

Kingston Single Malt Society

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This Exclusive Airbnb in Scotland Will Let You Be a Distiller for a Day

words: [TRAVIS GILLMORE](#) - MAY 12, 2021

[Annandale Distillery](#), an independent operation located in the Scottish Lowlands, is offering [Airbnb](#) vacationers a one-of-a-kind opportunity. Four fortunate couples will go behind the scenes and shadow an expert distillery team, become a distiller for the day, spend two nights at cottages next to the site, and leave with a bottle of single malt [Scotch](#). Guests are invited to participate in the entire process, from "meeting the malt delivery, to milling and mashing the barley, fermentation, firing up the stills, and filling the casks." The [listing](#) describes the accommodations as a two-bedroom, two-bath, "spacious stable conversion" on the distillery's grounds. In addition, a whisky tasting and fine meal at the historic [Globe Inn](#) are included with the stay. Established in 1610, the restaurant is fronted by two chefs with Michelin Star experience. Recognized as one of the earliest legal whisky distilleries in Scotland, Annandale was established in 1836 by George Donald. The operation was purchased by Johnnie Walker in 1893 but was shut down in 1918, only to be re-born in 2014 after professor David Tomson and Teresa Church purchased the distillery in 2007.

ADVERTISING

Opportunities are extremely limited, as only four bookable dates have been released for 2021, including June 8-10, June 22-24, August 4-6, and August 17-19. The window to book reservations opens May 17. Act fast, as these dates are expected to sell out quickly.

While the exclusive experience is only open to U.K. residents that have a history of positive Airbnb reviews, Annandale Distillery ships its premium single malt, single cask Scotch Whisky around the globe for those not lucky enough to get their reservations secured.

In October 2017, Diageo pledged a [£35 million \(US\\$46m\) investment](#) to restart production at closed distilleries Port Ellen and Brora. Both sites were mothballed in 1983. Brora and Port Ellen are two most of the highly collectible Scotch whiskies in the world.

Diageo [gained planning approval](#) to restore Brora's original buildings in October 2018.

As part of a three-year restoration project, the Sutherland-based Brora distillery was taken down and reconstructed stone by stone to replicate the site when it was new in 1819.

The renovated site is capable of another 200 years of production, according to Diageo. As one of Diageo's smallest distilleries, Brora has the capacity to produce 800,000 litres of spirit annually. Sutherland native and Brora master distiller Stewart Bowman officially marked the launch by opening the site's gates and filling the first cask of Brora spirit in more than 38 years. Bowman's father was the last exciseman at the distillery. Bowman worked with industry specialists and archivists in reinstating the distillery and its spirit.

Bowman said: "We have gone to every effort to replicate, as closely as possible, the conditions, equipment and processes from Brora in 1983 in order to recreate the spirit for which the distillery is famous.

"The original pair of Brora stills were [carefully refurbished](#) by our highly-skilled coppersmiths; we raised up the original pagoda roof to conduct intricate repairs, and rebuilt the stillhouse brick by brick using original Brora stone to restore this historic Victorian distillery."

'New dawn'

The facility has also installed a biomass boiler powered by sustainably sourced wood chips from northern Scotland.

Ewan Andrew, Diageo's president of supply chain and procurement, said: "This is a new dawn for Brora – a distillery that is a beautiful new jewel in the crown of our portfolio in Scotland.

"I am particularly proud that Brora will be a carbon-neutral distillery entirely powered by on-site renewable energy. This marks a major milestone on our journey to invest in Scotland, its rural communities and the future of Scotch whisky."

Brora, which sits within the Diageo Reserve portfolio of premium-and-above spirits, recently released a [trio of single malts](#) aged from 38 to 48 years.

Brora will welcome a small number of visitors by appointment only from July. Tours will include tastings of rare Brora releases, and a new distillery-exclusive bottling, called The Brora Distillery Collection: Hidden Beneath, a Brora 1982 39 Year Old.

Islay-based Port Ellen is also due to begin production this year after Diageo [received planning approval](#) in January 2020.

Brora distillery restarts production after 38 years

19th May, 2021 by Nicola Carruthers

Diageo has restarted production at the refurbished Brora distillery in Scotland following a multi-million-pound investment.



Brora master distiller Stewart Bowman officially marked the launch by opening the site's gates

Kilchoman Releases Special PX Sherry Cask Matured Single Malt

By [Gary Carter](#) / May 16, 2021

For the first time, Islay's Kilchoman distillery has released to global market a vatting of multiple Pedro Ximenez cask aged single malts ... 12,000 bottles of the juice to be exact. Anthony Mills, Kilchoman founder and master distiller, said that aging their signature Islay single malts in Pedro Ximenez casks isn't the easiest thing to do.

"That's why we decided on a combination of full maturing and finishing, to balance the distinct PX influence with that of our spirit. I'm delighted with the result ... big and bold with a delightful poise and balance of flavor," Mills said [in a prepared statement](#).

Having tasted numerous combinations, Mills and his team eventually settled on a vatting 33 casks, 9 only matured in Pedro Ximenez casks and 24 finished in PX casks for between 12 and 18 months.



Kilchoman PX Sherry Cask Matured (Image via Kilchoman)

It turns out, Mills explained, that the older casks have more layered depth of character compared to the big-hitting 2015 full maturation casks, and that combining the two produces what's described by the brand as the "perfect balance" of maritime smoke, citrus, berries and dark, honey sweetness. After sampling various strengths, they settled on 94.6 proof. At that proof, Mills said, the whisky had more assertiveness and allowed for the natural citrus character of the Kilchoman spirit to come through. The Kilchoman PX Sherry Cask Matured is priced at about \$104 USD. You'll find official tasting notes below.

- Nose: prunes, sultanas and heathery peat smoke with fresh coffee, sea spray and hints of citrus.
- Palate: warming, with dark berries, caramelised brown sugar, tobacco leaf, licorice and fruit cake with mixed spices and smoldering peat smoke.
- Finish: rounded sherry notes with waves of summer berries and dried spices.

The Best Bottles Of High-End Scotch Whisky Between \$300-\$500

[ZACH JOHNSTON TWITTER](#)

MAY 13, 2021

Most people will look at a \$500 price tag for a bottle of booze — yes, even [whisk\(e\)y](#) — and laugh. Even when you're very wealthy, spending \$300-\$500 for a single bottle of [Scotch whisky](#) is a big ask. The liquid encased in glass can't just represent a series of pours, it has to create *experiences*. Something special.

The ten bottles of [very expensive Scotch whisky](#) below are, at the very least, fitting of that "special" designation. They each come with a story, complex flavors, new layers of nuance, and a whole lot of craft. They'll help you take your [whisky journey](#) to the next level — maybe even shoot you into the stratosphere.

If you do want to give one of these Scotch whiskies a shot, click on the price links.

Related: [The Best Bottles Of Scotch Whisky Between \\$250-\\$300](#)

Ardbeg Traigh Bhan 19 Year



LOUIS VUITTON MOËT HENNESSY

ABV: 46.2%

Average Price: [\\$320](#)

The Whisky:

This is [Ardbeg's](#) yearly release of special batches of 19-year-old peaty malt. The whisky is Ardbeg's signature peated whisky that's bottled during a "haar." That's a thick and briny foggy morning on Islay, which imparts that x-factor into the whisky as it goes into the bottle.

Tasting Notes:

You're drawn in with a super subtle waft of soft smoke with hints of sour cream, fennel, and cold-smoked salmon on a pine cutting board that's been washed in the sea. The palate holds onto that briny seaside vibe as it veers towards sea salt-laden dark bricks of fudge bespeckled with dried orange zest and lavender. The end circles back around to a sooty smoke that feels like a warm granite rock that's been dipped in the sea and then rolled around in the dying embers of a fire.

Bottom Line:

I don't even *like* heavily peated whisky and I love this. So, maybe I do like big peated whiskies now. That's how good this stuff is — it will make you question what you thought you knew about your own palate. Mortlach 18



DIAGEO

ABV: 43.4%

Average Price: [\\$330](#)

The Whisky:

This Speyside distillery is the aficionado's label.

This [Mortlach](#) expression spent 18 long years aging in ex-bourbon and ex-sherry barrels before getting vatted, proofed down with that soft Speyside water, and bottled in a very art-deco decanter.

Tasting Notes:

You're drawn in with this sense of a wicker holiday basket brimming with sweet apples and pears mingling with shelled nuts, dried fruits, and sweet toffee candies all wrapped up in golden cellophane. The palate holds onto those sweet, nutty, and buttery notes while it dips into marzipan, salted caramel, and cherry tobacco. That tobacco holds on as the finish slowly fades away, leaving you with a final note of dark chocolate and orange oils.

Bottom Line:

There's a pang in your heart when you drink this. It's that sort of pain of realizing you've found one of your favorite whiskies (in any category) of all time that is just out of reach price-wise to be your favorite bottle. Still, that makes this an amazing celebratory bottle to have on your shelf for when you really need something beautiful in a glass.

The Macallan Sherry Oak Cask 18 Year



THE EDRINGTON GROUP

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$350](#)

The Whisky:

This version of Macallan is all about the sherry oak aging. The whiskies are aged in hand-selected sherry-seasoned barrels for 18 years before they're vatted, proofed, and bottled into this classic expression.

Tasting Notes:

You're greeted with this mix of ginger candies, vanilla beans, and cinnamon sticks with a touch of sultanas and dates. The palate builds on the spice with handfuls of clove, nutmeg, and allspice as cedar kindling mingles with a bright orange zest. That zest drives the finish as the ginger, dried fruit, and spice return, leaving you with this sense of spicy and sweet holiday candies.

Bottom Line:

If you love Macallan, you're going to love this. The flavors are ultra-refined with a smoothness that few other whiskies possess. This is one of those "smooth" whiskies that you can use as an example of what "smooth" means when describing whisky. It's really that easy drinking.

Chivas Regal 25



PERNOD RICARD

ABV: 40%

Average Price: [\\$362](#)

The Whisky:

This expression from Chivas is what the brand used to be back in the early 1900s before Prohibition struck everything down in the U.S. The 25-year-old blend was the high-water mark whisky of that era. Then it was gone. In 2007, Chivas decided to bring the iconic bottle of blended whisky back and we're all better for it.

Tasting Notes:

The nose draws you in with orange-flavored marzipan, hints of dried fruits, and a subtle flourish of ripe peach skins with a malty underbelly.

The palate holds onto that orange-marzipan vibe as layers of rich and dark chocolate arrive with silken vanilla and fruity/sweet woods. The finish on this one is long, bringing along a sense of creamy vanilla next to that sweet-yet-bright almond paste with orange oils.

Bottom Line:

This feels like the holidays in a glass. The vibe is very much like sneaking one too many sweets at Christmas. A nostalgia-activating, silken gem.

Highland Park 21



THE EDRINGTON GROUP

ABV: 46%

Average Price: [\\$370](#)

The Whisky:

This special release from 2019 is also sort of like a Scotch small batch. The whisky is a marrying of whiskies aged in nine first-fill sherry casks, eight bourbon casks, and nine refill barrels. Those whiskies are then vatted and brought down to proof on the windswept Orkney Islands.

Tasting Notes:

There's a clear sense of grilled tropical fruits drizzled with sweet and thick balsamic next to hints of shelled nuts and fresh ginger. The ginger spice persists as saffron-stewed pears mingle with vanilla husks, raisins, and pecans baked into pancake syrup. The end lingers for a while and warms towards the spicier end of the ginger as an earthy, almost mossy, peaty smoke dances through your senses.

Bottom Line:

This feels like it bridges the world of sweet and smoky scotch. The smoke is there, for sure, but it's an accent for the fruitier and nuttier aspects of the sip. That makes this the perfect dram for anyone looking for the best of both worlds.

Johnnie Walker Blue Label Ghost & Rare Port Ellen



DIAGEO

ABV: 43.8%

Average Price: [\\$375](#)

The Whisky:

This rare limited release from [Johnnie Walker](#) has a backbone from a "ghost" — or permanently closed — distillery, the famed Port Ellen. There's more. The blend also includes juice from two other shuttered distilleries, Carsebridge and Caledonian. That means this blend is not going to be seen again, ever. If you need more convincing, the whisky also has Mortlach, Oban, Blair Athol, Cragganmore, and Dailuaine whiskies layered in there, too.

Tasting Notes:

This has a vibe of oatly soda bread smeared with salted farm-churned butter with a hint of lemon curd, orange oils, and smoked pear. The taste moves the smoke away from the fruit and towards lavender as wet tea leaves mingle with vanilla-heavy cream soda and sea spray. The peatiness kicks up a subtle notch, bringing this vibe of a thick paper bag that once held BBQ charcoal next to more smoked pears, plums, and ginger.

Bottom Line:

This is smokier than a lot of Johnnie Walkers out there thanks to that Port Ellen foundation. Still, this is so unique and full of whiskies we'll never see again ... it feels like you have to try it at least once.

BenRiach The Twenty Five Speyside Four Cask Matured



BROWN-FORMAN

ABV: 46%

Average Price: [\\$400](#)

The Whisky:

This is a very special mix of [BenRiach](#) whiskies. The juices are peated and unpeated whiskies that spend 25 years in sherry casks, bourbon barrels, virgin oak casks, and Madeira casks before their brought together. The end result is proofed with Speyside water and bottled as is.

Tasting Notes:

There's this feeling of hazelnut by way of a shot of espresso that merges with smoked stone fruits and dark chocolate on the nose. The taste then drives towards a rich eggnog creaminess and spiciness with more smoked stone fruits, salted honey-roasted almonds, and a woody apple tobacco chewiness. The end doesn't overstay its welcome and leaves you with that tobacco chew and plenty of subtly smoked fruit.

Bottom Line:

You could argue that you're not paying for one 25-year-old whisky with this bottle but four 25-year-old whiskies. That's 100 years of whisky maturation in one bottle of booze. We'll just leave you with that thought. The Glenlivet XXV



PERNOD RICARD

ABV: 43%

Average Price: [\\$456](#)

The Whisky:

This masterpiece from Glenlivet is their iconic whisky that's left to mature for 25 years. That whisky is then finished in an Olorosso sherry cask for that final chef's kiss of perfection before going in the bottle at an incredibly accessible 86 proof.

