

Kingston Single Malt Society

www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com

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

OCTOBER 19th, 2020

VOLUME 14; NUMBER 4



This evening's menu with Single Malts from
SPEYSIDE & ISLAY



MENU

1st Nosing: GLENDRONACH 2009 VINTAGE

(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

1st Course: Boquerones, Oranges, Fennel, Watercress,
Chilli-Citrus Vinaigrette

2nd Nosing: GLENDRONACH 10 YEAR OLD PORT WOOD

(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

2nd Course: Honey & Ginger Roasted Pumpkin & Bacon Soup

3rd Nosing: BUNNAHABHAIN 18 YEAR OLD

(introduced by: Karen Sargent)

4th Nosing: BUNNAHABHAIN MARRIAGE 27 YEAR OLD

(introduced by: Rob Arnoth)

3rd Course: Tomato & White Wine Braised Osso Bucco
with Saffron Risotto

5th Nosing: BENROMACH CHATEAU CISSAC

6th Nosing: BENROMACH CLASSIC VINTAGE CASK STRENGTH

(introduced by: Conrad Falkson)

4th Course: Black Chocolate Cake with a
Salted Caramel Butter Cream

COST OF THE MALTS

GLENDRONACH 2009 VINTAGE SINGLE MALT WHISKY LCBO

601872 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$125.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky,
43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

GLENDRONACH 10 YEAR OLD PORT WOOD LIMITED EDITION

LCBO 601872 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$129.95** Spirits, Scotch Whisky,
46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

BUNNAHABHAIN 18 YEAR OLD VINTAGES 37242 | 750 mL

bottle **Price: \$ 179.95** Spirits 43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

BUNNAHABHAIN MARRIAGE 27 YEAR OLD SINGLE MALTS OF

SCOTLAND LCBO 821726 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$335.98** Spirits,
Whisky/Whiskey 48.4% Alcohol/Vol.

BENROMACH CHATEAU CISSAC SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT **Distilled:**

2010; Bottled: 2018; LCBO 12615 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$96.75**

Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 45.0% Alcohol/Vol.

BENROMACH CLASSIC SPEYSIDE VINTAGE CASK

STRENGTH; BATCH 1; Distilled: 2008; Bottled: 2019; LCBO

12615 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$128.70** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey
57.84% Alcohol/Vol.

SEPTEMBER - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 32 September attendees @ \$80) = \$2480.00

September dinner 31 persons = \$55.00/ea = \$1743.25

(Money remaining for buying Single Malt) = \$736.75

Cost of Single Malts: = \$1010.00

Cost of Pours per Person = \$31.56

KSMS Monthly operational balance = (-\$273.25)

Cost per person 32 attendees (All inclusive) = \$88.81

WHISKY LIST

Taste Your Way Through the Scotch Whisky Regions

JUNE 3, 2020 - SUSANNAH SKIVER BARTON - FROM FALL 2019



Where a scotch is made determines how it tastes, right? Islay whiskies are peaty, Speysiders are honeyed and sherry-forward, and so on. The idea is practically foundational for many whisky lovers—but [it bears critical examination](#), especially when confronted with evidence to the contrary.

The road to formal recognition for scotch regions was a long one. In 1909, the UK government published the Report of the Royal Commission on Whisky and Other Potable Spirits, a comprehensive survey of Scottish and Irish distilleries that specified distinct whisky regions in Scotland, including the Highlands, Lowlands, Islay, Campbeltown, and Speyside. A century later, the [Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009 \(SWR\)](#) formalized three regions—Highlands, Lowlands, and Speyside—and two localities—Campbeltown and Islay—to boost scotch's [European Union geographical indication \(GI\)](#) and better protect its identity worldwide.

The SWR does not, however, make any claims about regional flavor or style. “That would be impossible to do and that is not what it is designed to do, and neither are the regional descriptions in the regulations there to characterize Scotch whisky in different quality ways,” says Alan Park, legal director at the [Scotch Whisky Association](#), which works with the industry, government, and global partners to protect scotch. “They’re there because Scotch whisky is a protected GI, and regions with reputation and character are entitled to that protection. Because Highland, Lowland, Speyside, Islay, and so on are such longstanding regions, we wanted to ensure they are protected in law from misuse and damage [to their] reputations.”

Over the last few decades, certain attributes have coalesced into definitions of regional style that are so widely accepted and well-promoted that both distillers and drinkers reference them. Here we explore scotch regions as they are generally understood—along with bottles that both illustrate and refute them.



SPEYSIDE

Technically a subregion of the Highlands; distilleries in this region can use either term on their labels. Speyside made its reputation in the 19th century, [driven by the popularity of Glenlivet](#)—still the leader of the pack—and similar single malts used heavily in blends.

Typical flavor profile: Fruity, honeyed, sherried, full, rich, and elegant
Whiskies that fit the Speyside profile: Glenlivet Archive 21 year old ([92 points](#)), Glen Moray 18 year old ([92 points](#)), Balvenie 12 year old DoubleWood ([88 points](#))

Atypical Speysiders: Craigellachie 13 year old ([90 points](#)), BenRiach 10 year old Curiositas ([87 points](#))

HIGHLANDS

The “little brother” to Speyside—despite encompassing it—the Highlands are often seen as less refined. The largest region by area, it technically also includes the islands (apart from Islay). Ideas of Highland style are the most varied among whisky drinkers and distillers.

Typical flavor profile: Sweet, floral, heathery, fruity, nutty, and malty
Whiskies that fit the Highland profile: Glenmorangie Astar 2017 Release ([94 points](#)), GlenDronach 15 year old Revival ([92 points](#)), Royal Brackla 16 year old ([88 points](#))

Atypical Highlanders: Ardmor Legacy ([87 points](#)), Tomatin Cù Bòcan ([85 points](#))

ISLAY

Islay’s modern whiskies are the most consistent with their predecessors, retaining the heavy peat character that defined them from the start. All Islay distilleries make peated whisky, although several, notably [Bunnahabhain](#) and [Bruichladdich](#), also make unpeated malt.

Typical flavor profile: Peaty, smoky, salty, iodine, seaweed, medicinal, and oily

Whiskies that fit the Islay profile: Ardbeg Corryvreckan ([95 points](#)), Lagavulin 16 year old ([93 points](#)), Laphroaig 10 year old ([92 points](#))

Atypical Ileachs: Bunnahabhain 18 year old ([92 points](#)), Bruichladdich The Classic Laddie ([89 points](#))

LOWLANDS

[Triple-distilling](#) is considered to be a key element of historic Lowland whiskies, although only [Auchentoshan](#) currently triple distills; [when it reopens](#), Rosebank will also do so.

Typical flavor profile: Sweet, grassy, floral, soft, light, and delicate

Whiskies that fit the Lowlands profile: Auchentoshan 12 year old ([87 points](#)), Glenkinchie 12 year old ([87 points](#))

Atypical Lowlander: Ailsa Bay ([91 points](#))

CAMPBELTOWN

Once a powerhouse of distilling whose malts were widely used in blending, just three distilleries operate in the area today:

[Springbank](#) (which also makes Longrow and Hazelburn), Glengyle (where [Kilkeran](#) is made), and [Glen Scotia](#).

Typical flavor profile: Light peat, smoky, salty, and oily

Whiskies that fit the Campbeltown profile: Springbank 15 year old ([92 points](#)), Glen Scotia Victoriana ([87 points](#))

Atypical Campbeltown whiskies: Hazelburn 10 year old ([86 points](#))

ISLANDS/COASTAL

Not an official region, but it’s often included when discussing regional character as whiskies from places like [Orkney](#), [Jura](#), Arran, Mull, and Skye have distinct flavors.

Typical flavor profile: Salty, peaty, briny, and smoky

Whiskies that fit the Islands profile: Highland Park 18 year old ([94 points](#)), Talisker 10 year old ([90 points](#))

Atypical Islanders: Arran 21 year old ([91 points](#))

A Tale of Cake taps into Glenmorangie’s sweet side

22nd September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

The Glenmorangie Company has unveiled a new single malt Scotch, Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake, as part of a new series of whiskies.



A cake-covered Dr Bill Lumsden enjoying a dram of Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake

The limited edition expression was the result of Glenmorangie's director of whisky creation, Dr Bill Lumsden, experimenting with Tokaji dessert wine casks.

Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake is said to evoke memories of when Lumsden would bake with his granny and the pineapple upside down cake his daughter made him for his birthday.

Lumsden said: "In one of my many conversations with Louise Dennett [global head of brand] from our marketing department, where I drip feed her little bits of information about what I'm doing so she can maybe start planning product launches, I had mentioned this product and I thought she was going to be completely amazed by this. But she said, 'well, I like the way you're describing the flavour, but Bill, is it not just another wood finish from Glenmorangie?'"

"And I said yes, and no. It is a wood-finished product but this tastes like nothing you've tasted before. I said think of Glenmorangie Nectar d'Or on acid and steroids and then double it, and you're only half way there. "As soon as I started to mention pineapple upside down cake and coconut dusted sponge cake, and syrup sponge pudding, and almond and pecan nut croissants, she really started to get excited and that's where this idea of cake came from.

"So certainly, Louise deserves most of the credit for the way it's been presented as cake-like and we just took it from there and developed all sorts of ideas about how to present this."

Tasting notes include aromas of passion fruit, peach, baking bread, honeycomb and vanilla, leading to flavours of honey, white chocolate, apricot, almond and pear on the palate. The finish is said to taste of honeycomb, chocolate almond and pecan nuts.

Bottled at 46% ABV, Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake will be available to purchase exclusively from Selfridges from 22 September to 18 October, before being made available from other specialist retailers from 18 October. It will be priced at RRP £75 (US\$95).

To celebrate the launch, Glenmorangie has partnered with pastry chef Dominique Ansel, maker of the cronut, to create a cake and cocktail pairing – a 'caketail'.

Ansel put a twist on a pineapple boat cake, which has been paired with a pineapple Old fashioned made by bartender Jeremy Le Blanche. The 'caketail' pairings will be available from Ansel's bakery in New York.

"When I first tried Glenmorangie, it opened my senses to this amazing world of colour, texture, taste and aroma – it's a new adventure each time," Ansel said. "I never guessed I could enjoy whisky this much, but there is friendliness to the way Glenmorangie tastes. Baking and whisky making are different worlds but they have a lot in common."



Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake embraces playful packaging



The Macallan Edition No.6

The sixth and final release in The Macallan Edition series, Edition No.6 is a celebration of the River Spey, the iconic river that flows through the heart of The Macallan Estate.

This distinct single malt delivers a multifaceted experience; from the appealing rich brass natural colour, to the layers of aroma, followed by the deep and rewarding flavour.

The Macallan Estate lies on the banks of the River Spey, one of Scotland's most legendary rivers, famous for its whisky production and renowned across the world as a home to the mighty Atlantic salmon.

For almost 200 years the River Spey has played a key role in the production of The Macallan's distinct single malt, as well as a source of inspiration and connection. A day on this river, with its pure water, stunning wild landscape and calmness, is a once in a lifetime experience. The Macallan Edition No. 6 brings together The Macallan Ghillie, Robert Mitchell; Hardy, the world's most renowned fly fishing brand; and The Atlantic Salmon Trust, which has over 50 years' experience in salmon conservation.

OF NATURE AND CRAFT

The Macallan Edition No. 6 is a new, limited edition single malt celebrating the natural wonders of The Macallan Estate, and honouring the River Spey as the vibrant life force that sustains it. Inspired by the Spey, Steven Bremner, The Macallan Whisky Maker, created Edition No. 6 by choosing five cask styles that embody the unique stories and spirit of the river.

Crafted from a combination of American and European oak sherry seasoned casks, Edition No. 6 draws from the narrative streams of the River Spey's energy. It captures the warm, welcoming personality of The Macallan's Ghillie; the classic craftsmanship of Hardy; the extraordinary life of the Atlantic salmon on the beat; and the mastery of whisky making on The Macallan Estate.

THE WHISKY

By creating this whisky as the final release in the Edition series, Steven Bremner celebrates this unique experience inspired by a day at the River Spey. His inspiration drew on the vibrant blue colour of the water reflecting on the sky, the calm of nature, and the strength of the Scottish salmon jumping on the pristine water.

CASK STYLES

Inspiration

The River Spey

Cask Type and Use:

1st fill American oak butts

Inspiration

The Ghillie

Cask Type and Use:

1st fill European oak hogsheads

Inspiration

Hardy

Cask Type and Use:

1st fill European oak hogsheads/butts

Inspiration

The Atlantic salmon on the beat

Cask Type and Use:

2nd fill European and American oak butts

Inspiration

Whisky Making at The Macallan

Cask Type and Use:

1st fill American oak butts

The result of a combination of casks is a multifaceted whisky. It delivers aromas of fresh fruits, nutmeg and toffee merged with oak and flavours of ripe plum, and vibrant sweet oranges and cinnamon. These characteristics then transform into the subtlety of spicy fresh fruits, creamy chocolate and toasted oats at the finish.

COLOUR: Antique brass

AROMA: Rich fresh fruits, nutmeg, ginger, chocolate, toffee, vanilla, and oak.

PALATE: Plum and sweet orange, cinnamon, nutmeg, balanced oak, toffee, and oats.

FINISH: Long fresh fruit with spices turning to creamy chocolate and toasted oats.

ABV: 48.6 %

"Edition No.6 is inspired by the natural world surrounding our distillery, which has so much to offer and enjoy, in particular the River Spey, which is so vibrant, and full of energy.

"This complex single malt provides the perfect conclusion to the Edition Series as there is so much to discover in this whisky. The natural colour of antique brass derived from The Macallan's exceptional oak casks indicates the richness of flavour that awaits and there is a structure and depth that is uncovered more and more over time."

The Macallan has also partnered with the Atlantic Salmon Trust charity to help support at-risk fish such as wild salmon and sea trout, which have declined rapidly in recent years.

Priced at RRP £95 (US\$121), The Macallan Edition No.6 will be available from The Whisky Exchange, Master of Malt, The Whisky Shop and other specialist retailers from 29 September 2020.

Macallan unveils final Edition Series whisky

23rd September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The Macallan has unveiled its sixth and final Edition Series whisky, which celebrates the Speyside distillery's natural surroundings.



Edition No.6 is inspired by the natural world surrounding the Macallan Distillery The new Macallan Edition No.6 completes the annual range, which began in 2015. The new whisky is inspired by the distillery's land and river.

Edition No.1 celebrated the brand's use of wood; [Edition No.2](#) highlighted taste through a collaboration with The Roca Brothers of El Celler de Can Roca; [Edition No.3](#) showcased aroma in collaboration with master perfumer Roja Dove; and [Edition No.4](#) paid tribute to the architecture of [The Macallan's new distillery](#). The fifth edition [marked the natural colour of the Speyside single malt](#) and featured a "unique" shade of purple created by Pantone on its packaging.

The Macallan Estate is based on the banks of the River Spey, which is looked after by the site's ghillie, Robert Mitchell.

"A day on the River Spey is supremely special," said Mitchell. "You feel that you are escaping from everything and truly connecting with nature and with our distillery completing this stunning landscape, there is no other place in the world capable of drawing so many wonders together. "We are proud custodians of our one-and-three-quarter mile stretch of the River Spey and advocate for sustainability of the wildlife in and around it and so all fishing at The Macallan is catch and release."

The Macallan's whisky maker Steven Bremner created the new expression by choosing five cask styles that represent stories related to the river and its natural landscape.

The 49.6% ABV whisky has been crafted from a combination of American and European oak Sherry-seasoned casks.

The resulting liquid offers aromas of "fresh fruits, nutmeg and toffee merged with oak and flavours of ripe plum, vibrant sweet oranges and cinnamon, developing into spicy fresh fruits and creamy chocolate and toasted oats at the finish".

'Perfect conclusion'

"From its early days of whisky making almost 200 years ago, The Macallan has been strongly inspired by and intrinsically connected to nature," said Bremner. "It is the force that flows through everything we do at The Macallan and our whisky is enriched by its powerful presence.

Benriach unveils new core whisky range and redesign

10th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Older variants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bowmore celebrates The Art of Time

17th September, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Islay Scotch whisky Bowmore has created a new global campaign to celebrate more than 240 years of the brand’s history, called The Art of Time.



Bowmore will launch *The Art of Time* campaign globally in October. The Art of Time will launch in October covering traditional media, social media and digital commerce platforms, including still and dynamic content, secondary imagery and a set of key visuals. The campaign will also feature retail displays and window displays for whisky specialists, department stores and events.

The campaign aims to depict how Bowmore whiskies benefit from ‘the power of time’ as they mature. Bowmore was founded in 1779.

Céline Daniel, global marketing manager at Bowmore, said: “This is the first time we will be exploring Bowmore’s history and craftsmanship with such depth and with such consistency at a global level.

“We believe that Bowmore is a work of art and our understanding and respect for time is central to how and why we craft our whisky. With this campaign, we will show how Bowmore uses time to transform our celebrated single malt into a true masterpiece.

“By drawing inspiration from the black rocks surrounding our distillery, we are also paying homage to the way time has shaped not only our whisky, but also Islay itself.”

Last month, Bowmore revealed a partnership with luxury car maker Aston Martin. Together, they created a £50,000 (US\$66,000) whisky, called [Black Bowmore DB5 1964](#).

New Aberfeldy Scotch Whisky Gets A French Wine Cask Finish

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

The Aberfeldy Scotch single malt whisky distillery was built back in 1898, drawing its water source for whisky distillation from the nearby Pitilie Burn. It is owned today by Bacardi, and includes as part of its regular portfolio 12-, 16- and 21-year-old expressions. Joining

those now is what’s described as the brand’s latest limited expression, an 18 year old finished in French wine casks.

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



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

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

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

“Pauillac casks are the aristocrats of the Médoc,” said Aberfeldy Malt Master, Stephanie MacLeod, in a prepared statement. “They provide notes of black cherries, blackberries and a cedar wood spice. Aberfeldy’s wonderfully soft signature honey and creamy vanilla notes are invigorated with swathes of plush ripe fruits and lovely nutty aromas to create an incredibly elegant and fruitful whisky.”

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

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

Scotch distillers admit all scotch actually tastes the same

JUNE 15, 2016 by [ERIC TURKINICZ](#)

<https://thebeaverton.com/2016/06/scotch-distillers-admit-all-scotch-actually-tastes-the-same/>



[Photo Credit](#)

GLENKARNEY – An unexpected development occurred Tuesday at the Annual [Scotch](#) Distillery convention in Glenkarney, [Scotland](#) when the collected distillers revealed that all [scotch](#) everywhere has completely identical taste.

“We had been milking the idea for a while now that there are hidden notes of citrus or undertones of chocolate in some blends and rosewood flavourings from rum casks or some such nonsense in others,” stated Jim Carscadden, master distiller for The MacCallan single malt, “but the guilt of such bald-faced lies got the better of us. We’ve just been putting different labels on all the bottles at random. There’s literally no distinction between any of them.”

“Honestly, this whole Scotch thing started as a bet to see if we could get people to drink something that tastes so horrible,” Carscadden added.

A recent public poll suggested that this announcement was inevitable, with 98% of consumers not being able to distinguish between different scotches and the remaining 2% offering wildly inconsistent descriptions of each. A further 99.35% of people could not tell the difference between scotch or other whiskeys.

“Oh they’re all the same thing,” said Angus MacDuff, the cooper for Highland Park, “scotch, whiskey, bourbon, they’re literally all the exact same thing with zero differences. We were going to announce that part to everyone tomorrow.”

When asked what the shared flavour between the scotches was, the distillers unanimously agreed on the term: smokey-burny.

“Smokey-burny describes all of them without fail. There’s nothing much more to it than that,” elaborated Carscadden, “I guess if you wanted to go further, ‘varnish charcoal’ might be a more exact descriptor.”

“Oh yes, ‘varnish charcoal’ is exactly what they all taste like. All of them. Spot on,” agreed Timothy Patrick, of The Glenlivet.

The revelation is not without precedent as cigar and wine manufacturers had admitted the same thing with respect to their own products a month earlier. Experts predict that these announcements will result in a dramatic downturn in the number of 20-40 year olds trying to impress each other with empty, unearned smugness.

Whisky Review: The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage

By [Courtney Kristjana](#) / September 28, 2020

A 29-year-old gifted bottle sits unopened at The GlenDronach distillery. Originally bottled in 1913 just before the start of WWI, three friends each purchased a bottle. Before leaving for war, they each vowed to open the whisky when they returned. Alas, only one man safely returned home but never opened his bottle. This rare bottle serves as inspiration for the most recent GlenDronach involvement with the *Kingsman* movies. It remains on display in remembrance of fallen friends.

The *Kingsman* series gears up for a 2021 release of its latest movie; a prequel titled *The King’s Man*. A spy genre wouldn’t be complete without the proper whisk(e)y accompaniment. Like the *Kingsman* sequel, *The Golden Circle*, with its [Old Forester collaboration](#), *The King’s Man* will also release [a special collaboration whisky with GlenDronach](#). This is not the first time the two have partnered together.

The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition is a 1989 vintage. GlenDronach’s Master Distiller, Dr. Rachel Barrie, and *Kingsman* Director, Matthew Vaughn, chose six barrels first matured in Oloroso sherry casks and additionally matured in Pedro Ximenez casks. While the previous [GlenDronach Kingsman Edition was a 1991 vintage](#) tied to *Kingsman* agent Gary ‘Eggsy’ Unwin’s birth year, the new release is more relevant to the *Kingsman* Creed.

The culmination of this collaboration is [summed up by GlenDronach](#), “The GlenDronach is revered for the dedication to exquisite sherry cask matured Single Malt since 1826. Like the *Kingsman* creed, our values have remained constant; impossible perfection built on unshakeable tradition.” Bottled in 2018, The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage is the newest 29-year-old whisky at the distillery.



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

Tasting Notes: The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage
Vital Stats: 50.1%ABV. Six Oloroso and Pedro Ximenez matured casks from 1989 were hand-selected to produce 3,052 bottles. 700ml \$1,299.

Appearance: Roasted hazelnut.

Nose: At first whiff, the raisin is sweet and abundant. The sweetness also has a touch of crème brulee to it. However, there’s a creeping balsamic vinegar reduction that tinges the nose. Fig and all-spice, or mulling spices, meet in the middle. On the end is a damp, mossy musk reminiscent of a fallen tree.

Palate: The mouthfeel is oily and viscous. Adding in the sweetness, it’s almost like a rich demerara syrup. Raisin and clove swirl together with a touch of black peppercorn and fig. The finish goes back and forth between resin and black tea.

The Takeaway

Summary

While The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage is good, it’s not necessarily great either. The almost sherry or balsamic vinegar note on the nose is not wanted, but it’s not so overpowering that it ruins the experience. It does drink a bit hot with the spice on the flavor profile. The main factor for not giving the whisky at least a 4 out of 5 is the bitter black tea and resin notes on the finish. Adding a drop of water upped the all-spice and black peppercorn but gave it a waxy mouthfeel. Overall, The GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1989 Vintage is worth at least trying. I can think of how many other bottles I could buy with \$1299. I can appreciate collaborations with the movie industry, but I think better energy could be spent elsewhere.

Whistlepig finishes whiskey in Spanish oak and teak wood casks

23rd September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Vermont-based producer Whistlepig has released a 17-year-old rye whiskey finished in Spanish oak and South American teak wood casks as the seventh expression in its Boss Hog series.



Magellan’s Atlantic is the “most intensive edition of The Boss Hog to date”

The latest addition to The Boss Hog series is Magellan’s Atlantic, which is said to be the first whiskey finished in rare Spanish and South American casks.

It is the seventh edition in Whistlepig’s Boss Hog range, which includes expressions aged in a variety of casks such as [umeshu](#), [Scotch](#) and Calvados apple brandy. Previous whiskeys in the collection were only finished in one cask.

Pete Lynch, master blender of Whistlepig, said the whisky industry “has never before seen this truly one-of-a-kind combination of casks, nor

has it tasted anything quite like the resulting product and liquid it has produced”.

The straight rye whiskey is first finished in oak casks from Cantabria in northern Spain for three weeks, followed by a second finish in South American teak wood casks from Brazil for three days.

“The Spanish oak casks deliver a unique and unparalleled flavour and South American teak wood was among the most coveted bespoke barrels in our exclusive Single Barrel programme,” explained Jeff Kozak, Whistlepig CEO. “We anticipated that the combination would make for an unprecedented taste and we couldn’t be happier with the result.”

The Spanish oak casks are high in tannins, knotty and porous, the brand said. While the oak is extremely difficult to make staves from and prone to leakage and extra evaporation, it offers “intense flavours with heightened interaction between spirit and oak”.

Lynch added: “A one-hour proprietary toast with the Spanish oak creates a small char layer that removes some tannins but preserves the good ones. A medium level toast grants incredibly aromatic cinnamon, allspice, and roasted nut flavours, while softening the overall intensity of the greener wood notes in the finishing cask.”

The teak wood provides the liquid with notes of “baking spices and a sweet, toasted character, complementing the intense spiciness of the Spanish oak”.

‘Uncommon’ in whisky

“We have experimented [with] South American teakwood on just a handful of barrels in the past, and both this and the new Spanish oak are uncommon in the whisky world,” said Meghan Ireland, maturation chemist, Whistlepig. “It’s been the least predictable and most intensive edition of The Boss Hog to date, but well worth the trials and effort.”

The whiskey comes with a collectible pewter topper depicting Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan as a pig in traditional Spanish dress before setting sail.

Consumers who purchase the whiskey can use a unique code on the bottle’s label to access exclusive content.

The Boss Hog VII: Magellan’s Atlantic comes with an ABV of between 52.6% and 53.9%. It carries an RRP of US\$499.99 per 750ml bottle and is available to buy from premium alcohol stores, bars and restaurants across the US. The expression will also launch in select global markets in the coming weeks and is available for pre-sale from Caskers.

SWA urges locals to visit Scotch distilleries

23rd September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) is calling for local consumers to visit Scottish distilleries to help the industry recover from a drop in international tourists.



Scotch whisky distilleries welcomed 2.16 million visitors in 2019

The SWA has revealed the latest visitor figures for distilleries across Scotland in its annual survey. In 2019, Scotch whisky sites welcomed its highest number of visitors to date, 2.16 million – an increase of 7.8%. The SWA said two in every three visits (66%) to these distilleries last year were from international travellers. Visits to Scotch whisky distilleries have increased by two thirds since 2010.

However, the SWA said the pandemic has had a “significant impact” on international travel during 2020.

As such, the trade group is calling for the public to support their local tourist attractions and enjoy new experiences. The SWA said more than a third of the sector’s 68 visitor centres were Covid-secure and open to visitors.

