reminds some of cake mix. Finally, cask staves can also produce spicy notes of ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and clove that we strongly associate with holiday baked goods.

As you relive your baking memories, consider whether you are observing simple fresh bread, a sticky caramelized bun, a specific Danish dressed with baked fruits, or simply box-mix birthday cake. You

might even reminisce about licking a spoon thick with cake or cookie batter—satisfying and comforting tasting experiences that leave you hungry for more.

FRESH BAKED FLAVORS

Toast—[Chicken Cock Double Barrel 10 year old](#): Cinnamon bread, toasted oak, rich chocolate

Bread—[Strathcolme The Extra Special](#): Toasted crumpets, silky texture, vanilla sweetness

Pastry—[Kinahan's Small Batch](#): Apple Danish, vanilla extract, cocoa

Dalmore Master Blender Richard Paterson Has Signed on With A New Distillery

NOVEMBER 16, 2020 | [SUSANNAH SKIVER BARTON](#)



Wolfcraig Distillery (rendering pictured) will break ground near Stirling in the Scottish Highlands in 2021. Though it's not yet open, the distillery has already named whisky legend Richard Paterson as master blender.

For half a century, Richard Paterson has worked for a single scotch company, [Whyte & Mackay](#), serving as master blender since 1975. He's a legendary figure in the scotch world, called "The Nose" for his palate prowess, and celebrated for his showy presentation style, which often includes throwing the contents of a glass of whisky—even very expensive stuff—on the floor to ensure that the glass is clean. His larger-than-life personality has graced many a [WhiskyFest](#), and he has almost singlehandedly made [Dalmore](#)—the jewel of Whyte & Mackay's portfolio—[one of the most collectible whiskies in the world](#).

Paterson shows no signs of stepping back from his place at the helm of Dalmore (Actual quote: "Retirement? That word is not in my vocabulary!") but he's also taking on a new role: master blender at [Wolfcraig](#), an independent distillery set to begin construction next year. There, unlike at Whyte & Mackay where he has stewarded long-established whiskies for decades, Paterson will be starting from scratch. And that's exactly the point.

"It was a new challenge and the opportunity to create a brand new Highland single malt scotch from its birth" that drew him to Wolfcraig, Paterson says, adding, "It's too early to give a definitive overview of the whisky itself as it has not even been distilled yet. These things take time, but I can assure you that it will be something unique."



Richard Paterson will stay on as master blender of Dalmore while also overseeing the development of Wolfcraig's single malt.

FRESH OPPORTUNITIES

Set to break ground next year near Stirling in the heart of the Scottish Highlands, Wolfcraig Distillery is the brainchild of co-founders Michael Lunn and his son Jamie Lunn. Michael, who was CEO and chairman of Whyte & Mackay from 1978 to 1995, wanted to re-enter the business from the ground up. "The prospect of creating and developing a high-quality Highland single malt scotch brand is what enticed me back to the whisky industry, and the opportunity to establish and coordinate a strong multi-skilled team of brand developers who all share the same vision," he says. "We had elements of that in my early days at Whyte & Mackay and it's extremely exciting that I can once again recreate this alongside Richard." Wolfcraig will have a production capacity of 1.5 million liters annually, putting it on par with the likes of [Bruichladdich](#) and [GlenDronach](#).

While Paterson will be bringing his blending expertise to Wolfcraig, the company has also enlisted a master distiller, Ian MacMillan, with nearly as many decades of experience, to oversee the production end.

MacMillan spent the bulk of his career at Burn Stewart Distillers, the group that encompasses [Bunnahabhain](#), [Tobermory](#), and [Deanston](#) distilleries, leaving in 2015 to oversee the rejuvenation of [Bladnoch Distillery](#). Since 2019, MacMillan has been a free agent, working as a consultant to the whisky industry. Wolfcraig's board of directors includes several other scotch industry veterans as well.

The company has plans to make Highland single malt as well as other, unspecified spirits. Blockchain technology will figure heavily into the process, tracking everything from the origin of the malt, type of yeast, mashing and distillation dates, and length of fermentation to the cask used and where it is matured. The idea is to provide eventual consumers with a traceable record of the whisky's provenance. Other distilleries are starting to use blockchains to keep track of bottles—especially collectible or rare ones—but this is the first one extending the technology across the entire supply chain.

Although the process of setting up a new distillery can be challenging and lengthy, Lunn is excited about the possibilities engendered by Wolfcraig's team, especially with Paterson on board. "It's a very natural and easy partnership," he says. "We know each other's ways of working thanks to a strong brand development history that spans decades."

Royal Lochnagar Debuts 17 Year Old Single Malt To Celebrate 175th Anniversary

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / November 17, 2020

Royal Lochnagar distillery in Scotland turns 175 this year, and to celebrate, they've recently unveiled a limited-edition 17-year-old single malt Scotch whisky.

The Royal Lochnagar Single Malt Scotch Whisky Aged 17 Years 175th Anniversary is matured in refill and Pedro Ximenez and Oloroso seasoned casks and bottled at 56% ABV. Only 3000 bottles will be available, pricing at £250 (around \$335 USD).



Royal Lochnagar Single Malt Scotch Whisky Aged 17 Years 175th Anniversary (image via Diageo)

"We are pleased to celebrate our 175th anniversary with a rare limited-edition bottling," said Sean Phillips, Distillery Manager at Royal Lochnagar, [in a prepared statement](#). "Selected by our expert team, this rare release portrays true Royal Lochnagar character and celebrates its history as a tiny jewel among Scotland's traditional 19th-century distilleries. A special and exclusive treat for the whisky connoisseur." Official tasting notes indicate the whisky "opens with fruity notes of mango and melon, alongside hints of wood, bracken and brambles, obtained through a mixture of short and long fermentation. On the palate, there is an immediate smooth sweetness combined with juicy acidity."

"Chocolate and light coffee characters emerge after a few moments, giving a long, dry and elegant finishing with a touch of sandalwood." Royal Lochnagar, for those unfamiliar with it, was founded in 1845 and is located one mile from the Royal Family's Balmoral Castle at the end of the Cairngorm mountains. It was originally named New Lochnagar and renamed after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert took the distillery tour and issued a Royal Warrant that granted them the use of Royal in its name.

[The distillery](#) uses a combination of slow and long fermentation, slow distillation and worm tubs. It has a production capacity of 450,000 liters, making it one of the smallest distilleries out of Diageo, and uses as its water source the "crystal clear water" of Scarnock Springs.

DIAGEO'S 2020 DISTILLERS COLLECTION ANNOUNCED

This week Diageo announced the release of its 2020 Distillers Edition. This collection features some of the brand's prominent single malt distilleries. These whiskies are made by taking a core bottling from the distillery featured as the base and giving it a secondary fortified wine maturation. For the second maturation, bespoke barrels are created with re-charred American oak bodies and charred cask heads made from new American oak. These bespoke casks are then filled with the fortified wine for a month and then the wine is dumped. Then the core offering from one distillation year rests for up to six months.



Diageo's 2020 Distillers Edition Collection

Each bottle lists the date of distillation as well as the bottling date and batch number.

[OBAN 2020 DISTILLERS EDITION](#)

This bottling is made with Oban 14 Year distilled in 2006 and the wine here is Montilla Fino. It carries an SRP of \$94.99.

[TALISKER 2020 DISTILLERS EDITION](#)

This bottling is made with Talisker 10 Year distilled in 2010 and the wine here is amoroso sherry. It carries an SRP of \$84.99.

[LAGAVULIN 2020 DISTILLERS EDITION](#)

This bottling is made with Lagavulin 16 Year distilled in 2005 and the wine here is Pedro Ximénez sherry. It carries an SRP of \$109.99.

[CRAGGANMORE 2020 DISTILLERS EDITION](#)

This bottling is made with Cragganmore 12 Year distilled in 2008 and the wine here is port. It carries an SRP of \$84.99.

[DALWHINNIE 2020 DISTILLERS EDITION](#)

This bottling is made with Dalwhinnie 15 Year distilled in 2005 and the wine here is oloroso sherry. It carries an SRP of \$84.99.

[GLENKINCHIE 2020 DISTILLERS EDITION](#)

This bottling is made with Glenkinchie 12 Year distilled in 2008 and the wine here is amontillado sherry. It carries an SRP of \$84.99.

Whisky made in 2020 'most valuable in history'

20th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Casks of whisky produced in 2020 are forecast to be highly valuable in the coming decades due to the industry's drop in production.



In 15 to 20 years' time, it will be a profitable asset to own a bottle or cask of whisky that was made in 2020

Cask whisky investment company Whiskey and Wealth Club predicts that this year 'marks a significant time for the history of the whisky industry'.

The company said the value of whisky is based on three factors: age, brand and quantity produced. The Covid-19 pandemic forced many distilleries to shut temporarily earlier this year.

Trade body the Scotch Whisky Association said in a statement on 14 May during the first lockdown that "87% of production sites are either operating at reduced capacity or have closed entirely".

As such, the amount of spirit produced this year has been significantly reduced, making it the 'smallest production year based on production capabilities in the history of whiskey', the cask investment firm noted. The decline in production means the value of whisky produced in 2020 will 'become increasingly rarer in the years to come'.

Whiskey and Wealth Club said that owners of 2020 casks are part of an exclusive group of investors. In 15 to 20 years' time, it will be a profitable asset to own a bottle or cask of whisky that was made in 2020, the firm said. It is also important to buy this whisky from a well-known brand and the longer the owner waits to sell it, the more it will be worth.

Jay Bradley, founder of Whiskey and Wealth Club, said: "We have never been in a situation where whiskey production all but completely ceased. The whiskey produced in this turbulent year will be highly valuable in the next 15 years."

"Investors and whiskey enthusiasts would be wise to invest in 2020 whiskey as you'll be buying a significant part of whiskey history."

BALBLAIR AGE STATEMENT COLLECTION DEBUTS IN THE US

This week Balblair announced its age statement collection would be arriving in the US. This collection was first revealed in June 2019 in other markets and is a departure from its previous vintage-only releases. Each single malt is bottled at natural color with no chill filtration at 46% ABV. In addition to the new age statements, the brand has also revamped its packaging.



Balblair Age Statement Collection /Photo Credit: Balblair

[12 YEAR](#)

The 12 year matures in American oak ex-bourbon and double-fired American oak. It carries an SRP of \$69.99.

15 YEAR

The 15 year matures in American oak ex-bourbon and finishes in first-fill Spanish oak sherry butts. It carries an SRP of \$119.99.

18 YEAR

The 18 year aged in American oak ex-bourbon and is then finished in first-fill Spanish oak sherry butts. It carries an SRP of \$209.99.

25 YEAR

The 25 year matures initially in American oak ex-bourbon and is finished in Spanish oak oloroso sherry casks. It carries an SRP of \$699.99.

The Balblair core collection is now available in the U.S. across eight states (CA, CO, IL MA, NH, NJ, NY and TX). Also, consumers can find the whiskies online and at fine retailers in each market. Beginning in 2021, Balblair will be available in additional markets.

Glen Moray debuts Sauternes cask-matured whisky

23rd November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Speyside distillery Glen Moray has released a Scotch whisky matured in Sauternes wine casks as the first expression in its new Warehouse 1 Collection.



The Sauternes casks provide the whisky with 'honeyed sweetness' Glen Moray Sauternes Cask Matured whisky is the debut release from Glen Moray's new Warehouse 1 Collection. The range is named after the Elgin-based distillery's Warehouse 1, which is home to innovative, maturing casks.

Distilled and bottled in 2006, the whisky matured in the warehouse for 14 years in five sweet Sauternes wine casks.

Glen Moray brand ambassador Iain Allan said: "There are a good few warehouses at our Elgin site, but Warehouse 1 is special. Over the years, this is where our distillery teams have quietly stored the results of their experiments and cask adventures.

"As a result we have pockets of casks holding the most interesting and incredible tasting whiskies scattered throughout the warehouse, which we are now uncovering, tasting and making plans to release.

"It's fitting and very exciting that, starting with this superb Sauternes bottling, these whiskies will now be enjoyed by drinkers as part of our Warehouse 1 Collection in years to come."

The resulting liquid combines the brand's signature 'smooth, light Speyside style' with the 'aromatic, honeyed sweetness' of the French dessert wine. It has notes of dark chocolate, caramel, Seville orange and spice.

Glen Moray's head of whisky creation, Dr Kirstie McCallum, said: 'We're very proud to be releasing our Sauternes Cask Matured expression in time for the festive season – and as the first whisky in our new Warehouse 1 Collection.

"This is an absolute cracker of a dram, and a perfect marriage of Glen Moray's spirit with all the rich, deliciously sweet flavours you would enjoy in a glass of Sauternes. It's a real celebration of flavour and Glen Moray's passion for unusual cask maturation."

There are 1,248 bottles of the whisky available at a cask strength of 59.6% ABV. It is available to buy exclusively in the UK from specialist whisky shops, priced at RRP £79.99 (US\$107) per 700ml.

In July this year, Glen Moray [unveiled three new wine cask-finished expressions](#) as part of its annual Distillery Edition range.

Cocktail Queries: 10 Great Alternatives to Hyped, Sought-After Bourbons

By [Jim Vorel](#) | November 20, 2020 | 2:39pm

Photos via Heaven Hill, Brown-Forman, Jim Beam, Wild Turkey, Buffalo Trace, Maker's Mark, Belle Meade, High West,



Cocktail Queries is a Paste series that examines and answers basic, common questions that drinkers may have about mixed drinks, cocktails and spirits. Check out [every entry in the series](#) to date. It's entirely too easy these days, when it comes to spirits writing about bourbon in particular, to focus almost entirely on what the average consumer is never able to acquire. So many brands have had their prices inflated and seen corresponding drops in availability during the brown liquor craze, and the discourse found in online forums and Facebook groups in particular has a tendency to revolve disproportionately around only a small handful of brands, building a self-perpetuating hype cycle that convinces new drinkers that only a small number of brands represent "the good stuff." It's a phenomenon that has [resulted in price gouging from retailers becoming the norm](#), as package stores are all too happy to mark up a bottle of bourbon 400% from MSRP if there are people out there desperate enough to pay it. But that's all stuff I've written about before. In a market where hype drives unreasonable pricing and frustrating scarcity, the most valuable question to actually ask and answer is "So what should I be drinking *instead*?" If you can't find the hyped stuff, like most of us, what are your best alternatives that are easier to track down? If you don't care to be dropping three or four figures on whiskey bottles, what are the best value plays to capture those same flavor profiles? That's the purpose of this piece. In each entry here, I'll cite a hyped bourbon that is currently difficult to obtain (or subject to constant price gouging), and suggest an easier found alternative that you'll probably enjoy just as much.

Note: I've tried to ensure that I'm providing recommendations from an array of different distilleries, but the sheer hype surrounding Buffalo Trace products in particular means they'll inevitably be well represented here. It's simply the consequence of their products being so hotly desired.

1. W.L. Weller

The alternative: Larceny



The not-so-secret background of W.L. Weller is that it shares the same wheated bourbon mashbill as Buffalo Trace's coveted Pappy Van Winkle series, which made brands like W.L. Weller 12 Year (which [we recently reviewed](#) once again) one of the first to benefit from the miasma of hype that spread out in every direction from Pappy in the

last decade. That sudden surge in interest took a series of high-value bottles and turned them into whales overnight—there’s nothing wrong with the W.L. Weller lineup, but it does nothing to justify the fact that people are paying \$300 for bottles of W.L. Weller 12 Year on the secondary market when I bought one for around \$25 only seven years ago. It extends to the entire lineup, too—even the flagship W.L. Weller Special Reserve is going for \$100 or more in many price-gouging package stores.

Heaven Hill’s Larceny, on the other hand, is a similarly wheated, non-age-stated bourbon with no such availability issues. Despite the lack of an age statement, it likely has a higher average age than the W.L. Weller Special Reserve, and a slightly higher proof. Both pack classic wheated bourbon flavor notes of sweet vanilla, caramel, stone fruit and biscuits, but the Larceny will set you back \$20-25, rather than \$100. It’s about as clear a comparison as you can make between two products with almost identical statistics but vastly different price points thanks to hype and hype alone—not to mention the fact that [head to head tastings](#) often suggest that Larceny is every bit as good.

2. Pappy Van Winkle

The alternative: Maker’s Mark Private Selection



Might as well follow up W.L. Weller by addressing its big brother, right? The Pappy Van Winkle lineup is the elephant in the room in any conversation about hyped bourbon. Made from the same wheated bourbon mashbill as those Wellers, it barely needs any introduction at this point. Perhaps you’ve seen a bottle sitting behind glass in a liquor store for \$1,000 or more. Maybe your local bar has some in a strongbox, to be brought out for finance bro birthday parties. It doesn’t really matter; the brand can barely be said to be relevant to the average drinker thanks to the impossibility of getting it and the prohibitive price attached to it. Suffice to say, it’s a line of well-aged wheated bourbons favored by those who enjoy the soft and sweet flavor profile typical to that style.

