

Kingston Single Malt Society

www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com

A social club for the appreciation of Single Malt Whisky since 1998
JANUARY 31st, 2022 VOLUME 15; NUMBER 7a; No. 189



This evening's
menu celebrating
the
263rd Anniversary
of
Robbie Burns
Birthday

MENU

Ode to and Piping of the Haggis

(introduced by: Gavin Wood & Andrew Wallace)

1st Nosing: SPRINGBANK 12 YEARS OLD 54.8%
2019 RELEASE

2nd Nosing: SPRINGBANK 12 YEARS OLD 56.1%
2020 RELEASE

3rd Nosing: SPRINGBANK 12 YEARS OLD 55.9%
2021 RELEASE

(introduced by: Doug Perkins)

1st Course: Sausage Rolls with Spicy Tomato
Sauce

2nd Course: Cullen Skink: Creamy Potato and
Smoked Haddock Soup

4th Nosing: GLENMORANGIE 12 YEAR OLD
ACCORD

5th Nosing: GLENMORANGIE 14 YEAR OLD
ELEMENTA

6th Nosing: GLENMORANGIE 18 YEAR OLD
AZUMO MAKOTO

(introduced by: Tim Barber)

3rd Course: Traditional Mince & Garlic Tatties

4th Course: Scottish Butter Tablet

COST OF THE MALTS

SPRINGBANK 12 YEARS OLD 54.8% 2019 RELEASE

CAMPBELTOWN SINGLE MALT VINTAGES 211680 | 700 mL
bottle **Price: \$159.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky 54.8%
Alcohol/Vol.

SPRINGBANK 12 YEARS OLD 56.1% 2020 RELEASE

CAMPBELTOWN SINGLE MALT VINTAGES 211680 | 700 mL
bottle **Price: \$259.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky 56.1%
Alcohol/Vol.

SPRINGBANK 12 YEARS OLD 55.9% 2021 RELEASE

CAMPBELTOWN SINGLE MALT VINTAGES 211680 | 700 mL
bottle **Price: \$259.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky 55.9%
Alcohol/Vol.

GLENMORANGIE 12 YEAR OLD ACCORD VINTAGES

212589 | 1000 mL bottle **Price: \$139.95** Spirits,
Whisky/Whiskey, 43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

GLENMORANGIE 14 YEAR OLD ELEMENTA VINTAGES

212589 | 1000 mL bottle **Price: \$159.95** Spirits,
Whisky/Whiskey, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

GLENMORANGIE 18 YEAR OLD AZUMO MAKOTO

VINTAGES 212589 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$249.95** Spirits,
Whisky/Whiskey, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

December 6th Dinner - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 39 December attendees @ \$90)	= \$3510.00
December dinner 39 persons =	= \$2390.75
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt)	= \$1119.25
Cost of Single Malts:	= \$1180.55
Cost of Pours per Person = \$29.51	
Money for Heels	= \$275.00
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= \$213.70
Cost per person (All inclusive)	= \$91.57

December 13th Dinner - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 40 December attendees @ \$90)	= \$3600.00
December dinner 40 persons =	= \$2445.62
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt)	= \$1154.38
Cost of Single Malts:	= \$1091.65
Cost of Pours per Person = \$27.29	
Money for Heels	= \$320.00
Money Raised from Raffle	= \$365.00
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= \$747.73
Cost per person (All inclusive)	= \$88.43

Upcoming Dinner Dates

Monday February 28th 2022 - Bunnahabhain Dinner
Monday March 14th 2022 - Irish / Highland
Monday April 11th 2022 - Speyside / Islands / Islay
Monday May 30th 2022 - Speyside
Monday June 20th 2022 - June BBQ - Cigar Malts & Sherry
Monday July 25th, 2022 - Campbeltown / Speyside / Highlands
Friday August 26th, 2022 - 15th Annual Premium Night
Monday September 19th, 2022 - Lowland / Islands (Kyle)
Monday October 17th, 2022 - Speyside / Highlands / Islay
Monday November 14th, 2022 -
Monday December 12th 2022 - Christmas Dinner

Explain about ... Burns Night

<http://whiskyforeveryone.blogspot.com/2010/01/explain-about-burns-night.html>

Burns Night is an annual festival that celebrates the life and works of Scottish poet and lyricist Robert Burns (also known as Rabbie to his friends) and has a strong association with whisky. Burns is widely regarded as Scotland's national poet and the festival has become Scotland's unofficial national day. It is celebrated on January 25th, the date of Burns' birth. Burns Night has a rich heritage in Scottish culture and combines two of the nation's favourite pastimes, eating and drinking whisky, with the legendary poetry of Robert Burns.

Robert Burns was born in 1759 in the small town of Alloway, Ayrshire. The town is located two miles (3km) to the south of Ayr in the Lowland region of Scotland. The house where he was born is now the Burns Cottage Museum. Burns was tutored mostly by his father for his early education before starting formal schooling in 1772. His first attempt at poetry was in 1774 - it was entitled O, Once I Lov'd A Bonnie Lass and was inspired by his first love. He went on to write hundreds of poems and songs including famous works such as Tam O'Shanter, My Love Is Like A Red, Red Rose and Auld Lang Syne, which is traditionally sung around the English speaking world on New Year's Eve.

As time passed and Burns' work became more renowned, so did his reputation for liking whisky and women. His heavy drinking and adultery gained him notoriety and scorn within literary circles, although the quality and output of his works remained consistently high. His first illegitimate child was born in 1785 and he went on to father 12 children with four different women (although these totals are believed to both be higher!). He died on July 21 1796, aged just 37, of rheumatic fever that is believed to have been accelerated by a degenerative heart condition from his childhood. His final child was born two days later, on the day that he was buried with full civic and military honours. Burns' grave stands in a graveyard in Dumfries.

So how did Burns Night begin and what does it involve? It is believed that the first Burns Night took place over 200 years ago in 1801. This is less than five years after Burns' death and was celebrated by a group of scholars who were fans of his works. In the early days, it was seen as the perfect platform to celebrate Scotland and being Scottish, incorporating Burns' poetry, Scottish food (most notably haggis, neeps and tatties) and copious amounts of whisky. The popularity and celebrations grew year on year until we have the Burns Night that we know today.

The modern Burns Night supper has evolved over time but remains quintessentially (some would say, stereotypically) Scottish. The core of the supper is the haggis (a mixture of offal, cereal grains, oatmeal, herbs and spices wrapped in the lining of a sheep's stomach) and this is served with neeps and tatties (turnip/swede and potato). This can be preceded by a soup based starter - the three most common are Scotch Broth (a thick soup that contains barley and anything else that you may have), Cullen Skink (a fish based chowder) or Cock-a-leekie soup (the clue is in the name - it's chicken and leeks, then prunes are added). Dessert can take any form (if you have space or haven't had a heart attack by this point!), with cheese, Cranachan (whipped cream, whisky, raspberries and oatmeal) or Clootie Dumpling (a cake made with dried fruit, condensed milk, spices and golden syrup, then cooked in a cloth or cloot in Gaelic) being the most popular. These are traditionally accompanied by whisky at every opportunity.

The main ceremonial part involves the reading of *Address To A Haggis* - a poem written by Robert Burns to celebrate Scotland and its national food. The haggis is bought in and placed on a table and then the reader performs the poem to the haggis and the crowd. This can be accompanied by bagpipes at larger events (as seen in the image, left). The final act of the poem is to slash the stomach membrane of the haggis to reveal its contents and for the reader to down a dram of whisky (occasionally, another dram can be poured over the steaming haggis). Then the rule is to toast the haggis, have a fun evening and drink whisky!

Other Burns Night facts ...

- * Approximately 15 million people worldwide annually celebrate Burns Night.
- * There are statues of Robert Burns in Central Park, New York and at Poet's Corner in Hyde Park, London.

- * It is estimated that 70% of the UK's annual haggis consumption happens on or around Burns Night.

- * Burns Night contributes a staggering £150 million to the Scottish economy each year.

- * The poetry of Robert Burns have been translated in to almost every known language and have been used in the works of legendary figures such as Jimmy Hendrix and The Beatles.

10 Highest Scoring Whiskies From the Winter 2021 Buying Guide
DECEMBER 28, 2021 | [WHISKY ADVOCATE](#)



The [Winter 2021](#) issue of Whisky Advocate is all about connecting you with great whisky. There are over 150 whisky reviews inside, including our annual [Top 20 list](#), which celebrates an exciting year of high-quality and affordable drams. Our [Whisky of the Year](#) is a stout-finished Islay single malt scotch, but the full list includes value bourbons, surprising world whiskies, complex blended malts, and more.

Elsewhere in the issue, we help you plan a year of whisky spending based on four different budgets and interest levels, and survey the rich landscape of 21 year old scotch. Of course, there is perhaps no greater resource than our Buying Guide, which spans multiple styles and continents to deliver well-considered tasting notes. In each issue we provide [Editors' Choice](#), [Best Values](#), and [Collectibles](#) picks, but beyond those, there is still plenty of whisky to consider. The highest-scoring whiskies from the Winter issue, include familiar names like Laphroaig and Booker's as well as a few surprises. Germany's Eifel Whisky nets 94 points with its Peated Duo Malt, while Speyside's Glenallachie impresses with a 10 year old single malt aged in American oak barrels and then placed into Kentucky rye casks. Check out the 10 highest-scoring whiskies below and visit the [Winter 2021 Buying Guide](#) for the full slate of reviews.

TOP SCORES FROM WHISKY ADVOCATE'S WINTER 2021 ISSUE



Kilchoman Loch Gorm Sherry Cask Matured (2021 Edition)
94 points, 46%, \$100

Peat smoke and fresh maritime notes on the nose, rope tar, lime, black pepper, and medicinal hints of Band-Aid and iodine. On the palate, black peat embers blend into milk chocolate, luscious dark fruits, and espresso macchiato. The finish is viscous and smooth, and has excellent length. There's plenty of smoke, but also lively fruit notes of orange, blackberries, and black currants. There is a real elegance to this whisky. (2,040 bottles for the U.S.)—David Fleming



Eifel Whisky German Peated Duo Malt 2021 Edition
94 points, 46%, \$90

A nose of Nestle Crunch bar, dates, smoke from green wood, golden syrup, vanilla seeds, cherry gummy bears, and a medley of dried fruits. Respectfully, with its 4:1 mashbill ratio of malted wheat and barley to 35 ppm peated malt, it's like a fine blended scotch that costs ten times more. The flavors are in perfect balance with a distinctive red wine influence, with dark toffee, black cherry, black currant, runny caramel, and an up-tempo spiciness. (2,400 bottles)—Jonny McCormick



Booker's 2021-02 "Tagalong Batch" Kentucky Straight bourbon
93 points, 63.95%, \$90

The fifth edition of distiller Freddie Noe's signature annual release. This is a weighty one, in classic Booker's fashion—rich, full, and powerful, loaded with chocolate, cocoa powder, candied orange slices, dark chocolate, melted caramel, and cinnamon spice. Water quells the flavor riot, softening to notes of vanilla and vanilla malt, chocolate candy bar, and leather. The finish is spicy, with more chocolate and orange. There's nothing shy about this tasty sipper.—David Fleming



Laphroaig 25 year old Cask Strength (2020)
94 points, 49.8%, \$750

A cask strength whisky, but don't expect a rambunctious blusterer. Age has given this one a mellowed beauty. It offers a deep, rich, soft peat influence on a thick and creamy palate, with dried seaweed, seashells, salinity, brine, charcoal, and muted medicinal notes—all imbued with sweet oak, lime, chocolate-covered marshmallows, and light pepper. Cooked pears, chocolate, and vanilla cream complete the finish. The peat has settled in, and a marvelous, mature whisky rises.—David Fleming



Dalmore 30 year old (2021 Release)
93 points, 42.8%, \$5,500

Dark and gleaming from the port pipes that contained Graham's 30 year old tawny port, this revels in a nose of treacle tart, polished horse chestnut, baked orange, walnut, and Luxardo cherry syrup. A decadent palate of sweet orange, cherry, baked plum desserts, poached pears in cream, and a hint of nuttiness and spice, it finishes darkly with inky purple fruits, black grape, and Airheads blue raspberry chew bars. (1,318 bottles)—Jonny McCormick



Hibiki 21 year old

93 points, 43%, \$350

Deep layers of vanilla and mizunara oak with sugar sprinkled pastries, incense sticks, oiled wood, tatami, dried apricot, golden sultana, and faint smoky spiciness. Nectarous mouthfeel with honey, barley sugar, dried citrus, orange peel, and delicate spices, it continues to sweeten beautifully showing vanilla, sugared almonds, banana custard, with hints of ginger and gentle oak. Slightly gummy finish as the vanilla quenches little eruptions of wood spices.—Jonny McCormick



Peerless Single Barrel Straight (150812100)

93 points, 55.7%, \$124

The nose is filled with depth and spice, melding with blackberry and other cooked dark fruit notes. On the palate, rice pudding, vanilla cream, rich dark chocolate, and blueberry pie are laced with savory spice. The mouthfeel is smooth and creamy, with little hint of the high proof. It's even smoother with water, unlocking cinnamon spice, grape jam, and more chocolate. The finish is deep, jammy, and long, with loads of spice.—David Fleming



Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength

93 points, 60%, \$90

Sweet scents of Boston cream pie, citrus, and fresh forest, growing more fragrant as the liquid rests in the glass. On the palate, the citrus sweetens to baked orange tart and lemon meringue pie, with underpinnings of chocolate malt, raisins, and pepper spice. The mouthfeel is creamy and concentrated, and the finish is like a rich, full, spiced chocolate dessert. Water enhances things, bringing out more spice and chocolate.—David Fleming



Glenallachie 10 year old Rye Wood Finished

93 points, 48%, \$100

On the nose, there's roasted almond, fragrant butterscotch, toffee, lemon, and oak, plus vanilla, lemon meringue, sweet malt, and a hint of melon. The palate has notes of vanilla cake, pleasant soapiness, sweet tea, rich chocolate, a hint of coconut, and alluring flavors of blueberry cobbler and raspberry tart. The finish is long, lively, and beautifully punctuated with fruit notes, dark chocolate, and a parting song of oak. Loaded with great, well-integrated flavors.—David Fleming



Glenfiddich 21 year old Reserva Rum Cask Finish
93 points, 40%, \$210

Rich, sweet, and fruity with baked apples drizzled in honey, crisp white pear, honeysuckle, dried banana, vanilla fudge, and pecan pie. This works so well with the nascent Glenfiddich spirit; lime zest, vanilla, foamy meringue, honey blossom sweetness, and pepper transitioning to lime shred marmalade, soft oak, and a dry spicy finish. Vibrant, stimulating, sophisticated, and so well balanced that it never risks becoming overly sweet.—Jonny McCormick

GlenDronach unveils 50YO whisky

19 JANUARY 2022 By Alice Brooker

The GlenDronach Distillery has released 198 bottles of its oldest and rarest whisky to date, retailing for £20,000 (US\$27,238) each.



The 50-year-old Scotch whisky was distilled in 1971

The Scotland-based distillery has rolled out its GlenDronach Aged 50 Years on a limited basis, with fewer than 200 bottles available worldwide. Distilled in 1971, the whisky is GlenDronach's first 50-year-old single malt.

Master blender Rachel Barrie said: "The GlenDronach Aged 50 Years is the most prestigious expression of what this timeless, richly-Sherried Highland single malt Scotch whisky has to offer.

"At 50 years old, it is exceptionally rich and seductive, with mellow layers of alluring complexity.

"It has been a privilege to be the final custodian of our oldest expression to date, passed down through generations. The result is a hand-crafted Highland single malt that tells a story of rare dedication, of which the GlenDronach Aged 50 Years is the rarest of them all."

The liquid was matured in Pedro Ximénez and oloroso Sherry casks from the Spanish bodegas of Jerez in Andalucía, then married in a single Pedro Ximénez cask.

The 43% ABV whisky offers aromas of dark cherry and plum with a plume of tobacco on the nose. On the palate, the liquid delivers flavours of dark chocolate, black cherry and espresso.

Presented in a leather case, GlenDronach Aged 50 Years is packaged with a leather booklet detailing the distillery's history and craft.

The first bottle of GlenDronach Aged 50 Years, labelled number one, was donated to an auction in December 2021, and raised £40,000 (US\$54,489) to support disadvantaged young people in Scotland.

Each hand-numbered bottle can now be picked up from select specialist retailers worldwide.

In 2020, the distillery created the [Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage Scotch whisky](#) to mark the release of The King's Man.



Rachel Barrie, the distillery's master blender, personally selected the casks to be used for the new release and oversaw a final maturation in a single Pedro Ximénez cask before bottling.

Ardbeg launches 13-year-old whisky

21 JANUARY 2022 By Alice Brooker

Islay distillery Ardbeg has bottled a 13-year-old whisky made using the longest fermentation in the producer's history.



The bottling can be picked up for RRP £150 (US\$203)

The limited edition bottling will launch on 1 February, and has been fermented for three weeks due to an 'unplanned experiment'.

Dr Bill Lumsden, Ardbeg's director of distilling and whisky creation, said: "I've always wanted to experiment with longer fermentations, so I think an unintentional boiler breakdown was the best thing that could have happened." In 2007, after the distillery failed to fix a broken boiler, Lumsden instructed the team throw open the washback lids and expose the liquid to Islay air. As a result, a three-week fermentation began, said to be the longest in the whisky producer's history.

Lumsden added: "For context, most Ardbeg is only fermented for 72 hours, making three weeks uncharted territory for us.

"The outcome is a dram that tastes like pure science fiction. Peat and smoke meld beautifully with fresh, floral flavours, while sharp, more malty notes give Ardbeg Fermutation a uniquely zingy profile."

Ardbeg Fermutation is described as a 'wild, zingy and vibrant' whisky, and is available to members of The Ardbeg Committee for RRP £150 (US\$203).

Colin Gordon, Ardbeg's distillery manager, said: "Blind luck is sometimes just part of the way we do things here at Ardbeg. But the creation of Fermutation wasn't simply good fortune. Quick thinking, ingenuity and a little assistance from tiny beings in the atmosphere helped us get here.

"At 13 years old, this is of course an aged Ardbeg – something I'm sure our fans will be delighted to get their hands on."

In October last year, the brand unveiled its [Monster Ice Scream Truck Tour](#), which travelled to three UK cities over Halloween.

mixing tower (which looks like a Mies van der Rohe has landed on the banks of the Dornoch Firth). Then, just 25 minutes from the distillery, Glenmorangie House, a place formerly dedicated to 'corporate entertainment' – that dismal word – has had a 360 degree makeover. It was, until very recently, a relatively nondescript but perfectly sweet old Scottish house; tartan rugs, comfortable furniture et al. Nothing to write home about aside from its superb location on the water's edge in the royal burgh of Tain, deep in the Highlands.

MOST POPULAR



ONE OF THE INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNED BEDROOMS, NECTAR

Sim Canetty-Clarke

But only the best will do for LVMH, and as if by royal appointment, Russell Sage, the interior designer du jour fresh from his triumph at the Fife Arms (with its taxidermied stag leaping into the sky with ptarmigan's wings), was commissioned to work his magic. The brief was comparable, in that Glenmorangie was after a healthy dose of pizzazz – 'a visual retelling of the Glenmorangie story' – but with taxidermy strictly off limits. There are times, as we are being shown round by Sage, that Glenmorangie's brand manager – an easygoing Scot called Stuart – can hardly believe what he's agreed to. He blinks into the test-tube adorned chandelier (in tribute to the relentless innovation behind Glenmorangie's malts) and the painted toucans, baboons and a Henri Rousseau-esque tiger that grace a bedroom wall (in reference to Reserve, a tropical Glenmorangie blend).

<https://www.tatler.com/article/glenmorangie-house-scotland-hotel-review-russell-sage-design>

You know when you've been Russell Sage'd: Glenmorangie House is back and zanier than ever

Whisky lovers rejoice, Glenmorangie House has been given the Fife Arms treatment, and it looks and tastes magnificent

By [Annabel Sampson](#)

7 January 2022



THE MORNING ROOM

Sim Canetty-Clarke

To enter the golden morning room of Glenmorangie House, is to submerge into a Gustav Klimt painting. Neck-deep in life's shimmering excesses – both wall and ceiling are clad in bespoke Fromental wallpaper, not dissimilar to the gilded mosaics in the Fitzrovia Chapel. And yet, quite incongruously, we're in the rural Highlands of Scotland – and that's what happens when a 17th century Scottish house gets the Russell Sage treatment (and is bought by Monsieur Arnault of the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy empire).

