

# Kingston Single Malt Society

[www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com](http://www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com)

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

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 VOLUME 15; Number 12b; NUMBER 199



# WHISKY

HIGHLAND  
PARK  
SCAPA



## COST OF THE MALTS

**SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT 2006 - 14 YEAR OLD - 6175 CHIEFTAIN'S CIGAR MALT** LCBO 11584 | 700 mL bottle, **Price: \$430.95**, Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 59.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**TOMINTOUL CIGAR MALT SHERRY CASK** LCBO 846758 | 700 mL bottle, **Price: \$149.95**, Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**DALMORE CIGAR MALT RESERVE** LCBO 534453 | 750 mL bottle, **Price: \$199.95**, Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 44.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**GONZALEZ BYASS NECTAR PEDRO XIMENEZ DULCE SHERRY VINTAGES** 87577 | 750 mL bottle, **Price: \$25.95**, Spirits, Port, 15.2% Alcohol/Vol.

**TIO PEPE EXTRA FINE DRY VINTAGES** 231829 | 750 mL bottle, **Price: \$19.45**, Spirits, Port, 15.0% Alcohol/Vol.

## MENU

**1<sup>st</sup> Course:** Ditalini, Cherry Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Purple Onions, Red Pepper, Toasted Walnuts & Goat's Feta, with a Lemon-Smoked Paprika Dressing

**1<sup>st</sup> Nosing:** SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT 2006 - 14 YEAR OLD - 6175 CHIEFTAIN'S CIGAR MALT (introduced by: Paul Charbonneau)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Course:** Cajun Frogs Legs with a Grilled Corn and Red Pepper Salsa

**2<sup>nd</sup> Nosing:** TOMINTOUL CIGAR MALT SHERRY CASK (introduced by: Paul Charbonneau)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Course - Main course Choice:**

Grilled Salmon, with Chilli-Lime Rice and Creamy Coleslaw Or

Grilled Beef Sirloin, with a Warm Fingerling Potato Salad with Bacon, Mushroom, Baby Spinach, and Whiskey Cheddar

**3<sup>rd</sup> Nosing:** DALMORE CIGAR MALT RESERVE (introduced by: Paul Charbonneau)

**Dessert:** Strawberry Shortcake with Bourbon Whipped Cream.

**4<sup>th</sup> Nosing:** GONZALEZ BYASS NECTAR PEDRO XIMENEZ DULCE SHERRY (introduced by: Paul Charbonneau)

### May 30<sup>th</sup> Dinner - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 28 May attendees @ \$90)	= \$2520.00
March dinner 28 persons =	= \$1707.94
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt)	= \$812.06
Cost of Single Malts:	= \$1280.25
Cost of Pours per Person = \$32.10	
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= (-\$468.19)
Cost per person (All inclusive)	= \$106.72
Money for Heels	= \$650.00
Money Raised from Raffle	= \$ 0.00
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= \$181.81

### Upcoming Dinner Dates

- Monday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - Speyside / Highlands
- Friday August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Premium Night
- Monday September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - Lowland / Islands (Kyle)
- Monday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - Speyside / Highlands / Islay
- Monday November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Campbeltown / Highlands / Islay
- Monday December 12<sup>th</sup> 2022 - Christmas Dinner
- Monday January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023 - Robbie Burns
- Monday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 - Speyside / Islands / Islay
- Monday March 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 - Speyside / Islands / Islay
- Monday April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023 - Speyside / Islands / Islay
- Monday May 15<sup>th</sup> 2023 - Speyside / Islands / Islay
- Monday June 19<sup>th</sup> 2023 - June BBQ - Speyside / Islands / Islay

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## Explain about ... Scotland's whisky regions

### Lowlands

Nowadays, only a handful of distilleries occupy the region known as the Lowlands yet the style of whisky they produce remains quite distinct. The Lowlands are known for their delicate whiskies with floral, herbaceous and fruity characters. Notes of citrus, hay, cereal, caramel, and spices make them a lovely introduction to Scottish single malts.

### Highlands

This expansive territory that extends north of Glasgow and Edinburgh to Scotland's northernmost reaches counts several dozens of distilleries and as many varieties of whiskies. It is thus somewhat difficult to define a predominant style for all distilleries. However, most of their whiskies are characterized by robust aromas of caramel, malt, molasses, vanilla, spices, and wood. Some distilleries also produce peaty and smoky whiskies.

### Speyside

This small region tucked away in the Highlands includes forty or so of the most famous Scottish distilleries. This large concentration of distilleries is often attributed to the exceptional quality of the water and the abundance of natural resources. Speyside prides itself on making Scotland's most elegant and classic whiskies, dominated by aromas of honey, pear and candied fruit with hints of vanilla and flowers.

### Highlands

Often associated with the Highlands, distilleries located in the isles off the western coast of Scotland nevertheless produce their own unmistakable style of whisky. The isle of Islay has eight distilleries, the isles of Jura, Arran, Mull, and Skye each count their own distillery whereas the Orkney Islands are home to two. Whiskies distilled in the isles often present notes of iodine and smoke with fruity and spicy aromas.

### Islay

The small island of Islay boasts its very own whisky-producing region where it plays host to as many as eight distilleries scattered across an area covering barely 600 km<sup>2</sup>. These distilleries include some of Scotland's most famous whose their notoriety comes from the strong smoky, peaty and sometimes iodized character of their whiskies. Their authenticity and inimitable style explain why so many whisky connoisseurs sing their praises.

### Campbeltown

The city of Campbeltown was once an important distillation hub but most of the producers have since closed their doors. Nevertheless, Campbeltown maintains a distinct production region whose activity is assured by the Springbank distillery, which markets three kinds of Scotch whiskies under different names: Springback, a slightly smoky and iodized Scotch; Hazelburn, a rather light and fragrant Scotch; and Longrow, an intensely peaty Scotch.

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## Lochlea First Release

Posted on [February 7, 2022](#) by [Neill Murphy](#)



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### The Story of Lochlea

Lochlea distillery was established by Neil McGeoch, owner of Lochlea Farm. Planning permission was acquired in 2014 and construction work began in 2015.

The distillery is located in Ayrshire, just south of Kilmarnock and stands surrounded on all sides by green fields, some of which are used to grow the barley that makes their single malt. The project was joined in 2015 by Malcolm Rennie, a veteran of the Scotch industry with more than 30 years experience working at distilleries like Kilchoman, Bruichladdich, Ardbeg and Annandale.

Rennie oversaw the start of production in 2018, helping to nail down the character of the new make spirit in a distillery designed with a particular style in mind. By growing the barley themselves, the owners retain complete control over the quality of their raw ingredients. The fermentation process is deliberately long, in order to encourage fruity esters in the wash. Distillation runs slowly, as well. This patient approach, coupled with a high spirit cut helps to create a light, fruity spirit.

You could be forgiven for having never heard of Lochlea. Its early years were spent under a blanket of radio silence. There was no press releases, no big noises made. The people involved simply got on with doing their jobs and concentrated on making their product the best it could be.

That lack of coverage changed in 2021 when news broke that the distillery was readying its first single malt, to be released later that year.

Unfortunately, the release was delayed. I'm not totally sure what the reasons for that were though it's possibly safe to assume pandemic, supply issues relating to Brexit, HGV driver shortages or some combination of all the above played a role.

To complicate matters further, Malcolm Rennie departed to join Ian Macleod and oversee the revival of Rosebank Distillery. Lochlea immediately went about finding his replacement before deciding upon John Campbell, the man associated by so many, with Laphroaig distillery in Islay. Encouraged by the pandemic, various lockdowns and the

difficulty in seeing his family, Campbell decided that his future lay on the mainland and jumped at the chance to take on Lochlea. With Campbell named Production Director, Lochlea announced the re-arranged launch of their First Release. An appropriate date was chosen in the form of Burns Night 2022. The 25th of January sees the world celebrate the life of Robert Burns – and all things Scottish – with recitals of poetry, song and a meal of haggis and whisky. Burns, often considered Scotland's national poet, lived and worked at Lochlea Farm between 1777 and 1784.

## The Whisky



The First Release features spirit matured in first-fill bourbon casks and Pedro Ximenez sherry casks. The whisky is bottled at 46% without artificial colouring or chill filtration.

**Smell:** The nose is malty and nutty. Lots of cereal notes. Muesli. There's a bit of cut grass too. Lots of fruit – apple, pear... Tinned fruit cocktail. Vanilla and new wood. Hobnob biscuits. Black pepper – a wee bit of youthful spirit heat that gently prickles the nostrils. A subtle raisin note in the background.

**Taste:** Apples and rich honey on the arrival with vanilla cream. Then some fiery pepper develops. There's some of that fresh oak again before the malty backbone comes through. Some subtle dried fruits emerge before a dry, wood spice finish. Medium-bodied.

**Thoughts:** A fine debut from Lochlea. I like that they've allowed the spirit to show its character, young though it may be. When I read that a combination of first-fill bourbon and PX casks went into the making of the dram, I worried that it might be a little oak heavy but that certainly isn't the case. The spirit takes centre stage with the bourbon smoothing off the ages and beefing things up a little. There's been no mention of the split between bourbon and PX, though I'd imagine that a relatively small portion of sherry casks were used. The fortified wine's influence can be detected but it's kept in check. What you taste is the unique, albeit young character of Lochlea: the flavour of the spirit, distilled from the barley grown in the field beside the distillery. In that way, you're experiencing a flavour that could only have come from this place. Sure, the whisky is still a touch on the immature side but it's a pleasant sipping dram and it appears well placed to develop into something special in years to come.

**Value for money:** There was a few years when every new distillery seemed to price their inaugural release as if it was the most collectable, desirable item in the world. Thankfully, that trend seems to have stopped and I was delighted to see Lochlea pricing its malt at an affordable level. Good on them and long may it continue.



## Laphroaig launches 2022 Càirdeas edition

31 MAY 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Beam Suntory-owned Laphroaig has released the 2022 edition of its Càirdeas whisky to mark this year's Fèis Ile festival.



The 2022 Càirdeas edition is named after the brand's Warehouse 1. The annual release of the series has been created to celebrate the 'friends of Laphroaig'.

Laphroaig Càirdeas 2022 Warehouse 1 is available online today (31 May) on Laphroaig Day. The annual celebration is held during Islay whisky festival Fèis Ile (26 May to 4 June).

The new release has been matured in first-fill Maker's Mark Bourbon casks and aged in Laphroaig's Warehouse 1, which has stood for almost 200 years. Each cask laid to rest in the warehouse is said to have a maritime character due to its exposure to the sea.

The resulting liquid offers the brand's signature notes of peat, smoke and salt, along with hints of vanilla cake, fudge, heather honey and golden syrup, walnuts, nutmeg on the nose.

The palate provides 'strong peat reek, tar and powerful ashy notes' alongside manuka honey, burnt toffee, liquorice, oak spices and tannins, white pepper, dried herbs and flowers.

The liquid was developed by former distillery manager John Campbell, [who left Laphroaig last year to join Lochlea Distillery](#). He was [replaced by Barry MacAffer](#).

MacAffer said: "I am thrilled to announce the launch of our 2022 Càirdeas edition, named after the iconic Warehouse 1, answering the call from Friends of Laphroaig to make a Càirdeas release that reflects a classic Laphroaig.

"This limited edition bottling has been created not only for the community, but by them. Warehouse 1 will also be launched in time to celebrate Laphroaig Day at Fèis Ìle Festival 2022, which returns as a non-virtual event for the first time since 2019.

"We are all very excited to see both familiar and new faces at Fèis Ìle festival once more."

The 52.2% ABV whisky is priced at RRP £92 (US\$116) per 700ml bottle and available to purchase from the brand's website.

To celebrate Laphroaig Day today, the brand is offering several activities including a masterclass with MacAffer and a cask tasting and bottling session.

Entry to the Islay distillery will be complimentary from 10am and will include a goodie bag, as well as live music, whisky and cocktail bars, catered food, local stalls and a personalised engraver.

[Last year's Càirdeas whisky](#) was finished in European oak hogsheads containing PX Sherry.

Proudly presented at cask strength of 50.8%, unchillfiltered and at natural colour, this annual small-batch release is limited to just 2,000 bottles worldwide. Expect elegant notes of Medjool dates, roasted coffee beans and Seville orange, alongside classic GlenAllachie honeyed charm from this opulent and indulgent expression.

The GlenAllachie 30-Year-Old

Cask Strength Batch 2

Colour: Rich Mahogany.

Nose: Bursting with heather honey, sultanas and mocha, followed by waves of cinnamon, coconut shavings and dried fruits.

Taste: Lashings of dark chocolate, figs and orange zest, with hints of treacle, raisins and cinnamon, with nutmeg on the finish.

Commenting on the hotly anticipated release, Billy said:

"We're delighted to present the second batch of our eldest core release, delivering a bold and complex organoleptic profile truly representative of our house style and where we are taking The GlenAllachie Distillery."

## INTRODUCING:

### The GlenAllachie - 30-Year-Old Batch 2



Unveiling the second instalment of our oldest and most prestigious core release to date...

We are proud to present The GlenAllachie 30-year-old Cask Strength Batch 2 Single Malt. Acclaimed Master Distiller Billy Walker, fuelled by his desire to create a truly exquisite expression from our vintage stocks, drew upon his 50 years of industry experience to craft this deliciously rich mahogany malt.

The embodiment of our uncompromising philosophy and unrushed approach to production, the 30-year-old spirit was crafted from a combination of vintages from 1990 and 1991, each hand-selected by Billy. A marriage of PX and Oloroso hogsheads and puncheons, along with some virgin oak casks, the resulting liquid truly demonstrates Billy's wood management prowess and superlative blending skills.

## Duncan Taylor Releases Two Rare Scotches Five Decades Old

[Gary Carter - Scotch](#) | May 25, 2022

[Duncan Taylor Scotch](#) recently added two new older whiskies in their "Rarest of the Rare" portfolio to share with fans of their single malts. It's rarified liquid to be sure, dating back as far as 1969, as the launch of a Kinclaith 51-year-old and Caperdonich 50-year-old form part of a collection of rare whisky casks from closed distilleries that Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky matured in their warehouse for half a century. Both these whiskies have notable histories, as Kinclaith's production ended in 1975 and whisky making of Caperdonich from Rothes closed out in 2002.



Kinclaith 51-year-old and Caperdonich 50-year-old (image via Duncan Taylor)

This is the first time that the Aberdeenshire bottler has launched drams dating back more than 50 years.

Interestingly, Kinclaith's origins date back as far as 1957. Located on the south side of the river Clyde, this small malt distillery was housed within the larger Strathclyde grain distillery complex.

All its vital ingredients were local and the liquid matured in a combination of American and European oak casks. It closed in 1975 and was demolished to make way for an extension being built at Strathclyde. Caperdonich's beginning dates back to 1898. It was mothballed for six decades before Caperdonich's production was reinstated in 1965 to fulfill demand for The Glen Grant. That culminated in the expansion of the Caperdonich distillery site in 1967.

The new pot stills were steam heated and the whisky was given a new title in 1966, Caperdonich. The name was chosen after its water source. For this special release, less than a hundred handcrafted glass decanters are available of each of these rare whiskies worldwide. The bottles will be individually numbered and engraved as well as housed in a lockable framed box, inside a brushed stainless steel carry case.

The distiller's notes show that the 50-year-old Caperdonich delivers on the palate a frothy caramel latte topped with cinnamon. A long-lasting finish of gentle warm spices and sweet toasted oak notes round it off.

The 51-year-old Kinclaith is full gold in color and on the nose has fragrant sweet oak notes. The cask remains active offering the taste of seasonal spices, clove and cinnamon.

Euan Shand, chairman of Duncan Taylor, said in a prepared statement, "I feel it is a privilege to be the custodian of these stunning rare casks. Originally filled back in 1969, it's the start of an exciting chapter at Duncan Taylor as we plan to release a selection of rare malts from our portfolio over time."