If what you want is a top-tier wheated bourbon with no shortage of flavor, though, you’re in luck—Maker’s Mark has several that fit the bill, and they’re all excellent values. You could grab the regular Maker’s Mark Cask Strength for just over \$50, but you’re even better off dropping an extra \$10 on the Private Selection series, which takes the already delicious, cask-strength Maker’s profile and amps it up with additional aging on a variety of proprietary barrel staves. In fact, you’re likely to find this whiskey considerably more vivacious and flavor-packed than the relatively low proof likes of Pappy Van Winkle, if we’re being honest. It can’t compete with the Pappy in terms of big age statements, but it really doesn’t need one.

3. Booker’s Bourbon

The alternative: Knob Creek Single Barrel Select



Booker’s certainly isn’t as hard to find as some of these other bourbons, partially because Jim Beam possesses the capacity to produce it in fairly large quantities, but mostly because for a lot of bourbon geeks it has sort of priced itself out of the conversation in recent years. Beam is a distillery that is known for *value* across its whole lineup, and it has no shortage of great value options. In fact, Beam even has great, well-aged, overproof bourbon options at solid values, which begs the question of why you would pay \$90 for Booker’s when the same company offers very similar products at a much more attractive price point.

Case in point: Knob Creek Single Barrel Reserve or Select, which have become an even better deal since the flagship Knob Creek [regained its 9-year age statement this year](#). That makes even the standard Knob Creek Single Barrel Reserve considerably more mature than the 6-8 years common for Booker’s, and with a proof of 120 they’re only slightly less potent than the typical cask strength of Booker’s as well. All that, and a price under \$50!

In reality, though, single barrels from Knob Creek become an even better deal in the form of store picks, which are typically older than 9 years and may be as old as 13, 14 or 15 years, with the same 120 proof. It’s just hard to make a case for Booker’s at \$90, when you can often find these for \$45.

4. Old Forester Birthday Bourbon

The alternative: Old Forester 1920 Prohibition Style



This is less a knock on Birthday Bourbon, given that most of the batches are wonderful, and more an affirmation that Old Forester 1920 is consistently one of the best American bourbons on the shelf, and it isn’t too hard to find.

Birthday Bourbon is a yearly release that reflects the range of profiles you find within Brown-Forman’s Old Forester brand—I find that sometimes it plays up the “bananas foster” notes that their bourbon is

known for, while other years are much more red fruity or spice-driven. It's always fun to taste, but the MSRP of \$130 is pretty steep—and you're more likely to find it for \$500 or \$600 from a price gouging retailer marking it up to secondary market prices.

Old Forester 1920, on the other hand? It doesn't sport a fancy age statement, but neither do most Old Forester brands. It *can* claim to be extremely full flavored thanks to its 115 proof, and its taste profile is like a synthesis of everything you might like about Brown-Forman bourbons: Rich, sweet, fruity, spicy, it's got it all. And the price tag is \$60!

As someone who has had both of these bourbons many times, I can tell you that Old Forester 1920 will give you almost everything you're hoping to find in a bottle of Birthday Bourbon.

5. Blanton's Single Barrel

The alternative: Buffalo Trace Bourbon



I was tempted to write in "practically anything" as an alternative to the prices that have been normalized for Blanton's in the current whiskey marketplace, but I'll refrain from getting *that* snarky about it. Instead, let me put in a good word for one of the few products Buffalo Trace produces that is still fairly easy to find, in the form of their flagship bourbon.

Blanton's is a strange beast, and a clear case of rampant hype setting unrealistic expectations and pricing in the market. It was the first single barrel bourbon brand to hit the market, and its core stats are unremarkable: 6-8 years old, 93 proof. A very standard bourbon, made from Buffalo Trace's "#2," slightly higher rye mash bill. However, the cult that formed around Blanton's, thanks to its beautiful bottle and superlative marketing, means that this product with a \$60 MSRP is often sold by price-gouging retailers for \$200 or more in 2020. Suffice to say, there's just nothing about Blanton's specifically that justifies that kind of pricing. It's a fine whiskey, but you're being robbed if you pay those kinds of prices for it.

The flagship Buffalo Trace, on the other hand, has also gotten somewhat harder to find thanks to the mania surrounding the distillery, but it's still relatively plentiful and often available for prices under \$30. For that, you get a bourbon with a similar, possibly *older* average age than Blanton's, and a similar proof to boot. It's made from a slightly different mashbill, but it has all the beautiful Buffalo Trace hallmarks regardless—rich vanilla, caramel, cherry, etc. In a blind tasting, you'd never think that one of the two glasses was selling for \$200, while the other was selling for \$30.

6. Willett Family Estate Bottled Bourbon

The alternative: Wild Turkey Rare Breed



The Willett brand initially built its hype by sourcing and selling exceptionally aged bourbons, many of which went on to become collector's items that sell for thousands of dollars. Their own distilling operation is considerably younger, but via the Willett Family Estate Bottled Bourbon series they made the interesting choice of essentially trying to replicate those sourced bottles with their own distillate. This has resulted in selling 6-year-old bottles of cask strength bourbon for \$120 or more, with secondary prices going hundreds of dollars higher. Suffice to say, it's a level of inflation and price gouging that Willett's own distillate hasn't really earned—rather, those purple-topped bourbon bottles benefitted from the hype of the whiskey Willett previously sourced.

This is all the more clear when you look at some of the other brands that are now distilled and aged entirely at Willett, such as Old Bardstown. You can get decently aged, 100 proof Old Bardstown for pennies on the dollar, despite the fact that the distillate is very similar to those purple-topped bottles of Willett Family Estate. If what you really want is to properly sample the whiskey that Willett is making, the Old Bardstown brand is the most sensible way to do it.

If what you want is an unmistakably great value in cask strength bourbon, on the other hand, Wild Turkey Rare Breed is always there waiting for you. Year in and year out, this gem of the Wild Turkey lineup is available for around \$50, and it's considerably more mature than anything Willett has been able to put out, being a blend of 6 to 12-year-old bourbons that typically weigh in around 115 proof. It's massively flavorful, utterly delicious, and remains one of the best pure values in all of whiskey.

7. George T. Stagg

The alternative: Elijah Craig Barrel Proof



George T. Stagg is one of the unicorns of the annual Buffalo Trace Antique Collection, coveted above all others except for the yearly release of William Larue Weller. This is a knock-your-socks-off, well-aged (15 years), cask-strength bourbon that strides in with in-your-face flavors and a take-no-prisoners attitude. It's also just about impossible

to find outside of the secondary market, where greed and price gouging can put it at \$500-700 and beyond. Suffice to say, the best opportunity for getting to try something like this is knowing a friend who wins a package store lottery, or finding it at a bar and ponying up the cost for a pour.

That's all well and good, but for the rank and file bourbon drinker there's quite a few other cask strength options out there, and some other well-aged examples that won't break the bank or require a second mortgage. Some will no doubt suggest Buffalo Trace's own Staggy Jr. as an alternative, but it's often just as hard to find (and price inflated) as its big brother. You're far better off with the regularity and reliable excellence of Heaven Hill's Elijah Craig Barrel Proof, which can still reliably be found for \$60-70 after each release every four months. ECBP is a model of consistency, being a 12-year-old bourbon that usually rings in between 120-135 proof, bringing all the same intensity of flavor you'd be expecting from something with "Stagg" in the title. The fact that it releases three times a year makes it much easier to come by, and practically every batch is exceptional in its own way. In fact, check out [our tasting of all three 2020 batches here](#), and then go get some for yourself.

8. Kentucky Owl Bourbon

The alternative: Belle Meade Cask Strength Reserve



Kentucky Owl does one thing, and they do it well—buying excellent, well-aged bourbon from MGP of Indiana and presenting it at cask strength. There's not really any denying the quality of the results they've put out, and some of the Kentucky Owl batches we've sampled in the last few years have been among our favorite whiskey releases. With that said, however, Kentucky Owl batches are quite small and pretty hard to come by, and they carry *extreme* price tags. An MSRP of around \$300 for a bottle of bourbon is just really, really hard for most people to justify, and that's not even getting into the secondary market pricing.

Thankfully, though, there's a LOT of places to get great MGP bourbon in the marketplace, because they provide it to so many other distillers and non-distilling producers (NDPs). You can find some of the same whiskey in bottles from the likes of Smooth Ambler, Barrell, Old Carter, and now from MGP's own George Remus lineup. It's harder to match the exact combination of age statement and proof point as most of the Kentucky Owl releases, but one that comes particularly close is Belle Meade Cask Strength Reserve.

Like the Kentucky Owl, this is sourced from MGP, and it has a pretty solid average age considering it's a blend of 7 to 11-year-old high-rye bourbons. It likewise has the overproof punch to be very full flavored, while its lower profile keeps the price tag in the \$60-70 range, which is extremely reasonable. In terms of value for MGP bourbon, this can't really be beat.

9. Elmer T. Lee

The alternative: Russell's Reserve Single Barrel



Elmer T. Lee is made from the same Buffalo Trace mash bill "#2" as Blanton's, and indeed on paper these brands are extremely similar. They're both aged for moderate amounts of time, have similar (relatively lower) proof points, and are heavily hyped. They're aged in different types of warehouses, but it's still hard to make a case for Elmer T. Lee as a single barrel bourbon that should command a price even higher than Blanton's. And yet, thanks to the fact that it's produced in smaller quantities, Elmer T. Lee regularly sells on the secondary or at price-gouging retailers for \$350 and beyond, which is just absurd for a bourbon with a \$40 MSRP.

In the spirit of trying a new single barrel bourbon you're likely to enjoy even more, then, allow me to point you in the direction of Russell's Reserve Single Barrel Bourbon from Wild Turkey. The Russell's Reserve line of bourbons is a subtle branching off from the core Wild Turkey lineup, often bringing slightly rounder and more subtle flavors to the mix, although in this case the 110 proof Russell's Reserve Single Barrel is a certifiable flavor monster in its own right. It's both more mature and more assertive than the Elmer T. Lee, and you'll find it on shelves for \$60 or less. What's not to like?

10. Michter's 10 Year Rye

The alternatives: High West Rendezvous Rye, Pikesville Rye, WhistlePig Rye



I know this is a bourbon list, but I've got to at least *mention* rye whiskey, right? Of all the hyped ryes out there, the one I often find most difficult to accept the fervor for is Michter's 10 Year Kentucky Straight Rye. Here in my home in Virginia in particular, I have watched people lose their minds for the opportunity to buy this bottle of 10 year old, 93 proof rye for \$150 from the state-run liquor stores ... which is actually not bad, in comparison with the \$300-350 this brand is being priced at from many price gouging online package stores. That pricing, however, is ludicrous—10 years is a decent age statement for rye whiskey, but it doesn't justify those crazy prices, especially considering the proof point. Here then are *three* alternatives that each will work just fine as a replacement.

If you specifically want to keep the mid-90s proof point, High West Rendezvous Rye is a delicious blend of MGP rye and their own distillate, at 92 proof, and it can often be found for less than \$70. It's versatile and complex; an easy rye for neat drinking in particular. If you want something a bit bolder, Heaven Hill's Pikesville Rye is essentially a grown-up version of their budget-friendly Rittenhouse, with a commanding 110 proof point and a few more years of aging behind it. In terms of assertiveness of flavor, the Michter's 10 simply

can't compete with this, making Pikesville an ideal cocktail rye when you want the whiskey to shine through. And if you really need that 10-year age statement, the flagship WhistlePig rye whiskey has it for you at a price point that is still around \$80 from most national retailers ... *plus* a higher strength at 100 proof. All that, and the MSRP is still roughly \$70 less. Ultimately, you could buy any two of these other ryes for what one "M10" is going to cost you.

Jim Vorel is a Paste staff writer and resident liquor geek. You can [follow him on Twitter](#) for more drink writing.

UK-Canada trade deal to benefit spirits

24th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The UK and Canada have agreed to establish a new trade agreement next year, which will ensure tariff-free access to spirits such as Scotch whisky.



The value of Canadian spirits exports to the UK have grown by more than 20% since 2017

The UK and Canada have maintained their existing trading relationship, and will begin negotiating a new tailor-made agreement between the two nations next year.

The move was agreed in a video call on 21 November between UK prime minister Boris Johnson and Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau, who was joined by Liz Truss, the UK's international trade secretary, and Mary Ng, Canada's minister of small business, export promotion and international trade.

The agreement ensures tariff-free trade on 98% of goods that can be exported to Canada. Without the deal, British consumers would have paid up to 8% in tax for Canadian goods that enter the market under the UK Global Tariff.

Trade body the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) said the deal was "good news for Scotch whisky exports as it aims to secure fairer access for Scotch whisky to the Canadian market". Ian McKendrick, international director at the SWA, said: "Importantly, the agreement includes commitments to address practices by certain provincial liquor boards which currently limit market access for Scotch whisky. Over 50% of Scotch whisky exports to Canada are single malt Scotch whisky, making Canada a particularly important export destination for many smaller Scotch whisky distillers that only produce single malt.

"We look forward to future negotiations on a comprehensive Canada-UK bilateral free trade agreement which will provide a further opportunity to ensure Scotch whisky can compete fairly in the Canadian market. Canada is a whisky-loving nation, and with fairer access the industry is confident that we can grow direct exports of Scotch whisky in the years ahead."

Canada is the 15th largest global export market for Scotch, with exports worth £94.4 million (US\$126m) in 2019. The value of Scotch whisky exports to Canada grew by 5.7% in 2019.

'Complex alcohol market'

Miles Beale, chief executive of trade group the Wine and Spirit Trade Association, also welcomed the move.

He said: "This is a good result for the UK wine and spirit industry. Canada is an important market that is growing for UK exporters, particularly our small and medium-sized gin and English wine exporters.

"This agreement doesn't just confirm the continued removal of tariffs, but gives us some extra footing and mechanisms to engage with the Canadians on their complex alcohol market, which is controlled at a provincial level. It should allow UK businesses to be more competitive in the Canadian liquor board system and that's a positive step in helping us to grow in the market."

The value of Canadian spirits exports to the UK have grown by more than 20% since 2017, reaching US\$3.3m last year.

The UK will continue to be covered by the EU-Canada free trade deal during the Brexit transition period. This new agreement will come into effect on 1 January 2021.

Over the last past few years, the UK has agreed new post-Brexit trade deals with countries such as [the US](#) and [the Caribbean](#). Last month, the UK government outlined a [new geographical indication \(GI\) scheme](#) to protect British products such as Scotch whisky once the Brexit transition period ends.

Glen Scotia bottles 30YO Sherry cask-matured whisky

24th November, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Campbeltown distillery Glen Scotia has released 500 bottles of a 30-year-old single malt matured in ex-Sherry casks.



The Glen Scotia 30 Year Old was matured in ex-Sherry casks

The Glen Scotia 30 Year Old was distilled in 1989 and aged in European oak hogshead Sherry casks.

Iain McAlister, master distiller at Glen Scotia, said: "The Glen Scotia 30 Year Old single malt is an exceptional new addition to Glen Scotia's portfolio. The flavour profile is deep and distinguished, showcasing the complex flavours and maritime influence that Glen Scotia has become known for.

"Like our distillery, the Glen Scotia 30 Year Old is steeped in history and after three decades of maturation, I am proud to finally be able to unveil this new expression to the world."

Non-chill filtered and bottled at 50.8% ABV, the 30-year-old whisky has floral notes of violet and lavender on the nose. On the palate, the single malt whisky has flavours of honeyed pear and candied lemon, followed by 'warm notes of cinnamon and ground ginger, leading into dark chocolate and coffee'.

Glen Scotia has filled 500 bottles of the aged whisky, which is priced at £850 (US\$1,100) per 700ml. It is available to purchase from specialist retailers, including Master of Malt.

The Singleton Has Released A 38-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / November 23, 2020

The Singleton of Glen Old distillery, owned by Diageo and located in the Highland whisky region of Scotland, recently released a 38-year-old single malt scotch whisky. The cask-strength whisky went through the longest secondary maturation in The Singleton's history: 26 years.

This whisky was drawn from just eight casks and only 1,689 bottles are available worldwide.

The story of this malt goes back a quarter of a century. Diageo Master of Malts Maureen Robinson is said to have discovered a 12-year-old single malt 26 years ago. She decided to add a second maturation process, rehousing the whisky in casks of ex-bourbon, Pedro Ximenez Oloroso seasoned casks and brand new American oak casks. This combination was left to mature for over 25 years.