Tasting Notes:

Imagine the best, most bespoke dark chocolate-covered raisins from a ridiculously expensive chocolate shop and you'll be on the right track. Those sweets are the foundation for burnt orange peels, Almond Roca candies, and sweet caramel malts with zero edges. The finish is so long that you might still be thinking about it on your death bed thanks to an orange/spice/nutty matrix of silky whisky smoothness.

Bottom Line:

If we were going to spend nearly \$500 on a bottle of whisky, this is probably the one we'd pull that trigger on. It's really that good.

The Balvenie Tun 1509 Batch No. 6



WILLIAM GRANT & SONS

ABV: 50.4%

Average Price: [\\$480](#)

The Whisky:

These special limited editions from [Balvenie](#) are all about highlighting very special barrels in small batches. In this case, the batch was drawn from 21 carefully chosen barrels to highlight the best of the best from the distillery. The whiskies were aged in ex-bourbon, ex-sherry, and ex-sherry that already held whisky. Those whiskies were then vatted in Tun 1509 where they rested and mingled for three more months before bottling as is.

Tasting Notes:

This draws you in with a flourish of floral summer honey notes next to bright orange oils, wet brown sugar, and a touch of freshly squeezed ginger juice. Those orange oils turn candied orange as a dose of super high-quality maple syrup (that feels like it was just boiled after being pulled from the tree) ties everything together. A dusting of dark holiday spices cuts through the sweetness as a salted caramel maltiness ushers in the long-winded finish.

Bottom Line:

Once these bottles are gone, they're gone. These drops are pretty much the best example of what small batching special barrels of scotch can achieve, making the high price all the more palatable.

Tomatin Single Malt 30



TAKARA SHUZO CORP.

ABV: 46%

Average Price: [\\$499](#)

The Whisky:

This Highland whisky spent 30 years aging in ex-bourbon and sherry casks. If you score a bottle that was released last year, that means that that juice went into those barrels in 1990. That, in turn, means that the grains for that juice were grown in 1989. [Michael Keaton](#) was *Batman* in 1989. *The Cosby Show*, *Roseanne*, and *Cheers* were the top-rated T.V. shows. [Janet Jackson's Miss You Much](#) was the longest-running number-one single that year.

This is all to say, that you'd be drinking a whiskey from a different time entirely.

Tasting Notes:

There's a sense of wildflowers and honey up front that leads towards a very soft and almost wet leather with a hint of creamy milk chocolate. The taste veers towards bright and almost acidic tropical fruits in a rich vanilla pudding with plenty of cinnamon spice and a touch of candied ginger. The floral-honey vibe returns and melds with the spicy vanilla pudding as an oatmeal raisin cookie butteriness and sugariness lingers on your senses.

Bottom Line:

This is worth grabbing just to taste something that was born in the 1980s. Back before the whisky boom, whisky was made a lot more slowly (and deliberately) and that's what you're paying for in this bottle.

Heineken in talks to buy majority of Distell

18th May, 2021 by Nicola Carruthers

Brewing giant Heineken has entered into discussions with South African drinks group Distell to acquire the majority of the firm's business.



Distell's spirits portfolio includes Bunnahabhain Scotch whisky

In an investment announcement today (18 May), Distell confirmed that shareholders of Dutch brewing company Heineken have approached the company for the purchase of the majority of its business.

The two firms have begun talks regarding a potential deal, however both companies said there is "no certainty that an agreement will be reached".

Distell continued: "Shareholders are advised to exercise caution when dealing in their Distell securities until a further announcement is made."

Heineken confirmed that discussions are "ongoing" regarding the potential acquisition. Further announcements will be made as appropriate, Heineken said in a statement.

It is not known what parts of the Distell business Heineken is looking to acquire.

Distell produces drinks brands such as Amarula liqueur, and Scotch whiskies Bunnahabhain, Deanston and Tobermory. The company also produces wine and cider.

Distell felt the full force of [multiple alcohol bans in South Africa](#) on its 2020 fiscal results. The Amarula owner's revenue fell by 14.6% in the year ending 30 June 2020 because of the prohibition measures. Distell's revenue in its home market fell by 18.2% as a result of 'tough operating conditions'.

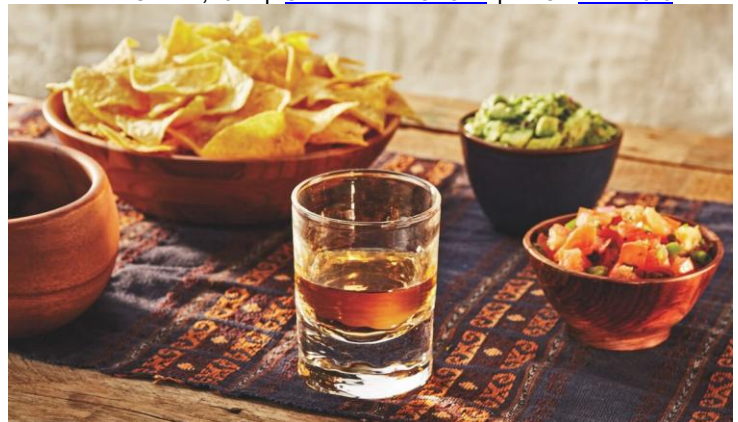
Earlier this month, Distell [named Brendan McCarron](#) as master distiller for its portfolio of single malt and blended Scotch whiskies.

In February 2021, Distell [purchased a 20% stake](#) in South African cannabis brand Rethink for an undisclosed sum.

Heineken is the second largest brewer in the world. The family behind beer giant Heineken [acquired a 10% stake](#) in tonic water and mixer producer Double Dutch in June last year.

How to Pair Whisky and Dips

FEBRUARY 4, 2021 | [STEPHEN BEAUMONT](#) | FROM [FALL 2020](#)



Whether the dip is creamy, spicy, or nutty, there's a whisky worth matching.
(Photo by Jeff Harris)

Some people would suggest that potato chips, tortilla chips, and wedges of pita bread are perfectly fine on their own. Then again, there are also those who believe that the Earth is flat and good whisky is not a necessity. For the rest of us, chips and pita wedges form only one half of the equation.

Dips are the savory equivalent of the frosting on a cake. They provide that extra jolt of flavor that turns a simple snacking occasion into a genuine gastronomic experience. But like the chocolate-versus-vanilla frosting debate, where dips are concerned, opinions run high. According to Lauren Hollow, consumer insights senior manager for the food-service research firm [Technomic](#), the most popular dip-centric appetizers in restaurants stick close to the familiar. “Tradition definitely still drives the dips market,” says Hollow. “The top three most popular categories are what they’ve been for a long time: cheese, salsa, and guacamole.”

[You Need To Start Pairing Whisky With Chips](#)

Beyond tradition, she suggests, we tend to seek indulgence in our dips selection, something particularly apparent in the behavior of consumers over 35 years old. In restaurants, this translates into multiple cheeses built into complex creations, often in combination with seafood—popular among older consumers—or peppery spice—big with younger ones. Anecdotally, Hollow adds, this behavior tends to mimic what we buy in the grocery store.

To find the best whisky pairings, I turned to the four most popular categories of dips as identified by Hollow: cheese, salsa, guacamole, and spinach-and-artichoke, as well as the number one up-and-comer, hummus. Each partnered both easily and quite deliciously with a different type of whisky.

Salsa, which dethroned ketchup as the most popular condiment in the United States in 2013, enjoys commonality of flavors with bourbon, which makes the American whiskey its best partner. The fruitiness of the spirit eases the acidity of the tomato without sacrificing any peppery spice, while still having the weight to measure up against the salsa’s big flavors. An added ice cube can mellow out any particularly searing heat if your salsa skews seriously spicy.

Remaining in a Mexican state of mind, guacamole is defined by a rich, creamy texture and a soft sweetness of flavor. Conveniently, such traits may also be attributed to Irish whiskey in general and particularly pot still whiskeys. Avocado may be the last green thing you would find growing on the Emerald Isle, but the gentle sweetness of both fruit and spirit make them ideal companions.

Cheese is the most popular dip category in restaurants, where elaborate blends of cheeses and seasonings reign, but supermarket versions veer more toward the cheese and chile pepper combinations widely grouped under the Spanish sobriquet queso. Given scotch whisky’s well-documented propensity toward [pairing with cheese](#), it’s no surprise that it shines here, with a lightly smoky blend faring best alongside a basic queso dip, again adding an ice cube and perhaps a splash of soda if spice abounds.

Spinach-and-artichoke dip requires two things from a complementary spirit: either sufficient body to stand up to the dip’s creaminess, or enough spice to cut it, and a dryness that will withstand the chlorogenic acid and cynarine in artichokes, which can exaggerate the sweetness of anything consumed alongside. Enter spicy straight rye whiskey, which fits the bill on both counts and has the added bonus of refreshing the palate between mouthfuls of dip.

Finally, for the Mediterranean staple hummus, a full-bodied Canadian whisky provides perfect balance, with just the right mix of richness and refreshment.

GET THE SCOOP ON DIPS



[Famous Grouse](#)

Medium Salsa Con Queso and soda and Tostitos

No need to break out a single malt scotch when a nice blend and a bit of soda will match the cheese and spice perfectly well.



[Buffalo Trace](#)

Salsa and Pace Medium Chunky Salsa

The fruitiness of the bourbon tames the acidity of the salsa while the salsa’s spice brings forward the richness of the bourbon. It’s a match that works both ways.



[Lot No. 40](#) and Sabra Roasted Garlic Hummus

This Canadian whisky has all the body needed, while the hummus benefits from its palate-cleansing ability.

Glenfarclas marks 185 years with new whisky

24th May, 2021 by Nicola Carruthers

Speyside distillery Glenfarclas has released a limited edition single malt whisky to celebrate its 185th anniversary.



The new Glenfarclas single malt is made using casks from across six decades

The new Glenfarclas whisky was released this month to mark 185 years since the producer began legally distilling in May 1836.

Glenfarclas, which means ‘valley of the green grassland’, uses spring water that emerges from granite under the slopes of the Speyside mountain, Ben Rinnes.

The water is combined with malted barley and double distilled in copper pot stills, before two thirds is filled in Spanish Sherry oak casks. The remaining liquid is poured into normal oak casks. The casks used to make the whisky span six decades.

George Grant, sixth-generation family member and current sales director, said: “Due to my grandfather’s foresight, here at Glenfarclas we are very fortunate to have casks in our dunnage warehouses from seven different decades, from the 1950s to the 2020s.

“Some of our warehouses even predate the 185th anniversary we are celebrating, as ‘uisge beatha’ was being made at Glenfarclas a good few years before a licence was held.

“To mark 185 legal years we have selected some of our finest casks from across the decades and put together a whisky with old, rich, Sherried flavours that remain fresh and vibrant in your glass.”

Limited to 6,000 bottles in the UK, the Glenfarclas 185th Anniversary Edition is priced at RRP £120 (US\$170). It is bottled at 46% ABV. In November last year, Glenfarclas released a [limited edition 60-year-old Scotch whisky](#) in the UK. To find out more about the history behind family-owned Glenfarclas, click [here](#).

Whisky Review: The Glenlivet Spectra

By [Margarett Waterbury](#) / May 20, 2021

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

To me, "Spectra" sounds more like a shadowy cabal of supervillains or a new Kia model than a Scotch whisky. But The Glenlivet's Spectra [isn't your standard whisky](#). Instead of reeling off the details about the cask regime, age, warehouse location, and flavor notes on the label, Spectra tells you...nothing at all. The packaging contains no details about the three whiskies inside, only a QR code that directs you to a multimedia experience where you're guided through a tasting, complete with quizzes about what flavors you taste, and how intense you find them. The Glenlivet has been releasing mystery whiskies for a few years, most recently the aptly named [Enigma](#). Spectra came out in May of 2020. Instead of a single whisky, this time it's three different 200ml bottles of whisky packaged in a nifty magnetized box that very much underscores the bad guy vibes, as if the Zelda Triforce were designed by a dark genius. MSRP for the box is around \$130.

The Spectra experience feels tailor-made for a pandemic. Even if you are totally alone, it makes for a convincing replica of drinking with a strange, somewhat demanding friend. The male voice actor chosen to narrate the "multimedia experience" has the mildest touch of brogue and otherworldly kind of serenity, kind of like a Scottish Brian Eno. I liked him immediately, complying happily with his directions to use headphones for the best experience, and hoping that my decision to split a set of airpods with my husband wouldn't ruin whatever Brian had in store. We poured our whiskies, huddled around the iPhone like moths to a cold, cold flame, and tapped the button for Spectra No. 1.

"Step into our secret orchard," Brian intoned through my left earbud over soft ambient sounds and the occasional drone of a honeybee. I sniffed the whisky, as classically fruity as I expect Glenlivet to be, layered with a kind of nutty richness. After some soothing talk about fruit trees, Brian asked me which flavors I found most prominent, offering a selection of options. I chose *pineapple*, *toffee*, and *pear*, although the buzzing bee's power of suggestion would have led me to pick honey had that been on the list. Next, I rated the flavors by intensity, after which Brian broke the news that I had only earned 63% accuracy—merely "connoisseur" level, a blow to the pride of a woman who recently wrote [an entire book](#) about Scotch whisky. No matter. I couldn't abandon Brian now, not after he'd so politely asked me to move on to Spectra no. 2, which was already throwing a tantalizingly smoky aroma from the glass. I played along through the next two whiskies, eventually redeeming myself with a score that placed me firmly in the "master" realm. Intrigued, I then tried a bunch of other different response combinations that earned similar scores, reinforcing the fundamental truth there's always more than one way to taste a whisky.

Note: The Glenlivet has released the official tasting notes for all three Spectra whiskies on its website, including information about casks. I won't spoil the surprise, but if you'd like to know, [click here](#).



The Glenlivet Spectra. Image via Margarett Waterbury (The Whiskey Wash)

Tasting Notes: The Glenlivet Spectra no. 1

Vital Stats: Single malt. 40% alcohol. Age and cask regime



unknown.