The LVMH takeover of Glenmorangie, the beloved single malt Scotch whisky, took place in 2004, when it joined their roster of premium champagnes – and the investments haven't stopped flowing since. The director of distilling and whisky creation, Dr Bill Lumsden, known as the 'Willy Wonka of Whisky' – thanks to his his zany formulations like 'Cake' and 'Tale of Winter' – now has his own glass



DESIGN DETAILS FROM MARRIAGE COTTAGE, INSPIRED BY GLENMORANGIE'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO 'MARRYING FLAVOURS'

Sim Canetty-Clarke

He needn't worry, it is thoroughly, deliriously, gloriously fun. Although, I suppose, the ultimate test would be what Billy Joel makes of it – after all, he visited Glenmorangie House in its previous incarnation. It was where he stayed in 2000, for the wedding of Madonna and Guy Ritchie at nearby Skibo Castle, the private members' club favoured by Americans with deep pockets. If the design brief was to bring the spirit of the whisky – favoured by Brigitte Bardot, who with her husband Gunter Sachs ordered 36 cases to be sent back to the continent after a trip to Scotland for filming – to life in the house, they have delivered and then some. The glowing morning room evokes the sense of being in a barley field (one of whisky's three key ingredients), helped by the actual barley seed art that protrudes from the mantelpiece beneath a Sage sourced golden Art Deco mirror. The walls are practically garlanded with handpainted flowers, bumble bees and butterflies next to a traditional barley dolly handmade by a local Aberdeenshire straw maker, Elaine Lindsay.



DESIGN DETAILS FROM THE MORNING ROOM

Sim Canetty-Clarke



DINING ROOM AT GLENMORANGIE HOUSE

Sim Canetty-Clarke

Next, the dining room is created to reflect the extreme heat of Glenmorangie's copper stills with burning red walls with molten orb-like light fittings which look straight out of Mordor. Bedrooms like Wild Wood, which I was pleasingly allocated, bring to life the flavours of the different concoctions (in this case, the Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban's 'forest of flavours') with a deep green velvet chaise longue, William Morris acanthus wallpaper and a René Magritte-like painting (by Scottish artist Louis McNally) of a forest. A meta view from my wood into a fictitious other. A fellow journalist was immersed in a Nectar-themed boudoir (taking its cue from the Nectar D'Or, a whisky wonderfully reminiscent of a French patisserie) and their room was adorned with pseudo-knitted cakes.

Best of all, the extremely likeable Russell Sage – who in another life was a successful fashion designer, appearing on the international Fashion Week circuit and who was once name-dropped as a favourite of Kate Moss – has kept things inherently local when it comes to his craftspeople (who span weavers to glassblowers and beyond).



TIPI TASTING TENT IN THE GARDENS

Sim Canetty-Clarke

And all I've talked about is the design. But, equally, the food was nothing short of sensational – and all dreamt up to be paired with whisky. To bring out all those notes and flavours of honey, coconut and Seville orange. You might have gone to Glenmorangie House prior to the revamp and enjoyed a traditional Old Fashioned – but these days you'd be better off reclining in Sage splendour with a Long Zest. A whisky cocktail that would satiate any weak-nosed, less hardy gin lover. Or a ginger lemon sour, the zestiest of whisky cocktails, ideally paired with the Signet – or 'signature' – dessert, a roasted pudding with flavours of coffee, baked apricots, rich dark chocolate and a hint of caramel. With local fare being as good as it is in Scotland's Highlands, the likes of North Sea halibut, partridge and Highland venison were all thoughtfully woven into the menu in clever and delicious ways.



ONE OF THE INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNED BEDROOMS, RESERVE

Sim Canetty-Clarke

The odds are you won't want to venture away from the whisky haven (with its raucously fun communal dining set-up with the whisky-fuelled, bagpipe-infused evenings), but leave you must; to go foraging in 'nature's larder', meet the Glenmorangie bees, explore the Moray Firth coastline, dabble in falconry and bask beneath the Highlands' night skies on an evening of crystal clear stargazing. Then there's the trip to the Glenmorangie distillery, to see the famous giraffe-height stills – and do a tasting (ask for Annette Mackenzie, who has worked at the distillery for very many years and is fun incarnate). Trust me, you won't regret a trip to Glenmorangie (pronounced 'orange', like its colour, and not 'angie'), it's brilliant.



VIEWS OF THE NORTH SEA

Sim Canetty-Clarke

Doubles from £340 including breakfast and dinner; 'Whisky Weekend' package from £1,100 for two nights. Fearn by Tain, Tain, Easter Ross IV20 1XP (01862 871671; theglenmorangiehouse.com).

This Coveted Highland Park 50 Year Old Will Lead Bonhams' Upcoming Whisky Auction

The sought-after scotch is expected to fetch up to \$32,000.

By [RACHEL CORMACK](#)



Bonhams

Bonhams is kicking off the new year by offering a coveted tippie. The auction house's first [whisky sale](#) of 2022 will be led by a [Highland Park 50 year old](#) that is expected to fetch up to \$32,000. The sale, which will take place in Hong Kong on January 21, will comprise some 470 lots in a bid to meet the growing demand for top-shelf expressions. "Our newly added January sale is a response to a robust and growing market," Daniel Lam, director of wine and spirits at Bonhams Asia, said in a statement. "Demand for whiskies, not only Japanese but also [Scotch](#), remains strong and wide, and our January sale offers a wide selection of collectors' favorites—all with attractive estimates."



Highland Park 50 year old. Bonhams

The [Highland Park](#) is the clear star of the sale. Released in 2020, it marks the third 50 year old created by Scotland's northernmost distillery in its 223-year history. There were only 274 bottles ever produced and this happens to be the first (hence it's numbered "1"). The expression was made using a traditional solera in which different aged batches are married together to create a new old [whisky](#). In this case, nine casks that were originally laid down in 1968 were blended together in 2008 and then re-racked into sherry seasoned oak casks. After 12 years quietly maturing, one of the casks was carefully mixed with some of the last 50 year old released by the distillery. The end result is a complex drop with rich sherried flavors of dried fruit and sweet toffee.



Macallan Liqueur Steam Train 1937. Bonhams

This prized bottle, which is signed by Highland Park's master whisky maker Gordon Motion, comes in an ornate wooden box handmade by Scottish craftsman John Galvin. To top it off, the sale proceeds from the lot will go toward Green Power. This NGO aims to address the environmental issues facing Hong Kong.



Macallan Fine & Rare 1946. Bonhams

Naturally, the auction also includes a healthy dose of [Macallan](#). Namely, a [36 year old](#) that celebrates the golden age of rail travel (high estimate: \$77,000) and a [56 year old](#) from the lauded Fine & Rare collection (high estimate: \$58,000). Choosing which bottle to bid on might be your most difficult decision.

GlenWyvis' Inaugural Single Malt First Whisky Made In Dingwall In A Century
[Gary Carter - Scotch](#) | December 24, 2021

Scotland's community-owned GlenWyvis Distillery recently launched its first-ever Scotch single malt whisky.

A total of 3,600 individually numbered bottles of the three-year-old GlenWyvis Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky have been allocated to GlenWyvis Distillery shareholders, those whose investment enabled the build and development of the distillery.

A further 2,000 bottles were available to pre-order in October of 2020 and sold out almost immediately. Another 200 bottles are now available at selected local retailers and on-trade premises throughout Scotland.



the three-year-old GlenWyvis Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky (image via GlenWyvis) Made from a batch of 18 casks, including 15 first fill ex-Tennessee whiskey (80%), two first-fill ex-Moscatel (15%) and one refill Hogshead (5%), the grain-forward whisky showcases the unique fruitiness of extra-long fermentation. The whisky is 50% ABV, non-chill filtered, with no coloring added. The distiller's notes show the nose of the whisky to be light and floral with a hint of malty sweetness. The palate brings a burst of stone-fruit, giving way to brown sugar, with a finish of lingering vanilla balanced with ripe orchard fruit. GlenWyvis Highland Single Malt Scotch is the first whisky to be produced in Dingwall in nearly a hundred years, with the last whisky distillery, Ben Wyvis, closing its doors in 1926.

Matthew Farmer, distillery manager at GlenWyvis Distillery, said [in a prepared statement](#) their journey over the past few years and the creation of GlenWyvis

Distillery is in part to the many shareholders, “so it is only fitting that they will be among the first to try our first whisky. The 2018 distillation of 18 casks has produced a delicious, young whisky that brings you so close to the grain – this is the first step, and it is pure GlenWyvis.”

Board Chairman David Graham said that present and past directors will join him in expressing pride and admiration for the dedicated GlenWyvis team on reaching the significant milestone of producing Dingwall’s first whisky in almost 100 years.

“Our small team has worked with passion to produce a fantastic product for all our shareholders and customers, and I look forward to raising a dram to each and every one of them and to the future of GlenWyvis Distillery,” he said.

The design of the GlenWyvis Whisky bottles is inspired by the local area, each bottle’s contour lines making a map of Ben Wyvis, the mountain that is the backdrop to the distillery. The bottle also features birds, Red Kites, a bird of prey with a forked tail often seen around the distillery and the surrounding area. In addition, the bottle is finished with a natural cork stopper and all of its packaging is recyclable.

Nestled beneath the mass of Ben Wyvis in the Scottish Highlands, GlenWyvis Distillery was established in 2015. The idea was to unite the community of Dingwall through the creation of a distillery principally owned by local people. More than 3,000 like-minded people invested in GlenWyvis to create the 100-percent, community-owned distillery.

BOOZE | DECEMBER 10, 2021 12:46 PM

The Big Winners and Biggest Surprises from Whisky Advocate’s Yearly Top 20 List

Lagavulin’s association with Nick Offerman proves fruitful. Plus, a rare Swedish entry.



Nick Offerman showing off Lagavulin Offerman Edition: Guinness Cask Finish Screenshot/YouTube

BY [KIRK MILLER](#)

Nick Offerman’s love of whisky has paid off. A Lagavulin bearing the actor’s name topped the annual [Whisky Advocate Top 20 Whiskies list](#), released on Friday.

Lagavulin 11 Year Old Offerman Edition: Guinness Cask Finish is the second release from the Islay distillery to be inspired by the actor and comedian’s love of single malt Scotch. The 11 year-old whisky spends four months finishing in Guinness casks, resulting in an expression where “peat smoke and maritime salinity become wrapped in the freshness of fragrant citrus, melding with honeyed vanilla and white chocolate,” as the magazine suggests.

Some other interesting takeaways from the rankings:

- The highest American whiskey to make the list was a limited-edition Maker’s Mark Wood Finishing Series 2021 Release: FAE-01, which came in at number two (interestingly, [we were a bit more partial](#) to two other releases in the Wood Finishing Series).
- At number three was a modern rarity: A peaty Irish whiskey called Blackpitts, via Teeling.
- The recent move by Jack Daniels to release an [age-statement whiskey](#) paid off, as the Tennessee distillery’s just-launched 10 Year release came in at number four.
- Biggest surprise? A Swedish whisky, High Coast Hav, cracked the top 10. Overall, the list did a nice job of staying global, also featuring expressions from Japan and India.

- And, in the “oh, wow, never heard of that and now I’m intrigued” category, Texas’s Andalusia Stryker came in at no. 20. It’s an American single malt “bathed in oak, applewood, and mesquite smoke.”



The first age statement release from Jack Daniel’s since Prohibition landed in Whisky Advocate’s top 5 Jack Daniel’s

As the publication notes, “To determine our Top 20, we begin by looking only at whiskies that rated ‘outstanding’ (90 points or higher on Whisky Advocate’s 100-point scale). However, the Top 20 is not simply a collection of our highest-rated whiskies, because many of those are so limited they would be impossible for most readers to locate or purchase. Therefore, in addition to quality (based on score), our selection also prioritizes value (based on price) and availability.” As well, the whiskies undergo a blind tasting by a panel of international reviewers.



The Bespoke Balvenie Boot is a Dream Gift Worth Waiting For

[JACOB OSBORN](#), 16 DEC 2021 | NEWS

When you think of celebrated whisky maker The Balvenie, you might not exactly picture premium footwear for [men](#) and [women](#). Thanks to a recent collaboration, however, that’s all about to change. Crafted by Stefanie Schöninger—the driving force behind bespoke bootmaker Atelier Stefani—[The Balvenie Boot](#) is quite simply a masterpiece of material and design. It’s currently available for pre-order and will arrive starting in March 2022. We’d tell you it makes for the perfect gift, but you knew as much as soon as you laid eyes on it.

[The Balvenie Boot](#) comes to us as part of [The Makers Project](#), whereby 5 Australian creators created a product inspired by the iconic distillery. Working directly alongside Ross Blainey, The Balvenie brand ambassador, Atelier Stefani drew inspiration from both the wearer’s personal journey and the whisky maker’s enduring culture. What ultimately unifies these respective entities is the tireless pursuit of perfection and the palpable human element, which informs literally everything they do.



Atelier Stefani knocked this one out of the park and managed to tell a story in the process. It's a tale of pure mastery through the tradition of time plus experience, so that the owner may enjoy life to the fullest extent. But you don't need a backstory to appreciate the signature quality and artisanal allure of this luxurious footwear. Those who love their leather, in particular, might find themselves unconsciously drooling a little. Don't worry—we did the very same thing!

Whether you know someone with a passion for premium whisky or a spectacular sense of style (or both), [The Balvenie Boot](#) will bolster their spirit and their wardrobe alike. Available in limited quantities, it can be shipped internationally with an estimated production time of 12 weeks. Pre-order your pair now and you'll receive the complimentary gift of an exclusive handmade Atelier Stefani cardholder, created using the same leather that constructed these very boots.



The Balvenie Boot – Men

A work of art in footwear form, [The Balvenie Boot for Men](#) is forged inside and out from the finest Italian leathers. The upper consists of Italian bison leather with a natural deep grain, which will only take on more character and a richer patina over time. Call it a subtle nod to The Balvenie's legendary single malts, each one of which similarly imparts dynamic character on its way to the bottle and beyond.

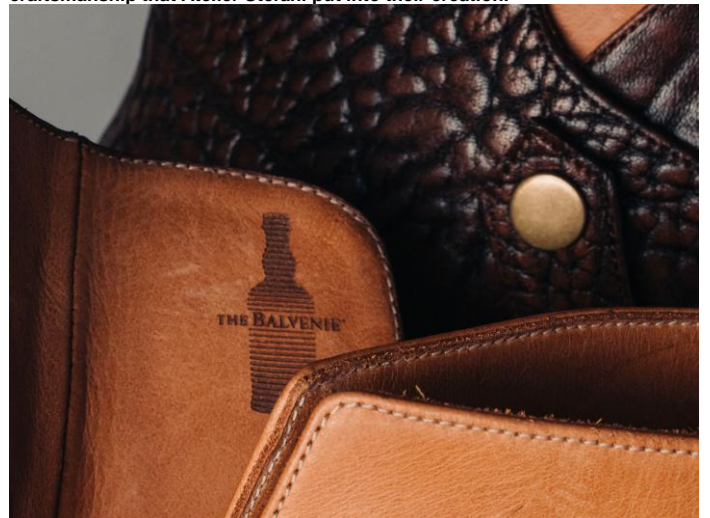
In addition to the special hides of the leather uppers—which were vegetable-tanned using the most sustainable production techniques—the boot features a vegetable-tanned leather insole, Italian calf leather lining, and raw leather sole. Stacked leather meets a rubber top at the 2.5 cm heel with hand-engraved details, rounding out the boot's exquisite combination of signature aesthetic and lasting durability.



The Balvenie Boot – Women

Another symphony of leather perhaps, but [The Balvenie Boot for Women](#) definitely strikes its own unique chord. It enraptures the eye and foot alike by way of its ultra-stylish upper, crafted from fine-grained soft burgundy bison leather, with fish leather accents on one side. Famously rare, the fish leather was sourced specially from Canada and it represents The Balvenie's ongoing love for adventure.

Move beyond the luxurious upper to discover a plush insole, sole, heel counter, and toe puff of vegetable-tanned leather. The lining is Italian calf leather whilst the heel combines stacked leather with a rubber top. Put it all together and you have an instant classic, the kind of which is ready for experiences of every variety. We cannot overstate the amount of care and craftsmanship that Atelier Stefani put into their creation.



It takes over 80 hours to bring The Balvenie Boot to life and it shows. Dressed in luxurious leather, each pair practically bursts through the screen. Just imagine how it will look and feel in person. Pre-order now and you'll receive an exclusive handmade Atelier Stefani cardholder, which was crafted from the same leather used to make these very boots and comes joined by a letter of authenticity. International shipping is available and orders are expected to arrive starting in March 2022. Here's to great whisky and great footwear and the tradition of mastery itself. Here's to The Balvenie Boot.



GlenWyvis launches first single malt whisky

GlenWyvis Distillery in Scotland has launched its first whisky. The 100 per cent community-owned distillery has released its three-year-old GlenWyvis Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky, which the team says is a "pure" expression of distillery character. Some 3,600 individually numbered bottles were allocated to [GlenWyvis Distillery](#) shareholders, by way of thanks for their investment and support. A further 2,000 bottles were available to pre-order in October 2020 and sold out in a matter of minutes. For those who missed out on the pre-sale, 200 bottles will also be available at selected local retailers and on-trade premises across Scotland. The grain-forward single malt whisky was made from a batch of 18 casks: 15 first-fill ex-Tennessee whiskey, two first-fill ex-Moscato and a refill hogshead. GlenWyvis says the whisky - which is bottled at 50% ABV and non-chill filtered - has distinctive fruity notes from its long fermentation time. While the distillery is remarkable for its community-owned structure, GlenWyvis' inaugural release holds its own accolade: it is the first whisky to be produced in Dingwall in almost 100 years, since the Ben Wyvis distillery closed its doors in 1926. GlenWyvis distillery manager Matthew Farmer said: "We are so excited to be launching GlenWyvis Distillery's first whisky. Our journey over the past few years and the creation of GlenWyvis Distillery is thanks to our many shareholders, so it is only fitting that they will be among the first to try our first whisky. "The 2018 distillation of 18 casks has produced a delicious whisky. Young whisky brings you so close to the grain - this is the first step, and it is pure GlenWyvis." David Graham, board chairman, added: "Present and past directors will join me in expressing real pride and admiration for the dedicated GlenWyvis team on reaching this significant milestone and producing Dingwall's first whisky in almost 100 years."

10 December 2021 - Bethany Whymark

Ardgowan reveals green distillery design

23 DECEMBER 2021 By Nicola Carruthers

Scottish producer Ardgowan has submitted a new planning application for its whisky distillery and visitor centre, featuring a sustainable Nordic design.



The Ardgowan Distillery will feature a Nordic long hall design. The whisky maker first [gained planning permission](#) to build a distillery and visitor centre on the Ardgowan Estate near Inverkip in 2017. Ardgowan then [revealed a revised design in 2018](#), which received planning approval the following year. The project was delayed due to Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the producer has now presented another new design for the distillery, with an updated plan submitted to Inverclyde Council. Ardgowan expects to receive a decision on the application in early 2022, with construction due to commence next year. The company hopes that the distillery will be operational in 2023. The new design for the distillery uses low environmental impact composite cladding, timber and steel materials to create a 'modern' Nordic long hall. The site aims to be carbon negative, using the latest innovations in energy reduction, heat recovery and carbon capture in partnership with specialist distillery engineers Briggs of Burton. In summer 2021, Ardgowan [received £8.4 million \(US\\$11.4m\) from Austrian investor Roland Grain](#), and up to [£5m \(US\\$7m\) from UK-based spirits producer Distil](#), to begin construction on the new distillery. Ardgowan will use an estimated £400,000 (US\$555,422) to build a permanent home for Distil-owned Blackwoods Gin on the same site as its planned distillery. 'Cathedral to whisky' "My passion for whisky began as a teenager in Austria when I began to collect Scotch whisky, and my wish is for this project to create the highest possible quality whisky and a lasting connection to the community in Inverclyde," said Grain, who holds a 20% stake in Distil. "Central to this is our innovative building - designed by leading Austrian architects Spitzbart and Partners. This very modern Nordic long hall is pointing skyward, symbolising resurrection and our rise from the ashes of the former Ardgowan Distillery, which burned down in the Greenock Blitz in May 1941, and our ambition to become one of the top whiskies in the world. "I hope it will stand out as a 'cathedral to whisky' and put this corner of Inverclyde firmly on the tourist map. "Ardgowan Estate is less than an hour's drive from Glasgow and in 2019 Greenock welcomed more than 100,000 cruise ship visitors, so I believe there is a great opportunity to draw people here with a first-class food, drink and retail experience." Ardgowan Distillery CEO Martin McAdam expects the project to create up to more than 47 new jobs within five years. He said: "We have already made our first local hire - our production coordinator Matt Blair is from Greenock - and we will be advertising construction tenders early next year. "We have a very strong commitment to employing locally. Already we work with Gourock property specialists Bowman Rebecchi and Port Glasgow suppliers Scotcrest, and our ambition is to use local firms and employees as much as we can. "Our goal is to build a world-class whisky distillery and visitor centre which will attract tourists and bring economic and social benefits to Inverclyde."