Karen Betts, SWA chief executive, said: “That two in every three visits to Scotch whisky visitor centres last year were from international tourists shows how popular Scotch whisky is around the world and what a fabulous entry point it is for tourists discovering Scotland’s fascinating heritage, beautiful landscapes and wonderful food and drink.

“But the figures also underline how hard Scotch whisky tourism is being hit this year, when international travel and tourism has all but disappeared as everyone plays their part in controlling the spread of Covid-19. All visitor centres closed in March and although some have now reopened, 2020 is proving to be a very difficult year for tourism.” Betts said support was “vital” to the industry and urged consumers to buy a bottle of whisky when they visit.

She added: “UK consumers are often surprised to learn that £3 in every £4 spent on Scotch whisky in the UK is collected in tax. The chancellor can back the industry and support the tourism sector by cutting duty on spirits in the autumn budget.”

The survey also showed that more than £200m (US\$254m) has been invested in Scotch whisky tourism over the past five years to meet increased demand from visitors. In 2019, spending at visitor centres reached £84.7m (US\$108m), an increase of 24%.

More than 1,200 people work in tourism roles at visitor centres, making up 10% of the industry’s direct employment in Scotland.

Marc Crothall, chief executive, Scottish Tourism Alliance, added:

“These figures highlight the importance of food and drink tourism to the tourism sector as a whole and to the Scottish economy plus the sheer scale of appetite from our international markets and indeed from visitors closer to home.

“Recovery will undoubtedly be challenging; we all have a part to play to protect and grow our tourism sector and invest in the clear opportunities ahead, such as whisky tourism, to maintain Scotland’s presence as a global destination.”

In July 2020, trade group Drinks Ireland also [launched a new campaign](#) to encourage local consumers to visit Irish whiskey distilleries as they reopen.

Expert Names the Best Whiskies in the World For 2020

[NICK HALL](#), 19 SEP 2020

We all have that friend that likes to tell us the new whisky he’s drinking is the ‘best you’ll find anywhere’, only to be greeted with a foul-tasting, gelatinous spirit that burns as much on the way down as it does on the way up. If you’re friends with Jim Murray, however, you can afford to be a little more reliant on his advice. The writer has become synonymous with the best whisky in the world, having put his name to an annual review of the year’s top releases and despite the uncertainty of 2020, he’s back at it again.



Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible 2021

Released earlier this month, Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible 2021 gives a rundown of the world’s best whisky, exploring different regions, territories and styles. Containing tasting notes for around 4,500 drams, the new book is a guide to discovering the true nature of whisky and learning the craft in the process. Arguably the world’s most famous whisky writer, Murray’s list of the best whisky in the world may not be to everyone’s tastes, but scoring high marks in his book is a recipe for success in the spirit arena.

“The one thing that tasting 1,250 whiskies a year for this book has reinforced in my mind, is that for people to really enjoy whisky of whatever type, then they have to let go of the past and learn to swim,” Murray said. With that in mind, Murray revealed the theme for this

year's edition is 'new releases, new distilleries and letting the past be the past'.

For this 2021 edition, Murray has taken into account the best whiskies from across the globe ranging from Scottish Single malts to Australian; from Canadian to Austrian. Whiskies from over 30 different countries are included and evaluated in trademark Murray style. So, who made the list of the best whiskies for 2020?

Best Whiskies 2020

For the Whisky Bible 2021 edition, Murray's choices take readers on a trip around the globe. Rather than seeing the standard names at the top of the list, some unknowns have scored well, including a couple of surprising winners. If you are keen to up your knowledge in the whisky game, this is the tool to do so.

Here is Jim Murray's best whisky 2020 list.



1. Alberta Premium Cask Strength Rye

Murray's top pick for this year was Alberta Distiller's Alberta Premium Cask Strength Rye. The Canadian premium release offers a different approach to traditional whisky, coming from a decidedly less prestigious background. While most of the best whiskies in the world like to tout their historical credentials, Alberta Distillers has crafted a strange reputation.

For years, the brand has been selling its rye whiskey to producers south of the border, including award-winning Masterson's and WhistlePig. These producers then bottled it under their own labels, leaving Alberta with little recognition. It's a big reason why back home, the label was considered cheap, often used as a flavouring whisky or watered down to create a decent blend.

In late 2019, however, the company launched a Cask Strength and a Cask Strength Rye that would go on to redefine what Alberta Distillers was all about. "A succulence to the oils, balanced perfectly by ulmo and manuka honeys ensure for the most chewable Canadian mouthful possibly ever and yet this is constantly salivating, from the very first nanosecond. Truly world-class whisky from possibly the world's most underrated distillery. How can something be so immense yet equally delicate?" Murray wrote in his Whisky Bible 2021 release before giving it a whopping score of 97.5 out of 100. As far as official awards go, being named as the best whisky 2020 by esteemed professional Jim Murray should go a long way in cementing that new reputation.

Bottle Size: 750 mL bottle

Alcohol/Vol: 65.1%

Made In: Alberta, Canada

By: Alberta Distillers Limited



2. Stagg Jr Barrel Proof (64.2%)

Obviously this year, Murray was into the strong stuff. Taking out second place in the writer's best whisky 2020 list was the Barrel Proof from Stagg Jr. A subsidiary of Buffalo Trace's George T. Stagg label, Stagg Jr offers a more affordable and accessible bourbon option that is more than worth the taste-test.

The Barrel Proof edition clocks in at 129.7 proof, making it an unfettered, unfiltered effort that offers American wood-aged spirit fans a taste of the golden era. This release has aromas of chocolate, brown sugar and cloves on the nose, while the palate offers notes of lively rye spice, cherries, wood smoke and vanilla. The strong showing wasn't enough to be labelled world best whisky this year, but it came damn close.

Bottle Size: 750 mL bottle

Alcohol/Vol: 64.2%

Made In: Kentucky, USA

By: Stagg Jr



3. Paul John Mithuna

Third place on Jim Murray's list of the best whiskies 2020 was an unexpected winner. Paul John Mithuna from Goa-based Paul John Distillery nabbed the bronze, marking the first time a south Asian whisky has secured one of the coveted positions. According to Murray, the Indian-born whisky's "sensational chocolate and spices complexity" were a major success, awarding it a solid 97 marks out of 100.

"India is not generally known for its whiskies so we're incredibly proud and frankly, over the moon with this accolade," said Mark Brown, Sazerac company president and chief executive officer. "To have our whiskeys named the second and third finest whiskeys in the world is astonishing, especially following last year's three top spots in the Whiskey Bible. It is truly a testament of the skill and dedication of not only our Master Distillers Harlen Wheatley at Buffalo Trace Distillery, and Michael D'souza at Paul John Distillery, but to all of our team members at Sazerac. We could not be happier and motivated to continue our quest to create the world's best whiskey."

For whisky fans who can't quite place the name, don't be deterred; the Mithuna is still a month away from being released. The second expression

in Paul John's Zodiac series of whiskies, this whisky hit the mark for Murray. "If Mithuna means 'ultimate', then it is the perfect name. Or maybe Mithuna means 'perfect', then it is pretty close," he wrote. "It is that very rarest of things. And, if nothing else, announces Paul John Distillery on the world stage of truly great distilleries. This is a whisky to devour while it devours you."

Bottle Size: 750 mL bottle

Made In: Goa, India

By: Paul John



Single Cask of the Year: Glen Grant 1956 Mr George Centenary Edition Gordon & MacPhail

At over AUD\$7,000 a bottle, you'd expect the 62 Year Old Glen Grant to be something special. The work of indie bottler Gordon & MacPhail, this single malt has been dubbed Mr George Centenary Edition in honour of George Urquhart, creator of Gordon & MacPhail's renowned Connoisseurs Choice range. Amazingly, this release was filled into a first fill sherry butt back on 13 December 1956 and bottled in June 2019, more than six decades later.

As far a luxury goes, it's hard not to be taken with handsome glass decanter and wooden presentation case, but be warned, there were only 235 bottles ever released. Murray noted that the single cask was one of the world's best whiskies thanks to its rich fruitcake aromas on the nose. Combined with liquorice and toffee flavours on the palate, the 62 Year Old Glen Grant is one of the most impressive releases Murray had seen.

Bottle Size: 700 mL bottle

Alcohol/Vol: 51.7%

Made In: Speyside, Scotland

By: Glen Grant

Specialised Categories

In addition to naming the best whisky in the world, Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2021 also went on to list some more specialised victors. Taking into account region, Murray revealed his top picks for Scotch, Scotch Blends, Single Malt Scotch, Irish, American, Canadian, European, Japanese and World Whiskies. Here is a full list of the world's best whiskies per category, according to esteemed writer Jim Murray.



Scotch Whisky

Scotch Whisky of the Year:

Glen Grant 15 Year Old Batch Strength 1st Edition

Scotch Single Malt of the Year (Multiple Casks):

Glen Grant 15 Year Old Batch Strength 1st Edition

Scotch Single Malt of the Year (Single Cask):

Glen Grant 1956 Mr George Centenary Edition Gordon & MacPhail

Scotch Blend of the Year:

Ballantine's 30 Year Old

Scotch Grain of the Year:

Cambus 1979 The Perfect Fifth

Scotch Vatted Malt of the Year:

Compass Box The Spice Tree



Single Malt Scotch

Scotch No Age Statement:

Glen Grant Rothes Chronicles Cask Haven

Scotch 10 Years & Under Multiple Cask:

Octomore Edition 10.3 6 Year Old Islay Barley (Category Winner)

Scotch 10 Years & Under Single Cask:

Annandale Vintage Man O'Words 2015

Scotch 11-15 Years Multiple Cask:

Glen Grant 15 Year Old Batch Strength 1st Edition (Category Winner)

Scotch 11-15 Years Single Cask:

Caol Ila 15 Year Old Gordon & MacPhail Connoisseurs Choice

Scotch 16-21 Years Multiple Cask:

Knockando 21 Year Old Master Reserve

Scotch 16-21 Years Single Cask:

Longmorn 1998 21 Year Old The First Editions (Category Winner)

Scotch 22-27 Years Multiple Cask:

Old Pulteney 25 Year Old

Scotch 22-27 Years Single Cask:

Glenlossie 22 Year Old Golden Glen (Category Winner)

Scotch 28-34 Years Multiple Cask:

Glenfiddich 30 Year Old (Category Winner)

Scotch 28-34 Years Single Cask:

Aberlour 1989 The Perfect Fifth

Scotch 35-40 Years Multiple Cask:

Port Ellen 40 Year Old 9 Rogue Casks

Scotch 35-40 Years Single Cask:

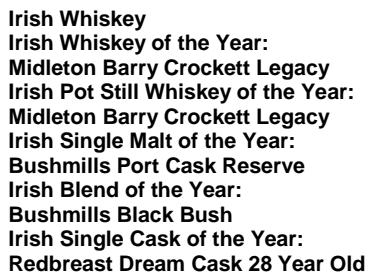
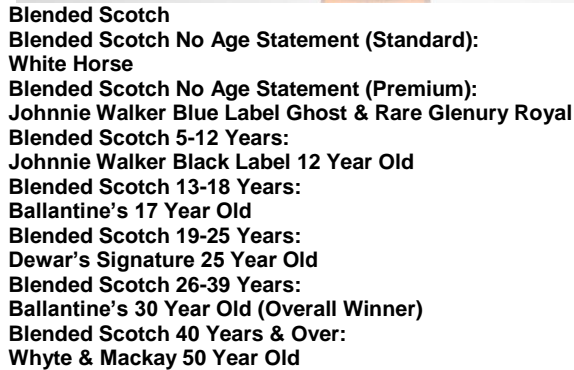
Lochside 1981 The Whisky Agency (Category Winner)

Scotch 41 Years & Over Multiple Cask:

Tomatin 1977 Warehouse 6 Collection

Scotch 41 Years & Over Single Cask:

Glen Grant 1956 Mr George Centenary Edition Gordon & MacPhail (Category Winner)



Second Finest Canadian Whisky of the Year
Canadian Club Chronicles 42 Year Old



European Whisky
European Whisky of the Year (Multiple Cask):
Puni Aura Italian Single Malt
European Whisky of the Year (Single Cask):
Braeckman Belgian Single Grain Whiskey Single Barrel 12 Year Old
Austrian Whisky of the Year:
J.H. Original Rye Whisky 6 Jahre Gelagert
Belgian Whisky of the Year:
Braeckman Belgian Single Grain Whiskey Single Barrel 12 Year Old
Danish Whisky of the Year:
Copenhagen Single Malt Whisky First Edition
English Whisky of the Year:
The English 11 Year Old Single Malt Whisky
German Whisky of the Year:
Hercynian Willowburn Exceptional Collection 5 Year Old
Swedish Whisky of the Year:
Mackmyra Svensk Single Cask Whisky Reserve The Dude of Fucking Everything
Swiss Whisky of the Year:
Langatun 10 Year Old Second Edition Single Malt
Welsh Whisky of the Year:
Penderyn Rhiannon



Japanese Whisky
Japanese Whisky of the Year:
Nikka Whisky Single Malt Yoichi Apple Brandy Wood Finish
Japanese Single Grain of the Year:
Makoto Single Grain Whisky 23 Year Old
Japanese Single Malt of the Year:
Nikka Whisky Single Malt Yoichi Apple Brandy Wood Finish
Japanese Single Cask of the Year:
The Matsui Single Cask Mizunara Cask Single Malt



World Whiskies
Asian Whisky of the Year:
Paul John Mithuna
Southern Hemisphere Whisky of the Year:
Adams Distillery Tasmanian Single Malt Whisky Cask Strength
Australian Whisky of the Year:
Adams Distillery Tasmanian Single Malt Whisky Cask Strength

Brands reject Whisky Bible following 'vulgar' reviews

23rd September, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Jim Murray's *Whisky Bible* has been removed from store shelves and brands have distanced themselves from the publication following backlash surrounding "sexist and vulgar" language used to describe whiskies in the book.



Jim Murray published his 2021 *Whisky Bible* last week. Whisky writer Jim Murray publishes his *Whisky Bible* every year, compiling reviews of whiskies from around the world. The language was initially highlighted by *Forbes* writer Felipe Schriberg and spirits writer and Our Whisky co-founder Becky Paskin. In a social media post, [Paskin cited some examples of Murray's comments and said that "something needs to be said"](#). She highlighted "34 references to whisky being 'sexy' and many more crudely comparing drinking whisky to having sex with women". Murray responded to the criticism arguing the points raised online were "an attack on free thought and free speech". Since Murray's remarks came to light, distillers around the world have begun distancing themselves from the publication. Beam Suntory, which was awarded [World Whisky of the Year by Murray](#) for its Alberta Premium Cask Strength rye whisky, thanked those who have "voiced concerns about the objectification of women in many of Mr Murray's reviews" and said it was "re-evaluating all planned programming that references this recognition". In a statement, Beam Suntory said: "While we are honoured that our Alberta Premium Cask Strength rye whisky was named World Whisky of the Year by Jim Murray's *Whisky Bible* 2021, we are extremely disappointed by some of the language used in many of the publication's product reviews. "The full edition of *Whisky Bible* was not available to us prior to the announcement of 'World Whisky of the Year,' and we would like to

thank the writers who have rightly voiced concerns about the objectification of women in many of Mr Murray's reviews. Language and behaviour of this kind have been condoned for too long in the spirits industry, and we agree that it must stop. As a result, we are re-evaluating all planned programming that references this recognition." Pernod Ricard-owned Irish Distillers, which walked away with the award for Irish Whiskey of the Year in the *Whisky Bible* for its Midleton Barry Crockett Legacy bottling, echoed these opinions. The Jameson owner said it would be "reviewing who we work with" in the future as it strives to "only engage with those who share our values". A spokesperson for Irish Distillers said: "At Irish Distillers we strongly believe there is no room for sexism in the whiskey industry. We have a long and proud history of inclusiveness and equality, and we always strive to take positive steps in building a whiskey community, which celebrates and builds on these values. "In common with other producers, we will be reviewing who we work with to ensure we only engage with those who share our values." Empty shelves



Alberta Premium Cask Strength rye whisky was named World Whisky of the Year

Retailers have also condemned Murray's comments and the book has been removed from shelves in spirits retailer The Whisky Exchange as the company said it did "not feel that the comments made in the book sit well with our vision of the whiskey community".

Sukhinder Singh, co-founder of The Whisky Exchange, said: "We have made the decision as a business to delist Jim Murray's *Whisky Bible* from sale on The Whisky Exchange website and in our shops.

"We have thought a lot about this topic and do not feel that the comments made in the book sit well with our vision of the whiskey community. This year, more than ever, has been about making the world a more inclusive place and our view is that these 'tasting notes' do not make whisky inclusive – something that both Becky Paskin and Felipe Schriberg highlighted in their social media posts and an article on *Forbes* online.

"We feel passionately about making whisky a spirit that can be enjoyed by everyone, and the language used in the *Whisky Bible* runs counter to this business ethos. We have therefore decided to delist the *Whisky Bible 2021* to stay true to this philosophy."

The book's Irish importer, *Irish Whiskey Magazine*, also announced it would cease distributing the *Whisky Bible* as it found "the nature and tone of some of the content to be completely inappropriate".

'Outrageous and concocted allegations'

Murray has refuted allegations of sexism in the *Whisky Bible* and said the claims were an "attack on the very essence of what it is to be a critic in any sphere".

In a statement he said: "I am not sexist; the *Whisky Bible* is not sexist, has never been sexist and I will not bow to this faux outrage. I have always fought the bully and I will do so here. Debate has been replaced by the baying of the mob, common sense and decency by straitjacketed dogma. Frankly, these people appal me because what they are doing is undermining society itself.

"I have dedicated 30 years of my life, longer than anyone else on this planet, fighting for whisky and the whisky underdog, so people will discover great whiskies from wherever they may be in the world. This has put quite a few people's noses out of joint. These outrageous and concocted allegations will not derail me in my life's quest. My

championing of great whisky will continue. My freedom of speech will continue. Whether these latter day Cromwellians like it or not."

Sep 22, 2020, 12:38pm EDT

Sexism In Whisky: Whisky Bible Award-Winner Rejects Prize

[Felipe Schriberg](#) Senior Contributor

Beam Suntory, owners of the Alberta Premium Cask Strength rye whisky that won 'World Whisky of the Year' in [Jim Murray's Whisky Bible](#), have publicly distanced themselves from influential whisky critic Jim Murray, all but rejecting his award which has been issued every year since 2003.

The company's shift in position follows a [social media campaign](#) started by whisky expert and Keeper of the Quaich Becky Paskin, as well as an article [posted here on Forbes](#) on Sunday September 20th, detailing Murray's use of sexist language to describe some of the whiskies in his book.



Nothing wrong with enjoying a glass of whisky, but no need to use sexist language to describe it.

Beam Suntory [issued the following statement](#) on its social media platforms earlier today:

"While we are honored that our Alberta Premium Cask Strength rye whisky was named 'World Whisky of the Year' by Jim Murray's *Whisky Bible 2021*, we are extremely disappointed by some of the language used in many of the publication's product reviews. The full edition of *Whisky Bible* was not available to us prior to the announcement of 'World Whisky of the Year,' and we would like to thank the writers who have rightly voiced concerns about the objectification of women in many of Mr. Murray's reviews. Language and behavior of this kind have been condoned for too long in the spirits industry, and we agree that it must stop. As a result, we are reevaluating all planned programming that references this recognition."

In another statement, Beam Suntory said:

"We have halted all promotions surrounding the latest edition and will no longer promote the 'World Whisky of the Year' accolade. We will evaluate any future collaborations based on commitment to meaningful change from the author in the future."

Some of the controversial entries in the 2021 edition of the Jim Murray Whisky Bible include:

On the Penderyn Celt (a whisky made by an all female distilling team):

"If this was a woman, I'd want to make love to it every night. And in the morning. And afternoon, if I could find the time...and energy..."

On the Glenmorangie Artisan Casks: "If whisky could be sexed, this would be a woman. Every time I encounter Morangie Artisan, it pops up with a new look, a different perfume. And mood. It appears not to be able to make up its mind. But does it know how to pout, seduce and win your heart...? Oh yes."

In the past, top whisky picks from the Murray's bible generated global headlines, with whisky brands often eagerly displaying his scores and comments on their bottles. However, this changed two days ago. Brands began distancing themselves from Murray not long after Paskin's campaign began. The world's largest online whisky retailer, The Whisky Exchange, announced that it would [no longer list](#) the Murray bible on its website and the book's Irish distributor, Irish Whiskey Magazine, [removed the publication](#) from its store and ceased the distribution arrangement.

From there, large whisky brands and groups have also publicly supported Paskin. These have included [Glenfiddich](#), [The Balvenie](#), [Dingle](#), [Glenturret](#), and [Douglas Laing](#) as well as smaller ones including [Catoctin Creek](#) and the [Dornoch Distillery](#). To give a further

measure of how big a deal this is within the whisky industry, even [The Scotch Whisky Association](#), the trade body representing most Scotch whisky distilleries and brands, weighed in against Murray.

Paskin has been pleased with the whisky industry's response to the issue once it was raised:

"It's incredibly heartening to see the response from the whisky industry to sexist comments made in Jim Murray's Whisky Bible. The industry has worked so hard for so long to champion inclusion and diversity. Sexist repugnant remarks like those made in the 'Bible' are damaging to the progress that's been made."

Murray strongly denied all allegations of sexism in an article published yesterday [in the Spirits Business \(full quote here\)](#):

"I am not sexist; the *Whisky Bible* is not sexist, has never been sexist and I will not bow to this faux outrage. I have always fought the bully and I will do so here. Debate has been replaced by the baying of the mob, common sense and decency by straitjacketed dogma. Frankly, these people appal me because what they are doing is undermining society itself.

How, in God's name, can, for instance, likening a whisky to an orgasm be remotely construed as sexist? Last I heard, male, females, transgender people, everyone is capable of an orgasm. I am a professional writer and use a language that adults – for the *Whisky Bible* is designed for adults – can relate to. I paint pictures of a whisky. And if that, on the rare occasion, is the picture or sensation that formulates in my mind, then I say so. As I have every right to."

Industry condemns 'sexist' language in Whisky Bible

21st September, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Spirits professionals, including Our Whisky co-founder Becky Paskin, have condemned the "sexist" language used to describe whiskies in Jim Murray's *Whisky Bible*.



Jim Murray published his 2021 Whisky Bible last week

The latest edition of [Murray's Whisky Bible was published last week](#) and recognised whiskies from around the world. However, Murray has drawn criticism for descriptions of some whiskies, which often compare different spirits to women.

In a post on social media platforms including Instagram and Twitter, Our Whisky co-founder Becky Paskin cited some examples of Murray's comments, saying that "something needs to be said". She highlighted that "there are 34 references to whisky being 'sexy' and many more crudely comparing drinking whisky to having sex with women". In the book, Murray refers to a whisky from Welsh distillery Penderyn as celebrating "maltiness in the same way a sex addict revels in a threesome". He also made these comments about a release from Canadian Club: "Have I had this much fun with a sexy 41-year-old Canadian before? Well, yes I have. But it was a few years back now and it wasn't a whisky. Was the fun we had better? Probably not." In response to Murray's "sexist and vulgar" language, Paskin and *Forbes* writer Felipe Schriberg both called on brands to stop "ignoring this problem".

Paskin said: "Comments like Jim's and the way that he describes whiskies in his book have an impact on the consumer perception of how to talk about whisky.

"The amount of people who read those sorts of comments and assume that it's OK to speak about whisky in that way is damaging."

She added: "The message it is sending to the whisky industry as a whole and to whisky consumers is that women don't really matter and they are there to be objectified."

'An attack on free thought'

Murray has responded to the criticism arguing the points raised online are "an attack on free thought and free speech".

In a statement, Murray said: "This is not a matter of alleged sexism on the trumped up charges against me – which have clearly been concocted for very clear purposes – this is an attack on the very essence of what it is to be a critic in any sphere, be it music, art, sport, wine or whisky. In other words: an attack on free thought and free speech.

"We are entering very dangerous territory when people try to control the thoughts of others and wilfully distort the truth for their own ends. This is now a battle between free speech and humourless puritanism. I am not alone in finding this very sinister.

"I am not sexist; the *Whisky Bible* is not sexist, has never been sexist and I will not bow to this faux outrage. I have always fought the bully and I will do so here. Debate has been replaced by the baying of the mob, common sense and decency by straitjacketed dogma. Frankly, these people appal me because what they are doing is undermining society itself.

"How, in God's name, can, for instance, likening a whisky to an orgasm be remotely construed as sexist? Last I heard, male, females, transgender people, everyone is capable of an orgasm. I am a professional writer and use a language that adults – for the *Whisky Bible* is designed for adults – can relate to. I paint pictures of a whisky. And if that, on the rare occasion, is the picture or sensation that formulates in my mind, then I say so. As I have every right to.

"Rather than write interesting, illuminating and compelling articles about whisky, other writers would rather engage in 'cancel culture' to [bring] down the world's most successful author on the subject.

"Some one million people have bought the *Whisky Bible* since it first came out in 2003 – and in that time I have not received a single letter, email or text complaining of its content. Not one. Suddenly, though...this. Several people writing exactly the same thing on the same day. Strange that.

"I am famed for my ability to nose a whisky. And I can tell you that I can smell a huge rat with this entire manufactured and revolting affair.

"I have dedicated 30 years of my life, longer than anyone else on this planet, fighting for whisky and the whisky underdog, so people will discover great whiskies from wherever they may be in the world. This has put quite a few people's noses out of joint. These outrageous and concocted allegations will not derail me in my life's quest. My championing of great whisky will continue. My freedom of speech will continue. Whether these latter day Cromwellians like it or not."



Becky Paskin (left) co-founded Our Whisky with Georgie Bell (right)

Vote with support

Since posting about Murray's comments on Instagram yesterday (20 September), Paskin said that "about 98% of comments" she has received in response have been "overwhelmingly disgusted" at the language used in the book.

"It has almost encouraged other people to come out and say something has happened to them at a tasting, this is almost our 'Me To' moment for whisky," she said. "Everyone has a story."

Schriberg and Paskin's comments have been shared across social media by industry insiders including French drinks journalist Christine Lambert and spirits writer Alice Lascelles.

Paskin added: "The way the industry has reacted has been really positive, but what I haven't seen is any brand saying we will no longer

stock his book, we will no longer support him. But I think it might be too soon, this only happened yesterday.
“People can vote with their money and won’t buy it, and I also think that the industry should vote with its support. If you support what he says and the way that he objectifies women, women who are the blenders and distillers and make up the workforce that are making the whisky, then by all means support the bible, if that’s what you want to do. But I do believe that if you are against objectification then do something about it.”