Appearance: Honeyed amber.

Nose: Sweet and lushly fruity, with lifted notes of peaches, fresh pineapple, vanilla bean, and cake batter embedded in robust oak. Almond extract adds a creamy richness.

Palate: Also very ripely fruited, with ripe pears and peaches and more pineapple building to a creamy, pleasantly buttery mid-palate. The finish is dry, oaky, and nutty, with a touch of bitter almond giving structure to a gentle afterglow of warm vanilla. To me, this is very much in Glenlivet's wheelhouse, and it's a style they've really perfected.

Score: 4/5

Tasting notes: The Glenlivet Spectra no. 2

Vital Stats: Single malt. 40% ABV. Age and cask regime unknown.

Appearance: Pale amber

Nose: A pronounced yet not overpowering smoky aroma rises from the glass, hinting at asphalt and petrichor. Up close, there's a toasty, salty smoke character underpinned by vanilla bean and grilled pineapple.

Palate: A sweet vanilla entry builds to mild to moderate smoke, more smoldering than billowing, with caramelized pears and plantains beneath the haze. The peppery finish brings cinnamon, clove, menthol, jalapeño, and coffee bean, but the final note is that signature clean, fruity Glenlivet sweetness. Fun to taste a smoky Glenlivet!

Score: 4/5

Tasting Notes: The Glenlivet Spectra no. 3

Vital Stats: Single malt. 40% ABV. Age and cask regime unknown.

Appearance: Pale amber

Nose: A sweet, mellow stroll down the candy aisle, with peach gummies, dried pineapple, cotton candy, and bubblegum. Cream soda underscores the sugar rush.

Palate: Very sweet, almost candied, with a softly oily texture and sensation of richness without much weight. There's some light cinnamon candy, orange peel, and underripe pineapple fading to a warming, sugary, gently acidic finish. It's a fun textural experience, but I'm left wishing for a little more flavor.

Score: 3.5/5

Final Thoughts: Spectra is a very entertaining experience. The whiskies were all enjoyable, yet distinct from one another, giving Brian a good spectrum of flavor to discuss (aha, that's where that name comes in). For me, The Glenlivet's primary charm is its bright and fruity character, and the whisky I liked the most – no. 1 – was also the most "typical" Glenlivet, although I was surprised at how much I enjoyed the delicately smoky element of no. 2.

Glen Moray launches Private Cask Collection

27th May, 2021 by Alice Brooker

Speyside single malt brand Glen Moray has released its exclusive Private Cask Collection, launching with a 13-year-old Marsala cask-finished whisky.



The Private Cask Collection has been handpicked from Glen Moray's Warehouse 1, where the distillery's valued casks are kept

Glen Moray's Private Cask Collection is a selection of the Speyside distillery's aged single malt whiskies.

The exclusive series is launching with a 13-year-old expression, finished in Marsala casks from Sicily.

The US will see the first release followed by a 10-year-old whisky, finished in Pauillac Grand Cru red wine casks from Bordeaux.

Meanwhile, China will receive a follow-up release of a 26-year-old Madeira cask-finished expression.

The whiskies from the Private Cask Collection have been individually selected to each present 'outstanding depth and character'.

Iain Allan, Glen Moray brand ambassador, said: "The Private Cask Collection is the perfect opportunity for whisky collectors to explore some of Glen Moray's most treasured casks. Each single malt selected for the series stands out because of its exceptional quality – and the first release is not to be missed.

"Finished in Marsala wine casks from Bordeaux, this 13-year-old bottling showcases the versatility of Glen Moray whisky. It demonstrates how our spirit integrates, moulds and marries with different cask influences to produce a truly stunning and unique dram."

Distilled in 2007, the whisky has notes of toffee and chocolate on the nose, with a rounded and fruity palate. The finish has been described as containing hints of sweet creamy berries, with a lingering gentle spice. Just 238 bottles of the first release of Glen Moray's Private Cask Collection are available, at 56.6% ABV a bottle.

Last year, Glen Moray released a [Scotch whisky matured in Sauternes wine casks](#) as the first expression in its new Warehouse 1 Collection.

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT DRAM ON ISLAY



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

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

Then I met my friend Dan, whose home collection of various Scotches and whiskies rivaled any bar I knew. He and Choun, the manager of Rye House in NYC, slowly walked me through the world of Scottish whisky. From sweet to smoky to heavy to peaty, I tasted everything. I went from whisky hater to whisky lover, and soon I learned that there was nothing I liked more than the smoky, peaty whiskies that come from the Scottish island of Islay. I came to love their campfire smell and strong bite at the end.

When I finally had the chance to visit Islay with Sean, another of my whiskyphile friend, I took it. Located off the west coast of [Scotland](#), Islay is a large island battered by the sea, wind, and rain. (The weather is so bad that planes can't land often enough that the island's carrier FlyBe's nickname is "FlyMaybe.")

Islay's history stretches back to the Mesolithic period but the first major settlers were Celts. In the mid-12th century, locals rebelled against Islay's Scandinavian settlers, putting the island back in Scottish hands. In the middle ages, the powerful Campbell owned the island and, acting like an absentee landlord, didn't invest in the island.

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

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

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

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



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

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

In Scotland, most distilleries reuse American bourbon or Spanish sherry casks (some use French oak, but that's very rare). By law, Scotch whisky has to be made in non-virgin oak — they can't make their own

barrels. It's not Scotch if it's made any other way! It's in these casks that the flavors of the whisky mix with the wood to become what they are. The longer the alcohol stays in, the smoother and mellower it becomes. (So if you like a real smoky, peaty whisky, get a young one!) Unlike wine, which continues to change with age, once the whisky is out of the barrel, it's done maturing.

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

After wishing Paul goodbye, we stumbled out of Ardbeg and strolled toward our final stop of the day, Lagavulin. With plenty of time before

our tour, we walked slowly down the path between the distilleries, awed at all the cows and sheep on the rocky verdant hills that rolled across the island, then caught a few minutes' snooze on one of the benches that line the way.

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

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

After a quick lunch and final dram, I hugged Sean goodbye, boarded the ferry back to [Glasgow](#) and promptly fell asleep in a happy, whisky-induced haze.

From the friendly people with their small-town charm to the beautiful landscape, distilleries, and sea air, Islay was an island of dreams. I had been to my alcoholic promised land and it was everything I had imagined it to be.

Logistics

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

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

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

Recommended Whiskies

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

Whisky Advocate's Top-Scoring Drams from Large-Scale Distilleries

MAY 26, 2021 | [SUSANNAH SKIVER BARTON](#)



When you think of the place where whisky is born, a factory floor may not spring to mind, but the truth is that [industrial-sized distilleries make](#)

[most of the whisky in the world](#)—and it's almost always extremely high quality. Size—or, really, scale—does matter when it comes to turning out enough great whisky to satisfy millions of thirsty drinkers, and the measures that these mega-producers take to ensure a delicious final outcome are impressive at every turn.

In most of the world, distillery capacity is measured in liters of pure alcohol (lpa) or liters of absolute alcohol (laa), though U.S. distillers favor proof gallons as the unit. Capacity measures how much whisky a distillery *can* make, not necessarily how much it *is* making—though it's safe to say that producers at this scale are making a whole lot. Check out the world's largest whisky distilleries below, and keep reading for recommendations on the best industrial-scale whiskies to try.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST WHISKY DISTILLERIES

United States: [Jack Daniel](#)

Whiskey styles: Tennessee whiskey, rye

Annual capacity: Over 72 million proof gallons (136 million lpa)

Scotland (single malt): [Glenlivet](#)

Annual capacity: 21 million lpa

Scotland (grain): Cameronbridge

Annual capacity: 105 million lpa

Ireland: [Midleton](#)

Whiskey styles: Malt, grain, pot still

Annual capacity: 68 million lpa

Canada: [Hiram Walker](#)

Whisky style: Canadian (made with rye, corn, wheat, barley, malted barley, and malted rye)

Annual capacity: 55 million lpa

**Hiram Walker makes other spirits as well, but the majority of production is whisky.*

BIG SCALE, BIG FLAVOR: HIGH-SCORING BOTTLES MADE BY MEGA-DISTILLERS



[Booker's 2020-02 "Boston Batch"](#)—90 points

Part of the James B. Beam Distilling Co.'s Small Batch Collection, this barrel-proof bourbon has the same origins as Jim Beam White Label, made at the company's two Kentucky distilleries.



[Canadian Club Chronicles 42 year old: The Dock Man](#)—96 points

Made at Hiram Walker Distillery, this extra-aged whisky boasts complex aromas and flavors of spice, fruit, and pepper.



[Glenfiddich Grand Cru](#)—92 points

Aged 23 years, including time in casks from France's most famous sparkling wine region, this Speyside single malt is fruity and floral, buttressed by a full mouthfeel.



[Glenlivet Enigma](#)—93 points

The distillery revealed little about this mysterious single malt, No. 8 in our 2019 Top 20, when it was first released, but its rich full flavors spoke for themselves.



[Hibiki Japanese Harmony](#)—90 points

Suntory uses whiskies from its two malt distilleries—Yamazaki and Hakushu—and Chita grain distillery for this balanced blend, one of the most widely available Japanese whiskies.



[Jack Daniel's Single Barrel Heritage Barrel](#)—93 points

America's largest whiskey distillery makes both Old No. 7 and this special edition, which ranked at No. 3 in our 2018 Top 20.



[Old Fitzgerald 15 year old Bottled in Bond](#)—94 points

Heaven Hill makes this high-scoring bourbon on the same equipment used for mainstream brands Evan Williams and Elijah Craig.



Pappy Van Winkle 15 year old Family Reserve—96 points

One of the most coveted bourbons in the world comes off the same colossal still as the other whiskeys made at Buffalo Trace, including bottom-shelf labels like Benchmark.



Redbreast 27 year old—93 points

This mature single pot still expression is made at Midleton Distillery, the source of numerous Irish whiskeys, including worldwide bestseller Jameson.



WhistlePig Boss Hog VI: The Samurai Scientist—92 points

Made at Alberta Distillers, one of Canada's largest distilleries, this experimental whiskey was fermented with *koji* and finished in umeshu plum wine barrels.

How to Drink Whisky the Right Way, According to an Expert
Patricia Doherty - May 25, 2021

Whisky drinking is on a definite upswing, in case you haven't noticed yet. You're excused if that's the case, since we haven't been able to frequent our favorite [bars](#) lately — but that's finally changing. [Data](#) from the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) shows that revenues from the production and sale of bourbon — "America's native spirit," as they refer to it — have grown substantially over the past few years. Rye, Irish whiskey, and Scotch have also been getting more attention.

As it is with food, wine, fashion, and wherever personal taste is involved, there may not be just one best method of imbibing. With a variety of ways to enjoy distilled spirits, your tastes and preferences may evolve or you might choose your whisky drinking style based on the occasion. *Travel + Leisure* spoke to an expert on the topic of a growing interest in whisky, bar supervisor and tobacconist ("barkeep" is fine with him too) Russell Greene at [Castle Hot Springs](#) in Morristown, Arizona, who brings years of experience to his role at the resort's [Bar 1896](#).

"I thought it was going to die out after a few years, but our culture has truly embraced whisky and brought it back to its original home," he said. "Now I have people of all ages eyeing the whisky shelves, and distilleries are popping up all over the place."

We spoke about how he usually serves whisky and any trends he's noticing. "Younger drinkers request cocktails more often than not, and the 40 and up crowd tend towards whisky neat or on the rocks," Greene said. "Plenty of younger guests will get whiskies, but I feel there are fewer due to the time it takes to develop an appreciative palate for whisky and spirits in general."



Professional bartender serving a cocktail in the glass with one big ice cube. The most widely requested whisky cocktails are the Old Fashioned and Manhattan, according to several sources, including Greene. "Everyone loves an Old Fashioned," he told T+L, "It's by far the best seller here." Both classic cocktails highlight the whisky with minimal additional ingredients.

From there, whisky (or whiskey — we'll get to that in a bit) can be enjoyed "neat," which is without any mixer or ice. Neat whisky is usually a two-ounce serving at room temperature in a lowball glass. Many aficionados will add a few drops of water which enhances the aromas and softens the finish.

Drinking whisky "on the rocks" means with ice, of course, and frozen water is having its day. Large, clear ice cubes or hefty spheres are appearing in whisky glasses, appreciated for their looks as well as their slower melting, and less diluting, qualities. While a bit of flavor on the palate might be sacrificed when whisky is cold, the chill takes away some of the harsh edge.

Either way, sipping slowly is the way to enjoy whisky, which is a spirit made from grain which has been mashed, fermented, distilled, and usually aged. Bourbon is made from corn, Scotch from barley, and Rye whiskey from rye grain. Aging takes place in oak barrels that have been toasted or charred.

A few rules, and even legalities, define whisky. Bourbon must contain at least 51% corn, and it's made in the United States (mostly Kentucky) and aged in charred oak barrels. Tennessee whiskey is bourbon filtered through charcoal. Scotch whisky must be made in Scotland, and single malt Scotch must be made from 100% malted barley. And Canadian whisky (also no "e") must contain barley, corn, wheat, and rye and be aged in separate barrels. The [spelling](#) differences between whiskey and whisky are based on geography as well as what goes into the spirit. Along with the interest in sipping whisky (and whiskey), distillery travel has grown in popularity. Vacationers are visiting the places where their favorite brands are produced and taking tours to see how it's done — with post-tour tastings, of course. The distillery atmosphere and equipment are fascinating, whether it's a modern new facility or a vintage distillery in Scotland or Ireland.

Imagine a trip to the Scottish Highlands inspired by a "wee dram" of Scotch whisky or a vacation along the [Kentucky Bourbon Trail](#) that features not only distilleries, but also camping, RV sites, bike paths, golf courses, restaurants, and natural wonders. The renaissance of Irish whiskey has led to a number of new distilleries around Ireland, another lovely tour and sip destination.