Both whiskies are currently available by ballot only from <https://therarest.duncantaylor.com> with a suggested retail price for Kinclaith of £12,300 and Caperdonich of £10,750.

Glen Scotia range receives redesign

06 JUNE 2022 By Alice Brooker

Campbeltown-based distillery Glen Scotia has refreshed the packaging design for its core whisky range.



The new range pays homage to the distillery's coastal roots. The Loch Lomond Group-owned brand has also revealed a bottle revamp for its standard and premium ranges.

The updated design includes 'bolder' shades of gold, deep aqua and emerald green, depicting the colours of Campbeltown's 'seafaring roots and leafy coastlines'.

Colin Matthews, chief executive officer of Loch Lomond Group, said: "Glen Scotia has forever held a special place in Scotland's west coast, but in recent years, thanks to the commitment of our team and significant investment in our distillery, the brand has grown exponentially.

"The Glen Scotia distillery is at the forefront of Campbeltown's renaissance – showcasing the town's rich whisky heritage, guiding the way for others to follow, and now putting the town and Glen Scotia back to the very centre of attention on the world's whisky map.

"It has been made possible by our team's knowledge, dedication, craftsmanship and determination, and we are very excited to take this stunning new packaging to the world."

The new look is intended to pay homage to the distillery, the region and its signature style. It will also feature aspects of the distillery's history.

Matthews added: "We continue to show our enthusiasm and ambition for Glen Scotia and Campbeltown to grow further with the release of this beautiful new packaging."

The move is said to represent a significant investment for the business, as it looks to drive sales and expand its presence.

Earlier this year, the distillery released a [46-year-old single malt](#) as its oldest whisky to date.

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## Pickering's Gin maker moves into Scotch whisky

06 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Summerhall Distillery, the Edinburgh-based producer behind Pickering's Gin, has made its first foray into Scotch and revealed plans to expand its whisky operations.



The Broody Hen is Summerhall Distillery's inaugural Scotch whisky. Summerhall Distillery was founded by Matt Gammell and Marcus Pickering in 2013.

The distillery has now made its first move into whisky with the release of blended Scotch whisky brand The Broody Hen.

The liquid is made with casks from Highland distilleries, resulting in a 'sweet and smooth flavour profile with a palate of vanilla, caramel and manuka honey'.

The whisky is blended and bottled on site at the Edinburgh-based distillery, which also has the ability to produce vodka, gin and rum. Pickering said: "The Broody Hen is a culmination of almost five years of careful development by myself, Matt and our distillery team and marks the start of our proposed expansion into Scotch whisky.

"This first foray into whisky has been something we've wanted to do since we first started out, but it's taken eight years of building up the right contacts and careful planning to get to where we are now.

"The resulting spirit is one we are very proud of and look forward to sharing with our customers. It is very soft, with a gentle flavour and sweet honeyed undertones."

The producer said the launch of the whisky marks the start of a period of significant growth for Summerhall Distillery, after rebounding from the pandemic.

The distiller plans to release a range of whiskies under The Broody Hen label, including a 10-year-old single malt at the end of 2022.

Bottling capacity is expected to double by early 2023 as the firm moves most of its whisky operations to a bigger warehouse facility. The move will create up to three new jobs.

The distiller has received pre-orders for The Broody Hen from the Bahamas, South Korea, North America, Japan, Singapore and Europe. The aim is to bring the brand to 12 markets in the next 12 months.

The Broody Hen Blended Scotch Whisky can be purchased directly from the Summerhall Distillery website and independent bottle shops for RRP £28-£32 (US\$35-US\$40).

In 2019, Pickering's Gin partnered with British Airways to create what it claims is the world's first expression specifically [designed to be sipped at high altitude](#).

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## The Dalmore debuts 21YO single malt

08 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Single malt Scotch brand The Dalmore has released a limited edition 21-year-old whisky – the pinnacle of its Principal Collection.



The Dalmore 21 Year Old was matured in Gonzalez Byass Sherry casks Limited to 8,000 bottles, the new annual whisky joins The Dalmore Principal Collection, formed of eight single malts including an 18-year-old bottling and The Dalmore King Alexander III.

The 21-year-old single malt was rested for an initial period in American white oak ex-Bourbon barrels.

The liquid is then matured in casks from Sherry producer Gonzalez Byass, based in Jerez. These casks were previously used through the solera system to make the brand's 30-year-old whisky.

The new expression offers the brand's signature style of bitter chocolate, Seville blood orange and subtle spice.

The aroma provides overripe Seville oranges, Colombian coffee and vanilla with hints of toffee apple and pecan pie.

The palate has notes of 'sweet liquorice stick, grippy black forest fruits, roasted walnuts and thick marzipan', followed by peaches in a thick syrup, ginseng, pear tarte tatin and Sanguinello blood oranges.

Master whisky maker Gregg Glass said: "Only after 21 years can a whisky of this quality and depth emerge, creating a delectably distinguished single malt."

"The Dalmore 21 Year Old is a result of patience and craftsmanship which we're tremendously proud to celebrate. We created this spirit for those looking for the finest of whiskies, whilst also creating an opportunity for those embarking on their whisky journey to try something truly inspirational and remarkable from The Dalmore."

The Dalmore 21 Years Old (43.8% ABV) is available from select retailers worldwide with an RRP of £575 (US\$722).

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## Prima & Ultima line to feature Port Ellen and Brora

08 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Diageo has unveiled the third iteration of its Prima & Ultima series of single malts, including Port Ellen and Brora bottlings from the 1980s.



The third edition of the Prima & Ultima range follows the theme 'A Moment in Time'

Johnnie Walker owner Diageo has opened registration for its latest Prima & Ultima releases, which comprise bottlings drawn from casks that are the first or last of their kind.

Diageo [introduced the Prima & Ultima range in June 2020](#) with a set of single malts selected by whisky maker Dr Jim Beveridge OBE. Last year, master blender Maureen Robinson, a 40-year Diageo veteran, was chosen to [curate the whiskies for the second edition](#).

The third iteration of the series includes eight bottlings chosen by Dr Craig Wilson, who played a key role in the restoration of the Brora spirit and oversees new releases from Port Ellen.

As such, the Prima & Ultima range includes a rare bottling from both Brora and Port Ellen, a first for the single malt series.

"I have personally selected each whisky with great care, each an exceptional spirit marking a special time in the distilleries' history and whiskies that I've had the privilege to watch mature," said Wilson.

"I have also selected whiskies from Brora and Port Ellen. In the year we celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, I have selected the last ever Port Ellen 1980 cask, filled in the year Her Majesty visited the distillery's maltings.

"The Brora bottling is equally as precious, taken from our last ever 1981 cask, making it one of our rarest Brora whiskies of all time."

The range will feature a 1987 vintage of The Singleton of Glen Ord, the first and only one to be released from the brand's remaining casks.

Other additions to the line include debut appearances from Royal Lochnagar, a 1981 bottling part of a pioneering experiment at the distillery, and a 'uniquely matured, unusually dark' Mannochmore 1990.

The range also includes a bottle from the last Talisker casks from 1984, while the oldest whisky in this year's selection comes from the oldest casks of Cragganmore in the reserves. A 28-year-old Lagavulin 1993 marks the beginning of a golden era of awards for the Islay distillery.

The theme of this edition is 'A Moment in Time' and the natural preservation of fossils and specimens. Each single malt in the collection comes with an artefact to reflect the whisky's story and is displayed within the accompanying set of 20ml samples provided with each full set.

Only 317 full sets of the Prima & Ultima collection are available for purchase, directly through Prima & Ultima agents. It is priced at RRP £36,500 (US\$45,715), including tax and duty, in the UK.

Whisky collectors can register their interest online until 30 June at [www.theprimaandultimacollection.com](http://www.theprimaandultimacollection.com).

To coincide with the release of the third edition of the range, Diageo is offering two 'ultra-rare' casks of Brora and Port Ellen [during a Sotheby's auction in London](#) until 14 June.

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## Whisky Review: 2021 Talisker The Distillers Edition

[Ian Arnold](#) - [Reviews](#), [Scotch](#) | June 5, 2022

In movies a good director's cut accomplishes a couple of things. You get a bit more of what you love, maybe a surprise or two, and maybe some more character development that wasn't in the original. This applies to a good distiller's edition as well. This review is one of several reviews looking at the 2021 Classic Malts Distillers Editions from Diageo ([click here](#) for the other reviews in this series). Everything in this product line starts by being aged in a barrel that is re-charred American oak with "crocodile-skin" charred new American oak ends. Then each distillery uses a [different style of fortified wine](#) to finish their spirit.

This review is for the 2021 Talisker The Distillers Edition. [Talisker](#) is a distillery on the Isle of Skye. It was the only one on the island until Torabhaig opened in 2017. Their flagship product is the [10-year-old single malt](#). They run two 10,000 liter wash stills and three 7,500 liter spirit stills. Their whisky has a phenol content of 20 to 25 ppm, which puts them at the lower end of peated whisky. All of their whisky is stored on the coast or very close to it in warehouses where they are only stacked two high.

The 2021 Talisker The Distillers Edition is double matured in American oak and ex-Amoroso Sherry casks. Amoroso sherry is a style made by adding some Pedro Xerminez to [Oloroso sherry](#). This is a dark full bodied style that normally has notes of dried fruit, caramel, and nuts. Oloroso is aged at a higher proof to keep flor from forming. Flor is a layer of yeast that can form during fermentation and aging. Oloroso has a high glycerol content that allows it to be perceived as sweeter, even though it is naturally dry.

Talisker is a great introduction to maritime flavors and light peat. The use of the Amoroso casks in finishing their whisky provides a lovely complement and lessens the intensity of what are very polarizing flavors. Talisker is a brand I have enjoyed for many years and their flagship product, annual release, and one off bottlings have all been things I enjoyed. I drank a flight of the 10-year-old, The Distillers Edition, and the Special Reserve Game of Thrones release while writing this. Their 10-year-old release, while not quite as interesting as The Distillers Edition, continues to be my preferred bottling. The maritime quality I enjoy so much gets subdued in The Distillers Edition making for something I see as being more approachable.



2021 Talisker Distiller's Edition (image via Malts.com)

Tasting Notes: [2021 Talisker The Distillers Edition](#)

Vital Stats: 45.8% ABV. Distilled in 2011 and bottled in 2021. Aged in new American oak and ex-Amoroso sherry casks.

Appearance: It is an orangish honey color. It forms a few thick tears that fall quickly, followed by slow smaller ones.

Nose: It smells of sweet peat. The nose is a combination of caramel, petrichor, and a faint smoke like a distant campfire.

Palate: It starts off with notes of caramel and peat, then progresses into a very earthy and slightly medicinal midpalate. Subtle mesquite bbq flavor on the finish is accompanied by an astringency that reminds me of lemon essential oil dropped right on the tongue. For those who did not grow up

with a parent into essential oils I will try my best to explain this sensation. It is the feeling of an oil rolling across the tongue while both drying it out and fully taking over the flavor profile. Like that, but much more subtle. Peat is more present in flavors of earthiness than it is in smoke. The addition of water brings cherry to the front palate and lets the smoke come out on the mid palate, but keeps all of the other flavors. Just a bit of water eliminated that bit of astringency on the finish as well.

4.5 / 5

Summary: Out of the bottle I think this is a crowd pleaser, but I have to say I think I prefer the standard Talisker 10 year's rougher edges. With just a little bit of water The Distillers Edition really shines and captures that element of giving you just a little bit more from a well known product. I just wish I got that maritime flavor I love from the 10-year-old.

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## Gordon & MacPhail Releases 70-Year Whisky Commemorating Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee

[Gary Carter](#) - [Scotch](#) | June 3, 2022

Whisky creators [Gordon & MacPhail](#) just introduced a special single malt whisky made to honor the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The Gordon & MacPhail Private Collection 1952 from Glen Grant Distillery spent the past 70 years maturing in a first fill Sherry butt, the same amount of time that the Queen has been on the throne. It was bottled on Feb. 6th, the date of the Queen's accession, and looks to serve as what's described as a tribute to how character, patience and wisdom can mature over decades to deliver on its legacy.



Whisky creators Gordon & MacPhail just introduced a special single malt whisky made to honor the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. (image via Gordon & MacPhail)

And in support of the Queen's "green canopy" initiative and build on the 2021 partnership with Scottish charity Trees for Life, Gordon & MacPhail plans to donate £20,000 from the proceeds of this rare whisky release.

[In a prepared statement from the whisky maker](#), Ewen Mackintosh, Gordon & MacPhail's managing director, said it is an honor to release this single malt whisky to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

"Matured over seven decades in our own casks, this single malt provides an opportunity to enjoy a style of Speyside whisky which is distinctly different to those created today," he said. "Our approach to ensuring our casks, made from the highest quality wood to our exact specifications, is one which sits right at the heart of our business. We want to do our bit to support The Queen's 'Green Canopy' initiative by continuing our successful partnership with Trees for Life."

The funds donated from this release will provide funding for their nursery, which grows 100,000 rare and native trees, including oaks, from seed each year.

"It's fitting that this whisky will provide a legacy that will last for generations," Mackintosh said.

Only 256 bottles of the rare commemorative whisky are available worldwide from the single cask laid down in 1952, some of the oldest Glen Grant whisky ever released from Gordon & MacPhail's warehouse in Elgin.

Distilled on Jan. 26th, 1952, and spending its entire maturation in cask no. 381, a first-fill Sherry butt, the Gordon & MacPhail Private Collection 1952 from Glen Grant Distillery was bottled this February at a cask strength of 52.3% ABV.

The Private Collection 1952 has a suggested retail price of £20,000.

The distiller's notes for the Gordon & MacPhail Private Collection 1952 from Glen Grant Distillery:

- **Color** – Dark Gold.
- **Aroma** – Notes of beeswax polish give way to honeyed ripe fig aromas, toffee and orange zest. Aged leather complements rum and raisin.
- **Taste** – Stewed blackberry compote, sweet clementine and milk chocolate flavors followed by dried tobacco leaf and a menthol undertone.
- **Finish** – A long finish with a touch of smoke and a hint of pepper.

## Brown-Forman sales boosted by Jack Daniel's

09 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Woodford Reserve owner Brown-Forman saw organic net sales increase by 17% in its 2022 fiscal year, led by the resurgence of Jack Daniel's whiskey.



Jack Daniel's helped drive sales for Brown-Forman in fiscal 2022. The US firm saw net sales reach US\$3.93 billion for the year ending 30 April 2022, while operating income rose by 27% to US\$1.2bn.

The firm's fourth quarter reported a 27% net sales increase to US\$966 million. It followed Brown-Forman's [double-digit sales increase](#) for the third quarter.

The company attributed its full-year sales growth to its flagship Jack Daniel's whiskey, which climbed by 23% as consumers returned to the on-trade.

Lawson Whiting, Brown-Forman's president and CEO, said: "I am proud of our exceptional results, our strategic progress, and yet another year of growth despite numerous headwinds."

"We achieved these results due in large part to the resurgence of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, which experienced strong consumer demand as the on-premise channel reopened around the world."

The Jack Daniel's family of brands recorded a 17% organic net sales rise, with gains made by the global launch of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Apple and the international growth of its RTDs.

The firm noted that the core Jack Daniel's whiskey, as well as the Honey and Fire line extensions, were impacted by supply chain disruptions. Brown-Forman's premium Bourbon brands, led by Woodford Reserve and Old Forester, grew net sales organically by 17%. Old Forester sustained double-digit net sales growth and surpassed 400,000 nine-litre cases during fiscal 2022, the firm said.

The company's Tequila portfolio, driven by Herradura and El Jimador, reported a 20% organic sales increase.