Sexism In Whisky: Why You Shouldn’t Read The Whisky Bible

Sep 20, 2020,08:44am EDT
Felipe Schrieberg Senior Contributor

Every year since 2003, whisky writer and critic [Jim Murray](#) releases his self-published annual Whisky Bible, and his top choices for the 2021 edition have just been announced. As usual, media organizations around the world immediately issued out headlines about ‘the best whisky in the world’. This year, the winner is a Canadian whisky, the Alberta Premium Cask Strength Rye. In the past, his best in show choices have raised some eyebrows. For example, when he [picked a Japanese whisky](#) in 2015 and a [cheap Canadian rye whisky](#) in 2016 he managed to create something approaching genuine controversy, at least within the whisky world. However, he has few defenders within the whisky fan community. Blogs and whisky social media groups race each other every year to see who can start bashing the Murray bible first upon its release, complaining about his scores, making fun of his ‘[Murray Method](#)’ (a rigorous 14-step process for tasting whisky), and accusing him of taking bribes from brands (a longstanding and unfounded claim that Murray strongly denies). Though these specific complaints are often over the top (they are written on the Internet after all...), the Murray bible’s main problem is the sexist language it employs to describe whiskies, and many brands are ignoring this problem as they rush to display his score on their bottles and marketing materials. This needs to change, so let’s dive into the issues.



Why is Jim Murray a big deal in the first place?

There’s no [questioning his credentials](#). He was one of the first writers who really did substantial work about whisky when very few others were doing it. The Whisky Bible, which has now been going for 19 years, is impressive in its scope, with over 4500 entries (Murray claims to add 1200 new entries a year, editing out old ones or re-reviewing certain entries). It’s now sold over a million copies.

PROMOTED

The angry whisky fans

There are famous athletes who despite their experience and success come off as a little egocentric and arrogant, and perhaps the same can be said for some whisky writers. His use of the term ‘best whisky in the world/best scotch/best XX’ in every edition of his book annoys some whisky fans, as the subjective judgement of one person, no matter how qualified he or she is, does not translate to the objective reality of what the ‘best’ whisky should be. Others will point to Murray’s caricature-like tasting regimen. When going through the months-long process of tasting for his book, he claims to eat only [bland, flavorless food](#), and he apparently does not have any [cooked dinners](#) in the house so as not to disrupt his nose.

He [abstains from sex](#), because ‘from kissing you can pick up something’, which will throw him off his tasting game. He has said that eating a bad salad once stopped him from [tasting whisky for a month](#). And of course, there’s his use of the word ‘Bible’, and the fact that he [calls himself a ‘guru’](#). The use of those spiritual terms and monastic approach to tasting makes for an easy target to mock, especially online. Then there’s his ratings, which set off a firestorm in the online whisky communities every year. For whisky consultant, writer and World Whisky Day founder [Blair Bowman](#), the fast-growing cadre of extremely highly rated whiskies cheapens Murray’s 200 point-scale scoring method (Murray scores out of 100 to the nearest half decimal point): “With so many whiskies now awarded 94+ by Murray the actual meaning of his ‘Liquid Gold’ award has lost meaning. The use of his 100 point scoring system doesn’t really mean anything to consumers and is confusing. A simple bronze, silver, gold without any decimal points would be a much more practical way of analysing his scores.” A few years ago, even the whisky world’s top (and only) satire site, Whisky Sponge, was so incensed by his scores that it published a [completely serious](#) and critical post of his work, claiming that he picks his favorite whiskies in order to generate headlines that will then boost book sales and assigns arbitrary scores in an inconsistent manner.

Some whisky fans also don’t like his relentless preaching against sulfur flavors found in whisky (and the Scotch Whisky Association [once issued a statement](#) on the matter responding to this), but I personally can’t fault him on this specific point. I also think certain sulfurous notes [are unforgivable](#) in a dram.

Sexism in the (whisky) bible

[In an interview](#) last year, Murray likens his Murray Method to sex while hypnotized, and it comes off as pretty smarmy. Then there are his tasting notes, which sometimes make for downright slimy reading. Here’s a few sexist excerpts from this year’s edition: On the Canadian Club Chronicles: Issue No. 1 Water of Windsor Aged 41 Years: “Have I had this much fun with a sexy 41-year-old Canadian before? Well, yes I have. But it was a few years back now and it wasn’t a whisky. Was the fun we had better? Probably not. It is hard to imagine what could be, as this whisky simply seduces you with the lightness and knowledgeable meaning of its touch, butterfly kissing your taste buds, finding time after time your whisky erogenous zone or g spots ... and then surrendering itself with tender and total submission.” On the Glenmorangie Artisan Casks: “If whisky could be sexed, this would be a woman. Every time I encounter Morangie Artisan, it pops up with a new look, a different perfume. And mood. It appears not to be able to make up its mind. But does it know how to pout, seduce and win your heart...? Oh yes.” On Fannys Bay Tasmanian Single Malt bourbon cask, barrel no. 39, bott 2 Oct 18: “No Port. No sherry. Just the wonderful opportunity to taste [naked Fannys](#).” And here’s another one from 2017, on the Highland Park 40 Year Old: “Like a 40-year-old woman who has kept her figure and looks, and now only satin stands in the way between you and so much beauty and experience...and believe me: she’s spicy...” There are plenty more examples like this from both past and present editions of the book.

[Becky Paskin](#) is a whisky expert, Keeper of the Quaich, and founder of [#OurWhisky](#). She campaigns against sexism within the whisky industry, and is angered by Murray’s language:

“The whisky industry is working hard to encourage more women to enjoy the whisky it produces, but the explicit, lurid, and sexist way Murray chooses to review whiskies in his ‘Bible’ is prehistoric, and frankly vile”, she told me.

“Whisky reviews are no place to boast the gross details of sexual conquests, or compare a drink to a woman’s body shape. He is damaging the progress producers have made to modernise whisky’s image as a drink anyone can enjoy.”

Should this really be the ‘whisky guru’ that newcomers (especially women) to whisky should turn to?

A Flawed Giant

That I’m even writing a piece like this about him is testament to Murray’s reach with consumers. The ambition of his work over the years, despite his questionable tasting notes, is truly impressive. He also has a legitimate claim that he has helped draw serious attention to certain styles of whisky.

However, despite his large influence, he is unfortunately a flawed ambassador for whisky. His reviews, scores, and comments do not deserve to be promoted by the industry.

It’s high time for consumers and especially brands to move on.

So where should a new whisky fan go to see scores and find out more about whisky, if not to Murray's bible? The work of respected veteran writers [Charlie MacLean](#) and [Dave Broom](#) are certainly great places to start, as is the now-defunct website [scotchwhisky.com](#) formerly helmed by Paskin, which is still online and is a treasure trove of information (disclaimer: I have previously written for scotchwhisky.com).

Website [Whiskyfun.com](#) has also been reviewing whiskies on a 100-point scale since 2002, and has over 15,000 entries. [Whiskybase](#) and [Distiller.com](#) serve as the closest thing to IMDB-style ratings of whiskies.

The most important thing to remember though, is that there is no such thing as a 'best whisky in the world' despite what you might hear from hyperbolic media headlines or read on the pages of the Murray bible. There are just a number of subjective opinions from different sources that you may or may not agree with as you go on your own personal whisky journey, and that is the gospel truth.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020 9:45 AM

Why the Whisky Industry Is Fed Up With Heralded Critic Jim Murray

"The Whisky Bible" writer is accused of using sexist and vulgar language in his reviews



BY [KIRK MILLER](#)

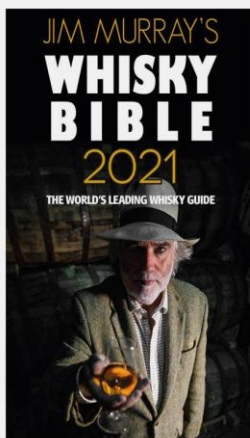
A few days ago, the 2021 edition of *Jim Murray's Whisky Bible* was announced, and it included the eye-raising choice of [an obscure Canadian rye as its best whisky of the year](#).

No problem with that. While I've never met Murray, I've always

appreciated his dedication (he's tasted over 20,000 whiskies in his life and released a new edition of the *Whisky Bible* every year since 2003) as well his willingness to highlight lesser-known or overlooked tipples in his annual awards.

It helps to have a unique voice out there championing a point of view that comes from a position of knowledge. And the few industry pros I've been able to informally speak with in the last 24 hours have no doubts about Murray's palate or nose, although he also has [plenty of detractors](#) (his [100-point rating system](#) and his [forsaking sex during his tasting periods](#) have been commented upon ... I honestly could care less about his professional scale or personal habits).

His voice, however, is another matter.



Jim Murray's new book and his pick for the 2021 world's best whisky
The Whisky Exchange

And by voice I mean the sometimes vulgar and immature ways Murray describes whiskies. As noted by [Our Whisky](#) co-founder Becky Paskin a few days ago (and reported by the drinks publications [The Spirits Business](#)), Murray made "34 references to whisky being 'sexy' and many more crudely comparing drinking whisky to having sex with women" in the latest edition of his book.

"I don't think we should be making excuses for people like that anymore," as Paskin suggests. "One person should not have so much

power that they can get away with saying or doing anything they want," adding that "[t]he message it is sending to the whisky industry as a whole and to whisky consumers is that women don't really matter and they are there to be objectified."

Forbes writer [Felipe Schrieberg](#) offers up several [examples of Murray's smarmy prose](#), with a Highland Park 40 Year Old being compared to "a 40-year-old woman who has kept her figure and looks, and now only satin stands in the way between you and so much beauty and experience...and believe me: she's spicy" as one odious example. Industry reaction has been swift. Beam Suntory — the company behind Murray's no. 1 whisky choice Alberta Premium Cask Strength — expressed disappointment and rightly commended those who "voiced concerns about the objectification of women in many of Mr. Murray's reviews." And The Whisky Exchange [no longer lists the book as available](#) on its site.

"We have made the decision as a business to delist Jim Murray's Whisky Bible from The Whisky Exchange website and stores," as the store [notes](#) on Facebook. "We are passionate about making the world of whisky inclusive and accessible for everyone, and we do not feel that some of his comments that have come to light in the recent edition represent this ethos or the future of the whisky community."

And the Scotch Whisky Association has the moment to emphasize its upcoming [Diversity and Inclusivity Charter](#), which was in the works before this Murray backlash came about.

But worse than Murray equating certain whiskies with sex or threesomes has been his immediate response.

In a statement, he called the criticism "an attack on the very essence of what it is to be a critic in any sphere," an "attack on free thought and free speech" and "faux outrage." He also suggested other writers were engaging in "cancel culture to [bring] down the world's most successful author on the subject."

No matter what, this is definitely [not how you do an apology](#).

Though Murray writes off his prurient antics to free speech and some variation of the "locker-room talk" defense, WhiskyCast founder and podcaster Mark Gillespie rightly [noted](#) in a tweet that such comments are simply "no longer acceptable in today's society." While I don't think occasionally making an adult comment about whiskey is the worst thing in the world, we also don't need to lionize a writer who has made those kinds of comments his bread and butter, and moreover, doesn't recognize them as problematic. (It is also worth pointing out here that those people who have taken to public platforms to deride Murray's writing are ... also just exercising their right to free thought and free speech.)

Final thoughts: You have the right to buy this book (which Murray appears to [self-publish](#)). You have the right not to. And stores (particularly in the booze world) have the right not to sell it. I can commend Murray for showcasing whiskies I would have overlooked and still decry his crude manner and take-no-responsibility response to criticism.

So certainly drink that Canadian rye he recommends; then go find a better source for your next whisky recommendations, because there's a really diverse group of people out there who can offer more interesting (and better written) opinions.

Old Forester celebrates 150 years with new Bourbon

24th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Brown-Forman will release a new limited edition Old Forester Bourbon in three batches next month to mark the brand's 150th anniversary.



Old Forester 150th Anniversary Bourbon comes in a amber glass bottle

Old Forester was founded by George Garvin Brown in 1870. The new Bourbon pays tribute to Brown's original process and is composed of three batches, each unfiltered and presented at a different batch strength.

"This special Bourbon has been in the works for some time now, and while it is exciting for our family and colleagues, I hope the larger Old Forester family – the Bourbon lovers and fans – will appreciate it just as much," said Campbell Brown, Old Forester president and fifth-generation Brown family member.

"My great-great grandfather had quite the vision for his whiskey. He was bringing something to the market that had previously not existed and today, we instill his legacy of ingenuity in everything we do – especially in the halls at Old Forester Distilling Co, in the same building George ran the business in the early days of the company." Brown was the first to sell whiskey in sealed glass bottles and the first to commercially batch whiskey to ensure a consistent flavour profile, the brand said.

Brown originally used liquid from three distilleries – Mellwood, Mattingly and Atherton – before eventually buying the Mattingly Distillery and distilling his own whiskey.

Master distiller Chris Morris set aside 150 barrels for the new expression. Once matured, several barrels worth was lost entirely to angel's share. The resulting liquid was tasted by master taster Jackie Zykan and separated by hand into three distinct batches, differing in ABV and flavour profile.

"We designed the expression to share our unique story," said Zykan. "George Garvin Brown was an entrepreneur and an innovator. I have composed three unique blends to honour his process of batching from the three original distilleries. Each captures a distinct facet of the beloved Old Forester flavour profile, each upholding his highest standards of quality."

Batch one is bottled at 62.8% ABV and comprised of 46 barrels. One the nose, it has notes of maple syrup, ripe orchard fruits, apricot and plum, with a finish of peppermint and spice.

The second batch (63.2% ABV) comprised of 48 barrels and provided an aroma of cherry cordial and raspberry preserves.

Finally, batch three carries an ABV of 63.4% and is comprised of 43 barrels. It presents dill, orange peel and brown sugar on the nose, followed by a medium dry finish with tingling green peppercorns, rosemary, grapefruit peel, and anise.

The new whiskey comes in a amber glass bottle, reminiscent of the hand blown glass used by Brown, and will be packaged in a commemorative gift box.

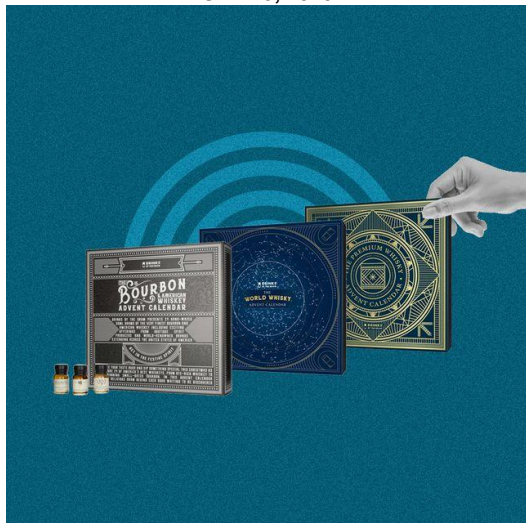
Old Forester 150th Anniversary Bourbon will be released in the US in October 2020, priced at RRP US\$150.

5 Whiskey Advent Calendars To Bring You A Bit Of Boozy Cheer

'Tis the season, after all.

by [KATIE BOURQUE](#)

SEP 23, 2020



ALYSSA GRAY

There once was a time when advent calendars were only filled with chocolate—remember that? Now, you can get a Christmas countdown stuffed with just about anything: [cheese](#), [dog treats](#), [wine](#), [beer](#). It's a world full of possibilities, people, which is why we're excited to share a

burgeoning new advent calendar category: [whiskey](#) advent calendars. Consider it the perfect gift for the whiskey lover who's already got a [fully-stocked bar cart](#) and doesn't like anything but booze, straight. Go get shopping.

(Psst: If you're looking for something else, shop these [best gifts for whiskey lovers](#).)

1Whiskies of the World Advent Calendar



FLAVIAR
flaviar.com

\$225.00

[BUY NOW](#)

You may not be able to travel the world in 24 days, but you can taste a new whiskey from around the globe in the same time period with this advent calendar. Behind each door is a different spirit sample, plus you'll get a special glass, coaster, and tasting note booklet.

2The Bourbon and American Whiskey Advent Calendar



WHISKEY ADVENT CALENDAR

whiskyshop.com

£173.73

[BUY NOW](#)

This calendar specifically focuses on an American whiskey, which includes bourbons. Each day, you get a new, hand-waxed 30-mL bottle of whiskey. Want a sneak peek at what's inside? There's Jack Daniel's Single Barrel, Eagle Rare 10 Year Old, Hudson Four Grain Bourbon, Maker's Mark 46, Gentleman Jack, and more...

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

3The World of Whisky Advent Calendar



DRINKS BY THE DRAM

whiskyshop.com

\$193.10

[BUY NOW](#)

Another whisky-themed trip around the world, this one includes mini bottles of Yushan Signature Sherry Cask and Brenne Cuvée Spéciale French Single Malt Whisky—plus other favorites. Who knows? You may just find your new go-to bottle.

4The Premium Whisky Advent Calendar



THE PREMIUM WHISKY ADVENT CALENDAR

whiskyshop.com

£321.84

[BUY NOW](#)

Consider this one the crème de la crème of whiskey gifts. Behind each window are top bottles from the best whiskey brands. Read: This is sure to delight any enthusiast who knows their stuff.

5The Japanese Whisky Advent Calendar



DRINKS BY THE DRAM

whiskyshop.com

£212.00

[BUY NOW](#)

For those who prefer Japanese whiskey to bourbon, you'll want to mark your days with this calendar. Hibiki 17 Year Old, Yamazaki 18 Year and Nikka Pure Malt Red are just a few of the bottles you'll find inside.

Ardnamurchan launches first single malt whisky

29th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Highland distillery Ardnamurchan has released its inaugural single malt, made with a combination of peated and unpeated whiskies.



Ardnamurchan's inaugural single malt is made from a 50/50 split of peated and unpeated whiskies

Located at Glenbeg, Lochaber, on the Ardnamurchan Estate,

Ardnamurchan Distillery was [opened in July 2014](#).

Since opening, the site has released maturing spirit as young as one

years old, with its first release [selling out four times over](#). When its

liquid officially became whisky in 2017, Ardnamurchan had said it

wouldn't be released [until it was aged for a minimum of seven years](#).

The distillery will now release its first single malt after six years of

maturing. With an ABV of 46.8%, the whisky is non-chill-filtered and

bottled at natural colour.

Ardnamurchan produces two style of spirit, one peated and one unpeated. The distillery was designed to make a "full flavoured malt" that represents its west Highland location.

The single malt comprises of an even split of peated and unpeated

whiskies, matured in a mix of ex-Bourbon and ex-Sherry oak casks.

The resulting liquid has notes of honeycomb, waxy peel, oyster shells, brine, strawberries, black pepper and bonfire embers.

Ardnamurchan managing director, Alex Bruce, said "When we filled the first spirit into casks, just over six years ago, the concept of being able to disgorge those casks into bottles seemed very distant.

"However, we have had an incredible journey, building our 100% local team, filling the warehouses with over 10,000 casks and preparing national and international distribution. We relied on the unique local maturation climate to do the rest, and are really excited by the quality and consistency that has been reached."

The single malt is available to buy from whisky shops in the UK from 5 October, followed by 25 global markets. It has an RRP of £45 (US\$57.80) per 700ml bottle.

The Ardnamurchan Distillery is said to be one of the first to be wholly reliant on local renewable energy, using woodchip for heat and hydro-generated electricity.

The distillery also claims to be the [first to use blockchain technology](#), providing consumers with a scannable QR code on the bottle to show the site's field-to-bottle journey.

Whiskey Review: Michter's 10 Year Single Barrel Kentucky Bourbon (2020)

By [Carin Moonin](#) / September 24, 2020

[Michter's](#)! What else can we say about Michter's whiskeys that we haven't said already? I believe Michter's needs no introduction because you should know by now that Michter's is solid. Michter's is like the high school quarterback who doesn't lose a game, the guy who parts the crowds like Moses just by walking down the hall. Good looking,

popular, solid. That's Michter's. The quarterback who can write an essay. But let's briefly rehash: According to Michter's [in announcing](#) the May launch of their 10 Year Single Barrel Kentucky Bourbon, "Michter's has a long legacy of offering traditional American whiskeys of uncompromising quality. With each of its limited production offerings aged to its peak maturity, Michter's highly acclaimed portfolio includes bourbon, rye, sour mash whiskey, and American whiskey." Also, in January 2020 Michter's was named the #1 top trending American whiskey brand by Drinks International in their annual brand report for the 2nd year in a row. I have been lucky to get some of these bottles in my hot little hands, including the [2019](#) (which got five stars) and the [2017](#) (4.5 stars). So I was psyched to see if/how the 2020 version lived up to its predecessors.



Michter's 10 Year Single Barrel Kentucky Bourbon (2020) (image via Carin Moonin/The Whiskey Wash)

Tasting Notes: Michter's 10 Year Single Barrel Kentucky Bourbon (2020)
Vital Stats: About \$130; 94.4 proof (47.2% ABV); came out in May; aged in specially chosen, new charred American white oak barrels.

Appearance: It looks light in the bottle, but there's a depth to it in the glass. It's the color of the orange that shows up on a tortoiseshell kitten. Or the hue of cinnamon bark, with a fine dusting of nutmeg. Fall is here!

Nose: To all the other Michter's I've sniffed before: You're less strong than this one. This whiskey punches a little assertive. Cinnamon comes through the nose as well as eyes. I smell a more exotic fruit blend than the usual cherry: Think dried mango. Even pandan.

Palate: Once again, Michter's refuses to disappoint (and given 2020, THANK GOODNESS FOR THAT). I will say it doesn't have the caramel or butterscotch quality I consider common among the other versions I've sampled. This is gingery, more savory. You will get an initial kick. Almost rye-like. This is not dessert, this is dinner. It reminds me of a curry in that there's a lot going on but there is an end result that's fairly cohesive.

There's a slight sourness, but it's balanced—like the pickled mango you might find alongside an Indian curry. The mouthfeel is a little thinner than others, too. That said, it's still tasty AF.

The Takeaway

Summary

My vet recently informed me that my cat "has opinions." Well, so does this bourbon. It's not sweet and gentle. It's complicated. Is it worth \$130? (Well, it's cheaper than the last vet bill, so.) Besides, if you like Michter's, you already know the answer. - 4.5

THE BEST WHISKEY GLASSES FOR YOUR HOME BAR

by [Thijs Klaverstijn](#) - September 19, 2020

The type of glass in which you pour your whiskey might not matter much to the uninitiated. But in reality, the whiskey glasses you choose can have a big impact on your enjoyment—and indeed—appreciation of whiskey. Whiskey (or aqua vitae) has been around since the Middle Ages, but only in recent times have we begun to consider the best whiskey glasses to drink our beloved tipple from.

Originally, there was really only one vessel to choose from: the quaich. It's a term derived from the Gaelic word "cuach", which means cup. They first appeared in the 1600s and originally were made from wood.

However, in the centuries after, silversmiths began to improve upon and enhance the original design.

A quaich more or less looks like a small bowl with two handles on either side. Drinking from it sort of resembles as if drinking from one's own hands. Although it's not the ideal glass, the quaich still plays an important part in certain Scottish social gatherings, as it traditionally has for many hundreds of years. Its most prominent use happens during the bi-annual induction of new members to the [Keepers of the Quaich](#), an exclusive society honoring those that have shown outstanding commitment to Scottish whisky.



A quaich /Photo Credit: Dewar's

In the right circumstances drinking from a quaich is an experience. But it's not one exactly suited for optimum enjoyment in your own home. Luckily, with the rising popularity of single malts and other whiskeys, enthusiasts are now spoiled for choice when it comes to whiskey glassware. We've highlighted a few of the best whiskey glasses for your home bar, from the extremely casual to the super geeky.

BEST WHISKEY GLASSES FOR YOUR HOME BAR TUMBLER

The humble [tumbler](#) is probably the most well-known whiskey glass in the world, mainly due to its depiction as such in pop culture. It's a short, wide glass without a handle or stem that lends itself perfectly for those less pretentious moments. This is especially true when you're looking to chill your [whiskey over ice](#). It's also superbly suited for certain classic whiskey cocktails, such as an [Old Fashioned](#) or a [Mint Julep](#), because its wide base makes it easy to [muddle cocktail ingredients](#).



The tumbler GLENCAIRN

[The Glencairn](#) is the glass of choice for many enthusiasts and probably the most commonly available tulip-shaped glass. You'll find it at distilleries and shops, as well as [festivals and tasting events](#) around the world. The roots of the Glencairn glass, which was first introduced at Whisky Live in 2001, lie in the traditional nosing glasses used by blenders around the world. It's more robust than other similarly shaped glasses, which comes in especially handy in more crowded situations in bars. Of course, this is less of a concern when enjoying a dram at home. The bowl concentrates aromas and allows for an increased organoleptic experience.



Glencairn

NORLAN

[The Norlan Glass](#) is a modern take on a tulip-shaped glass, but with a few remarkable features. For one, it has a double-walled structure, preventing the whiskey from being warmed-up by your hands. This practice is encouraged by some (in an effort to release aromas) but frowned upon by others—the makers of the Norlan Glass firmly settle in the latter camp. The inner glass has protrusions at the bottom, which increases the surface-to-air ratio and rate of oxidation when swirling. In theory, this allows the whiskey to become more expressive.



The Norlan Glass /Photo Credit: Norlan Glass

COPITA

[The copita glass](#) is the preferred vessel for many master blenders around the world. These stemmed glasses sit by the hundreds in their offices, but have also found their way into the homes of whiskey connoisseurs. Originally, copita glasses were used by traders to verify the quality of imported sherry in the 1700s. Mind you, this happened not in sterile blending labs, but rather on the docks of harbors. Hence, the copita is also referred to as the “dock glass”. The stem prevents the drinker’s hand from interfering with the aromas, which are concentrated in a similar way to the Glencairn glass.



The copita /Photo Credit: Thijs Klaverstijn
1920S PROFESSIONAL BLENDER'S GLASS

Probably the geekiest whiskey glass out there is the [1920s Professional Blender's Glass](#). It's a throwback-style glass developed in conjunction with whiskey writer Angus MacRaild. The design—featuring a large onion-shape bulb and small opening at the top—is based on what whiskey blenders used in the olden days. It concentrates and amplifies aromas well. Furthermore, it works great with old, low-strength whiskeys of which the aromas might quickly disappear otherwise.



1920s Professional Blender's Glass /Photo Credit: Elixir Distillers

Cake-Inspired Glenmorangie, WhistlePig Boss Hog & More New Whisky

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



Bill Lumsden looks great in cake, the theme of Glenmorangie's newest single malt.



There are loads of new releases to dive into this week, as well as news of another brand revamping its look. [Heaven Hill](#) is rolling out restyled packaging for [Evan Williams](#) straight bourbon and bottled in bond bourbon, as well as the line of flavored whiskeys. Look for the new bottles to hit shelves starting this month.