Back to whiskey drinking for a few last ideas. Glassware makes a difference, as it does with wine, champagne, and cocktails. "For whisky neat, I have always loved the Riedel Single Malt glass — super fine crystal, clean lip, noses properly," Greene said. "For on the rocks, a large tumbler is my go-to, something sturdy and heavy, with a nice lip." Fans claim that cigars and whiskey are a perfect match, consumed together slowly along with a picturesque outdoor view and friendly company. Pairings are based on the flavors and intensities of both, and planning can be as thoughtful as matching the perfect wine with each dinner course. At some restaurants and resorts, a tobacconist like Greene is there to offer suggestions.

So, after all, it's up to you to discover the best way to drink whisky, and we hope a few of our ideas will send you in the right direction.

X by Glenmorangie is the Ultimate Whisky for Mixing This Summer

Bearing an aromatic blend of pear and vanilla that is exceptional in your warm weather cocktails.



A round of applause deserves to go out to any company who has been around 178 years, and this certainly holds true for [Glenmorangie](#) — a Scotland-based whisky company who has been crafting some of the finest single malt since 1843. And just in time for Summer, the company has expanded its delectable catalog with a new item: X by [Glenmorangie](#).

The inspiration behind this newest product was predicated on the idea of providing a more approachable expression for new whisky drinkers. Its bears an amalgamation of both pear and vanilla aromas that is ideal for assembling extra refreshing cocktails all-year round, but even more so now with the warmer weather starting to trickle in.

“We’re well aware that people enjoy drinking whisky in different ways and at different times and wanted to depart from the stuffier stereotype of a single malt drinker and make the space itself more inviting for newcomers and cocktail lovers”, Allison Varone, VP, Emerging Brands at Moët Hennessy says when speaking on this flavorful new malt. “This goal inspired our Whisky Creation Team to craft a single malt ideal for mixing up refreshingly simple serves – each needing just 2-4 ingredients”.

Even the bottle design on this Scotch beverage has been modernized. Deviating from the classical golden label with burgundy font vibe, an iridescent “X” backdrops a smaller white “X” logo in the center and is complemented by further details of the product down below. When asked about the new look, Varone explains, “Since this is the only [Glenmorangie](#) offering made specifically for mixing, it was a great opportunity to differentiate it’s label from the rest of the portfolio and have a little fun with it! Also, we skipped the gift carton for this bottle to better highlight the striking label design and in turn, we were able to reduce excess packaging. The finishing touch on the bottle is a neck tag with a few simple cocktail recipes and a scannable QR code with even more cocktail inspiration to check out ahead of your next get-together”. You can find more info about X by Glenmorangie [here](#), and note that it is available right now for \$33.99 USD [here](#) and through select retailers.

Glenmorangie Releases 23 Year Old Whisky Influenced By French Red Wine Casks

By [Allyson Nichols](#) / June 4, 2021

[Glenmorangie](#) recently announced the release of the Grand Vintage Malt 1997. Aged in bourbon casks for almost a decade after distillation in 1997, a parcel of the new single malt whisky was then transferred into a handful of Château Montrose red wine casks, from the Saint-Estèphe appellation of Bordeaux, for an additional 13 aging years to create what was described as “extraordinary berried depths.”

Following on this, the brand noted, it was further influenced with whisky aged in bourbon casks that brought “classic citrus notes,” whisky “long finished in Oloroso sherry casks [that] gave sweet layers and spice” and some “secret casks [that] also played their part.”

“Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1997 is a dramatically different whisky, vibrant with red berries and tingling spice, melting marzipan and floral notes,” Director of Whisky Creation Dr. Bill Lumsden said in a

prepared statement. “Inspired by my dream of a more expressive single malt, it wonderfully embodies Glenmorangie’s kaleidoscopic style.”



Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1997 (image via Glenmorangie)

Glenmorangie opened its doors in 1843, when farmer William Matheson and his wife Anne founded the distillery. Since then, it has used what’s described as the tallest copper stills in Scotland to create its whiskies, allowing more space for taste and aroma. Stating the giraffe as its spirit animal, the distillery currently has a conservation partnership with the [Giraffe Conservation Foundation](#) charity, which aims to secure a future for all wild giraffe populations in Africa.

The Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1997 is the newest installment in [the Bond House No. 1 vintage series](#), named after the largest of Glenmorangie’s 19th century Bonded Warehouses. For generations, Warehouse No. 1 was home to casks of maturing spirits until in 1990, when it was transformed into a still house. Today, Bonded Warehouse No. 1 is noted as being the heart of the Distillery’s whisky creation. The 1997 edition follows the most recent award-winning [Grand Vintage Malt 1996](#), which won Luxury Masters 2020 Gold, SFWSC 2020 Silver, IWSC 2020 Gold, IWC 2020 Single Malt Scotch 19-25 Years Gold and ISC 2020 Gold. The Grand Vintage Malt 1997 will stand as the seventh release in the series.

Retailing at \$900, the Glenmorangie Grand Vintage Malt 1997 is available starting this month.

Bladnoch Distillery Announces Its 2021 Single Cask Scotch Whisky Collection

By [Allyson Nichols](#) / June 6, 2021

[Bladnoch Distillery](#) out of Scotland recently announced it is set to release its annual Single Cask Collection, consisting of six single casks hand-selected by Master Distiller Dr. Nick Savage. Featured in this year’s collection one will find cask types such as Palo Cortado Sherry, Port Pipe and Amontillado Sherry, with an additional 6th cask, a grand ex-Canasta Butt that is one of only a few to exist in Bladnoch’s bluestone warehouses. This single cask will be differentiated by a luxurious all-black bottle presentation. Distilled in 2002, this single malt displays notes of liquorice sticks, delicate florals and almonds on the palate, according to official tasting notes.

“The 2021 Single Cask Collection once again allows us to demonstrate the quality and breadth in style of the maturing stocks at Bladnoch,” Savage said in a [prepared statement](#). “As part of this five-year program, these six whiskies add to the 2020 collection with more cask types and vintages, including the extreme rarity of certain casks such as the specially selected Canasta Butt. The 2021 collection showcases the very best casks from our maturing stocks.”



Bladnoch Single Cask 2021 (image via Bladnoch)

Bladnoch Distillery was established in 1817, making it said to be the oldest working Scotch whisky distillery in the Lowlands. The distillery uses local ingredients to create each whisky, including water from the River Bladnoch that flows alongside the distillery and Scottish barley. Each single malt release is non-chill filtered to ensure the truest flavors shine through.

The inaugural 2020 Single Cask Collection sold out in record time to whisky enthusiasts around the world. With bottle quantities of each cask very limited, Bladnoch's 2021 Single Cask Collection is perhaps set for a similar fate with the retail pricing ranging from £140 (\$198.65 USD) to £400 (\$567.58 USD).

Talisker unveils sustainable packaging refresh

8th June, 2021 by Alice Brooker

Diageo has revealed new sustainable packaging for its Scotch whisky brand Talisker.



Talisker's wider portfolio is expected to receive a similar sustainable packaging refresh later this year

Isle of Skye-based Talisker 10-year old has received a packaging makeover with increased recyclability and reduced plastic components. Alterations to Talisker's packaging align with parent company Diageo's aim to [achieve net zero carbon emissions](#) by 2030, as part of a 10-year plan.

The packaging weight has been reduced by 6%, with an aim of lowering Talisker's material usage by 28 tonnes across this year.

The recyclability of the product has been increased by 99.8% with regards to weight, while the plastic components have been reduced by 86%. A wood stopper has replaced the original plastic stopper.

Pranay Chandra, Diageo's malt whisky marketing manager, said: "Talisker is committed to its drive to protect the planet, ensuring our whiskies are produced sustainably."

"The new packaging will increase the recyclability of the Talisker portfolio significantly and we're continuously seeking ways to achieve our sustainability goals."

The brand's packaging refresh is part of Talisker's 'ongoing commitment to sustainability' – in 2020, Talisker revealed its [partnership with non-profit organisation Parley for the Oceans](#), on a three-year scheme to protect marine environments.

Chandra added: "Consumers are increasingly conscious of their own environmental impact."

"We understand that there is still more to do, yet this is a significant step towards our goals of making all Talisker packaging recyclable by 2030, as well as working towards zero waste across our supply chain." The newly revamped bottle can be purchased for RRP £40.49 (US\$57.25) from [malts.com](#).

Glen Moray finishes whisky in Tokaji casks

11th June, 2021 by Nicola Carruthers

Speyside distillery Glen Moray has released a UK-exclusive Scotch whisky matured in Tokaji casks as the second expression in its Warehouse 1 Collection.



Glen Moray 2005 Tokaji Finish is the first of three bottlings in the Warehouse One line this year

The new Glen Moray 2005 Tokaji Finish follows the release of a single malt [matured in Sauternes wine casks](#) in November 2020.

It was the debut release in Glen Moray's Warehouse 1 Collection, which is named after the Elgin-based distillery's Warehouse 1, which is home to innovative, maturing casks.

The latest addition to the range was distilled in October 2005, and finished in oak casks that once held Tokaji Aszú dessert wine from Hungary.

Glen Moray used five Tokaji casks from the warehouse to create 1,244 bottles for the UK market. It is bottled at cask strength (56.3% ABV). Glen Moray brand ambassador Iain Allan said: "When our distillers talk about Warehouse 1 it's almost as if they're letting you into a secret. This is their special space for experimentation, innovation and patiently waiting for the character of each whisky to develop."

"Our team searches the world for interesting casks and they're not afraid to push the boundaries, try the unusual and creatively combine Glen Moray whisky with unexpected casks. In this case, we have turned to Tokaji, which is a very old but lesser-known wine that has created a wonderful, flavour-packed dram that we're very proud to release."

The resulting liquid offers a 'full-on sweet shop' on the nose, 'malty, maple syrup flavours' and a 'long, lingering marzipan finish'. Following the 'success' of the Sauternes cask-finished whisky, Glen Moray has given the collection a 'bold' redesign.

The bottle comes with a 'colourful' Warehouse 1 stamp in gold to represent the dessert wine casks, and an illustration of the warehouse with birds flying over the distillery.

Allan added: "It's also very fitting that Warehouse 1 now has its own new and distinctive identity. This is a mark that signifies exclusive, small-scale releases, non-chill-filtered and bottled at cask strength and with natural colour."

The new bottling is the first of three launches scheduled for the Warehouse 1 range in 2021. All will follow the theme of using casks that previously held wine from across Europe.

Glen Moray Warehouse 1 2005 Tokaji Finish is available in the UK from specialist whisky shops for RRP £75 (US\$106) per 700ml. In March 2021, Glen Moray [appointed Stephen Woodcock](#) as head of whisky creation and stocks.

Ardgowan secures £8.4m for new distillery

14th June, 2021 by Kate Malczewski

Scottish producer Ardgowan has received an £8.4 million (US\$11.4m) investment to begin construction on its new distillery.



Funding from Austrian investor Roland Grain will support Ardgowan's distillery build

The whisky maker [gained planning permission](#) to build a distillery and visitor centre on the Ardgowan Estate near Inverkip back in 2017, but the project was delayed due to Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Austrian investor Roland Grain has provided a £7.2m (US \$10.1m) equity injection, acquiring a majority stake in the company; the rest of the investment comes from new and existing shareholders.

The producer is also in talks with a loan provider for further funding. Grain has a history of investment in the spirits industry, having backed the Cotswolds Distillery, Australian firm Manly Spirits, East London Liquor Company and Potstill Spirits Trading. He also holds a 20% stake in UK-based spirits producer Distil.

Grain commented: "My wish is for this project to create a lasting connection to the community and produce the highest possible quality whisky and over time achieve the lowest possible CO2 footprint.

"The company founders Martin McAdam, Alan Baker and I have a shared vision of what we can achieve. Already they have built a strong team around them – not least their chairman Willie Phillips and their whisky maker Max McFarlane – and together we will craft the finest quality single malt whisky, based on the extraordinary location of the Ardgowan Estate, and the unusual microclimate of the Inverkip area.

"My hope is that the distillery will become a landmark building and a significant tourist attraction in the years ahead, and I very much look forward to seeing work commence this year."

Production goals

With the new backing, Ardgowan will resume construction plans that started in 2016, when it [first submitted an application for the project](#) to the local council.

Construction will follow [designs laid out in 2018](#). The initial phase will see the site fitted with two copper stills and six washbacks, for an output of 1m litres per year.

A second building phase, already approved, will see the addition of two more stills and more washbacks to double the capacity.

Within five years of completion, the company estimates that the new distillery and visitor centre will create up to 30 new jobs in the area. Ardgowan aims to produce its first spirit at the distillery in 2023.

Company CEO Martin McAdam called Grain's involvement "terrific news for the project".

"We have put a lot of the uncertainty of Brexit behind us and we hope that Covid will also soon be a distant memory," he said.

"Over the past few years, we have used the time well to build up our team and craft some fantastic blended malt whiskies, sourcing some of the finest casks from across Scotland."

Earlier this year, Ardgowan [launched the second bottling in its Clydebuilt series](#).

Douglas Laing Unveils Old Particular "Cheers to Better Days" Whisky Series

By [Gary Carter](#) / June 11, 2021

Independent Scotch bottler Douglas Laing & Co out of Scotland recently unveiled their Old Particular "Cheers to Better Days" whisky mini-series, with quite the line-up.

The mini-series is comprised of a Jura 12 Years Old Single Malt, Port Dundas 16 Years Old Single Grain, Linkwood 12 Years Old Single Malt and a Bunnahabhain 12 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky ... each from one single cask.

The family firm noted that its Cheers to Better Days Series has been bottled in "celebration of a brighter future ahead." All four of the limited edition bottlings are visually-led by a bright orange label that features a bespoke, hand-drawn illustration intended to signify "joy, warmth, health and success."