Geographical performance

Net sales in the US were up by 12%, boosted by Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, Herradura and El Jimador, and higher volumes and price increases for Woodford Reserve and Old Forester.

The firm's developed international markets increased by 16%, while emerging markets rose by 29%.

The travel retail channel bounced back with net sales soaring by 67%.

During the fourth quarter, the firm said it recognised a US\$52m non-cash impairment charge for its Finlandia vodka brand name. Brown-Forman said this reflects a decline in its long-term outlook for Finlandia as a result of the firm's [suspension of operations in Russia](#), a key market for the brand.

Looking ahead to fiscal 2023, Brown-Forman expects both organic net sales and operating income to rise by mid-single digits.

## The Macallan's Artful New Single Malt Whisky Is One For The Ages IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



# The MACALLAN



Updated on 11th June 2022 – by [BOSS HUNTING](#)

It was just last year that the whisky world watched as The Macallan lifted the curtain on the thematic Anecdotes of Ages Collection, a pointed and fascinating fusion of art and whisky worked up in collaboration with legendary British pop artist Sir Peter Blake. Considering this is the third time the artist has worked with The Macallan in as many decades, the collection is fashioned as somewhat of a celebration for both the legacy of this historic Craigellachie distillery and Sir Peter Blake, who has been highly revered ever since he designed the cover for The Beatles' 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's*

*Lonely Hearts Club Band* in his distinctive style of collage.

Comprising 13 one-of-a-kind bottles and an exquisite 1967 single malt whisky that has been maturing for more than 50 years, The Macallan Anecdotes of Ages Collection was, upon release, an instant and unequivocal hit for consumers and collectors alike. And while that came as no surprise, considering bottles of The Macallan have been known to break records when it comes to whisky auctions, it was still interesting to see one of the 13 original bottles, the "Anecdotes of Ages Collection: A New Era of Advertising," fetch a final price of \$437,500 when it was sold at Sotheby's New York in March 2021.

With the proceeds going on to support the Guggenheim Museum's diversity, equity, access and inclusion initiatives, the sale deepened The Macallan's ties with the art world, a connection that's already been



solidified with each bottle featuring a different collage from Sir Peter Blake.



“Each collage in the Anecdotes of Ages Collection is inspired by The Macallan’s history and heritage, one that respects time and craft, two essential components of my own creative process,” said Sir Peter Blake. “I meticulously worked on each collage, pulling from The Macallan Estate’s rich history to complete a collection that is a celebration of art and whisky.”



As you could expect from a whisky that’s over 50 years old, the exceptional single malt inside these bottles was chosen for its classic and distinctively colourful character, built with oak and fig notes that creep up on the palate only to burst with sweet, chewy flavours of hazelnut, strawberry, chocolate and lightly spiced peach. Wrapping that all up with an equally colourful collage from such a renowned artist only furthers this collection as one of The Macallan’s most playful in years. And this coming from a label that most recently released the ultimate fusion of [chocolate and whisky](#).

The 13 original bottles in The Macallan Anecdotes of Ages Collection are, of course, treated as a special occasion completely befitting of their rarity. The hand-blown bottles come with an oak stopper and a label signed by Sir Peter Blake himself, presented in a handcrafted European oak case that is covered with thumbnail photography tracking the artist’s long and storied journey with The Macallan. A leather-bound book is also included

with each original bottle, featuring all 13 label artworks and the stories that match these collages, along with a certificate of authenticity.

And although not everyone is going to be able to get their hands on one of these coveted bottles, The Macallan has brought a sense of accessibility to the collection. While The Macallan archive will retain the 13th original bottle, the label has released just 322 bottles of the same rare 1967 whisky, divvied up around the world as The Anecdotes of Ages Collection: Down to Work Limited Edition.



Yes, still rare. But those 322 bottles are still much more accessible to the average whisky lover than the 13 original bottles. And to make the release even sweeter, The Macallan has now brought Australians a further special single malt commemorating Sir Peter Blake’s visit to The Macallan Estate on the legendary River Spey.

Titled, The Macallan “Sir Peter Blake: An Estate, A Community and A Distillery,” this newly released single malt whisky pays homage to the momentous partnership and is displayed in a custom box inspired by Sir Peter Blake’s art, alongside a certificate outlining the history and heritage on which the art was based, and Sir Peter Blake’s artwork printed on a scroll.

Described as cinnamon in colour with a nose of rich dried fruits and hints of orange and clove, An Estate, A Community and A Distillery is an appropriately luscious way to celebrate the crossroads of art and whisky. The palate, full of dried fruits, crackled black pepper and accents of vanilla and orange oil, finishes with a long, lingering burst of oak with cinnamon and cacao.



The Australian release of An Estate, A Community and A Distillery has been commemorated with a [digital exhibition](#), welcoming the public into Sir Peter Blake’s studio for those who want to dive deeper into this release.

Sir Peter Blake: An Estate, A Community and A Distillery can now be found at select independent retailers and venues across Australia at an RRP of \$1,600.

[themacallan.com](http://themacallan.com)

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The 6 Best Scotch Cocktails To Serve at This Year's Father's Day Brunch  
Check out these whisky drinks fit for every kind of dad.

By [Esquire Editors](#) - Jun 2, 2022



5PH / 500PXGETTY IMAGES

There's something about whiskey that feels synonymous with Dad's day off. Maybe it's the swirling of the snifter that indicates a moment to relax and put his feet up. Or perhaps it's thanks to the spirit's historic link to adventure. Whatever the reason, having a signature drink this Father's Day is the right move. Using [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#) as the base, we've got a list of excellent options expertly crafted with your father in mind. Is your dad into the classics? Try an Old Fashioned. Is he outdoorsy? Serve up a pitcher of Picnic in the Park. Here are our favorite cocktails for Dad.

### For the Beach Bum Dad



JOHNNIE WALKER

#### Summer Daze

This cocktail brings the ultimate summer vibes thanks to bright citrus and ginger and a wedge of grilled pineapple. Can you say "cowabunga"?

Ingredients

1 ½ oz. [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#)

¾ oz. lemon juice

½ oz. maple syrup

¼ tsp. chipotle in adobo sauce

2 oz. ginger beer

Grilled pineapple wedge, for garnish

Method

1. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add the Johnnie Walker along with the lemon juice, maple syrup, and chipotle in adobo. Shake to combine.
2. Strain into a glass over ice.
3. Top with the ginger beer and finish with the grilled pineapple and serve.

### For the Dad Who Loves the Classics



JOHNNIE WALKER

#### Old Fashioned

Does your dad drive around blasting oldies? Is he always trying to get you to watch his favorite Hitchcock movies? While an Old Fashioned is traditionally made using rye or bourbon, this variation on the throwback cocktail is bound to satisfy his nostalgic streak.

Ingredients

1 ½ oz. [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#)

½ oz. simple syrup

2 dashes aromatic bitters

Orange zest, for garnish

Toasted rosemary or a blood orange wedge, for garnish

Method

1. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add the Johnnie Walker along with the simple syrup and bitters. Shake to combine.
2. Strain into a rocks glass over ice.
3. Twist the orange zest over the glass to release the aromatic oils. Finish with the orange zest and toasted rosemary or a blood orange wedge and serve.

## For the Epicurean Dad



### JOHNNIE WALKER ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

#### Blood Orange

This elevated pour is sure to delight the dad with a sophisticated palate. Blood orange cordial and a cocoa powder-dusted blood orange garnish add a flare any foodie would appreciate.

#### Ingredients

1 ½ oz. [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#)

½ oz. blood orange cordial

4 ½ oz. tonic water

Blood orange slices dusted with cocoa powder, for garnish

#### Method

1. Fill a glass with ice. Add the Johnnie Walker along with the blood orange cordial and tonic water. Stir to combine.
2. Finish with the cocoa-dusted blood orange slices and serve.

## For the Outdoorsy Dad



### JOHNNIE WALKER

#### Picnic at the Park

Would dad rather be out in nature, every time? This drink can be easily scaled up to serve a group as a batch cocktail for a Father's Day picnic.

And it's earthy and fresh thanks to the addition of watermelon, lemon, and cucumber juices

#### Ingredients (serves 7)

10 oz. [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#)

20 oz. watermelon juice

3.75 oz. simple syrup

5 oz. lemon juice

2.5 oz. cucumber juice

Watermelon wedges, lemon wheels, and cucumber slices, for garnish

#### Method

1. Mix first five ingredients in a punch bowl.
2. Garnish with watermelon wedges, lemon wheels, and cucumber slices.

## For the Dad With a Strong Point of View



### JOHNNIE WALKER

#### Ginger Highball

This ginger-heavy drink is bold—just like dad. The combo of Johnnie and ginger ale keeps things interesting, much like his friendly debates.

#### Ingredients

1 ½ oz. [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#)

5 oz. ginger ale

Fresh ginger, for garnish

Star anise or a lemon wheel, for garnish

#### Method

1. Fill a rocks glass with ice. Add the Johnnie Walker.
2. Fill the remainder of the glass with the ginger ale.
3. Garnish with the fresh ginger and star anise or a lemon wheel for garnish and serve.

## For the Sweetheart Dad



JOHNNIE WALKER

### Watermelon Highball

Does one emoji-packed text from dad brighten your whole week? This watermelon cocktail is as big-hearted as he is. Garnish with watermelon and cucumber for a fresh, crunchy finish dad will love.

#### Ingredients

1 ½ oz. [Johnnie Walker Black Label](#)

3 oz. watermelon juice

½ oz. soda water

Watermelon and cucumber slices, for garnish

#### Method

1. Fill a glass with ice. Add the Johnnie Walker along with the watermelon juice and soda water. Stir to combine.
2. Finish with the watermelon and cucumber slices and serve.

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## What Is The Smoothest Whiskey? Our Top 15 Picks in 2022

June 8, 2022 1:36 am by [Lydia Martin](#)

Last Updated on June 12, 2022 by [Lydia Martin](#)

Are you a fan of whiskey's intense and bold flavors or one of those whiskey drinkers that enjoy drinking it neat? If you've answered yes for both, then a smooth whiskey is perfect for you!

But what is the smoothest whiskey? We're here to help you out. Top 15 Smoothest Whiskey You Can Drink Straight

## 1. Auchentoshan 21 Year Old



This single malt whiskey has been triple-distilled and aged in American and Spanish sherry barrels for over two decades. It's filled with flavors of gooseberry, honey, and creamy vanilla.

Auchentoshan's signature smooth, delicate relish is also featured in this spirit. At first sip, you can get the light chocolate and green fruit taste with hints of old oak and sweets. Its finish is long-lasting with a real depth of character.

## 2. Balvenie 14 Year Old Caribbean Cask



The Balvenie Caribbean Cask is a 14-year-old single malt whiskey aged in traditional oak barrels. It was then finished in barrels previously used for Caribbean rum. The acquired taste of the spirit from the aging process features rich, creamy, and sweet toffee with hints of fresh fruits on the nose.

Also, this spirit features vanilla and sweet oak with fruity notes as you drink forward. You'll surely love its soft and lingering finish— ideal for drinking [whiskey neat](#).

## 3. Bushmills 21 Year Old



[Bushmills 21-Year-Old is an Irish whiskey](#) aged in former Oloroso Sherry casks and Bourbon-seasoned barrels for a minimum of 19 years. It then gets transferred to new Madeira casks for the final two years. The tasting notes boast dark chocolate, nuts, toffee, and raisins. You can expect sweet, mint, and syrupy pipe tobacco on the finish. However, you may find it hard to get this excellent bottle as this is produced in limited numbers.

#### 4. Crown Royal



This classic Canadian whiskey is one of the highly recommended spirits if you're looking for a smooth and more traditional whiskey. It is versatile and ideal for drinking straight, neat, or on the rocks, perfect for cocktails. On the nose, it features caramel and light vanilla note. It offers an elegant bouquet with undertones of lemon zest and pound cake. You'll love its long finish complemented with spice, toasted oak, and chocolate.

#### 5. Glen Moray Elgin Classic



This medium bright gold whiskey features light, fresh, nutty, and fruity on the nose. On the palate, you can get the flavors of gentle oak with citrus, lemon sponge, walnut, and grist. Then the tangy citrus and spicy fruitcake will linger on the finish.

Our spirit experts recommend putting a drop of plain water to make its flavors come out even more. This drink is perfect for unwinding, like watching a film or relaxing by the fire.

#### 6. Glenlivet 12 Year Old



This 12-year-old double-matured single malt Scotch whiskey from Glenlivet distillery is aged in American oak barrels. It imparts notes of sweetness and gives it its distinctive taste. With a mash bill of malted barley, this single malt whiskey has a rich and creamy palate with a smooth finish. Its delicate balance of dried apple and pineapple notes makes it a perfect gift for any special occasion or to treat yourself as an everyday dram to drink straight.

#### 7. Glenmorangie 18 Year Old Extremely Rare



This 18-year-old Scotch whiskey was made from American white oak and Oloroso sherry casks. It has a thick, fruity, and creamy flavor with the beautiful and elegant bottle, making it look prestigious.

The palate is tropical and creamy with hints of butterscotch, peaches, and yogurt, which may spice up your drinking whiskey experience. Then its finish features tangy oak and grapefruit with plenty of caramelized dark sugar on top.

#### 8. George Dickel Bottled In Bond



George Dickel Bottled in Bond is a Tennessee [whiskey perfect for drinking straight](#). You can expect the many flavors resulting from its 11-year aging process. The drink is filtered with maple charcoal and maple syrup, adding a smooth and creamy taste.

After it has aged, it produces a distinct scent that can be identified by the presence of candied pecans. This fruit drink has a distinctive flavor with a combination of cinnamon spice, blood orange, and honey.

## 9. Jameson Irish Whiskey



Jameson, a world leader in Irish whiskey, is a traditional pot-still and grain spirit aged in American oak barrels. You can expect a light floral fragrance with spicy wood, freshly cut hay, and sweet notes as you drink straight. The taste boasts a perfect balance of spiciness and nutty notes with hints of sherry, giving it a smooth and versatile flavor. Also, you can expect an exceptionally smooth finish with bites of spice and fruits.

## 10. Knappogue Castle 1995



Distilled at Bushmills Distillery in 1995, this drink is a superb classic Irish single malt whiskey. This whiskey is very aromatic with interesting notes of baked apple, barley sugar, honey, and boiled sweets. It also features a touch of pepper, caramel, and oak.

The palate boasts creamy sweetness with tropical fruit, biscuits, berry compote, and malted barley. The medium to short finish has notes of spice and dried fruits.

## 11. Laphroaig 10 Year Old



This smooth whisky from Laphroaig Distillery possesses the flavors of peat smoke and salt. The smoky aroma gives this drink a unique feel with hints of seaweed and sweetness. You'll be surprised with its sweetness and its long and lingering finish.

Aged in ex-Bourbon barrels, it features a distinctive taste, which you can enjoy neat or with ice. This is a staple choice if you're new to Scottish whisky. The rich flavor and character of this drink make it an ideal choice for both novices and seasoned fans.

## 12. Redbreast 12 Year Old



This best-selling single-pot whiskey features the traditional blend's complex flavors. This drink is matured in a combination of American and European cask finishes, a delight to behold. This cask-strength whiskey features high alcohol content, adding intensity to its flavors.

This drink is made from malted and unmalted barley and boasts a spicy and fruity palate with toasted barley and wood notes. The balance of spice, sweetness, and toasted notes, makes a silky smooth whiskey with satisfying long, complex flavors that linger on the mouth.

## 13. The GlenDronach Allardice



If you're a fan of fruity notes, the GlenDronach Allardice is for you. This Scotch whisky has been aged for 18 years and has a variety of flavors such as pineapple, rum, and brown sugar.