Port, sherry, whisky - Christmas drinks are all about the wood
When alcohol is aged in oak barrels, magic happens. And the nights between Christmas and New Year are the best time to sit and sip



"The string of relaxed dark nights between Christmas and New Year seems to me the perfect time to sit and sip." Photograph: Olga Miltsova/Alamy
[David Williams](#) Fri 24 Dec 2021 12.00 GMT

Around about this time last year, a few sips into one of the drinks that are the subject of this column it occurred to me that the best Christmas nighttime drinking is all about wood. Most of the drinks I turn to as a calmer mood takes over from the jangly, tinselly brightness of Christmas Day have benefited from mastery of the mellowing effects of ageing alcohol, for various lengths of time, in oak barrels of various sizes. In Portugal's Douro valley, port producers perform an annual experiment, making two very different styles from the same sweet, red fortified wine. Vintage port will go into a bottle after a couple of years in oak vats, retaining its inky purple colour and dark fruit when sold. Tawny ports, by contrast, stay in vat for years longer, even for several decades in the case of the flurry of very rare collectors' tawnies that have emerged in recent years (such as the extraordinary, €895 a bottle 1934 Dalva I was lucky enough to try a small sample of recently). Advertisement

The effects of oxygenation are more advanced in porous barrels than they are in bottles, in which only a small amount of oxygen, passing through the cork, is in contact with the liquid. It's that process which brings the special cast of flavours to tawny ports: the nuts, the dried fruits, the treacle and caramel, and dark baking spices, as well as the colour that gives the style its name. Colheita ports are relatively rare; most tawny ports are blends of vats of differing ages with an average age statement rounded up to a decade (10-year-old, 20-year-old etc). These rely even more on the chef-like skill and librarian's memory of a master blender – the same abilities that bring magic to blended, oak-aged drinks such as whisky, rum, cognac and very old sherry. In all of those drinks the taste isn't only wood. Character and quality depends equally on the raw materials, the length of time they spend in wood and the way they interact with it: its flavours (American oak tends to deliver sweeter, more coconut flavours than the toastier aromas of French) and the oxygenating effects it allows.

The suave, golden harmony of great grape-borne cognac; the molasses-richness of dark rum; the peppery iodine-wildness of Islay whisky made from peaty malted barley; the salted nut savouriness of very old sherry ... the string of relaxed dark nights between Christmas and new year seems to me the perfect time to sit, sip and explore this world within a world.



Taste the Difference Oloroso Sherry (£8, 50cl, [Sainsbury's](#))

The range of sherry made for Sainsbury's by Lustau has long been one of the highlights of the Taste the Difference range. The oloroso has a touch of sweetness but is intensely flavoured with tangy dried citrus and nutty length and great with a slab of manchego.

Warre's Colheita Port 2009

(£17, [thewinesociety.com](#))

This superb-value colheita (a tawny port from a single harvest) from venerable port shipper Warre's has been bottled at a beautiful point on the continuum between ruby youth and tawny age. The result is all Christmassy dried dates and nuts, and a hint of brambly jam.

Villa de Varda Amaretto

(£26.95, [independent.wine](#))

Not a product of wood-ageing, but a drink that is very much of the woods, a sweet but gloriously complex amaretto that is very far from the mass market norm thanks to its high-definition capture of the scents and flavours of almonds foraged in the forests of Alpine Trentino.

Hine Rare VSOP Cognac

(from £43.90, [thewhiskyexchange.com](#); [waitrosecellar.com](#))

The flagship VSOP cognac from one of the region's grand old names, Hine's Rare gets its seductive silkiness and aromatic fineness from a combination of top-notch grapes from more than 20 of the region's best crus, plus an average of eight years' rest in French oak barrels.

Gosling's Family Reserve Old Rum

(£60, [Waitrose](#))

A molasses-based, 150-year-old family secret recipe is the base of this luxuriously rich old rum from Bermuda. The components have spent 16-19 years in charred oak barrels, and the result has a liquorice-toffee dark depth, a crackle of spice and a beguiling softness.

Laphroaig 10 Year Old Cask Strength Batch 012 Bottled 2020

(£89.95, [thewhiskyexchange.com](#))

The standard 10 Year Old Laphroaig (from £30) is one of my failsafe single malt choices, but this special cask strength bottling is another level of evocative wild Islay magic: an extra-concentrated version of the classic Laphroaig mix of heather-honeyed smoothness and smoke-and-sea-spray pungency.

Drink Like a Movie Star at One of These Film-Famous Bars

DECEMBER 20, 2021 | [JEFF MILLER](#)



Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Al Pacino in "Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood" at Musso & Frank Grill in Los Angeles. (Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.)

[Quentin Tarantino](#) spent five days shooting the film "Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood" at the Musso & Frank Grill, enlisting bartender Kenneth "Sonny Bones" Donato who shook up at least 15 of his famous Whiskey Sours. Musso's has been a favorite of the film industry ever since Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks raced to the bar on horseback, with the loser picking up the tab. But this Hollywood favorite is also popular with regular folk thirsty for a drink and a bit of cinematic nostalgia. Check out these other real-life bars that appear in famous movie scenes.

[L STREET TAVERN](#) IN BOSTON

As seen in: "Good Will Hunting" (1997)

Troubled mathematics genius Matt Damon introduces his new girlfriend Minnie Driver to his pals (including Ben Affleck) at this now-famous Irish bar which proudly boasts its connection to the Oscar-winning film.

Potable: Irish whiskey with a pint of Guinness

Quotable: "I got her number. How do you like them apples?"—Will (Matt Damon)

[MUSSO & FRANK GRILL](#) IN LOS ANGELES

As seen in: "Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood" (2019)

Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio) enjoys one of Sonny's Whiskey Sours while waiting to meet agent Marvin Schwarz (Al Pacino) at the famous Hollywood Boulevard watering hole.

Potable: Sonny's Whiskey Sour, which combines bourbon, lemon, simple syrup, sweet and sour mix, and egg whites in an ice-filled cocktail tin.

Quotable: "When you come to the end of the line, with a buddy who is more than a brother and a little less than a wife, getting blind drunk together is really the only way to say farewell."—Narrator (Kurt Russell)

[THE FORMOSA CAFÉ](#) IN LOS ANGELES

As seen in: "L.A. Confidential" (1997)

An iconic Hollywood establishment, the recently refurbished bar has appeared in numerous films, most notably this period noir where LAPD officer Ed Exley (Guy Pearce) mistakes Lana Turner for a lookalike prostitute.

Potable: Blood and Sand cocktail made with scotch, vermouth, cherry liqueur, and orange juice

Quotable: "I wouldn't trade places with Edmund Exley right now for all the whiskey in Ireland."—Captain Dudley Smith (James Cromwell)

[21 CLUB](#) IN NEW YORK CITY

As seen in: "Wall Street" (1987)

A former Prohibition speakeasy, this indefinitely shuttered formal bar and restaurant was where Charlie Sheen and mentor Michael Douglas shared a power lunch.

Potable: '21' Perfect Manhattan made with Maker's Mark bourbon or Bulleit rye and sweet and dry vermouth

Quotable: "Greed, for lack of a better word, is good."—Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas)

[MAXIM'S DE PARIS](#) IN PARIS

As seen in: "Midnight in Paris" (2011)

This world-famous, art nouveau-styled bistro dates to 1893. In Woody Allen's time-travel comedy, modern writer Owen Wilson visits Maxim's in the 1920s with his new love, Marion Cotillard, and meets notable celebrities from that era.

Potable: Maxim's de Paris Pure Malt Scotch

Quotable: "That Paris exists and anyone could choose to live anywhere else in the world will always be a mystery to me."—Adriana (Marion Cotillard)

[NEW YORK BAR](#) IN TOKYO

As seen in: "Lost in Translation" (2003)

Located on the 52nd floor of Tokyo's Park Hyatt Hotel, this elegant bar was featured in Sofia Coppola's drama about a world-weary actor (Bill Murray) who befriends bored newlywed Scarlett Johansson while filming a Suntory commercial. Sofia's inspiration came from her father, Francis Ford Coppola, who once starred in a Suntory ad for filmmaker Akira Kurosawa.

Potable: Hibiki 17 year old

Quotable: "For relaxing times, make it Suntory time."—Bob Harris (Bill Murray)

MASTER OF MALT BLOG

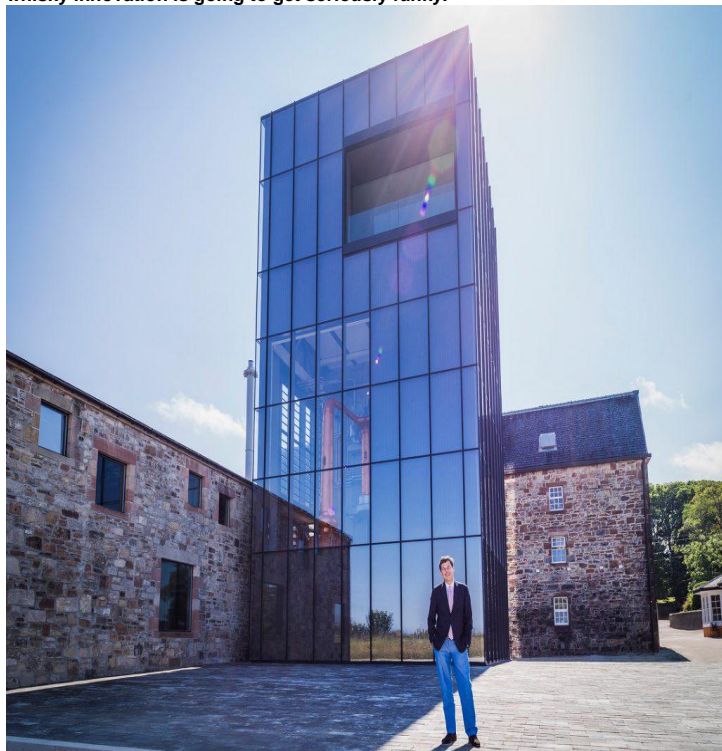
Inside the Lighthouse, Glenmorangie's innovation hub

ADAM O'CONNELL - SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 12:55 PM

"Come with me, and you'll be, in a world of pure imagination..." Whisky's Willy Wonka has a new factory of fun to create the drams of the future and we got a chance to see it before the experiments begin. Here's what to expect from [Glenmorangie's](#) new distillery: The Lighthouse! Dr Bill Lumsden's first-ever sip of whisky was [Glenmorangie 10 Year Old](#) in 1984 at a party on Marchmont Road, Edinburgh, while [Let's Hear it For The Boys](#) played on the radio. Since then, he has spent almost four decades in whisky innovating and creating exceptional drams like the [world's first made with high-roast chocolate malt](#), exploring the benefit of [various cask styles](#) and even sending the odd tippie into the [final frontier](#). You can see where the Willy Wonka comparisons come from.

This week we got a first-hand glimpse at how Lumsden's experimental days are far from behind him as Glenmorangie invited us to visit its new on-site innovation distillery called The Lighthouse. A spectacular multi-million-pound creation, the new landmark on the site where Glenmorangie has been creating its single malt since 1843 stands tall like an actual lighthouse, a 20m-high beacon in its rural highland home that promises to give Lumsden and co. true flexibility at all stages of whisky-making.

Designed by Barthélemy Griño, known for creating premises for Berluti, Dior, and Louis Vuitton, those who attended from the luxury magazines will appreciate all the reclaimed stone and slate, the stunning views and the wood aluminium hybrid cladding made with wood from bourbon and sherry casks that sits behind the Lighthouse's glass façade. But this is MoM, so we were there to get our geek on. Because Lumsden tells us this is where Scotch whisky innovation is going to get seriously funky.



Dr. Bill in front of his new pride and joy

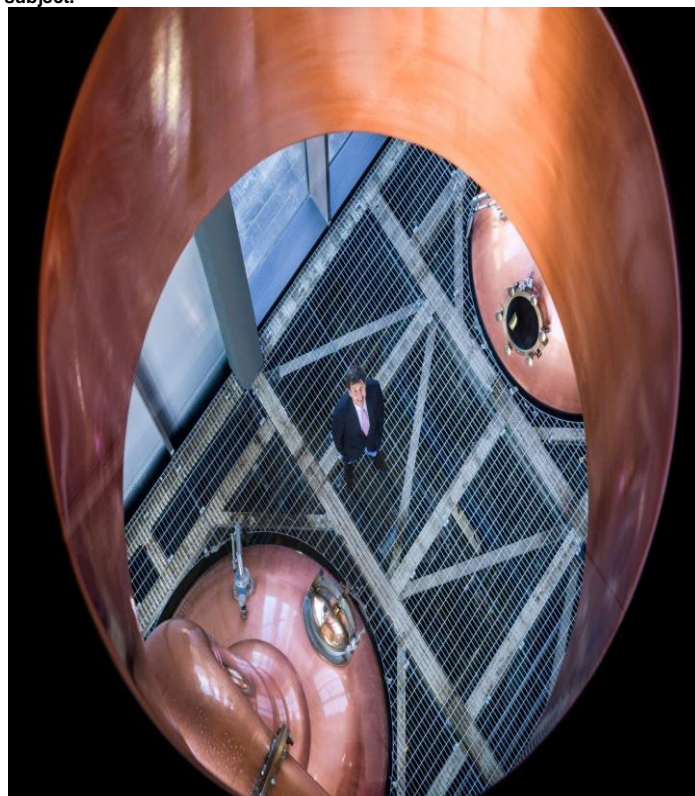
Inside the Lighthouse

"The ambition is to look at every aspect of primary production. Experimentation in terms of maturation is well established, as is Glenmorangie's reputation for it. But dabbling in primary production isn't easy when you've got your main distillery set up and running smoothly. So, you name it: raw materials, malting, milling, mashing, fermentation, and all sorts of things with distillation. There's nothing on or off the table," says Lumsden. He will spend a week of every month here doing things that were never possible before because the old distillery was too busy or lacked the required equipment.

As our tour demonstrated, that's very much not the case anymore. Beginning on the bottom floor, a [Briggs of Burton](#)-designed malt intake and mill can process array of cereals, so for the first time in Glenmorangie's history, you can expect whisky made from things other than malted barley. Wheat, maize and oats are all tipped, as is spirit from things that aren't cereals at all... On the next floor, the two mash tuns capable of processing one-and-a-half to two tonnes of mash (compared with 12 in the main distillery) can create different clarities of wort, from crystal clear to cloudy.

A cereal cooker is fixed to each, a piece of equipment that Lumsden says he "hasn't used in anger in many years" which breaks down the husk of grains to get to the starch. This is useful because in Scotch you can't add chemical enzymes (or jungle juice as Lumsden calls it) and if you're using non-malted barley, for example, there are no naturally occurring enzymes to break things

down for you. Two temperature-controlled fermentation vessels, common in brewing but not in Scotch, meanwhile, give Lumsden control in his specialist subject.



What does the future hold? Bold, original and distinctive drams are surely on the way

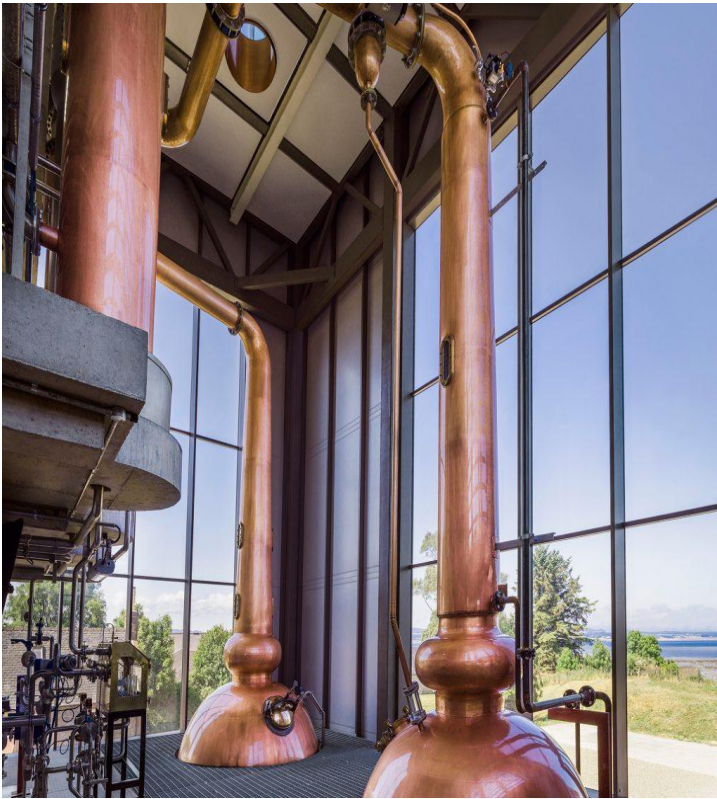
The possibilities are endless...

Armed with a PhD in biochemistry, the workings of yeast and fermentation is very much his bag, baby, and he laments the fact that in Scotch whisky, fermentation is typically a two or three-day process that's very vigorous and violent. "There's got to be a reason why our colleagues in the wine industry allow fermentations to run for two weeks, or beer for five or six days," Lumsden explains. "I'm deeply intrigued by how those two industries focus on the flavour from primary production, whereas in Scotch we rely a lot more on maturation to drive the shape of our products".

Lengthy fermentations are to be expected then, as are different yeasts.

According to Lumsden these are "magical microorganism" which are sadly just treated like a commodity. "When I first joined DCL (now Diageo), I was aghast that they were just emptying bags of yeast into water. You never do that as a yeast physiologist! It's simply used to reach an end, but there's so many different avenues you can go down. I know others like my old friends at Diageo have tried things, but a lot of experimentation in the industry is never really published".

From outside, the glass tower offers a glimpse at the two gleaming Forsyth's copper stills, modelled on the 12 giraffe-high stills in the main stillhouse, and they're even more impressive up close. While the wash still is fairly conventional, the spirit still (or "the little beauty" as Lumsden calls it) is full of additional modifications. A glass man door allows the distillers to see what's being distilled, while an optional purifier like the one at Ardbeg is there to recycle vapours and increase reflux.

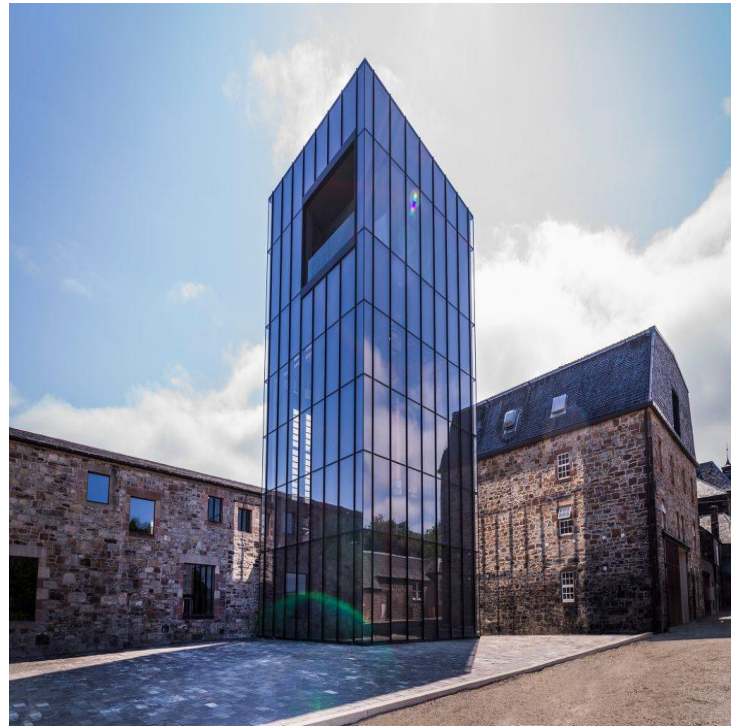


These might look like regular stills, but they're anything but
Worth the wait

Look up at the lyne arm and you'll see it splits to go into either a standard copper condenser (to create the lighter, elegant signature style) or a stainless steel condenser designed to mimic the effect of a worm tub, exposing the vapours to less copper to create meatier, more full-bodied whisky like Ardbeg. The neck of the still is covered with temperature-controlled cooling jackets, which metaphorically double the height of the still to allow the vapours to condense and reflux. "Many of these bells and whistles exist in other distilleries, but this is the only place where they ALL exist," Lumsden says, beaming with pride.

On the fourth and top floor, our tour concludes with the Sensory Laboratory, a space in which the team will be able to study raw spirit and assess their experiments after every six-hour spirit run. It's not finished yet, but soon it will be complete with a tasting room, while a terrace offering truly spectacular views of the neighbouring Dornoch Firth. Although Lumsden does add he would have been happy with a shed, it's hard not to think that such a vibrant space won't be inspiring.