The Singleton 38-Year-Old (image via Diageo)

“The Singleton 38-year-old was crafted during an era that was very exciting at The Singleton — a time of flavour experimentation and innovation across our whisky-making,” said Robinson [in a prepared statement](#). “Selecting new American oak casks was very new for us at that time at the distillery, and we decided on a lengthy secondary maturation to continue to unlock the decadent layers of flavour in this single malt. I remember tasting cask samples just three years into the secondary maturation and I was struck with how even at such an early stage, we could identify the richness of flavour the new casks had presented.

“To mature those casks for more than two decades further was an exploration of how it is possible to unearth exceptional flavour within whisky, and it feels a real privilege to now share this truly delicious single malt with the world.”

The presentation case this whisky comes in has a red apple design that’s said to draw inspiration from the flavours of the malt, including warm autumnal spices and caramel. An abstract apple has 26 lines on it that represent the 26 years spent in its second maturation.

The Singleton 38-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky is available globally for £2,100, or around \$2,800 USD. You’ll find official brand tasting notes below.

- **Appearance:** Rich, deep amber with copper lights. Outstanding beading and good viscosity.
 - **Nose:** Mellow and generous overall. The immediate top notes are rich, fruity and sweet, with aromas of red apple, mango, pineapple and candied citrus fruits. These fruity tones are soon succeeded by almond oil and vanilla pod, and later vanilla fudge, on a base of sandalwood. A drop of water opens the nose a little, while keeping the same profile.
 - **Body:** Full.
 - **Palate:** At natural strength, a thick, creamy texture and a vibrant, sweet start in which rich opening notes of fudge lead smoothly into a lightly spicy, intense and fruity taste suggesting cinnamon-spiced baked apple, drying gently into an autumnal peppery warmth that envelopes the palate. Appreciably deeper in taste than its younger siblings, it shows the classic Singleton smoothness, being richly flavoured, well balanced and easy to drink straight. The palate opens to reveal hints of orange citrus while with a dash of water more sweet flavours of vanilla ice cream and caramel fudge are perfectly balanced by just a trace of salt, still with a light touch of that Szechuan pepper warmth.
 - **Finish:** Really long; a sweet warmth suffuses the whole palate and leaves the palate tingling as a trace of gingery spice lingers. With water lighter and longer, still leaving the memory of that rich warmth.
-

Scotland’s Loch Lomond Adds 21- and 30-Year Old Whiskies To Its Core Range

By [Katelyn Best](#) / November 23, 2020

Loch Lomond, one of the oldest distilleries in Scotland, recently added new 21-year-old and 30-year old whiskies to its core range. The two expressions “perfectly [capture] the distillery’s signature fruity character,” according to those behind them.

The Loch Lomond 21 Year Old and 30 Year Old were both distilled in the distillery’s unique straight-necked pot stills and are both mixes of several different styles of whiskies, selected by master blender Michael Henry.



Loch Lomond 21 Year Old and 30 Year Old (image via Loch Lomond)

The 21-year-old expression, it is said, “showcases three styles of spirit, two of which are peated, and all matured separately in American Oak Casks before being expertly married together for up to three months before bottling.” It is un-chill-filtered and bottled at 46% ABV.

The 30-year-old whisky, meanwhile, was also matured in American oak, with half the batch then finished in first-fill oloroso sherry casks to accentuate the expression’s “underlying fruity character.” This older expression is bottled at 47% ABV.

“Working on these two aged products has been a pleasure,” said Henry [in a prepared statement](#). “Each expression perfectly showcases our signature style and the range of flavours that Loch Lomond Whiskies is known for – fruits, spice and a hint of peat. Working with both American Oak and Oloroso casks has created wonderfully distinctive, warming flavours that we hope whisky lovers will enjoy.” Loch Lomond was founded in 1814, with roots in the Littlemill distillery—believed to be the oldest licensed distillery in the world, established in 1772. Their signature straight-necked stills are said to produce a lighter, fruitier spirit and give distillers better control over the final product.

Both of these whiskies will be available worldwide, with the 21-year-old priced at £140 (about \$185 USD), and the older expression at £500 (about \$660 USD). The distillery also plans to add a 14-year-old expression to its lineup later this year.

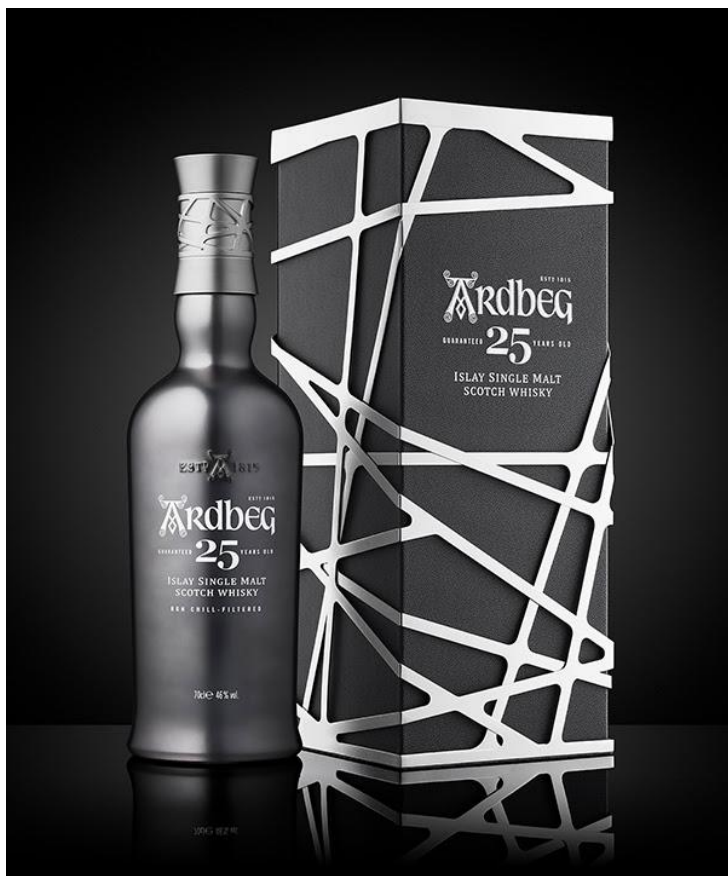
You’ll find some official tasting notes below for both.

Loch Lomond 21 Year Old:

- **Nose:** Toasted oak and coconut, green apple and ginger
- **Palate:** Sweet vanilla fudge, peach and pear, lime juice with a touch of cinnamon spice
- **Finish:** Long and dry with a wisp of peat spoke and lingering oak spice

Loch Lomond 30 Year Old:

- **Nose:** Honey, peach and melon, vanilla and cinnamon
- **Palate:** Toffee fudge sweetness, crisp green apple and fresh pineapple, gentle spice of ginger and nutmeg
- **Finish:** Long with juicy green fruit, kiwi, gooseberry and lime



AGED FOR 25 YEARS...

Dear Committee Member

It's been an eventful quarter of a century at Ardbeg Distillery. But while we've all been busy soaring into space, diving into whirlpools and creating the best Committee on Earth, a small number of casks have been quietly lying in wait... Secret casks containing some of Ardbeg's rarest whisky stocks.

Today, I'm delighted to reveal that Ardbeg 25 Years Old is *almost* ready to be released.

...CAGED FOR ITS OWN PROTECTION

The mathematically-minded of you will note that these casks must have been filled during a dark time when the Distillery produced only a trickle of new make spirit every year.

Indeed, these casks contain some of the most scarce and precious Ardbeg known to man, woman or four-legged beast.

Speaking of beasts, I can tell you that time has not tamed this one. Though longer in the tooth than its fellow core range expressions, Ardbeg 25 Years Old still exudes Ardbeg's hallmark smoky power. Only here, it is exquisitely interwoven with layer upon layer of complex, elegant and majestic flavours.

FIRST TO KNOW

Naturally, we wanted our Committee Members to be the first to know about this supreme expression, which will be a permanent addition to our family of whiskies.

Ardbeg 25 Years Old will be released in most countries in 2021, with a handful of lucky locations receiving it this year. Rest assured, you will be the first to hear when it's available for you to buy in your country. For now, sit tight and await our next correspondence regarding this old and rare Ardbeg...
Slàinte!

Mickey Heads
Committee Chairman

ARDBEG 25 YEARS OLD

The newest, oldest whisky to join our core range. This supreme expression proves unequivocally that age cannot tame Ardbeg's smoky power. But it can yield some of the most complex and majestic flavours ever to burst forth from Ardbeg Distillery.

Bottled from incredibly rare casks filled during some of the Distillery's darkest days, this is Ardbeg at its most intricate, balanced and beguiling.

Majestic aromas of smoked cream and earthy bonfires are masterfully interwoven with layers of pine and fragrant candle wax. Hot pepper rises on the palate, twisting around lemon sherbet sweetness, while hints of carbolic soap and tar flow into a long aftertaste characterised by delicate aniseed entwined with lingering cream and fudge. Non chill-filtered with a strength of 46%

Every Bottle Of The Core Johnnie Walker Scotch Whisky Line, Ranked

[ZACH JOHNSTON](#) [TWITTER](#) LIFE WRITER

NOVEMBER 20, 2020

Johnnie Walker is one of the [best-selling whiskies](#) in the world. And it's the best-selling [scotch whisky](#) by a pretty [big margin](#). Meaning there are a lot of loyalists to Johnnie Walker's [blended scotches](#) out there. The [whisky](#) shingle doesn't leave its fans starving for options either, with seven core bottles in the [U.S. line up](#) and 16 active limited editions (although several of those are variations on the spendy Johnnie Walker Blue, which itself has five limited-edition expressions).

We're not here to discuss hard-to-track-down [limited edition](#)

[scotches](#) today. The drams we're tasting are all available at your local liquor store or, at the very least, online (check by clicking the price).

They're also [relatively affordable](#) when compared to the limited-run expressions.

As for the science behind this ranking, we only considered two elements. The first and most heavily weighted aspect was taste. The second was cost. Johnnie Walker's price can jump drastically between expressions, so we had to weigh whether the more expensive bottles were really that much better than the cheaper stuff.

With that all in mind, here's a definitive ranking of Johnnie Walker's core line of scotch whiskies.

Related: [Whiskeys That Deserve Way More Respect Than They Get](#)

7. Johnnie Walker Red Label



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$26](#)

The Whisky:

Johnnie Walker's entry point expression is also the best-selling scotch expression on the planet. The juice is a blend from Diageo's deep stable of distilleries around Scotland that's specifically designed to be mixed and not taken straight.

Tasting Notes:

The nose reminds you more of a sweet and citrusy Speyside or Highland whisky. The palate holds onto those notes while adding a peppery spice and a hint of orchard fruits. The end shifts towards Islay with a wisp of smoke as the sip fades quickly away while warming you with alcohol heat.

Bottom Line:

I feel bad putting this whisky in the last spot. It does exactly what it says and that means something. It's also very affordable. This is a very solid base for a highball, especially for anyone looking to get into a mild blended scotch that brings all of Scotland into the glass.

Still, this is the broadest of all the sips on the list and really only works as a mixer at the end of the day.

6. Johnnie Walker Double Black



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$46](#)

The Whisky:

This is basically Johnnie Black, a slightly peaty blend, that's been casked again in deeply charred oak. The idea is to maximize that peat and amp up the Islay and Island smokiness of the final dram.

Tasting Notes:

Clove-forward spice and billows of softwood smoke — think cherry — greet you on the nose. The palate has a vanilla creaminess that's punctuated by bright apple, dried fruit, and more peat. The spice kicks back in late, warming things up as the smoke carries through the end with a nice dose of oakiness.

Bottom Line:

This was a struggle to place. While it's not *that* much more expensive than standard Johnnie Black, we can't say it's *that* much better, either. It feels like they took Johnnie Black and just added more smoke for the sake of more smoke. If that's your jam, wonderful — this is the whisky for you.

For us, it always feels a bit like a nice hat on an already nice hat.

5. Johnnie Walker Black Label



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$38](#)

The Whisky:

This is Johnnie's signature blend that's dialed in to be a sipper with a few rocks thrown in. The blend leans into the peaty seaside distilleries with 30 plus whiskies from powerhouses like [Lagavulin](#), Talisker, and Cardhu.

Tasting Notes:

Mild notes of spice mingle with bright and sweet fruits and a hint of vanilla. The taste allows the malt to shine as the vanilla, spice, and fruit counter a distant wisp of smoke. That smoke warms as the sip fades out, leaving you with a final note of sweet wood.

Bottom Line:

This is a very quaffable whisky that works wonders on the rocks. It's also affordable, for what it is. We'd argue that this is a good place to start if you want to dip your toes into mildly smoky whiskies without diving headfirst into a Lagavulin or Ardbeg.

4. Johnnie Walker Gold Label Reserve



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$80](#)

The Whisky:

This no-age statement blend leans into that signature Walker marriage of Highland and Speyside whiskies with a small dose of Western Scottish juice for good measure. The lion's share of the whisky involved in this gilded bottle is Clynelish, a Highland whisky that adds a modicum of peat to the mix.

Tasting Notes:

Honey and oak greet you with a distant fruity nature and a little warmth. The fruit kicks up on the palate and becomes slightly tropical as a counterpoint of rich vanilla creaminess arrives. The end is subtle and long with the fruit and honey standing tall against a very distant echo of earthy peat.

Bottom Line:

This is tasty, refined, and fairly affordable. It used to be one of those bottles you could only get at duty-free but became widely available a few years ago. At the end of the day, this is a perfectly decent bottle of whisky that will not disappoint.

3. Johnnie Walker Blue Label



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$230](#)

The Whisky:

This is the mountaintop of Johnnie Walker's whiskies. The blend is a marriage of ultra-rare stock from extinct Diageo distilleries around Scotland. That's just ... cool. This expression is all about barrel selection and the mastery of a great noser and blender working together to create something special.

Tasting Notes:

Dried fruit with a plummy sweetness mingles with a very soft and almost dry pall of smoke. The palate then veers in a completely different direction — folding in orange oils, marzipan, rose water,

honeycombs, and a dusting of bitter cacao once water is added. The end is slow, smoky, and full of dry fruits, nuts, and a malty nature.
Bottom Line:
This does taste really f*cking good. It's hard to get past the price though. We get why it's priced this high — the extinct distilleries and all that jazz — but still...
Anyway, if this bottle was in the \$100 range, we'd probably never shut up about it.

2. Johnnie Walker Aged 18 Years



DIAGEO

ABV: 40%
Average Price: [\\$90](#)
The Whisky:
This blend used to be called Johnnie Walker Platinum, which was aged for 18 years. You might still see some of those bottles on shelves where scotch sells slowly. This is the same juice, which is comprised of 18 whiskies all of which are a minimum of 18 years old. The primary distilleries in the bottle are Blair Athol, [Cardhu](#), Glen Elgin, and Auchroisk.
Tasting Notes:
There's a rich and buttery toffee that's counterpointed by a bowl of ripe and sweet fruit that really draws you in. The caramel malts mix with marzipan, creamy vanilla pudding, and a nice rush of juicy winter tangerines that have just been peeled. Adding a little water, those orange oils marry to a deeply dark chocolate nature, which leads towards a velvety and ever-so-lightly smoky end.
Bottom Line:
This is some refined goddamn whisky. This is one of those whiskies that's really hard to put down. Full disclosure: For us, this and the expression above are basically a tie when it comes to how tasty they are. The only reason this one's technically "second" and not "third" is that it's a lot less expensive.
If you do snag a bottle, make sure to add some water or a rock and really let the scotch bloom in the glass.

1. Johnnie Walker Green Label



DIAGEO

ABV: 43%
Average Price: [\\$65](#)
The Whisky:
This whisky was actually taken off the market in 2012 and people lost their shit. Diageo came to its senses and brought it back by 2016. The juice is a blend of single malts only, making it a "pure malt" and not a "blended scotch whisky" (that blends malt and grain whiskies). The juice primarily comes from Speyside, Highland, Lowland, and Island

malts with a focus on a minimum of 15-year-old [Talisker](#), Caol Ila, Cragganmore, and Linkwood.

Tasting Notes:

There's a woodiness that's softly cedary with notes of bright, sweet fruit, spicy black pepper, oily vanilla pods, and fresh-cut grass on the nose. The taste really delivers on the softness of the cedar while adding more tropical fruitiness and a subtle edge of dried roses. The end is deliberate with the cedar, spice, and fruit giving way to a measured wisp of earthy smoke and a splash of sea brine to finish off the sip.

Bottom Line:

1) This is just a great whisky, period.

2) this is only \$65 (depending on local taxes) and that's crazy cheap for a whisky this good.

This expression really is Scotland's best whisky flavors all in one single dram with none of them overpowering or diminishing the others. Add a little water to let it bloom and take your time with it. You can also whip up a hell of a cocktail with it at this price. Even if this bottle was twice its going rate, we'd still be raving about it.
Never take this one away from us again, Diageo.