Unlike other types of whiskey, this drink is not aged in a Bourbon cask. Instead, it's been stored in Spanish Oloroso sherry casks. This whisky ensures that the drink has a smooth and creamy consistency.

## 14. Tomintoul 14 Year Old



The natural environment and the smooth ingredients used in Tomintoul 14 Year Old make it an ideal choice if you seek a gentle and smooth experience. This mellow and smooth drink has an inviting aroma full of sweetness with hints of orchard fruits and creme brulee.

You can taste the chopped almonds mixed with Danish cinnamon, citrus oil, and oat biscuits on the palate. Also, you'll enjoy the warming, toasty layers of hazelnuts, mocha, and fresh grassy highlights on the finish.

## 15. Woodford Reserve Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey



When it comes to the smoothest whiskeys, no one would forget the [Woodford Reserve American whiskey](#). Woodford Reserve distillery introduces this unique whiskey blend featuring over 200 distinct flavor notes, including bold grain, wood, sweet aromatics, and fruit and floral notes.

The finish is silky smooth, with a creamy feeling at first and a lingering warmth as it develops. The unique flavor breakdown of this bottle reflects its diverse tasting notes, giving you a unique experience in every sip. What Makes Whiskey Smooth?

Whiskey can be smooth due to its soft texture, sweet flavor, the grains used for distillation, and the blending process. Also, [high-proof whiskeys](#) are known to achieve lightness. They have a higher proof during the final distillation stage, which results in a more mild flavor. But, expect a strong alcohol content.

Also, maturation [1] and filtration are essential factors that make a whiskey smooth. For instance, if whiskey is aged in oak casks, it becomes softer as it ages.

### How To Drink It



### Choose Your Whiskey Glass

Choose a not-so-wide glass to contain the aroma to fully enjoy your drinking whiskey experience. We suggest using Glencairn Crystal whiskey glass as it can perfectly hold the spirit's smell.

### Swirl The Whiskey



After pouring some whiskey into the glass, carefully swirl it to prevent it from getting spilled. This helps enhance the drink's flavor and prevents it from getting too wet.

### Don't Add Ice

Don't dilute your drink with water or ice if you want to drink straight. Instead, use smooth whiskey or any other type of liquor that you have picked.

### Let It Rest



After stirring, let the drink rest for a couple of minutes to allow the flavors to blend and enhance the experience.

### Take A Sip

After about 10 minutes, take a sniff. If you can still smell alcohol, it's normal. Then, open your mouth and try to breathe in. You'll taste different types of fruit and spices.

### FAQs

Which type of whiskey is smoothest?

Blended whiskey is the smoothest because, like blended scotch, it's made by mixing malt whiskey and grain whiskey. The result is a more approachable and smooth spirit that most drinkers recognize.

What is the smoothest whiskey for beginners?

The smoothest whiskey for beginners is the Auchentoshan 21 Year Old. Its savory flavor with fruity, oak, and chocolate is perfect for beginners, whose not accustomed to strong spices.

### Key Takeaways

A drink's smoothness is a perception, not a definite quality. This is how much of a burn you experience when you consume it. But, speaking of smoothness, we recommend the [Woodford Reserve Straight Bourbon](#) whiskey aside from Auchentoshan 21 Year Old. Both possess the quality, texture, and character a smooth whiskey should have. If drinking straight is your forte, then smooth whiskey is the way to go.

### Spot debuts Port cask-matured whiskey

13 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Irish Distillers has released a limited edition Spot single pot still whiskey to mark the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mitchell family's whiskey bonding business.



The eight-year-old Gold Spot whiskey combines four different casks, including Port pipes

The new Gold Spot Single Pot Still Irish Whiskey celebrates Mitchell & Son, one of Ireland's last remaining wine merchants. The family-run company was founded in 1805.

The Mitchell family's whiskey bonding firm began in 1887 when the bonders sent empty wine and fortified wine casks to the Jameson Distillery in Bow Street, Dublin, to be filled with new single pot still spirit for maturation in its underground cellars. Once filled, the fortified wine casks were marked with a 'spot' of coloured paint to indicate the product's age.

Within the brand's range, Blue Spot, Green Spot, Yellow Spot and Red Spot, respectively are aged for seven, 10, 12 and 15 years. Katherine Condon, distiller at Irish Distillers, said: "It has been a privilege and a joy to work with the renowned Mitchell family as they took us on a journey through the rich history of their business, handed down through seven generations.

"Gold Spot truly is a liquid time capsule with the wine-driven casks trading a beautiful balance of tradition and innovation and marking their 135-year history of whiskey bonding in Ireland."

Matured for a minimum of nine years, Gold Spot is made with the brand's signature method of ex-Bourbon and ex-Sherry casks, and is married together with hand-selected Bordeaux wine casks and port pipes. The inclusion of Port casks – sourced from Portugal's Douro Valley – is a first for the brand.

The combination of the four different cask types results in a liquid with flavours of vibrant fruits, oak tannins and wood spices.

Jonathan Mitchell, managing director at Mitchell & Son, added: "As the oldest family-run wine and spirits merchant in Ireland, we're delighted to continue the legacy of the Spot family, and our family's historic role in Dublin's whiskey bonding era.

"It has been fascinating to once again collaborate with Katherine Condon and the talented team at Midleton to celebrate the colourful story of our family business, utilising casks that would have been originally introduced to Irish whiskey in the late 1800s."

The 51.4% ABV bottling made its debut at Whiskey Live Dublin from 10-11 June.

The non-chill-filtered whiskey is available online from the brand's website and from Mitchell & Son stores and retailers from 14 June, priced at RRP €120 (US\$126).

It will be available to buy in Ireland, France, the UK and global travel retail, as well as the US from mid-July.

In November 2020, Irish Distillers [relaunched Blue Spot whiskey](#) with a revamped recipe after a 56-year hiatus.

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## Port Ellen appoints distillery manager

13 JUNE 2022 *By Nicola Carruthers*

Islay distillery Port Ellen has named Alexander McDonald as its first distillery manager in nearly 40 years.



The distillery, which closed in 1983, was revived following Diageo's [£35 million \(US\\$46m\) investment](#) to bring Port Ellen and Brora back into production.

Argyll native McDonald was born and raised in Lochgilphead.

The Islay resident studied at the Institute of Brewing & Distilling before getting his start in the whisky industry at Kilchoman Distillery. He also worked as a distiller at Islay distilleries Caol Ila and Lagavulin.

McDonald is a volunteer in the local fire service when not working for Diageo.

Laura Beadell, Diageo's senior manager on Islay, said: "In his relatively short time in the industry Alexander has established himself as a highly skilled operator and a committed leader.

"He is passionate about Islay and Scotch whisky, and he will make an exceptional manager of Port Ellen."

For the past year, McDonald has led the Port Ellen restoration project, overseeing the construction work that will eventually bring the distillery back into production next year.

McDonald added: "This is an incredibly exciting time for everyone at Port Ellen and I look forward to leading the team as we prepare for the historic moment when spirit flows through the stills once again."

The distillery will be brought back into production in a combination of modern and heritage buildings, which will feature two pairs of copper pot stills and two separate distillation regimes.

One pair of stills will replicate the original Port Ellen spirit character, while a second, smaller pair of stills will produce alternative spirit characters to allow for experimentation.

Following its most recent closure in 1983 very few of the original buildings remain. The original kiln building with its classic pagoda roofs and the traditional sea-front warehouses will be restored, with a new stillhouse created to house distillation.

Sutherland-based Brora [restarted production in May 2021](#) after a three-year restoration project.

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## Tamdhu releases oldest whisky to date

13 JUNE 2022 *By Alice Brooker*

Ian Macleod Distillers is releasing 600 bottles of its oldest Tamdhu Single Cask whisky, aged 18 years, to China travel retail.



The whisky retails for RRP US\$650

The cask has been selected and bottled for China Duty Free Group (CDFG) from Tamdhu's vintage series. It is the Speyside single malt producer's first listing with the company.

The whisky was distilled in 2003 and clocks in at 54.5% ABV.

A first-fill, European oak oloroso Sherry cask whisky, the liquid retails for RRP US\$650.

CDFG president Charles Chen said: "This exceptional sherry-matured whisky creates a new focus for whisky connoisseurs and collectors in Asia. We are delighted with this Tamdhu exclusive, which is part of a continuing strategic partnership between ourselves and Ian Macleod Distillers."

With sweet aromas on the nose, the 18-year-old presents flavours of raisins, toffee apples and cinnamon on the palate, with a mild and long finish.

Ian Macleod Distillers' global travel retail director William Ovens said: "We are thrilled to introduce this exceptional Tamdhu single cask to CDFG and its customers.

"This cask is the pinnacle of Sherry cask maturation, giving the whisky its rich mahogany colour and outstanding taste.

"Tamdhu is becoming known for its superlative single casks, which have won multiple awards in recent years, and we have no doubt this cask – the oldest ever released by the brand – will be very well received."

Tamdhu was launched into global travel retail in 2018 in the UK with two exclusive GTR expressions, [Ambar and Gran Reserva First Edition](#). Last year, the Tamdhu unveiled the [sixth whisky in its Batch Strength series](#).

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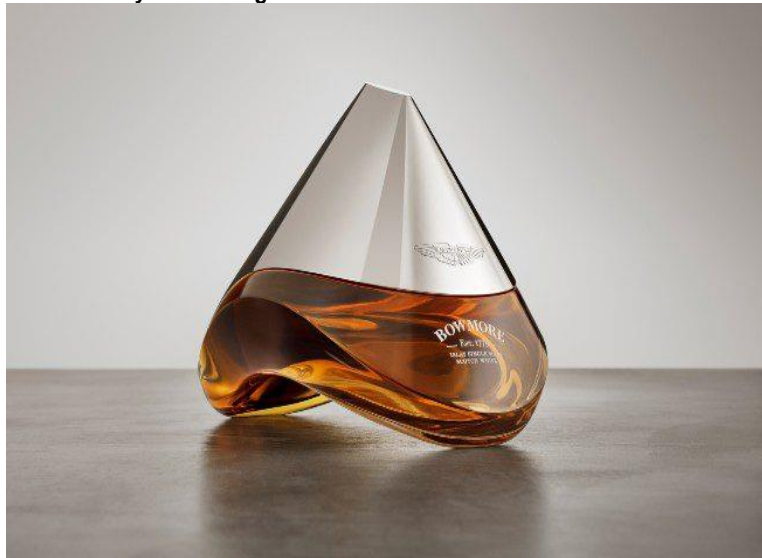


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## Bowmore teams up with Aston Martin

13 JUNE 2022 By *Georgie Pursey*

Beam Suntory-owned Bowmore has partnered with Aston Martin to release a 52-year-old single malt in a limited edition 'futuristic vessel'.



"A piece of sculpture" – the hand-blown glass decanter is designed to look like it is weightless

Made in collaboration with luxury British brand Aston Martin, Bowmore ARC-52 has matured for 52 years in a marriage of two cask styles: 50% in American Oak Hogshead and 50% in a European Oak Butt.

This single malt promises 'unquestionable complexity', and is one of the oldest whiskies to be released by the Islay-based distillery to date.

The liquid offers creamy and fruity notes of custard cream and vanilla on the nose, and flavours of green grapes, peach melba, clementine and lime zest, as well as nuttier notes of almonds and hazelnuts.

It also offers a lightly peated and buttery character on the palate.

Ron Welsh, Bowmore's master blender, said: "A Bowmore as exquisite and complex as this 52-year-old is testament to the skills of our distillery team and their commitment to optimising the time spent in cask to create such an incredible spirit.

"With ARC-52 the complexity of this single malt is unquestionable and to achieve such perfect balance not only defines its physical form but unites beautifully in every drop of this stunning whisky.

"Working with Aston Martin remains hugely rewarding and fascinating for me. It continues to inspire and show us a different way of working, with absolute precision, and has allowed us to create what, in my opinion, is the best Bowmore over 50 years old that I've ever tasted."

Designed by the visionaries at Aston Martin, the decanter is a futuristic take on whisky vessel design and is limited to a run of 100.

Its design has drawn parallels with Aston Martin's car production, merging natural and man-made contours in a 'provocative' form, causing it to effectively balance on two points in a bid to make it appear almost weightless. It is presented in a box opened by a magnetic key.

"ARC-52 sits at the apex of our partnership, truly showing the depth of what we can create collaboratively," commented Marek Reichman, chief creative officer, Aston Martin. "We set out to produce something which hasn't been seen before, capturing our un-compromised design principles and also the magnificence of the whisky. I believe that what we have created is truly a piece of sculpture.

"Taking balance as the most important factor, as we do in designing Aston Martin cars, we've harnessed heritage and innovation in perfect balance. For me there is just so much to discover with this whisky as it embodies so much hidden knowledge, even the colour looks like it's been created by time."

The first 50 bottles of ARC-52 will be available to purchase from late summer 2022, with the remaining 50 released in early 2023 to ensure the highest quality and craftsmanship of each vessel.

It will be available in key global markets including UK, Germany, Netherlands, USA, Canada, China, Singapore, and global travel retail at an RRP of US\$75,000.

Aston Martin first partnered with [Bowmore in 2019](#). Since then, the companies have created [three travel retail-exclusive whiskies](#), and a £50,000 (US\$66,000) whisky, called [Black Bowmore DB5 1964](#).

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## Midleton Distillery aims for carbon-neutral status by 2026

13 JUNE 2022 By *Alice Brooker*

Pernod Ricard-owned Irish Distillers is investing €50 million (US\$52.2m) to make Midleton the first and largest carbon-neutral distillery by 2026.



Midleton Distillery will receive €50m to become the first and largest carbon-neutral distillery by 2026

Midleton Distillery, based in County Cork, Ireland, is home to Irish whiskey brands including Jameson, Powers, Redbreast, Midleton Very Rare, Spot and the experimental Method and Madness range.

Its €50m investment over the next four years will fund projects designed to phase out the use of fossil fuels to power its operation.

It is said to be the largest investment by an Irish distillery for carbon-neutralisation, putting Midleton Distillery on track to become Ireland's first and largest carbon-neutral distillery.

The Tánaiste of Ireland, Leo Varadkar, said: "Congratulations to the entire Irish Distillers team for blazing a trail, investing an incredible €50m to become Ireland's first carbon-neutral distillery by 2026. We need to take better care of our planet.

"Enterprise has a role to play, not just in reducing emissions that come directly from their operations, but by innovating and creating new products and ways of doing things that will help us make the changes that are needed. Companies like Irish Distillers that are committing to such bold and transformational change will lead the way for many other similar businesses, and I commend the team for their ambition and commitment." The plan involves reducing overall energy use by improving on-site energy generation efficiency and recycling waste heat in the distillation process.

Following this, in time the distillery is aiming for remaining energy requirements to be fulfilled by generating power from renewable sources. As part of the investment, 'highly efficient' boilers will be installed which will require less fuel to operate.

The first three phases of the roadmap alone are expected to reduce emissions by up to 70 per cent, according to the distillery. The final phases will see the introduction of renewable sources of energy, including green hydrogen and biogas to power the distillery.

"First and largest carbon-neutral distillery in Ireland by 2026"

Conor McQuaid, CEO and chairman at Irish Distillers, said: "Today is a hugely significant day for Irish Distillers as we announce our ambition for Midleton Distillery to become the first and largest carbon-neutral distillery in Ireland by 2026. This announcement is reflective of our commitment and ambition to reduce our environmental impact.

"We understand that our long-term future depends on reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. This plan was many years in the making, and we understand that there are many more years ahead to reach our goal. However, we are confident that by making this bold and brave move into the future, we will leave fossil fuels behind for good.

"Through the delivery of this plan, we hope to play our part in supporting Ireland's decarbonising strategy while also aligning with Pernod Ricard's commitment to follow a Net Zero trajectory by 2050."

The move is a significant step in Pernod Ricard's [2030 Sustainability & Responsibility roadmap](#).