He has had to wait to play with his new toys, as the launch has been postponed since April 2020 due to COVID. This delay has the benefit of giving him the time to plan, however, and Lumsden knows the dozen or so things he's going to do when things kick off properly next month. Which includes the freedom and capacity to bottle things that aren't Scotch whisky, which might not even be presented as Glenmorangie. "The first thing will be to make a normal spirit, and then after that I will never make a normal spirit again here," Lumsden says.

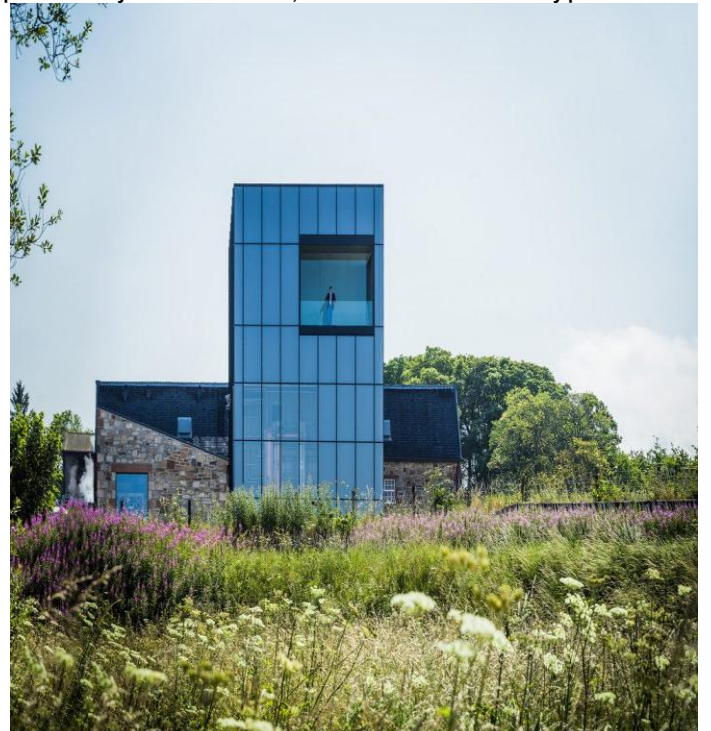


The Lighthouse

Nothing holds them back

Glenmorangie fans need not fear, however, as the whisky maker stresses that this will not distract him from the core whisky that makes the distillery what it is. "People don't realise that at least 50% of my working time and effort goes into maintaining the quality and integrity of our core offerings. It just doesn't generate press coverage. If we don't have that foundation we don't have anything else. Innovation is the cherry on top of the icing on top of the case". Lumsden is also a supporter of the current Scotch whisky regulations, saying they are "stifling in a good way" and that they make you take a step back and be really creative. "I wouldn't want the regulations to be loosened again. When they were last changed, my question was 'why would you want to use a Tequila cask anyway? Is it going to give you a good flavour?' It's easy to lose sight of that fact. I won't sit down and think about using a wild yeast, I think about what product I want to create and then work back from that".

The maverick malt master also goes out of his way to credit the LVMH group for backing his visions, saying that many of its brands are run as if they are independent, which is also true of its modest but mighty Scotch portfolio: Glenmorangie and Ardbeg. "We're very much left to our own devices, which allows us to be nimble and experiment with ease," he explains. "A lot of things I've worked on I never told anyone what I was doing until I thought there was a product ready to be talked about, which I could never do in any previous role."



We can't wait to see what's to come
The whisky of the future

While the Lighthouse part of the distillery won't be open to the general public day-to-day, there will be a special limited edition 'Lighthouse' whisky release available to purchase from the distillery to mark the occasion. Limited to 4,782 bottles, the 12-year-old malt has been aged in the very same bourbon and sherry casks that are now embedded in the Lighthouse distillery's walls. In addition to this, Glenmorangie House, the brand home in the Highlands, has undergone a large renovation and now looks completely and brilliantly bonkers.

It's all part of an approach to rebrand Glenmorangie as a vibrant producer, welcoming a world of colour and innovation to take on the difficult, dark, masculine and often closed-off world of whisky and the "sea of sameness", as Lumsden puts it. Even the packaging is currently being reviewed. What we can expect from the Lighthouse is truly exciting. The brand promises new ways to make whisky, new ways to drink it and everything in between. The fourth-biggest single malt in the world doesn't need to rock the boat and, at 61, Lumsden is aware he won't even see some of the products he creates. But the ambition is here to embrace modernity, and creative, original and category-defying booze lies in the distance. The future of Scotch is bright. And The Lighthouse promises to be one of its leading lights.

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT DRAM ON ISLAY



Updated: 8/1/20 | August 1st, 2020

Whisky and I got off to a rocky start. The first time I tried it was in college. It tasted like rocket fuel. I only drank it when I had no other options — and drowned what little I poured into my glass under a ton of Coke.

Then I met my friend Dan, whose home collection of various Scotches and whiskies rivaled any bar I knew. He and Choun, the manager of Rye House in NYC, slowly walked me through the world of Scottish whisky. From sweet to smoky to heavy to peaty, I tasted everything.

I went from whisky hater to whisky lover, and soon I learned that there was nothing I liked more than the smoky, peaty whiskies that come from the Scottish island of Islay. I came to love their campfire smell and strong bite at the end. When I finally had the chance to visit Islay with Sean, another of my whiskyphile friend, I took it. Located off the west coast of [Scotland](#), Islay is a large island battered by the sea, wind, and rain. (The weather is so bad that planes can't land often enough that the island's carrier FlyBe's nickname is "FlyMaybe.") Islay's history stretches back to the Mesolithic period but the first major settlers were Celts. In the mid-12th century, locals rebelled against Islay's Scandinavian settlers, putting the island back in Scottish hands. In the middle ages, the powerful Campbell owned the island and, acting like an absentee landlord, didn't invest in the island.

After the potato famine in the 18th century, the lands were split up and sold off to private individuals.

Whisky has a long history on Islay. It's been made here since the 16th century — first in backyards and then, starting in the 19th century, in big distilleries. Over the years, whisky from the island came to be considered a specialty and was used to flavor a lot of other blends on the mainland. It wasn't until the early 2000s that Islay whisky became world-famous in its own right and was a "must" for all serious drinkers. The island produces mostly single malt Scotch, which means they only use one type of grain (barley).

As we landed, Islay looked as I imagined. Through the cloud cover, I could see a vast green island with rocky shores, endless farms, grazing sheep, and rolling hills dotted with diminutive stone houses. The land looked pastoral and untamed. It was hard to imagine that so much of the world's whisky originates here.

Sean and I visited seven of the eight distilleries on the island (sorry, Coal Ila, see you next time!). We began our first day at Bowmore (Sean's favorite), famous for its mildly peaty whiskies. Bowmore was founded in 1779 and is one of the oldest and largest distilleries on the island, producing 1.5 million liters per year. Located on the shores of Loch Indaal in the town that bears its name, the white painted buildings behind the walls of Bowmore made it seem less a factory and more like a housing complex. (All but one of the distilleries are located near the water because it was easier to get supplies in and out of the bays rather than overland.)

Whisky production is a simple process: first, you take barley, soak it for 2-3 days in warm water, and then spread it on the floor of the malting house, turning it regularly to maintain a constant temperature. These days, only Bowmore and Laphroaig do their own maltings, though they produce only a fraction of what they need (used to make the tourists happy, I suspect); most of the malt and smoking process for all the distilleries on the island is done at a big plant in Port Ellen or on the mainland.

After the malting, the barley is then smoked in peat, an earthy fuel from the bogs that cover the island. It is this process that gives the whisky the flavor that has made Islay famous. After that, it is fermented, distilled, and then put in casks, where it ages.

In Scotland, most distilleries reuse American bourbon or Spanish sherry casks (some use French oak, but that's very rare). By law, Scotch whisky has to be made in non-virgin oak — they can't make their own barrels. It's not Scotch if it's made any other way! It's in these casks that the flavors of the whisky mix with the wood to become what they are. The longer the alcohol stays in, the smoother and mellower it becomes. (So if you like a real smoky, peaty whisky, get a young one!) Unlike wine, which continues to change with age, once the whisky is out of the barrel, it's done maturing.

The highlight of our trip to Bowmore was when the attendant let us bottle our own whisky right from the cask! Let me introduce you to the Nomadic Rebel (blending our website names):

After Bowmore, Bunnahabhain followed. Located at the very far end of the island, its remote location provided the opportunity for the most scenic drive of the trip: across the island and then down a tiny road, with the sea and mountains of the nearby island of Jura to your right and farmland to your left.

Our second day was filled with three most famous distilleries on the island: Laphroaig, Ardbeg, and Lagavulin.

Laphroaig sits on a beautiful, wide, and rocky inlet that opens up to the sea. The smell of salt and sea fills the air, fighting for control against the peat smell of the distillery. This distillery is considered one of the prettiest on the island, with its small historic buildings and viewpoints of the bay. The highlight of the tour was seeing the malting process in progress, as well as the peat fire and smoke as it filled the kiln.

At Ardbeg, we had lunch before joining our tour guide, Paul. "You've probably seen a bunch of these now, huh? I'll just show you what makes Ardbeg different and we'll just drink," he said as he grabbed two bottles for the tour. "In case you get thirsty!" he added slyly. (Narrator: We got thirsty.)

Paul gave us a quick tour of the facilities, highlighting their old mash tanks and distilling process, which produces alcohol at 62-75% alcohol by volume (ABV). Afterward, we toured the grounds, marveling at the old casks and original buildings still in use, before setting back to the main house. Ardbeg is set back from the road and seems to take up a city block with its large white warehouses. Back at the tasting room, Paul let us sample many of Ardbeg's famous brands, as well as some special distillery-only blends found nowhere else, never seeming to care that we kept slipping in requests for the harder-to-find good stuff.



Like most people we met, Paul had grown up on the island, moved away, and come back. "City life was too busy for me," he said. And, like most of his friends, he got a job at a distillery. Unlike most of his friends, though, he actually liked whisky. A surprisingly large number of the young people we talked to weren't really keen on Scotch ("it's what my grandfather drinks") but Paul was a big fan and knew his way around the spirit.

After wishing Paul goodbye, we stumbled out of Ardbeg and strolled toward our final stop of the day, Lagavulin. With plenty of time before our tour, we walked slowly down the path between the distilleries, awed at all the cows and sheep on

the rocky verdant hills that rolled across the island, then caught a few minutes' snooze on one of the benches that line the way. On our final day, Sean and I visited Bruichladdich and Kilchoman. Starting early at Bruichladdich (which had been shut for decades before two private investors reopened in 2000), our guide Jenn gave us the grand tour and history of the place. The grounds are mostly white industrial buildings in a small compound, though upon arriving we were struck by the cobblestone courtyard (parking lot). It was a beautiful entranceway that harked back to days of old. She set seven different types of whisky in front of us, though I had to drink most of Sean's too because he was driving.

At Kilchoman, the visit becomes a blur, after having drunk so much at Bruichladdich. Our tour moved quickly through the distillery, then we tried a few of the brands. I don't remember which ones, as I mostly turned them down since I didn't want to be too drunk too early.

After a quick lunch and final dram, I hugged Sean goodbye, boarded the ferry back to [Glasgow](#) and promptly fell asleep in a happy, whisky-induced haze. From the friendly people with their small-town charm to the beautiful landscape, distilleries, and sea air, Islay was an island of dreams. I had been to my alcoholic promised land and it was everything I had imagined it to be.

Logistics

If you're going to go to Islay, you can get there by a twice-daily plane from Glasgow with FlyBe or via the ferry/bus combo from Glasgow.

For meals, I liked Yan's Kitchen, Lochindaal (best seafood on the island), the café at Ardbeg, the Harbour Inn, and [Bridgend Hotel](#).

Accommodations consist mostly of cute little farmhouses turned B&Bs. They are super cool and old fashioned. There's also an HI Hostel on the island ([Port Charlotte Youth Hostel](#)), which is going to be the cheapest option.

Recommended Whiskies

- Bowmore 13 – Nice, smoky taste with a strong finish. One of my favorites.
- Bowmore 18 (sherry cask) – Smooth, fruity flavor.
- Bowmore 25 (wine cask) – Smooth, with a peaty finish.
- Laphroaig 21 – Smooth, light on the palette.
- Laphroaig Cask Strength 16 Year – Really strong, very flavorful. Packs a punch.
- Ardbeg Supernova – Very strong with good, peaty finish.
- Lagavulin Double Matured Distiller's Edition – Delicious!
- Lagavulin 8 – Very strong smoky and peaty flavor. Tastes like a campfire. One of my favorites.
- Lagavulin 18 – Smooth, with a more subtle flavoring.
- Bruichladdich 1989 – Smooth, with a subtle sweet flavor.
- Bruichladdich 2003 – Really strong, powerful flavor.
- Kilchoman Machir Bay – Great smooth Scotch, with a subtle peaty finish.

Note: Visit Islay provided the car and accommodation (Rosemary and Don from [Persabus](#) were incredible hosts. Don cooks a mean breakfast!) for Sean and I, and they also connected me to distilleries so I could get the behind-the-scenes tours for this article. Meals, flights, and transportation to and from the island — as well as all that whisky I bought — were at my own expense.

Whisky Review: Ardbeg 19-Years-Old Traigh Bhan (Batch 3)

[Theresa Q. Tran](#) - December 30, 2021

The rocks found on the Isle of Islay record a time some 700 million years ago when Earth was one giant snowball orbiting space. Fossilized [organisms in Islay's limestone](#) suggests that this rugged and remote island in the Hebrides archipelago off the west coast of Scotland may have once been in the tropics. As the glaciers retreated, erosion carved craters where water accumulated in low bogs, eventually slowing the decomposition of moss, tree roots, and plant material. Over thousands of years, this process created [peat](#). This form of fossil fuel not only burned in hearths across Scotland, but for over two centuries peat has fired the Ardbeg distillery kilns on Islay's southern coast.

Traigh Bhan is Ardbeg's 19-year old single malt Scotch whisky aged in American oak and Oloroso sherry casks. This permanent expression is produced in a single batch released yearly, and with slight changes to cask selection, each batch reflects notes distinct to its own.

Nicknamed "Ardbeg's lockdown liquid," [Traigh Bhan 19-Years-Old Batch 3](#) came to age during the global pandemic when closed distillery doors meant uncertainty for its disgorging and bottling. At last, Head Whisky Creator Dr. Bill Lumsden along with a skeleton distillery team released Traigh Bhan Batch 3 from its casks. As described by Ardbeg, "The main difference with Batch 3 is that it has been imbued with an altogether more fragrant, spicy character."

I couldn't be happier with the more fragrant expression of wood smoke, pine tar, mineral salt, and satsuma that this dram delivers. The peat-soot nose is earthy, but clean given the proximity of a nectar sweetness and mineral vein. The deeper I breathe it in, the more my nose opens to the braidings of sweet, salty, smokey. Or is it earth, sea, and air? In any case, it's an amalgam of scents I'm quite fond of. The palate is surprisingly spicy with a bright cayenne or eucalyptus heat. Light in mouthfeel, the heat flares back across the palate and quickly overpowers initial notes of toffee, fennel, and citrus peel. As with [Traigh Bhan Batch 2](#), added water

creates a waxiness that tames the heat and makes possible more enjoyment of the peat and age that Ardbeg has to offer.



Ardbeg Traigh Bhan Batch 3 (image via Ardbeg)

Tasting Notes: [Ardbeg 19-Years-Old Traigh Bhan \(Batch 3\)](#)

Vital Stats: 46.2% ABV. Aged 19 years in American oak and Oloroso sherry casks. 750ml at \$300.

Appearance: Rose gold. A batch code label on the bottle provides details pertaining to each annual release.

Nose: The nose smells distinctly like braided seine twine. If this is an unfamiliar association, imagine the scent of a beach bonfire. Strong earthy aromas of pine tar, wood smoke, and salty minerals brightened by the sweetness of satsuma, fennel, and floral nectar.

Palate: A hot cayenne or eucalyptus spiciness interrupts the initial notes of toffee, aniseed, and citrus zest. Adding a touch of water creates a waxy mouthfeel that tames the heat enough to taste hints of black walnut, flinty minerals, and sappy tannins.

The Takeaway

Summary

As fond as I am of the pine tar, smokey-sweet, sea scent of Ardbeg's 19-year-old single malt scotch whisky, in the Traigh Bhan Batch 3 expression it seems true that where there's smoke, there's fire. The spicy heat overpowers the palate and cuts short the subtleties at work on the nose. There is a sense of interruption that comes through, perhaps reflecting its bottling during a global pandemic. While I appreciate Batch 3, admittedly it leaves me longing for a more balanced dram that better expresses the deep time and complex processes inherent to the peat from whence Ardbeg came.

Multi-Million-Pound Investment Set For Very Rural Scottish Distillery

[Gary Carter](#)

[Scotch](#) | December 30, 2021

Plans are under way to build The Cabrach Distillery and Heritage Center in one of the UK's most rural communities, known for its role in the birth of malt whisky. The multi-million-pound project, it is said by [the brand](#), will showcase the craft of making Scotland's national drink while telling the story of the historic Cabrach region.

The Cabrach, a remote, upland area in Northeast Scotland, was a once thriving community of more than a thousand residents ... and also a land that flourished with illicit distillers and smugglers. The devastation wrought by the Great Wars, however, brought about a spiral of depopulation and decline. Today, less than a hundred folks call the Cabrach home.



A rendering of the planned Cabrach distillery (image via Cabrach)

A move to regenerate the area as a sustainable community have been driven by The Cabrach Trust, which recently confirmed it secured the £3.5 million needed to activate the project, designed to blend harmoniously with the natural environment of the Cabrach.

Grant Gordon, founder and chairman of The Cabrach Trust, said [in a prepared statement](#), “Our vision is to regenerate the Cabrach as a thriving, sustainable community. Having secured funding for this project represents a critical milestone for the Trust and we look forward to embarking on this exciting next chapter in the Cabrach’s story.”

A 19th-century steading at the Trust’s Inverharroch base will be restored while sustainability will be at the heart of the transformation, and planners look to incorporate a renewable energy source.

The new project represents what’s described as the Trust’s regeneration masterplan for the Cabrach, which will bring about skilled, permanent employment to the area and attract thousands of visitors every year.

The Ethos Foundation, a principal funder of The Cabrach Trust, pledged its support to the project, alongside capital grants from the William Grant Foundation and the Vattenfall Clashindarroch Wind Farm Community Fund.

Forsyth, a leader in distillation equipment and based in nearby Rothes, will also contribute to the project. The Bently Foundation awarded a significant grant to the project in 2021 as well.

With funding secured and planning approval in place, work at the site is expected to get under way in February, with a goal of being operational by spring of 2023. Jonathan Christie, chief executive of The Cabrach Trust, said that with the build starting early in the new year, “We look forward to sharing progress as our one-of-a-kind social enterprise unfolds, while launching several other exciting projects all poised to go live in 2022.”

Richard Lochhead, member of Scottish Parliament, said, “The Cabrach is a unique community with an incredibly rich heritage. The Trust’s ambitious regeneration plans promise to open a new chapter in its story. It is widely believed that the Cabrach is the birthplace of Scotch whisky and plans for a new distillery and heritage center are not only fitting but also hugely exciting. This project will undoubtedly put the Cabrach on the map and I’m delighted this funding has been secured.”

In 2013, The Cabrach Trust acquired the historic Inverharroch Farm and its 170 acres of land and through community asset transfer, acquired the Old School and Hall along with the Acorn Community Center.

Following the restoration, The Cabrach Distillery and Heritage Center will be housed within the Inverharroch Farm steadings. The distillery and traditional dunnage warehouse will occupy two wings of the steading, with the additional two wings allocated for the heritage center, community bistro, tasting room, and visitor reception.

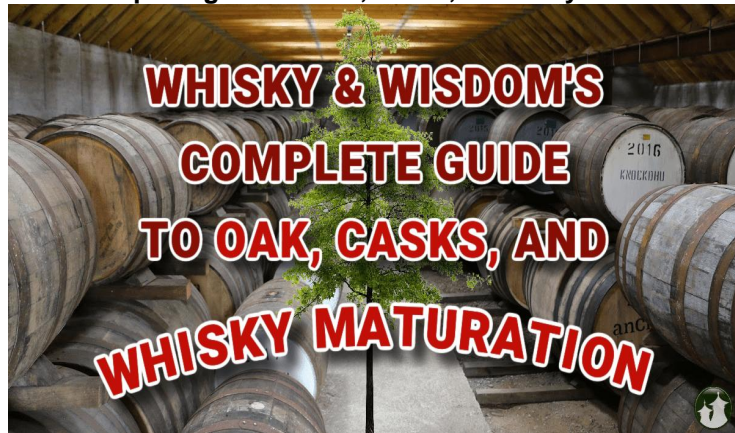
Operated as a social enterprise, the distillery will utilize what described as historic whisky-making methods which reflect the manufacture and production of malt whisky from the 1800s, when “real Cabrach whisky” was widely acclaimed. Following aging and maturation, the bottled product will eventually be available for sale, generating profits as part of the Trust’s long-term sustainability plan.