Serious Whiskey Pros Name Their Favorite Bottles To Pair With A Feast

[ZACH JOHNSTON](#) [TWITTER](#) LIFE WRITER

NOVEMBER 23, 2020

Pairing [whiskey](#) with [food](#) presents a delicate proposition. First, [wine](#) tends to dominate that conversation, with [beer](#) coming in second. [Bourbons](#), ryes, gins, and even [vodkas](#) are mostly afterthoughts. Second, it's not quite the same as a lower-alcohol pairing, where you'd course things out. If you course out a whiskey pairing, you'll be on the floor before dessert. Nevertheless, whiskey happens to feature flavor notes that place nicely with a hearty autumn-winter meal. Especially those big, carb-heavy, umami-rich, butter-laden holiday feasts.
To help us better understand food and [whiskey](#) pairings, we reached out to some serious [whiskey experts](#). We asked distillers, critics, consultants, awards jurors, writers, and drinkers for the one bottle of whiskey they'd bring to a big seasonal meal to pair with the food. The prices for the nine bottles vary, but they're all squarely in the "affordable" range, with a few pushing the limits just a tad.
You should be able to find most of these nationwide with a little sleuthing, or click on the prices if you want them delivered straight to your door.

Nikka Pure Malt — Andy Nelson, co-founder [Nelson's Green Brier Distillery](#)



NIKKA WHISKY

ABV: 43%
Distillery: Nikka Whisky Distilling Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan (Asahi Group)
Average Price: [\\$80](#)
The Whisky:
Impressively balanced, each sip contains a subtle, mouth-watering sweetness that makes an amazing pairing for any Thanksgiving dessert dish but also works like a charm in a highball. I often believe that the simpler something is, the better. That's exactly why I love this whisky so much. There's no pretension or overcomplicating things. It just is, and it's magical.
While it sits on my top shelf at home, this one is accessible enough and approachable enough that I reach for it regularly.
Tasting Notes:

Brilliant fruitiness and a perfect touch of honey compliment the delicate creaminess from front to back. A perfectly wonderful maltiness balances the sweeter notes to round out the structure without trying too hard. This one epitomizes an effortless elegance to me. Starward Two Fold Double Grain Australian Whisky — Becky Paskin, Whisky expert and co-founder of [OurWhisky](#)



STARWARD WHISKY

ABV: 40%
Distillery: Starward, Melbourne, Australia
Average Price: [\\$34](#)
The Whiskey:

When showing up to any gathering where food is served, the whisky you bring should be a crowd-pleaser. It should be something bold enough to pair with any strong flavor the host's cooking can throw at it. But, it should also be versatile and appealing to everyone in the room. Pairing neat whisky with food can be tricky, particularly when most of us prefer our meals accompanied by a long, refreshing drink. That's why I recommend Starward Two Fold. A blend of malt and wheat whiskies matured in Australian red wine barrels, it's delicious neat or with ice, makes a superb highball served with tonic or soda, or works well mixed into a cocktail.

Tasting Notes:

Melbourne's Starward Distillery is known for its signature maturation in Australian Shiraz, Cabernet, and Pinot Noir barrels. So expect plenty of apple and berry flavors with tropical fruits, cereal, and creamy vanilla with a touch of baking spice.

Elijah Craig Barrel Proof — Chris Perugini, Scotch and bourbon reviewer and founder of [Single Malt Savvy](#)



HEAVEN HILL

ABV: 66.4%
Distillery: Heaven Hill Bernheim Distillery, Louisville, KY
Average Price: [\\$75](#)
The Whiskey:

This was an easy choice for me — since this whiskey has been a Thanksgiving tradition in my house for a few years now. Elijah Craig Barrel Proof has an incredibly dynamic range that allows it to pair nicely with anything your holiday feast can throw at you. This unfiltered, high-strength bourbon has a rich and oily body that won't get overpowered by a variety of competing flavors (think savory gravy, sweet cranberry sauce, and salty turkey or ham). If you can hold off until dessert, give this pour a try with a slice of pumpkin pie.

Tasting Notes:

At 12 years old, ECBP is a well-aged bourbon in a world where age statements have decreased or vanished with so many bottles. The result is an oak-driven profile with enough age to keep those young, spirit-forward notes at bay. This release varies slightly by batch, but expect to find toffee, brown sugar, and sweet maltiness. With time, that profile develops into a sugary layer of ginger snap cookies and dried berries. There are undertones of leather and tobacco and plenty of vanilla as well, but the sweetness, spice, and oak are all nicely balanced and it always drinks well under its bottling proof (though you may prefer high-strength whiskey after spending enough quality time with your eccentric great-uncle). Happy Sipsgiving! GlenDronach Allardice Aged 18 Years— Jared Himstedt, Head Distiller and co-founder [Balcones Distilling](#)



GLENDRONACH

ABV: 46%
Distillery: GlenDronach Distillery, Aberdeenshire, Scotland (Brown-Forman)
Average Price: [\\$180](#)
The Whiskey:

Pairing whisky with food can be tricky. Do you pair in a way that the whisky and food complement each other, or are you hoping for contrast so that each brings out and emphasizes aspects of the other in an interesting way?

In my experience, desserts are the easiest to pair whisky with, but what about a big family meal? A holiday meal is going to be filling, with diverse dishes, and rich foods, with a good amount of starches — meat, fat, holiday spices, and maybe even some berries. I would want something with enough acid, body, and density to stand up to all of that without taking the center stage, which is, of course, reserved for the meal and the company.

I'm going with Glendronach 18 Allardice.

Tasting Notes:

There's no smoke to complement the proteins, but the sulfur and funk of a good sherry maturation fill that role nicely. It's sweet enough to go with honeyed ham and a cobbler, but with enough acid and tannin to cut through the richest of dishes. Loaded with fruit notes, hints of custard, clove/allspice, and a subtle nuttiness, it is a perfect pour to accompany a traditional holiday meal.

Sazerac Rye — Bobby Childs, founder of [Adventures in Whiskey](#)



BUFFALO TRACE

ABV: 45%
Distillery: Buffalo Trace Distillery, Frankfort, KY (Sazerac Company)
Average Price: [\\$32](#)
The Whiskey:

When it comes to a big meal, the flavors, aromas, and textures can fill the entire spectrum. The challenge of choosing only one bottle to pair with an entire meal is daunting, but I think I have it: rye whiskey. Why rye? A nicely balanced rye whiskey can offer sweet, spicy, herbal, and earthy flavors that can cut through any meal and cleanse the palate in-between courses. It's also required for my favorite cocktail — the Sazerac. And we all know that you'll certainly need a pre-dinner cocktail or two.

So with that in mind, I'd bring a bottle of [Sazerac Rye](#). It's tasty and won't break the bank.

Tasting Notes:

Buffalo Trace Distillery's popular rye whiskey has a fair amount of corn, which gives the whiskey some body. The nose is classic rye whiskey with caramel, toasted rye bread, vanilla, and cloves. You'll find some toffee and vanilla alongside spicy rye grain and some baking spice on the palate. The finish is warming and has a slightly lingering spearmint note.

The whiskey itself is around six or so years old, so it doesn't lend itself to a lot of heavy oak notes and retains its grain-forward freshness. It's just what you'd need for that big Thanksgiving meal.

Monkey Shoulder — Gillian Murphy, [Tullamore DEW Ambassador](#)



WILLIAM GRANT AND SONS

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Kininvie Distillery, Dufftown, Scotland (William Grant & Sons)

Average Price: [\\$35](#)

The Whiskey:

One of my go-to scotches is Monkey Shoulder. This 100 percent malt whiskey, is made from a blend of three unique single malts and is a deliciously tasty sipper. From cocktail classics to modern mixes; richness and vibrancy combine with mellow vanilla notes to make it perfect for mixing. And for me, that makes it the best candidate for bringing to a big holiday meal. You can go any way with this whisky — sip it neat, on the rocks, in a highball, or in a cocktail.

Everyone's happy around the table!

Tasting Notes:

Balanced, rich, sweet, and smooth. This whisky leans into creamy puddings with plenty of vanilla, Christmas spices, and fruit. The malts come through and join cloves, red berries, dried apricots, and a note of honey.

Method & Madness Single Pot Still Finished in French Chestnut Casks — Greg Dillon, founder of [Great Drams](#) and [Drinks Producer of the Year 2019](#)



IRISH DISTILLERS

ABV: 46%

Distillery: Irish Distillers, Midleton, County Cork, Ireland (Pernod

Ricard)

Average Price: [\\$85](#)

The Whiskey:

Firstly, I love the name and the idea behind [Method & Madness](#) from the great team at the Midleton Distillery and wider Irish Distillers group. And the products are, frankly, superb. So what is Method & Madness Irish whiskey all about then?

Having been designed by a husband and wife team of designers who have never designed a whiskey bottle before, I must say the result is great. There's lovely faceting on the bottle. The corks (especially the 31-Year-Old Single Grain) are nicely engineered and the copper foiling is fantastic. Each product has had a unique artwork created using screen printing to represent the flavor profile and to add good shelf standout in-store, and presumably in bars.

The MM logo marque, for Method & Madness Irish whiskey, is neat, tidy, and very grown-up. There's a sophistication that is an interesting take on what a new Irish whiskey brand means when you compare it to other startups and expressions from existing brands looking to introduce new ranges.

The Irish Whiskey Act allows distillers to push boundaries in wood programs much more than the scotch producers are allowed to. Irish distillers don't just have to use oak, for example. For this release explore they used sweet chestnut wood to finish the single pot still whiskey. And boy, does it deliver.

Tasting Notes:

This started off as a pot still spirit being matured in American oak with a little bit of sherry influence, but not much. Then it was put into French chestnut casks and checked every three months to ensure the wood was working and the flavors were maturing how they wanted them to. The nose is sweet and very oaky. I would have to say, it has the perfect palate with a nice medium toasted note there too with lots of juicy exotic fruits. It's my favorite of their releases to date, for sure.

Elijah Craig Small Batch Bourbon — Adam Levy, Alcohol Professor, and founder [International Spirit Competitions](#)



HEAVEN HILL

ABV: 47%

Distillery: Heaven Hill Bernheim Distillery, Louisville, KY

Average Price: [\\$32](#)

The Whiskey:

There are certain expectations when your friends know you are in the liquor industry and they invite you over for a big meal. Showing up empty-handed is not an option. You want your drink to be your comfortable companion and not a whiskey that will be a challenge all night. You want a whiskey that you can drink from when you arrive through dessert.

One of my top picks to bring with me is Elijah Craig Small Batch Bourbon. It's one of the stars from the great value whiskey portfolio from Heaven Hill Distillery.

Tasting Notes:

When you raise your glass and your nose first interacts with the whiskey, you will find the presence of vanilla along with hints of caramel and oak. Once in the mouth, the taste continues to match with vanilla and continued traces of oak. As it swirls around your mouth hints of spice and nutmeg are on the edges of your tongue. The experience of the finish isn't syrupy but more balanced with a sweet soft low-fire end.

This is a whiskey for all night long with friends and good food.

Writer's Pick: Woodinville Straight Bourbon Finished In Port Casks — Zach Johnston, [Deputy Editor UPROXX Life](#) and host of [Expression Session](#)



WOODINVILLE WHISKEY COMPANY

ABV: 45%

Distillery: Woodinville Whiskey Company, Woodinville, WA

Average Price: [\\$50](#)

The Whiskey:

I like to bring things from my home to big meals. It's a conversation starter and a chance to highlight something cool from my neck of the woods. I've really been into Woodinville's whiskeys this year and their Port Casks finish has been a standout. The whiskey has a heritage reaching back into Maker's Mark history. The grains are all sourced locally from a single Washington farm. Their straight bourbon [won](#) "best bourbon of 2020" at San Francisco while the distillery has been named the best distiller of 2020 throughout whiskey [media](#).

The Pork Cask is one of the most sought after bourbons in the line. The bourbon is aged for five years, as per bourbon rules. It's then transferred to Ruby Port barrels for a final six months of mellowing before bottling. The only downside is that it's a very limited edition and might be harder to find outside of the Pacific Northwest.

Tasting Notes:

This is a wonder in a glass. Out of a Glencairn, you get a nose full of candied fruit, roasted nuts, plum, vanilla, Christmas spices, and a touch of smoke and oak. The sip has a velvety body that really leans into the buttery and molasses-laden Christmas cake while adding a layer of bourbon corn next to more oak, vanilla, spice, and a note of stone fruit in the background.

After some water, a whisper of worn leather and dark cacao arrives. This is stuffing loaded with dried fruits, nuts, and butter next to all the pies you could want that leads right into all the crackling fireside Christmas vibes in a glass. It's big, bold, and will stand up to any meal while accenting it nicely.

Kavalan combines art and whisky in new line

25th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Taiwanese distiller Kavalan has launched a limited edition series of whiskies in collaboration with artist Paul Chiang.



Kavalan has partnered with Paul Chiang on the Artists Series

The new Kavalan Artists Series comprises of four single cask, cask strength whiskies: Puncheon, Virgin Oak, French Wine Cask, and Peated Malt.

Each expression is inspired by four elements that play a key role in the creation of Kavalan whisky – ocean, air, sunlight and earth.

The Taiwanese producer will release a total of 198 sets comprised of four 700ml bottles. Each set is individually numbered and comes with a

signed edition of one of two silkscreen prints by Chiang – Pisilian or Mountain Range of Taiwan.

Furthermore, a total of 4,000 one-litre bottles will be released separately for purchase. Each whisky is bottled at between 50 to 63% ABV.

Chiang was chosen by Kavalan due to his work on 'interpreting classical music and the natural beauty of Taiwan'.

Kavalan CEO YT Lee said: "Art, like whisky, has the power to stir deep emotion. But this takes decades of hard work and commitment to mastering your craft."

"Take Puncheon, which depicts the sea, sky, and stars. Paul painted this work after returning to Taiwan after 30 years, settling on the coast in Taitung. You can feel the euphoria of that time and the beauty of rediscovery."

"We want to bring together great art and our rarest whisky to connoisseurs an expression of the finest artistry. We are honoured to be collaborating with Paul on the inaugural edition."

Puncheon was aged in Puncheon casks and has notes of 'sweet toffee, white-fleshed nectarine, and tropical fruits and hints of rich nuttiness'. Matured in virgin oak barrels, the Virgin Oak whisky has notes of spicy oak, sweet honey, autumn pear and chestnuts, ripened guava, and cinnamon spice on the palate.

Meanwhile, the French Wine Cask whisky was matured in Bordeaux red wine barrels. It has a 'rich aroma with a full-bodied texture' along with notes of 'tropical fruit, wild berries, dried fruits, soft tannins, and subtle spice'.

Peated Malt offers 'buttered toffee and peaty and earthy notes on a bed of red pepper, generous spice, and rich longan' on the palate. Peated Malt is Kavalan's [second shaved, toasted, and recharred \(STR\) whisky](#), following Solist Vinho Barrique.

The Kavalan Artists Series is available to buy in Taiwan. Individual bottles will be priced at an RRP of NTD\$12,000 (US\$421) each.

Opinion: Why You Should Start Paying Attention To English Whisky

By [Felipe Schriberg](#) / November 25, 2020

About a month ago, a small virtual whisky event took place. It marked an important, if niche, point in whisky history. The [English Whisky Society](#) Virtual Festival was the world's first ever whisky festival devoted entirely to English whisky, showing how English whisky has rapidly created a very interesting niche for itself within the last 15 years.

From 1903, when the English whisky distillery Lea Valley Distillery closed up shop, [English whisky](#) simply did not exist until the construction of the St. George's Distillery in Norfolk in 2006. Since then, many new distilleries have cropped up across the country, with 26 distilleries currently in the process of producing whisky, though fewer have actually released whisky that meets the 3- year maturation criteria required by E.U. law, as of May 2020.



The English Single Malt Whisky Aged 11 Years (image via English Whisky Co.)
Already it's becoming clear that many of these operations know what they're doing with their liquid. For example, the young whiskies from [The Cotswolds Distillery](#), founded by American Daniel Szor, are bursting with orchard fruit flavors. Third generation distiller Dariusz Plaszewski has created big, bold, hard-hitting whiskies at London distillery [Bimber](#). [The English Whisky Company](#) (based out of St. George's Distillery), has released a wide variety of malt and grain whiskies, with an emphasis on smooth sophistication. [The Lakes](#)

Distillery, located by a llama farm in a remote area of Cumbria, is producing gorgeous rich whiskies often matured in ex-sherry casks. With the exception of some of the releases from The English Whisky Company, English whiskies are not older than 3-4 years. Don't be put off by the age, though. It may be young liquid but it is almost always complex and well balanced, featuring a wide variety of flavor profiles, and certainly worth your time. All English whisky distilleries are independent craft operations as well, so the scale of production is a drop in the ocean compared to their neighbors north of the border in Scotland. As a result, it's still pretty hard to get hold of most English whisky releases, especially across the pond. So what should you try? Here's 5 recommendations that showcase what English whisky has to offer.