On to new whiskey! [Glenmorangie](#) is launching a special single malt finished in tokaji dessert wine casks. Glenmorangie A Tale of Cake is priced at \$99 and available in limited amounts.

[WhistlePig's](#) newest Boss Hog is rolling out, and it has an unusual finish. WhistlePig Boss Hog VII: Magellan's Atlantic is available in limited amounts, priced at \$500.

Three special batches of [Old Forester](#) bourbon have been created in honor of the brand's 150th anniversary. All are quite limited, with bottles priced at \$150.

[Macallan](#) is wrapping up its Edition series with Edition No. 6. The single malt scotch is available in limited amounts and priced at \$150.

[Bruichladdich Distillery](#) has released Port Charlotte OLC:01, a heavily peated single malt distilled in 2010. The limited-edition whisky is priced at \$130.

[Virginia Distillery Co.](#) is rolling out the second batch of Courage & Conviction, this one named for the late Jim Swan. The single malt remains priced at \$75, with just under 10,000 bottles available.

A new bourbon distilled at [MGP](#) is hitting shelves in California. [Off Hours](#) straight bourbon is priced at \$47.

Oregon-based [Cascade Spirits](#) is relaunching its Broken Top line as a standalone brand. Broken Top currently offers a bourbon (\$35), barrel-proof bourbon (\$45), and rye (\$40), available in Oregon.

A new independent bottler called [DS Tayman](#) is releasing its first whiskeys, a 10 year old Caol Ila (\$60) and a 12 year old Linkwood (\$60). Both are available in the U.S. in limited amounts—400 bottles of the Caol Ila and 1,600 of the Linkwood.

[Baltimore Spirits Co.](#) has launched its latest Post Epoch rye, this one finished in pineau des Charentes casks. The whiskey is available at the distillery only, priced at \$60.

Finally, [Tobermory Distillery](#) has unveiled a 23 year old expression. Priced at £320 (around \$400), the single malt is not available in the U.S. Read on for full details.



GLENMORANGIE A TALE OF CAKE

Style: Single malt
Origin: Scotland (Highlands)
Age: Not stated
Proof: 46% ABV
Price: \$99

Release: October 2020

Availability: Limited edition

Need to know:

Inspired by the flavors of pineapple upside down cake, Glenmorangie's director of distilling, whisky creation, and whisky stocks, Bill Lumsden, finished this whisky in tokaji dessert wine casks from Hungary.

Glenmorangie partnered with chef Dominique Ansel of Cronut fame to create a custom pineapple boat cake to pair with the whisky ([recipe here](#)). (Ansel also created cake pairings for Glenmorangie [Original](#), [Lasanta](#), and [Quinta Ruban](#).)

Whisky Advocate says:

Although dry styles are made, Hungary's tokaji is usually a sweet wine, made with grapes that have been [infected with botrytis](#). Tokaji casks have rarely been used for maturing whisky, although [Single Cask Nation](#) recently used them to finish a 12 year old rye.

Glenmorangie ended its Private Edition series in 2019 with [Alta](#), but this kind of unusual cask finishing—and wacky-whimsical packaging—feels very familiar. A Tale of Cake is a one-time release, but I wouldn't write off the possibility of more whiskeys like this from Glenmorangie in the future.



WHISTLEPIG THE BOSS HOG VII: MAGELLAN'S ATLANTIC

Style: Finished rye

Origin: Canada

Age: 17 years old

Proof: 52.6%-53.9% ABV

Price: \$500

Release: October 2020

Availability: Limited edition

Need to know:

Distilled in Canada, this whisky aged for 17 years in new charred oak. It then underwent a 3-week finish in virgin toasted Spanish oak casks, then spent just 3 days in toasted Brazilian teak casks.

The whisky's name refers to the famous circumnavigation of the globe begun by Ferdinand Magellan in 1519. The explorer and his crew set off from Spain and made their first landfall in the New World in Brazil.

Whisky Advocate says:

Maturing whisky in non-oak woods isn't common, but it is done; Irish whiskey, in particular, allows for casks of any wood type, and a few distillers there have done finishes in chestnut and acacia. [Ohishi rice whisky](#) from Japan has some expressions finished in sakura (cherry wood) and acacia as well, and whiskeys from Alsace, France are [permitted to use non-oak casks after 3 years](#).



OLD FORESTER 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Style: Straight bourbon

Origin: Kentucky

Age: Not stated

Proof: 62.8%-63.4% ABV

Price: \$150

Release: October 2020

Availability: Limited edition

Need to know:

Old Forester turns 150 years old in 2020, and these special-edition bourbons commemorate that milestone. There are three batches being released, totaling 150 barrels:

- Batch 01 is comprised of 46 barrels and is 62.8% ABV
- Batch 02 is comprised of 48 barrels and is 63.2% ABV
- Batch 03 is comprised of 53 barrels and is 63.4% ABV

Whisky Advocate says:

There were 150 barrels chosen for these batches, but as you can see, the total bottled is 147. That's because three barrels were completely empty—the contents having evaporated due to the [angels' share](#). Creating three batches is meant to recall founder George Garvin Brown's use of whiskey from three different distilleries (Mellwood, Mattingly, and Atherton) to create the original Old Forester. These contemporary batches, however, all have a single source—Brown-Forman's Shively distillery—and were created by master distiller Chris Morris and [master taster Jackie Zykan](#).



MACALLAN EDITION NO. 6

Style: Single malt

Origin: Scotland (Speyside)

Age: Not stated

Proof: 48.6% ABV

Price: \$150

Release: October 2020

Availability: Limited edition

Need to know:

The sixth and final release in Macallan's Edition series, this single malt was matured in American and Spanish oak sherry-seasoned casks.

Whisky Advocate says:

The color of the packaging is meant to evoke the River Spey, which runs through Macallan's estate. The distillery has partnered with the [Atlantic Salmon Trust](#) to support conservation of the river and its population of salmon.



PORT CHARLOTTE OLC:01 (2010 VINTAGE)

Style: Single malt

Origin: Scotland (Islay)

Age: 9 years old

Proof: 55.1% ABV

Price: \$130

Release: September 2020

Availability: Limited edition

Need to know:

Distilled from 100% Scottish barley at Bruichladdich, this heavily peated whisky (40 [ppm](#)) was matured in 30% first-fill American whiskey casks, 40% second-fill American whiskey casks, 25% vin doux naturel (sweet wine) casks, and 5% second-fill syrah casks. After vatting, the final blend was finished in first-fill oloroso hogsheads for 18 months.

Whisky Advocate says:

This whisky initially launched overseas in April and is now becoming available stateside. It's part of the Port Charlotte brand's Cask Exploration Series, which showcases the influence of wood.



VIRGINIA DISTILLERY CO. COURAGE & CONVICTION (DR. JIM SWAN BATCH)

Style: Single malt

Origin: Virginia

Age: Not stated

Proof: 46% ABV

Price: \$75

Release: October 2020

Availability: 9,900 bottles

Need to know:

The second batch of Virginia Distillery Co.'s Courage & Conviction single malt, this whisky is named for [Jim Swan](#), a whisky scientist who helped the distillery develop its processes and production in the early days, and who passed away in 2017. Full information about the whisky's makeup can be found at [batch.info](#).

Whisky Advocate says:

Virginia Distillery Co. [debuted Courage & Conviction](#) in the early days of the pandemic in April, a decision that CEO Gareth Moore [discussed a few months later on Instagram Live](#). The first batch, named for distillery founder George G. Moore, [scored 91 points](#). Along with this release, Virginia Distillery Co. is flooding the market with 50-ml bottles of Courage & Conviction to encourage people to sample it before committing to a full bottle.



BROKEN TOP STRAIGHT BOURBON

Style: Straight bourbon

Origin: Indiana

Age: 2 years old

Proof: 43.75% ABV

Price: \$35

Release: September 2020

Availability: For sale in OR only

Need to know:

Made at MGP, this bourbon is distilled from a mashbill of 75% corn, 21% rye, and 4% malted barley.



OFF HOURS STRAIGHT BOURBON

Style: Straight bourbon

Origin: Indiana

Age: Not stated

Proof: 47.5% ABV

Price: \$47

Release: September 2020

Availability: For sale in CA

Need to know:

This is a straight bourbon made by MGP and aged at least 4 years.

Whisky Advocate says:

The message of Off Hours is “made for the moments in between,” and the brand is positioning itself as a bourbon “for everyone, everywhere.”

Personally, I think any and all bourbons are for anyone who wants to drink them, but the message of inclusivity is certainly welcome.



BROKEN TOP STRAIGHT RYE

Style: Straight bourbon

Origin: Indiana

Age: 2 years old

Proof: 43.75% ABV

Price: \$40

Release: September 2020

Availability: For sale in OR only

Need to know:

Also made at MGP, this rye uses a mashbill of 95% rye and 5% malted barley.

Whisky Advocate says:

Cascade Street Distillery launched the original Broken Top brand of bourbon a few years ago, but has since been acquired by Cascade Spirits, which is spinning out the whiskeys—now made at MGP—into their own line. In addition to this bourbon and rye, there's also a high-proof straight bourbon at 56.5% ABV (\$45).



DS TAYMAN 10 YEAR OLD CAOL ILA

Style: Single malt

Origin: Scotland (Islay)

Age: 10 years old

Proof: 46% ABV

Price: \$60

Release: September 2020

Availability: 400 bottles

Need to know:

Distilled at [Caol Ila](#), this whisky first matured in bourbon casks and then was finished in kosher Galil Mountain wine casks.



DS TAYMAN 12 YEAR OLD LINKWOOD

Style: Single malt

Origin: Scotland (Speyside)

Age: 12 years old

Proof: 46% ABV

Price: \$60

Release: September 2020

Availability: 1,600 bottles

Need to know:

Initially matured in bourbon casks, this single malt distilled at [Linkwood](#) was finished in kosher Galil Mountain wine casks.

Whisky Advocate says:

Both of these scotches are certified as kosher by the Orthodox Union, Kosher London Beth Din, and Mishmeres Hakashrus London. While bourbon and other whiskeys aged in new oak are widely accepted as kosher, there's less consensus about wine cask-matured whiskies, as the kosher status of the casks' previous contents may impact that of the whisky.

There are a few other kosher single malts that use wine-cask maturation, including a [Tomintoul](#) finished in kosher port casks and [M&H's single malt matured in kosher sherry casks](#). Look for an article about kosher whisky in the Winter 2020 issue of *Whisky Advocate*!



BALTIMORE SPIRITS CO. POST EPOCH RYE (BATCH NO. 5)

Style: Finished rye

Origin: Maryland

Age: 3 years old

Proof: 50% ABV

Price: \$60

Release: September 2020

Availability: Limited edition; for sale only in the tasting room

Need to know:

This rye spent its first 2 years aging in new charred oak barrels, then underwent a 1-year finish in French oak pineau des charentes casks.

Whisky Advocate says:

Pineau des Charentes (a fortified wine made of unfermented or lightly fermented grape juice and eau-de-vie from Cognac) is about as uncommon a finish as tokaji. [Jos. A. Magnus & Co.](#) had a limited edition of Murray Hill Club bourbon finished in such casks, and France's Warengem Distillery made a [special Armorik single malt](#) with them as well.



TOBERMORY 23 YEAR OLD

Style: Single malt

Origin: Scotland (Islands)

Age: 23 years old

Proof: 46.3% ABV

Price: £320 (about \$407)

Release: September 2020

Availability: Not available in the U.S.

Need to know:

This single malt was matured for 15 years and then spent 8 years in oloroso sherry casks.

Whisky Advocate says:

A bottle of this whisky will be auctioned alongside a custom sterling silver and gold [gualaich](#) to benefit Scottish charity [The Ben](#).

Highland Park Adds A Cask Strength Scotch Whisky To Its Regular Line Up

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

The Highland Park distillery, based in Scotland on the island of Orkney, has long made a name for itself in Scotch single malt whisky circles due, in part, to its bottlings' trademark flavor profile of aromatic smoky peat and sweet heather honey. While it does have a desirable range of expressions, one it seems to have been missing was a regular cask strength edition, which is now what has been made available.

The new Highland Park Cask Strength whisky series, according to those behind it, is an annual and permanent edition to the distillery's regular portfolio. It is, as the name implies, cask strength, meaning it has been bottled straight from the barrel with no cutting of the proof. Each yearly batch, starting with Release No. 1, will feature different flavor profiles and casks of different ages, though it also looks like the releases will be non-age statement in nature.



Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.1 (image via Highland Park)

"A cask strength whisky is very much made the traditional way but it doesn't have to be enjoyed so," said Gordon Motion, Highland Park whisky maker, in a prepared statement. "Its full flavour allows you the control to discover the taste and strength that appeals to your palate by adding ice or water according to your preference."

"I want to give everyone who loves Highland Park the chance to experience our single malt whisky in its purest form by bottling 'straight from the cask' but allowing you to choose the strength you want to drink this special single malt."

Plans call for Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.1 to be bottled at 63.3% ABV and priced around \$90 per 750 ml bottle. You'll find some official tasting notes below.

- Appearance: Naturally warm and golden colour
- Nose: Heather honey, freshly grated nutmeg
- Palate: Molten toffee-logfire, Sun-ripened citrus fruit
- Finish: Lingering peat smoke

ANNOUNCING CASK STRENGTH RELEASE No. 1

Hello Roberto,

What's the correct way to drink whisky? It's a question our Master Whisky Maker, Gordon Motion, is asked all the time. His answer? "It's

your whisky – drink it the way you want it!" That's the thinking behind Cask Strength Release No. 1, the newest release in our core range – bottled straight from the cask, it's Highland Park in its purest form, matured our way for you to savour your way – no restrictions, no rules.

Straight from our casks to your glass

Bottled at 63.3% ABV, Cask Strength Release No. 1 captures the essential DNA of Highland Park – no added water, no chill filtration and, of course, entirely natural cask driven colour. Casks have a huge influence on the flavour of our whisky so, when you bottle straight from the cask, every strand of flavour is left intact, just as nature (and the casks!) intended. Matured predominantly in sherry seasoned American oak casks, Cask Strength Release No. 1 is sweet and smoky on the nose, revealing notes of soft butterscotch, heather honey, freshly grated nutmeg and a distinctive tang of sun-ripened citrus fruit; its lingering aromatic finish leaves the impression of warm crème brûlée and exotic Eastern spices. Try it neat for a whole new taste adventure and experiment with adding water or ice to find your perfect serve.

A new taste adventure awaits...

Cask Strength No. 1 will be available from specialist whisky shops around the world from October. Priced at £60.00 for a 700ml bottle, a limited number of bottles are available to buy from our online shop or, if you live in Orkney, directly from our Albert Street store, here in Kirkwall.

Glasgow Distillery offers final whisky casks

1st October, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Scotch producer The Glasgow Distillery Company is selling barrels of whisky to the public for the last time as it concludes its Cask Club programme.



Sales of filled casks of whisky from The Glasgow Distillery Company start at £5,000

The Scottish distiller previously offered sales of its filled whisky casks through the Cask Club programme, but has now confirmed it will no longer be accepting new members to the scheme.

In response, The Glasgow Distillery Company will now offer 40 casks of whisky from its maturing stocks for sale. Among the 40 casks is a selection of unpeated, triple distilled and peated whiskies produced across the last four years.

The sale includes virgin American oak casks that previously held Glasgow Distillery's 1770 whisky, as well as ex-Bourbon barrels. Prices start at £5,000 (US\$6,400) for a 200-litre first fill ex-Bourbon cask filled in July 2020 and rise to £12,000 (US\$15,000) for a 200-litre first fill ex-Bourbon barrel filled on 12 May 2016.

Liam Hughes, CEO and co-founder of The Glasgow Distillery Company said: "We would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last few years, whether that's by simply keeping up to date with our recent news, purchasing a bottle from our ever-growing range of spirit brands or putting your name to your very own cask."

"During the early stages of a distillery's life cycle, programmes such as our Cask Club are particularly important to the growth of the business and as we now move into a new and exciting phase in the history of Glasgow Distillery we felt it was only right to give people who have supported us one last chance to obtain a cask from our maturing portfolio."

"We are delighted with the response from existing Cask Club members who enjoyed an exclusive preview opportunity before we made today's

announcement and we anticipate further interest from many of our single malt supporters.
“After these casks have been sold there will be no more for sale to private individuals. This opportunity will not come around again.”
Earlier this year, [The Glasgow Distillery Company announced it had secured a £5.5 million \(US\\$7m\) loan](#) to fund its international expansion.

Glencairn creates five coloured whisky glasses

1st October, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Crystal glassware manufacturer Glencairn is marking 20 years of its signature whisky glass with the release of five coloured variants.



The Glencairn Glass will now be available to purchase in black, blue, red, green, and gold

Following the release of [a limited edition black whisky glass last year](#), Glencairn Glass will now sell the signature glass in five colours – black, blue, red, green and gold.

The new range of coloured glasses is said to offer “visual impact” while also enhancing the blind-tasting experience by disguising the colour of the whisky.

The glasses can be purchased individually at £8 (US\$10) each, or in a presentation box featuring the full colour range of five glasses plus the original clear glass for £60 (US\$78).

Scott Davidson, new product development director, said: “We were blown away by the massive success of our limited edition black Glencairn Glass last year which sold out almost immediately.

“So in response to public demand, our 20th anniversary gift to loyal fans of the Glencairn Glass across the world is the introduction of this colourful new range, which is here to stay. Not only are the coloured glasses a fun addition to any drinks cabinet, tasting your dram blind is the perfect way to develop your senses and to learn all about the wonderful world of whisky”.

Glencairn also marked the 20th anniversary milestone with [a podcast series and the opening of a new expanded studio](#) in Scotland.

Compass Box marks 20 years with Hedonism Felicitas

1st October, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Independent bottler Compass Box has launched the Hedonism Felicitas whisky to celebrate its 20th anniversary this year.



Hedonism Felicitas has been launched to celebrate Compass Box's 20th birthday

The limited edition Hedonism Felicitas brings together three grain whiskies, each distilled in a different decade.
Bottled at 53% ABV, the blended grain whisky offers notes of creamy coconut intertwined with caramel, vanilla and almond. It has a soft finish with creamy toffee. To bring out a toasty aroma and subtle fruitiness, Compass Box recommends adding one ice cube to the whisky.

Whisky maker James Saxon said: “Hedonism Felicitas is intended to convey the good fortune, happiness and gratitude we feel having met and worked with so many remarkable people.”

Since Compass Box was founded on 23 October 2000, the bottler has released more than 100 whiskies. The company's first expression, Hedonism, was thought to be the world's first blended grain Scotch whisky. It is a vatting of Scotch grain whiskies from American oak casks.

“Launching our business with Hedonism was widely seen at the time as unusual, because so few Scotch whisky companies bottle 100% grain whiskies,” said founder and whisky maker John Glaser.

“I am hopeful that over the years, we have shown people how delicious good quality Scotch grain whisky can be and as a result, Hedonism has become a signature whisky for us,”

“For these reasons, we love to create special, limited edition Hedonism bottlings to commemorate important milestones and events.”

Limited to 2,226 bottles, Hedonism Felicitas is priced at £140 per 700ml and US\$175 per 750ml bottle.

In 2015, Compass Box celebrated its 15th anniversary [with the release of limited edition Hedonism Quindecimus](#). In the same year, Bacardi [acquired a minority stake in Compass Box](#).

The producer [launched its Scotch whisky transparency campaign](#) in 2016, and has previously teamed up with [bar owner Ryan Chetiawardana](#), [Chicago venue Delilah's](#) and [Scottish brewer Brewdog](#) on collaborative releases.

Fettercairn Brings A Rare 46 Year Old Scotch Single Malt To Market

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

Fettercairn, as we've touched upon in recent times, is a more obscure Scottish distillery owned by Whyte & Mackay. They've been busy there [rebuilding the core whisky portfolio](#), showcasing back in summer [a new 22 year old single malt](#). Now coming to market for them is a super rare 46 year old expression.

The new Fettercairn 46 Years Old, [according to those behind it](#), was distilled in 1973, having spent most of its long slumber in American white oak, ex-bourbon barrels before a 4 year finishing period in 40 year old Tawny Port Pipes. It heralds from a time, the brand noted, as “a year of great historical change; of major innovation and technological advancement and of profound cultural evolution.



Fettercairn 46 Years Old (image via Fettercairn)

“From the end of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal; to the first handheld mobile phone call and the introduction of the ATM; to space travel and legendary music and movie releases. Defining, and game changing, too for the innovators of Fettercairn as this was the year the distillery joined the Whyte and Mackay family; a true milestone in the story of this hidden gem.

“Beginning with the optimal maturation conditions, the spirit has slumbered in the highest quality casks under the watchful eye of distillery manager John Livie initially in 1973, to Stewart Walker today.”
“This is a truly scarce and special single malt; a celebration of the years of passion and commitment which are inherent to the way Fettercairn Distillery has always been,” said Kirsteen Beeston, Head of

International Malts at Whyte and Mackay, [in a prepared statement](#). “We recognise that having such incredible treasures in our warehouses means we need to ensure we always respect when and how we bring these amazing aged whiskies to single malt drinkers, and this is something we will always honour.”

Plans call for just 55 bottles of this whisky, bottled at 42% ABV, to be released. It is being made available at select global specialist retailers in the UK, Europe and Asia for £8,500, or close to \$11,000 USD. You'll find some official tasting notes below.

- Colour – rays of amber gold and cherry wood
- Nose – Over-ripe bananas, toasted bread, citrus fruit and plum, giving way to raisin, bitter chocolate, fig and spice.
- Taste – Spiced pear, coffee, caramelised orange and liquorice. Followed by black cherries and treacle with a finish of plum, demerara sugar and chocolate.

How To Drink Whisky When You're A Total Newbie

[Hollie Atkinson](#)

Published 3 days ago: September 30, 2020 at 12:46 pm-



At a glance, the world of scotch whisky can seem a daunting place for newbies. With almost 150 distilleries in Scotland, knowing where to begin can seem pretty overwhelming.

The outdated perception that scotch whisky is an older *man's* drink is being challenged by an increase in young adults, specifically women, taking to the spirit. The misconceptions surrounding scotch whisky may have turned people away in the past, however, consumers are continuously challenging the way whisky is being portrayed as we see an explosion in whisky experimentation, especially within the bar scene.



[Australia's Best Whiskies: Our Top Five Drops](#)

Geographically Australia couldn't be further away from the best whisky producing regions of Scotland, but it is now crafting world-beating premium quality spirits. Some of them are so sought-after that distilleries cannot meet the demand for bottles.

[Read more](#)

With that in mind, there is no better time to start exploring scotch whisky than now! So, to help simplify the process, here are five top tips for whisky newbies.

Knowing where to start

With so many scotch whiskies on the market, knowing where to start, or what you like, can take a bit of time to discover. When it comes to knowing what whisky to start with, I would recommend reaching for something with a lighter flavour profile that has a smooth finish.

Blended scotch whisky is crafted from the finest single malts and grains to create a taste that is indulgent and beautifully balanced. To help whisky newbies decide where to start, it's handy to know there are five regions where [scotch whisky is allowed to be produced](#). Those regions, all in Scotland, the home of whisky (not Irish or American whiskey) include the Highlands, Lowland, Speyside, Campbeltown and Islay. Those regions produce distinctly tasting scotches with Speyside, the most common region, being sweeter and heavier than the light, softer whiskies of the Lowland region.

Discover how you like to drink it

Although there are many different ways to enjoy scotch whisky, ultimately it comes down to your personal preference. I'd always encourage those who are new to drinking whisky to try it neat before adding a splash of water or ice. By adding a few drops of water, you lower the alcohol percentage and release the aromas in the whisky, which can make it more accessible to your palate. This softens alcohol vapors and allows you to appreciate the flavours of the whisky.

An emerging trend within whisky is the Highball. Refreshing and simple to create, combining whisky and soda in a tall glass with ice and a citrus twist is a great way for whisky newbies to explore how they like to enjoy scotch. There is no right or wrong way to drink scotch whisky, it simply comes down to your own preferences and how you best enjoy our blended scotch.



[Nose Whisky Like A Pro Using This Expert Trick](#)

When you're tasting whisky, nosing, the act of bringing your whisky to your nose and taking a sniff, is a step that a lot of people skip, but they shouldn't. Smelling your booze can help you pick out flavours and aromas that you won't be able to detect through sipping alone. It's an important part of the process.

[Read more](#)

Attend different whisky tastings and masterclasses

The best thing about whisky tastings and masterclasses is that you have the chance to try a variety of different whiskies, which is great way to get familiar with what you like and what you don't. Tastings and masterclasses not only allow you to try whiskies, but you also gain knowledge about the production, heritage and craftsmanship of whisky. The key thing to keep in mind when tasting whisky during classes is having confidence in identifying tasting notes – we all have different taste buds, so no two palates are the same, meaning that you may be able to identify certain flavour notes that others may not, and vice versa.

Don't be afraid to experiment

One of the most exciting things about whisky is its versatility. The perception that scotch is an older man's drink to only be enjoyed neat is aging, and continuously we see the boundaries of whisky being pushed further. At the end of the day, whisky comes down to personal preference – so don't shy away from experimentation when you drink it. When it comes to whisky cocktails, the Australian bar scene is showing exactly how exciting and accessible scotch can be. Cocktails are also a great way to be introduced to a new spirit. If you are drawn to something classic with a kick, why not try out a Old Fashioned or Whisky Sour? Or if you're looking for something more contemporary, Summery and refreshing, an Algonquin Cocktail with pineapple juice and dry vermouth is the way to go. There truly is a style of drinking scotch for everyone.

Be open to trying new whiskies

Although it's a great idea to gain an understanding of what kind of scotch you enjoy drinking, it's always good to keep an open mind and try new whiskies when you can. This is made easy with the number of incredible whisky bars in Australia, offering customers a wide variety of whiskies from across the globe. It's also important to note that your palate changes with time, so a more smoky whisky that you may have

avoided as a whisky novice is perhaps something that your palate would enjoy further down the line. We're spoiled for choice as scotch whisky drinkers, so why not make the most of it and try a wide variety of them when you can.

Islay Supermarket Special

JASNOCTOBER 4, 2020

<https://malt-review.com/2020/10/04/islay-asda-aldi-glen-marnoch/>



The initial premise seemed simple in theory at least. Pull together as many of the supermarket Islay releases and see which one comes out on top? At least that was the plan, but revisiting various retailers confirmed just how few exclusives are now available from Scotland's peat isle.