Douglas Laing Old Particular "Cheers to Better Days" (image via Douglas Laing & Co)

The set is described by Douglas Laing officials as having "distinct, different and divine" flavor profiles; the Jura release with notes of sea salt, rich toffee and charred oak, the Port Dundas revealing a palate of freshly baked pancakes, toasted nuts and juiced pineapples, the Linkwood with hints of tangy green fruits, thick cream and buttery oat biscuits, and the Bunnahabhain balancing a melody of zesty citrus juices and sweet spices. The series bottles clock in at 96.8 proof. Cara Laing, Douglas Laing's Director of Whisky, said in a prepared statement, "The light at the end of the tunnel, that we are all so desperately craving, has been truly and beautifully represented by this mini-series. The vivid orange label design is intended to stand on consumer's shelves at home as a promising reminder that brighter days are just around the corner. The unique flavors that are encapsulated inside each and every one of these bottlings represent warmth, comfort and vibrancy – a taste of what's to come."

All four of the limited editions will be packaged in a premium gift tube. The Old Particular "Cheers to Better Days" Jura 12 Years Old Single Malt and Port Dundas 16 Years Old Single Grain releases are expected to retail at £65 and £85 respectively. The Linkwood 12 Years Old Single Malt bottling will retail at £75 exclusively [on douglaslaing.com](#) and the Bunnahabhain 12 Years Old Single Malt edition is expected to retail at £70 exclusively in Asia.

Metallica releases 'sound-enhanced' whiskey pack

15th June, 2021 by Alice Brooker

Members of heavy metal rock band Metallica have released a sonically-enhanced, limited edition whiskey pack.



In 2018, members of Metallica partnered with Whistlepig master distiller Dave Pickerell to [launch a whiskey, which had received musical treatment](#).

Barrels of the whiskey, Blackened, are fed with sound waves to enhance and finish the spirit.

Distiller [Rob Dietrich](#) explained the vibrations lead to more interaction between the spirit and the wood, thereby adding deeper flavours and colours.

The partnership's latest batch of Blackened whiskey, Batch 114, was pounded with low-hertz frequencies from the band's 1991 *The Black Album*.

Dietrich said: "*The Black Album* was one of the first albums that I truly took up as a personal anthem.

"It carried me and my buddies through some intense times during our military deployments in the early '90s and beyond."

The whiskey is a mix of straight Bourbons and ryes, aged for a minimum of eight years in black brandy casks.

The spirit's finishing process is said to enhance 'the molecular interaction of the whiskey'.

Dietrich added: "Just like the record, *The Black Album* Whiskey Pack's Batch 114 has been masterfully crafted, and is heavy-hitting and well-balanced."

"Now it's time to sip a little whiskey, throw this record on the turntable, and crank it until the windows blow out."

The expression is said to give notes of 'buttery caramel' and oak on first sip, followed by an earthy chipotle, walnut and maple finish.

The inspiration for the musical production process was drawn from [late master distiller Dave Pickerell's](#) experience of working in a lab, where one of the world's largest church organs would reverberate through the walls. Pickerell then used these vibrations to manipulate the taste of whiskey.

"The whole building would tremble, it would really shake your guts," he said.

The Black Album whiskey pack is available for US\$50, and includes a 750ml bottle of Batch 114, a collectible whiskey coin and a Snakebyte Cocktail Booklet, named after Metallica member James Hetfield's signature Snakebyte guitar.

The limited edition pack can be purchased from [blackenedwhiskey.com](#).



Construction is underway at The Moffat Distillery in Dumfriesshire

In January 2020, Dark Sky Spirits founders Nick and Erin Bullard [received planning permission](#) to build the site, which will be called The Moffat Distillery. Dark Sky received [£320,000 \(US\\$415,000\) in funding](#) to build the facility.

The new distillery, nestled in the hills of Moffat, is due to open in spring 2022. It is thought to be the first legal distillery to operate in Moffat.

The producer is named after Moffat's status as Europe's first dark sky town, a title awarded to Moffat due to the installation of eco-friendly street lighting that keeps light pollution to a minimum.

The construction of the new site will allow the business to produce its first single malt. Dark Sky currently makes The Moffat blended malt whisky.

Distillation is expected to begin in early 2022, and the single malt will be matured for seven years before it is tasted. The name of the inaugural whisky is yet to be revealed.

In the meantime, the distillery will continue to blend whisky, and develop other spirits and liqueurs.

It will also offer new expressions under its Local Dram brand, including Doonhamer and Muckletoon, as well as whiskies from every corner of the country.

"We live and breathe Moffat," said Nick Bullard. "We want to focus on community. We believe in having genuine, high-quality interactions with people, telling the story of our culture and heritage and exploring the flavours of our local area.

"Each whisky we make is developed in consultation with the community it represents, and this approach is at the heart of Dark Sky Spirits. Each dram, each experience reflects who we are as a community and as a region."

The distillery will operate what it claims is Scotland's only direct wood-fired still, which will offer a signature flavour for the whisky and create a sustainable production process, according to the founders.

Furthermore, Dark Sky Spirits plans to create a 'makers marketplace' on its site, a dedicated creative space for local producers to work together and share ideas.

The Dark Sky Spirits team hope to offer 'hard hat' tours in late 2021 ahead of the public launch.

Once open, the new site will offer tours, tastings, workshops and a whisky bar.

Moffat's first legal distillery to open in 2022

15th June, 2021 by Nicola Carruthers

Dark Sky Spirits has broken ground on a new whisky distillery in the Scottish town of Moffat, which is due to open next year.

Gordon & MacPhail bottles 80-year-old whisky

15th June, 2021 by Melita Kiely

Independent bottler Gordon & MacPhail will release an 80-year-old whisky in September, which will be the world's oldest single malt Scotch.



Gordon & MacPhail will release an 80-year-old single malt in September 2021. The whisky, which comes from The Glenlivet Distillery, was poured into its cask on 3 February 1940 under the watch of George Urquhart and his father, John.

On 5 February 2020, Gordon & MacPhail decided to bottle the cask – Cask 340 – creating 250 decanters.

The whisky bottler partnered with Sir David Adjaye OBE to design a decanter and oak case to present the whisky.

Bottled at 44.9% ABV, the 80-year-old single malt is said to be “full of vibrant flavour”.

Ewen Mackintosh, managing director at Gordon & MacPhail, said:

“Maturing a single malt Scotch over eight decades is an art, similar in many ways to architecture where you are creating something that needs to stand the test of time. Neither can be rushed.

“Both Sir David and Gordon & MacPhail share a commitment to invest in the future. We both see the significance of creating something exceptional; leaving a legacy for future generations.”

The price of the whisky will be unveiled in September, along with Adjaye's decanter and case.

Sotheby's will auction decanter number one in early October, with all proceeds, minus costs, to be donated to award-winning Scottish charity Trees for Life, which works to rewild the Caledonian Forest.

Gordon & MacPhail is no stranger to bottling extremely old Scotch whiskies. In 2015, Gordon & MacPhail released [£20,000 \(around US\\$28,000\) 75-year-old Mortlach](#) single malt Scotch whisky that was first put into casks at the start of World War Two.

In November last year, Gordon & MacPhail revealed the [name of its new Speyside distillery](#), which is due to open in spring 2022.

Whisky Review: The GlenAllachie 2006 14-Year-Old Port Single Cask #7862

By [Courtney Kristjana](#) / June 15, 2021

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

Most distilleries in Scotland have a long and rich history, often centuries old. However, The GlenAllachie Distillery cozied in the Speyside region was only erected in 1967, making it relatively new. The first production run made nearly three million liters, or almost 800,000 gallons, of

whisky. Production went so well that the distillery had to double the number of stills within six months. Alas, like many Scottish distilleries in the 1980s, The GlenAllachie Distillery earned mothball status. After purchasing it from Chivas Brothers and Pernod Ricard in 2017, [Billy Walker, Graham Stevenson, and Trisha Savage](#) gave The GlenAllachie Distillery the independence it deserves. Of the whiskies produced, it is the [cask strength, single cask offerings](#) that are highly sought after. To extend distribution to the United States, the distillery partnered with ImpEx Beverages. Out of this partnership, an exclusive cask strength, single cask bottling has been created. [The GlenAllachie 2006 14-Year-Old Port Single Cask #7862](#) was selected by ImpEx Beverages from barrels hand-selected by Billy Walker. The whisky from the single port pipe rings in at 55.4% ABV and has a beautiful blush color to it. When they say it is limited, they mean limited to 332 bottles. Specialty retailers in AK, AZ, CA, MA, MN, NY, and TX will carry this exclusive whisky.



The GlenAllachie 2006 14-Year-Old Port Single Cask #7862 (Image via ImpEx Beverages)

Tasting Notes: The GlenAllachie 2006 14-Year-Old Port Single Cask #7862

Vital Stats: 55.4% ABV. A 14-year-old Speyside single malt bottled exclusively for ImpEx Beverages. Bottled without chill filtration or coloring. 332 bottles produced in total. 750ml \$175.

Appearance: Blush/rose gold

Nose: Fresh garden mint and spearmint mingle with baby powder right off the bat. The whisky is very reminiscent of rosé on the nose. The nose is also perfumy with florals; specifically geraniums.

Palate: As soon as the whisky touches the tongue, it tastes like a dissolving sugar cube. The mouthfeel is oily but still light. I was not expecting a smoky Speyside. While the whisky is still light and floral, it has a sooty, or charcoal, taste to it. In the background, there is a brightness to it like citrus peel and clean linen. Near the finish, it becomes earthen like a damp log fallen in the forest. Heather lingers on the breath.

The Takeaway

Summary

For a Speyside, I was really surprised by the complexities and smoke that erupts over the palate. To the lucky few who can find a bottle, I am jealous. The Port pipe imbues the whisky with a gorgeous tinge of blush. The nuances from the brightness to the heather make this exclusive cask bottling from The GlenAllachie Distillery exceptional.

4 / 5 stars

User Rating 4.33/ 5 stars

US and EU end tariffs for five years

16th June, 2021 by Nicola Carruthers

The US and EU have agreed to a five-year suspension of tariffs on products such as vodka and Cognac, marking a major breakthrough in the Boeing-Airbus dispute.



The 25% US tariff on Cognac, which came into force in January 2021, has been lifted for five years

In a statement yesterday (15 June), US trade representative ambassador Katherine Tai confirmed the agreement, calling it “significant progress” towards ending the years-long Boeing-Airbus feud.

The trade war between the European Union (EU) and the US is part of a 16-year spat between aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing. In 2019, the US government imposed tariffs on US\$7.5 billion worth of EU goods, including single malt Scotch and single malt Irish whiskey, because of the ongoing disagreement.

In October 2020, the World Trade Organization (WTO) sanctioned the EU to impose tariffs on almost [US\\$4bn worth of US products](#), including a [25% import tax on rum, brandy, vodka and vermouth](#) from the US.

The 25% EU tariff on US rum, brandy and vodka has been suspended, as well as the 25% US tariff on liqueurs and cordials from Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain, and [certain Cognacs and other grape brandies](#) from France and Germany, the latter of which was implemented in January 2021.

In March 2021, the two nations [agreed to a mutual four-month suspension](#) of tariffs.

The five-year suspension has been welcomed by a number of trade groups, including the Distilled Spirits Council of the US (Discus).

“The five-year suspension of these tariffs on distilled spirits is happening at a critical time for the US hospitality industry,” said Chris Swonger, president and CEO of Discus. “We appreciate the Biden administration’s work to reset relationships with our trade allies.” He added that the move will also help the on-trade and craft distillers recover from the pandemic.

Swonger continued: “Today’s announcement is an important building block to reset the bilateral relationship and we urge the administration to build on this positive momentum.”

Trade body Drinks Ireland | Spirits said the tariff suspension was a “positive development for Irish spirits” due to the importance of the US market.

“In 2019, [the US] was the number one market for Irish GI [geographical indication] spirits (Irish whiskey, Irish cream and poitín), with 2,385,800 nine-litre cases of Irish cream exported from Ireland to the US that year,” said Vincent McGovern, head of Drinks Ireland | Spirits.

“Open trade is critical for our sector and we hope that the removal of tariffs will help grow the Irish cream category in that market in the coming years.”

Spirits Europe’s director, Ulrich Adam, called the decision a “major step” that could lead to the conclusion of the dispute.

‘Competitive disadvantage’

But Swonger warned that the EU and UK continue to impose a 25% tariff on American whiskey as part of the steel and aluminium dispute, which has “severely damaged” the industry.

In a joint statement released by the US and the EU, both parties expressed that they “will engage in discussions to allow the resolution of existing differences on measures regarding steel and aluminium before the end of the year”.

In May 2021, the EU decided to temporarily suspend its [proposed 50% tariff increase](#) on American whiskey.

Swonger said: “Until steps are taken to permanently remove these tariffs on American whiskeys, the United States’ largest spirits export category

will remain at a serious competitive disadvantage in our two most important export markets.”

According to Discus, American whiskey exports to the EU increased from US\$502 million in 2008 to US\$702m in 2018, up by 40%.

Since the tariffs were imposed in 2018, American whiskey exports to the bloc have fallen by 37%, while the UK recorded a 53% drop.

Swonger added: “We are committed to working with the Biden administration to help secure the removal of the EU and UK’s tariffs on American whiskeys. It is critical to secure a return to the zero-for-zero tariff agreement on distilled spirits, which has been instrumental to our export success and job creation on both sides of the Atlantic since 1997.”

Adam called for the dispute to be “resolved as soon as possible, so that all remaining tariffs on spirits may be removed for good”.

He continued: “This is a must if we want to focus on economic recovery and rebuilding a strong transatlantic alliance based on a positive and ambitious agenda, including a reform of the WTO.”

Last month, the UK government [started a six-week consultation](#) on US tariffs, which could remove duties on American whiskey.

Diageo becomes first spirits company to sign sponsorship deal with NFL
PUBLISHED WED, JUN 16 2021 8:00 AM EDT

[Amelia Lucas@THXAMELIAN](#)

KEY POINTS

- Diageo said it has become the NFL’s first spirits sponsor.
- The NFL banned spirits advertising until 2017, when Diageo’s Crown Royal whisky aired a commercial about drinking responsibly.
- The multiyear sponsorship deal includes all of Diageo’s spirits portfolio, but not Guinness beer.

In this article



Diageo owned whiskies on a bar at their headquarters in Edinburgh where Diageo announced a £150 million investment over three years to transform its scotch whisky visitor experiences.