Cotswolds Distillery Founder's Choice – Available at Whisky Shop USA, Astor Wines, Binny's

The first cask strength release from the Cotswolds Distillery is matured entirely in STR (Shaved, Toasted, Recharred) wine barriques. It's a maturation trick pioneered by legendary whisky consultant Jim Swan, who also helped set up the distillery. The result is a toffee apple in alcoholic liquid form.

Bimber Single Cask USA Releases – Availability TBC

Bimber's releases often sell out within minutes, and are rapidly snapped up at the retail stores that stock them. The distillery has announced that three single cask releases, #45 (sherry), #95 (virgin American oak), and 154 (ex-bourbon), will soon be exclusively sold in the U.S. near the end of the year (I've been told 'in the D.C. area if I were a betting man' by a spokesperson) as part of its new 2020 Country Collection. Expect big bombastic aromas and flavors.

The Lakes Distillery Whiskymaker's Reserve No. 3 – Available at The Whisky Exchange

Each of the Whiskymaker's Reserve releases is a reflection of what distillery Whiskymaker Dhavall Gandhi ultimately wants to create on a more regular basis. Each one of these is rich packs a serious punch. The latest iteration features a mix of Pedro Ximenez, Oloroso, cream sherry, and red wine casks.

English Whisky Company 11 Year Old – Available at The Whisky Exchange

Possibly the oldest English whisky that's been made widely available, it is also soft and gentle. It's fresh and floral, with plenty of candy sweetness on the palate, and an earthy, walnut like finish.

Spirit of Yorkshire Filey Bay 2nd Release – Available at The Whisky Exchange

A combination of bourbon and sherry casks brings in citrus, graham crackers, and honey. Now is the perfect time to start following and drinking English whisky, especially as it doesn't suffer from the punishing 25% tariff currently set on Scotch single malt. Also, aside from the fact that we get to enjoy delicious new releases from these new distilleries, it's exciting to be able to witness and taste the beginning of a completely new chapter of whisky and watch these distilleries evolve in the years to come.

Macallan collaborates with David Carson

27th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The Macallan has partnered with American graphic designer David Carson on a new festive campaign.



A collaboration with The Macallan and David Carson.

Each design is signed by David Carson

Texas-born David Carson is considered one of the world's most influential graphic designers, The Macallan said. The 'powerful and disruptive' campaign features artwork in Carson's signature iconoclastic style.

The creative focusses on five of the Scotch brand's single malt whiskies – The Macallan Double Cask 12 Years Old, Sherry Oak 18 Years Old, Sherry Oak 25 Years Old, Rare Cask and Estate. Each of these expressions are said to share characteristics with the American artist and his work, including uniqueness, innovation, craftsmanship and complexity.

Jaume Ferras, global creative director for The Macallan, said: "David Carson is an extraordinary visionary whose ground-breaking graphic designs continue to excite and inspire to this day.

"Like The Macallan, he is renowned for his unique style and mastery of his trade. Working with him has been an incredible process and we look forward to revealing the results of our collaboration over the festive season."

The campaign features 'bold, fractured typography' combined with illustrations of the flavours featured in each of the whiskies. The designs also highlight 'playful representations of the festive season'. The campaign's straplines include: 'I love it', 'Nothing less will do', 'You don't have to', and 'You know me so well'.

The designs will be published digitally and in print, and are signed by Carson.

In April last year, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) [banned The Macallan's first global advertising campaign](#) for promoting "risky or daring behaviour".

Glenmorangie – A Tale of Cake



You can never accuse Glenmorangie of standing still. In fact, they remain – consistently – one of the more innovative distilleries in Scotland, always putting out something new that presents their prized spirit in a new and interesting light.

It's one of the reasons why the distillery has such appeal. Their core range of The Original (a 10yo), the extra-matured releases (Lasanta, Quinta Ruban, and Nectar d'Or), and the 18yo are all hard-hitters and right up there in the quality stakes, contradicting anyone who believes the mass-production whiskies can't be any good. But, never resting on their laurels, Glenmorangie entertains its fans by regularly putting out limited release or special project editions that tweak the character of the spirit and showcase the whisky's DNA in a different light.

The Private Edition range was one such avenue for these special releases, although this came to an end with 2019's Allta. Stepping into the void towards the end of 2020 is the aptly named, "[A tale of cake](#)". A tale of cake's story is along the same lines as several other of the special releases, in that it is "regular" Glenmorangie, matured initially for around 10 years in ex-bourbon barrels, before being transferred to a wine cask for a period of extra maturation or finishing. In this instance, the spirit was finished in Tokaji dessert wine casks.

Tokaji (also styled Tokay, although the term was given *Protected Designation of Origin status in 2007*) is a sweet wine from the Tokaj region of Hungary. (Readers in Australia might most closely associate the name with the tokays of Rutherglen although, in truth, that's a bit of a misnomer, as both the grapes used and the production methods employed differ from Hungarian Tokaji). Nonetheless, the executive summary is that wine casks have imparted considerable sweetness to the spirit!

As a concept, this is not altogether new for Glenmorangie: The core-range Nectar d'Or is finished in Sauternes casks; [Milsean](#) was finished in re-toasted Portuguese red wine casks; and [Companta](#) was a

combination of two different wine finishes – one being a Grand Cru from Clos de Tart, and the other being a sweet fortified from Côtes du Rhône. But, as always, the difficulty and skill in creating such a finished whisky is getting it right – plenty try and fail.

Dr Bill Lumsden, Glenmorangie's Director of Whisky Creation – and the man behind *A tale of cake* – has discussed this at length with Whisky & Wisdom previously. To paraphrase, not every wine finish works. For every success that goes on to be bottled, there are many experiments that fail. The other trick is to catch and end the finishing maturation at just the right time before it overpowers the spirit. The Private Edition release, *Bacalta*, was a good example of this: When the already-matured whisky was transferred into the Malmsey Madeira casks for finishing, it was originally envisaged the spirit would spend three to four years in the casks. However, the casks were sampled and checked every three months, and after just two years, Lumsden felt the result had peaked – any further time in the cask would detract from the whisky.

My point is that blasé drinkers should not dismiss this as just another whisky thrown into a wine cask. It is, in contrast, a very carefully planned, curated, matured, and delivered spirit. And, with that in mind, let's settle down and actually put the whisky through its paces:



Glenmorangie “A tale of cake”, 46% ABV, non-chillfiltered
Nose: The initial nose has a welcome introduction of familiarity – the house style DNA of Glenmorangie is the first aroma to awaken the olfactory senses. It's the second and third nosings – with a bit of swirling and air – that bring out the sweetness. Ripe pineapple wafts out of the glass; vanilla sponge; a hint of marzipan; and perhaps a touch of lemon meringue pie. After time, there's even a hint of banana cake.

Palate: The name of the whisky could not be more apt. This tastes of cake! What sort of cake, you ask? Well....I suspect each person's brain and taste memory will insert their own answer from their flavour bank, but I found tea cake, Dundee cake, vanilla sponge, and banana cake on the first pass. On a second tasting, things got more dessert-like, with cream and liqueur starting to emerge – *almost* heading into tiramisu territory.

Finish: The finish is long and....soothing! It doesn't turn sickly sweet, nor does it become oaky, drying, or bitter. It is just remarkably consistent; a smooth transition and continuation of the palate, and hangs in your mouth for an eternity before slowly trailing away.

Comments: Bottled at 46% and non-chillfiltered, the whisky is full-flavoured, full-bodied, and superbly balanced. Despite the notion of “cake” and the use of dessert-wine casks, this whisky is *not* overtly or sickly sweet. (For context, a dram of both Milsean and *Bacalta* were compared alongside, and both were sweeter than *A tale of cake*). In fact, it's the balance of malt, oak, and sweetness here that make this whisky a winner, because it will appeal to most palates: There's plenty to entertain those with a sweet tooth, but the traditionalists will find there's still the cereal, and Glenmorangie's signature citrus and complexity.

Congratulations, Dr Bill – you've done it again.

Cheers,
AD

Glenmorangie's *A Tale of Cake* is a limited edition release. It is available from specialist whisky stockists, with an RRP of \$170 Australian.

For those keen to try *A tale of cake* in other guises, Glenmorangie teamed up with acclaimed mixologist, Jeremy Le Blanche, to create a

cocktail. Jeremy fashioned – appropriately – “The Cake Old Fashioned”. To try this at home:

Ingredients:

- 50 ml Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake
- 7.5 ml coconut water
- 7.5 ml pineapple syrup
- 1 dash Peychaud's bitters
- 1 pinch black pepper

Method: Stir all ingredients with ice and strain into a rocks glass over a block of ice.

Garnish with a twist of orange zest and a walnut.

With thanks to 1000Heads.

Eden Mill launches new whisky and hamper

30th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Scottish distiller Eden Mill has released 800 bottles of its 2020 single malt and a limited edition hamper containing two new Hip Flask Series whiskies.



The Eden Mill hamper contains the 2020 single malt and three other whiskies

The 2020 release is the fourth single malt whisky from Eden Mill in three years. The expression was unveiled to mark St Andrew's Day today (30 November) and follows the release of the [2019 bottling](#) and [2018 whisky](#).

The distiller released its [inaugural single malt whisky range](#), the Hip Flask Series, in April 2018.

The new single malt incorporates Bourbon, Pedro Ximénez and oloroso Sherry casks, along with spirit distilled using pale, chocolate, brown and crystal malt barley.

Scott Ferguson, Eden Mill's head distiller, said: “The liquid we have crafted pushes the boundaries of our previous whisky expressions.

“This small batch of Eden Mill single malt showcases the evolution of cask and spirit, bringing you light vanilla and toasted cinnamon from Bourbon barrels, combined with the rich fruit and subtle spice from our distinctive range of Sherry casks, leading to a creamy biscuity finish.”

The 46.5% ABV expression can be purchased on its own for £85 (US\$113.50) per 700ml or as part of an Eden Mill whisky hamper, which also contains a Glencairn glass, the 2019 edition single malt and two new Hip Flask Series 200ml bottlings.

The new Hip Flask expressions are Hip Flask #16 and Hip Flask #17.

The first is a pale malt spirit aged in an ex-Islay whisky refill cask, while the latter is a peated malt spirit aged in a refill Bourbon cask. Both expressions are bottled at 47% ABV.

There are only 200 hampers available, priced at £200 (US\$267) each. Earlier this year, Eden Mill co-founder Tony Kelly was [named CEO of the Scottish distiller](#). Eden Mill is currently building a new distillery and visitor centre in St Andrews, Fife, which will become Scotland's first carbon-neutral single malt whisky distillery. Distilling is expected to begin by the end of 2021.

Paul Miller, co-founder of Eden Mill said: “This limited release is a real reflection of the team, our passion and Eden Mill's pioneering spirit which has stayed strong throughout 2020. We can't wait for people to enjoy a dram of our 2020 single malt Scotch safely at home this festive season.

“We anticipate the new year with excitement and hope as we look forward to the relief a vaccine will bring and also the completion of our

new carbon-neutral single malt distillery in St Andrews, which will be the first of its kind in Scotland and a significant step in our Eden Mill journey.”

Black Friday whisky sells out in two hours

30th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Retailer The Whisky Exchange released a limited edition 22-year-old Highland single malt for Black Friday, which sold out online in under two hours.



The 22-year-old Highland single malt whisky was sold out in one hour and 51 minutes

Since 2016, The Whisky Exchange has released an annual limited edition bottling for Black Friday, which often sells out in under an hour. All 1,308 bottles of this year's expression were snapped up in one hour and 51 minutes.

“Customers want something different on Black Friday and we're the only whisky specialist that produces its own special bottling for the day,” said Sukhinder Singh, co-founder of The Whisky Exchange. “Our customers trust us, so while nobody knows what to expect when we reveal our Black Friday whisky, they take a chance on it, and for good reason: we're well known for finding very nice whiskies. Plus it's a bit of fun.”

The 2020 Black Friday whisky came from an unnamed Highland distillery near the Speyside borders. The site is known for its ‘distinctively smoke style’.

The 22-year-old single malt is described as a ‘complex, yet well-balanced dram’ and ‘fantastic value for money’ at £99.95 (US\$133) per 700ml bottle.

Bottled at 50.5% ABV, the whisky has notes of pine trees, sweet and sour apples and Refresher sweets on the nose. The palate offers peat smoke, stewed orchard fruit, freshly cut grass, damp oak and cinnamon-spiced cookies.

Hunter Laing expands Scarabus whisky series

27th November, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Scotch whisky bottler Hunter Laing & Co has added two new expressions to its Scarabus Islay single malt range.



Scarabus whisky's core flavour profile features Islay peat smoke
Scarabus 10 Year Old and Scarabus Batch Strength join the inaugural Scarabus bottling, [Scarabus Specially Selected](#), in the brand's range. The debut release was unveiled in May last year.

Stewart Laing, managing director, said: “Following the success of the brand's launch at Fèis Ile 2019, it's very exciting to add two brand new expressions to the range. Scarabus is a brand which we are incredibly proud of, and to see Scarabus grow and develop like this is really wonderful.”

Scarabus 10 Year Old (46% ABV) has the brand's distinct flavour profile of ‘sweet Islay peat smoke, but with extra complexity’. The expression was aged for a minimum of 10 years in refill, ex-Bourbon and virgin American oak casks.

Meanwhile, Scarabus Batch Strength is bottled at 57% ABV and made from a small selection of Scarabus single malt casks. The resulting liquid features the brand's signature sweet, peaty profile, followed by a ‘lingering’ finish.

Scarabus, which is an old Nordic word for ‘rocky place’, is named after a ‘mystical area’ on the Scottish island of Islay.

Scott Laing, business development director, said: “It's always exciting when a new Islay expression launches and we are particularly proud of our Scarabus brand.

“The flavour is unmistakable, the Islay peat, smoke and sea salt on the nose, followed by warming leather notes and a delightful vanilla sweetness in the mouth, leads to a rich, lingering finish, culminating all the elements which Islay whisky enthusiasts adore.”

Both expressions are available to buy from the Ardnahoe Distillery on Islay and online. The 10-year-old bottling is priced at £45 (US\$60) per 700ml, while Scarabus Batch Strength has an RRP of £49 (US\$65) per 700ml.

In Which We Blindly Try To Tell Affordable Scotch From Expensive Scotch

[ZACH JOHNSTON/TWITTER](#) LIFE WRITER

NOVEMBER 29, 2020

Is [expensive scotch](#) (often climbing into the hundreds and even thousands of dollars) really that much better than [mid-shelf expressions](#)?

That's a tough question to answer. [Scotch](#), by its nature as an import, is a little more [expensive](#) overall than, say, locally sourced [bourbon](#). Transport costs and tariffs add up. Still, there are some genuinely tasty and absolutely affordable [scotch whiskies](#) on the market. There are also some delicious, palate-expanding [scotch whiskies](#) that *will* break the bank, but just might be worth the expense.

Ultimately it's going to depend on what you can afford and how much joy a good dram brings you. If you're a neophyte on a budget, spending big cash on scotch is silly. If you're an aficionado with money to burn, have at it.

To test whether [cheap scotch whiskies](#) can stand up to some of the more expensive scotch whiskies on the market, I decided to run [another blind taste test](#). After all, it's all about the taste of the whisky at the end of the day, right? Labels, awards, prestige, and price tags mean nothing if the flavors don't work in harmony.

My experiment doesn't have too many variables. I was looking at six single malts and two blended malts (those are blends that are only blended with single malts from various distilleries, as opposed to "blended whisky" which is a blend of single malt and grain whiskies from various distilleries). Meaning we're sticking squarely in the wheelhouse of [Scottish malt whisky](#). The price range is pretty vast, though. The [cheap whiskies](#) range from \$35 to \$57 per bottle. The expensive [whiskies](#) range from \$145 to \$760. That last number isn't a secondary mark up either. That's *MSRP*. Part of my goal in tasting these blind was to see if I could tell which ones were expensive. Embarrassingly enough, I didn't get them all correct. Read on to find out which.

Part I - The Blind Taste Test



ZACH JOHNSTON

Taste 1

Tasting Notes:

There's a nice mix of honey and spice on the nose and in the taste. It's warm, young-ish, malty, and full of vanilla. There's a sherry edge with... a touch of smoke on the end?

Bottom Line:

Honey means [Aberfeldy](#). There's no way this is the woody Exceptional Cask, so it's gotta be their 12-year expression, which is both affordably-priced and very enjoyable.

Taste 2

Tasting Notes:

Peppery, mildly smoky, and sea-brine forward. Christmas cake meets caramel malts meets sea spray. There's a note of raw chili pepper in the backend that's a nice counterpoint to all the other flavors.