Tommy Keane, operations director at Irish Distillers, said: "With the climate crisis at a critical juncture, Irish Distillers is committed to reducing

our environmental impact across our entire value chain and an area that we cannot ignore is how we power our distillery.

“While the technical challenges the team face in transforming our operations at Midleton Distillery to become carbon-neutral are considerable, we believe that with the help and support of our partners at home and across the globe, this is possible.

“We are committed to doing the right thing for our industry, people, and communities. Together, we can make a real impact.”

In November 2021, €13 million (US\$14.7m) was invested in Midleton Distillery for the [redevelopment of its visitor experience](#), expected to be completed in 2025.

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## Nick Offerman goes into the wild in Lagavulin spot

14 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Diageo has teamed up with actor Nick Offerman to unveil their sixth Father's Day spot as part of the *Lagavulin: My Tales of Whisky* series.



L-r: Nick Offerman and his father Ric head into the woods for Lagavulin's latest video

The collaboration between the Islay distillery and Offerman began in 2014 with the launch of the [My Tales of Whisky series](#).

The partnership has also seen the actor create two single malts with the brand – [Lagavulin Offerman Edition: Guinness Cask Finish](#) in 2021 and [Lagavulin Offerman Edition: Aged 11 Years](#) in 2019.

Released to celebrate Father's Day this Sunday (19 June), the newest video in the series sees *Parks and Recreation* star Offerman venture into the woods alongside his father, Ric.

The digital spot follows the pair as they take on outdoor activities such as woodworking, bird-calling and steak-eating, with the conclusion that 'dad does it better every time'. They also bond over a bottle of Lagavulin whisky.

“Does my dad do everything better than me? Sure,” said Nick Offerman.

“But hang on, is that because of his superior life prowess, or am I maybe letting him win because I am a generous son?”

“If you answered with the superior prowess one, you're right, dang it, but I hope you at least considered the second. The good news is, I only have to do three quarters as good as my dad to finish in front of most of my fellow mortals.”

In addition, Lagavulin has pledged a US\$50,000 donation to the California Fire Foundation to benefit the state's firefighters, their families and the communities they protect.

Additionally, the handcrafted wooden bear featured in the new Lagavulin video will be auctioned on Charity Buzz from 10-22 June to raise further funds for the California Fire Foundation.

The *Lagavulin: My Tales of Whisky* series can be viewed on YouTube, and the latest spot can be watched below.

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## The Glenlivet relaunches two whiskies

14 JUNE 2022 By Georgie Pursey

Speyside single malt The Glenlivet has evolved its 21- and 25-year-old whiskies with new double and triple cask finishes.



Both re-imaginings of the 'iconic' whiskies rest at 43% ABV

The two whiskies have been finished in different types and combinations of casks to create two new expressions, which come together to form The Sample Room Collection.

“This has been an exciting opportunity to elevate two iconic whiskies – our 21 and 25 Year Old Originals – developing an end result full of layers of flavour and richness,” said The Glenlivet cask expert, Kevin Balmforth. “The Sample Room Collection from The Glenlivet is breaking new ground in whisky, setting new standards in taste and quality through craftsmanship and refined cask finishes.”

The Glenlivet 21 Year Old single malt has been triple finished in first-fill oloroso Sherry, Tronçais oak Cognac and vintage Colheita Port casks, which offers the liquid notes of caramelised pears and juicy sultanas, with hints of warming ginger.

Deriving from the Cognac cask influence, the whisky also offers notes of fragrant nutmeg and cinnamon, leaving a long and rich spice finish.

The reimagining of The Glenlivet 25 Year Old single malt offers new levels of complexity and richness with its finishing in PX Sherry and Tronçais oak Cognac casks.

The double cask finish adds depth to the palate, with rich, intense and sweet character. Flavours of sweet fig and blood orange are derived from the Sherry influence, which is complemented by the Cognac casks' warming notes of ginger, toasted oak and hints of charred pineapple, leaving a long, rich and sweet gentle spice finish.

The design of The Sample Room Collection bottle and box is an evolution of the brand's signature original look, with new colour tones playing on the brand's turquoise palette, whilst adding richness with a premium copper finish.

The combination of the deep blue gradient and the unique textures of embossing across the packaging enters the range into 'a new standard of luxury'.

The reimagined 21YO whisky retails at €250 (US\$260.85) and the 25YO whisky retails at €600 (US\$626.05). Both rest at 43% ABV.

The full Sample Room Collection will be available in the UK from July.

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## The changing face of whisky marketing



Whisky marketing is a funny beast – its goal is to entice newcomers into the category or to encourage established whisky drinkers to try something new. For a product that is geared towards our senses of taste and smell, it's amazing *how little* whisky's current marketing methods actually speak to those senses – instead relying on sight and persuasion. But it wasn't always this way...

Think about the bottles of whisky you've purchased in the last 6-12 months. Can you recall what prompted or urged you to buy those whiskies? Ignoring any financial incentive (i.e. it was on special or part of a discount deal) here's a list of possible triggers that may have prompted your purchase...

- You saw a promo for it in a newspaper advertisement or lift-out.
- You attended a tasting event put on by the brand which was presented by the brand ambassador.
- You tried a dram of it at a bar or a whisky expo show and were impressed enough to grab a bottle for yourself.
- You saw some "chatter" and noise about it in an online whisky group (e.g. a forum or Facebook group).
- You read an online review of it by a whisky blogger.
- You watched a YouTube video review of it that was shot and uploaded by an amateur/enthusiast.
- You were "influenced" by an Instagram post.

At various different times in recent history, each of the above was considered "best practice" for whisky marketing. Those of you with either a few years under your belt or a bit of marketing experience may have noticed that the above list was presented in a particular order. Generally speaking, the above list started with more traditional, "old school" marketing methods and transitioned to more "new school" marketing methods. You may also have cynically (but accurately) observed that the list is in order of *most expensive* to *least expensive*, in terms of how much a brand must spend to market and promote their product. And therein lies the rub...

Before the advent of social media and when internet resources were still relatively basic, brands would reach out to potential customers by presenting something incredibly quaint and old-fashioned known as a "tasting event". They would hire a function venue, advertise in printed media, take bookings (via fax or over the phone), and the brand ambassador would stand before the seated crowd and present a classic masterclass-style tasting...occasionally utilising some new technology called "Powerpoint". Sometimes these tastings were free; sometimes they had a small ticket price; and sometimes they were subsidised by a retailer or distributor who would facilitate the event and get the benefit of any bottle sales then and there on the night. Importantly, these tasting events were fun, they were informative, they were educational, and they were *tasty*.



Whisky Marketing 101: Fly a brand ambassador out from Scotland and get them to present a huge tasting for the public.

Brand ambassadors were hired not for their good looks, or their bar experience, or their ability to take and manipulate photos or create reels – they were hired because they could project their voice in a room, and entertain and hold an audience. In many cases, experience and knowledge about the whisky industry outside their own brand was considered a bonus or an optional extra.

Those events were relatively expensive to put on, and marketing budgets were chewed into by pouring product out for the masses, but they achieved something that would subsequently get lost for quite a few years: The ability to engage directly with customers and consumers; to pour whisky out for them; to bring the brand to them face-to-face; and – most critically – to include everyone. That inclusiveness is also something that would get lost as whisky marketing changed tack...

The well-known whisky personality, Ralfy, recently [posted a video](#) to his YouTube channel in which he defined and detailed the difference between a whisky *consumer* and a whisky *customer*. (Some readers might suggest there's little difference and that we're all just purchasers...but it would be fair to say that some of us purchase more enthusiastically and at a deeper level of involvement than others!) If there is a widening gulf between the two, I'd suggest that the changing face of whisky marketing and the current methods of marketing whisky are driving the wedge.

But what led brands to shy away from putting on their own tastings and engaging on a more personal level with their customers? One of the first steps down this path was the rise in the mid-2000's of the whisky expo (e.g. Whisky Live and any number of similarly-named and similarly-formatted variants). Suddenly, from the brands' point of view, there was a forum where a third-party promoter would take on the risk and organise the event, and the consumers would come to them! The number of in-store and independent venue tastings began to decline, with brands relying on the whisky expos to be their main avenue for customer contact.

However, even this *golden egg* began to tarnish over time: An increasing number of these expos, shows, festivals and fairs started popping up, and brand account managers found themselves being endlessly approached to (i) provide tasting stock for the events and (ii) supply ambassadors/advocates to man the stands. With many of these expo-style shows having sessions across Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, the commitment was not insignificant. Multiply this by multi-city events (such as happens in Australia, where the organisers aim to present the show in various capital cities around the country), and many brands began to either decline the opportunity to participate, or would drastically cut back on the range of stock made available for the event.

Not surprisingly, whisky customers (as opposed to consumers...if I may borrow from Ralfy's theme) rapidly lost interest in these events – growing tired of paying high ticket prices to attend events that largely featured just ubiquitous, garden-variety whiskies, and with the stands being manned by "rent-a-pourer" ring-ins who actually had no official connection with the brand (and little requisite knowledge). This style of whisky event – whilst still popular amongst newcomers to the category – effectively consumed itself, as support and endorsement waned from the big brands. Witness how many of these shows now have to rely on showcasing other spirits (e.g. rum, cognac, etc) at the event to offer a sufficient "menu" for the punters.

With social media now in full swing, a seismic shift occurred from around 2014 onwards with the rise of the so-called "[influencer](#)". Whisky blogs

started to emerge in rapidly increasing numbers (*ahem*); Twitter became the voice of many; and Instagram would demonstrate that a picture truly does tell a thousand words. And it was during this time, say from 2014 to pre-COVID, that – in the opinion of this writer – many brands started to lose direct touch with their customer base and, critically, the whisky enthusiast. The inclusive touch was lost, as many marketing campaigns became *exclusive*.

Where once a brand might have put on a public, ticketed event for one and all, many brands now simply hand over the reins to a PR firm. The PR firm then arranges a private event for just 15 or so carefully invited influencers, and then relies on those attendees to spread the word for them via their social media channels. For many whisky drinkers, it is no longer a case of trying the whisky for themselves at a tasting, but instead reading someone else's endorsement of it.

Whisky marketing via influencers and social media – you may not get a chance to taste the whisky, but at least you'll get a chance to "like" it. From a financial perspective, and in the context of a brand's "reach", you can hardly blame the brands or their PR firms. They're spending significantly less on events; they're sacrificing less stock; and yet their message arguably reaches more people. (Although one questions if some influencers' audiences are actually the target demographic?) Social media marketing – particularly when others are doing it for you – is effectively free and unlimited. Such strategy was (and remains) a no-brainer. But we lost something along the way. Countries and markets outside the UK were blessed in the 2000's to regularly have luminaries from Scotland and other global brand ambassadors frequently visit their shores to host tasting events, promote the brand, speak to the punters, and pour out their whiskies. There was a tangible connection between brand and customer. As marketing has transitioned to social media and virtual tastings, we're no longer seeing as many of those industry figureheads and luminaries travel overseas to spread the word. (Notwithstanding travel shutdowns during the COVID pandemic, obviously). And if a country or market is lucky enough to actually get a global brand ambassadors or industry luminary come to their shores, they present to the influencer crowd, rather than to the purchasing masses. I have attended many such events where I've sat next to someone with absolutely no interest (or liking) for whisky whatsoever, but they were invited by the PR firm to attend because of their large following on Instagram, rather than their relevance or association with whisky.

Yannick Douzals, a Perth-based account manager for a spirits/drinks importer and distributor, who also boasts an impressive CV in the bar and on-premise scene, has some insight and an accurate capture on the current state of play: "The line between the sales and ambassador roles has blurred, with salespeople putting on events that would traditionally be held by a dedicated ambassador, and brand ambassadors – even those directly employed by the producer – now need to meet sales targets. The days of the rockstar BA who spends their days in hotel rooms and nights getting tanked with the public are all but gone. In the current climate, in most cases, the distributor would prefer the producer to send them bonus stock, rather than a brand ambassador."

But how did we get here? What reasoning or drivers are behind the current status quo? Douzals elaborates: "I'd say the biggest reason for this is the crunch in the industry. As much as we don't want to hear it, the wholesale price of liquor is probably too low. Between the constant battering of excise increases, massive increases in freight costs, inflation as a whole, and venues still wanting premium spirits for under \$40 a bottle, margins are bloody tight." Real, live events with a brand ambassador that engage the public and give us all a chance to *taste* the whisky thus fall by the wayside. In this environment, whisky marketing via social media comes to the fore.

While we're on the medium of Instagram, let's not ignore that sex sells. It should come as no surprise that many of the influencers being courted by the PR firms are young, glamorous, attractive, and often female. With no disrespect or undue commentary to anyone involved, witness the number of Instagram whisky accounts that showcase the bottle of whisky along with some skin. Yes, those accounts have a huge number of followers – but I wouldn't be the first to question how many of the followers are actually in it for the whisky pics. For the PR firms or distributors that only need to report back to their clients about the level of [engagement](#), such scrutiny is seemingly unnecessary.

There was recent chatter or conjecture in many circles that the era of the influencer is in decline, and that consumers were seeing through the insincerity of some Instagram accounts that were clearly receiving significant incentives to spruik for the brands. Instagram countered this by introducing a paid-partnership feature that at least declares such arrangements – but many remain sceptical. While it should be a self-evident truth that "likes" on social media don't necessarily correlate to sales at the local liquor store, bottle sales typically aren't part of a PR firm's remit or one of their KPI's. They need only demonstrate "reach" and

"engagement". Walking into your liquor store and buying a bottle of whisky the day after seeing an Instagram post is a level of engagement the PR firms can't actually measure. And remember: Sales and marketing within a business are usually two different departments!

It will be interesting to see how the whisky companies and distributors respond in a post-pandemic marketplace. The 2020/2021 years of COVID demonstrated that the world can still function reasonably effectively with us all staying at home. In an ironic yet fortuitous development, distributors and retailers started presenting virtual tastings, with accompanying tasting kits delivered to your door. Providing someone is able to prepare all the sample bottles and send them out in the mail, customers and consumers are now once more *tasting* the product again as part of the whisky marketing experience. Will brand ambassadors get back out on the road again as the pandemic recedes, or will tastings remain largely in the virtual space? How and where will brands see value, and what value do they put on real, inclusive, engagement?

For some whisky brands now, re-engagement is not just a *strategy* but a *necessity*. The recent explosion of so many different expressions, releases, distilleries, and brands on offer has been a two-edged sword: We're now spoiled for choice, but it's also bred a culture of "try before you buy". No longer content to take a punt on an untried brand or a NAS release costing \$90 or more, consumers want confidence and experience before committing their cash to a whole bottle.

The digital age of marketing ain't disappearing anytime soon, and consumers will continue to scour online reviews; engage in discussions on social media; and read the stories and posts on Instagram. Live, online tastings; live streams; virtual gatherings; *real* gatherings; tastings, expos, shows, and masterclasses...the brands that play their cards wisely can have the best of both worlds. And so, too, can the customers.

Cheers,  
AD

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## Five whisky buzzwords you need to know right now



When you first start to take whisky seriously, there's a new lexicon you have to learn. Words like *malt*, *maturation*, *hogshead*, *fermentation*, and *Speyside* have to form part of your vocabulary. But there's a new bunch of whisky buzzwords that are now in the lingo. Get your mouth around these....

## TRANSPARENCY



30 years ago, a whisky's label would simply state the spirit's age and its ABV. Glen McSporrán 12yo at 40% ABV? Done. It was a short day in the office that day for the marketing team. However, as the category grew, so too did consumers' thirst for knowledge. Some labels started to declare the nature of the cask (or casks) that were used in the maturation. The independent bottlers – chiefly bottling single casks – led the way by providing more information about the specific cask, e.g. whether it was a hogshead or a butt; how many bottles the cask yielded; whether the cask was ex-bourbon or ex-sherry; whether the spirit had been chill-filtered or not. Of course, all this is simply what normal people would call “information”.