Andrew Milligan | PA Images | Getty Images

Smirnoff Vodka owner [Diageo](#) has signed a multiyear deal with the NFL to become the league’s first spirits sponsor.

While the National Football League has long had relationships with beer brands like [Anheuser-Busch InBev’s](#) Bud Light, it has been slower to embrace spirits. Until 2017, distillers couldn’t even advertise during games. An advertising campaign on drinking responsibly from Diageo’s Crown Royal whisky was the first spirits commercial to air during an NFL game after the ban was lifted.

“What they’ve done from a responsibility standpoint to us, really stood head and shoulders above other spirit companies in the marketplace,” said Nana-Yaw Asamoah, vice president of business development and sponsorship for the NFL. “And that goes for their marketing standards, which hold themselves to a higher standard than the rest of the market, and kind of used it to inform our policies as we looked to advertising restrictions and opening up spirits in-game advertising in 2017.”

Since the repeal of Prohibition, the spirits industry has regulated its own advertising and marketing with voluntary guidelines for distillers. For example, the code requires that spirits producers advertise only on TV programs where at least 71.6% of the audience is at least 21 years old. Spirits’ higher alcohol content carries a taboo that separates it from beer

and wine in the eyes of some watchdogs, who want even stricter standards for hard liquor, citing concerns about underage consumers viewing those ads.

The spirits industry's advertising spending fell last year but is up in 2021. According to Kantar Media, it rose 20% in the first quarter of 2021 from a year earlier.

Diageo North America Chief Marketing Officer Ed Pilkington said in an interview that the company will continue to focus on responsible drinking as part of its partnership with the NFL.

Diageo was also the first industry sponsor of NASCAR, which lifted its ban on spirits partnerships in 2004. Asamoah said the NFL could have chosen a spirits sponsor two years earlier but decided to wait.

"We always take the approach that we don't have to be first, but we want to make sure to get it right," he said. "After looking at other leagues and how they approached the spirits base and how we started in 2017 — in 2019 we allowed our teams to start having relationships with spirits brands, 20 of which have a spirits partner, so we really felt like this was a good time."

Financial terms and the specific length of the deal between Diageo and the NFL were not disclosed in Wednesday's announcement. It will include all of Diageo's spirits portfolio, although the company plans to focus primarily on the Smirnoff, Crown Royal and Captain Morgan Spiced Rum brands at the start. Its Guinness beer is not part of the deal. Diageo also got the international rights. The NFL has been trying to expand its fanbase overseas with several international games every season in London and Mexico City. For the upcoming season, the league is planning to hold two games in London.

"We're excited for that as well, especially for our international brands like Captain and Smirnoff, which are big brands in the U.K. and that links over there as well," Pilkington said.

In addition to displaying the brands' logos and TV advertisements to the NFL's millions of fans, Diageo also has plans to display its partnership with the football league in liquor stores and host responsible drinking programs. The company is also sponsoring the NFL's annual Fan of the Year contest this year.

"We'll make sure to do it in a really holistic way," Pilkington said.

Prior to the sponsorship, Diageo already had partnerships with 12 NFL teams and stadiums. Pilkington said the company is in talks to add more teams to that roster.

Compiled by Whisky Exchange founder Sukhinder Singh and annotated by ambassador and head of training Billy Abbott, the package, which was designed in-house, features 3 cl (about 1 oz.) samples of each whisky, a pair of glasses and a 52-page illustrated booklet which includes the background of each selection, tasting notes and an explanation of "Why We Chose This." The package, which [costs £160 \(around \\$193\)](#), took about three years from conception to completion, starting with, of course, the list. Singh says, "I probably started with a list of maybe 30 to 35, and then we condensed them down to 20. We wanted to balance it between price, age, different types of casks, the education element, which were the important world whiskies. That's the key—they all set the benchmarks, and everybody followed." The package is divided into four thematically arranged flights of five whiskies each, including cask finishes, world whiskies, peated malts and innovators. Singh and Abbott will be making videos to accompany both the flights and each individual whisky for a more formalized tasting experience, though Abbott emphasizes that "flexibility is the key word. You can do them individually, you can do them by flight, and if you really want to, you can sit down and do the whole lot as an endurance challenge... but I wouldn't recommend it."



Here's How to Taste 20 of the Most Groundbreaking Whiskies of the 21st Century - Drink your way through the new millennium.

By [TONY SACHS](#)



Photo: courtesy The Whisky Exchange

There are plenty of lists of the best and more important whiskies, some of the most insightful of which you'll find in this very publication. But actually tracking down all the bottles in a given list can be a Herculean and frustrating task. Which is what makes The Whisky Exchange's new package, [20 Whiskies That Changed The World](#), so groundbreaking in its own right. It's not just a well thought out and beautifully written compendium of the biggest game-changers of the still-young 21st century, it's a tasting kit of those very whiskies.

A sampling of the whisky you'll receive. Photo: courtesy The Whisky Exchange The world-changing whiskies are a wide-ranging mix, serving as an introduction to the category for newcomers as well as an opportunity for veteran drinkers to revisit some classics that may not have crossed their paths for a while. There are no serious obscurities or anything too far off the beaten path by 2021 standards, but it's hard to criticize any of the 20 picks, which include seminal drams from Johnnie Walker Blue Label to Michter's 10 Year Old Rye.

"You think they're just standard malts which have been there forever, but it's not true," Singh says. "These whiskies, when they launched, actually inspired brand owners to say, 'They've done a great job, we need to learn from that. Let's do something different.'" Many of the picks were launched in the 20th century, but didn't really make a splash until the 21st. One such expression is the Macallan's 18 Year Old. "You talk about sherry casks, and Scotland, and you can't talk about this style of whisky without them," Abbott says. "They really created it as a modern style through the '90s into the 2000s, and now you see Macallans going for quite scary amounts of money. It's all based on the quality and the reputation they've built up. They've also inspired other people, so if you look at distillers across Scotland who are using sherry casks, they're using [Macallan] as the benchmark."

The set is weighted heavily towards Scotch whiskies, which represent 15 out of the 20 selections. Some of it is due to extenuating circumstances—Irish distilleries, for example, refused to let The Whisky Exchange create small sample bottles. But for the most part, it was intended that way. "This is where it all started, in the UK," Singh says. "I know because I was there at the beginning."

Singh founded the London-based Whisky Exchange with his brother Rajbir in 1999 as an early ecommerce site (a physical store opened in 2006) and he's as familiar with the whisky scene at the beginning of the millennium as he is with today's market. In his opinion, it was the Scotch whiskies that were driving both innovation and quality until fairly recently. "I like to look long-term," he says. "Take America, for example. I still think it's early. There are so many good American whiskies today—I didn't find that five years ago." Abbott adds, "America has a lot of great whiskeys, but half the time you don't get to try them unless you

know the distiller. I'd try something delicious and ask if they were doing exports, and they'd say, 'We're not even exporting to the next state. We're barely exporting to the next town.'" The set does contain two American whiskeys, as well as two Japanese and one Indian expression. The collection is an ongoing release, not a limited edition, so that's one reason why they didn't fill it full of rarities they'd have to replace on a regular basis (although the Macallan 18 and Blanton's Gold [bourbon](#) can be difficult to find nowadays). And also, these whiskeys are meant to be consumed and enjoyed, not hoarded. Abbott notes, "Often the rare [whiskies] aren't the things which push things forward. So it's the things that are still around, the things you can actually get," that they focused on. He slyly adds, "If we did a '20 Whiskies You'll Gnow Your Arm Off in Order to Try,' then we could really do some fantastic things."

15 Best Whiskies in the World for 2021

[NICK HALL](#), 16 JUN 2021

The time has come again when whisky experts huddle around and rifle off notes of peppercorn and sweet honey, uncorking the very intricacies of the spirit in fantastic detail. This year, the [International Whisky Competition](#) saw a professional tasting panel made up of whisky, beer, and wine experts blind tasting a number of the world's best drams and ranking them using a 100-point scale system. This time around, it was a Scottish icon that sealed the victory, with the Uigeadail release from Islay favourite Ardbeg claiming the top spot this year, followed by a host of big-name distillers.



International Whisky Competition 2021

An annual event that generally takes place in Chicago, the International Whisky Competition sees whiskies blind tasted and rated by a professional tasting panel, the results of which are then used to produce tasting notes for an International Whisky Guide. Under the International Whisky Competition 2021 guidelines, judges blind-tasted, judged and scored each whisky individually for eight minutes based on a select series of criteria. These included:

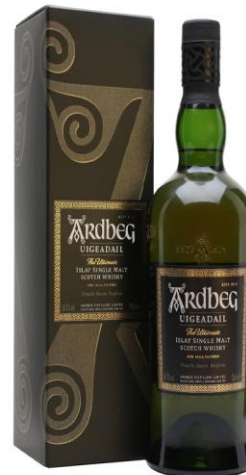
- Sight: Color (0 points), Visual Appeal (5 points)
- Nose: Intensity and Complexity (15 points), Distinctiveness of Aromas (10 points), Balance of Aromas (10 points)
- Taste/Mouth Feel: Palate and Balance (10 points), Alcohol, Body and Complexity (10 points), Distinctiveness of Flavours (10 points), Balance Between Flavours (10 points)
- Finish: Length and Finish (10 points), Quality of Finish (10 points)

As mentioned, Ardbeg Uigeadail came away with the Whisky of the Year award, scoring an industry-leading 95.9 out of 100. Adding to the victory, Ardbeg chief Bill Lumsden was named Master Distiller of the Year, with the Scottish icon also walking away as the winner of the Golden Barrel Trophy. Interestingly enough, last year's surprising winner of the World's Best Whisky, Dewar's Double Double 32-Year-Old slipped in the

placings, falling to third, just behind Glenmorangie Vintage 1997. While no Australian release managed to crack the top 15, in a separate acknowledgment, Morris Muscat Barrel Australian Single Malt Whisky was named the nation's best, with a score of 90.3.

Best Whiskies for 2021

Held in Estes Park, Colorado outside of its regular Chicago homeland, the International Whisky Competition judged a number of big-name releases from the spirits community. After a bling tasting and judging process, the panel of experts named the top-ranking drams for this year. Here is a list of the top 15 whiskies for 2021, according to the International Whisky Competition.



1. Ardbeg Uigeadail – 95.9 Pts (Islay, Scotland)

Named for the loch that Ardbeg sources its pure water from, Uigeadail is a strong, peat driven whiskey with notes of smoke, leather, dried fruits and walnut oil. Courtesy of maturation in both old bourbon and sherry casks, the Ardbeg Uigeadail has a flavour of Christmas pudding, glazed smoked ham with a burst of clove-driven spice on the finish.

Country: Scotland

Region: Islay

Distillery: Ardbeg

ABV: 54.3%

[Buy it here](#)



2. Glenmorangie Vintage 1997 – 95.1 Pts (Highland, Scotland)

The seventh release in the limited edition The Bond House No. 1 Collection, Glenmorangie Vintage 1997 has spent about 10 years in ex-bourbon casks before a portion was transferred to Château Montrose red wine casks, from the Saint-Estèphe appellation of Bordeaux. It is bottled at 43% ABV and is available as of June, 2021.

Country: Scotland

Distillery: Glenmorangie

ABV: 43%

[Buy it here](#)



3. Dewar's Double Double 32 Year Old – 95 Pts (Scotland)
 Last year's winner in this very competition, Dewar's Double Double 32-Year-Old proved it wasn't a fluke, finishing in third spot for the Best Whisky 2021 category. This blended whisky is finished in Pedro Ximenez sherry casks, bringing rich, ripe treacle notes with a hint of smokiness and a silky smooth finish.
 Country: Scotland
 Region: Perthshire
 Distillery: Dewar's
 ABV: 46%
[Buy it here](#)



4. Kavalan Artist Series: Paul Chiang Peated Malt Single Cask Strength Whisky – 94.6 Pts (Taiwan)
 The first of many Kavalan whiskies to make the top 15, this release is rather artsy. According to the brand, this peated whisky from Taiwan bears the fruits of labour for both Kavalan and renowned artist Paul Chiang and the seeds for new growth.
 Country: Taiwan
 Distillery: Kavalan
 ABV: 54%
[Buy it here](#)



5. King Car 40th Anniversary Selected Wine Cask Matured Single Malt Whisky – 94 Pts (Taiwan)
 This single cask whisky was created to celebrate a milestone by Kavalan owners King Car. Aged in 'Highly Exclusive' red wine casks, this limited edition signifies 40 years of the King Car Company. Matured in a single red wine cask and bottled at 56.3% abv with only, a couple of dozen bottles will be released in Australia.
 Country: Taiwan
 Distillery: Kavalan
 ABV: 56.3%
[Buy it here](#)



6. Black Bourbon Society's Maker's Mark Private Selection: Recipe 2. – 93.8 Pts (Kentucky, USA)
 A collaboration between whisky lovers, Black Bourbon Society's Maker's Mark Private Selection: Recipe 2 was made through the Maker's Mark Private Selection program, which allows retail partners to "make their own Maker's" by finishing fully-matured cask strength Maker's Mark Bourbon.
 Country: USA
 Distillery: Maker's Mark
 ABV: 55.1%
[Buy it here](#)



7. Kavalan Solist Vinho Barrique Single Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky – 93.7 Pts (Taiwan)

Another winning release from Kavalan, Vinho is fully matured in used American oak wine barrels that have been toasted and re-charred in a way that the brand claims brings out fruity vanilla notes from the whisky. Add to that a wood overlaid that matches with a delicate background of complex fruitiness and you've got a solid release.

Country: Taiwan
Distillery: Kavalan
ABV: 57.8%

[Buy it here](#)



8. Dewar's Double Double 21-Year-Old – 93.6 Pts (Scotland)

A super-smooth and easy to drink blended whisky, Dewar's Double Double 21-Year-Old has been finished in Oloroso Sherry casks, giving the whisky "subtle notes of cinnamon and ripe vine fruits with a silky smooth finish".