But it wasn’t always this way. Whisky – uisge beatha, or the water of life – was originally an unaged spirit, taken off the still and flavoured with additives such as honey or heather to quell the drink’s aggressive nature and to make it more palatable. Tradition, or perhaps just a convenient story for the distillery tour guides, tells us that the maturation and aging of whisky was a happy accident. Variations on the story abound, but the crux of it is that some unfortunate person had more uisge beatha than he could immediately consume, and so he put it in an oak cask to store it until he was ready for it. The cask was left alone or forgotten about for some time, and when it was finally retrieved, he made the happy discovery that the spirit had mellowed, improved, and taken on new characteristics. Maturation, as we know it today, was born. Of course, the reality of it – certainly in today’s commercial industry – is that whisky production is more than just sticking the spirit into oak casks for a few years and waiting until it’s ready. Today’s producers forge and shape the final character and flavour of their whisky by deliberately and strategically manipulating several different parameters of maturation. These parameters include:

- Time – that is, how long the spirit spends in the wood. We’ll look at this in more detail in a moment.
- Oak species – for example, American oak, Spanish oak (aka European oak), French oak, and so on. The different oaks have different porosity, permeability, cellular structure, wood sugars, and chemical make-ups that all impact how the spirit, wood, and oxygen interact with one another to shape the development and character of the resulting whisky.
- Freshness of the cask – that is, is the cask being used for the first time, or is it a refill cask that’s previously already matured whisky for a stint? (The terminology will be 1st fill, 2nd fill, 3rd fill, etc, or simply just refill). Clearly, a 1st fill cask will have a faster and more pronounced influence on the spirit than a 3rd fill cask. However, this needs to be carefully monitored – we don’t want the wood influence to dominate or overpower the spirit to the point that it’s too dry and woody.
- Cask provenance and history – the vast majority of casks used for maturing whisky (particularly Scotch whisky) will have been seasoned by maturing some other liquid previously, e.g. bourbon, sherry, etc. Obviously, the cask’s previous filling soaks into the wood, changing its nature and also absorbing the more “up front” woody flavours. The previous filling might also leave behind a residual flavour footprint. Hence, a cask that previously held bourbon will impart very different flavours to the spirit than a cask that previously held, say, chardonnay or port. The use of new “virgin oak” was traditionally shunned in the Scotch industry but, more recently, is finding favour when used as a finishing cask, or for short maturation periods with newer distilleries looking to bring youthful spirit to market sooner.
- Cask size – the influence of the wood is obviously a function of how much of it there is, relative to the amount of spirit. In the case of smaller casks, the ratio of the contact surface area of wood relative to the volume of spirit contained is larger, and so smaller casks will influence the spirit at a relatively faster rate. Larger casks such as 500 litre sherry butts might therefore need longer time periods to mature their whisky than, say, a 250 litre sherry hogshead.
- Finishing the whisky in a different cask to the one it was originally filled into – also sometimes referred to as “ace-ing”, the classic example is whisky that might spend, say, 8-10 years in an ex-bourbon cask, then get finished in an ex-wine cask for 6-12 months. The finishing cask will add a new nuance or texture to the whisky, ideally adding also to its complexity. A variation on finishing is wholesale re-racking – a not uncommon practice whereby whisky sitting in tired, old, casks is rejuvenated by transferring it into new casks to freshen and liven up the spirit. Both Bruichladdich and Benriach were keen exponents of this when those brands were re-activated in the 2000’s with stock that had previously been filled into poor quality or tired casks; Tamnavulin undertook a similar program

The complete guide to oak, casks, & whisky maturation



Whisky maturation is both a simple and, yet, incredibly complex process. Let’s look at the subject in detail; explore what the distilleries are doing; address a few myths; and explain all the beautiful things that happen when we age whisky in oak casks...

One of the quintessential images associated with whisky these days is the classic “action shot” inside the warehouse. Think of those old-school, dunnage style, dimly-lit warehouses with earth floors and casks racked just two or three tiers high. It’s an evocative image, showcasing the majestic oak casks quietly slumbering, doing their part to mature the spirit that will one day give us delicious whisky.

in 2017 with stock that was originally ear-marked for blending but instead re-purposed for bottling as a single malt, and thus needed to be “polished up” by re-racking into 1st fill ex-bourbon casks.

- **Climate** – Admittedly, this is a parameter that distilleries can’t particularly “control” or manipulate; they simply inherit the environment and climate of the region they build their warehouse in. Not surprisingly, Scotland’s consistently cool and damp climate has a very different impact on maturation to the hot and humid conditions of, say, India, which is different again to the hot and dry conditions of Australia. Compare this with, say, the variance experienced in Kentucky, USA, where the maturing whisk(e)y is subjected to warm summers and freezing winters. Distilleries – particularly the bourbon producers in Kentucky – will even utilise micro-climate to their advantage, rotating casks “vertically” through their warehouses to capitalise on the warmer temperatures at the top of the warehouse, compared to the lower temperatures at the lower levels.



Some of the stages involved in making whisky prior to aging it in casks: Mashing, fermenting, and distilling.

When we speak about all the factors that contribute to a whisky’s flavour, there are many variables: The barley grain variety, the use of peat, the strain of yeast used for fermentation, the duration and style of that fermentation, the shape and size of the stills, how the stills are run and where the spirit cuts are made, the type of condenser used, the amount of contact with copper, the local climate/environment, and so forth. The nuances, combinations, and permutations of all these are near infinite. Notwithstanding that, the accepted wisdom is that, of the final flavour of the whisky that we enjoy in our glass, 60-70% of that flavour may be attributed to the influence of the oak cask and the maturation the whisky received. On that basis, oak and maturation is king. So what’s actually happening during maturation, and why should whisky drinkers be cognisant of these things? Let’s explore some of the abovementioned parameters in more detail....



Time

Maturation of whisky in oak is a three-pronged action that requires three different processes to occur. These three processes may be summarised as being additive, subtractive, and interactive. They are worth elaborating on:

- **Additive:** The cask will add flavour and character to the spirit. Wood sugars, oaky notes, tannins, the influence of the previous filling (e.g. sherry), and colour will all be added to the spirit.
- **Subtractive:** The cask will subtract certain volatiles and compounds from the spirit, making it more mellow, softer, and approachable. Casks are typically charred before being employed in the drinks industry; the charred wood acts as a natural filter that removes undesirable compounds such as sulphur. (As an aside, this is why the distilleries that produce a more sulphury new-make often benefit from longer years in the wood). Other volatiles in the spirit, some of them undesirable, will be lost through evaporation.

The “angels’ share” is the lighthearted term given to evaporation, but it’s a serious matter for whisky producers in warmer climate countries: Filling a 200 litre cask with your precious spirit and only having 100 litres of it left in the cask after five years is a challenging issue.

- **Interactive:** This is where the magic happens. Certain chemical and molecular reactions occur between the wood, the spirit, the residuals left by previous fillings, and – most importantly – oxygen, to create new flavours/aromas. The casks breathe; the spirit oxidises; and the oak and spirit transform one another. This interactive process can be where the different oak species produce different results, as they vary in the nature of their chemical and biological make-up: The differing characteristics of the wood’s density, permeability, hemi-cellulose, lignins, tannins, oils, lipids, and so on, will all impact the spirit differently. Despite the modern Scotch whisky industry being more than 250 years old, commentators and industry professionals such as Dr Bill Lumsden of Glenmorangie believe that this third interactive process is only just now starting to be understood from a scientific perspective.

Time is therefore of the essence, and due time is needed for all three of these processes to play out. Three years is the minimum period of maturation stipulated by law in Scotland, which was set as a minimum benchmark for quality....although the climate and production regimens in Scotland generally dictate that most whisky will take 8-15 years to peak. Climate and environmental conditions (namely heat and humidity) obviously have a large influence on maturation – particularly evaporation – and so different countries factor this into their production methodologies and timescales. There’s a truism that whisky matures faster in hotter countries, but it’s important to understand the difference between true, three-pronged maturation and simply base evaporation and taking on colour.

Evaporation over time is a complex problem for distillers, and it differs the world over, subject to the local climate – particularly the local humidity. The conditions in Scotland lead to the alcohol evaporating faster than the water within the spirit, meaning that the alcohol content of the whisky decreases with time. In contrast to this, the conditions in Kentucky, USA, lead to the water evaporating faster than the alcohol, meaning that the alcohol content of the spirit actually increases over time!

One of the challenges for the so-called new world whisky producing countries is to find the balance or sweet spot with their maturation programs whilst juggling the many forces, demands, and financial factors at play for start-up operations. For new distilleries wanting to bring aged whisky to market sooner and bring in much-needed cash flow, there is temptation and a growing tendency to adopt small-cask maturation in active casks to supposedly fast-track the process. However, as many distilleries in Australia have found to their detriment, aging spirit in 20L or 50L casks for just over two years in ex-wine casks might produce a dark whisky that initially seems ready to some drinkers, but the reality is that only two of the three maturation processes discussed above have partially occurred: The additive and interactive processes have occurred to some extent, but there simply hasn’t been sufficient time for the subtractive process to fully play out. The result is often hot and dry whisky that is over-oaked yet under-matured. The situation is exacerbated at distilleries who insist on using ex-wine casks that have only been toasted, rather than heavily charred, meaning that their casks are less capable of removing (subtracting!) the volatiles and other aggressive compounds that maturation seeks to address. (Hence leading to whisky that is described as “hot”, regardless of the actual ABV percentage.)

Fans of peated whiskies should also be aware that peatiness decreases over time. The phenol levels in the spirit reduce with years in the wood (there’s that subtractive process again!) and so those wanting to experience the real “smoke bombs” should be seeking younger whiskies and not necessarily older releases.



Oak species

It’s no accident that oak is used for making barrels. Coopers have been using it since the middle ages. As natural timbers go, it’s strong, durable, and well suited to storing liquids. Coopers could certainly make barrels and casks out of different species of timber but in both the American and Scotch whisk(e)y industries, oak must be used by law.

When the current single malt boom had its genesis in the early 1990’s, the situation in the Scotch whisky industry – and thus the lore that was written in the

books of that era – was pretty much that whisky was matured in either American oak casks (*quercus alba*) that previously held bourbon, or European oak casks (*quercus robur*) that previously held sherry. As a gross generalisation, that remains a not-unreasonable statement, but it conveniently ignores a few details, and certainly overlooks some current practices. The first ignored detail is that a lot of ex-sherry casks used in the industry are actually American oak. For more information on sherry and how sherry casks are used in the Scotch whisky industry, you can read Whisky & Wisdom's [The whisky lover's complete guide to sherry](#). The other overlooked fact that is an increasing amount of whisky is being either fully-matured or partially finished in French oak barriques – and certainly so in other whisky-producing countries. French oak (*quercus petraea*) is less dense than its American oak counterpart, and is favoured in the wine industry for being more subtle in the flavours it can impart to wine (the additive and interactive processes). That being said, it also imparts firmer tannins to the wine. The presence of these tannins needs to be carefully monitored and kept in check when French oak ex-wine casks are subsequently used in the whisky industry. A “double whammy” can occur if the tannins in the French oak combine with residual tannin soak left from a previous wine filling, resulting in an overdose of tannins that overwhelms the whisky and destroys the balance. This is, again, a growing issue for the Australian whisky industry, which favours French oak ex-wine casks due to their abundance and cheaper affordability, courtesy of that country's enormous wine industry. The issue of overly-tannic whisky in Australia is discussed in detail [here](#).



As you'd expect, the different oaks impart different characteristics and flavours to the wines and spirits they mature. American oak, which is rich in vanillin, typically imparts sweeter notes, with flavours falling into the vanilla, coconut, and tropical fruit families. European oak (often referred to as Spanish oak in Scotch whisky circles) imparts characteristics that are typically drier and spicier, including dried fruits, cinnamon, and citrus. French oak combines an unusual mix of both savoury and sweet, with common descriptors including tobacco, cedar, nuttiness, coffee and chocolate.

You can experience these differences first hand, and very effectively. The visitor centres at some distilleries (Highland Park being a good example) have sample casks of both oak types (that is, American oak and Spanish oak) that both held the same seasoning sherry. The differences in the aroma of the oak and the flavour of spirit produced is surprisingly stark! Similarly, try a whisky that's been matured in an ex-oloroso sherry cask that's made of French oak....the contrast to the more familiar Spanish oak aromas and flavours of, say, a Glenfarclas or an Aberlour a'Bunadah will be very apparent, even though the oloroso sherry gave them a common thread.



There's often a lot of excitement and chatter in whisky circles around the use of Mizunara oak – an oak native to Japan. However, such excitement is often more

hype than reality. Commercially, Mizunara is difficult to work with: For starters, the tree generally needs to be 200 years old, and the wood is unusually porous, meaning leaks and evaporative stability are constant problems. Quality Mizunara casks are rare, making them a particularly expensive product. Whiskies matured or finished in Mizunara oak tend to carry high price tags accordingly, but most consumers probably don't fully understand certain realities: The general consensus amongst the experts is that Japanese and Scotch whisky needs around 15 years minimum in Mizunara casks for the true qualities, properties, and flavours of the oak to be realised. Whiskies that are younger in age, or were merely finished in Mizunara oak for short periods, are not benefiting from or capable of displaying the very characteristics that Mizunara oak can impart.

Cask history – 1st fills and refills

It's a long-used cliché, but casks can be likened to tea bags and brewing a cup of tea. If you make a cup of tea with a fresh, new tea bag, you're going to get maximum flavour and extraction. If you elected to make a second cup of tea using the same tea bag, then it follows that the leaves' influence will be significantly diminished, and you'll need to steep the leaves for significantly longer to get a satisfactory result.



And so it is with casks. 1st fill casks can give strong, assertive results in a shorter time frame; 2nd fill casks need longer – at least for the additive process to play out. It's not uncommon for casks to be used a third time (3rd fills), and some distilleries will even put a cask back into service for a fourth filling, depending on the spirit and intended purpose. 5th and 6th fill casks are a bit like the Star Wars prequel films: They definitely exist, but it's considered uncool to talk about them. With the massive boom in the whisky industry and demand for casks at an all-time high – plus the cost of casks increasing accordingly – tired casks that might once have been discarded are now being rejuvenated to get a second lease on life. The internal surface of the cask is scraped back to fresh wood, then re-charred to re-instate the all-important charcoal filter. “De-char, re-char” is the common phrase and process in Scotland, and many casks will also receive a level of toasting prior to re-charring, in order to better break down the wood, release the vanillins, and soften the tannins. Casks or whisky releases noted as STR undergo this process, with STR standing for Shaved, Toasted, and Re-charred.



Sparks fly as a cask undergoes a de-char / re-char process at the William Grant & Sons cooperage at Glenfiddich

(As a secondary comment here, the amount or level of charring is a further parameter that can be tweaked to influence whisky maturation. As discussed earlier, charring is critical to whisky maturation – it promotes fast lignin breakdown and caramelisation of the hemicellulose, thus extracting considerably more guaiacols, isoeugenol and vanillin into the spirit. Courtesy of the bourbon industry, four levels of charring are recognised, depending on the amount of time that the wood is fired for – it varies from 15 up to 55 seconds. Obviously, the amount/extent of charring will have an impact on both the additive, subtractive and interactive processes of maturation. Level 4 char – also known colloquially as “alligator char”, owing to the pattern it imparts to the wood's surface – has

been used by marketers to good effect, as demonstrated by Ardbeg with their “Alligator” release).



Barrels being charred in Kentucky. Image courtesy Tadd Myers, Lux Row Distillers.

Whilst most people don't fancy the idea of a cup of tea made from tea bags that were already previously used, the Scotch whisky industry, in particular, benefits tremendously from 2nd fill casks. Long-term maturation in 2nd fill casks allows the magical interactive process to really play out without the additive process becoming over-bearing or upsetting the balance. Single malts matured from 15 to 25 years in 2nd fill casks produce some of the finest results.

John Grant, current Chairman of Glenfarclas, is a fan of 2nd fill casks, and believes that the best Glenfarclas whiskies come from refill casks. Glenfarclas, of course, is famed for maturing its whisky in ex-sherry casks, and the distillery is careful to ensure that 1st fill casks aren't left for too long. The danger is that the sherry-influence would over-power and dominate the spirit. Most releases in the Glenfarclas portfolio (e.g. the 10yo, 12yo, 15yo, 17yo, etc, etc) are thus a careful vatting of casks that combine 1st fills and re-fills; American oak and European oak. Macallan goes down a similar route with its Double Cask range, further introducing the influence of ex-bourbon casks in its Triple Cask Matured range.



Cask size

It is risky making such generalisations these days but, for the most part – and ignoring puncheons and port pipes, etc – Scotch whisky is chiefly matured in three different cask sizes: Barrels (180-200 litres), Hogsheads (250 litres), and Butts (500 litres). Butts are unique to the sherry industry, hence it can be safely assumed that a butt being used in the whisky industry will previously have held sherry at some stage in its life. And if you're wondering about Quarter casks, we'll address them in a moment.

In the decades between World War II and the early 2000's, it was common (if not de rigueur) for 200 litre ex-bourbon barrels to be broken down into their individual staves and shipped across to Scotland where they were subsequently re-assembled into larger hogsheads (250 litres). Increasing the number of staves would create the larger cask; larger ends or heads were then fitted to close off the larger diameter. Five barrels would subsequently produce four hogsheads, and it was thus possible to fit more casks and a greater volume of whisky inside each warehouse. Thus, whilst hogsheads are still regularly coopered for the aging of sherry and subsequently find their way into the Scotch industry, the vast majority of hogsheads in Scotland are actually ex-bourbon – a fact that's often under-stated and not widely appreciated.



Coopers at work at the Speyside Cooperage in Scotland, not far from the village of Craigellachie

However, with coopering being a dying trade and the cost of labour so high, the practice of re-coopering to enlarge the casks has fallen out of favour, and ex-bourbon barrels are now generally shipped whole across the Atlantic. Whilst there are still ample hogsheads in the industry (mostly now refills), the industry's demand for casks and their high costs have kept distillery accountants awake at night. The response from many distilleries has been to now fill their casks at higher ABV filling strengths. Whilst it was once standard practice to water the spirit down to a common filling strength of 63.5% ABV before laying the casks down for their long slumber, distilleries realised it was getting increasingly expensive to mature water. Accordingly, at many distilleries, casks are now being filled at higher strengths of 65-69% ABV to reduce the number of casks needed. This is a key reason why many independent bottlings of single cask releases are now coming out with ABV's at 59-62%, whereas up until 10-15 years ago, ABV's of 55-59% or so were more the norm. (Higher filling strengths are nothing new, however. For example, it's a higher filling strength that allows Glenfarclas to produce its “105” expression – even with age statements of 22 and 40 years old!) As established earlier, maturation – or at least the influence of wood – can be faster in smaller-sized casks, owing to the ratio of the surface area of the wood to the contained liquid. (For an excellent mathematical explanation and demonstration of this, check out the article by my colleague, Matthew Fergusson-Stewart, on his Whisky Molecules' Facebook page [here](#) and scroll down to the article posted 18/05/2018.) Notwithstanding the shortage of aged whisky that led to the [NAS explosion](#), the higher proportion of faster-maturing 200 litre barrels to 250 litre hogsheads in the industry these days may be another reason why distilleries are willing and able to put out younger yet still impressive releases of late – note the recent releases of numerous 8yo age-statement whiskies by several well-known brands.



A quarter cask standing next to a regular ex-bourbon barrel at the Laphroaig visitor centre.

It was the old Allied distilleries – chiefly Laphroaig and Ardmore, both now part of Beam/Suntory – that made a virtue of quarter casks. Quarter casks are 125 litres and hold roughly half that of a Hogshead, leading to faster maturation (all other things being equal!). Laphroaig used this to great effect with their original Quarter Cask release in 2004. The whisky was aged in regular Bourbon barrels for around five to six years, and then finished in Quarter casks for around six months. The result was a seemingly fully-matured whisky that had an altogether different and pronounced flavour profile to its older 10 year old stablemate.

(Noting also, as discussed earlier, that the phenols in whisky decrease over time, hence the younger Quarter Cask release was also perceived as being peatier than its older sibling).