Bottom Line:

Smoke + Sea = [Talisker](#). Affordable. Tasty. I want to put it in a highball or cocktail, not drink it straight. There are [way better Taliskers](#) out there for sipping, folks.

Taste 3

Tasting Notes:

I'm getting bitter orange marmalade, creamy vanilla leaning towards cream soda, a few Christmas spices, and a rush of ripe, red berries. This is nice but the body is fairly thin in a good way — it's quaffable with no heat. The end is short and sweet with another hint of that spice.

Bottom Line:

The thinness of the body means it's gotta be a young malt or a young blend. It's nice, but I'm going with something cheap for mixing. Which means there's only one more cheap bottle in the tasting unless I've already screwed up.

Taste 4

Tasting Notes:

This is lush vanilla ice cream covered in cinnamon-laced stewed apples and dotted with raisins and berries with a malty underbelly and leathery chew. It's inviting, sweet/spicy, old, and velvety smooth.

Bottom Line:

Woow, this was tasty. It's like the best ice cream sundae you ever had melded with a well-crafted, supple old whisky. I wouldn't even cut this with water. It has to be expensive to be this good.

Taste 5

Tasting Notes:

This is familiar. The Christmas cake and chocolate-chili feel are really enjoyable on the tongue. Those notes last a while and orange oils arrive with subtle fruit sweetness.

Bottom Line:

This is [Mortlach](#) and very expensive. I've tasted this dram a lot over the past few months. It's really growing on me. The first time I tasted it, I was sort of shrugging it off. Now, I think I want to drink it every day.

Taste 6

Tasting Notes:

There's a clear sense of soft cedar with a nice mix of fruit, pepper, and vanilla. The fruit carries on towards a nice hint of dried flowers. The end is very smooth and has a medium length.

Bottom Line:

Scotch generally gets cedar-y when it's old, so I have to go with this being a very tasty but expensive bottle of booze.

Taste 7

Tasting Notes:

This is more like a toasted wood than a cedar, though the wood is more dialed back and with notes of honey, Christmas cakes full of spice and fruit, and some orange oils. Caramel malts meet dried flowers and a hint of dark, sweet chocolate. That wood lasts right through to the very light end.

Bottom Line:

Hum. I'm not sure what this is. The toasted wood and lightness on the end kind of throws me off. I'm wagering that this is a cheap bottle.

Taste 8

Tasting Notes:

Salted caramel dances with malts and roasted nuts. The body is bold yet light with a bit of dark chocolate leading towards coconut, more nuts, and more sea spray. This is bright, minerally, earthy, sweet, salty, and tasty AF.

Bottom Line:

Hello, old friend. This is [Oban](#). Expensive. Delicious. Needs nothing in the glass.

Part II - The Answers

ZACH JOHNSTON

1. Aberfeldy 12 (Affordable/Correct)



ABERFELDY

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$44](#)

The Whisky:

[Aberfeldy](#) is one of the main malts that go into the iconic Dewar's Blended Scotch. The classic Highland single malt is all about those honeyed notes, Highland wildflowers, and easy drinkability.

2. Talisker Game of Thrones House Greyjoy Select Reserve (Affordable/Correct)



DIAGEO

ABV: 45.8%

Average Price: [\\$57](#)

The Whisky:

Launched in 2018, this expression celebrates the final season of [HBO's Game of Thrones](#). The juice is aged in extra-deeply charred ex-bourbon casks to add an edge to the already edgy whisky.

3. Monkey Shoulder Blended Malt (Affordable/Correct)



MONKEY SHOULDER

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$35](#)

The Whisky:

This malt blend is quickly becoming a whisky-fan favorite for its extremely easy drinkability and very accessible price point. The malts involved are drawn from Kininvie, Glenfiddich, and [The Balvenie](#). The whiskies are married and then spend six to 12 months resting in a tun (batching container) before proofing and bottling.

4. Aberlour 18 (Expensive/Correct)



ABERLOUR

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$145](#)

The Whisky:

Speyside's [Aberlour](#) is an iconic albeit not-well-known distillery. Their 18-year expression rests in ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks for 18 long years before they're combined, proofed, and bottled, creating this masterful dram.

5. Mortlach 21 (Expensive/Correct)



DIAGEO

ABV: 56.9%

Average Price: [\\$760](#)

The Whisky:

This is the 2020 release from Diageo's [Rare By Nature Collection](#). The Dufftown whisky is very eclectic and really only known to hardcore scotch fans. The juice is a small-batch whisky drawn from juice aged for over 20 years and then finished in Pedro Ximenez and Oloroso sherry seasoned casks.

6. Johnnie Walker Green Label Pure Malt (Inexpensive/Incorrect)



DIAGEO

ABV: 43%

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

The Whisky:

[Johnnie Walker Green](#) is a "pure malt" blended whisky. That means it's made from single malts only. In this case, that's juice from Speyside, Highland, Lowland, and Island whisky regions with a focus on a minimum of 15-year-old Talisker, Caol Ila, Cragganmore, and Linkwood.

7. Aberfeldy 20 Exceptional Cask (Expensive/Incorrect)



ABERFELDY

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$235](#)

The Whisky:

These very limited yearly releases from [Aberfeldy](#) are aged in two oak programs — in this case, the juice was moved into Sauterne casks (a French dessert wine) for its finishing run. The best barrels are then hand-selected by Aberfeldy's Master Blender for their unique nature and bottled.

8. Oban 21 (Expensive/Correct)



DIAGEO

ABV: 58.5%

Average Price: [\\$599](#)

The Whisky:

[Oban](#) is a very straightforward whisky done right. The juice is put to bed in a re-fill European oak barrel and left alone for 21 years in the tiny Oban warehouses right on the sea. That's it. The best barrels are selected and bottled as is. The result is one of the finest examples of single malt you'll ever find.

Part III - Final Thoughts



ZACH JOHNSTON

I can't believe I got the Aberfeldy 20 wrong. I just tried that dram [two weeks ago](#). Then again, maybe it's a testament to how well-done that Johnnie Walker Green bottle is that I thought it was so pricey? I don't know. My palate might just be tired. I've tasted a lot of whiskeys this month.

All of that being said, if I had to rank these by which ones I want to drink again right now, it'd go like this:

8. Monkey Shoulder
7. Aberfeldy 20
6. Talisker House of Greyjoy
5. Aberfeldy 12
4. Johnnie Walker Green Label
3. Mortlach 21
2. Aberlour 18
1. Oban 21 (this is the mountaintop of great single malts for me)

I should start saving money now for those top three since those bottles would set me back \$1,194. That's a bummer. I guess I'll just stick with the [Johnnie Walker Green Label](#) until I can afford the others.

Glengoyne Travels To The Past With New 50 Year Old Scotch Whisky

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / November 30, 2020

Glengoyne is one of those Scotch single malt whisky distilleries with a great deal of history. As they put it they make "Scotland's slowest distilled malt, unhurried since 1833." It thus makes sense they have access to some incredibly old stocks in their aging warehouses, some of which they've now turned to in this release of a new 50 year old expression.

The new Glengoyne 50 Year Old, according to those behind it, was laid down back in the 1960s. It is a very limited edition offering, with only 150 bottles being made available. Said bottles come in the form of "a special crystal decanter, which features an engraved goose emblem representing the geese who migrate to the Glen each winter. Hidden within the beautiful solid oak and gold display box is also a 25ml sample of the 50 Year Old whisky, as well as individually hand numbered books which are hand signed by Robbie Hughes, the Distillery Manager."



Glengoyne 50 Year Old (image via Glengoyne)

"When we first filled hand-selected oak casks with our sweet, fruity, new make spirit back in the late 1960s," said Hughes in a prepared statement, "the Beatles were only just breaking up, Richard Nixon was US President, and Sesame Street debuted on television. A lot has changed while we've been waiting patiently for this unique release. "At Glengoyne we believe that patience is always rewarded. This year we've all had to sacrifice spending time with our loved ones or delay celebrations. That's why we want to make these moments extra special in 2021 with a memorable whisky that, after waiting so long for just the right moment, is truly ready to be opened and savoured."

Pricing for the Glengoyne 50 Year Old obviously isn't on the cheap side – in this case you're looking at a price tag of £22,500, or around \$30,000 USD, for an expression that's available now. Interestingly, distillery management decided they will "give away a special decanter of this incredibly high aged, rare whisky in 2021. After what's been a difficult and disruptive year across the globe, the distillery will be making a moment with friends or family extra special for one group.

"[An online ballot](#) has opened for groups of five or more friends or family to submit an entry alongside a description of their perfect moment for savouring the Glengoyne 50 Year Old together next year. Whether it's toasting a delayed celebration, or creating an unforgettable reunion, the Glengoyne team will make their special moment a reality, hand-delivering the highly sought-after whisky for one group to enjoy and savour, in good company.

"Entrants have until Monday 14th December to gather their groups and submit their moments."

Official tasting notes for this half century old whisky are below. It becomes part of Glengoyne's new "Fine and Rare" range, which also hosts a new 30 year old and an existing 25 year old.

- Nose: Demerara sugar, walnuts, sweet pipe tobacco, red apples and cloves
- Palate: Rich, spicy oak burst, then molasses, treacle and liquorice take centre stage.
- Finish: The finish is long, going through savoury characteristics into a tingle of black pepper

Laphroaig Quarter Cask

[JASONNOVEMBER 30, 2020](#)



We're plugging some gaps in the Malt coverage and this maintenance brings us to the [Laphroaig](#) Quarter Cask. I expect it's a release that almost everyone on the team has had and possibly appreciated over the years, without feeling the need to write about it. And that I feel speaks volumes not just about the whisky, but the distillery itself. The Quarter Cask is a staple for many and a step up from the widely available and often cheaply priced [10 year old](#) expression. And given my experiences alongside the [Batch cask strength](#) editions, the Quarter Cask is one of the core range options that many talk fondly of, whilst at the same time, expressing some concerns about Laphroaig in general.

I'm often told that I don't like peat, sherry or even [Bimber](#), [Jura](#), [Balvenie](#), [Glenfiddich](#) etc. It's heartening to think that people actually read my articles and then come to some form of preconception. Such fanciful images are dangerous things. In all cases, I do like a *good* whisky, or at least what I believe is a *good* whisky. Bimber for instance has received [very good scores](#) even though I've resisted the urge to jump up and down like a crazed fan at a Duran Duran concert and throw my knickers at the stage. Jura as well, given some of the frankly excellent matured casks we're now seeing come to market. This includes the recent release from [Chapter 7](#) and [Lady of the Glen](#) – that's despite Gregor failing to comprehend our scoring system. A 5 is average and from there it becomes good, very good, excellent, superb and reaching the legendary 10: Tormore. Talk about fantastic whiskies from Glenfiddich? Then, I'll say, please read the [2017 Speyside](#) incarnation. As for Balvenie, the [Tuns are great](#) if increasingly expensive.

So, never presume a distillery won't have its day here or moment in the upper echelons of our fair scoring system. That's part of the appeal of Malt I believe. Just because we get something for free, doesn't guarantee a positive score or a deliberate attempt to avoid the issue of pricing.

Meanwhile back on Islay, Laphroaig keeps on going. Under the ownership of Beam, Suntory or combined nowadays, you cannot say that it has been a steady ride. Going back a relatively short period of time highlights the shortcomings of several core range editions. This is magnified if you're fortunate enough jump back even further. Such an ability is the privilege of a chosen few or those who were able to squirrel away bottles for future enjoyment. For you the mere reader, and the majority others, we have to plough the independent scene for our Laphroaig fix.

Such a venture confirms the spirit is still in good condition and able to delight at times – where other bottlings fall short. It's that age-old problem of what happens between the warehouse and the retail space. Laphroaig is far from alone in this respect as just up the road, Bowmore is a repeat offender. But for these giants of Islay and Scotch, criticism isn't welcome. I suppose it is very much like pouring scorn on an old masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci. Art like whisky has a timeless quality. It doesn't have a sell-by date or best-before label. That timeless quality ensures our appreciation throughout time, regardless of the year. Except, whisky is meant to be consumed and in doing so, you begin to compare and contrast. Notice things have slipped, or even improved.

Competition is fierce and especially within the domain of Islay peat. Mere names don't matter as much as they once did. They may tug at the heartstrings, but nowadays we vote with our wallet more than ever before. I wouldn't have even given this Laphroaig a second glance if it wasn't for a recent Amazon discount that allowed me to purchase it for £24. In reality, this Laphroaig release is available everywhere including Master of Malt for [£38.25](#), The Whisky Exchange will request [£40.95](#) and Amazon currently demand [£38.25](#). As always, other retailers might offer better value subject to any special offers.

Laphroaig Quarter Cask – Jason's review

Colour: caramel.

On the nose: a familiar opening with wet rope, pencil shavings, stewed black tea and just that decaying autumnal vibe from a brisk woodland walk. Coastal elements with driftwood, grilled shiitake mushrooms, burnt liquorice and brown sugar. Haggis-like in parts with spices and cardamon, mace and toffee. The iodine note seems to be missing from the equation, we'll try water... oak spice, a muted blood orange. In the mouth: earthy peat, some sea salt laced driftwood and damp moss. Tumeric, bacon fat and more cardamon and liquorice. Fairly standard stuff. Adding a splash of waters turns the experience into an unpleasant boggy water, lacking definition.

Conclusions

Even at 48%, this feels underpowered on the palate. The promise of the nose is lost at sea when the liquid is sampled. There's a disconnect. Almost a taming of the Islay beast as it becomes more domesticated for the bar scene and the latest hipster speakeasy. I don't dislike this at all, especially for under £25, but that isn't its normal price so I cannot award a value point here.

The Islay-ness as been somewhat eroded and accessibility has moved in for a permanent residency. My memory, suggests that it is a slight step up from the variable 10 you'll find under every rock. That might be a future comparison, but for now, circa £40, this just doesn't move me in the way you'd expect from a Laphroaig.

Score: 5/10

Laphroaig Quarter Cask – Rose's review

Colour: Harvest Moon.

On the nose: Crunchy sourdough toast smeared with apple butter. Sage growing on a mulchy coast side, an old mildewing woodpile, white plaster walls moist with sea salted rain, the iodine of pungent seaweed washed ashore. Some notes of brown sugar mingle with Indian spices, brown whole grain mustard and pecans in browned butter. Then some scents I had scan to identify, reminiscent of my mom's patchouli, amber, and sandalwood hippy stuff. Maybe even that red square bottle of Ralph Lauren, Lauren that she rarely wore but sat on her dresser my whole childhood, *ahh* mom scents.

In the mouth: Initially just a muddle of the above, earthy, sweet, peaty, salty but all less distinct. It leaves me wanting more of what I found on the nose. After some more searching I get some dirt covered peated caramels, ashy extinguished coals, and old damp newspaper. Followed by Sharpie permanent marker, I've found this in another Laphroaig expression, a Cairdeas I think. Indian spice flavors come back to me, nigella seeds, turmeric and black pepper. Sadly a loss of the fruity and perfumy elements I was enjoying. On the finish maybe some dried rose petals with some vetiver.

Conclusions

It has been some time since I've sipped this Laphroaig expression or any of their OB's really. I had previously owned the Quarter Cask, but presently couldn't remember any details, well besides the Laphroaiginess. So, when Rover asked me if I wanted to join in on notes, I thought it could be interesting to dive in again without any real preconceptions. It's readily available here locally, and the price isn't terrible at \$59.99.

While this whisky is one that I wouldn't mind having around as a filler dram, I think where it lost me was the cohesiveness between the nose and palate. The nose was enlivening in some ways. I might have gotten a little too excited too soon, which as we know the higher the hopes, the harder they come crashing down, right? But then again, I'm a glass half empty sort of person, and as this glass sits before me half empty there's a sense of disconcertment settling in. My bad getting all giddy about scents and nostalgia, I'll learn that lesson someday! Anyhow, the palate just fell flat for me and I think that's a damn shame. So it leaves me questioning, if this was bottled at cask strength, or even not been given the uncool filtering treatment, maybe, just maybe it wouldn't be lacking here?

Score: 5/10

Review: The Glencairn 20th Anniversary Colored Glass Whisky Set

By [Courtney Kristjana](#) / November 30, 2020

Just shy of the legal drinking age in the United States, the Glencairn Glass turned 20-years-old this year. Founded in 2000 by Raymond Davidson, his son, Scott Davidson has taken over as New Product Development Director. Last year, the Glencairn Crystal Studio did a limited release of black Glencairn glasses. The black edition sold out within minutes, and [Teeling Irish Whiskey Co.](#) has chosen the black Glencairn for themselves as they partner with the Glencairn Crystal Studio.

[In Davidson's reaction](#) to the massive success of the black Glencairn he stated, "So in response to public demand, our 20th anniversary gift to loyal fans of the Glencairn Glass across the world is the introduction of this colorful new range, which is here to stay." In addition to the traditional clear Glencairn, the glass now comes in Olympic ring colors of blue, red, green, black, and shimmering gold.