The reality is that brands and marketing teams are at liberty to declare whatever information they feel is appropriate on the label. The word “transparency” is interesting, because it carries the subtle sub-text of what the brand is *willing* to declare – and implies there is information they *don't* wish to declare. In a time of increasingly inquisitive consumers and the *era of outrage*, there is instantly a culture of questioning or doubt when a label chooses *not* to declare something. Brands are suddenly now expected to be transparent. If Distillery A is happy to tell you the cask was a 1<sup>st</sup> Fill, why won't Distillery B tell us about their cask? Does it infer that it's a *refill* cask? Is there a (misplaced) perception that the whisky is suddenly inferior or less marketable? If a label is not transparent about what's in the bottle, is there something to hide? (The answer is, “Of course not”. Alas, that's not the vibe carried by a sector of consumerville right now).

As whisky buzzwords go, it's a particularly hot one amongst the independent bottlers at the moment, particularly in the realm of the single cask – noting that there seems to be considerable conjecture as to what constitutes a “single cask” these days. Thank you, Glendronach.

## DARK



Growing up in the 1970's and '80's, *dark* had negative connotations – such as the reach of Star Wars and the *dark* side of the force. Whisky, of

course, is the antithesis of this: Rightly or wrongly (and it's mostly *wrongly*), dark whiskies are seen as being the highly desirable item. We taste with our eyes, and there's no denying that a dark-coloured whisky gets our palates salivating. The dark hue gives an instant message of either great age, or sherry-cask influence – or both.

As such, *dark* is a tremendous marketing word and an even better marketing tool. Young whisky can be artificially coloured with E150 caramel, labelled as a No-Age-Statement, and sold with a high price tag. Similarly, a whisky can spend five minutes in a lifeless fourth-fill PX cask, be artificially coloured, and be sold at a premium. Witness how many new and young/start-up distilleries resort to marketing their product on the basis of its colour, rather than its flavour or quality. (Australian distillers, [I'm looking at you](#)).

As such, there's now no shortage of whiskies that have pounced on the word. Highland Park Dark Origins. Talisker Dark Storm. Auchentoshan Dark Oak. Bowmore Dark & Intense. There's now even an independent bottler called Darkness.

## ENGAGEMENT



Years ago, you bought a whisky. You drank it. If you liked it, you went out and bought another bottle when it was finished. Darlings, that's *so* 2006. These days, you're expected to *engage* with the brand. Some brands will even go out of their way to engage *with you*. No longer content with just brand ambassadors, we now have brand advocates, brand champions, brand partners, and...shudder....brand *influencers*. The whisky companies and labels spend serious marketing dollars making sure you're engaged with their brand and their message. It's no longer about the liquid in the bottle, it's the *story* that the bottle tells. Hand-in-hand with engagement, there's another related word: Your relationship with the brand should be *experiential*. Marketing campaigns are no longer posters on billboards, they're now interactive websites, apps on your phone, online competitions, and hashtags on your posts. Captain Picard, eat your heart out.

## EXTRA

Years ago, Jerry Seinfeld did a routine about the word 'extra' and it's uncanny how his comments on the word now ring true in the world of whisky. “Normal” just doesn't cut it anymore and *extra* is what drinkers want. [Chivas Regal Extra](#), anyone? Others quickly jumped onboard – Haig Extra, for one, and it's now widely applied to a host of Japanese bottlings (e.g. Mars, Torsys, and Sun Peace.) But it's being applied in other senses, too. Glenmorangie led the way – their whiskies aren't “finished” anymore, they're “extra-matured”.

## OAK



Oak is hardly a new word, and your earliest education in whisky would have introduced you to the concepts of American Oak and European Oak. If you got particularly nerdy about it, you even knew which one was *quercus alba* and which one was *quercus robur*. The problem for whisky – well, at least for the people tasked with marketing it – is that a product made from only barley, water, and yeast doesn't leave much room for spin. And so oak is one of the few things they can hang their hat on. And thus it's been an increasingly-embraced buzzword in recent times: Auchentoshan American Oak. Sullivans Cove French Oak. Balvenie's "The sweet toast of American oak". Glenfiddich Rich Oak. Compass Box' Oak Cross. Auchentoshan Blood Oak. Akashi White Oak.

What's the difference between gravy and jus? About \$15 on the menu. Same goes for asking, "What's the difference between wood and oak?" They're the same thing, but "wood" is out and "oak" is in. It sounds more exotic, more artisan, more sophisticated. Distilleries that used to use the word "wood" on their labels have replaced it with "oak" and, in some cases, it's now the delineator between their product range. Macallan, in particular, have doubled down in recent years: Fine Oak, Sherry Oak, and Select Oak, to name just three.

Got any more whisky buzzwords you've heard repeated lately? Share them in the comments section below.

Cheers,  
AD

## The highs and lows of a whisky brand ambassador



Do you want to be a Whisky Brand Ambassador? There are a number of professions that have the outward appearance of being particularly glamorous and appealing. They're the careers that people look on at with envy, with the inherent assumption that the work is always exciting, always fun, never a chore, easy to fulfil, well remunerated, and without any downsides.

Over the decades, several professions have assumed such projected glamour. Rock stars, airline pilots, flight attendants, professional footballers, film stars, astronauts, magicians, and so on. As a subtle prelude to this article, you'll note that most of these professions involve *performing* and/or *travelling*. And, as any regular traveller or performer will tell you, it ain't always a barrel of monkeys.

The role of whisky brand ambassador is one such profession that, on the surface, must surely be the ideal, dream job? After all, you get *paid* to work with whisky. Heck, you get paid to actually *drink* whisky! You get *paid* to travel and tell people about whisky. You get *paid* to hear all the insider knowledge, to visit the distilleries, and to be on the frontline of whisky's marketing, development, and expansion. If you love whisky, surely there couldn't possibly be a *downside*?



Yours truly has been a whisky brand ambassador for over 20 years now, representing – at various times and in several different guises – Ardbeg, Glenmorangie, Macallan, Bowmore, Glenfiddich, Glenlivet, Glenfarclas and, of course, my main gig, which is The Scotch Malt Whisky Society. But mine is a different journey and perspective to most, having always managed this caper part-time or sometimes just as a gun for hire. Even though there was a period from 2009 until around 2015 where my whisky work regularly had me tied up for over 30 hours per week, it's never been my main source of income, nor has my livelihood depended on it. And, as you'll read below, 30 hours a week is very small beer compared to what full-time brand ambassadors put in. So, in just a few paragraphs from now, we'll chat to and hear from some brand ambassadors who have lived and breathed it full-time. We'll explore the fun and the bright side, but we'll also shine a light on the areas that you might not have contemplated or appreciated. But first, let's explore a bit about the game....

The brand ambassador's toolkit...

The role of whisky brand ambassador has changed and developed exponentially in the last 10 years alone, and some of today's current high-flyers wouldn't recognise the scene or the role from what it was at the turn of the millennium. Back then, it was just about pouring out good whisky, giving everyone a good time, and talking up the brand – hopefully chalking up a few bottle sales for the liquor store that hosted the event. None of the local Scotch whisky ambassadors I conversed with after tasting events in the late 1990's had ever even been to Scotland, let alone the distillery they represented, and few knew anything about their competing brands or the ins and outs of whisky. They had a brand "cheat sheet" to recite from and, for many, that was it. A major difference between then and now was knowledge. *Having it* was not a pre-requisite for the job, and *whisky education* was only a minor component of any formal whisky event, or it was overlooked altogether. To be fair to the era and for context, bear in mind that digital projectors and Powerpoint presentations weren't necessarily part of a brand ambassador's toolkit in the late 1990's. Nor were flat caps, waistcoats, and tweed. An A4 handout was about as advanced as things got, and public speaking was the "essential skill" needed for the job.

Of course, the internet changed a few things. Information about whisky became far more accessible and available, and distilleries/brands developed more meaningful and detailed websites – sharing photographs and facilitating *virtual tours*. Where, once, brand ambassadors were the

bridge between Michael Jackson's book and your local liquor store, they were now the face and voice of brands that were tremendously increasing their presence and exposure. Oh, yes....and the Scotch whisky category *exploded* with the biggest boom it's seen in 200 years. The net result was that consumers and audiences became more educated; brand engagement had to become more focussed as the marketplace got crowded; and brand ambassadors suddenly had to have a few more strings to their bow. Throw in social media and the age of the influencer, and the landscape changes further still.

The fount of all knowledge...

Today's whisky ambassadors now undergo significant training before heading out on the road although, to be fair, many enter the industry with a significant amount of pre-acquired data and experience already under their belts – usually gleaned from working in some other sector of the drinks industry, particularly the on-premise bar trade.

A brand ambassador's role can ultimately be condensed into two primary functions whilst promoting the brand: You're there to educate, and you're there to entertain. Every tasting event, presentation, or appearance needs to have an element of both, and it's a skill learning to get that balance right – noting that the balance changes with different audiences and different occasions: A raucous bucks night probably isn't the occasion to unravel the science of fermentation and ester development, and a formal banquet-style tasting or fundraiser with distinguished guests and luminaries probably isn't the right time to pull out your best lewd and offensive joke. (Although this invariably works for the likes of Dr Bill Lumsden!) In any case, the best brand ambassadors find public speaking a breeze and can hold and entertain an audience whilst also imparting knowledge about both the brand and the category. And, needless to say, in an era where audiences are armed with phones and Google, you need to know your stuff.



Matt Bailey – National Ambassador in Australia for The Scotch Malt Whisky Society

A brand ambassador's knowledge bank needs to constantly grow and evolve, going well beyond the confines of their own brand. Consider also that some roles are more widely encompassing than others. For example, a brand ambassador for Balvenie has to know everything about Balvenie. Whereas – as myself and my colleague, Matt Bailey (National Brand Ambassador for The Scotch Malt Whisky Society in Australia), can attest to – brand ambassadors for independent bottlers have to have a reasonable knowledge of every distillery the IB has bottled or represented. Bailey elaborates: "What's the most important thing? It's being more than just a whisky ambassador for your brand...you need to be a 'category' ambassador and know every aspect as much as possible. Pouring a single cask single malt while a punter wants to ask you about blended whisky? Sure! Be ready and know a lot about the category, rather than just your brand. But knowing your brand back to front, knowing the story, knowing how and when to best communicate...that's the key. The other thing is being a great storyteller. Rattling off factoids about wash temperatures and still sizes doesn't tell you much about flavour and sheer enjoyment.

Being personable, performing, and being a true entertainer with some old-school hospitable charm will go a long way."

Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go...

The first thing to appreciate about being a whisky brand ambassador is that it's not a Monday to Friday, nine-to-five job. Tasting events and activations are usually in the evenings and there's often an obligation or compulsion to "carry on" after the formalities end. The rise of social media has also made brand ambassadors far more *accessible* than used to be the case, and some folks will think nothing of sending a brand ambassador an Insta message or Tweet in the middle of the night or on weekends, expecting an answer. Like so many other aspects of professional life these days, we are always "on".



Matthew Fergusson-Stewart – a former whisky brand ambassador for William Grant & Sons

Contrary to what you might think, the time demands on a brand ambassador are very significant. Matthew Fergusson-Stewart, a former Glenfiddich brand ambassador with William Grant & Sons who spent five years in the role in the Asia Pacific market, explains further: "How many hours per week did I work? Do you count the time in airport lounges? The time you spend drinking with your friend who runs a bar that buys lots of your product? The time in the shower thinking of new ways to talk about your brand? If you count all that, I can't see how any brand ambassador is doing less than 80 hours a week, even if they are enjoying lots of it! Of course, the core office hours are nothing like that – but if you regularly spend 30-plus hours in the office each week, you're probably not doing your job very well!"

My own experience plays that out regularly: For every contact hour you're visible for, you can add multiple unseen hours to the equation. Running & hosting a public tasting event is the textbook example: Your tasting might run for two hours from 6.00pm until 8.00pm, but no one sees the (sometimes) weeks that went into organising and liaising with the venue; organising the catering/bookings; managing the stock to be featured; preparing customised notes or handouts; agreeing to promotions or incentives for both host and attendees; tailoring a specific slideshow; arriving at the venue hours beforehand to set it all up and pre-pour; and then the pack-up afterwards after the last punter leaves (usually an hour or so after closing time!) In some instances, you even find yourself carting 200-odd glasses back to your house and running them through the dishwasher when you get home at 2.00am. That ain't glamorous. The two hours that people saw you "working" for might easily have been a 20 hour exercise, all up.



Dan Woolley – a former (and hugely energetic) brand ambassador who's recently established his own whisky brand and distillery.

Dan Woolley, formerly a brand ambassador responsible for some of the Beam/Suntory lines in Australia, doesn't mince words for those contemplating such a career: "Be warned – it's very far from easy, with super-long hours that become much more of a complete full-time lifestyle, rather than a job. There are no set hours....you're either asleep or you're working."

Georgie Bell, currently the Global Malts Ambassador for Bacardi, but with previous stints as a global ambassador for both Diageo and The Scotch Malt Whisky Society, sheds further light on the time demands – recalling one year when she was on the road and away from home for eight months of the year. "When you're away on the job, you're 'on' all the time. There's no nine to five – the job is done when it's done. A typical day might start with meetings in the morning and then bar visits in the evening – it's often quite full on, but we wouldn't be in this role if we didn't enjoy it and enjoy sharing whisky with others."



Georgie Bell – Global Malts Ambassador for Bacardi

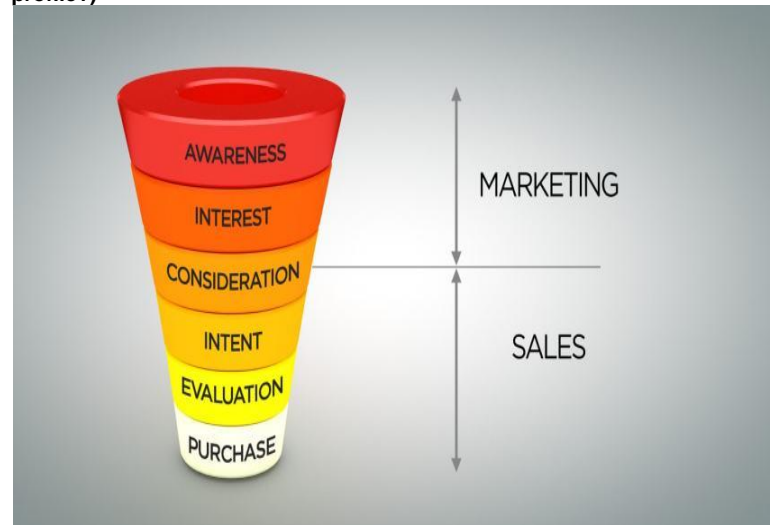
#### The dark side of the force...

We joke about the occupational hazards of being a whisky ambassador and how our livers need to be retired at the age of 40, but there are genuine concerns to be aware of. The reality is that it's an industry and a job with recognised increased risk factors for mental health issues. Fergusson-Stewart elaborates: "Sometimes you are physically and emotionally exhausted; travelling daily, not getting much sunlight, drinking a lot, eating poorly, missing your friends and family, perhaps feeling sick and yet you know you have to 'switch on' and deliver for another group of strangers after you get to the bottom of your inbox. All of

these things are potential triggers for mental health issues. I've helped some fellow brand ambassadors through some pretty dark times." Woolley shares a similar sentiment: "Being away from your home and family every week starts to wear thin, the older you get. It's okay if you're young and single but I missed being away from my family 80% of the time. It's not all glamour and glitz – super long weeks would regularly see me doing 18 hour days/nights back-to-back, compounded with long flights, very little sleep and a lot of whisky... whilst all the time keeping up appearances and maintaining a smile. It all looks good on social media but, trust me, it's not."