The cask's previous filling

We've covered the basics of this already in the sections above, so we needn't go into too much more detail here about the influence on flavour from a cask's previous filling (e.g. bourbon, sherry, port, wine, etc).

However, you may be wondering at this point why ex-bourbon casks from America are so prevalent in the Scotch whisky industry? It is a function of legal definitions and simple economics: One of the requirements and laws of bourbon production is that the oak casks must be made from American oak (quercus alba); they must be virgin casks; and the casks can be used only once. If a distillery elects to re-fill a cask a second time, the spirit is still American whisk(e)y, but it cannot legally be called bourbon. Since the majority of casks cannot effectively be re-used by the American distilleries, they are sold as unwanted discards to the Scottish distillers (and other distilleries around the world) who happily buy them up. In very rough terms, an ex-bourbon barrel is roughly one tenth of the cost of an ex-sherry butt, so ex-bourbon barrels are thus an economically attractive prospect. (The exact costs of ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks are listed in our article, The whisky lover's complete guide to sherry, which you can read [here](#))

Finally, no article on the use of ex-sherry casks in the whisky industry is complete unless the issue of sulphur is discussed. There's nothing worse than paying good money for a rich, dark, delicious-looking, sherry-matured whisky, only to pour a dram and find that it smells of rotten eggs, boiled cabbage, brimstone, and rubber tubes. The culprit here is the use of sulphur candles that are burned inside a sherry cask to kill off bacteria. Whilst the practice has supposedly stopped, the sulphur contamination stays in the casks permanently, and will thus still be present in the industry for decades to come as casks are re-filled and used a second, third, or fourth time. For more information on sulphur from sherry casks, see Whisky & Wisdom's article, "[The stink about sulphur](#)", which received industry acclaim on the subject and is oft-quoted and referenced.

– Conclusion –

Like a Level 1 char, we've barely touched the surface here, but the above discussion hopefully gives you some insights into the many complex variables and parameters of whisky maturation. As stated above, the common wisdom (rightly or wrongly) is that the oak cask and maturation contribute roughly 60-70% to the final flavour we experience in whisky. That means that 30-40% is coming from other sources and influences. And that, dear reader, is an article for another day....

Cheers, AD

Is this the smokiest Scotch on the market?

Last Updated: Jan. 22, 2022 at 11:47 a.m. ETFirst Published: Jan. 21, 2022 at 9:45 a.m. ET

By - [Charles Passy](#)

Have a dram of Bruichladdich's Octomore, known for its intense peaty flavor, to honor the January 25 birthday of Scottish poet Robert Burns



Can you handle the smoke? Bruichladdich's Octomore Edition 12.3 is known for its intense flavor

Bruichladdich [Octomore Edition 12.3](#) Scotch whisky, \$259

The back story

This is the time of year we usually think a lot about Scotch — not just because we love a good dram, but because we want to honor Robert Burns (1759-1796), Scotland's most famous poetic son, on his birthday (January 25). Indeed, Burns Night celebrations, as they're called, have become increasingly popular in recent years. Think gatherings with readings of Burns' work, and feasts built around

such Scottish foods as haggis (a classic meat dish), tatties (mashed potatoes) and neeps (turnips).

Of course, there's plenty of Scotch whisky to be had. But which Scotch should you put on your Burns Night table? We're inclined this year to opt for Bruichladdich's Octomore, a limited-edition annual release from this distillery that has a history going back to the 19th Century but was resurrected as a brand about 20 years ago. (Today, it's under the ownership of [spirits conglomerate Rémy Cointreau](#).)

In many ways, this Bruichladdich (pronounced [brook-LAHDee](#)) sip is the most "Scotchy" Scotch on the market. For starters, the distillery prides itself on often sourcing key ingredients — as in the barley malt — as locally as possible, with a keen attention to terroir. ("Our farmers are known to us by first name," the [Bruichladdich team boasts](#).) But there's also the type of Scotch that Bruichladdich produces, which is typically a peated (or smoky) style in keeping with the traditions of its location on the Scottish island of Islay. And Octomore is billed as one of the most intense, heavily peated whiskies of them all — and it's bottled at cask strength (about 124 proof in the case of Edition 12.3), to boot. "It really speaks to the experimental nature of the distillery," says Bruichladdich spokeswoman Christy McFarlane.

What we think about it

We're fans of pretty much any Islay Scotch — and we've written about our share of them, including ones from [Bowmore](#) and [Laphroaig](#). So, yes, we like Bruichladdich's Octomore as well. Don't let the intensity of the sip scare you off. While you taste the smoke, this Octomore edition isn't all about that — it's rightly described as having a salty citrus note, plus the taste of sweet dried fruit. In all, a very satisfying sip — and a very "Scotchy" one — that arguably merits the high cost. (Bruichladdich has two other current Octomore releases at slightly lower prices.)

How to enjoy it

This should be sipped neat to best appreciate its beguiling intensity. (But it's okay to add a little water, or an ice cube or two.) Pair it with some good dark chocolate for the perfect Burns Night after-dinner treat.

Cù Bòcan extends Creation series

24 JANUARY 2022By Nicola Carruthers

Highland single malt brand Cù Bòcan has released two limited edition cask-matured expressions as part of its Creation range.



Creation #4 was matured in a combination of Tawny Port and Cognac casks. The new bottlings are Creation #3, which was matured in Moroccan Cabernet Sauvignon and North American rye casks, and Creation #4, which was matured in a combination of Tawny Port and Cognac casks.

The expressions were distilled at the Tomatin Distillery in limited batches and made with lightly peated Scottish barley.

Cù Bòcan #3 is described as offering the 'tastes and smells of a Moroccan souk, with notes of rose, water strawberry and black fig, while the rye casks provide hints of exotic spice, citrus and tropical fruits.

Meanwhile, Creation #4 pays homage to The Antrim Cocktail, which is made with Cognac and Port. The resulting liquid has hints of plum jam, grilled peach, stewed forest fruit, cinnamon, and sweet campfire smoke.

Cù Bòcan unveiled the [first two expressions](#) in the Creation range in August 2019, alongside Signature, a single malt matured in Bourbon, oloroso Sherry and North American virgin oak casks.

Creation #1 was aged in Black Isle Brewery Imperial Stout and Bacalhôa Moscatel de Setúbal wine casks. The brand used Japanese shōchū casks for the maturation of its single malt, Creation #2.

Graham Nicolson, sales director, said: "We are delighted to finally be able to release these two new Creations to our customers. We're excited for all that 2022 has in store for Cù Bòcan and looking forward to opening up the world of lightly peated whisky, whilst continuing to explore unusual and intriguing finishes."

The 46% ABV expressions are limited to 4,200 bottles globally, priced at RRP £60 (US\$81) per 700ml bottle.

Largest private whisky collection sells for \$4.5m

24 JANUARY 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

The world's largest private whisky collection to be offered on the secondary market has reached a total of £3.36 million (US\$4.5m) after 23 auctions were held over two years.



Pat's collection of American whiskeys

Pat's Whisk(e)y Collection [comprised of more than 9,000 bottles](#) from 150-plus Scottish distilleries, as well as Bourbons and bottlings from Europe and across the globe.

Whisky Auctioneer split the collection across 23 auctions with the final sale concluding on 22 November 2021. The first part of the collection went on sale from 25 September 2020.

It took nearly two years for the entire collection to be sold, which included 5,000 single malts, more than 1,000 blended whiskies and 600-plus American whiskeys.

The [American whiskey auction](#) in October 2020 reached a hammer price of £376,183 (US\$508,317), while the European Bottler's Auction in December 2020 sold for a total of £302,456 (US\$408,700).

A range of Gordon & MacPhail Private Collection whiskies fetched £246,209 (US\$332,700) in October 2021.

Sale highlights from across the total collection included a Brora 1972 Rare Malts 22 Years Old (£20,500/US\$27,700), Glenfarclas 1952 Family Cask #1712 Release 1: (£18,000/US\$24,332) and Karuizawa 35 Years Old Bourbon Cask #8518 / Emerald Geisha (£9,200/US\$12,431).

Iain McClune, founder of Whisky Auctioneer, said: "Pat's Whisk(e)y Collection was historic, a once-in-a-lifetime chance for whisky lovers old and new to bid on some of the most diverse bottles on the secondary market.

"The variety of whiskies on offer was unique, with whiskies accessible at every price point, hopefully inspiring the next generation of collectors.

"It's highly unlikely we'll ever see a collection as large and diverse as this one, meaning this auction will go down in whisky history, setting a precedent for future collectors."

Pat's Whisk(e)y Collection was accumulated over a period of 15 years by an anonymous collector who is only known as 'Pat'.

"Selling the collection was a deeply emotional process for me since it has been such a huge part of my life," said Pat.

"I feel this incredible journey has culminated in a fitting finale with these bottles entered back into the market so other people can enjoy them, perhaps with some added knowledge gained alongside."

The final auction of the collection in November 2021 reached £758,223 (US\$1m), with £26,134 (US\$35,312) from the total donated to Teenage Cancer Trust, while Whisky Auctioneer pledged £2,375 (US\$3,210) to the charity.

Whisky Reviews: The Aberfeldy Tasting Collection

[Courtney Kristjana -Reviews, Scotch](#) | January 23, 2022

Editor's Note: These whiskies were provided to us as review samples by Aberfeldy. This in no way, per [our editorial policies](#), influenced the final outcome of this review. It should also be noted that by clicking the buy link towards the bottom of this review our site receives a small referral payment which helps to support, but not influence, our editorial and other costs.

Dewar's, like a classic television show, is a longtime staple in the world of whisky. Although Dewar's has been a major producer of blended whisky for centuries, [John Dewar's sons had bigger plans](#). In 1896, the foundation for a new distillery was laid, and two years later production began at Aberfeldy.

Aberfeldy is the only distillery built by the Dewar family that specifically makes Scotch whisky (today, however, Dewar's the company owns several Scotch whisky distilleries). Aberfeldy lies in the heart of the Highlands near the Pitilie Burn. This small river that runs into the River Tay is rich with gold that is panned to this day. Like the [gold in the water](#), Aberfeldy is partnering with local beekeepers in conservation efforts to save the honeybees.

Many are afraid to mix their aged Scotch, but the Aberfeldy Tasting Collection is perfect for making the [Aberfeldy Golden Dram Cocktail](#). The collection contains three 200ml bottles of the Aberfeldy 12-year-old, 16-year-old, and 21-year-old. For this review, we also threw in a bonus and tasted the 18-year-old. While the [Aberfeldy 12-Year](#) and 21-Year mature fully in ex-bourbon barrels, the Aberfeldy 16-Year and 18-Year take to finishing in sherry casks and French red wine barrels respectively.

Unlike some sample packs, the Aberfeldy range is fully available, so be sure to check if it's in a location near you. Dewar's and soda is one of my go-to's, and as I found out, the Aberfeldy is the perfect upgrade. I did buy some local honey to try the Golden Dram, and I recommend it.



Aberfeldy 12-, 16-, and 21-Year-Old (image via [Courtney Kristjana](#))

Tasting Notes: [Aberfeldy 12-Year-Old](#)

Vital Stats: 40% ABV. Highland single malt aged 12 years in ex-bourbon barrels. 750ml \$45. The Aberfeldy tasting kit includes 200ml samples of the 12-year-old, the 16-year-old, and 21-year-old for \$80.

Appearance: 24 karat gold

Nose: The nose is light and delicate with jasmine and rose at the forefront. A touch of orange oil comes through underneath while the rest of the nose is filled with porridge. The sweet aroma found in the dram is reminiscent of simple syrup.

Palate: The mouthfeel is light—almost watery. Trying to discern any flavor is a hard task with this whisky. It's easy to drink, but there is no distinct flavor. There is a hint of honey, a hint of oak, and a hint of porridge, but overall there is no wow factor. Black pepper is delivered at the end of the dram.

Final Thoughts: For novices or those breaking into Scotch, the Aberfeldy 12 Year doesn't have the smokiness that comes to mind with whisky. For the whisky lover, the Aberfeldy 12 Year is expensive water if you're looking for a bottle to sip. At the price point, I would skip this and go for a bottle of regular Dewar's 12 Year.

Score: 3/5



Tasting Notes: [Aberfeldy 16-Year-Old](#)

Vital Stats: 40% ABV. Highland single malt finished in sherry casks. 750ml \$119.

Appearance: Light Amber

Nose: There is a slightly noticeable aroma of nail polish at the beginning but lingers in the background. Apricot and orange peel mingle like jam on toast.

Brown sugar provides sweetness on the nose.

Palate: The whisky drinks hotter than the 12-Year-Old even though they have the same ABV. It tastes malty with oak, however, the combination reminds me of toast. Lots of orange peel and orange segment comes through. The whisky is mellow with its sweetness. Apricot and baking spices meet in the middle. A touch of jasmine stays on the tongue after the finish.

Final Thoughts: More flavorful than the Aberfeldy 12-Year-Old, the 16-year-old whisky is lovely for sipping. Bourbon drinkers and Scotch drinkers alike will be left wanting more, but I would use this as an introduction to newcomers in the whisky realm.

Score: 3.5/5

Tasting Notes: [Aberfeldy 21-Year-Old](#)

Vital Stats: 40% ABV. Highland single malt aged 21 years. 750ml \$199.

Appearance: Gold

Nose: Caramel and vanilla are rich and greet the nose first. A touch of baby powder comes from behind. Overall, the nose is pleasantly balanced with florals and fruit.

Palate: Orange peel and clove touch the taste buds first. This is followed up with grain and just a bit of oak. Despite the aromatic nose, the palate of the whisky is lackluster.

Final Thoughts: It has fruit and spice, but overall the whisky is middle of the road flavor-wise. The 21-year-old is easy to drink and would make a good old fashioned, even if the grain is overpowering.

Score: 3/5

Tasting Notes: [Aberfeldy 18-Year-Old](#)

Vital Stats: 43% ABV. Highland single malt finished in French red wine casks. 750ml \$130. Not included in the sample pack.

Appearance: Rose gold/blush

Nose: Bright green apple and pear dusted with cinnamon starts the nose off. It reminds me of Jolly Rancher hard candies but more luscious. A slight tone of nail polish fills in the middle.

Palate: Apple pie. The whisky tastes like apple pie. It is robust with green apple and spicy with nutmeg and cinnamon. A hint of clove lingers on the backend. Crisp and flaky pastry crust defines the malted barley compared to the other whiskies.

Final Thoughts: Alas, although the Aberfeldy 18-Year-Old is not a part of the Aberfeldy Tasting Collection, it is the Aberfeldy I can get behind. The three percent increase in ABV expresses the flavor, which I don't think gets across in the collection with all the same ABV.

Score: 4/5

Ardbeg's New Committee Scotch Expression Result Of 'Happy Accident'

[Gary Carter](#) - [Scotch](#) | January 24, 2022

The newest expression from [Ardbeg](#) is the result of an unplanned experiment that led to the longest fermentation in Ardbeg's history.

In November of 2007, The Ardbeg Distillery found that a broken boiler threatened six washbacks full of whisky. The team at Ardbeg tried to revive the boiler, but it was dead.

Dr Bill Lumsden, Ardbeg's director of distilling and whisky creation, said he saw that situation as an opportunity to experiment.



Ardbeg Fermentation (image via Ardbeg)

He instructed the distillery crew to throw open the washback lids and expose the contents to the Islay air. And that began a three week-long fermentation, the longest in Ardbeg's history, which eventually gave rise to a wild and zingy spirit, the distiller explained.

"I've always wanted to experiment with longer fermentations, so I think an unintentional boiler breakdown was the best thing that could have happened," Lumsden said in a prepared statement. "For context, most Ardbeg is only fermented for 72 hours, making three weeks uncharted territory for us. The outcome is a dram that tastes like pure science fiction. Peat and smoke meld beautifully with fresh, floral flavors, while sharp, more malty notes give Ardbeg Fermentation a uniquely zingy profile."

Colin Gordon, Ardbeg's distillery manager, said that sometimes, blind luck is just a part of the way they do things at Ardbeg. "But the creation of Fermentation wasn't simply good fortune. Quick thinking, ingenuity and a little assistance from tiny beings in the atmosphere helped us get here. At 13 years old, this is of course an aged Ardbeg – something I'm sure our fans will be delighted to get their hands on."

As a Committee-only bottling, Ardbeg Fermentation is only available to members of The Ardbeg Committee at this time for a suggested price of \$199.99. Those interested can join The Committee by signing up at www.ardbeg.com/committee. Formed in 2000, the Ardbeg Committee is made up of thousands of Ardbeg followers worldwide that seek to make sure "the doors of Ardbeg never close again." Today there are more than 130,000 members of the Ardbeg Committee in more than 130 countries.

Committee Members are regularly consulted on new bottlings and expressions and are offered exclusive Committee bottlings. Members also receive invitations to special gatherings, tastings and events. The Committee is free to join.

Ardbeg Fermentation official tasting notes:

- Age: 13 Years Old
- ABV: 49.4%
- Maturation: Ex-bourbon casks, both 1st and refill
- Color: Pale Straw
- Nose: Fresh, floral, herbal and tart. Hints of mixed herbs and cedar wood. Zesty hints of smoked orange and grapefruit, lots of menthol and peppermint. With water, powerful bursts of diesel oil, tar, fresh paint and aniseed. As this dies down, a memory of freshly cut hay, and the tiniest hint of something savory, like yeast extract or bread dough.
- Taste: A lively, vibrant, sharp, 'zingy' texture, leading into very firm, distinctive flavors – malty/biscuit tones, powerful aniseed, cardamom, antiseptic lozenge, sweet mint toffee and cigar ash.
- Finish: Finally, a lingering, salty, firm aftertaste of mint, tar, oak tannin & leather.

Lochlea Drops New Single Malt Whisky On Burns Night

[Gary Carter](#) - [Scotch](#) | January 24, 2022

Lochlea Single Malt is set to release its first expression, marking 245 years since Scotland's most famous bard moved to Lochlea.

Every year, the Scottish celebrate Burns Night, an annual party in honor of the life of writer and poet Robert Burns, the man who penned 'Auld Lang Syne.'

And based on the Ayrshire farm which was Robert Burns' home and workplace from 1777 to 1784, Lochlea Distillery began distilling, casking and maturing their whisky in 2018. The Lochlea team used their own barley and natural water resources to ensure full traceability from field to cask.



Lochlea Single Malt First Release (image via Lochlea)

John Campbell, Lochlea production director and master blender, said this new expression is the first opportunity for people to partake in a dram from Lochlea, just in time for Burns Night.

"Our first single malt release isn't quite what you expect from a typical lowland malt. For us, on the nose it is bursting with fresh orchard fruit and zesty orange, with vanilla fudge and a lovely cereal note in the background," Campbell explained in a prepared statement. "The palette is rich and sweet with burnt caramel and hazelnuts with a medium mouth coating to finish while still holding on to that fruit."

He said this new spirit will provide a taste of what's to come as Lochlea prepares to launch their core expression and limited small batches later this year.

Lochlea commercial manager David Ferguson said, "This is an exciting moment for us. The team has worked tirelessly to get everything organized and bring our first whisky to market ... this is very much just the beginning for Lochlea."

Bottled at 46% ABV, the single malt whisky was matured in first-fill bourbon and Pedro Ximenez Sherry casks with no added coloring, and it's non-chill filtered. Lochlea Single Malt First Release is available from whisky and spirits shops around the UK and in 10 export markets. It has a suggested retail price of £50. Lochlea Distillery is the result of more than £6m invested. The planning of the purpose-built facility started in 2014 with everything from the groundwork and foundations, through to installation of the still house equipment ... taking four years to complete. Production of the liquid started in August of 2018 with the first casks filled and stock laid down in their on-site warehouse.

Final bottles of Glen Grant 72YO to sell for £50,000

28 JANUARY 2022 By Kate Malczewski

The last 50 bottles of a 72-year-old Glen Grant single malt Scotch whisky from Gordon & MacPhail will go on sale next month for £50,000 (US\$66,959) each.



Glen Grant 72YO was bottled at 56.2% ABV

Created by investment specialist Premier Whisky and independent Scotch bottler Gordon & MacPhail, the rare single malt was distilled by Speyside producer Glen Grant in 1948.

The liquid was matured in an American oak ex-Sherry cask. It is presented in a crystal-cut glass decanter, and just 290 bottles were produced.

Glen Grant 72YO was [unveiled in January 2021](#), when bottle number 88 was auctioned at Bonhams Hong Kong.

Collectors have already snapped up 200 bottles of the whisky. The final allocation of 50 bottles will become available for purchase after Chinese New Year (1-3 February).

Once the bottling hits the secondary market, it is expected to fetch more than £100,000 (US\$133,872).

"This is altogether an amazing and hugely rewarding whisky," said Charles MacLean MBE, whisky writer and Master of the Quaich.