We take these bargain-basement offerings from granted. For many, it is their bread and butter, their only taste of single malt for £20 or less. Yet, I was surprised by just how few actually remained in existence. I had hoped to maybe bring you 5 or so, from the big chains. Possibly all from the same distillery (who knows?) and touting the biggest attraction of value. Goodness knows, we all need a bargain right now and the sense of value in hard times.

Visiting these retailers confirmed the presence of a new breed of single malt offering. Namely, the store exclusive that's been created by an established distillery or firm. And being labelled under a new brand such as the [Aerstone Sea Cask and Land Cask](#) releases that have been bottled by William Grant & Sons. The [Tesco Finest exclusives](#) created with the assistance of Richard Paterson have vanished from view. And those that do still manage to stock their own exclusive creation, often only seem to have the Highland or Speyside regions available. Others that once had an Islay staple, such as Sainsbury's, are now noticeably lacking any effort to provide a budget offering. As speculated on our [Ardbeg Wee Beastie](#) article, there will be an abundance of stock right now and possibly new products. If many independents are unable to purchase in sufficient quantities then you'd expect the supermarket sector could bring their buying power. After all, speaking with some brand ambassadors, current sales are in the lower value end right now and the more expensive releases are gathering dust. That trend is only set to continue as we step into a difficult autumn and winter period.

Thankfully, Asda and Aldi are still stocking their own Islay single malt. Both are fairly similar in presentation, being bottled at 40% and being chill-filtered with lots of colouring to make these youthful peated Islay's look like a whisky. At 3 years of age or thereabouts, there won't be much natural colour prior to the caramel being added and I expect that its use has added to some of the tasting notes below.

The aforementioned Ardbeg article also tapped into the theme of batch variation. And that's been a constant with the [Glen Marnoch Islay](#) bottling if the comments are anything to go by. In fact, it's been a constant with all of our Glen Marnoch releases, in comparison to the Asda Extra Special Islay releases, which we've reviewed in [2013](#) and [2018](#) and neither has generated any comments.

I've also included the bottle batch numbers where possible. Given the batch variations that time has underlined in some cases, I do think it is worthwhile to highlight that something reviewed in 2013, 2016 or 2018, won't be the same in 2020. This is a fact that possibly isn't considered by the wider public or those that just enjoy their monthly supermarket bottle. The consumers who give it little thought beyond reaching up and pulling down a bottle from the top shelf – or bottom depending on where you shop. Just because the name and branding remain intact doesn't mean everything remains constant. These releases are driven by their source. The quality and consistency are less of a driver when stock from Islay is in such high demand.

All these youthful Caol Ila's we're seeing bottled as a single malt nowadays add up, as do other distilleries. If you can hold onto a cask/s for a couple of years and bottle it (or sell it on) with a natural presentation for £60-£80, that's clearly a better business model for some. But we should remain thankful that we still have a handful of bargain Islay releases out there.

Glen Marnoch Islay Single Malt – review

Bottled at 40% strength and purchased for £16.49, this features colouring and chill filtration. This is batch L CB2 E 20200597 01/07 0826. Colour: caramel.

On the nose: a gentle peat which given the strength isn't too surprising. Sea salt, driftwood and the usual coastal beach assortment. Some sweetness as well with brown sugar and a soggy moss.

In the mouth: less Islay and more muggy. Tepid black tea. Lacklustre peat, chocolate sponge, liquorice and a peppery caramel on the finish. Score: 3/10



Asda Extra Special Islay – review

Bottled at 40% strength and purchased for £20, this features colouring and chill filtration. This is batch LCB2E 20618655 20/07 1340. Colour: glowing amber.

On the nose: a sweet maple syrup with some treacle and a hint of earthy peat. Aniseed balls, fir trees and cinnamon. A flat cola and spent matchsticks.

In the mouth: refined soot, aniseed and a sweat peat. It does feel engineered and drab in places. Brown sugar, black pepper and licking a gum strip on an envelope.

Score: 4/10

Conclusions

This almost felt like a relegation dogfight. Pretty ugly and unpleasant viewing in places. Not a match-up for the purist, but at least the price of admission was cheap. The Asda release has the edge in a very close run competition yet is the slightly more expensive option.

There's been a noticeable decline in quality since I last tried this regional Glen Marnoch. It feels less punchy, less Islay and a more timid affair. There is still a lick of the coastal elements and the peaty aspect that many of us subscribe to. Yet, it's a faint echo, when you're expecting a little more oomph.

But then you have to balance this with the price. Just £16.49 for an Islay single malt? Ridiculous, even if it is just 3 years old. If someone is operating on a limited budget and looking for something peaty, but doesn't want to pay Islay prices, then this will probably do the trick. And I think it's important that we appreciate how fortunate many of us are with our expensive single malts; not everyone can subscribe to such an indulgent lifestyle of whisky drinking.

Both have a little sweetness from the overuse of colouring and in Islay terms are approachable without being challenging. They are drinkable as well, which sometimes isn't always a given in my experience! And for those looking for a peated whisky to use as a mixer or in a cocktail, then both give you that added value.



Forget Bottles of Pappy. Whiskey Nerds Are Buying Rare Bourbon by the Barrel

https://www.gearpatrol.com/food/drinks/a34205875/private-barrel-selections-rare-bourbon-whiskey/?utm_source=GetTheElevatordotcom

Whiskey geeks are tired of chasing bottles of Pappy, Michter's and Birthday Bourbon. Their solution: to buy the whole damn barrel.

BY **WILL PRICE** - SEP 30, 2020

Just before 9 p.m. on a Thursday night, the founder and admin of a Facebook group dedicated to the buying and selling of rare whiskey hurriedly explained the future of whiskey nerdery to me over Messenger.

"When I first started chasing bourbons I wanted the expensive stuff. The Pappys, the older Michters', BTAC [Buffalo Trace Antique Collection], Willett, etc.," he wrote. "As I built up a decent collection, I started to realize there were some really good whiskeys to be found from people you trusted."

Patrick (who asked that his real name be withheld because Facebook bans alcohol sales on its platform) was referring to the practice of barrel picking, where distilleries offer barrels of whiskey for groups to sample, select and buy for themselves. In 15 minutes, he'd be holding an online sale of bottles from his latest barrel.



Some single barrel selections are known more for the sticker than the whiskey inside.

Booze retailers and whiskey bars have participated in these private-barrel programs for decades, purchasing all the bottles from a single barrel — which costs anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 — and selling

them as an exclusive offering. Barrel picking isn't new, but the customers are. In recent years, it's the Patricks of the world piquing whiskey makers' interests.

While there's no hard data on the growth of private-barrel purchases in the American whiskey market (it's not tracked, and likely won't be anytime soon), there are plenty of anecdotes like those from Four Roses Private Barrel Manager Mandy Vance, who said the distillery's barrel program has grown fivefold since it started in 2013. "When I first started, if someone came in and wanted to buy more than one barrel, we were ecstatic," she said. Today, the program pushes well over 1,000 barrels a year, a number that has forced Four Roses to limit how many people can buy.

Thousands strong, the Facebook group Patrick operates isn't just a platform for whiskey trading and boozy conversation. It is one of very few that exclusively buy, sell and trade *picks*, otherwise known as *bakes* — that is, bottles from single-barrel selections. A good number of them are selected by Patrick himself, who hosts numerous community barrel picks through the group and elsewhere. The appeal, he said, isn't just that these are rare bottles that are (usually) not crippling expensive, it's also the juice inside.

"It's not like my taste is better than anyone else's, but if you can find a picker that you know has tastes that match up with whiskey that you like consistently, then that's your best source of whiskey," he explained. "I just kind of fell in love with the concept of being able to choose my own bourbon."

"Now, any bourbon society worth its salt has got to have its own calendar of barrel selection."

Jay Erisman, cofounder of [New Riff Distilling](#), knows the feeling. In 2014, he and his business partner Ken Lewis opened their Kentucky distillery on the same block as [The Party Source](#), a Costco-sized spirits and party-supplies emporium with a sweeping selection of single-barrel store picks, where Erisman used to work as the Fine Spirits Manager. Some whiskey groups came to him for help barrel picking, but only out of necessity. By law, everyday consumers couldn't — and still can't — buy a barrel on their own. Most of the U.S. must adhere to what's known as the [Three-Tier System](#), which ushers alcohol sales along a strict one-way street: producers (distillers) may only sell to distributors, distributors may only sell to retailers (liquor stores) and retailers own the sole right to sell to drinkers. The Party Source was the broker between the group, a distributor and the whiskey maker.

"Now, it seems any bourbon society worth its salt has got to have its own calendar of barrel selections," Erisman said. The surge in interest has prompted New Riff to cater its barrel program to the general whiskey community, not just bars or liquor stores. The company was the first to conscript a third-party panel to pen tasting notes for each barrel available for purchase, and groups that visit the distillery to pick are given a full tour of the production facility and rickhouses and attend a question-and-answer session with the staff before being sequestered into a room with upward of 20 barrels to choose from.

New Riff's efforts have made its barrel program wildly popular with groups like the one Patrick runs. But why is private-barrel buying just now going mainstream? Easy: the internet.



Known by his username, T8ke, in online whiskey circles, Jay West is one of the Web's most prolific whiskey reviewers. West is in his late 20s, works in software development and posts reviews of whiskey on his [website](#) and [/r/bourbon](#), Reddit's largest whiskey community. He's managed a number of private-barrel buys and also runs the subreddit's single-barrel pick program, which has more than 5,500 people on its waitlist. "I've been talking to some of these people for five, six years about whiskey, life, whatever, and I've got no clue what they look like, but that doesn't mean we can't buy a barrel," he said.

Fully Web-based groups are the most extreme example of the internet's ability to connect whiskey drinkers. West says there are pros and cons. "Doing it over the internet means less camaraderie, but you can get better picks sometimes," West said. "You're not going to piss off your buddy Steve, who you've known for twenty years, by thinking something is good when he doesn't like it when you're doing it online." "Nobody's getting Pappy anymore. What's the next cool thing you could get? Your own barrel."



Transparency is one of the hallmarks of buying whiskeys by the barrel. Private selections often disclose distillation dates, barreling dates, barrel numbers, rickhouse information and the date when the exact whiskey exited the cask.

Courtesy

Connected online or by geography, whiskey groups' thirst for barrels over bottles has spawned track-greasing businesses like [Seelbach's](#), a site that specializes in connecting groups to distilleries across the country (including New Riff). Blake Riber, the company's founder, says facilitating barrel sales wasn't part of the plan when he launched the business, but interest demanded it. Riber's company has handled barrel purchases for West and the [/r/bourbon](#) community, the bourbon review site [Breaking Bourbon](#) and its legion of [Patreon](#) subscribers, and the podcast [Bourbon Pursuit](#), which was so popular those behind it launched a private label out of it.

"I talk with these groups and these guys aren't, like, getting paid to do this. But they've got goals and they take pride in it," Riber said. "I think people are tired of chasing the limited editions, so they just moved on to private barrels and stacking those up. Nobody's getting Pappy anymore. What's the next cool thing you could get? Your own barrel." As his auction was starting, Patrick excused himself from our conversation on Messenger. He was hosting a release of new bottles from a barrel of New Riff bourbon (his first New Riff pick is legendary in the private barrel community). Group members put their names in for

the chance to buy one of 200 bottles from the barrel selection. He returned to our chat shortly after, apologetic. "Back," he wrote. "New Riff pick just sold out in less than a minute. Lol."

Sotheby's sale to include oldest Macallan bottling

5th October, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Auctioneer Sotheby's is gearing up to sell the second part of The Ultimate Whisky Collection and a new Macallan range comprising of six single malts aged over 40 years.



The Ultimate Whisky Collection Part II will include 20 bottles from The Macallan Fine & Rare range

The first part of The Ultimate Whisky Collection [fetched £7.6 million/US\\$9.8m in total when the auction](#), comprised of 391 lots, concluded in October 2019. During the sale, a bottle of Macallan 1926 60-year-old Scotch whisky set a new world record after fetching £1.5m (US\$1.9m). The sale was Sotheby's first spirits offering from a single owner.

On 31 October 2020, Sotheby's will offer The Ultimate Whisky Collection Part II as part of a larger sale. This year's offering will present 190 lots of Scotch, Japanese and Irish whiskies, estimated to sell for £800,000 (US\$1m) in total.

Jonny Fowle, Sotheby's spirits specialist, said: "After launching Sotheby's spirits business last year, this segment of the wine and spirits market has seen the fastest growth, not least during these past six months, with three new world auction record prices, and an increase in buying and bidding from both new and young collectors.

"The appreciation for whisky is incredibly diverse and our younger collectors are showing a keen interest in understanding the nuances of age, rarity and provenance, whether acquiring bottles for current drinking, special occasions, or to treasure for the future.

"This season, we are thrilled to present the first of our annual spirits sales to take place on Halloween, not least with the second part of the Ultimate Whisky Collection and an opportunity for collectors to get their hands on a complete set of The Macallan's new collection, so soon after its official launch.

"Our sale of part one a year ago – our first-ever single-owner spirits auction – marked a historic moment for the spirits market, with new benchmark prices and a fresh approach to selling whisky.

"This year's offering, though lower in value, is testament to the quality of the collection in its depth and breadth. With The Macallan continuing to take the dominant pole position in our spirits sales, it is a real pleasure for us to open the auction with one of the most exciting launches in the world of collectible whisky in recent years."

Macallan partnership

Sotheby's has collaborated with The Macallan to mark the launch of a new collection of single malts from the Speyside distillery. The sale will kick off with a complete set of six whiskies aged from 40 years old to the oldest expression ever released by the brand. Full details of the series will be revealed on 15 October to coincide with The Macallan's official launch.

Proceeds from the sale will be donated to the City Harvest charity, which redistributes surplus from the food industry to vulnerable people internationally.

In total, the auction will include 63 Macallan lots that are estimated to sell for £501,000 (US\$649,000).

Highlights from the sale include four bottles from The Macallan in Lalique 6 Pillars Collection (estimate: £215,000 (US\$278,575), The Macallan 50 Year Old 1928 (estimate: £30,000-£45,000/US\$38,810-58,215), and 20 bottles from The Macallan Fine & Rare collection (estimate: £153,400/US\$198,500).

The auction will also offer 21 Bowmore lots, including the full Bowmore Trilogy series (estimate: £36,500/US\$47,230), Bowmore 50 Year Old Last Cask 1964 (estimate: £32,000-£38,000/US\$41,400-US\$49,000), Bowmore 52 Year Old 1965 (estimate: £24,000-£30,000/US\$31,000-US\$38,810) and Bowmore Samaroli Bouquet 1966 (estimate: £20,000-£30,000).

Other highlights include: Glenlivet Gordon & Macphail Generations 70 Year Old 1940 (estimate: £14,000-£19,000/US\$18,000-US\$24,500), The Balvenie 50 Year Old 1963 (estimate: £13,000-19,000), and Laphroaig Samaroli 1970 (estimate: £9,000-13,000).

Highland Park Adds A Cask Strength Scotch Whisky To Its Regular Line Up

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

The Highland Park distillery, based in Scotland on the island of Orkney, has long made a name for itself in Scotch single malt whisky circles due, in part, to its bottlings' trademark flavor profile of aromatic smoky peat and sweet heather honey. While it does have a desirable range of expressions, one it seems to have been missing was a regular cask strength edition, which is now what has been made available.

The new Highland Park Cask Strength whisky series, according to those behind it, is an annual and permanent edition to the distillery's regular portfolio. It is, as the name implies, cask strength, meaning it has been bottled straight from the barrel with no cutting of the proof. Each yearly batch, starting with Release No. 1, will feature different flavor profiles and casks of different ages, though it also looks like the releases will be non-age statement in nature.



Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.1 (image via Highland Park)

"A cask strength whisky is very much made the traditional way but it doesn't have to be enjoyed so," said Gordon Motion, Highland Park whisky maker, in a prepared statement. "Its full flavour allows you the control to discover the taste and strength that appeals to your palate by adding ice or water according to your preference."

"I want to give everyone who loves Highland Park the chance to experience our single malt whisky in its purest form by bottling 'straight from the cask' but allowing you to choose the strength you want to drink this special single malt."

Plans call for Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.1 to be bottled at 63.3% ABV and priced around \$90 per 750 ml bottle. You'll find some official tasting notes below.

- Appearance: Naturally warm and golden colour
- Nose: Heather honey, freshly grated nutmeg
- Palate: Molten toffee-logfire, Sun-ripened citrus fruit
- Finish: Lingering peat smoke

Bowmore unveils 30-year-old whisky

6th October, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Islay Scotch whisky Bowmore has launched a limited edition 30-year-old single malt, which will be released annually.



Bowmore 30 Year Old is limited to 2,580 bottles for the 2020 release
Distilled in 1989, the whisky has matured for three decades in Sherry hogsheads and Bourbon barrels. The liquid used to make the single malt will be selected from just two casks each year.

Bottled at a cask strength of 45.3% ABV, the new expression is said to be "defined, shaped and crafted by time".

Bowmore plans to release a new edition of the 30-year-old bottling every year in limited quantities.

David Turner, Bowmore Distillery manager, said: "By adding an ongoing 30-year-old Bowmore to the portfolio, we are able to showcase how vital time spent in cask shapes and influences our spirit, making it even more exceptional and characterful."

"Each annual release will tell the rich stories of Bowmore, but importantly each will have their own unique style and character. As for this release, this is another perfect example of classic Bowmore but with boundless depth and intrigue reflecting the long standing interaction of spirit and wood."

On the nose the whisky brings notes of heather, bananas, peaches, pineapple, vanilla and butterscotch. The palate offers tropical fruits and honey sweetness, along with subtle peat smoke and hints of eucalyptus.

Limited to 2,580 bottles for the 2020 release, Bowmore 30 Year Old will be available across all key markets for RRP US\$1,850.

Last month, Beam Suntory-owned Bowmore [created a new global campaign](#) to celebrate more than 240 years of the brand's history, called The Art of Time.

Islay Farm Distillery Kilchoman Offers Up 10th Edition Of Its All Island Barley Whisky

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / October 6, 2020

The Kilchoman distillery is a farm based whisky making operation located on Islay in Scotland. One of the younger of the distilleries there, it is a still relatively small operation when compared to its more well known neighbors. Of the different expressions it releases annually, perhaps one of the more highly sought after is its barley farm grown 100% Islay variant.

The Kilchoman 100% Islay 10th Edition, [according to those behind it](#), is the 10th annual edition of the distillery's whisky that's produced entirely from barley grown on its farm on Islay. This time around this expression is distilled from Optic and Publican barley varieties grown at Kilchoman in 2007, 2009 and 2010. The barley was then "malted onsite and peated using local Islay peat before being distilled, matured and eventually bottled all within the farm distillery's limits."



Kilchoman 100% Islay 10th Edition (image via Kilchoman)

Maturation for this release occurred in a combination of 39 bourbon barrels and 2 oloroso sherry butts for a minimum of 9 years, with each cask being “personally selected for the release by distillery founder, Anthony Wills.”

“Our 100% Islay whiskies are special, they both reflect the traditions of Scotch whisky production and examine the increasing interest in the detail of how single malt is made,” said Willis in a prepared statement. “With our 100% Islay range we control every element of the whisky-making process ourselves, from barley variety through to individual casks selected for bottling. It means we are able to adapt our methods and inputs to maximise the character of the whisky in the glass. “The Optic and Publican barley varieties used for the 10th Edition, paired with a light peat smoking, long fermentation and high spirit cut creates a bright, floral nose of citrus sweetness that gives way to prunes, cinnamon and cooked apples & pears on the palate. “The finish brings waves of mildly spiced peat smoke, lasting sweetness and rich sherry notes.”

Plans call for this whisky to see 12,400 bottles released globally, bottled at 50% ABV and pricing around £75, or about \$100 USD.

How to Pair Whisky and Store-Bought Cookies

JUNE 1, 2020 | [STEPHEN BEAUMONT](#) | FROM [WINTER 2019](#)



Unwrap your favorite pantry treat with something just as sweet from the bar. (Photo by Jeff Harris)

Who wants a cookie? Those sweet little treats are a very big deal in North America, with packaged cookies accounting for \$11 billion in sales in 2018 in the U.S. alone, and on track to total \$12 billion by 2023, according to the [National Confectioners Association](#). For Jim Dudlicek, editorial director of [Progressive Grocer](#) magazine, what’s driving this growth is today’s popular “treat yourself” culture. While Dudlicek says that cookies are “historically the top-selling item in the in-store bakery,” according to his magazine’s annual bakery operations survey, it is the center-aisle packaged brands that account for the bulk of cookie sales, led by longtime best-seller [Oreo](#). Despite inroads being made by niche brands from smaller producers, the balance of the top-ten cookies in the U.S. is composed of names familiar to most adults since childhood.

For tasting purposes, I separated the supermarket cookie aisle into five categories: biscuit, chocolate sandwich, peanut butter sandwich, chocolate chip, and spice. And before we delve into the pairings, a caveat: Of all the whiskies sampled, straight rye is the only one that

failed with all varieties of cookies, so keep your favorite ryes well away from the cookie jar.

Biscuit cookies without fillings or adornments are typified by shortbread, the unquestionable national cookie of Scotland. No surprise then, that imported, pure-butter shortbread pairs wonderfully with soft and silky single malt scotch—best with a [balanced Speyside](#), avoiding anything with full peat, advanced age, or an elaborate finish. Dark-chocolate wafers sandwiching vanilla cream mean one thing: Oreo. The iconic American cookie pairs best with an equally iconic American spirit, namely bourbon. For traditional Oreos, pick a barrel-expressive whiskey such as [Woodford Reserve](#), doubling down with the distillery’s [Double Oaked](#) for Double Stuf and pulling the reins a bit for Oreo Thins with [Basil Hayden’s 10 year old](#).

Reverse the cookie profile so that the vanilla is on the outside and the chocolate in the center, as with America’s ninth favorite cookie, [Pepperidge Farm](#) Milano, and the Woodford Reserve addition becomes even more enticing, particularly so with Milano Double Dark Chocolate.

As sweet as packaged cookies typically are, few are more so than Nutter Butter, with its rather intense mix of peanut butter and sugar. For a companion, look for a whiskey with an almost confectionary palate, either from Tennessee or one of the more adventuresome of America’s (or Canada’s) youthful craft distillers. In this case, the sweeter the spirit, the better.

A somewhat surprising pairing is presented by the quintessential [Chips Ahoy!](#), with a round Canadian whisky like [Collingwood](#) accenting the cookie dough or a moderately smoky single malt doing wonderful things to the abundant chocolate chip flavors.

Finally, given their gastronomic affinities, it makes sense that both Japanese and Indian whiskies, most notably [Nikka From the Barrel](#) and [Amrut Fusion](#), make affable partners for [Sweetzels](#) Ginger Snaps in the spice category. Try the former for a more elegant pairing and the latter for accentuating the spicy punch of the ginger.

THREE WHISKY AND COOKIE PAIRS TO TRY

[Gentleman Jack](#) with Nutter Butter

The whiskey’s candied notes up the sweetness, while its cooked-fruit flavors play the role of “jelly” to the cookie’s peanut butter.

[Glenfiddich 15 year old](#) with Walkers Shortbread

A mix of woods contributes a rich fruitiness to the whisky, which makes this pairing the Scottish equivalent of scones, clotted cream, and strawberry jam.

[Talisker 10 year old](#) with Chips Ahoy!

Smokier than most Highland malts, but mellower than the big Islays, the whisky’s balanced “peat and sweet” adds depth and complexity to the chocolate chips.

Exclusive: The People Behind This New Whiskey Actually Are Descended from Bootleggers

OCTOBER 6, 2020 | [SUSANNAH SKIVER BARTON](#)



In the decade or so that American whiskey has been booming, many new brands have popped up claiming roots in Prohibition, whether via a great-great-granddaddy’s moonshine recipe or a vague tale about smuggling bottles across the border. Never let the truth get in the way of a good story, they say, and many of these yarns are spurious at best. But there’s a new whiskey whose founders actually can prove the veracity of their forebears’ criminal liquor enterprise—because they have a presidential pardon for them.

“You don’t just snap your fingers upon the repeal of Prohibition and decide to get into the liquor business,” says Marc Taub, president and CEO of [Taub Family Cos.](#) and co-founder with his son Jake of Jacob’s Pardon American whiskey. The third generation of a family of alcohol distributors, Marc guessed that there was more to the origin story of the

business than he knew, but wasn't privy to the details for most of his life. He describes growing up and seeing a metal box in his grandfather's office, next to the bar set. Eight years ago, after his father passed away, Marc opened the box to discover evidence of his grandfather, Martin Taub, and great-uncles' original business: whiskey production.



Marc (right) and Jake Taub are coming full circle on their family business with the launch of Jacob's Pardon whiskey. There were floor plans for a production facility in New Jersey, trademarks for brands like Baltimore Club whiskey, contracts with whiskey distillers, and the most intriguing documents of all: pardons from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for Abner and Jacob Taub, Marc's great-uncles, who had been convicted in 1930 of transporting barrel scrapings with the intent to use them in flavoring whiskey. "It all came full circle to recognize where the early beginnings [of the family business] were," Marc says. "It enticed me to want to try and figure out how it all began and pay homage to the beginning, and the retrospective of where the family got into alcohol in the first place—and that was in the rectifying business." While Marc always believed that only his uncles had worked in whiskey production, his grandfather was the one who had to obtain the license in 1932, because Abner and Jacob were convicted criminals. And although there's no evidence that Martin had been involved in illegal whiskey production during Prohibition, Marc says, "I'd be hard-pressed to say that he *wasn't* involved."



The front of Jacob Taub's 1935 pardon from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt



The back of Jacob Taub's 1935 pardon from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

A RECTIFYING IDENTITY

After establishing their business in the early 1930s, the Taub brothers originally marketed a number of whiskeys, led by Baltimore Club, but Marc and Jake decided to launch their whiskey with a distinct new name, nodding to their heritage with a "Baltimore Club" emblem on the label. And they opted to follow in the footsteps of their forebears by choosing to rectify—purchase whiskey made by someone else and then age, finish, blend, and bottle it themselves—rather than open a distillery. It was a deliberate choice to extend the family legacy, and a pragmatic option in today's whiskey landscape.

"Over the years we've seen great companies be able to buy barrels of scotch" and bottle them under their own label, Marc explains. "I thought that was a better approach for us than going the craft route and starting from scratch." Over the past eight years, the company has amassed around 8,000 of barrels from a number of American whiskey distillers, and has plans to acquire more, especially as the economic fallout from COVID-19 is motivating some producers to sell existing stock. Jacob's Pardon debuts this month with two 15 year old single-barrel whiskeys, both distilled at MGP from 99% corn and 1% malted barley and aged in used barrels. Because they were initially distilled to above 80% ABV—the minimum distillation proof for [light whiskey](#)—these barrel-proof whiskeys have eye-popping ABVs: 69.75% for Barrel No. 37 and 70.9% for Barrel No. 23. Despite the [HAZMAT-level](#) alcohol, the whiskeys are remarkably easy-drinking, with a sweet, butterscotch profile. Both are priced at \$200, with just 106 bottles of Barrel No. 37 and 169 bottles of Barrel No. 23 available.