#### Between and between....

The other side of the game that impacts a brand ambassador's activities is the unique and constantly-tensioned bridge they form between a company's two outward arms: Sales and Marketing. For the uninitiated, they're two different beasts, occasionally with objectives that are in conflict with one another – and brand ambassadors can be the meat in the sandwich. Marketing wants to build the brand, whilst Sales looks to push volume. What might be good for one might not serve the interests of the other, yet brand ambassadors have to navigate the rocky ground – occasionally having to deliver mixed messages. (A classic example is price and brand positioning: Discounting and price cuts will deliver increased sales, but is that in the long-term interests of the brand – particularly one wanting to establish or maintain a luxury or high-end profile?)



As such, there can occasionally be friction – there are marketing people who don't even like or drink whisky, yet they determine the campaigns that can impact a brand ambassador's directives and KPI's. One brand ambassador, currently assigned to a Scotch brand in the USA and who requested anonymity, put it in pretty simple terms: "Some of the crap that marketing comes up with is ridiculous and I cringe having to deliver some of the messages or campaigns that are flavour of the month. And as soon as any activation starts to gain traction or find its space, it gets canned and replaced with the next scheme."

#### Show me the money...

Speaking of which, KPI's are the other *unseen* aspect. KPI's are different for each company and position, but you can be measured and assessed on the number of bartender training sessions you run each month; the number of consumer events; the number of brand lead events; consumer engagement; trade engagement; social media involvement and activations; and – ultimately – sales in your market. A brand ambassador's remuneration is typically tied to these KPI's, and many have bonuses linked to sales. Christmas can be good if sales increased in your market for the year, but it might be lean if sales went down. When asked which aspect of the job they disliked the most, the collective answer from our panellists was unanimous: "Filling out the monthly expense forms."





### Climbing the ladder...

One issue that comes up repeatedly in conversations is the lifespan of a brand ambassador and what's further up the corporate ladder? The demands of travel and time commitments tend to make it a "younger person's game", so what's an ambassador's next step in terms of career progression? This depends very much on the company, naturally. Larger companies have broader infrastructure, business arms, and roles within the company's umbrella for some brand ambassadors to move into. For others, particularly those working as brand ambassadors for local distributors, there's not much on offer once you decide to hang up the kilt.

Georgie Bell offers some insight: "As my career has developed through the three different companies I've worked for – and the time I've been in the role – my interests have also developed. You're right in thinking there's no 'carved career path' but, rather, as an ambassador you do develop transferable skills that can be applied to other areas of the business. For me, this was to move into a more advocacy programming-centric role."

Matthew Fergusson-Stewart sheds further light: "This is a big issue for companies that employ brand ambassadors – they regularly lose some of the most powerful advocates and knowledge holders for their brands. Some brand ambassadors move from a local to a global role; some move into Brand Manager roles; and some change market. Most, unfortunately, just leave."

Some do manage to stay in the drinks industry, albeit a different sector or role within it, as Matt Bailey explains: "The path to becoming a brand ambassador is about as varied as the paths that can follow such a role. Yes, there is a ceiling in some countries, so some look to an overseas position but, by the same token, as the trade changes, opportunities open up, and roles in brand development and marketing sometimes appeal. That is one of the ways many brand ambassadors progress by moving into brand management of the spirit they once presented. I've known others who've moved out of brand representation and into owning/running bars or distilleries as well, keeping in the game that way."

### The love of the liquid...

Regardless, every job has its golden moments and the reason we get out of bed. And those moments might surprise you...if you thought the job's highlights were drinking rare or expensive whisky, our participants' answers might surprise you. When asked what the most enjoyable or satisfying aspect to their job was, their answers shared a common theme: "Changing a mind. You [referring to *Whisky & Wisdom*] once wrote a great article on the three stages of appreciating Glenfiddich and occasionally I'd have the joy of meeting someone in 'Stage 2' and bringing them to 'Stage 3'. Sometimes you preach to the choir and sometimes people are just there for the free booze, but actually taking a person from not liking Glenfiddich to saying, 'This has been fantastic, I really love the 15yo' is immensely satisfying." *Matthew Fergusson-Stewart*. (And for that article he referenced, click [here](#)).

"The most satisfying thing about the role is seeing new-comers have that lightbulb 'I love whisky' moment. Seeing people love something that you work so hard for and also love. To be honest, there are many satisfying things about the role." *Dan Woolley*.

"Being able to share whisky with others across the world and tell the stories of the distilleries, and also working with our global team. We have such an incredible team in whisky across the world, and I really look forward to travelling just to also work alongside them! One of my proudest moments at Bacardi was with our Craigellachie 51 tour – I never anticipated that we would be able to give away a cask of 51 year old Craigellachie, of which there were only 51 bottles, away for free. Dram by dram, over 1500 people across the world were able to try this whisky and for me this really brought to light the idea of Scotch being the piece of the puzzle that brings together friends, old and new – the medium to have conversation over." *Georgie Bell*.

So next time you're at a tasting or a whisky fair and there's a brand ambassador up the front of the room straining their voice, arching their back, cracking a joke, and pouring you a dram....don't forget to convey your thanks. It's not always an easy gig....

Cheers,  
AD

## Port Charlotte removes outer packing

17 JUNE 2022 By *Georgie Pursey*

Islay-based Bruichladdich Distillery is removing the tinned packaging across its core single malt brands, starting with the heavily peated Port Charlotte range this month.



Port Charlotte single malts are peated to a heavyweight 40PPM. As part of its long-term mission to be more sustainable across all processes, [the B Corp-certified distillery](#) is eliminating unnecessary packaging to save carbon emissions, weight and waste, while continuing to champion more sustainable practices in the industry. "We've become accustomed to thinking that single malt Scotch must come with outer packaging as standard, while premium gins, vodkas and mezcals are readily bought without additional packaging," said Douglas Taylor, Bruichladdich Distillery Company CEO. "Whilst the outer packaging of our Port Charlotte brand is both beautiful and recyclable, the need to act and influence a shift-change in perceptions of quality feels increasingly necessary. Removing it completely is the right thing to do."

The removal of 'unnecessary' packaging from [the full Port Charlotte range](#) will allow the distillery to reduce the amount of steel used to produce the outer tins, and will eliminate the energy use and emissions involved in production and transportation of the excess packaging. Last year, Bruichladdich Distillery encouraged customers to go [One Tin Lighter](#) and opt out of receiving secondary packaging with their whisky purchases.

"When we launched our One Tin Lighter initiative, reactions were overwhelmingly positive, with some customers insisting that an option to simply opt out on our web shop wasn't enough," Taylor continued.

"As a B Corp-certified company, we are part of a movement to use our business as a force for good, making conscious decisions that will positively impact our people, local community and the planet."

Removing all outer packaging from the Port Charlotte range is the next 'natural step' for the brand, which plans to eventually eradicate all unnecessary secondary packaging across its portfolio.

Port Charlotte is available to purchase at selected specialist whisky retailers or online at [bruichladdich.com](#) for a recommended retail price of £55 (US\$67.65).

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## Macallan whisky worth \$80,000 now in GTR

15 JUNE 2022 By Melita Kiely

Edrington-owned The Macallan has extended the availability of its Tales of the Macallan Volume I single malt whisky to include global travel retail.



Tales of The Macallan Volume I retails for RRP US\$80,000

Travellers will now be able to purchase [Tales of The Macallan Volume I](#), The Laird of Ester Elchies (1659-1715) from the brand's GTR boutiques, and select physical stores throughout the channel.

The Scotch whisky launched last year and was the first edition in a series designed to tell the story behind The Macallan's pioneers.

Jeremy Speirs, regional managing director for Edrington Global Travel Retail, said: "Bringing to life The Macallan's rich heritage is a key pillar of our storytelling in global travel retail.

"The Tales of The Macallan series adds a new dimension to this, shining a light on some of the extraordinary individuals who have shaped the brand. "Combining incredible liquid with beautiful packaging, the first bottling in this series will act as a real draw for global whisky connoisseurs, visiting select locations in global travel retail."

Tales of The Macallan Volume I was created to honour the legacy of John Grant. Distilled in 1950 and bottled in 2021, the whisky is said to have notes of wood spice, sweet wood smoke and antique oak, complemented by ripe fruits and spices.

The whisky is presented in a handmade Lalique crystal decanter, concealed in an almanac book. Each chapter depicts the story of John Grant and includes illustrations by Andrew Davidson.

Tales of The Macallan Volume I is limited to 350 bottles worldwide, priced at RRP US\$80,000 (£60,000/€65,000) each.

The third edition of the competition tasked UK-based bartenders with creating cocktails using the brand's cask strength Glenfarclas 105 whisky. The competition is [launched annually on 15 April](#), the 105th day of the calendar year.

Gordon, of cocktail bar Orchid in Aberdeen, Scotland, was crowned the winner during the final on 13 June, held at the Scotch Malt Whisky Society in Glasgow.

He competed against four other bartenders, who were selected after succeeding in national drop-in heats that took place in Glasgow and London during May.

The other finalists included: Alex Basile from Black Rock bar in London; Leonardo Giacomello, of Scarfes Bar in Rosewood London; Gavin Lidbury, The Finnieston in Glasgow; and Lisa McLeod, The Esslemont Bar & Restaurant and Under The Hammer, for The McGinty Group in Aberdeen, Scotland.

2022 theme

This year's competition asked bartenders to create a serve inspired by a story.

The five finalists were then challenged with creating a second serve, this time inspired by the year 1968 – when Glenfarclas 105 was created. During the final, bartenders were given a time limit of 10 minutes to present their two cocktails.

The competitors were judged on their knowledge of the brand, ingredients and presentation skills, as well as cocktail-making techniques, and the flavour, balance and appearance of the drinks.

The judging panel comprised: Kirsten MacDonald, Glenfarclas brand ambassador; Louise Gallagher, business development manager, Pol Roger Portfolio; Nicola Carruthers, deputy editor at *The Spirits Business*; Peter Donnelly, director of Pol Roger; and [Dan Jones](#), assistant bar manager at Klosterhaus in Bristol, and the winner of [last year's Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength Cocktail Competition](#).

Gordon won the competition with his serves, A Pal's Dram and High-Flyer's Highball.

A Pal's Dram combined Glenfarclas 105, yellow chartreuse, acid-adjusted apple juice, honey syrup and bramble jam, along with a dehydrated apple garnish. Gordon served the drink alongside a hand-illustrated book and used his background as a magician to vanish coins during the presentation.

The High-Flyer's Highball was made with Glenfarclas 105, King's Ginger Liqueur and homemade green tea soda, with a dehydrated lemon for the garnish.

The serve was inspired by the first Boeing 747 airplane that was built in 1968. Gordon was inspired by his travels, including to Asia, when creating the Highball, and combined ingredients from around the world.

Judges praised Gordon's storytelling abilities, his whisky knowledge and mixology skills.

After the competition, Gordon said: "I was very surprised that I won considering what I was up against. Especially some of the London guys who had ideas that were very in-depth, but I'm delighted."

For winning the competition, Gordon will be invited to the Glenfarclas Distillery for a three-day experience. He also received a unique decanter, the only one of its kind, containing Glenfarclas 105.

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## Glenfarclas reveals 2022 competition champion

15 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

This year's Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength Cocktail Competition has named Aberdeen-based bartender Marcus Gordon as its winner.



Marcus Gordon was the winner of this year's Glenfarclas 105 cocktail competition

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## Tomatin appeal over hotel complex rejected

15 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Highland distillery Tomatin has lost an appeal against a company's plan to build a hotel development named after the Scottish village.



An artist's impression of the Tomatin Trading Company's hotel development

In November 2019, Scotch whisky producer Tomatin [launched a trademark lawsuit](#) against the Tomatin Trading Company (TTC) over its plan to build a multi-million-pound hotel and food/retail village in Tomatin. The site received planning approval in late 2018.

The lawsuit claimed that TTC has infringed the distillery's UK trademark for the word 'Tomatin', which was registered on 18 January 1963 under class 33 (Scotch whisky).

In 2018, the distillery secured two further trademarks in relation to alcoholic beverages, retail, education, and bar and leisure services (classes 33, 35, 41, and 43).

In 2019, the hotel developer registered its own trademark for 'Tomatin Trading Company' across several classes that overlapped with the distillery's own marks. TTC removed class 33 for Scotch whisky from its application after the distillery requested it.

The distiller believed that TTC's use of the 'Tomatin' name for its hotel development takes unfair advantage of the brand's reputation.

However, in a Court of Session decision published on 6 October 2021, judge Lady Wolfe [ruled in favour of TTC](#), and said the public would not make a link between the two companies.

**Appeal ruling**

Tomatin Distillery appealed the decision but it has now been dismissed by the court in a ruling published on 14 June.

During the appeal, evidence was provided by whisky writer Iain Russell, who said Tomatin single malt was "a niche brand within a niche market" and is best known among single malt enthusiasts.

According to the court document, this is supported by several factors, including the brand's limited availability. Most of Tomatin's sales comes from the distillery, and specialist and online retailers. The brand is not available in UK supermarkets.

Globally, Tomatin was the 25th best-selling single malt, at 67,800 cases, the court noted. In the UK it ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in sales among leading single malt Scotch brands.

Furthermore, Tomatin has 'limited brand awareness' and is 'not well-known among the UK whisky-drinking public' according to evidence from Russell and whisky writer Charles Maclean. This was attributed in part to the distillery's 'very low spend' on advertising.

Lord Stephen Woolman noted: "The intellectual property judge concluded that the average consumer of the distillery's goods and services was a whisky aficionado or explorer. Such a person is discerning about single malts and was unlikely to be confused. We agree. The intellectual property judge did not err in considering the average consumer of the distillery's goods and services, as opposed to the average consumer of TTC's goods and services."

Furthermore, the ruling said the action by the distillery was premature as trademark infringement can only be determined when the development is built.

The court added that there is no warrant for the distillery to have a monopoly on the use of 'Tomatin' for non-whisky classes.

Woolman added: "Consumers who are less knowledgeable about single malts, such as those who may visit TTC's development, would readily distinguish between the parties' respective goods and services. They would understand 'Tomatin' to be a geographical descriptor. The addition of 'Trading Company' emphasises the bright line between the sign and the marks."

A spokesperson for Tomatin Distillery, said: "Whilst we are disappointed that Lord Woolman has upheld the original ruling regarding trademark infringement, we are delighted that the judgement regarding our trademark registrations has been overturned.

"We are pleased to now be able to draw a line under the matter and, as ever, remain committed to creating a thriving community here in Tomatin."

## Lawrenny bottles Boal Madeira cask-finished whisky

16 JUNE 2022 By Melita Kiely

Tasmanian whisky producer Lawrenny Estate Distillery has revealed its latest single malt bottling: Descension.



Lawrenny Descension sits at 46.6% ABV

The single malt whisky joins the producer's Ascension Tasmanian Single Malt Whisky expression.

Descension aims to showcase the company's cask management skills.

The spirit was created using Tasmanian barley and water sources from the upper River Derwent.

New make spirit was filled into ex-Port and ex-Bourbon casks. After 'several years' in the 100-litre casks, the whisky was vatted by type, strength-standardised, and entered into smaller ex-Bourbon and ex-Port casks, each with different qualities such as toasting and charring levels to impart subtle nuances throughout the profile.

Each whisky barrel was left to age for another year before being blended into the final whisky.

To add a final layer of complexity, according to [Lawrenny Estate Distillery](#), the whisky was then finished in Boal Madeira casks before bottling. Boal Madeira casks were picked to add further complexity to the single malt whisky.

Descension sits at 46.6% ABV.