"Although I have rarely encountered whiskies of such advanced age, I am generally sceptical about very old malts – they lose vitality and tend to become fragile and flat, generally owing to low strength. Not in this case. I can honestly say this is one of the finest malts it has ever been my pleasure to taste in forty years of professional exploration."

More information is available at www.premierwhisky.com.

Gordon & MacPhail earned a world record last September when it released the oldest single malt Scotch whisky ever produced, [Generations 80 Year Old](#). The bottling became the [world's oldest single malt sold at auction](#) in October 2021.

Also in October last year, Glen Grant [launched a 60-year-old single malt](#) to honour its master distiller, [Dennis Malcolm](#).

Last November, Gordon & MacPhail [debuted a one-off Scotch whisky collection](#) of rare bottlings priced at £100,000.

Cotswolds Distillery plans 'significant' expansion

28 JANUARY 2022 By Alice Brooker

UK-based Cotswolds Distillery has revealed plans to expand its distillery, which will see it become the largest producer of English whisky.



The distillery will be commissioned over the summer in 2022

The expansion, which is taking place at the producer's site near Shipston-on-Stour in England, will enable the distillery to produce 500,000 litres of alcohol per year. The Cotswolds Distillery [raised £1.5 \(US\\$1.8m\) million for expansion in 2017](#). It will be commissioned over the summer of 2022.

Founder Daniel Szor said: "Since the launch of Cotswolds Single Malt Whisky in 2017, its spectacular growth in popularity has proven its ability to drive our premium brand both nationally and across key international markets.

"The long-term nature of whisky production, combined with our ambition to remain at the forefront of the fast-growing English whisky movement for years to come, is behind our decision to significantly upscale our whisky production.

"The priority for this ambitious expansion is retaining our signature quality and deliciousness and continuing to highlight our beautiful Cotswold homeland." Szor is leading the Cotswolds Distillery's international growth in the company's core markets, which include the US, France and Germany.

The distillery said it achieved sales growth of 30% in volume and 35% in value in 2021, compared with 2020.

[Cotswolds Single Malt Whisky](#) grew by 122% in the off-trade year on year in the 12 months leading up to 15 January 2022.

As part of the expansion, the distillery has appointed Lynsey Eades as international sales and global travel retail director, to spearhead growth in international and travel retail markets.

Eades previously held positions at consumer goods firm Mars, Rémy Cointreau and Godiva Chocolatier.

Cotswolds Signature Single Malt Whisky is available in Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose stores across the UK.

OUR FAVORITE BEGINNER SCOTCH WHISKY PICKS

BY STEPHANIE MORENO - January 28, 2022

Welcome to the club! You've decided to add Scotch whisky to your drinking repertoire and we couldn't be more thrilled to assist. Admittedly, Scotch whisky can be a bit daunting for beginners who aren't used to some of the flavors — not to mention the pronunciations of some of the brand names. But there is a wide range of accessible whiskies in the Scotch whisky world, despite what you may have heard. Most beginner Scotch whisky drinkers will want to start with whiskies that contain little or no peat smoke flavors (we'll cover that a bit later).

Naturally one of the first things to consider is the price. But you needn't spend a great deal of money on your selections. You're dipping your toes in the water so to speak so buying rare or old Scotch whisky bottles isn't really necessary. There are plenty of everyday single malts near the \$50 mark with around 10-12 years of aging to them that are perfectly suitable. For blended Scotch whisky, you'll find many great picks for around \$30 a bottle.

When tasting, try to focus on the flavors that you find pleasant, and perhaps even more importantly, on those tastes that you don't enjoy. Jot down the flavors and aromas that come to mind. This way you'll have a reference to look at while training your taste buds and building your Scotch whisky collections. Of course Distiller has a great way to keep your tasting notes and ratings together. Simply add them to our spirit listings in the links below.

Our suggestions for beginner Scotch whisky brands to try are each widely available and moderately priced. We can't wait to hear what you think!

[GLENFIDDICH 12 YEAR](#)

The brand's flagship expression is aged for 12 years in American and European oak barrels and then allowed to mellow in an oak vat before bottling. Glenfiddich is Gaelic for "Valley of the Deer," hence the stag on the label.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Cooked pears, gentle spice and vanilla



Glenfiddich 12 Year /Photo Credit: Glenfiddich

ABERFELDY 12 YEAR

The majority of the whisky made at this Highlands distillery is used for [Dewar's](#), a widely popular blended Scotch whisky that you may also try as a beginner.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Honey, toasted nuts and oak

OLD PULTENEY 12 YEAR

Known as the Maritime Malt due to the proximity of its dunnage warehouses to the North Sea, this whisky was aged for 12 years in ex-bourbon casks.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Toasted cereal, vanilla and brine

GLENMORANGIE THE ORIGINAL 10 YEAR

After distilling in Scotland's tallest stills, The Original is aged for 10 years in American oak barrels.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Orange, vanilla and cream

AUCHENTOSHAN AMERICAN OAK

Unlike most single malt whiskies in Scotland, Auchentoshan is triple rather than double distilled.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Coconut, citrus and vanilla

CHIVAS REGAL 12 YEAR

Just after Prohibition in 1938, the brand launched this 12 Year blended Scotch whisky. Notably, the brand updated its packaging this month with a more contemporary design and taller bottle.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Apples, butterscotch and cinnamon

READY FOR PEAT?

While you're tasting your way through these beginner Scotch whisky bottles, you may find yourself wanting more bold flavors. It is at this point you should start to consider peated whiskies. If you're unfamiliar with peat, we've got a [primer here for you](#). But flavorwise, peated whiskies have tasting notes such as menthol, seaweed, brine, earth and campfire smoke, in addition to all of the other whisky flavors.

And while there are many peated whiskies which will punch your taste buds into submission, whisky makers can adjust the amount of peat in their creations through various production methods. In short, not every peated whisky is one to be feared.

Here are a few peated beginner Scotch whisky picks to explore.

JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL

Johnnie Walker Black was so named in 1909 as customers had started to order its bottles by the label's color. Aged 12 years, it's made from a blend of over three dozen distilleries, including peated single malt distilleries such as Talisker and Lagavulin but also the unsung hero [Cardhu](#).

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Moderate peat, toffee and vanilla cream



Johnnie Walker Black Label /Photo Credit: Johnnie Walker

HIGHLAND PARK 12 YEAR VIKING HONOUR

The climate on the Orkney Islands where Highland Park is located is quite windy and sea swept creating a dismal environment for trees. As such, the Orcadian peat bogs have more heather, grass and plants than those on Islay.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Orange honey, dates and gentle peat.

BOWMORE 12 YEAR

Located on the Isle of Islay which is known for its peated single malt whisky distilleries, Bowmore offers a moderate peat level, especially compared with powerhouses like Ardbeg and Laphroaig.

FLAVORS TO LOOK FOR:

Salted caramel, beef jerky and mild smoke

Glenfarclas 105 comp winner talks whisky ambitions

31 JANUARY 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Bartender Dan Jones stormed to victory in the Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength contest – his first competition final. He discusses his dream to go from cocktail connoisseur to Scotch whisky master.



Dan

Jones impressed the judges in the Glenfarclas 105 cocktail competition **This feature was originally published in the October 2021 issue of The Spirits Business magazine.*

For Dan Jones, [winning the second Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength Competition](#) was an invaluable experience. "This is the first time I've been to a final, so to go straight through and win it is odd," the London-born bartender explains.

The self-confessed whisky geek triumphed at the final in Edinburgh in September 2021, beating seven bartenders from acclaimed venues such as Swift and The Connaught.

Jones took inspiration from his family in Essex for one of his winning cocktails, a Highball called Never Far From Home that was made with ingredients from his

family's farm, as well as rose water, a nod to his sister Rose. "Making a Highball well balanced is difficult," he says. His second cocktail, Darwin's Rob Roy, was made with Glenfarclas 105 fat-washed with citrus-infused olive oil, Belsazar Rosé Vermouth, sugar syrup, homemade truffle and orange bitters, and balsamic vinegar, all garnished with a crostini and cherry gel. It was based on the theme of 1836, when the distillery was established, but the drink could have turned out differently: "I had a different idea; I thought I would do a cocktail that evolved using reverse spherification that would add a thin film and release the liquid by popping it. So for the Rob Roy you could pop the drink to add more sweet vermouth. It was a logistical nightmare if I had to transport it from Bristol to Edinburgh, so I abandoned that idea."



Jones' Never Far From Home Highball

Jones' presentation skills were highly commended by the judges, with the bartender sticking to the 10-minute time limit while divulging knowledge of the brand.

"I don't like to learn stuff off by heart for competitions as it can come off really stiff. I love public speaking; I was a drama nerd as a teenager. I tried to focus on the drinks that I'm making. I know it well and I spent ages making it. I've talked to guests about it."

Jones, who is bar supervisor at Bristol's Klosterhaus, is adamant about remaining on the competition circuit. "Competitions will be something I do more of," he says. "I fell in love with the industry very quickly. I was bar-backing and now I'm winning cocktail competitions."

Like many bartenders, Jones' entry into the industry was a happy accident. While studying philosophy at the University of Bristol, Jones started as a weekend bar back at The Florist in 2019, part of the New World Trading Company. His ambition to progress in the industry saw him compete in a Marti Miller's gin competition. "I was still a bar back but I was already thinking a career in the industry was good fun, so I made a twist on a Mimosa and I came third. I was the plucky bar back that gave it a shot," he says. "I really wanted to be a bartender."

Daunting challenge

Jones moved up the ranks to become head bartender at The Florist, but the pandemic hit and he was placed on furlough "for a really long time". During this time, he jumped ship to join the opening team at German-inspired restaurant Klosterhaus, a new D&D London venue in Bristol, in September 2020. "It was daunting because we had all these big shots from London and I had only worked one job at The Florist where everyone was trained there," he adds.

However, the venue was forced to close within a month of opening when the second lockdown came into force in England during November. "By mid-October we were wondering if this place was going to survive the lockdown," he says. "I had taken a risk moving. I was thinking whether it was the right move to make, and in the end it was."

At Klosterhaus, Jones says the team was "handed the keys to the kingdom" in terms of creating the cocktail menu: "It's an opportunity I wouldn't get if I was in those high-end bars in London."

"The good thing about D&D is that none of the sites are part of a chain, while benefitting from the protection of a parent company, so we have control over the menu."

Jones and the team are finalising a new cocktail menu for October with a winter theme. The aim is to launch a new menu every six months, Jones tells me. "We've come up with some twists on classic, winter-themed drinks and some really out-there cocktails," he says. "We've got a cocktail that is duck-fat-washed Bourbon with mushroom-infused Campari and red vermouth – a wintry, dark twist on a Negroni."

There's also a Kirsch Daiquiri, made with homemade rosemary syrup, cherry bitters and Havana Club 7, and a twist on a Margarita using burnt passionfruit syrup, Tequila, mezcal and lime juice.



Klosterhaus opened in September 2020

Career moves

While he could see himself making the move to London in a few years' time to work at one of the city's top watering holes, Jones' ultimate goal is a career in spirits.

"I don't want to go down the management route," he says. "I like making drinks and designing them. Every bartender has a dream to open their own bar. That being said, I'd love to work in the Scotch industry, ideally production. I'm really passionate about tasting whisky and creating the product."

"I'm interested in the subtleties of how you can change the flavour of a Scotch; it's so alluring to me. It's still so people-focused. Learning from those people would be a fantastic thing to do. I'd love to do brand ambassador stuff as well." Jones' passion for spirits also saw him launch a spirits review website, The Spirits Somm, with a friend in the industry.

It's fitting then that his prize for winning the Glenfarclas competition is a two-day trip to the Scottish distillery itself, where he'll be shown the ropes. "Glenfarclas will be my first visit to a distillery. I'm very excited," he enthuses.

Whisky Review: Compass Box Orchard House Blended Malt

[John Dover](#) - | January 26, 2022

To blend, or not to blend. That is the question. And when it comes to [blended whisky](#), it is important to differentiate a blended whisky from a blended malt. A blended whisky combines malt and grain whiskies, while a blended malt—such as Compass Box's Orchard House—combines various malt whiskies.

London-based [Compass Box](#) does both styles of blending. I am generally pulled in by the brand's attention to detail, and the fact that the blending is done to carefully marry flavors rather than stretch more flavorful malt whisky with milder grain. Much like a jazz musician pulls from the sounds from their band mates when crafting solos, Compass Box approaches their craft with intention and an open-minded palate. Helmed by John Glaser, the creative minds at Compass Box appear to strive for an elevation of established flavor profiles to find their balance in their spirits. This philosophy, in my opinion, tends to deliver a higher quality product.

Among the latest releases from the Whiskymakers (their coined term for their craft) at [Compass Box is Orchard House](#), a blended malt that is a "monument to fresh fruitiness in Scotch whisky." What I found in my glass was both unique and engaging.

The blending of Orchard House incorporates single malts from all over the lands of Scotland. They join their varied characteristics into an integrated pour where no singular element sticks out.



Compass Box Orchard House (image via John Dover)

Tasting Notes: [Compass Box Orchard House](#)

Vital Stats: A combination of single malts and a malt blend from the following: Clynelish Distillery, A Distillery near the town of Aberlour, Highland malt blend

(Glen Moray, Balmenach, and Tomatin distilleries), Caol Ila, The Benrinnes Distillery, The Linkwood Distillery. Non-chill filtered. 46% alcohol. Suggested retail pricing around \$51

Appearance: Light golden hay

Nose: A light fruity nose, with notes of Bosc pear, apple, a hint of citrus, and soft caramel,

Palate: The mouthfeel is silky and luxurious. The flavors are given a platform to develop and linger, allowing the sipper to explore the aftertaste as well as the actual drink. It has a very light and delicate fruitiness, with ok, peat, and a hint of white pepper. The spice lingers, but is balanced. Fruits hit the middle of the tongue with ripe pear, baked apples, and just a hint of raisin.

Peat hits the back of the tongue and coats the flavors in a soft blanket of doused campfire. The peat is more present than I expected it to be from the push of fruit they are working to express through this blend. Yet it is not a medicinal smokiness that comes through. The campfire was built with apple wood, cherry wood, and maple bark, giving it a soft smokiness that makes for a gentle introduction to peat flavor to those that are not up for the boldness of Islay-style malts.

Over ice, a suggested serve from the brand, the whisky's fruit notes come forward, especially the orange and other citrus notes. The smoke is pushed to the back of the flavor profile, but still is at the party. The spice notes are also still there, but their punch is suppressed just a bit so you get the waft of cinnamon and clove in the nose as you drink it, but less of the bite of those flavors.

The Takeaway - Summary

For the price and amount of flavor packed into this bottle, I would recommend it to anyone looking for an interesting flavor profile that will appeal to many palates. I experienced a nice balance of fruit, but found more peat than I expected. That is not a negative for my personal preferences, but if you are looking for a fruit-forward, sweet Scotch whisky, you might be left wondering if you grabbed the right bottle. The good thing is, the payoff for the other flavors is well worth the slight misalignment between the marketing and the experience.

Membership and Dinner prices for 2021-2022

Membership Fee:	\$50 (singles)
	\$75 (couples)
One Time Initiation Fee:	\$15
Standard Dinner Fee:	\$90 (member)
	\$100 (non-member)

Reservation policy

- The agreement with the Kitchen's requires that we provide five (5) business days notice for them to guarantee accommodation for our requested numbers. To accommodate the Kitchen's needs and meet our obligation with them; our members are requested to respond to the emailed invitation five (5) business days prior to the respective dinner to guarantee a seat at the dinner. Following the RSVP date members will be placed on a waitlist.
- For these individuals the process will be as follows, using the Monday September 20th, 2021 dinner date as an example:
- Dinner invitations will be sent out Friday August 20th, 2021. Please respond to me (rdifazio04@gmail.com) in the form of an e-transfer. I will then acknowledge that you have a seat. Please understand that if you do not receive a response you are not guaranteed a seat at the respective dinner. In such circumstances (e.g., computer glitches) please e-mail me again or call me (613-532-5285).
- Once payment is received I will send a confirmation and your seat will be guaranteed reserved.
- An RSVP only does not guarantee the seat and if there is a waiting list, you run the risk of losing your seat.
- Unless otherwise stated accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 3rd, 2021 @ 6pm or until capacity is achieved.
- Please keep in mind until further notice our maximum attendance will be capped at 40. So delays run the risk of your missing out.

Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Friday September 3rd, 2021 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Friday September 3rd, 2021 @ 6pm and Monday September 20th, 2021 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$90). 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 20th, 2021 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$90). A member will be responsible for their guest's cancellation (\$100).

- If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Friday September 3rd, 2021 @ 6pm and Monday September 20th, 2021 their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.

Dinner Payments

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

Assigned / Reserved Seating

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

Perfume / Cologne and Whisky

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

Just a note because we care.

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



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Whisky of the Year

Lagavulin 11 year old Offerman Edition: Guinness Cask Finish

46% • \$80

PANEL RATING 95 • ISLAY SINGLE MALT SCOTCH

Inspired by actor and comedian Nick Offerman's devotion to Lagavulin single malt scotch, Islay distillery Lagavulin debuted its first Offerman Edition in 2019. A second Offerman release appeared in the spring of 2021—an 11 year old like the first, but with four months of finishing in Guinness casks. Amid a crowded field of ultra-aged, barrel proof, and many other formidable contenders, this stout cask-finished expression emerged from the pack to become our 2021 Whisky of the Year.

While the 16 year old Lagavulin is generally considered the classic of the range, many Lagavulin fans prefer the younger expressions. The Lagavulin 12 year old, for example, has made frequent appearances in the Diageo Special Releases annual series, and the 2017 version landed at number-four in our Top 20. But could an even younger expression—and one with a simple beer cask finish to boot—possibly compare to the stately, sherried depth of the oldest Lagavulins on the shelf? The answer was a resounding yes.

At first whiff, it's Lagavulin alright—but somehow brighter and more playful. The peat smoke and maritime salinity become wrapped in the freshness of fragrant citrus, melding with honeyed vanilla and white chocolate. On the palate, a subtle backdrop of peat embers harmonizes with flavors of toffee and baked orange, leading to a nimbly smoked finish that sings with notes of coffee and chocolate, and just goes on and on. That finish truly became the clincher for our tasters. It showed that while this whisky charts its own lively course, it is anything but straightforward—and loses none of Lagavulin's famed depth and complexity.

While peated scotch devotees are among the most loyal whisky fans in the world, we recognize that peat is not always for everyone. Yet with its artfully cheerful style and an abundance of captivating flavors, we believe this whisky bridges that divide.

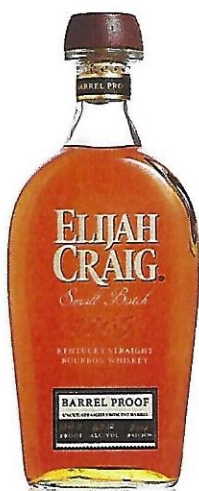
—David Fleming



TOASTING FIVE YEARS

Whisky Advocate looks back at our Top 20 selections over the years

WHISKIES OF THE YEAR



2017
Elijah Craig
Barrel Proof
(B517)

UNITED STATES
A 12 year old bourbon
bottled at barrel strength.



2018
Nikka From the
Barrel

JAPAN
A blend of over 100
different whiskies.



2019
George Dickel
13 Year Old
Bottled in Bond

UNITED STATES
Ultra-aged Tennessee
whiskey at an amazing
price.



2020
Larceny Barrel
Proof (B520)

UNITED STATES
The softness of this
wheated bourbon balances
its hefty proof.



2021
Lagavulin
Offerman
Edition:
Guinness Cask

SCOTLAND
A remarkably playful,
complex Islay single malt.

In 2017, *Whisky Advocate* revamped its annual awards system, streamlining a previously multi-faceted program into a single honors list of great whiskies—our Top 20 Whiskies of the Year. We now mark the fifth year of our Top 20 list, which means that a total of 100 whiskies have made the grade. This presents a good moment to look back on the stars that have shined the brightest.