Country: Scotland
Region: Perthshire
Distillery: Dewar's
ABV: 46%

[Buy it here](#)



9. Ardbeg Traigh Bhan 19 Year Old (Batch 2) – 9.4 Pts (Scotland)

Following up their Best in Show whisky award, Ardbeg's Traigh Bhan 19-Year-Old also scored highly. A permanent addition to the Ardbeg stable, Traigh Bhan is released in much smaller quantities than the rest of the core range, with each batch intended to be slightly different. The 2020 edition continues to focus on ex-bourbon and Oloroso sherry matured whiskies, offering notes of "fresh lime, roasted tea leaves and smoked pineapple".

Country: Scotland
Region: Islay
Distillery: Ardbeg
ABV: 46.2%

[Buy it here](#)



10. Glenmorangie Signet – 93.1 Pts (Highland, Scotland)

Described as the culmination of a lifetime's experience of Glenmorangie's whisky creators, Signet is a fusion of some of the oldest and rarest whiskies from the stable's archives aged in designer casks. According to Glenmorangie, Signet "tantalises with sizzling spices, before the voluptuous texture of rich chocolate and dark intense aromatic coffee create a veritable velvet explosion of taste".

Country: Scotland
Region: Highland
Distillery: Glenmorangie
ABV: 46%

[Buy it here](#)



11. Kavalan Solist (Oloroso) Sherry Single Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky – 93 Pts (Taiwan)

Another winner, Kavalan Solist Sherry is matured in Oloroso sherry casks in special editions, with each release is bottled by hand at the distillery. Better yet, this Taiwanese whisky is crafted with no colouring or chill-filtration, making it as pure as it gets.

Country: Taiwan
Distillery: Kavalan
ABV: 57%

[Buy it here](#)



12. Kilchoman Machir Bay – 92.97 Pts (Islay, Scotland)

A favourite from one of the smallest distilleries in Scotland, Kilchoman's Machir Bay is matured in a combination of both Bourbon and Sherry casks, creating a well-balanced combination of rich tropical fruit, peat smoke, light vanilla and intense sweetness.

Country: Scotland
Region: Islay
Distillery: Kilchoman
ABV: 46%

[Buy it here](#)

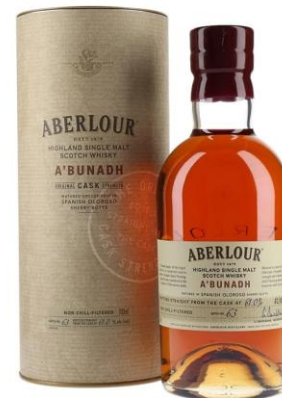


13. Ardbeg An Oa – 92.87 Pts (Islay, Scotland)

Arberg returns to the winner's table with An Oa, a whisky that is described as "singularly rounded", thanks to its time spent in the newly established bespoke oak Gathering Vat. This process allows the spirit to familiarise itself with whiskies from several cask types – including; sweet Pedro Ximenez; spicy virgin charred oak; and intense ex-bourbon casks, amongst others.

Country: Scotland
Region: Islay
Distillery: Ardbeg
ABV: 46.6%

[Buy it here](#)



14. Aberlour A'Bunadh – 92.73 Pts (Speyside, Scotland)

Aberlour a'bunadh is a single batch single malt that is sourced exclusively from the Speyside region. Straight from the cask without chill-filtration and alcohol reduction, this whisky is heavy-bodied and not for the faint heart.

Country: Scotland
Distillery: Aberlour
ABV: 61%

[Buy it here](#)



15. Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban 14-Year-Old – 92.67 Pts (Highland, Scotland)

Rounding out the top 15 was another old favourite. Glenmorangie's Quinta Ruban 14-year-old is an intense non-filtered single malt initially matured in Bourbon casks. The spirit is then extra matured or 'finished' in Port casks, to create the chocolate, minty notes of The Quinta Ruban.

Country: Scotland

Distillery: Glenmorangie

[Buy it here](#)



Major Winners

Alongside the top 15 announcement, the International Whisky Competition also outlined a number of key industry accolades. No surprises here, but Ardbeg managed to clean up, securing three of the five major prizes after a stunning year and vintage release. Here is a list of the major award winners from the International Whisky Competition 2021 event.

Whisky of the Year - Ardbeg Uigeadail (95.9 points)

Master Distiller of the Year - Dr Bill Lumsden

Glenmorangie & Ardbeg Distillery

Golden Barrel Trophy Ardbeg Distillery (Scotland)

Distillery of the Year Kavalan Distillery (Taiwan)

Master Blender of the Year Stephanie Macleod John Dewar & Sons

General FAQs

What is the International Whisky Competition?

The International Whisky Competition is an annual event that takes place in Chicago in which whiskies are blind tasted and rated by a professional tasting panel. The results are used to produce tasting notes for an International Whisky Guide.

What is the best whisky in the world for 2021?

At the International Whisky Competition 2021, Ardbeg Uigeadail was named Whisky of the Year, outpacing releases from major distilleries like Glenmorangie and Kilchoman.

Are whiskey and scotch the same?

Whisky, spelled without the e, is also alcohol made from a fermented grain mash made exclusively in Scotland, Japan or Australia. Scotch whisky is a type of whisky made specifically in Scotland.

Diageo opens Cardhu visitor centre

17th June, 2021 by Melita Kieley

Speyside distillery Cardhu has opened its new visitor centre, part of Diageo's £185 million (US\$258.5m) investment in Scotch whisky tourism.



Cardhu's new visitor centre is now open

Dubbed the 'Speyside home of Johnnie Walker', the Cardhu visitor centre follows the [opening of Glenkinchie's visitor centre](#) in the Lowlands and [Clynelish's visitor attraction](#) in the Highlands.

Cardhu's visitor centre now features a red flag to symbolise the one used by Helen Cumming, of Cardhu's founding family, which was used to warn illicit distillers of the approaching excise man in the 1800s. Cristina Diezhandino, Diageo chief marketing officer, said: "When Helen raised her flag, it was to warn her neighbours and the local community, but today we raise the flag in a symbol of confidence and ambition for the future of Scotch whisky and tourism in Speyside and throughout Scotland."

"Cardhu is a special whisky, a special distillery with a special history and heritage, and the investment we have made creates an exciting and engaging experience that will surprise and delight visitors, whether they are local staycationers in the UK or tourists from around the globe when they are able to travel."

Visitors to Cardhu will be able to discover the brand's history through a story room, where they can watch an animation retelling the whisky's origins. The animation was created by Scottish production studio Eyebolls.

Guests will also be able to explore the distillation and maturation process of Cardhu's signature whisky through updated interactive tours and experiences, and indulge in a dram or Highball in the new Tasting Kitchen.



Flying the flag: Helen Cumming

Cardhu is the third of the 'four corners of Scotland' Johnnie Walker distillery experiences, all of which are single malt distilleries that contribute to the world's leading blended Scotch. In addition to Glenkinchie and Clynelish, Caol Ila Distillery on Islay will open its new visitor experience in 2022.

The [Johnnie Walker Princes Street](#) experiential whisky department store in Edinburgh is set to open this summer.

Diageo officially reopened the [silent Brora distillery after 38 years](#) last month as part of its investment.

Ewan Andrew, president of global supply chain and procurement, added: "Cardhu is the latest step in our [£185m investment journey to transform Scotch whisky tourism](#) and to create truly world-class visitor experiences at our distilleries, and at Johnnie Walker Princes Street when it opens later this summer.

"This is not just an investment in Scotch whisky tourism, but an investment in the future growth of Scotch whisky by engaging new generations of whisky consumers both at home and around the world."

ARE WHISKEY COLLECTORS RESPECTING THE CRAFT? A DISTILLER'S PERSPECTIVE

BY MATT STRICKLAND - June 17, 2021

In the modern whiskey world, you'll come across a multitude of consumer types. There's the neophyte taking their first steps into this monstrously large category trying not to feel like a fool. There's the "strictly bourbon" people who would sooner use Bowmore for lighter fluid than let some of that peaty liquid ever touch their glass. Conversely, you've got the single malt fanatics who eschew any liquid that even remotely smells of the word "blend." And there are countless others.

Each one makes up the fantastically varied microcosmic tapestry of grain spirit drinkers. Of increasing interest in today's whiskey ecosystem is the growing numbers of whiskey collectors.

LIQUID INVESTMENTS

Now, before anyone gets too nervous about where this is headed, let's define what we mean by "whiskey collectors." We're not talking about the whiskey fanatics who purchase every new release from their favorite brands. What we're discussing here are the folks who purchase said bottlings and hold onto them while waiting for a prominent increase in value before (un)ceremoniously selling them off onto the secondary market via auction houses, social media forums or other means. For these folks, the liquid is an investment. Indeed they will often approach the appropriation of these fine liquids with an investor's eye.



In this day and age, none of this should be all that shocking. Trade magazines such as Whisky Advocate regularly host columns pertaining to the latest auctioneering news. The newswires often trumpet headlines of [record-shattering prices](#) whiskey collectors are receiving for various bottlings and collections. And while most people would never reasonably believe that they could become wealthy by playing the whiskey investment game, many average Joe's have taken the plunge to attempt to pull in a little extra scratch.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with making a little money (so long as it's done legally, ethically and humanely). However, the tragedy is that many of these bottles exchange hands and are never opened! From a distiller's point of view, this teeters on the edge of blasphemy. We don't

make whiskey to be traded and bartered over and over like some alcohol-laden version of Beanie Babies. We make whiskey to drink, preferably with a friend or five.

RESPECT THE CRAFT

Now, as distillers we understand that not all whiskey is created equal when it comes to the drinking occasion. Most people aren't busting out the nice stuff for everyday consumption. Certainly that 30-year-old bottle of fine Speyside malt or the bottle of [Old Forester Birthday Bourbon](#) won't likely be in your everyday drinking canon. However, drink these drams you most definitely should when the occasion warrants it.



Distillers have been making whiskey for centuries. But it is only within the past 200 years that the practice has reached its apotheosis. Distillers these days are often involved with every step of the whiskey making process. That includes everything from [growing and harvesting the grain](#) to [cask management](#) and every step in between. It often takes years and sometimes decades to make a truly memorable dram.

Admittedly much of this time is spent waiting for the whiskey to mature inside a cask. However, there is still an intense amount of physical labor involved behind the scenes.

This is all to say that good whiskey doesn't just happen. But when all of the work is done and the dust is settled, you find yourself holding a bottle of liquid beauty that in an increasing number of instances fetches a high shelf price. That price is certainly reflective of what the market is willing to pay, which is a wild and confusing lesson in supply-side economics if there ever was one.

However, much of that price is also indicative of the labor, time and resources that have been put into it. After all that hard work, the last thing most distillers want to see are whiskey collectors snatching up the fruits of their labors only to place them in a locked glass case shelf.

FOR DRINKING, NOT HOARDING

Distillers love their work. We have the privilege of crafting concoctions that bring joy and happiness to countless people on many happy occasions in their lives. Our drams also get consumed during the sad times when life has dealt someone a bad hand. A little liquid libation, responsibly and reasonably consumed, can be a serious boon for people on so many varied occasions in their lives. Shooehorning whiskey into the realm of investment opportunity seriously misses the point and love behind its manufacture and existence.

But hey, if spiritus investments are how whiskey collectors get their financial kicks, there's likely not a distiller out there (including this one) that would stop them. They are well within their rights to enjoy whiskey the way they want to enjoy it. And that means even if they never drink a drop of the stuff. But for most distillers in the world, whiskey is supposed to be tangible and experiential, adding both salve and lubricant to the confusing and often confounding experience of being human.

Simply put: whiskey is meant to be drunk in good spirits with good company. All you have to do is to open the bottle.

Whisky Review: Highland Park Single Cask Series Scotch in the City Edition

By [Talia Gragg](#) / June 19, 2021

Editor's Note: This whisky was provided to us as a review sample by Highland Park. This in no way, per [our editorial policies](#), influenced the final outcome of this review. It should also be noted that by clicking the

buy link towards the bottom of this review our site receives a small referral payment which helps to support, but not influence, our editorial and other costs.

The whisky coming off the Isle of Orkney is as classic a Scotch as you'll find; the heritage, however, takes a different tack. Orkney has spent as much time in the Viking Empire as the British one, and the former holds as much if not more esteem than the latter. Viking heritage is still prevalent and culturally close to both the people and the distillery of Highland Park.

[Highland Park](#) goes back to 1798 (officially; whisky was distilled in a less-than-legal capacity beforehand) and is the northernmost Scotch distillery in the world. The Viking heritage of the isle is as important to the distillery as it is to the local Orcadians. They tie their Viking roots strongly to their brand, in both bottle imagery and the naming of their products.

These ancient roots have added a modern perspective and consciousness. Highland Park has paired with Instagram account [Scotch in the City](#) to select this limited-release bottle. Kevin and Nick, who run the account, chose this specific cask from three unidentified samples sent to them. After some heavy debate, #150 won the day – an 11-year-old Scotch aged in a first-fill American oak sherry puncheon. As part of the project, some proceeds from bottle sales would be going to the [The First Responders Children's Foundation](#) COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund (Kevin and Nick made no money from this release, nor from their account in general).

In mid-May Kevin and Nick did an Instagram live tasting of the whisky they chose (which can be viewed in the app) and a Q&A. Kevin and Nick opened with discussing the \$15,000 the bottle sales had contributed to the fund. A "phone call" from [Edrington](#) (parent company of Highland Park) in the first few minutes doubled that number to 30,000. The live video went on to discuss the process of releasing this Scotch, how it compares to others, and some general questions about Scotch and the account.

Kevin and Nick want to continue selecting casks for limited release, as well as continuing to contribute to charity – hopefully one a year. In their closing words, they thanked Edrington and their work in charity, thanked and asked for consideration towards first responders and frontline workers, and dedicated this bottle to both them and the account followers.

They wrapped up the video with a few quick tasting notes on the bottle – caramel, sherry on the nose, fresh vanilla bean, peeled fruits, some tangy, zesty orange, and little heather-y peat at the end. They specially noted how the whisky changed from the first notes as they sipped, bringing out more latent elements.

Only 594 bottles of this limited-release Scotch were made available. As of the publishing of this review, a few bottles are still available on [Caskers](#) – so run, don't walk if you want to participate in this very special expression.