The first release of Jacob's Pardon Small Batch is labeled "Recipe No. 1" and combines some of that 15 year old MGP light whiskey with 8 year old whiskey from Tennessee. It's bottled at a gentler proof of 48.6% ABV and, because the Tennessee whiskey was aged in new charred oak barrels, has deeper notes of spice and nuts. There are 14,898 bottles rolling out in this initial batch, which was blended by spirits expert Paul Pacult.

Going forward, the Taubs have plans for a number of different recipes and whiskey styles under the Jacob's Pardon label, always linked back to the original Baltimore Club brand. But they're not in a rush. "To date, we haven't sold bottle one, but we've been at this for eight years, socking away thousands of barrels," Marc says, emphasizing that getting the quality right comes first. "[We're starting] with aged whiskeys that have definitive character that we can be proud of."

6 Outstanding Ryes Under \$50

JUNE 23, 2020 | [AARON GOLDFARB](#)



While rye whiskey doesn't have the same unique national identity that bourbon does, its identity is just as rooted in American history. First made in the northeastern U.S. in the colonial era, rye whiskey allowed farmers to turn excess grains into a shelf-stable, valuable trade good—that is, if they didn't drink it themselves. Rye was as popular as bourbon for decades, but largely fell out of favor post-Prohibition. With the arrival of the cocktail renaissance over the past two decades, a renewed interest in the spirit has blossomed, and distilleries both large and small have accommodated the demand with a flood of new ryes. Other countries, most notably Canada, make their own versions of rye, but these don't always use much (or sometimes any) rye grain. In America, rye whiskey must have a mashbill that is at least 51% rye, which makes for a spirit that is typically less sweet than bourbon, and a lot spicier. Rye is often enjoyable from a fairly young age—Kentucky Peerless's 2 year old rye was No. 15 in Whisky Advocate's Top 20 of 2017—which means even new distilleries can produce top-notch bottlings. These are some of our favorites, all priced at \$50 or below. **TOP-RATED RYE: SIX GREAT BOTTLES FOR \$50 OR LESS**

[Old Forester Straight Rye](#)—88 points, \$24

The venerable 150 year old brand debuted its first-ever rye in 2019, a well-balanced iteration with a mashbill of only 65% rye, along with 20% malted barley and 15% corn. The nose offers cinnamon, zesty citrus peel, and brown sugar, balanced by oak. The palate is fruity and nutty, with almonds and pecans, as well as black pepper, ginger, and dill. The medium-length finish has a smooth mouthfeel, with just a hint of rye spice.

[High West Double Rye](#)—91 points, \$35

Once a blend of two sourced whiskeys, since 2018 the Utah distillery has been adding its own house-made pot still rye to the blend. It's incredibly spicy and herbal on the nose, with notes of mint, dill, star anise, eucalyptus, cinnamon, and chamomile tea. The palate is oily with slightly more restrained spice notes, plus flavors of green Jolly Ranchers, lemon, and honey. Released in different batches year-to-year, Batch #18A23 made the [No.-14 spot in the 2018 Top 20](#).

[Rossville Union Straight Rye](#)—90 points, \$40

Since countless other producers were sourcing and bottling MGP's rye to great success, the Lawrenceburg, Indiana distillery finally decided to start releasing it under its own brand, named for the town's original distillery. A blend of 51% and 95% rye mashbills, the whiskey has a peppery nose with hints of dill and just a little smoke. The palate offers peaches and cream, cherries, and charred oak. The finish is leathery with the hot sting of tannins.

[New Riff Bottled in Bond Rye](#)—92 points, \$46

Bucking a trend among craft distillers to release ryes younger than 4 years old, New Riff debuted this well-aged whiskey to great acclaim. (It's yet another rye to make [Whisky Advocate's Top 20](#), this time in 2019.) Using a unique mashbill of 100% rye—5% of it malted rye—the whiskey is refined while still offering a green and bold graininess. Earthy and herbal in the aroma, with hints of orange and rose petals, the palate is bold and spicy, with cinnamon, cloves, and other baking

spices backed by caramel and toasted oak. The finish is long and creamy, with a lingering chocolate note.

[Jack Daniel's Single Barrel Rye](#)—90 points, \$50

Few people think of the iconic Tennessee whiskey distillery when it comes to rye, but maybe they should. A mashbill of 70% rye offers a sweet and tropical nose—coconut and pineapple, plus Jack's signature bananas—with just a bit of oak and campfire. The palate is rich and chewy, like fresh-baked rye bread, with notes of caramel and toffee. With a long, but not particularly spicy finish, this is a rye whiskey that will appeal to diehard bourbon (or Tennessee whiskey) drinkers.

[Finger Lakes Distilling McKenzie Rye](#)—89 points, \$42

An excellent example of [Empire rye](#), this New York state-made whiskey uses local grains in a mashbill that is 80% rye. Aging in new charred oak casks before being finished in sherry-style wine barrels from local wineries creates a nose that's fruity and sweet, with apple crumble and blueberry pie. More spice notes arrive on the palate: cinnamon, allspice, cloves, nutmeg, and even oregano. It's long and weighty, with sweet sherry notes and a bit of minerality. If you can bear to not drink it all neat, this whiskey would be stellar in cocktails.

Rock band Kiss to release spirits range

5th October, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

American rock band Kiss has partnered with Swedish drinks company Brands for Fans to create a new line of branded spirits.



American heavy metal band Kiss will create two spirits with Brands for Fans. Heavy metal band Kiss, which is known for its members' elaborate face paint and stage outfits, is made up of Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Eric Singer and Tommy Thayer. The American band currently has two products in the pipeline with Brands for Fans, with more information about the collaborative releases due to be "revealed shortly". Through a deal brokered by brand management company Epic Rights, Kiss and Brands For Fans plan to release the two premium spirits in Europe, Japan and Australia before the end of 2020.

Sari H Wilholm, marketing director and co-founder of Brands for Fans, said: "The first money I earned was spent on a Kiss record. To find myself 40 years later having them as Brands for Fans clients, I don't even know where to begin. It feels so fun and exciting to finally take Kiss into the premium alcohol beverage segment, and they have chosen the right partner for this."

The collaboration between Kiss and Brands for Fans follows the company's previous work with musicians including Motörhead, Slayer, Ghost, Judas Priest and Scorpions.

Ardnamurchan launches first single malt whisky

29th September, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Highland distillery Ardnamurchan has released its inaugural single malt, made with a combination of peated and unpeated whiskies.



Ardnamurchan's inaugural single malt is made from a 50/50 split of peated and unpeated whiskies

Located at Glenbeg, Lochaber, on the Ardnamurchan Estate, Ardnamurchan Distillery was [opened in July 2014](#). Since opening, the site has released maturing spirit as young as one years old, with its first release [selling out four times over](#). When its liquid officially became whisky in 2017, Ardnamurchan had said it wouldn't be released [until it was aged for a minimum of seven years](#). The distillery will now release its first single malt after six years of maturing. With an ABV of 46.8%, the whisky is non-chill-filtered and bottled at natural colour.

Ardnamurchan produces two style of spirit, one peated and one unpeated. The distillery was designed to make a "full flavoured malt" that represents its west Highland location.

The single malt comprises of an even split of peated and unpeated whiskies, matured in a mix of ex-Bourbon and ex-Sherry oak casks. The resulting liquid has notes of honeycomb, waxy peel, oyster shells, brine, strawberries, black pepper and bonfire embers.

Ardnamurchan managing director, Alex Bruce, said "When we filled the first spirit into casks, just over six years ago, the concept of being able to disgorge those casks into bottles seemed very distant.

"However, we have had an incredible journey, building our 100% local team, filling the warehouses with over 10,000 casks and preparing national and international distribution. We relied on the unique local maturation climate to do the rest, and are really excited by the quality and consistency that has been reached."

The single malt is available to buy from whisky shops in the UK from 5 October, followed by 25 global markets. It has an RRP of £45 (US\$57.80) per 700ml bottle.

The Ardnamurchan Distillery is said to be one of the first to be wholly reliant on local renewable energy, using woodchip for heat and hydro-generated electricity.

The distillery also claims to be the [first to use blockchain technology](#), providing consumers with a scannable QR code on the bottle to show the site's field-to-bottle journey.

Benromach unveils 21-year-old whisky

7th October, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Speyside distillery Benromach has released a 21-year-old whisky as the oldest expression in its core range to date.



The 21-year-old whisky is the latest permanent addition to the Benromach range

The new Benromach 21 Year Old is the latest permanent addition to the range, which includes 10-year-old and 15-year-old bottlings, an organic expression, Cask Strength Vintage and Peat Smoke.

The 21-year-old bottling was matured exclusively in first-fill Sherry and Bourbon casks.

Keith Cruickshank, distillery manager at Benromach, said: "The 21 Year Old is the oldest expression we have offered in our core line up since our team reopened the distillery 22 years ago.

"As an older whisky which is still grounded in our commitment to using only the finest first-fill Bourbon and Sherry casks, it provides a unique take on the classic Benromach style."

The 43% ABV expression offers sweet Sherry aromas with underlying citrus, ginger and oak notes, accompanied by a touch of smoke. The palate provides cracked black pepper, Seville orange and raspberry flavours.

Benromach 21 Year Old will be available at selected retailers worldwide from mid-October, priced at £129.99 (US\$167) per 700ml bottle.

New look

The 21-year-old whisky marks the worldwide release of the brand's redesign, first announced in June 2020. The design has been rolled out across the core range and has been shipped to several markets in Europe and Asia.

The new look is inspired by the hand-painted sign that used to adorn the roof above the kiln, along with the distinctive red doors around the distillery and the red brick chimney.

Cruickshank added: "We're proud to see our new bottles which better reflect the Benromach story and approach to whisky making, now filling stockists' shelves and drinks cabinets around the world.

"Made by hand for genuine character, Benromach is a traditional Speyside distillery owned by a family intent on producing single malt the right way. Our small team of distillers rely entirely on their expertise and senses to make the finest handmade whisky, matured exclusively in first-fill casks, with a subtly smoky character and authentic Benromach taste."

Balvenie bottles seventh Tun 1509 whisky

7th October, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

Scotch whisky distillery Balvenie has unveiled the latest release in its Tun 1509 series, which comprises liquid from 21 casks that underwent a three-month marrying process.



The whisky comprises liquid matured in Sherry hogsheads, American oak barrels and refill Sherry butts

Released annually, each bottling in The Balvenie Tun 1509 series features whiskies that comprise different casks married together in the distillery's Tun 1509, housed in Warehouse 24, for several months. The Balvenie Tun 1509, Batch 7 comprises whisky matured in Sherry hogsheads, ex-Bourbon American oak barrels and Double Wood refill Sherry butts, which has undergone a three-month marrying period in Tun 1509.

The marrying process is said to allow the whisky from each barrel "to mix and create a unique single malt Scotch whisky, which is more than the sum of its constituent parts".

The resulting whisky is said to have flavours of "candied orange peel, lots of oak vanilla, some golden syrup, layers of honeycomb, toasted hazelnuts with some spicy ginger and nutmeg". The finish is described as being sweet and malty with oak vanilla and spices.

The Balvenie's malt master, David Stewart, said: "The Tun 1509 series has been hugely popular with whisky enthusiasts over the years and I'm in no doubt that this expression will receive a similar response. "Batch 7 showcases this remarkable liquid resulting in a deep and rich Balvenie. It is intensely spicy with sweet aromas of dried fruits, notes of candied orange peel, golden syrup and honeycomb on the palate." Every bottle of Tun 1509 Batch 7 comes with a breakdown chart showing in-depth details about the whisky, with visual representations of the flavour profile of each cask involved in its creation. Bottled at 52.4% ABV, Batch 7 of Tun 1509 will be available from October 2020 onwards with an RRP of US\$409.99.

William Grant & Sons buys Tequila distillery

7th October, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

Scottish spirits firm William Grant & Sons has acquired a distillery in Mexico to support the growth of Milagro Tequila and drive innovation.



William Grant & Sons had been working on acquiring its own distillery in Mexico for the last two years

The acquisition is part of William Grant & Sons' "multi-million-pound investment plan to build its brands globally and upgrade its infrastructure to support the company's growth ambitions". The move will protect Milagro's "continued success, while opening up the opportunity for future innovation for the company", the family-owned firm said.

Jonathan Yusen, William Grant & Sons' president and managing director, Americas, said: "Milagro has always been an exciting brand within our award-winning portfolio, and with this distillery it is now a clear long-term priority for our global business, alongside such iconic premium brands as Glenfiddich single malt Scotch, Hendrick's gin and Tullamore Dew Irish whiskey.

"This acquisition allows us to manage our production more closely, ensuring the long-term quality and consistency of our silver, reposado and añejo offerings, while bringing our innovation expertise to agave-based spirits."

Founded in 1998 by Danny Schneeweiss and Moy Guindi, Milagro Tequila is made with 100% blue agave from the Jalisco highlands and is distilled using both pot and column stills. The Tequila undergoes a 36-hour slow roasting process in traditional brick ovens. The range consists of six expressions: silver, reposado and añejo bottlings across the Core collection and the Select Barrel Reserve lines.

Since 2015, Milagro has reported double-digit annual growth in the US, reaching more than 300,000 nine-litre cases yearly. William Grant said Milagro is the fifth largest premium Tequila brand in the US.

Yusen added: "2020 has seen accelerated consumer interest in the premium Tequila category, with Nielsen markets showing retail growth of over 30% over the last quarter alone, and with Milagro out-pacing the category with almost 50% retail growth."

In addition, William Grant has reintroduced its ultra-premium Milagro Select range in a new "bold, bright" design. Each bottle comes with a blue agave plant design.

'Global opportunities'

Simon Hunt, William Grant & Sons' chief executive, said the firm has been working on acquiring its own distillery in Mexico for the last two years.

He added: "We're excited by this move to build a strong platform for further innovation that will help us take full advantage of global opportunities in the fast-growing premium Tequila category. It demonstrates our commitment to investment in global growth despite the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The acquisition of the Tequila distillery in Mexico and our recent decision to set up our own dedicated distribution business in Germany are two examples of our investment decisions at a difficult time for our people, our trade partners, our loyal brand fans and our industry."

In February this year, the firm established its own distribution company in Germany, called William Grant & Sons Deutschland. The company also operates wholly-owned divisions in the US, UK, France, Australia, China, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Korea and Taiwan.

2020 Van Winkle Whiskeys Announced With The Usual Caveats From Buffalo Trace

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / October 7, 2020

The 2020 crop of Van Winkle American whiskeys have been announced by Buffalo Trace. Consisting of the five bourbons of various ages and the one rye these expressions, as always, immediately become some of the hottest bottlings to hunt for in liquor stores for those into this.

Alongside of these releases, the distillery also announced the usual caveats of limited availability and price gouging.

The six whiskeys that make up the Van Winkle line up, according to those behind them, include the Old Rip Van Winkle 10 Year Old Bourbon, Old Rip Van Winkle 12 Year Old Bourbon, Pappy Van Winkle 15 Year Old Bourbon, Pappy Van Winkle 20 Year Old Bourbon, Pappy Van Winkle 23 Year Old Bourbon and Old Rip Van Winkle Rye 13 Year Old. It was noted by the distillery around these that "yields from the barrels are typically low due to the evaporation during the long aging cycle, and this year is no exception. While the amount of 10, 12 and 15-year bourbon will be about the same as previous years, unfortunately the 20 and 23-year-old barrels yielded far fewer bottles this fall.

"Good news is there is more 13-year rye than in years' past."



It's Van Winkle whiskey time again (image via Buffalo Trace)
Official pricing information for each is as follows:

- around \$70 – Old Rip Van Winkle Handmade Bourbon 10 Year Old 107 proof
- around \$80 – Old Rip Van Winkle Special Reserve Bourbon 12 Year Old
- around \$120 – Old Rip Van Winkle Family Reserve Rye 13 Year Old
- around \$120 – Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve Bourbon 15 Year Old
- around \$200 – Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve Bourbon 20 Year Old
- around \$300 – Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve Bourbon 23 Year Old

With regards to the caveats mentioned above, we've already spoken to limited availability related to barrel yield. Pricing is the bigger concern, as always, and 2020 is certainly no exception. "Unfortunately even though we suggest what we believe to be a very low and fair MSRP, we cannot control the price retailers charge, and some retailers mark it up even though we and the distributors that those retailers buy from ask them not to," said Julian Van Winkle, president, Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery, in a prepared statement. "We are committed to releasing quality whiskey at a reasonable cost and we hope retailers will honor what we suggest as a fair retail price."

Alongside the pricing warning comes a stern note from the brand to take heed of not selling or buying these whiskeys from online forums such as private Facebook groups or Craigslist. "Trading and selling bourbon online is an unlicensed and illegal sale," added Kris Comstock, senior marketing director at Buffalo Trace Distillery. "If you are not a licensed retailer selling Van Winkle products, we are prepared to take action to curtail the activity. Additionally, if you are a customer trying to buy a bottle at a licensed retailer who has marked it up above MSRP, we encourage you to file a complaint with the Better Business Bureau or contact [your state](#) Attorneys General office."

Plans currently call for all Van Winkle whiskeys to be made available in very limited numbers in November. As an aside, some may not understand the history of the Van Winkle brand and how its whiskeys have gained such a cult status. In regards to this, Buffalo Trace noted that "The Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery has a four-generation history. The Van Winkle family's involvement in the bourbon industry began in the late 1800s with Julian P. "Pappy" Van Winkle, Sr. He was a traveling salesman for the W.L. Weller and Sons wholesale house in Louisville. Pappy and a friend, Alex Farnsley, eventually bought the wholesale house and also partnered with Mr. A. Ph. Stitzel on the purchase of Mr. Stitzel's distillery. The three of them merged the two companies and became the Stitzel-Weller Distillery.

"In May of 1935 at the age of 61, Pappy opened the newly completed Stitzel-Weller Distillery in South Louisville. Its prominent brands were W.L. Weller, Old Fitzgerald, Rebel Yell, and Cabin Still. Pappy had a heavy influence on the operations there until his death at the age of 91. His son, Julian, Jr. took over operations until he was forced by stockholders to sell the distillery in 1972. The rights to all of their brands were sold to Norton Simon, Inc. Later, United Distillers, who eventually ended up with the Stitzel-Weller Distillery, sold off all of the original labels around 1999.

"After selling the distillery, Julian Jr. resurrected a pre-Prohibition label, the only one to which the Van Winkles kept the rights, called Old Rip Van Winkle. He used whiskey stocks from the old distillery to supply his brand. Julian Jr.'s son, Julian, III took over in 1981 when Julian, Jr. passed away. Julian III has continued with the Van Winkle tradition of producing high-quality wheated bourbon. His son, Preston, joined the company in 2001 and the Van Winkles look to continue that tradition for generations to come.

"In 2002 the Van Winkles entered into a joint venture with Buffalo Trace Distillery in Franklin County, Frankfort, Ky. All of the Van Winkle's whiskey production now takes place at Buffalo Trace Distillery under the same strict guidelines the family has always followed."

Pierce Brosnan joins Don Ramón Tequila

8th October, 2020 by Owen Bellwood

James Bond star Pierce Brosnan has joined Tequila maker Casa Don Ramón as global spokesperson.



Actor Pierce Brosnan has joined Casa Don Ramón as global spokesperson Brosnan, who starred as James Bond in four films including *Die Another Day*, has joined the Tequila maker and will act as the face of Casa Don Ramón.

Brosnan said: "I love the finer things, and Tequila Don Ramón Limited Edition is just that. It takes you on a journey from the luxe packaging, to the first pour, to the initial sip."



Each Tequila in the new collection is embellished with Swarovski crystals

In his new role, Brosnan will represent the Tequila Don Ramón Limited Edition Collection, which has been created in small batches with a limited number available for purchase. Each Tequila within the range is presented in a Swarovski crystal-embellished bottle.

The new line includes three expressions, Plata, Añejo and Extra Añejo. Tequila Don Ramón Limited Edition Plata is a clear, double-distilled Tequila with a bright, clean and herbal aroma. Each of the 10,000 bottles produced is embellished with 65 Swarovski crystals and priced at US\$250.

The Añejo bottling has aged for 12 months and can be described as "fresh and woody with elegant notes of dried fruit and cooked agave".

Just 5,000 bottles have been produced, each priced at US\$349 and studded with 115 Swarovski Xilion Rose Hotfix crystals. Finally, Tequila Don Ramón Limited Edition Extra Añejo has been aged for three years in oak barrels, producing a spirit with aromas of berries, cherry and wood notes. The bottle is embellished with 178 Swarovski crystals and priced at US\$399. Casa Don Ramón has released 5,000 bottles of the Extra Añejo. Made using 100% Blue Weber agave, which are slowly baked over the course of several days, Tequila Don Ramón is fermented and distilled under the care of maestro tequilero and master blender Jesus Reza.

Plans unveiled for £15m Wolfcraig whisky distillery

8th October, 2020 by Nicola Carruthers

The former chief executive of Whyte & Mackay has revealed plans to build a new £15 million (US\$19m) Scotch whisky distillery near Stirling.



An artist's impression of the Wolfcraig Distillery near Stirling

The Wolfcraig Distillery project will incorporate a distillery, an interactive, education-focused visitor attraction, private tasting room and a 180-cover bistro restaurant and bar.

The site is the brainchild of Michael Lunn, former chairman and chief executive of Whyte & Mackay, and co-directors John Moore and Jamie Lunn.

The management team will be made up of Dr Alan Rutherford OBE, a former production director at Diageo, former Bacardi UK operations director Iain Lochhead, and Ian Macmillan, the [former master distiller of Lowland distillery Bladnoch](#).

The facility will have the capacity to produce up to 1.5m litres of spirit per year and will make premium Wolfcraig Highland single malt Scotch whisky and a range of spirits.

Subject to planning approval, construction is expected to begin in spring 2021 with the distillery due to open in summer 2022. The site will employ around 50 full-time workers.

The distillery's interactive visitor centre will showcase tales of Scotch whisky and the history of Stirling. The site will offer tours and a range of different experiences and masterclasses.

The project seeks to further establish the city of Stirling as a major food and drink tourist destination. The producer also hopes to operate a shuttle service between the distillery, the train station and Stirling Castle.

"Our distillery will encourage visitors and tourists to spend more time in and around Stirling, helping to boost both the local and national economies," said Lunn.

"In addition to producing a premium Highland single malt, we want to offer a state-of-the-art immersive experience for people of all ages and knowledge levels. Our research indicates the distillery could attract around 90,000 visitors in its first year given its proximity to Glasgow and Edinburgh."

The site has secured initial private funding with further investment opportunities being made available to the public through founder membership packages.



The New The Macallan Edition No. 6 Marks The End Of This Scotch Single Malt Series

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / October 9, 2020

The Macallan Edition series over time has, according to the brand, explored "the unique and defining elements which make The Macallan one of the world's most revered single malts." [Edition No. 1](#), for example, was released in 2015 and considered the distillery's cask management from wood sourcing to finished, seasoned, cask. The series is now coming to an end, with the final bottling focusing upon [the mighty River Spey in Scotland](#).

The Macallan Edition N0.6, [according to those behind it](#), is a Scotch single malt whisky that's been crafted from a combination of five American and European oak sherry seasoned cask styles. It is non-age statement in nature and bottled at 48.6% ABV.

As for this expression's relationship to The Macallan Estate sitting on the banks of the River Spey, it was explained that it "captures the River Spey's energy; the warm, welcoming personality of The Macallan's Ghillie; the classic craftsmanship of Hardy; the extraordinary life of the Atlantic salmon on the beat; and the mastery of whisky making on The Macallan Estate, which has taken place since 1824.



The Macallan Edition N0.6 (image via The Macallan)

"The result is a multifaceted whisky delivering aromas of fresh fruits, nutmeg and toffee merged with oak and flavors of ripe plum, vibrant sweet oranges and cinnamon, developing into spicy fresh fruits and creamy chocolate and toasted oats at the finish."

"From its early days of whisky making almost 200 years ago, The Macallan has been strongly inspired by and intrinsically connected to nature," said Steven Bremner, The Macallan Whisky Maker, in a prepared statement. "Edition No.6 is inspired by the natural world surrounding our Distillery, in particular the vibrant and energetic River Spey. This complex single malt provides the perfect conclusion to the Edition Series as there is so much to discover in this whisky."

"The natural color of antique brass derived from The Macallan's exceptional oak casks indicates the richness of flavor that awaits and there is a structure and depth that is uncovered more and more over time."

This whisky, which is becoming available globally, prices around \$150 per 750 ml bottle. You'll find some official tasting notes below. As a side note The Macallan, "to protect the magical sense of the Spey that lies at

the heart of Edition No.6, has launched a new charitable partnership with The Atlantic Salmon Trust to help conserve the at-risk fish, whose numbers have declined so rapidly in recent years.”

- Color: Antique brass
- Aroma: Rich fresh fruits, nutmeg, ginger, chocolate, toffee, vanilla, and oak
- Palate: Plum and sweet orange, cinnamon, nutmeg, balanced oak, toffee, and oats
- Finish: Long fresh fruit with spices turning to creamy chocolate and toasted oats

New Partnership Aims To Uncover Illicit History Of Whisky Making In Scotland

By [Hannah Kanik](#) / October 9, 2020

The National Trust for Scotland is getting down and dirty with The Glenlivet distillery for a first-of-its-kind partnership that looks into the cultural heritage of Scotland and its relationship to whisky production. The Trust announced its partnership with the brand to launch “Pioneering Spirit” — an archival and archaeological dive into the history of Scottish whisky making.

Both the Glenlivet and the Trust will conduct archaeological digs across the Glenlivet site and at National Trust for Scotland locations to uncover “the illicit stills and forgotten bothies” that were used to illegally produce and smuggle Scotch whisky across the Highlands in the 19th century.



Trust archaeologists investigate the site of an illicit whisky still at Mar Lodge Estate (image via National Trust for Scotland)

There are around 30 such stills across the area, from Torridon and Kintail to Grey Mare’s Tail, that will be analyzed.

“We are proud to be supporting the National Trust for Scotland and the amazing work they do to protect, and celebrate, what makes Scotland unique,” said Miriam Eceolaza, Global Marketing Director of The Glenlivet, [in a prepared statement](#). “As a brand that holds so much history in the distilling of Scotch whisky, we are looking forward to learning more about the illicit trade that our founder was involved in, as well as the lasting impact it has had on the country’s rich heritage, “We hope that through this partnership we can continue to educate and inspire whisky drinkers everywhere on the original story and taste of The Glenlivet.”