Our pinnacle honor, Whisky of the Year, has gone to an American whiskey in three of the past five years—Elijah Craig Barrel Proof in 2017, George Dickel 13 year old Bottled In Bond in 2019, and Larceny Barrel Proof in 2020. Those winning whiskeys each had something exciting to offer—Elijah Craig with its new barrel proof departure, Dickel 13 as ultra-aged Tennessee whiskey at an amazing price, and Larceny Barrel Proof as a wheated whiskey with

Most and Least Expensive Winners by Year

2017	
Chivas Regal Ultis • \$160	
Expressions from Ardbeg, Crown Royal, Elijah Craig, Rebel Yell, Sheep Dip • \$60	
2018	
Glendalough 13 year old Mizunara Cask • \$120	
High West Double Rye! (Batch 18A23) • \$35	
2019	
Glenlivet Enigma • \$149	
George Dickel 13 year old Bottled in Bond (Fall 2005) • \$36	
2020	
Macallan 15 year old Double Cask • \$135	
Old Overholt Bottled in Bond • \$25	
2021	
Wild Turkey Master's Keep One • \$175	
Wheel Horse Straight Bourbon (Batch 1) • \$30	

Winners by Country

United States	39
Scotland	34
Ireland	10
Japan	6
Canada	3
India	2
England	1
France	1
Israel	1
Mexico	1
Sweden	1
Wales	1

JEFF HARRIS



THREE TIME WINNERS



Compass Box

Spice Tree Extravaganza 2017
The Peat Monster 2020
No Name No. 3 2021



Glenmorangie

Astar 2017
14 year old Quinta Ruban 2019
15 year old The Cadboll Estate 2020



Wild Turkey

Master's Keep Decades 2017
Rare Breed Barrel Proof Rye 2020
Master's Keep One 2021

TWO TIME WINNERS

Ardbeg

An Oa • 2017
Wee Beastie • 2020

Bruichladdich

Islay Barley 2010 • 2017
Bere Barley 2010 • 2019

Crown Royal

Noble Collection Wine Barrel Finished • 2017
Noble Collection 13 year old Blenders' Mash • 2018

Elijah Craig

Small Batch Barrel Proof • 2017
Small Batch Rye • 2020

George Dickel

13 year old Bottled in Bond (Distilled Fall 2005) • 2019
8 year old Bourbon • 2021

GlenDronach

15 year old Revival • 2018
PortWood • 2021

High West

Campfire • 2017
Double Rye! • 2018

Jack Daniel's

Single Barrel Heritage Barrel • 2018
10 year old • 2021

Kentucky Peerless

Straight Rye • 2017
Double Oak • 2021

Knob Creek

Cask Strength Rye • 2018
12 year old Bourbon • 2020

Lagavulin

12 year old (Diageo Special Release 2017) • 2017
11 year old Offerman Edition: Guinness Cask • 2021

Laphroaig

10 year old Cask Strength • 2018
Cardeas Cask Strength Triple Wood • 2019

Little Book

The Easy • 2017
Noe Simple Task • 2018

Macallan

12 year old Double Cask • 2017
15 year old Double Cask • 2020

Nikka

From the Barrel • 2018
Taketsuru Pure Malt • 2021

Port Charlotte

10 year old • 2018
Pac:01 2011 • 2021

Rampur

Select • 2017
Asava • 2021

Teeling

Single Pot Still • 2020
Blackpitts • 2021

its soft tones integrating beautifully as a barrel proof expression. The two non-American winners have been Nikka From the Barrel in 2018, and Lagavulin Offerman Edition: Guinness Cask Finish—the first scotch to finish at number one. Our panel was wowed by this 11 year old, with its remarkable softness and complexity.

Not surprisingly, American and scotch whiskies have dominated the overall list. But there has been plenty of variety. Labels from Ireland and Japan have played a role, as have entrants from non-traditional whisky making countries. Some whiskies have even crossed borders, combining liquid from more than one country in their blend—specifically High West Campfire, Virginia Distillery Co. Cider Cask, and Little Book Noe Easy Task.

We've had numerous two-time winners from distillers in our Top 20. We've also had some three-time winners—Compass Box, Glenmorangie, and WildTurkey—all with different expressions.

When it comes to price, our Top 20 whiskies have always cast a wide net. Our 2019 Whisky of the Year, for example, carried a retail price of just \$36. The highest-priced entry ever is this year's number-10 whisky, Wild Turkey Master's Keep One (\$175). Prices have ranged from \$25 to the mid-\$100 range, providing opportunities across the pricing spectrum for big spenders, bargain hunters, and everyone in between. Indeed, our aim has never been to build a list of the year's most precious whiskies. We seek to choose the best, most exciting whiskies that people will be able to buy

and enjoy. We do make occasional exceptions and go higher on price, however, bearing in mind that whisky lovers are sometimes looking to spend a bit more, or are searching out ideas on what might make the perfect whisky gift.

Looking back at all the Top 20 lists, perhaps the most noteworthy aspect is that many of the whiskies are from distilleries and labels that did not even exist 20 years ago—names like Balcones, Drumshanbo, Glendalough, High Coast, M&H, Nelson's Green Brier, Penderyn, Teeling, Virginia Distillery Co., West Cork, and others. Notwithstanding all the tradition and all the venerable distilleries, the whisky world is in a constant state of renewal and change.

—David Fleming

WHISKY WITH...



Get Cheesy with Whisky

The U.S. produces more cheese annually than France, Italy, and Switzerland combined. That statistic is according to Afrim Pristine, maître fromager, or cheese master, and owner of Cheese Boutique in Toronto, where he oversees the sale of some 44 tons of cheese each year. Of course, that's not the same as having the greatest variety of cheeses, a title that goes to France. But still, the prodigious output of the U.S. is impressive.

Further, Pristine says that from "about 1995 to 2002," North Americans finally started to explore the full scope of that cheese. "I saw it firsthand," he recalls, "People stopped buying the same cheese every time and became much more interested in trying different varieties."

While trying new cheeses is never a bad thing, Pristine notes that it can lead to disappointment. "I tell my customers to buy

smaller pieces and shop more often," he says, "Cheese doesn't go bad, but when people overbuy and it sits around too long, it just won't taste the way it should."

For storing the cheese you do buy, Pristine suggests avoiding plastic wrap, which can dry out the cheese, and resealable zipper-closure bags, which cause the cheese to sweat. Instead, he recommends wrapping the cheese first in parchment or waxed paper and then in aluminum foil, since the parchment will allow the cheese to breathe while the foil will protect it from absorbing other odors in the fridge and also keep your vegetables from smelling like cheese.

When serving, Pristine says that the longer you can leave it outside of the fridge, "two, three, or even eight hours," the better it will taste. Which is precisely how I approached my tasting of what Pristine identifies as the

six basic groupings of cheese: goat/sheep, semi-firm, washed rind, bloomy rind, hard/aged, and blue.

Cheeses made from goat's or sheep's milk tend to be more delicate in flavor than those made from cow's milk, so weighty whiskeys like bourbons and straight ryes should generally be avoided. With goat's milk cheese in particular, the relative lightness and almost paradoxical depth of an Irish whiskey containing a high proportion of pot still spirit makes great gastronomic sense.

For a youthful gouda, my semi-firm cheese, I sought a complementary relationship in a fruity, sherry wood-aged single malt, and found it in Macallan 12 year old Double Cask. The sherry accents play perfectly against the nutty flavors of the cheese, while the richness of the gouda draws out complex fruit and vanilla notes in the whisky.

(As an aside, balanced Scottish single malts, not too peaty or rich, seem to pair best with a wide variety of cheeses, as you might find on a typical cheese board.)

Washed-rind cheeses, like the French chaumes I sampled, tend to have big aromas—some call them "stinky"—but rather mild flavors, which require spirits of subtle complexity and soft bouquet, the toffee-ish Crown Royal XO fitting this bill quite deliciously. For cheeses with bloomy rinds, such as Bries and Camemberts, which often feature saltiness and acidity from the rind, a bolder and sweeter partner makes the most sense, like Woodford Reserve Double Oaked matched with the classic Brie de Meaux.

Finally, I returned to Scotland to find pairings for both my hard/aged and blue cheeses, hardly surprising since classics of both camps, cheddar and Stilton, were born not far from where the whiskies evolved. In general, I find that Speyside malts favor mature, firm cheeses and peatier Island whiskies complement blues, although full and round bourbons also benefit the latter.

—Stephen Beaumont



Chabichou du Poitou with Redbreast 12 year old

The dryness of this weeks-old chèvre draws forward the whiskey's sweetness, while the spirit accentuates the fruitiness of the cheese.



3 year old Cheddar with Glenlivet 12 year old

The creaminess of the cheddar is underscored by the whisky, while the cheese heightens the nutty, fruity flavors of the malt.



Colston Bassett Stilton with Talisker 10 year old

England's legendary blue cheese meets a Scottish partner in strength and assertiveness, to the flavorful benefit of both parties.



INFORMER

Scotch Whisky's Journey

How does that bottle get from the distillery to you? A look at the long voyage

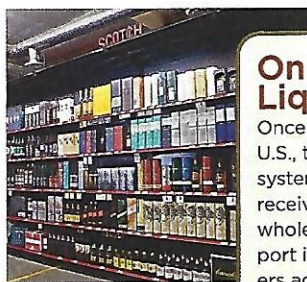
* add a few months
if you live in
Canada
* add a few ⁺⁺ if
you rely on LCBO

Barrel to Bottle Scotch distillers store their casks in large warehouses that stretch from the southern counties of Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire all the way up to the Highlands. The biggest scotch whisky producer, Diageo, has its main warehouse in Clackmannanshire (near Edinburgh), which holds over 3.5 million casks. Most bottling plants are located within a 35-mile radius of Glasgow, and that is where the bottled scotch is kept, awaiting its overseas journey.



Time to Travel When it's time to go, logistics companies—usually Malcolm Group or Russell Group, which dominate that business in Scotland—drive the bottled scotch to port. The U.S.-bound whisky usually sails from Greenock Ocean Terminal, west of Glasgow on Scotland's coast, though shippers can also use Grangemouth near Edinburgh. But neither are deep-water facilities, so feeder vessels must sail the whisky to the deep-sea ports of Liverpool, Southampton, London Gateway, Teesport, and Felixstowe in England—or Rotterdam and Antwerp in Europe—for the ocean voyage.

Sailing The Ocean Blue One of the main ocean routes for U.S.-bound scotch is from Liverpool to New York and New Jersey, though other U.S. destinations include Los Angeles, Long Beach, Houston, Oakland, Miami, and Port Everglades. The journey to New York takes about 10 to 20 days, while it's 40 days to Los Angeles. Lately, however, supply-chain woes have been delaying arrivals by two weeks or more.



Sources include the Scotch Whisky Association, Diageo, Compass Box, Russell Group, Malcolm Group, and Kühne Logistics University

On to the Local Liquor Store

Once the whisky arrives in the U.S., the market's three-tier system takes over. Importers receive and disburse it to wholesalers, who then transport it, state by state, to retailers across the nation. Thus the precious liquid arrives, ready for you to buy and take to its final destination—your home.

—Zak Kostro



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MIKE WILKINSON/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES; EMILY KATE ROEMER; MARCO MCGINTY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Refresher Course

Fight tasting fatigue by cleansing and resetting your palate

One of a whisky drinker's greatest joys is variety: Grain, barrel, distilling technique, and time combine in so many unique ways that there's no chance of getting bored. No, the main peril in tasting an array of whiskies is getting tired.

Anyone who has spent an evening sharing bottles among friends and jumping from sherried scotch to barrel-proof bourbon knows this feeling. The tongue gets numb, flavors start to blend together, and subtle aromas disappear in a haze of sensory overload. This is palate fatigue, and the way to combat it is by cleansing and resetting.

To understand the importance of a good palate cleanse, it helps to know what's going on in your mouth when sipping whisky. Stick out your tongue. See the bumps on it? Those are papillae, each with a tiny pore on the surface about the width of a hair. Within the papillae are taste receptors. Whisky that goes into your mouth floods those papillae, and until it's flushed out, its flavors remain. There are also mushroom-shaped papillae at the back of the tongue whose undersides are lined with taste buds, a formation that can trap flavor molecules. Nancy Rawson, associate director and vice president of the

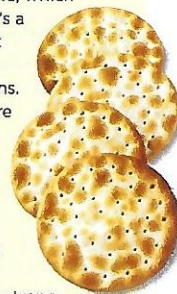


Keep It Simple

Since the goal is to reset your palate to neutral between whiskies, the best cleansers are also neutral. Rawson recommends sparkling water, which helps "to physically disrupt the surface of the tongue and flush the molecules out," but still water is fine as well. Avoid flavored waters or those with high mineral content, and make sure the water is at room temperature.

Rawson also suggests unsalted crackers, such as water crackers, matzos, or unsalted rice crackers, which stimulate salivation. "There's a lot of proteins in saliva that help bind things and then wash them out," she explains. Salted crackers can interfere with your ability to detect salty or briny flavors in the whisky, so should be avoided. Plain white bread can do in a pinch.

Whatever you do, before and during a tasting, avoid disrupting your palate with strong flavors like coffee, spicy foods, or highly fatty foods that can stick around on your tongue for a long time.



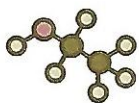
Monell Chemical Senses Center, describes it as "crawling into a cave. The molecules can get in there, but one or two swallows isn't going to get them all out again."

Alcohol is especially "sticky" on the palate, as it's fat-soluble and thus penetrates the tissue, leading to physical effects as well as the chemical reactions that allow you to detect flavor. The burning or numbness in your mouth from a high-proof whisky occurs because the trigeminal nerve, which carries pain and temperature sensations, is stimulated. "Alcohol can be a little bit harder to get out" of the palate than other substances, Rawson says, although she notes that size works in its favor: Alcohol molecules are small and can be washed away with just water.

For numbness, however, there's nothing to do but wait for the nerve to reset itself, which usually takes 15 to 30 seconds but can take up to a few minutes. "Err on the side of longer cleansing," Rawson advises. "If you're trying to rush...the nerves might be partially recovered, but not fully recovered, so that's going to catch up over time."

—Susannah Skiver Barton

Optimize Your Reset Strategy



Consider Complexity

Whisky's flavor molecules are carried by alcohol, so the higher the proof, the more flavor that's packed in—and the more cleansing and recovery time you'll likely need.



Take Your Time

Resting between whiskies gives your senses and nerves a chance to reset. The more recovery time they get between pours, the more drams you can enjoy tasting without hitting a wall.



Don't Neglect Your Nose

Your nose has far more sensory receptors than your tongue, making it key to tasting, but detecting odors is energetically demanding. Pause and sniff your wrist—you can't smell your own body scent—to reset it.



Know Thyself

Everyone's palate is different, even anatomically. Some people have more taste papillae than others, or a stickier tongue. Rawson suggests trying different rest times between whiskies to see what's best for your individual situation.



An Added Perc

Whisky barrel-aged coffee is an eye-opening experience

Coffee and whisky make a pleasing pair, serving up some complementary flavors and aromas. The popularity of the two together has also become evident in the way roasters and distillers have joined forces on whisky-flavored coffees and coffee-infused whiskies. But there's yet another way that coffee and whisky lovers can get their fix: barrel-aged coffees.

Coffee roasters big and small are turning to whisky distillers for used barrels to age their beans. "When we tried aging them in barrels for the first time, I was shocked that the end result was so interesting and balanced," says Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea Co. founder Mané Alves. "I thought the whisky flavor would overwhelm the coffee, but it was wonderful. It had the nuances of the whisky but none of the alcohol."

Even more so than other types of whisky-flavored coffee—which can be infused or feature artificial flavoring—barrel-aged variants are oftentimes deeply reminiscent of the whiskies they share ties with, imparting rich vanilla and caramel flavors, and packing a heavy aromatic punch. Rest assured, though: You can drink these upon waking, as the roasting process takes all of the alcohol out of the beans.

Coffee Junkie Crown Royal Barrel Aged \$15/8 oz.

These single origin beans were aged in barrels that the roaster wet with Crown Royal whisky—the barrels did not come directly from the brand, as the others on this list did. Once roasted, the coffee takes on hints of oak and whisky from the barrel, as well as plenty of warm baking spices. coffeeandteajunkie.com

Doma Whiskey Barrel Aged \$12/12 oz.

Doma Roasting Co. uses Brazilian yellow bourbon, catuai, and acaia coffee beans and ages them in seasoned barrels from Spokane, Washington-based Dry Fly Distilling. The barrels once held the distillery's oat whiskey, delivering flavors of molasses, vanilla, caramel, and brown sugar. A muted acidity is balanced by pleasant sweetness and a thick body. domacoffee.com

Cooper's Cask Single Malt Whiskey Barrel Aged \$30/12 oz.

This Rhode Island-based coffee roaster puts its single-origin Sumatra Lintong coffee beans in barrels that once held Sons of Liberty Uprising American single malt. The beans then get a medium-dark roast, adding to the intensity of the coffee's flavor, which is rooted in woody earthiness, tobacco, tropical fruits, and caramel. cooperscoffeco.com

Oak & Bond Coffee Co. Scotch Whisky Barrel Aged \$25/10 oz.

Scotch whisky barrels sourced from a variety of distillers were used to age 100% arabica coffee beans. The barrels once held both peated and unpeated single malt scotches, imparting the coffee with some sweet fruitiness, as well as milk chocolate, honey, and raspberry flavors. oakandbondcoffee.com

Pappy & Company Bourbon Barrel Aged \$22/12 oz.

This coffee is the result of a partnership between Louisville-based wholesale coffee roaster Gold Folks Coffee and Pappy & Company, a bourbon-inspired retail and culinary brand owned by the famed Van Winkle bourbon family. It starts with small batch, single-origin Guatemalan beans, which are then aged in Pappy Van Winkle bourbon barrels, resulting in bold wood flavors and a strong but palatable sweetness. pappyandco.com

Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea Co. WhistlePig Barrel Aged \$18/12 oz.

These medium-roast South American coffee beans were aged for several months in WhistlePig Boss Hog straight rye barrels. The resulting coffee takes on peppery, fruity flavors, which are akin to those found in the whiskey. Notes of brown sugar and cardamom abound. vartisan.com

—Julia Higgins

When a Whisky Leaves the Scene

When a distillery discontinues a cherished expression, or even when it makes a packaging change, a sense of disappointment and nostalgia usually ripples through the whisky community. A revamp of a distillery's lineup can seem like a minor tragedy when it involves the elimination of your favorite whisky. Upon receiving the news, you join other latecomers in chasing the last bottles as they vanish from stores. Often, whisky drinkers resort to auctions to secure replacement bottles of these discontinued favorites. And for people more interested in supplying high-demand whiskies to the secondary market, a vanished label can mean a big profit opportunity.

The lost label lament grew louder as no-age-statement whiskies swept through scotch ranges over the past decade, as distilleries reacted to rocketing demand by resorting to limited editions and Travel Retail offerings. Once they had allocated their mature stocks, they had no choice but to tap into casks of younger spirit to main-

tain their presence in the whisky boom. It's been a widespread problem, especially for scotch and Japanese whisky drinkers, with few ranges spared. You might recall when Mortlach 16 year old Flora & Fauna disappeared, Longmorn 15 year old was replaced by the 16 year old, Old Pulteney switched their 17 and 21 year old with 18 and 25 year olds, or how Scapa's age statement drifted up gradually from 10 to 16 years in 2-year increments before disappearing from labels all together.

The increased demand in the secondary market can elicit a jump in prices, leaving values sustained at three or four times higher than the last suggested retail price. Even when stocks reflate decades later, distillers usually prefer a fresh start—that's most likely why we have Ardbeg 19 year old Traigh Bhan rather than a reformulated Ardbeg 17 year old. Collectors should be vigilant of such moves, and savvy drinkers should stash away bottles of their favorites for their future drinking pleasure.

—Jonny McCormick

Closed Distillery Substitutes

While direct replacements may be too expensive or impossible to find, some shared aroma and flavor characteristics can be found in current standard distillery bottlings

CLOSED DISTILLERY	AROMA & FLAVOR	WORKING SUBSTITUTE
Banff	Sweet, oily, smoky	Ardmore
Brora	Smoke, leather books, spice	Clynelish
Caperdonich	Dried fruit, figs, smoke	Talisker
Coleburn	Dry, fruity, lemons	Glencadam
Convalmore	Honey, malty, waxiness	Aberfeldy
Dallas Dhu	Honey, oily, grassy	Benromach
Glen Albyn	Light, floral, dry	Miltoduff
Glen Mhor	Aromatic, licorice, spice	Mortlach
Glenlochy	Creamy, peat, vanilla	Port Charlotte
Glenugie	Butterscotch, florals, resin	Glen Deveron
Glenury Royal	Herbal, aromatic, oily	Glen Spey
Hillside	Aromatic, malty, clean	Teaninich
Imperial	Sweet, fruity, juicy	Cardhu
Littlemill	Desserts, dry, green apple	Aultmore
Lochside	Soft, floral, malty	Glen Moray
Millburn	Smoky, aromatic, drying	Jura
North Port	Dry, fruity, banana	Glenallachie
Pittyvaich	Spicy, oily, fruity	Tomintoul
Port Ellen	Pepper, lemon sherbet, smoky	Caol Ila
Rosebank	Light, aromatic, lemon	Bladnoch
St Magdalene	Grassy, perfumed, syrupy	Glenkinchie