The glasses will be sold individually at £8 (~\$10 USD) if you want a specific color, but the [Glencairn Colored Glass Whisky Set](#) sells for £60 (~\$78 USD). The set comes in a nice presentation box. They are made of lead-free crystal. Unlike the clear glass, the colored ones aren't customizable, nor do they come in the cut-crystal variation.

To my surprise, colored crystal does not make up the new glasses. Instead, they are treated with a sprayed coating, and though durable, it is only possible to decorate with a low temperature curing ink. When holding the colored glass, I noticed that it has some bubbles on the coating. Not on all the colored glasses. You mostly feel them as you have to look super hard to see them on the glass.

But I can't see my whisky through the colored glass? That is the question, or main complaint, I have seen across the worldwide web. Well, on one hand, the color of whisky is not reliable in general. On the other hand, without being able to see through the glass clearly, it's hard to determine how the whisky behaves. For example, seeing the legs of the whisky can help determine proof.

Since The Glencairn 20th Anniversary Colored Glass Whisky Set is the first colored set, I'm hoping this is a gateway to other sets. Personally, I'd love to see a Pride edition with variants for Bi-, Trans-, and BIPOC-Pride. The Glencairn glass has reached 140 countries across all seven continents. [Yes! Including Antarctica](#). Adding colored glassware options is an opportunity for inclusivity in the whisky world that has been infamous for being a "Boy's Club."



The new range of Glencairn colored glasses (image via Glencairn)

Specs: The Glencairn 20th Anniversary Colored Glass Whisky Set

Top Diameter: 1.875 Inches

Bottom Diameter: 1.875 Inches

Maximum Diameter (bowl): 2.5 Inches

Height: 4.5 Inches

Capacity: ~6oz

Care Instructions: Hand-wash only. While the coloured coating is durable, washing in the dishwasher can dull the finish and leave scratches.

Final Thoughts: I highly recommend The Glencairn 20th Anniversary Colored Glass Whisky Set. It helps to sort out the whiskies you're tasting and keep them straight. You don't have to label the clear ones with Sharpie, or by some other means. There still the traditional Glencairn, you just can't visually see the whisky you're tasting except the clear glass one.

If you already have clear Glencairns, then you could just buy the colored glasses individually to make a set. You don't have to buy a whole new set if one breaks. I'm a glassware hound, so I have to have these. The blood red Glencairn is my favourite.

Ben Bracken 16 Year Old Rare Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky

JASON NOVEMBER 30, 2020



This is the season to be jolly. A tonic we haven't had too much of during 2020, but one thing we've certainly enjoyed – arguably too much of – is whisk(e)y. Whether its opening and sharing, or just admiring from a distance, 2020 will be remembered for many things, including the flippers and hoarders who have no interest in the contents; only the financial value.

So, its all too easy to get sucked into values and potential profits. We're all guilty of wondering what's around the corner and what we can get our grubby mitts on. Frankly, this has become entirely tiresome and predictable. A little like watching Nigella dance her way around the kitchen in her latest television escapade. Another seasonal tradition

are the whisky specials from the German supermarkets. A little something to entice us into their stores in the hope of picking up a bargain, gift or an easy drinker for the coming weeks.

Surprisingly, Aldi didn't really embrace the format this year, although maybe they'll have a surprise in store? Perhaps this is a reflection of the silly prices for casks at auction and via brokers? If you're a supermarket looking to marry value with an attractive price tag; have things become nigh impossible to deliver? Thankfully, Lidl managed to pull off this special from Islay and bottled at 16 years of age. Created by the experienced hands at Whyte & Mackay, if you can find a bottle, then it's yours for a miserly £34.99. Pretty impressive on paper, eh?

Cue lots of online chatter about which distillery this release comes from. Particular favourites amongst the online theorists included:

1. Due to COVID-19 and falling sales, Diageo sold on some stock of the Lagavulin 16.
2. It's Ardbeg after Dr Lumsden messed up the latest annual experiment and created something worthwhile.
3. Definitely Bowmore. No one is buying the official products anymore leading to excess stock.
4. This is a Laphroaig after the blenders added too much colouring and had to move it on.
5. Caol Ila all the way as it's the only one that is readily available at such an age.
6. Jura. It's near Islay and they've got to do something to sell stocks, so a little geographical inventiveness was applied.

A great deal of hot air was expelled and thereby creating the whisky fake news phenomenon. Only one of these distilleries is the true source, but such speculation confirms the human condition to know more, and a refusal to believe that something is as good as it seems. Have we all become sceptical in whisky, that if something is too good to be true, then clearly it is? Enthusiasts bashed and drained from the 2020 onslaught of bottle chasing that makes the Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling and Wake look like a rendezvous for afternoon tea?

Maybe I'm just an experienced onlooker, or someone, who has been around the block more times than necessary and doesn't want to do it again – I don't really care what Islay distillery produced this. The price point of £34.99 and the availability of an age statement should remove any need for hot air. Frankly, I just don't care. As long as the whisky is good enough and I'm happy with the experience that should be enough, or should it?

For the record, this Ben Bracken is bottled at 43% strength and proudly exclaims it is chill filtered. I'm fine with that given the price. The packaging actually plays host to some wonderful moments such as cask aged for 16 years, matured in oak and the immortal distilled in copper pot stills. This is all fodder and label filler. What they don't want to state is the distillery, or provide a clue as such, unlike many independent bottlers who have dropped hints where possible. There's a rich colour on display, suggestive that E150 has been added to a sizeable degree, particularly given the omission when it comes to a natural colour statement. Again, you'd expect this feature given the price point.

Despite all of these flaws, there's no denying that the bottle looks a little more premium than your regular Ben Bracken releases. Some care and effort has been put into the presentation, so let's hope that continues into the liquid.

Ben Bracken 16 Year Old Rare Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky – review
Colour: caramel.

On the nose: it has character despite the strength with a waft of peat kicking off proceedings. Pine cones, caramel and coastline character with driftwood, sea salt and old rope. Spices as well with black peppercorn and cloves. Charcoal, autumnal forest decay and Muscovado sugar. Adding water reveals notes of coffee, amber and old newspaper.

In the mouth: a more rounded peat, approachable and not overpowering at this strength. Nuttiness with walnuts and caramelised pecans. Cracked black pepper and smokey towards the finish. Shoe polish, black tea and charcoal once more with liquorice. Water on the palate reveals candied orange and varnish.

Conclusions: In the words of Nigella, strangely satisfying. I'd certainly buy another bottle if these hadn't already been stripped from the shelves across the UK. That's the price we all pay for a bargain that actually delivers. Sure, there's too much colouring and the 43% strength isn't ideal, nor the filtration utilised. But it could have been much worse and after all this, there's still the foundation of a good whisky shining through.

Score: 6/10

Glenkinchie Distillery, Johnnie Walker's Lowland Home, Gets A Tourism Overhaul

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / December 1, 2020

Glenkinchie Distillery, which originally was founded in 1837, recently launched a new, unique multi-million pound distillery and garden visitor attraction upgrade in East Lothian, Scotland, which parent company Diageo hopes will boost tourism.

After months of renovation, the single malt distillery, working with the restrictions set by the government on COVID-19, has aimed to be open to the public again after being part of a major, £185 million project to invest in Scotch whisky experiences by Diageo.



Glenkinchie Distillery is open again, subject to COVID-19 restrictions. (image via Diageo)

Glenkinchie, in its role as the Lowland Home of Johnnie Walker, plays a part in the so-called "Four Corner Distilleries" around Scotland. The others include Caol Ila, Clynelish and Cardhu. These in turn form an incredible network of visitor experiences linked to the Johnnie Walker Princes Street attraction in Edinburgh that's set to open next summer. "The opening of the wonderful new visitor experience and garden at Glenkinchie is the first step in our long-term £185million investment in whisky tourism in Scotland," said Barbara Smith, Managing Director of Brand Homes for Diageo in Scotland, [in a prepared statement](#). "We are acutely aware of the difficult times many people are going through, particularly our colleagues in the tourism and hospitality sector across Scotland.

"We know there's a long way to go and a lot of uncertainty ahead. Still, we believe in the resilience of our business and our communities, and we will be doing all we can through our investment to sow the seeds of recovery and future growth."

The Glenkinchie Distillery attraction is centered around a garden and surrounded by the distillery's traditional Victorian red brick warehouses.

"Glenkinchie will give people a thrilling first taste of the new visitor experiences we are creating across Scotland," added Ramsay Borthwick, Glenkinchie Distillery Manager. "We will be offering people an experience like no other distillery in Scotland at Glenkinchie and that will be followed as we transform Clynelish, Cardhu and Caol Ila over the coming months, and as we build towards the opening of our global Johnnie Walker Princes Street attraction in Edinburgh next summer."

The distillery will be open under COVID-19 guidance and best practices, and tours can be booked at www.glenkinchiedistillery.com.

Whiskey Review: Angel's Envy Bourbon Finished in Japanese Mizunara Casks

By [Kenji Mizumori](#) / December 2, 2020

I have several prominent memories and experiences regarding Angel's Envy. First of which was meeting one of their local representatives and simply talking bourbon. Next up would be a favored regular who's

combination of choice was Angel's neat and a cheap beer. Finally, I am reminded of a dinner with a friend involving several courses and finishing with creme brulee and Angel's Envy rye. As tends to be true, when there's whiskey around, there's bound to be stories. With regards to the whiskey I'm reviewing here, it was said by Wes Henderson, Angel's Envy Co-founder and Chief Innovation Officer that "ten years ago [on August 19th], 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 honor my dad's incredible legacy, how far Angel's Envy has come and our exciting future ahead.

"We chose this release for the tenth 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."

The new release begins with a blend of Kentucky straight bourbon whiskeys aged 4 and 9 years, that was then finished in Mizunara casks from Japan for 2 full years before being bottled at 97.8 proof in a stunning crystal decanter. On the nose, the distillery tells us to expect "notes of smoky wood, sandalwood, banana bread, cherry and ripe apples. On the palate, notes of vanilla, oak, rich chocolate, banana, cinnamon, apple and light black pepper are present, along with floral and fruity notes and a hint of coffee. The finish is slightly dry with hints of toasty oak and a lingering smokiness."

Why are [Mizunara](#) casks so interesting? As previously mentioned, to reach full maturity, the trees require about 200 years! The wood is also incredibly porous, which allows more interaction with the whiskey. It also means that more evaporation occurs. Also, Mizunara casks are a definite commodity at up to \$6000 each. Yikes!



Angel's Envy Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished In Japanese Mizunara Oak Casks (image via Angel's Envy)

Tasting Notes: Angel's Envy Bourbon Finished in Japanese Mizunara Casks

Vital Stats: 97.8 proof, 48.9% ABV. This is a blend of equal parts four year and nine year bourbons that are finished in Mizunara wood casks for two years. 750ml bottles were available for purchase for \$350 at the distillery but can go for over \$2,000 elsewhere.

Appearance: A light orange with yellow hues. In the glass found several slow legs.

Nose: There's a lot going on with this one. For sure there are elements of candied orange and amarena cherry up front. As a whiskey near 100 proof, there's definitely a bit of heat. Took a moment and returned to the glass and found a touch of molasses.

Palate: A bit lighter bodied than expected, but still a lingering finish. We return to the initial impressions of cherry and orange. However, there's also a bit of pepper rounding out the tasting experience.

The Takeaway

Summary

This was certainly a tasty sipper. There's a great balance of fruit and spice elements, and the longer finish was appreciated. I am curious as to what this one tastes like at barrel strength. In any case, it's quite beautiful, but given the price tag, it's definitely a special occasion purchase.

4.5 User Rating (votes)



The run-up to the holidays is full of planning, excitement—and a lot of running around. It's important to make time to catch your breath and actually enjoy the season. An advent calendar is a great daily reminder to slow down and enjoy the holiday spirit—especially if it's filled with whisky. (Get it?)

You can buy a number of pre-made whisky advent calendars. What's available varies from year to year, but these companies usually offer a calendar, and sometimes several: [Secret Spirits Whisky Advent Calendar](#), [Heritage Distilling Co.](#), [Flaviar](#), and [Drinks by the Dram](#).

Be aware, however, that many of these options cost hundreds, and even thousands of dollars.

Then there's the DIY option—a great choice if you already have plenty of whisky. [Holiday Spirits Calendars](#) offers pre-fab advent calendars that you can fill with your choice of whiskies. "Our goal is to appeal to that segment that like to give quirky, fun, inventive gifts to their friends and family, who also happen to enjoy cocktails," says founder and president Adam Cappelli. "It resonates well since the design has that old traditional Christmas vibe and incorporates a fun twist on something that is meant for children, but allows adults to once again enjoy counting down the days to Christmas."

WHAT YOU NEED

Each calendar differs, but naturally you'll need whisky and bottles.

Don't worry about having 24 different whiskies—it's fine to repeat.

You can find mini spirits bottles on [Amazon](#) and [eBay](#). Some come with a mini funnel, which makes the project much easier and faster. As you use your calendar, wash and save the bottles each day so you can reuse them next year. Because once you've done this, you're going to want to do it again.

HOW TO MAKE A WHISKY ADVENT CALENDAR

You don't need to be Martha Stewart to make a festive advent calendar.

There are many ways to DIY, ranging from easy to, well, Martha-level.

Pick one that you like and that you can display prominently in your home so you never forget your daily dram. Here are a few ideas to try, in order from no-sweat to need-some-skills.

Up-cycle a shoe organizer

Buy an over-the-door shoe organizer, [label each pocket with a number](#), and slip your bottles in. Add some bows or other decorations to boost the jolly vibe.

Hang mini stockings

Buy a pack off [Amazon](#), stuff each with your bottles, and hang up. Santa Claus not required!

Use a spice rack...

...or any other [kitchen organizer](#). Label your bottles with stickers or tags so you know what order to drink them in, then arrange them in the rack.

Transform a beer box

The slots are already there, so all you have to do is add the bottles, [make a lid](#), and decorate. Cappelli says this could work on a smaller scale with a shoebox or any box lying around. "Get creative on the computer for your calendar face and apply it to the front of your box," he says. "The tricky part may be getting the individual bottles to stay in place, but with a toolbox, some MacGyver-ing, and some bourbon in you, I bet you can make it work."

Hang them from your tree

If the branches are strong enough and you're using plastic bottles, you could consider turning your Christmas tree into an advent calendar—simply tie ribbon to the bottles. Or you could buy six sets of [these scotch-filled baubles](#) from Angels' Share Glass (but keep them high up if you have cats). Either way, it adds to the fun since you have to hunt for your whisky each day.

Build a cubby calendar

Feeling ambitious? First [construct a 25-slot cubby organizer out of pine wood](#) and add labels. Then [put one bottle in each cubby](#). This also works if you're able to find an organizer that happens to have 24 or 25

Why You Need a Whisky Advent Calendar (and How to Make One Yourself)

NOVEMBER 24, 2017 | [BRITTANY RISHER](#)

slots, so consider checking stores like Pottery Barn, craft stores, and even [flea markets](#).

Turn toilet paper rolls into a tree

Place each bottle in a toilet paper roll, wrap in wrapping paper, and stick a number on the end (write it in marker or, since you're already making the effort, make labels and glue them on). Then arrange the tubes into a pyramid shape in random order, gluing them together, and add a star on top. It's a whisky advent tree! For more details, [follow the step-by-step directions on Thrillist](#).

WHAT ABOUT HANUKKAH?

You don't need to celebrate Christmas to get in on the action. You can DIY a box, rack, or cubbies to hold eight bottles rather than 12 or 24.

Or [build a menorah out of wood to hold your mini bottles \(this Etsy one would be easy to recreate\)](#). Or if you're lucky enough, find a menorah that can hold or support mini liquor bottles. [Individual candle holders of different heights](#) also work.

Whatever you do, if you have a menorah that is lit, be sure to keep it distanced from your whisky menorah.

BONUS POINTS

There's nothing wrong with drinking alone, but why not ask some friends to get crafty with you? Have everyone bring a certain number of whiskies, and you can all enjoy new drams (both during the crafting and when using your calendar). While you're at it, arrange each other's calendars so that each day's whisky is a surprise.

If you're feeling generous and have the time, DIY advent calendars make a great gift that keeps giving all month long. Just be warned that recipients may expect a new calendar next year.

that's costing money and eating up labor hours." On a positive note, Keir foresees little to no impact from Brexit on production or on scotch whisky's protected status. "Scotch whisky is protected as a [geographical indication], and Brexit will not affect this," he explains. "It's more the sheer practicalities of moving cased goods from Scotland across to the EU—that's where issues could potentially lie." Another challenge concerns not exports, but imports. "People tend to focus on goods going out, but we also source some dry goods from within the EU, and get glass for some of our product," Keir adds. "And our gift boxes, our cartons, are sourced from within the EU. There's going to be a more complicated import procedure, which may add a delay."