Highland Park Single Cask Series Scotch in the City Edition (image via Caskers)
Tasting Notes: Highland Park Single Cask Series Scotch in the City Edition

Vital Stats: 65.4% ABV, 130.8 proof, aged 11 years, single cask, cask #150, finished in first-fill American Oak Sherry puncheon, distilled 2008,

bottled 2019, 594 bottle limited release, 100% malted barley, 750ml \$155.99

Appearance: Clear, mostly leg-less, golden toffee

Nose: Very earthy and mossy at first whiff. As it sits, prunes and candied fruit come through, with a fine champagne on the end.

Palate: A light texture, but immediately hot, to the point of astringency. A hint of nutmeg expands into full, sweet marshmallow. A punch of ripe, juicy fruit tones down into herbal botanicals and artichoke, with a whisper of willow bark. This leads into the wonderful long finish where the sweet, flowery smoke shows up.

The Takeaway

Summary

Oh my, this is a spicy one. As a general rule I never recommend this, but this pour needs to be a little watered down for even the first taste - for the sake of your tastebuds. But once you do - we reach the second "oh my."

This Scotch has levels, and moves through them effortlessly. I didn't get all of the same notes as Nick and Kevin, but I did agree that this changes and grows as you drink. This collaboration has absolutely been a success, in terms of both aid and taste, and I'll be waiting eagerly to see what comes next.

4.5 out of 5 stars

User Rating 3 out of 5 stars

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 "KSMS2021RDF", to whatever your security question is. Receiving payment in advance will allow everyone the opportunity to socialize before the dinner as well as reduce the accounting work required after.
- For e-transfers, Members are responsible for collecting from their guests, and then forwarding one payment in total by e-transfer.

Just a note because we care.

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



Kingston Single Malt Society

Roberto Di Fazio, President

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words: TIM MCKIRDY - illustration: DANIELLE GRINBERG

The Ultimate Whiskey Flavor Wheel



The Scotch Whisky Masters 2021 results

3rd June, 2021 by Melita Kiely

Blended – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Blue Label	Gold
Sassenach Spirits	The Sassenach	Gold
Terroirs Distillers	Highland Queen Blended Scotch Whisky Sherry Cask Finish	Gold
Atom Brands	Green Isle	Gold
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Red Label	Silver
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Gold Label Reserve	Silver
Loch Lomond Group	Clansman Blended Scotch Whisky	Silver
Diageo	Black & White	Silver

Blended – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Black Label	Gold
Distell	Scottish Leader 12 Years Old	Gold
Distell	Black Bottle 10 Years Old	Gold
MacDuff International	Lauder's Oloroso Cask Edition	Silver

Blended – Aged between 19-30 Years

Company	Product	Medal
MacDuff International	Islay Mist 21 Years Old	Gold

Blended – Standard (up to £20)

Company	Product	Medal
Lidl Great Britain	Glen Orchy Blended Scotch Whisky	Gold
Distell	Scottish Leader Signature	Gold
Distell	Black Bottle Blended Scotch Whisky	Gold
La Martiniquaise-Bardinet	Sir Edward's 12 Years Old	Gold
Terroirs Distillers	Highland Queen Blended Scotch Whisky 1561	Gold
Whisky and Spirits	Bonnie Prince Whisky	Gold

Bardinet	Sir Edward's Smoky	Gold
Distell	Scottish Leader Original	Silver
Loch Lomond Group	High Commissioner Blended Scotch Whisky	Silver
La Martiniquaise-Bardinet	Sir Edward's Finest	Silver
La Martiniquaise-Bardinet	Label 5	Silver
La Martiniquaise-Bardinet	Cutty Sark Original	Silver
Charles Edge London	Scots Gold 8 Years Old	Silver
Charles Edge London	Scots Gold Red Labe	Silver
Terroirs Distillers	Highland Queen Blended Scotch Whisky	Silver
Lidl Great Britain	Queen Margot Blended Scotch Whisky	Silver

Blended – Premium (£21-£30)

Company	Product	Medal
Distell	Black Bottle Double Cask Blended Scotch Whisky	Master
Distell	Black Bottle Island Smoke Blended Scotch Whisky	Master
Distell	Scottish Leader Sherry Cask Finish	Gold
Distell	Scottish Leader Supreme	Gold
Pure Scot	Pure Scot Signature	Gold
Charles Edge London	London Square	Gold

Blended – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Monkey Brands	Frisky Panky	Silver
Pure Scot	Pure Scot Midnight Peat	Silver

Blended Malt – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Wemyss Family Spirits	Peat Chimney	Gold
Wemyss Family Spirits	Spice King	Gold
Wemyss Family Spirits	The Hive	Silver
MacDuff International	Waterproof	Silver
Douglas Laing & Co	The Epicurean Ruby Port	Silver

Douglas Laing & Co	Rock Island Sherry Edition	Silver
Blended Malt – Aged up to 12 Years		
Company	Product	Medal
GlenAllachie Distillers Company	MacNair’s Lum Reek 12 Years Old	Gold
Wemyss Family Spirits	Spice King Highland & Islay	Gold
Blended Malt – Aged between 19-30 Years		
Company	Product	Medal
GlenAllachie Distillers Company	MacNair’s Lum Reek 21 Years Old	Master
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Speyside Blended Malt (Burnside)	Gold
Blended Malt – Aged over 31 Years		
Company	Product	Medal
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Blended Scotch Whisky	Master
Blended Malt – Standard		
Company	Product	Medal
Lidl Great Britain	Abrachan Blended Peated Malt	Gold
Aldi Stores (Australia)	Highland Green Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Blended Malt – Premium		
Company	Product	Medal
Glasgow Distillery Company	Malt Riot	Silver
Blended Malt – Super Premium		
Company	Product	Medal
Berry Bros & Rudd	Peated Cask Matured Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Douglas Laing & Co	Scallywag	Gold
Ardgowan Distillery	Clydebuilt Coppersmith	Gold
Berry Bros & Rudd	Sherry Cask Matured Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Silver
Blended Malt – Ultra Premium		
Company	Product	Medal
Douglas Laing & Co	Big Peat	Master

Single Malt: Campbeltown – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia Double Cask	Gold

Single Malt: Campbeltown – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia 10 Years Old	Gold

Single Malt: Campbeltown – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia 15 Years Old	Gold

Single Malt: Campbeltown – Aged between 19-30 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia 25 Years Old	Master

Single Malt: Campbeltown – Cask Strength

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia Victoriana: Cask Strength	Master

Single Malt: Campbeltown – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia 18 Years Old	Gold

Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Tullibardine	Tullibardine Artisan	Gold
Tomatin Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Tomatin Legacy	Gold
Isle of Arran Distillers	Arran Barrel Reserve	Gold
Distell	Deanston Virgin Oak	Gold
Nc’nean Distillery	Nc’nean Organic Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Wolfburn Whisky	Langskip	Gold
Edrington	Highland Park Cask Strength Release No.1	Gold
Edrington	Highland Park Dragon Legend	Silver
RR Whisky	River Rock	Silver

Isle of Raasay Distillery	Isle Of Raasay Single Malt	Silver
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Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Aged up to 12 years

Company	Product	Medal
Edrington	Highland Park 12 Years Old Viking Honour	Gold
Distell	Tobermory 12 Years Old	Gold
Distell	Deanston 12 Years Old	Gold
Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 10 Years Old	Gold
Isle of Arran Distillers	Arran 10 Years Old	Gold
Distell	Ledaig 10 Years Old	Gold
Tullibardine	Tullibardine 12 Years Old	Silver
Tomatin Highland Single Malt	Tomatin 12 Years Old	Silver
Edrington	Highland Park 10 Years Old Viking Scars	Silver

Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Aged between 13-18 years

Company	Product	Medal
Distell	Deanston 18 Years Old	Master
Edrington	Highland Park 18 Years Old Viking Pride	Gold
Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 18 Years Old	Gold
Halewood Artisanal Spirits	Crabbie 15 Years Old Highland Single Malt	Gold
Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 14 Years Old	Silver

Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Aged between 19-30 years

Company	Product	Medal
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Highland Park 1992	Master
Distell	Tobermory 23 Year Old	Master
Edrington	Highland Park 21s Year Old 2020 Release	Master
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Jura 1991	Master

Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Highland Park 1992	Gold
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Jura 1991	Gold

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society	26.138 – Aubergine Taco	Gold
Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Cask Strength		
Company	Product	Medal
The Scotch Malt Whisky Society	112.53 – Sophisticated Seductive Sazerac cocktail	Gold
Isle of Arran Distillers	Arran Quarter Cask The Bothy	Gold
Isle of Arran Distillers	Arran Sherry Cask The Bodega	Gold
Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Standard		
Company	Product	Medal
Aldi Stores (Australia)	Glen Marnoch Sherry Cask Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Aldi	Glen Marnoch Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Lidl Great Britain	Ben Bracken Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Aldi	Highland Black 8 Year Old Whisky	Silver
Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Premium		
Company	Product	Medal
Charles Edge London	Canmore 12 Years Old	Gold
Tullibardine	Tullibardine Sovereign	Gold
Glencadam Distillery	Glencadam 10 Years Old	Gold
Glencadam Distillery	Glencadam Reserva Andalusia	Gold
Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 12 Years Old	Gold
Charles Edge London	Canmore	Silver
Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Super-Premium		
Company	Product	Medal
Glenturret	The Glenturret 12 Years Old (2020 Maiden Release)	Master
Glenturret	The Glenturret Triplewood (2020 Maiden Release)	Gold
Glenturret	The Glenturret 10 Years Old Peat Smoked (2020 Maiden Release)	Gold
Glencadam Distillery	Glencadam 15 Years Old	Silver
Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Ultra Premium		
Company	Product	Medal
Tomatin Highland Single Malt	Decades II	Master

Single Malt: Lowland – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Kingsbarns Distillery	Dream to Dram	Gold
Glasgow Distillery Company	Glasgow 1770 Single Malt Scotch Whisky – Peated	Gold
Glasgow Distillery Company	Glasgow 1770 Single Malt Scotch Whisky – The Original	Silver
Bladnoch Distillery	Bladnoch Vinaya	Silver
Kingsbarns Distillery	Balcomie	Silver

Single Malt: Lowland – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Bladnoch Distillery	Bladnoch 14 Years Old	Gold

Single Malt: Speyside – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Creag Dhu	Creag Dhu Single Malt Whisky	Gold

Single Malt: Speyside – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Halewood Artisanal Spirits	Crabbie’s Speyside Single Malt	Master
Campari Group	Glen Grant 10 Years Old	Gold
The Benromach Distillery Company	Benromach Aged 10 Years	Gold
Campari Group	Glen Grant 12 Years Old	Gold
Atom Brands	Darkness 8 Years Old	Gold

Single Malt: Speyside – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
GlenAllachie Distillers Company	The GlenAllachie 15 Years Old	Gold
Campari Group	Glen Grant 18 Years Old	Silver
The Benromach Distillery	Benromach Aged 15 Years	Silver
Campari Group	Glen Grant 15 Years Old	Silver

Single Malt: Speyside – Aged between 19-30 Years

Company	Product	Medal
The Benromach Distillery	Benromach Aged 21 Years	Gold

Single Malt: Speyside – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Speyside Single Malt 2006	Silver
Artful Dodger Whisky Collective	Auchroisk 2007	Silver

Single Malt: Speyside – Cask Strength

Company	Product	Medal
The Benromach Distillery	Benromach Cask Strength Vintage 2009 Batch 4	Gold
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	6.39 – A Belter of a Dram	Gold
Speyside Distillers Company	Spey Trutina Cask Strength Batch 3	Silver

Single Malt: Speyside – Standard

Company	Product	Medal
Aldi Stores (Australia)	Glen Marnoch Bourbon Cask Single Malt	Master
Aldi	12 Years Old Speyside Single Malt	Gold
Aldi	18 Years Old Speyside Single Malt	Gold
Lidl Great Britain	Ben Bracken Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Silver

Single Malt: Speyside – Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Tomintoul Distillery	Tomintoul Tlàth Speyside Single Malt	Gold
Tomintoul Distillery	Tomintoul 16 Years Old Speyside Single Malt	Gold
Tomintoul Distillery	Tomintoul Seiridh Speyside Single Malt	Gold
Tomintoul Distillery	Tomintoul 10 Years Old Speyside Single Malt	Silver

Single Malt: Speyside – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Tomintoul Distillery	Tomintoul Cigar Malt Speyside Single Malt	Gold

Single Malt: Islay – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Kilchoman Distillery	Kilchoman Loch Gorm	Gold
Kilchoman Distillery	Kilchoman Machir Bay	Gold
Distell	Bunnahabhain Stiùireadair	Gold

Distell	Bunnahabhain An Cladach	Gold
Distell	Bunnahabhain Cruach Mhona	Gold
Elixir Distillers	Port Askaig 100 Proof	Gold
Distell	Bunnahabhain Eirigh Na Greine	Silver
Distell	Bunnahabhain Toiteach A Dha	Silver
Kilchoman Distillery	Kilchoman Sanaig	Silver

Single Malt: Islay – Aged up to 12 years

Company	Product	Medal
Atom Brands	Aerolite Lyndsay	Gold
Distell	Bunnahabhain 12 Years Old	Gold
Atom Brands	Seaweed & Aeons & Digging & Fire	Silver

Single Malt: Islay – Aged between 13-18 years

Company	Product	Medal
Distell	Bunnahabhain 18 Years Old	Gold

Single Malt: Islay – Aged between 19-30 years

Company	Product	Medal
Distell	Bunnahabhain 25 Years Old	Master & Taste Master

Single Malt: Islay – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	53.322 – Carpe Diem	Master
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	10.191 – Oh So Sumptuous	Gold

Single Malt: Islay – Cask Strength

Company	Product	Medal
Atom Brands	Seaweed & Aeons & Digging & Fire Cask Strength	Gold

Single Malt: Islay – Standard

Company	Product	Medal
Lidl Great Britain	Ben Bracken Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Aldi UK	Glen Marnoch Islay Single Malt Whisky	Gold

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