The project will bring in visitors and Scottish residents to uncover more about the country’s past and the role distilling whisky played in defining Scottish culture.

“We’re excited to be partnering with The Glenlivet to launch the Pioneering Spirit project,” added Derek Alexander, Head of Archaeology at the National Trust for Scotland. “Our charity is always searching for new ways to tell Scotland’s stories, and this project will help us shed light on a really fascinating era in Scotland’s history, which has shaped our culture and our landscapes too.

“With the goal of sharing the stories behind Scotland’s illicit whisky industry, it’s only fitting we partner with a name that is so firmly part of this story. We’re looking forward to working closely with The Glenlivet to carry out this ground-breaking conservation project and uncovering new and interesting stories for everyone who loves Scotland!”

Whisky Casks Are Now Outperforming Gold as an Investment

They are also outpacing Bitcoin and the S&P 500 Index.

BY [MARTIN LERMA](#) ON OCTOBER 9, 2020



Courtesy of Daniel Vogel/Unsplash

If you’re thinking about where to invest your cash during these uncertain times, you may not have to look much further than your [whisky](#) cellar.

According to findings from the BC20 Whisky Cask Index published in the UK’s [Times](#), \$100,000 in whisky casks procured in July of 2018 would be worth around \$160,000 by the end of this past June. Perhaps even more surprisingly, it asserts that [investing](#) in the popular [digital currency Bitcoin](#), the S&P 500 Index or even gold—a standard safe bet—would not have yielded the same level of returns.

“Societal turbulence is often a time when investors take stock of their portfolio and examine new ways in which they can protect and profit from their savings, this global pandemic is no different,” said Samuel Gordon, managing director of Braeburn Whisky, in a [press statement](#). “Investment in whole casks of whisky is a strategy that helps investors both build, and safeguard their wealth, whilst providing a diversified approach to investing,” Gordon further explained to [The Times](#).



Investing in whisky is a wise way to diversify a portfolio. Courtesy of Dylan de Jonge/Unsplash

But for those who have been following the [whisky market](#) closely, this should come as no surprise. In Scotland alone, there are an estimated 22 million casks of aging whisky in storage. Distilleries were once far more hesitant to release their barrels preferring to gain the long-term profits from their matured contents. However, casks have become more and more available on the open market and cask collecting has gained momentum accordingly. [Rare Whisky 101](#), a whisky broker and investment firm, has gone so far as to launch a bespoke cask brokerage service to meet increased demand from global whisky enthusiasts. And in [Japan, an upstart distiller](#) is attracting new clientele by letting you buy the cask and then aging it for you.

Though largely a safe bet, cask collecting does involve some risk. Evaporation can lead to a loss of up to two percent of the liquid housed within per year and holding on to it for too long can result in a tippie that’s overtly woody. But among the many upsides, collecting these vessels has one additional advantage none of its competitors do: If things go south, this venture is drinkable.

OCTOBER 8, 2020 8:22 AM

Review: We May Have Found Our Favorite Scotch of 2020

Speyside's Benriach has crafted a "smoky sweet barbecue" with a new release



Four "slight evolutions" of what you'd expect from Benriach Benriach

BY [KIRK MILLER](#)

What we're drinking: The Original Ten, The Original Twelve, The Smoky Ten and The Smoky Twelve from [Benriach](#)

Where it's from: Benriach is a Speyside producer of forward-thinking single malts founded in 1898. The distillery went through a few non-production periods (one lasting 65 years) and a couple of ownership changes (Brown Forman took over in 2016); as well, Rachel Barrie took over as Master Distiller fairly recently and is certainly bringing about change. Most of their expressions are released in both peated and unpeated variations, including the four we tried.



Benriach Master Distiller Rachel Barrie Benriach

Why we're drinking this: "I've been with the company for two and a half years," as Barrie tells us. "This is Benriach in its new form."

We were huge fans of the [older releases](#) from the distillery, and we had loved the Curiositas bottle we tested earlier this year. The new range reimagines that particular bottle, takes some inspiration from 1994 bottling of the Original Ten and amplifies some aspects of what you'd expect out of Benriach in general — which is an incredible balance of smoke, spice and sweet, and some tasting notes that we find unique in a Scotch.

How it tastes: Barrie describes these four releases as "slight evolutions" utilizing the distillery's wide and eclectic collection of casks. So while nothing will shock you if you're familiar with Benriach, a newcomer may be dazzled by the array of flavors here, some unexpected.



Of the four new Benriach releases, The Smoky Ten is a standout Benriach

They all have their strengths, but to me the standout is The Smoky Ten. Matured in bourbon, pot-still Jamaican Rum and medium-toasted virgin oak casks and coming in at 46% ABV, an unusual process for a peated whiskey. It's sweet — you'll get hints of vanilla. There's a fruity creaminess here as well, and then you have a modest smoke. Grilled pineapple is prevalent. "What goes through my head is barbecuing in a pine forest in late summer — it's a sweet smoky barbecue," explains Barrie.

As for the others: The Original Ten is a nice balance of fruit, malt and nuttiness; The Original Twelve amps up the sherry influence but counters that with influences from bourbon and ruby port casks (cherry is a strong note here); and The Smoky Twelve balances its smoke with notes of charred orange peel and brown sugar, those via the influence of Italian marsala casks.

But all of the releases possess a creaminess that adds a nice body to the whisky while also tempering the smoke in the peated variations. Fun fact: Benriach sources their water from the rocks underneath the distillery, not from any nearby bodies of water — it gives the backbone of the spirit a high minerality.

Where to buy it: All four releases are available on [The Whisky Exchange](#) for \$38-\$50.

MARCH 29, 2019 9:00 AM

BenRiach Is the Best Scotch You're Not Drinking (Yet)

Peated? Unpeated? They've got a dram for you.

BY [KIRK MILLER](#)

Yesterday, we mentioned that a [\\$30 bourbon won "Best in Show" whiskey](#) at the San Francisco World Spirits Award.

Huzzah, kudos, etc.

[Coming in second place](#)? BenRiach Temporis 21 Years, a peated single malt Scotch that we (randomly) were trying for the very first time just hours before we saw the results from the SFWSC. Better yet, we were tasting it alongside BenRiach brand ambassador, former BenRiach production manager and all-around whiskey legend [Stewart Buchanan](#). We say for "the first time" because we weren't really that familiar with [BenRiach](#), a Speyside-based producer of very forward-thinking single malts founded in 1898. The distillery actually went through a few non-production periods (one lasting 65 years) and a couple of ownership changes (Brown Forman took over in 2016), which means it seems relatively new to some drinkers.

A few things stick out about BenRiach: They employ a female Master Blender (Rachel Barrie), which you're not likely to find in many other distilleries (although that's slowly changing). They're sourcing their water from the rocks underneath the distillery, not from any nearby bodies of water (it gives the backbone of the spirit a high minerality). And most of their expressions are released in both peated and unpeated variations.

Ostensibly, we were gathered around Buchanan — who also works with The GlenDronach and Glenglassaugh — to learn more about the just-launched 25 Year (more on that in a minute). But let's run through four all four expressions we sampled.

The [BenRiach 21](#) is matured for at least twenty-one years in a combination of four types of casks: bourbon barrels, virgin oak, Pedro Ximenez sherry and red wine casks. We got a lot of apple, pear and apricot notes here; Buchanan suggested you should drink the 21 "with

a few good friends and then buy another bottle.” Unpretentious and it’s easily your everyday sipper.

The standout of the day, [Temporis](#), is a marriage of whisky aged in bourbon barrels, virgin oak, Pedro Ximenez Sherry and Oloroso sherry casks. Buchanan suggested unusual tasting notes like “smoky bacon” and “Korean BBQ”, and we agree — but what truly stood out was the intense smokiness on the nose took up to 12 seconds to transfer in the mouth. It was like a time release of spice, and a pleasantly surprising experience.

The [BenRiach 25 Years Old](#) is aged in a range of oak casks (including remade American oak bourbon hogsheads and French Burgundy barriques). It’s non-chill filtered, with honey and apples on the nose and a chocolate-y, raisin and wood tones on the palate. This one’ll be out in April.

The already-released [Authenticus 25](#), meanwhile, might be the mellowest peated Scotch we’ve tried. It’s rich, fruity and herbaceous, but definitely doesn’t have the smoky kick you’re expecting (especially after trying Temporis).

Prices start at \$170+, so this isn’t an impulse buy. The good news, though, is that the distillery certainly has a single malt tailored for you.

OCTOBER 7, 2020 7:56 AM

An Ode to the 100 Most “Impossible” Whiskies to Ever Walk the Earth

Clay Risen’s new book champions the finest and rarest of brown spirits

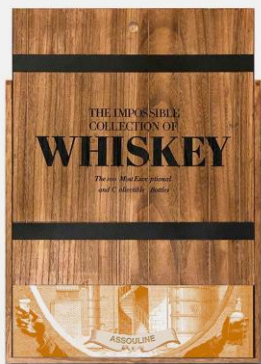


Colin Scott, Chivas Regal’s master blender since 1989

Courtesy of Assouline

BY [KIRK MILLER](#)

“No one could ever hope to assemble all of these bottles into a single collection, but the fun of it is the fantasy that we could.” So suggests spirits writer and *New York Times* editor Clay Risen in his new spirits tome [The Impossible Collection of Whiskey](#), just released by arthouse publisher [Assouline](#). Within the book, he hand-selects 100 of the “most exceptional and collectible” bottles from around the globe, drawing from both the whiskey standard bearers (Scotland, Ireland, United States) and a few surprise entries (see: the Czech Republic).



Assouline

Risen — a historian himself whose 2016 *NY Times* feature [“Jack Daniel’s Embraces a Hidden Ingredient: Help From a Slave”](#) was possibly the most important whiskey story of the last decade — also documents his own interest in the spirit, from drinking a Blanton’s single barrel with his dad to sampling a 50-year old Glenfiddich and tasting an ancient Old Overholt that was distilled in the first decade of the 20th century, when it was owned by banking tycoon Andrew Mellon.

“Here is a bottle that tells a story about America — about wealth, politics and culture — in a way that no book or film ever could,” as Risen notes, later suggesting that whiskey is “among humanity’s greatest achievements, up there with fire and parliamentary democracy.”

The good news is that even as Risen spotlights this fantasy collection, he still believes even the rarest bottles need to be tasted and shared to be appreciated.



Assouline

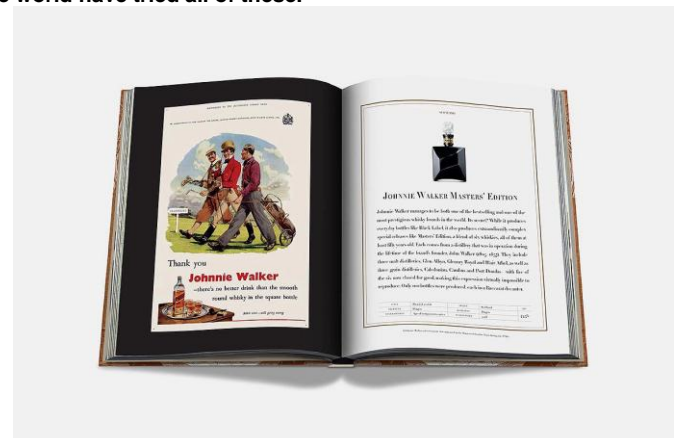
Below, more thoughts from Risen on his favorite tippie.

InsideHook: What was the inspiration for putting this book together?

Clay Risen: Assouline, the publisher, has produced several books in the “Impossible” series, covering wine, cigars and other collectibles. Whiskey was a natural next focus, especially with the explosion in worldwide demand for super-premium spirits over the last two decades. They approached me about writing it, and I didn’t think twice. What a fun exercise! It was not without its challenges, as you might imagine: compiling a list of 50 whiskeys is easy, and 150 is almost as easy, but trimming that list to exactly 100? That was tough. But most whiskey fans I know have a personal desert-island list of bottles; Assouline gave me the opportunity to assemble my list in an expansive, no-holds-barred way.

Have you tried every whiskey in this book?

I wish! I’ve tried a lot of them, but in the end, the point of the book is aspirational, like a fantasy football team, but of bottles. These are the 100 whiskeys I would love to own, or at least try. I doubt many people in the world have tried all of these.



Assouline

Many rare, “collectible” bottles do just that — gather dust in someone’s *collection*. Is it at all difficult for you to crack open one of these bottles once you obtain it?

Especially in the United States, it can be hard to track down prized expressions, given the web of state-level shipping laws and restrictions on private sales. But once I obtain a bottle, I find it pretty easy to drink even my most precious of them. Sometimes I want to wait for the right

moment, but it's never an issue of sacrificing a bottle, or losing money by opening one. I've never sold bottles I own, and I have no intention to. Whiskey is there to enjoy, but you can't enjoy it if it's corked up in a bottle.

What's the most impossible bottle you own?

[A.H. Hirsch 16 Year Old](#), with the gold foil. I have a few of them — I was lucky enough to come into whiskey at a moment when you could still find amazing bottles for almost nothing; they were just collecting dust. I'm almost ashamed to say how little I paid for those, and I'm very ashamed that I didn't buy more.

What's a bottle on the list that's not from the usual countries of origin? The 28-year-old Hammerhead, from the Pradlo distillery in the Czech Republic. It was distilled toward the end of the Cold War, when communist states were still trying to replicate western goods for domestic consumption, on the assumption that it could temper public frustration over chronic deprivation. In this case, Pradlo did a fantastic job, producing a whiskey that wasn't just a good enough copy of a Scotch-style whiskey, but an admirable malt in its own right. I included it in the book largely because of its historic importance, though it wouldn't have made the cut if it wasn't also delicious.

Is there a younger brand that stands out now?

I include a whiskey from Amrut, in India; not long from now, I imagine I'll be considering whiskey from its countrymate, the Paul John distillery. I think a distillery like Mackmyra, from Sweden, makes amazing spirits, and could also show up in a second edition. And there are any number of American craft distilleries that are making their mark with collector-worthy bottles, like St. George Spirits and Westland.



Assouline

You talk a lot about the importance of the “story” behind the whiskies — is there one that particularly stands out to you?

I included the centennial edition of Elmer T. Lee largely for the story behind it. Lee was the longtime manager and master distiller at Buffalo Trace, back when it was known as the Staggy Distillery. He is considered one of the greatest whiskey makers in American history; in the 1980s he invented single-barrel bourbon, which jump-started the bourbon renaissance in America. More importantly, he and a few others like him, like Booker Noe of Jim Beam, held the bourbon industry together during its lowest years, in the 1980s. Without them, their distilleries, and the traditions of American whiskey making, might have collapsed. There is a regular-release expression named for Lee, and in 2019, on what would have been his 100th birthday, Buffalo Trace rolled out a centennial edition in his honor. Is it as good as, say, 1926 Macallan Fine and Rare? Probably not, but that's not my point. To me, that bottle tells an important story. That's why it's in the book.

Scotland's whisky islands are dealing with a major Covid hangover

Adrian Mourby, CNN • Updated 10th October 2020
FacebookTwitterEmail



(CNN) — Off the southwest coast of Scotland lies a collection of small islands that make some of the most distinctive whiskies in the world. Names like Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig are revered by whisky lovers from Japan to New York, from Australia to St Petersburg. Yet those three ancient distilleries are not only on the same island — Islay — they are lined up together on a narrow two-mile stretch of coastal road on Islay's southern shore.

Nearby, across a 500-meter stretch of water, the island of Jura also produces whisky, a less smoky, more herbal dram from an almost deserted landscape.

And nearer to the mainland stands mountainous Arran. This island is also unique in being the only whisky-producing outcrop that makes Highland whisky on its north coast and Lowland on its south. These rugged islands, drenched in mist and buffeted by the roar of the Atlantic, are hugely important to the Scottish whisky industry. And whisky itself is vital for the Scottish economy. In 2019 the country exported 1.3 billion bottles to 175 markets around the world, bringing in £4.9 billion (\$6.3 billion).

Protected industry



The Carraig Fhada Lighthouse on Islay — one of Scotland's most important whisky islands.

Shutterstock

Just as the champagne industry cannot be allowed to fail in France's Champagne region, so Scotland protected its whisky industry as best it could during the Covid lockdown.

So what was the impact of Covid on these islands and on the whisky they produce?

These three important whisky islands — Arran, Islay, and Jura — were completely sealed off during the British lockdown. The only ferries that arrived were delivering supplies (99% of what sustains the islanders arrives by boat).

The only people allowed off-island were those with medical emergencies.

As a result there were no cases of Covid-19 on the whisky islands, even though Glasgow and Cumbria on the mainland nearby were badly hit. That is not to say the islands didn't suffer, however. As non-essential industries, all distilleries in Scotland were obliged to close by March 29, 2020.



The Laphroaig whisky distillery on Islay.

Shutterstock

This inevitably affected the local economy. Ten thousand people work in the Scottish whisky industry, the majority of them — 7,000 — in remote areas like the Highlands and the islands.

"All distillery staff were furloughed during lockdown," says John Campbell, manager at Islay's Laphroaig Distillery. "It was very quiet on the island and good to be able to go out for a walk and not meet anyone."

Laphroaig, founded in 1815, normally produces over two and half million liters of smoke-infused, peated whisky every year and has the distinction of being "by appointment" to Prince Charles.

Those quiet roads also meant no tourists. With the closure of distilleries came the closure of all visitor centers and hotels. Islay annual whisky festival (Fèis Ìle), which normally swells the island's population from 3,000 to 10,000 in May, had to be canceled.

Doors closed

"The weather this spring was beautiful and I was able to spend a lot of time on the beach with my son," says Jane Deakin, manager of Islay House Hotel, located in the grandest mansion on the island. "But we had to close our doors for four months.

"Whisky tourism is incredibly important to us. In 2019 the Whisky Association recorded over two million visitors coming to Scottish distilleries, and a tenth of that number -- 200,000 -- come to stay on Islay. I estimate it will take two to three years for us to make back what was lost during lockdown."

Linda Maclellan, who runs one of Islay's best fish restaurants, the Bowmore Hotel, describes the current situation as "pretty dire. All the distilleries are making whisky again, but on Islay only Ardnahoe is offering tours to visitors."



Whisky island Jura was completely sealed off during a coronavirus lockdown.

Shutterstock

The visitor experience on mountainous Arran isn't much better either. Fortunately Arran's whisky lockdown didn't last as long as Islay's because the island's two modern distilleries, Lochranza and Lagg, were built to be operated by one person. As such they had special dispensation from the Scottish government to recommence early on 12 May.

At Lagg, which produces Lowland whisky on the island's southern coast, manager Graham Omand soon had his computerized distillery up and running again. "I was in my office and there would be one member of staff socially distanced in the distillery and so we were able to start mashing (mixing milled grain with hot water to extract the sugars) again straight away on May 12. That went on for a week and by Monday the 18th we were able to start distillation again."

Not all island distilleries were that fortunate.

'It's just lost'



The Isle of Arran's whisky lockdown didn't last as long as Arran's.

Shutterstock

Back on Islay, Laphroaig is a much older and more complex distillery, meaning that manager John Campbell needed to bring in three staff members to restart production. "This meant we didn't reopen until 29 May, the day after the whole of Scotland came out of lockdown," he says.

These older distilleries didn't always take well to having been shut down for so long. Many have been customized, adjusted and added to over the years and are only kept in a delicate balance by being constantly in production. "It took six weeks to get things back to

normal," says John Campbell. "We had never been shut for this length of time for over 40 years. I reckon we lost about a million liters of whisky and we will never make that up. Even working 24/7. It's just lost."

Visitors to Islay always make straight for Port Ellen where Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig stand together on the coastal road, but Ardbeg and Lagavulin have only reopened for tastings -- with no distillery tours -- while Laphroaig hasn't reopened at all for visitors. Neither have Caol Ila, Bruichladdich and Bowmore.



The Ardbeg distillery has reopened for tastings.

Shutterstock

Similarly on the island of Jura, which sits less than half a kilometer east of Islay and is home to a single distillery (also known as Jura), there are no plans to open to visitors.

So it's not looking like whisky tourism will be bouncing back any time soon in the islands. Back over on Arran, Lagg reopened its shop to the public on 21 July and its café two weeks later on a "pre-booking only" system.

"Distillery tours were to begin again on 14 September," says Graham Omand, "but new government guidelines prohibiting mixing more than two households and having more than six in a group has made that unfeasible, even though we were only going to run two tours a day with clean-downs in between."

Instead Lagg is offering tutored tastings in a room that Graham says is "big enough for two groups to keep their distance while enjoying the whisky we have to offer."

Whisky shortage



Whisky exports bring in \$6.3 billion to a year to Scotland.

Danny Lawson/PA Wire/AP

Visitor center admissions provide only a small addition to a distillery's primary profits, but footfall can still be significant.

On the north coast of Arran in 2019, 120,000 people visited the Lochranza Visitor Centre where there was an attractive modern café (currently closed).

The charge in the shop for tasting four whiskies was £15 (\$19), with a distillery tour costing an additional £10 and many visitors buying a bottle of single malt to take away with them. Until the Scottish government lifts its restrictions, the number of visitors will continue to be low and an additional source of income will be denied.

"We're fortunate that we will get back up to our 500,000-liters annual target by end of the year, with no extra costs," says manager David Livingstone.



Lagavulin is one of Islay's well known whisky producers. Shutterstock

"It's a terrible thing that we're not able to offer full distillery tours. But the safety of our customers and workers takes top priority. Once lockdown is fully lifted, we look forward to bringing visitors through in order to experience the magic of distillation first-hand, once again." Another post-lockdown problem is an actual shortage of whisky on some of these islands this autumn. Although all aspects of production are required by law to take place on the home island, the filled whisky barrels are always sent to bottling plants on the mainland. The disruption to supply chains caused by lockdown means that at the moment it's not possible to buy a bottle of Laphroaig on Islay. It's not in the supermarkets and it cannot be purchased from the Laphroaig Visitor Centre because that remains closed. So islanders are finding themselves in the bizarre situation of having millions of liters of Laphroaig whisky sitting in casks in island warehouses and yet less than two miles away in Port Ellen, Isaías Fuentes Cuartero, bar manager at the Islay Hotel, complains that he has been unable to source any Laphroaig on the island. "I'm actually thinking of buying bottles off Amazon."

The New The Macallan Edition No. 6 Marks The End Of This Scotch Single Malt Series

By [Nino Kilgore-Marchetti](#) / October 9, 2020

The Macallan Edition series over time has, according to the brand, explored "the unique and defining elements which make The Macallan one of the world's most revered single malts." [Edition No. 1](#), for example, was released in 2015 and considered the distillery's cask management from wood sourcing to finished, seasoned, cask. The series is now coming to an end, with the final bottling focusing upon [the mighty River Spey in Scotland](#). The Macallan Edition N0.6, [according to those behind it](#), is a Scotch single malt whisky that's been crafted from a combination of five American and European oak sherry seasoned cask styles. It is non-age statement in nature and bottled at 48.6% ABV. As for this expression's relationship to The Macallan Estate sitting on the banks of the River Spey, it was explained that it "captures the River Spey's energy; the warm, welcoming personality of The Macallan's Ghillie; the classic craftsmanship of Hardy; the extraordinary life of the Atlantic salmon on the beat; and the mastery of whisky making on The Macallan Estate, which has taken place since 1824.



The Macallan Edition N0.6 (image via The Macallan)

"The result is a multifaceted whisky delivering aromas of fresh fruits, nutmeg and toffee merged with oak and flavors of ripe plum, vibrant

sweet oranges and cinnamon, developing into spicy fresh fruits and creamy chocolate and toasted oats at the finish."

"From its early days of whisky making almost 200 years ago, The Macallan has been strongly inspired by and intrinsically connected to nature," said Steven Bremner, The Macallan Whisky Maker, in a prepared statement. "Edition No.6 is inspired by the natural world surrounding our Distillery, in particular the vibrant and energetic River Spey. This complex single malt provides the perfect conclusion to the Edition Series as there is so much to discover in this whisky. "The natural color of antique brass derived from The Macallan's exceptional oak casks indicates the richness of flavor that awaits and there is a structure and depth that is uncovered more and more over time."

This whisky, which is becoming available globally, prices around \$150 per 750 ml bottle. You'll find some official tasting notes below. As a side note The Macallan, "to protect the magical sense of the Spey that lies at the heart of Edition No.6, has launched a new charitable partnership with The Atlantic Salmon Trust to help conserve the at-risk fish, whose numbers have declined so rapidly in recent years."

- Color: Antique brass
- Aroma: Rich fresh fruits, nutmeg, ginger, chocolate, toffee, vanilla, and oak
- Palate: Plum and sweet orange, cinnamon, nutmeg, balanced oak, toffee, and oats
- Finish: Long fresh fruit with spices turning to creamy chocolate and toasted oats

More help needed as bars approach 'point of no return'

13th October, 2020 by Melita Kiely

Many hospitality businesses are 'quickly reaching the point of no return' and urgently need additional financial support, UK Hospitality has warned, as new restrictions were announced for England in response to rising Covid-19 cases.



The on-trade in England is facing new restrictions as the government reacts to the rise in Covid-19 cases

Yesterday (12 October), UK prime minister Boris Johnson announced a new three-tier system for England in his battle against Covid-19, ranging from tier one (medium) and tier two (high) to tier three (very high).

Tier one includes measures such as the widely criticised [10pm curfew for bars and restaurants](#). The restrictions get progressively stricter moving up the tiers, with tier three meaning all pubs and bars must close, with the exception of restaurants, and pubs that can operate as restaurants, which are permitted to stay open.

The measures will come into force on Wednesday 14 October, with Liverpool put in the highest tier. The government will pay employees who cannot work 67% of their salaries up to £2,100 (around US\$2,740) a month, UK chancellor Rishi Sunak announced last week. However, trade bodies are calling for additional support to help venues survive tougher restrictions, or risk mass job losses and business closures.

Kate Nicholls, UK Hospitality chief executive, said: "The impact of all of these restrictions is huge and we are quickly reaching the point of no return for many businesses.

"For those businesses in tier three areas, forced to close their doors again, things look bleak but the support announced last week for closed businesses will hopefully give them the breathing room they need to survive another lockdown.

"There is currently a concerning lack of support on offer for hospitality businesses in tier two, and to a lesser extent tier one, despite their facing restrictions that is seeing trade down by between 40% to 60%. They will have the worst of both worlds, operating under significant restrictions without the financial support on offer to tier three businesses. Without enhanced grant support and enhanced government contributions to the Job Support Scheme, many are going to fall by the wayside.