Small scotch companies like Single Cask Nation have a lot on the line with the UK's departure from the EU. Co-founder Joshua Hatton says that a lack of trade agreements would derail plans for expansion and leave the company with large sums in inventory. **SMALL BUSINESS STRUGGLE** Brexit-related delays are also threatening the growth of startup scotch businesses like independent bottler [Single Cask Nation](#). "We very much are on the edge of our seats," says president

and CEO Joshua Hatton. "This year COVID put all sorts of roadblocks and delays on all of our business," with major releases slated for the UK, EU, and Asia in 2020 curtailed or severely delayed. Hatton notes that in 2019, Single Cask Nation expanded beyond its home market of the U.S. to Sweden and Germany, and is looking to establish itself in the Netherlands and France. "Our biggest concern is the delay in getting product into these countries," he says. "We're not expecting disruption in our dealings between the UK and the U.S. [due to Brexit], but it could surely affect our business dealings within the EU. We've invested a lot of dollars into casks—both casks of whisky, and sherry casks, ex-bourbon casks, et cetera, for re-racking programs—that we hope we'll still be able to get into Europe with a fair amount of ease. The last thing we want is for it to be shut down, and to have to figure out where that whisky goes. There's a lot of it, and it can't all come to the U.S., so we're really counting on European sales." There's also fear that a hard Brexit—where the UK potentially forfeits its current access to the EU single market—could set off new tariffs. "Our distributors are after us saying, 'We need the whisky ASAP—before Brexit—because we don't know what's happening,'" Hatton says. "From a sales perspective, if the product can be ready before a hard Brexit, this is good news. But it's scary to think that we simply have no idea what business will look like in 2021 and beyond, and we're fearful that once the UK drops out of the EU in the form of a hard Brexit, any feuds that may be going on between the UK and EU could potentially activate other tariffs, similar to what we're experiencing here in the U.S."

Still, Hatton is banking on the industry's biggest players to blaze a path forward. "Small businesses like ours are incredibly lucky, because if any fight needs to be had—or if any path to resolving potential export issues needs to be cleared—that's going to fall on the shoulders of the big drinks companies like Diageo, Pernod Ricard, and Bacardi," he explains. "These global drinks companies are worth billions and have legal teams to figure out how to make it all happen, and we and other small businesses share distribution partners in various countries with these large companies. Once they figure it out ... we'll understand that path to proper, legal, and cost-effective exportation and importation. There's no way Diageo, Pernod Ricard, or any of these big players are just going to sit and say, 'Well now what do we do?' They're going to figure it out because there's so much money tied into the exportation of goods into the EU from the UK and elsewhere."



Scotch producers like Duncan Taylor (warehouse pictured) are used to playing the long game, given the years whisky must spend in cask

Scotch Producers Brace for Brexit's Final Act

NOVEMBER 23, 2020 | [ZAK KOSTRO](#)



As the closing date for the Brexit transition looms, the scotch whisky industry has far more questions than answers about what the future holds. Distilleries like GlenAllachie (warehouse worker pictured) are grappling with little certainty, other than increased costs.

2020 has pummeled businesses around the world, and the scotch whisky industry is no exception. Adding to the onslaught of challenges caused by COVID-19 are the Brexit negotiations, which are now entering their final stages. As the clock ticks toward the end of the transition period on Dec. 31, there's little certainty about what Britain's departure from the European Union will mean.

For its part, the [Scotch Whisky Association](#) (SWA) has made its position clear. "UK and EU negotiators should intensify discussions to deliver a deal that allows for zero tariffs on all goods, protects UK and EU geographical indications, and puts in place governance structures to limit any new barriers to trade from forming," an SWA spokesperson said in a statement to *Whisky Advocate*. "It's a race against time for businesses to receive all the technical guidance they need."

While it remains to be seen whether the SWA will have its way, scotch producers do see one certainty: The transition will cost money.

"There's no doubt that Brexit in any form will raise costs for our business, and all scotch whisky businesses, due to new labeling requirements and paperwork," says [Compass Box Whisky Co.](#) founder John Glaser. "We're getting a clear picture as the days and weeks go by about the various types of paperwork that'll have to be done that don't have to be done now. ... We'll have to change our labels to include the name of our European importer or importers—that's a cost to us. And we'll have to maintain different sets of inventory for each of the different importers—another cost to us. But that's all we know at the moment."

David Keir, sales and marketing director at the [GlenAllachie Distillers Co.](#), says the unpredictability is hitting the bottom line. "It's one thing knowing what to plan for and another thing planning for uncertainties," he explains. "But we need to ensure that we're fully prepared, and

before it's mature, and many believe Brexit is just one more bump in the road.

TAKING THE LONG VIEW

Although big players like Diageo and others have been preparing, Brexit is a hurdle even for them. "It's been a massive logistical exercise for us and the scotch whisky industry," said Jean-Christophe Coutures, chairman and CEO of Pernod Ricard-owned [Chivas Brothers](#), in a statement to *Whisky Advocate*. "While our preference has always been for a deal, we made a decision early on to prepare for a no-deal scenario, and have had project management groups in place across all areas of the business for over four years." Chivas Brothers has factored in possible short-term disruption at ports, and adapted its labeling and customs processes. Those efforts have been complicated by prolonged uncertainty over the final parameters of the EU-UK relationship and resulting regulatory requirements, as well as COVID-19. "But deal or no deal, we will continue investing in scotch and Scotland," Coutures added.

Peter Currie, partner at Shand Import, which handles the whiskies of independent bottler [Duncan Taylor](#), notes that the scotch industry is used to taking the long view—a characteristic that will serve it well during this period. "We're working 12, 15 years in advance," he explains. "The stocks that we're laying down now are not going to be sold immediately—they're going to be sold in five or 10 years' time. We tend to work on longer timescales than most other industries, so we're quite used to long-term planning. Shorter-term events like tariffs and Brexit have to be taken into account, but they're kind of bumps in the road in the maturation cycle of a 12 year old whisky." Similarly, Keir exudes a certain faith that whisky companies small and large will tackle Brexit-related barricades full-on, as they've plowed through countless other setbacks in centuries past. "We've got something like 50,000 casks of single malt maturing at our distillery, which for a small, new company like us is phenomenal," he says. "So despite COVID, tariffs, and potential Brexit disruption, we're pretty bullish about the future. As a young company, you just need to be positive, plan as best you can, have your contingencies in place for the worst-case scenario, and get on with it."

The 12 Most Commonly Flipped Whiskies

JUNE 29, 2020 | [WHISKY ADVOCATE](#) | FROM [SPRING 2020](#)



Wondering which whiskies are most flipped, sold, or traded on the secondary market? We scoured a half-dozen private Facebook and MeWe groups to compile this list, averaging the various prices at which the bottles sold. To get a better understanding of how and why these bottles are so in-demand, check out our exclusive report that goes [deep into the world black market bourbon](#).

[VAN WINKLE SPECIAL RESERVE 12 YEAR OLD BOURBON \(LOT B\)](#)

MSRP: \$80

Secondary Market Price: \$525

The poster child for whiskey flipping due to its rarity and high demand. The prevalence of counterfeits often requires multiple photos, showcasing fill level, laser code, and foil seals.

[W. L. WELLER 12 YEAR OLD BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$37

Secondary Market Price: \$150

The potential margins on this bottle are generous and, given the scattered national allocation, people in some regions where it isn't distributed will pay as much as \$200.

[BLANTON'S SINGLE BARREL BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$60

Secondary Market Price: \$120+

Depending on the date it was dumped from the barrel, as stated on the label, this whiskey's prices can fluctuate immensely. People searching for specific dates to commemorate anniversaries or birthdates will pay \$300 or more.

[OLD FITZGERALD 15 YEAR OLD BOTTLED IN BOND BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$150 (Fall 2019 Release)

Secondary Market Price: \$300

This decadent wheated sipper from [Heaven Hill](#) is its oldest release yet, contributing to high demand on the secondary market. Semi-annual releases create more opportunities to buy, but also seem to increase demand.

[BAKER'S 13 YEAR OLD BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$99

Secondary Market Price: \$200

This single barrel was distributed via lottery in some control states and often unavailable in others, making it a current darling.

[MICHTER'S 10 YEAR OLD SINGLE BARREL BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$130 (2019 Release)

Secondary Market Price: \$200

While [Michter's 20 year old](#) bourbon can command north of \$2,000, the 10 year is more prevalent and affordable.

[OLD FORESTER BIRTHDAY BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$100 (2019 Release)

Secondary Market Price: \$350

Demand for this annual limited release has risen considerably, especially among collectors who want to complete a set.

[ELMER T. LEE 100 YEAR TRIBUTE BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$100

Secondary Market Price: \$400

Regular [Elmer T. Lee](#) fetches about \$150, but the limited availability of the special-edition tribute bottle has made the price soar.

[WILLETT 6 YEAR OLD FAMILY ESTATE BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$100 (2019 Release)

Secondary Market Price: \$250

Demand for aged [Willett ryes](#) has reached a fever pitch and its bourbons aren't far behind. Private barrels like "Annd It's Gone" command triple this price.

[BARRELL 15 YEAR OLD CASK STRENGTH BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$250

Secondary Market Price: \$300

Partially sourced from [MGP](#) in Indiana, [Barrell's](#) whiskeys are well-aged and well-curated, as their high scores in the Whisky Advocate Buying Guide show.

[WILLIAM LARUE WELLER BOURBON](#)

MSRP: \$99 (2019 Release)

Secondary Market Price: \$725

Consistently high-scoring and limited, this is the current star of the [Buffalo Trace Antique Collection](#), all of which fetch high prices on the secondary market.

[HIBIKI 17 YEAR OLD JAPANESE WHISKY](#)

MSRP: \$150

Secondary Market Price: \$450

Second only to bourbon, Japanese whiskies, especially those bearing age statements, are also compelling targets for flippers.

Balblair Brings Its Age Statement Collection Whiskies To The United States

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / December 3, 2020

Scotland's Balblair distillery was long known for being one of the few to assign vintage statements to their whiskies. This changed however last year as they went more [towards the industry standard of age statements](#). This collection is now being imported to the United States. Four whiskies from Balblair, according to those behind them, will be available on American retail shelves. These include the 12-, 15-, 18- and 25-year-old bottlings. In making the move away from the vintage labeling for these, it is said, "the launch of this collection signals a new era for Balblair. While each expression offers its own unique appeal, the series as a whole stays true to Balblair's house style, following a gentle and considered approach with its focus firmly on quality over quantity – an attribute Balblair has become renowned for since the distillery was established in 1790."



Balblair Core Collection (image via Balblair)

“As one of the oldest working distilleries in the Scottish Highlands, Balblair has a long and rich history of crafting premium single malt Scotch whisky,” said John MacDonald, Distillery Manager at Balblair, in a prepared statement. “We are proud of our heritage and we will continue to honor our centuries-old traditions, but we also look forward in a quiet pursuit of perfection.”

On the new series, MacDonald also commented, “Our new collection is intrinsically linked to our heritage and is testament to the place and the people behind our whisky, while being emblematic of our ‘True Highland Spirit’.”

You’ll find more official information on each, including pricing, below. It is currently across eight states (CA, CO, IL, MA, NH, NJ, NY, and TX). Consumers can find the whiskies online and at fine retailers in each market. Beginning in 2021, Balblair will be available in additional markets.

Balblair 12-Year-Old (around \$70)

- 46% abv, matured in American oak ex-bourbon and double-fired American oak casks
- Color: Polished gold
- Aroma: Elegant bright lemon peel layered with creamy vanilla and crisp green apples
- Palate: Ground spices and dried orange slices enveloped in intense set honey sweetness
- Finish: Creamy and leathery with notes of sweet vanilla

Balblair 15-Year-Old (around \$120)

- 46% abv, matured initially in American oak ex-bourbon casks, followed by first-fill Spanish oak butts
- Color: Bright amber
- Aroma: Leatherwood honey and spicy gingerbread followed by juicy prunes and fresh lemon peel
- Palate: Velvety in texture, bursting with dark chocolate, tropical fruit and spices
- Finish: Long and mellow with notes of creamy vanilla and citrus

Balblair 18-Year-Old (around \$210)

- 46% abv, matured initially in American oak ex-bourbon casks, followed by first-fill Spanish oak butts
- Color: Oiled cedar
- Aroma: Rich toffee and baked pears shine bright against an elegant backdrop of new leather
- Palate: A masterful balance of juicy apricots, seasoned oak and vanilla custard
- Finish: Long and warming with chords of fresh spices and raisins

Balblair 25-Year-Old (around \$700)

- 46% abv, matured initially in American oak ex-bourbon casks then reshaped in Oloroso Spanish oak
- Color: Hot copper
- Aroma: Indulgent overripe apricots and dark licorice stand out against polished oak and a touch of saddle wax

- Palate: Full-bodied with oily citrus, chocolate praline and a faint note of fresh tobacco leaf
- Finish: Warming with smooth chocolate and blood oranges

Torabhaig Single Malt From Isle Of Skye To Launch Next Year

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / December 2, 2020

The second legal distillery ever to be built on the Isle Skye in Scotland will soon release a rare new offering in the form of a peated single malt. What will be known as the Torabhaig Legacy Series 2017, bottled at 46%, will be a limited release, first edition bottling.

“By opening the second-ever licensed Single Malt Scotch Whisky distillery on the Isle of Skye we have from the start been mindful of the legacy we are leaving – it was never enough to make ‘just another whisky’, said Neil Mathieson, Chief Executive at Mossburn Distillers, the company behind Torabhaig, [in a prepared statement](#). “We have created a characterful whisky with real depth and complexity, and an elegance and refinement which belies the extremely high phenol levels in the barley.



Torabhaig Legacy Series 2017 (image via Torabhaig)

“It is a distinctive take on peat, and it is the first expression of our distillery’s signature style, a flavour profile we call Well-Tempered Peat, which we hope will help define the future of Torabhaig.”

Torabhaig prides itself on being a product of its surroundings and heritage. It is said it is shaped by the landscape and climate of the Isle of Skye.

“We first found the site as an abandoned but ruggedly handsome farmstead, which just so happened to be the perfect location for a distillery,” noted Mathieson. “In testament to Hebridean pragmatism, the original buildings had been built using stone from the nearby ruins of Castle Camus. We saw it as our duty to preserve this history and bring the building back to life, to create something more than just a distillery.

“Over four years we painstakingly restored the derelict buildings, uncovering ever more history in the process, including the remains of an old mill wheel which we have refitted, and which is now powered by the cooling water from our stills. We are proud to have created our brand home with a true sense of place, now fully operational and ready to release our first Single Malt. Our tenacity and attention to detail is now to be 100% dedicated to making whisky.”

Production on this release started in January of 2017 with a team of nine distillers, many new to the industry. Torabhaig hopes to change the course of whisky-making on the island by bringing their own distinctive character.

Plans call for the first whisky to be released this coming February, priced at £50, or around \$70 USD.

Glencairn Crystal unveils new Gin Goblets

Glencairn Crystal is transferring its glass-making expertise from whisky to gin with the release of its new Gin Goblet.

The Glencairn Gin Goblet is designed to provide the ultimate gin-drinking experience, whether it be over ice with tonic or a twist on a gin cocktail.

While the East Kilbride-based crystal glassware company is best known as the producer of the official glass for whisky, the Glencairn Glass, it has been fielding more and more questions from gin distillers and drinkers about a dedicated gin glass as the spirit has grown in popularity in recent years.

In response, Glencairn Crystal investigated the world of gin and discovered there was little variation in the gin glasses on the market. It found that its Glencairn Mixer Glass - originally developed with the Canadian whisky industry to accommodate a mixer or ice with a dram - was a popular choice for gin drinkers.

Using the Mixer Glass as a starting point, the Glencairn team designed the Gin Goblet with a number of features considered beneficial for gin drinkers, distillers and bar staff, including a unique lip, a curve at the top of the glass to enhance aromas, and a stem to prevent hands warming the glass (as with popular gin 'copas' and wine glasses). Scott Davidson, new product development director at Glencairn, said: "At Glencairn, we are proud of our innovative history, having been at the forefront of ground-breaking crystal design and creation for nearly 40 years. We always strive to listen and respond to customer demand with the ultimate aim of enhancing the spirit lover's drinking experience. We hope that we have delivered the perfect glass for gin lovers worldwide."

The Glencairn Gin Goblet is available to buy at [the Glencairn Crystal online store](#), priced at £10, and can also be personalised with a bespoke engraving.

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.



Kingston Single Malt Society

Roberto Di Fazio, President

827 Old Colony Road

Kingston, Ontario, K7P 1S1, Canada

613-532-5285

rdifazio04@gmail.com

<http://www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com>