"It is time for the government, at the very least, to rethink the mandatory 10pm curfew on those areas where Covid rates are low. It was imposed without credible evidence that hospitality is the source of increases in transmission, while some evidence points the other way. To leave hospitality out to dry would be a grave and risky move and would cost many people their jobs."

Legal action

Sacha Lord, night time economy adviser for Greater Manchester in England, has launched legal proceedings to challenge the UK government's impending lockdown of hospitality and entertainment venues across the north of England.

It comes as the latest data from Public Health England continues to show that food outlet and restaurants continue to relate to a very small percentage of confirmed Covid-19 cases.

In the week ending 4 October, the number of new acute respiratory incidents (ARI) in England was 918. Of these, 30 incidents were from food outlet or restaurant settings, and 24 had at least one linked case that tested positive for Covid-19 – meaning only 2.6% of Covid-19 cases were linked to on-trade settings.

For comparison, educational settings created the highest rates of Covid-19 cases with 252 incidents, followed by workplace settings at 132 cases. Care homes also reported 172 ARI incidents in total, where 116 had at least one linked case that tested positive for Covid-19.

Lord revealed in a post on LinkedIn that he had engaged judicial lawyers to begin a judicial review into the legality of the emergency restrictions due to be imposed on the hospitality and entertainment sectors.

Lord is leading the legal action, which is being backed by numerous associations and companies, including The Night Time Industries Association, The British Beer and Pub Association, The Alchemist bar and Atlas Bar, to name just a few.

How to Build the Perfect 6 Bottle Whisky Bar

JUNE 15, 2020 | [TED SIMMONS](#) | FROM [FALL 2019](#)



A wall of whisky is impressive to behold, but it's not necessary. The truth is, no whisky collection can ever be comprehensive. As long as you have a bottle from each of these representative styles, you'll be well prepared to satisfy almost any whisky drinker, and perhaps create

some new ones as well. Even with splurging on a trophy whisky, the average price to complete this impressive lineup is under \$500.



1. A TROPHY WHISKY

Every collection needs a crown jewel and whether you display it prominently or keep it under lock and key, you'll know precisely when the time is right to bring it out.

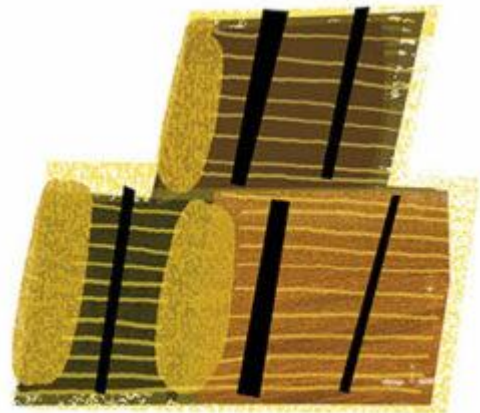
[Glenmorangie Signet](#)—94 points, \$220

[Johnnie Walker Blue Label](#)—97 points, \$225

[Midleton Very Rare 2018](#)—94 points, \$200

[Old Fitzgerald 13 year old Bottled in Bond](#)—93 points, \$130

[Yamazaki 12 year old](#)—93 points, \$85



2. BARREL-PROOF BOURBON

If strength is in numbers, then the ABV here says it all. By starting with full proof, these whiskeys are fine sipped neat, yet also adapt well to ice and cocktails, making them supremely versatile.

[Belle Meade Cask Strength Reserve](#)—92 points, \$60

[Booker's 2019-02 Shiny Barrel Batch](#)—93 points, \$80

[Elijah Craig Barrel Proof A119](#)—94 points, \$60

[Maker's Mark Cask Strength](#)—93 points, \$50

[Wild Turkey Rare Breed](#)—90 points, \$45



3. A NON-SMOKY SINGLE MALT

Single malts are the pinnacle of whisky for many. While Scotland may be the obvious place to start your search, other countries are adding diversity. You should too.

[Balvenie DoubleWood 12 year old](#)—88 points, \$55
[Macallan 12 year old Sherry Oak](#)—87 points, \$70
[Miyagikyo Single Malt](#)—88 points, \$80
[Tyrconnell 16 year old](#)—91 points, \$100
[Westland Garryana \(Batch 3|1\)](#)—90 points, \$150



4. HEAVILY PEATED SCOTCH

For peat lovers, there is no substitute for these Islay classics. Recognizable in both name and flavor, no whisky bar is complete without packing at least one peaty punch.

[Ardbeg Corryvreckan](#)—95 points, \$90
[Kilchoman 100% Islay 8th Edition](#)—91 points, \$110
[Lagavulin 16 year old](#)—92 points, \$85
[Laphroaig 10 year old Cask Strength](#)—93 points, \$70
[Port Charlotte 10 year old](#)—93 points, \$65



5. A SMOOTH BLEND

For the guest who isn't quite sure which whisky they like—if any. These high-quality blends satisfy whisky lovers, yet are approachable enough to win over new fans.

[Compass Box Great King Street Artist's Blend](#)—91 points, \$40
[Crown Royal Deluxe](#)—88 points, \$25
[Dewar's 15 year old](#)—90 points, \$50
[Powers Gold Label](#)—90 points, \$38
[Teeling Small Batch](#)—89 points, \$44



6. SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Make a personal statement that will pique the interest of even fervent whiskey fans. Think conversation starter, a singular whisky with an unusual origin or groundbreaking approach.

[Amrut Single Malt](#)—87 points, \$65
[High West Bourye](#)—91 points, \$80
[Kikori](#)—90 points, \$50
[Legend](#)—88 points, \$35
[Sierra Norte Single Barrel Yellow](#)—90 points, \$50



UPROXX

Serious Whiskey Experts Name The Most Underrated Single Malt Scotches

[ZACH JOHNSTON](#) TWITTER LIFE WRITER

OCTOBER 13, 2020

There's a whole lot of single malt [scotch](#) out there. Big brands tend to make headlines when they drop big bottles, which, in turn, means a lot of lesser-known bottles of [scotch](#) remain underappreciated or underhyped. That's especially true if you're not in Scotland or not entrenched deeply into the world of [Scottish single malts](#). Our focus today is underhyped single malt scotch whisky. We've gathered a quorum of whisky experts — whisky distillers, whisky bottlers, whisky judges, booze writers, and whisky ambassadors — to shout out the bottles of single malt from Scotland that they think need a little more love on the international [whisk\(e\)y stage](#).

The ten [single malts](#) below may already be on your radar. Or they may not. Either way, these are bottles of the good stuff that our experts think are worth seeking out, giving a try, and maybe adding to your whisky rotation.

Related: [Bona Fide Whiskey Experts Name Their Favorite Bourbons Right Now](#)

Oban 18 — Nate Ganapathi, Whisky investment consultant and founder of [Single Malt Daily](#)



OBAN WHISKY

ABV: 43%

Distillery: Oban Distillery, Oban, Highlands

Average Price: [\\$150](#)

The Whisky:

Oban, a west highland malt, is always a great choice. One of the many many distilleries owned and operated by Diageo, makers of Johnnie Walker, this staple to any whisky collection fits in perfectly with its other siblings: Lagavulin, Talisker, and Caol Ila. One of the smallest distilleries in Scotland, everything they touch turns to gold! A delicious malt that often goes under the radar, Oban 18 expands upon the quintessential home bar piece in the 14.

Tasting Notes:

It has a few similarities to Highland Park with regards to its taste (sweet, citrus, smoke). A more muted smoke than its younger counterpart with brilliant vanilla custard and some hints of sea salt. This is also one of the best bang-for-your-buck bottles on the market.

Inchgower Aged 27 Years — Ervin Trykowski, [Global New Age Scotch Whisky Ambassador](#)



INCWGOWER

ABV: 55.3%

Distillery: Inchgower Distillery, Buckie, Speyside

Average Price: \$300

The Whisky:

Not so much underrated as *unsung*! Inchgower is a magical single malt whisky. It's a fruity Speyside malt with a whisp of salt tang that's usually associated with the heavier styles of Scotch. This makes it a unique liquid and a great starting point for someone looking to explore coastal malt whisky.

The distillery was founded in 1871 and sits on the site of a ghost distillery, Tochieneal. It even uses the same equipment. As such, releases are few and far between (other than their 14-year Flora and Fauna). Plus, Inchgower is often reserved for special releases like the 27YO from 2018. It's also featured in the blended malt Claddach from the same year.

It's awesome juice, from a solid distillery, with a complex character. What more do you want?

Tasting Notes:

A huge amount of barley sweetness, fruit sweets, cedarwood, hay, blossom, and a touch of chocolate. On the palate, a hit of citrus (first lime, then orange), ginger ice cream sweetness flanked with tannin, and salt finish. It's awesome on the rocks and as part of a cocktail, a Morning Glory fizz or a sour are my two favs.

Glenfarclas Aged 12 Years— Jared Himstedt, Head Distiller and co-founder [Balcones Distilling](#)



GLENFARCLAS

ABV: 43%

Distillery: Glenfarclas Distillery, Ballindalloch, Speyside

Average Price: [\\$55](#)

The Whisky:

The topic of over and underrated whiskies is a tricky one, the landscape changes so fast. Yesterday's underdog can be tomorrow's darling if it gets traction with an influential group or club or wins in a spirits competition. That said, I still have a go-to that I feel is underappreciated and has been for some time: Glenfarclas 12.

The allure of being independent and family-owned and their continued use of direct fire stills adds a layer of romance to the Glenfarclas brand. We have so many other sherried single malts — some subtle and some completely over the top — and this little gem has always struck me as being better and more interesting than some pricier and higher profile brands.

The value is there.

Tasting Notes:

It's a dram that starts with the expected sherry notes. Some varnish on the nose, nutty, vinous, just the right amount of sulfur. Maybe a hint of heavy cream and a crisp, almost eucalyptus, evaporativeness. It's expressive for 43 percent ABV, with a creamy and coating texture. Grain and soft oak sweetness join the nuts and fruit mid-palate before a nice pop of acid and citrus meets you at the finish.

Glenfiddich 12 — Gillian Murphy, [Tullamore DEW Ambassador](#)



GLENFIDDICH

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Glenfiddich Distillery, Dufftown, Speyside

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

The Whisky:

In 1963, Glenfiddich became the first single malt scotch whisky to be exported out of Scotland, essentially establishing the category as we know it. As the youngest expression in the Glenfiddich range, I find that The Glenfiddich 12-year-old Single Malt is often overlooked for its older, more elusive siblings. That's a real shame.

Glenfiddich 12 offers a truly refreshing dram which can be enjoyed by all. The whisky is matured for 12 years in Olorosso sherry and American oak casks before being married in specially designed, uniquely sized oak tuns for nine months.

Tasting Notes:

This dram really reminds me of freshly cut pears! It's fresh and fruity on the nose; sweet, creamy, and malty on the palate and has a long, smooth, and mellow finish.

Speyburn Aged 10 Years — Bobby Childs, founder of [Adventures in Whiskey](#)



SPEYBURN

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Speyburn Distillery, Aberlour, Speyside

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

The Whisky:

Lots of single malts out there get tons of attention, but there are even more that fly under the radar, especially here in the States. Speyburn 10-year-old is definitely a whisky that doesn't get the credit it rightfully deserves.

Given its pleasing aromas and captivating flavors, it's a perfect everyday pour. As important as that is, the \$30-ish per bottle asking price is what really cements this malt as a must-have. Find me another 10-year-old whisky as delicious as Speyburn for that price!

It's matured in a combination of ex-bourbon barrels and ex-sherry casks. The distillery bottles Speyburn 10-year-old at 43 percent ABV, which is a great sipping proof.

Tasting Notes:

Speyburn 10 starts with hints of subtle sweetened malt, caramel chews, and a floral top note. Ripe nectarine, vanilla, and spice notes make an appearance with a little airtime. On the palate, honeyed malt is complemented by candied orange peel, stewed orchard fruits (think pear), pie crust, and vanilla bean. The clean, slightly dry finish features butterscotch and the slightest oak note.

It's a Speyside single malt that beautifully captures a classic whisky profile at a very affordable price. You can't beat that.

Old Pulteney Aged 12 Years — Adam Levy, Alcohol Professor, and founder [International Spirit Competitions](#)



OLD PULTENEY

ABV: 40%

Distillery: Pulteney Distillery, Pulteneytown, Highlands

Average Price: [\\$48](#)

The Whisky:

I believe one of the most underrated distilleries in the Highlands is Old Pulteney in Wick. Wick, in its earlier glory, harbored the largest herring fleet in the world. The town became so unruly with drunken sailors that

at one point it was ordered to become a “Dry Town.” Sailors looked at that distillery every day, longing to satisfy their thirst, with night watchmen standing guard ensuring the casks stayed safe. The Old Pulteney 12 is a true maritime malt. It is aged in ex-bourbon casks and has a deeper amber color than one would expect for a 12-year-old.

Tasting Notes:

When you bring it to your nose, you almost feel transported to the edge of the sea as brine fills your nostrils. Through the brine comes a light touch of honey and vanilla to bring balance to the nose. When you taste, you feel the malt presence in your mouth with a light spice and honey as it moves around. The finish is a smooth, long finish but not syrupy.

The dram ends on light smoke, spice, and the expected faint hints of the sea.

Aberfeldy 20 Exceptional Cask Series — Greg Dillon, founder of [Great Drams](#) and [Drinks Producer of the Year 2019](#)



ABERFELDY

ABV: 43%

Distillery: Aberfeldy Distillery, Aberfeldy, Highlands

Average Price: [\\$190](#)

The Whisky:

Aberfeldy is a distillery nestled in the Highlands of Scotland. They are famous for being the spiritual home of Dewar's and are still owned by the brand today. Lead by Master Distiller Stephanie Macleod, they are well known for their high-quality malt. This malt was first distilled in 1998 and has been matured in bourbon casks for 16 years, before being transferred to sherry casks to finish for four years.

Tasting Notes:

The nose begins with notes of honey, caramel, and oak. Sherry spices appear with dried fruits and a lovely moist Christmas cake note. It's rich and warming. Citrus fruits give it a nice liveliness and crystallized orange peels add a wonderful sweetness.

The palate is full of caramel and honey with a hint of vanilla oak. Coffee and dark chocolate give it a nice edge. The bitterness is excellent against the sweetness. The mouthfeel is smooth and brings out a lot of chewy dried fruit notes. Marzipan and Christmas cake continue through the sip.

The finish is bold with cinnamon and vanilla.

Mortlach Aged 20 Years — Ewan Gunn, [Senior Global Brand Ambassador](#) for Diageo Scotch Whiskies



MORTLACH

ABV: 43.4%

Distillery: Mortlach Distillery, Dufftown, Speyside*

Average Price: [\\$220](#)

*This brand is owned and distributed by Diageo — so Ewan is, admittedly, making a homer pick here.

The Whisky:

Mortlach has been admired and respected by those “in the know” for decades — by the people who actually make whisky, including distillers and blenders. However, apart from a small cult following within the malt whisky cognoscenti, it seems to fly under the radar.

Mortlach 20 for me strikes the perfect balance of rich, powerful, elegant, and complex. It's one of the finest examples of Speyside whisky you'll ever encounter.

Tasting Notes:

This whisky has it all. It's robust and rich, elegant, and intriguing. On the nose, there are notes of dried fruit, cedarwood, leather, barbecue ribs, and cocoa nibs. On the palate, these carry through along with aromatic spice, berries, jam, and a touch of ginger. The flavors and aromas are beautifully integrated and perfectly balanced, making this a truly exceptional whisky that deserves to be savored.

The Glenfiddich Project XX — Naomi Leslie, [The Balvenie Ambassador East USA](#)



GLENFIDDICH

ABV: 47%

Distillery: Glenfiddich Distillery, Dufftown, Speyside

Average Price: [\\$88](#)

The Whisky:

The Glenfiddich Project XX is a delightfully unique whisky that I don't believe has been spoken of enough in recent years. It was created at the distillery in Scotland by Malt Master Brian Kinsman and twenty of the industry's leading experts. Each person chose a cask that stood out

to them and these casks were married together to create this delicious spirit.

Tasting Notes:

Due to this distinctive creation process, the whisky is very complex. At its core are the warm, fruit flavors you expect from any Glenfiddich whisky but, as you savor it, the spirit opens up to reveal notes of baking spice, toffee, and a touch of anise brightness. It then has a long finish that circles back around to those classic candied citrus notes Glenfiddich is renowned for.

Caol Ila Aged 12 Years — Zach Johnston, [Deputy Editor UPROXX Life](#) and host of [Expression Session](#)



CAOL ILA

ABV: 43%

Distillery: Caol Ila Distillery, Port Askaig, Islay

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

The Whisky:

Caol Ila — pronounced “Cull Eela” — was a revelation to me when I tried it last year (thanks to Ewan Gunn’s recommendation in a small Edinburgh whisky bar). The distillery hides away on a small Islay bay. They pull their malt from the historic Port Ellen peat-fueled malting floors. The water is sourced from Loch Nam Ban as the water from the lake meanders past the distillery towards the briny sea. The result is a perfect marriage of Islay malts and seaside atmosphere in each sip.

Tasting Notes:

The nose opens with a nice rush of citrus fruitiness next to moments of old leather, olives, and almond with a very distant hint of mouthwash mint. The fruit edges away from citrus towards sweeter notes as the sip mellows into hints of dried flowers, leather, and brine with an easy-going billow of smoke in the background. A light sourness arrives late as a counterpoint to the sweetness as this sip slowly fades away.

Whisky Review: Ardbeg 19-Year-Old Traigh Bhan (Batch 2)

By [Courtney Kristiana](#) / October 13, 2020

Ardbeg’s most recent permanent release, the 19-year-old Traigh Bhan, is [now on it’s second batch](#). The batches differ from one another similar to the changes in coastal weather. The pronunciation for Traigh Bhan is “Tri-Van.” Traigh Bhan is not only Ardbeg’s latest whisky, it is also the Islay beach known as the “Singing Sands.”

The Ardbeg Traigh Bhan (Batch 2) was bottled during a Haar. No, not a hurry. In non Scots Gaelic, that means a thick coastal fog or mist.

Ardbeg seized the moment to give us “[an opportunity not to be mist](#).”

Apparently, the first batch of Traigh Bhan was bottled in a storm. Like Macallan with its Editions series, Ardbeg fans and collectors will want to get their hands on the Ardbeg 19-Year-Old series. Batch 2 is similar, but with new nuances [compared to Batch 1](#). It is possible to like one batch of the Ardbeg 19-Year-Old and dislike another batch. Batch 2, for example, has more barrels in the blend that are first fill ex-bourbon barrels.

Ardbeg’s Whisky Creator, Dr. Bill Lumsden thinks “this whisky is the epitome of an aged Ardbeg.” While I don’t disagree that the whisky is a peaty beast Ardbeg is known for, I hesitate to put it at the top of my list for Ardbeg. I spent over a week tasting the whisky. On one hand I’m not thrilled with it, which you can see why in my tasting notes, but on the other I kind of crave it.



Ardbeg Traigh Bhan (Batch 2) (image via Ardbeg)

Tasting Notes: Ardbeg 19-Year-Old Traigh Bhan (Batch 2)

Vital Stats: 46.2% ABV. Blend of higher proportion first fill ex-bourbon casks alongside refills and Oloroso sherry casks compared to batch one. 750ml \$300.

Appearance: Pinot Gris

Nose: The nose is incredibly earthy with the likes of mushroom and damp soil. Add in the peat reek, and it’s reminiscent of an extinguished campfire. On a different note, the dram is quite fruity. I get bright satsuma peel and tangelo segment. Underlying the whisky to bring everything together is the faint sweetness of honeycomb.

Palate: The mouthfeel is light but overwhelmingly hot. There is no sweetness to it except for maybe a kiss of honey. There is the faint mist of salt air, or sea spray. Mainly, the Ardbeg is all smoke and soot with umami or mushroom. The bright fruit on the nose hides away behind the peat; it’s just not there on the palate. Rose hips with a little eucalyptus add a floral or tea-like taste. Overall, the only way to describe the taste is the smell of burnt rubber on asphalt. Adding water makes this more enjoyable than straight.

The Takeaway

Summary

The Arbeg 19-Year-Old Traigh Bhan (Batch 2) has a wonderful nose on it. You pick up on the complexities and subtleties. The palate though just was not giving me the nuances I desired that I can usually taste in other Ardbegs. I’m not fully disappointed with it as I find myself wanting to drink it. With water, it’s more palatable. It is a classic Ardbeg, but I just couldn’t get the notes Dr. Bill Lumsden, its creator, put out. 3/5

Dixon Dedman: Reviving and Catapulting a Whiskey Legacy

OCTOBER 13, 2020 | [SAM STONE](#)



Dixon Dedman, master blender at Kentucky Owl, joined #TasteWithSpace on Instagram Live on Oct. 9 to talk about how the brand has risen to success after relaunching in 2014, thanks to Dedman’s insistence on developing barrel-proof blends from unique, high-quality whiskeys.

It’s not uncommon in the whisky world to see a brand revived after it’s been dormant for a number of years. Some pre-Prohibition brands have only just come back with the recent American whiskey boom. But it is certainly less common to see such a brand revived and catapulted into premium status in just a few years, and that’s precisely what has happened with [Kentucky Owl](#). “One of the questions I get asked a lot is...‘How did I start doing this? Where was my education?’” said Dixon Dedman, the Kentucky Owl master blender who joined *Whisky Advocate’s* [#TasteWithSpace](#) on Instagram Live on Oct. 9. “One of the greatest pieces of advice...A lot of the people I decided to emulate said,

“You know what? Make and create whiskeys that you like, that you believe in.”
 The original Kentucky Owl brand was founded in 1879 by Dedman’s great-great grandfather, and Dedman relaunched it in 2014 after he’d been working in another family business—historic Kentucky hotel [The Beaumont Inn](#). “I’m the fifth generation in my family to operate the inn, so there’s a lot of history there. I pride myself on being a 12th-generation Kentuckian,” Dedman said. Once the brand was revived, Dedman and his former partner set out to create “very high-profile, amazing, quality liquid with unique characteristics, with unique profiles” and develop them into barrel-proof blends without worrying about volume, Dedman added.

SECONDARY MARKET OWL

Since Kentucky Owl products are produced without concern to volume, they tend to fetch high price tags and are regular fixtures on the [whiskey secondary market](#). Whether it be retailers marking up the shelf price or whiskey flippers capitalizing on the scarcity, these whiskeys can be hard to access for most drinkers, particularly as bars across the country remain closed. While Dedman sympathized with the drinkers who can’t pay astronomically marked-up prices, he reasoned that “for the majority of people, it’s not what you pour because you’ve had a long day,” and instead is a special drink to be enjoyed on special occasions.

Dedman addressed the pricing issue again during the audience question-and-answer segment, when he disclosed that he has been working for a number of years on an expression that will be more widely available and sold at a more affordable price than previous releases. In April of 2019, Kentucky Owl introduced [Confiscated](#), a straight bourbon available in all 50 states and priced at \$125, meant to give curious drinkers a more attainable access point. This new, yet-to-be-named product, will push that access point even further, and we await an official announcement with additional details. (Be sure to check [Whisky Weekend](#) every Friday for information on the latest releases.)

On the opposite end of the pricing spectrum, Dedman discussed the newest Kentucky Owl release, [Dry State bourbon](#), which was released to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Prohibition, with only 2,000 bottles available. He and *Whisky Advocate* digital assistant editor Ted Simmons tasted Dry State, which retails for \$1,000. “This is kind of a celebration of the 100-year anniversary of America going into a ‘dry state,’” Dedman said.

Check out the [full interview](#) with Dedman on [Whisky Advocate’s IGTV channel](#) and follow *Whisky Advocate* on Instagram to join our [#TasteWithSpace](#) live interviews every Friday at 3 p.m. Eastern. Tune in this Friday, Oct. 16, as senior whisky specialist and digital editor Susannah Skiver Barton chats with [Angel’s Envy](#) founder Wes Henderson.

Upcoming Dinner Dates

November 16th, 2020 - Highlands / Islands
 December 7th 2020 - Christmas Dinner
 January 25th, 2021 - Robbie Burns Dinner
 February 22nd, 2021 - 18 Year Old - Adulthood Arrives !!
 March 15th, 2021 - Irish / Speyside / Highlands
 April 19th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Islands / Islay
 May 17th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Speyside
 June 28th, 2021 - BBQ (Final Exam)
 July 19th, 2021 - 10th “Matt” Night
 Friday August 27th 2021 - 14th Annual Premium Night

September 20th, 2021 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside / Highlands / Islands / Islay

October 18th, 2021 - Speyside / Highlands

November 15th, 2021 - Speyside

December 6th 2021 - Christmas Dinner

Membership and Dinner prices for 2020-2021

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

Reservation policy

- The agreement with the Kitchen’s requires that we provide seven (7) business days notice for them to guarantee accommodation for our requested numbers. To accommodate the Kitchen’s needs and meet our contractual obligation with them; our members are requested to respond to the emailed invitation seven (7) business days prior to the respective dinner to guarantee a seat at the dinner. Following the RSVP date members will be placed on a waitlist.
- For these individuals the process will be as follows, using the Monday September 23rd, 2019 dinner date as an example:
- Dinner invitations will be sent out Friday August 23rd, 2019. Please respond to me (rdifazio04@gmail.com). I will then acknowledge that you have a seat. Please understand that if you do not receive a response you are not guaranteed a seat at the respective dinner. In such circumstances (e.g., computer glitches) please e-mail me again or call me (613-532-5285).
- Unless otherwise stated accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm.
- Once the RSVP date has been achieved I will e-mail a spreadsheet informing everyone of their status and amount due.

Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm and Monday September 23rd, 2019 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$70). It is the responsibility of the member who cancels their (or their guest’s) reservation to find a replacement. If I am asked to find a substitute and one is found, then the member will be asked to pay for 50% of their dinner cost.
- Anyone who fails to attend the Monday September 23rd, 2019 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$70). A member will be responsible for their guest’s cancellation (\$80).
- If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Friday September 6th, 2019 @ 6pm and Monday September 23rd, 2019, their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.

Assigned / Reserved Seating

- Assigned Seating will be offered for the January, June, August, and December dinners.

- Reserved Seating will only be considered if it is a group consisting of a single member plus 3+ guests or a couple member plus 2+ guests.

Perfume / Cologne and Whisky

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

Dinner Payments

- Please consider sending your payment by e-transfer prior to the dinner. The password will be "KSMS2020RDF", to whatever your security question is. Receiving payment in advance will allow everyone the opportunity to socialize before the dinner as well as reduce the accounting work required after.
 - For e-transfers, Members are responsible for collecting from their guests, and then forwarding one payment in total by e-transfer.
-

Just a note because we care.

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



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