Fellow Australian producer Lark Distilling Co purchased the [owner of Pontville Distillery and Estate](#) for AU\$40 million (US\$29.9m) in 2021.

[Lark Distilling opened a new distillery](#), complete with an immersive visitor centre, in March this year.

Lark Distilling is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, earlier this month the producer released [a rare single malt whisky](#).

The producer also unveiled [The Still](#), a whisky complex comprising a bar, tasting room and shop, in September last year.

## Highlands to host first Master of Scotch exam

16 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

Education and certification body The Council of Whiskey Masters will hold its inaugural Master of Scotch examination in the Scottish Highlands this September.



Whisky experts can become a 'Master of Scotch' through The Council of Whiskey Masters's programme

Los Angeles-based Council of Whiskey Masters launched what it claimed was the [first set of 'specialised and rigorous' qualifications](#) dedicated to Scotch and Bourbon in 2019.

The Council of Whiskey Masters offers a four-level certification programme, beginning with the 'Certified Scotch Professional' or 'Certified Bourbon Professional' diploma and leading to the 'Master of Scotch' title for candidates who 'demonstrate mastery of single malt whisky'.

Thousands of candidates across 35 countries have advanced through the programme, the council noted.

The first Master of Scotch exam will take place from 8-11 September 2022 at the Rothes Glen castle in Speyside, the Scottish home of the council.

Candidates must complete a written and oral exam, as well as demonstrate their skills in recognising Scotch whisky through a two-hour blind tasting that will cover regional styles, ageing and finishing.

The two-hour written theory exam will consist of six essay questions, chosen from a menu of 30 topics and themes.

The one-hour oral theory exam will cover specific questions from required readings of 10 books on the category.

The examination will be judged by members of the council's advisory board, featuring Keepers and Masters of the Quaich.

The inaugural [members of the advisory board](#) includes chairman Steve Beal; spirits consultant, judge and keeper of the wuiach; Dave Broom, spirits writer and master of the quaich; Lew Byrson, author and former managing editor of *Whisky Advocate*; Martin Duffy, North American brand representative for Glencairn Crystal; and Rick Edwards, who has worked for Scotch brands such as Johnnie Walker, The Glenlivet and Chivas Regal.

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## Benromach Distillery Exclusives

[GRAHAMJUNE 17, 2022](#)



Benromach distillery was initially founded in 1898 in Forres, Speyside.

Like many others, it went silent during the ebb and flow of whisky's popularity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The distillery was mothballed by United Distillers' subsidiary J&W Hardie Limited in 1983. According to Philip Morrice in his *Schweppes Guide*, the output from Benromach was regarded as one of the finest Highland malt whiskies. It was occasionally bottled by Gordon & MacPhail and Wm Cadenheads, but largely went into blends such as the Antiquary Deluxe Old Scotch, which was a brand also owned by J&W Hardie.

In 1993 the distillery was purchased by Gordon & MacPhail and underwent an extensive refurbishment. Benromach reopened to produce spirit in 1998, exactly 100 years after the founding. As the first new spirit ran off the still George Urquhart (Mr George) was sat next to the spirit safe and tasted the new make from their new distillery, celebrating a long held ambition of the Urquhart family to distil whisky as well as mature and bottle it.

The decision to reopen a distillery was quite bold in 1993. The whisky loch was still very full, and the popularity of Scotch had yet to reach such giddy heights as today. The only other significant distillery development at the time was Isle of Arran. Perhaps that contributed to the conservative size of Benromach: just a single wash and spirit still produce the whisky. Output was increased in 2013 and 2017; although no changes to the stills were made, additional washbacks were installed and a warehousing for the maturing whisky was constructed. The output of the distillery is still only around 400,000l up from 150,000l when it reopened.



The additional production will likely begin to filter through to new markets – such as the US and Asia – from 2023. That year also marks both the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the distillery itself, as well as the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reopening by the Urquhart family.

There is limited information currently about a forward plan for 2023, largely because the business has been focussing on building the Cairn Distillery 23 miles further South at Grantown-on-Spey. Current estimates are that the Cairn will be due to open around September 2022. The Cairn will owe a lot to the lessons learned at Benromach over the last 24 years, and particularly those hard lessons learned by Keith Cruickshank who has been Distillery Manager throughout the revival period.

Earlier this year during a distillery visit it was rumoured that production and visitor centre staff would move South to The Cairn to get things up and running and allow for a period of refurbishment at Benromach prior to reopening for the anniversary. It is unclear if this remains the plan given the delays in completing the Cairn.

When Benromach reopened, the distillery targeted at a forgotten style of whisky: the smoky Speyside whisky that was usually lightly peated, yet still light and fruity. By the 1970s and 1980s Speyside distillers had abandoned peat in favour of the sweet smooth style of whisky which remains the 'character' of Speyside today. Benromach is typically lightly peated to 12ppm, but has used malt between 8ppm and 30ppm for various special editions. In line with Gordon & MacPhail cask policies, the casks at Benromach are generally of high quality.

In mid 2020 Benromach rebranded to a modern bold typeset and clear age statements. I understand this approach is driven by consumers in the USA who appear to appreciate the bold signposting, or who don't respond well to tiny text on whisky labels. The colours of the distillery whitewash and bold red painted woodwork inspire the colour scheme.

So, what of the output of the distillery that is finally coming of age? Well, I have a review of three distillery exclusive casks below, and will hopefully get round to reviewing the core range in due course. In the meantime, Andrew [has reviewed](#) the Contrasts: Peat Smoke favourably, though Mark P was [less enamoured](#) with older batches of the Cask Strength; prior to that the last time Malt visited the distillery was as long ago as 2018.



**Benromach 2006 to 2022 Distillery Exclusive Polish Oak – Review**  
*Hogshead. 58.1% ABV. £140.*

Colour: Builder's tea.

On the nose: Perfumed oak, polished mahogany, wax crayons, Derwent Artists Pencil shavings, BBQ peaches, bruised red apples, vanilla poached rhubarb, dusty baking spices. Water brings out more fruit, raspberry and redcurrant. Really complex like the best American Bourbons.

In the mouth: Sweet and smooth oak character, followed by gorse flowers, tropical muesli, heather smoke and dried pineapple. Fresh ginger, Scottish macaroon, lovely oily spiced finish that clings to the tongue. With water it mellows and allows the complexity from the nose to become easier to enjoy. A great funkiness from over ripe fruit develops too.

Conclusions:

Really interesting; something different from Scotch. Unusual, inviting whisky that would no doubt develop and offer something new each time you revisit the bottle.

Score: 8/10



**Benromach 2003 to 2021 18 Years Old – Review**  
*First-fill ex-bourbon cask. 57.4% ABV. £110. Distillery (and Distillery website) exclusive.*

Colour: Pale gold.

On the nose: Initially quite tight on the nose, slightly spicy from the oak and peat, the fruit is very restrained. With water it becomes more biscuity, malty, dusty slightly smoky vanilla, a fruity funk developing.

In the mouth: Thick and oily; the peat gives a rich robustness. Some smoke. An effervescent bright white fruit and more gently tingling spicy peat, oak, and remarkably drinkable at full strength. With a few drops of water, it is much more lively, fruity and the funkiness of the fruit really comes out. With a slightly bitter finish.

Conclusions:

The funky fruit notes are a real feature here; the peat is almost imperceptible beyond the richness it provides. Great body and complexity.  
 Score: 7/10



Benromach 2010 to 2021 Fresh Sherry 11 Years Old – Review  
59.8% ABV. £74.99.

Colour: Gold.

On the nose: Heavy rich sherry, dark fruit, plum, blackberry, boiled caramel, some new leather, sticky toffee pudding, almond pralines prepared over an open fire in a copper pan. Sweet toffee popcorn. With water, a whiff of marmite, treacle toffee and more butter.

In the mouth: refined sherry, oak spices prominent before gentle spicy peat and an antiseptic bitterness. Slightly simple but a great balance and integration between forceful peat and sweet sherry. Water helps dilute the sherry and let the spirit through.

Conclusions:

For me the peat is a little too medicinal here from an otherwise refined dram. Great whisky, not overly complex.

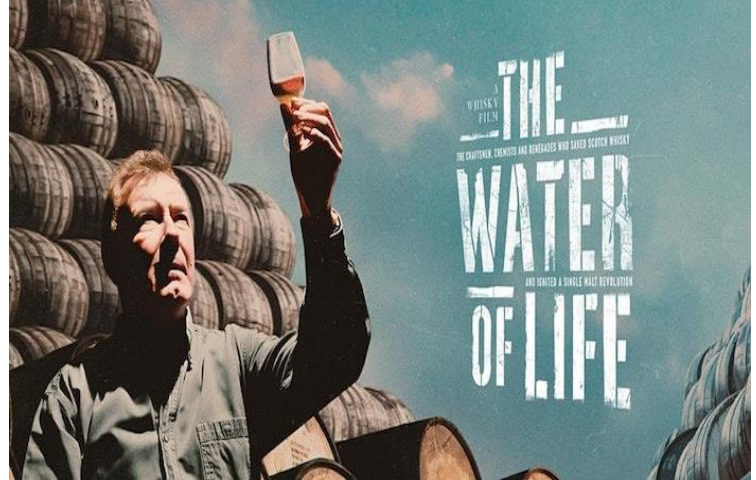
Score: 6/10

### Whisky Movie ‘The Water of Life’ Premieres On PBS This June [Gary Carter](#) - June 8, 2022

A new documentary film on whisky, “The Water of Life,” will make its U.S. broadcast debut across the PBS Network this June.

Filmed in six countries, on three continents, over the course of three years, The Water of Life tells the story of what’s described as the creative revolution that saved Scotland’s once-sagging whisky industry and turned it into the vibrant industry it is today.

Picked up by the network’s syndication arm PBS Plus, the 88-minute film will be screened on PBS networks in more than 200 markets this month.



The Water of Life (image via Water of Life)

The majority of member stations will premiere the documentary in primetime during the week of June 27th. PBS will retain the rights to broadcast The Water of Life for a year. From now until July 6th, the film will also be available on the PBS website via [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the PBS app. A statement from PBS notes that the film highlights a half-dozen distillers and distilleries, and focuses much of its time on the resurrection of the Bruichladdich Distillery on the remote Scottish island of Islay. Under the leadership of entrepreneurs Mark Reynier, Simon Coughlin and whisky legend Jim McEwan, the distillery went from being a mothballed memory to a world-beating innovator in a few short years, which the documentarians called “a creative explosion that helped save the struggling economy of the island often called Whisky Island.” The story also features world renowned whisky writer Charles Maclean, MBE; master distiller Billy Walker; master blenders Dr. Rachel Barrie and David Stewart, MBE; and the next generation of innovators like Adam Hannett, Kelsey McKechnie, Liam Hughes, Iain Croucher, and Eddie Brook.

The film was produced by Blacksmith & Jones, the production company that Swartz co-owns with producer Trevor Jones. Actress Brittany Curran (The Magicians, Chicago Fire) served as executive producer. It was co-produced by Special Order and Aurora Films.

“We are very excited to be on PBS because it’s really the gold standard of documentary film in America,” Jones said. “We think it’s a perfect fit because the film is as much a love letter to Scotland as it is to whisky itself and we really tried to create a cinematic portrayal of the beautiful Scottish countryside.”

Curran said that they knew they wanted to make a film that would appeal just as much to people who don’t drink whisky as it would to those who are experts.

“We shot, scored, and paced the film purposely to bring the audience on a sensory journey as they watch the story unfold. And we think that that’s pretty unique. We’re excited about it as filmmakers and as whisky geeks.”

Viewers can check out [www.pbs.org/show/water-life/](https://www.pbs.org/show/water-life/) to watch the film in June and find air dates and showtimes on their local PBS member station.



# WHISKY & WISDOM

Is the tide turning on the Scotch Whisky industry?



The Scotch whisky industry and its sales have seen many ups and downs over its history. The last two decades have certainly been on the “up”. However, there are some signs around that the tide might be turning, and perhaps there’s a “down” looming on the horizon. Let’s take a look at some of these signs and whether the industry should be worried....

In many forms of pop culture and entertainment at the moment, there’s a fine yet increasingly blurry line between nostalgia and recycling. Witness the recent Top Gun sequel: Many have argued (correctly) that it borrows far too heavily from the original. Was this lazy, uninspired thinking by the producers – or a calculated ploy to cash in on the public’s fondness and nostalgia for the original? (One suspects a combination of both!) The same could be said for so many other big screen and little screen productions – it’s a seemingly endless line of sequels or spin-offs. I assume it’s only a matter of time until the Fast & Furious is somehow worked into the MCU? And when reality TV shows have to rely on getting previous contestants and winners to come back for a “fresh” season, you KNOW there’s a serious dearth of new ideas.

Whisky, it seems, is not much different. The names of certain branded expressions or releases that were retired many years ago are back in service again. (For example, Macallan’s “Gran Reserva” and Exceptional Special Cask labels, or Diageo’s “Singleton” appellation, etc). Other buzzwords are being re-applied to countless expressions and releases that are actually just the same product that’s always been on the shelves, merely dressed up in new clothing. (You can play whisky word bingo with the following: “Reserve”, “Harvest”, “Choice”, “Vintage”, “Barley”, “Vault”, “Sherry”, “Warehouse”, “Loch”, “Rare”, “Wood”, and “Cask”).

Oh, for the days when brands just had a 12yo, a 15yo, and an 18yo!!! But how effective is all this recycled – even “upcycled” – marketing? Can the industry *really* afford to be re-dressing old ideas?



There’s a not-so-secret dirty secret in the Scotch whisky industry at the moment, namely that sales of Scotch whisky (by volume) are in decline\*. They’ve been on the slide some time now. However, this reality is being masked or buoyed by the fact that, in some markets, sales *by value* are steady or increasing. In other words, brands are selling less bottles, but the revenue they’re earning from their reduced sales is either steady or growing. The rise of uber-premium releases with gargantuan price tags goes some way to explaining this: Selling just 250 bottles of a rare 50yo for \$30,000 a pop will cover the fact you sold 100,000 *less* bottles of your \$75 NAS expression.

*\*The trend of falling sales was consistent up until 2020. Latest figures from the [Scotch Whisky Association](#) released for the first quarter of 2022 show a turnaround occurred in many markets in 2021 over their 2020 figures, although it’s not yet clear to what extent COVID played a role in this, and whether a return to upward sales will be sustained.*



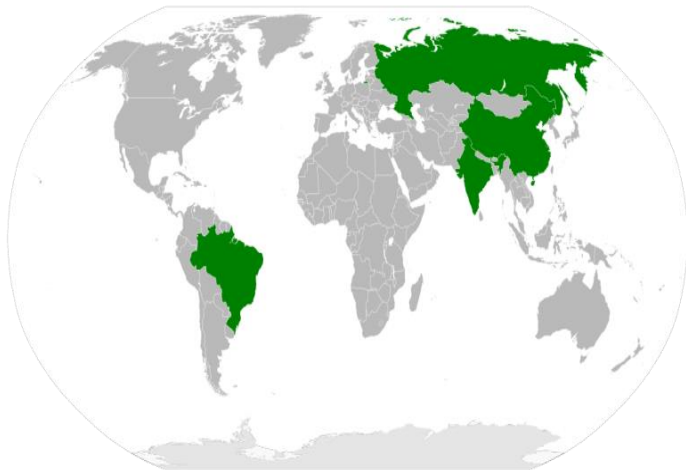
Of the Scotch Whisky industry’s Top 20 countries/markets for exports in 2021, 13 were down on their pre-pandemic 2019 figures. (Value in GBP) One questions if the sales and marketing teams behind the various Scotch brands are pulling the right levers to address the worrying trends? Some of the levers being pulled – to this observer, at least – seem to be either missing the mark or exacerbating the problem. For example, some brands seem to think that having a wider core-range is the answer. Does having four different NAS expressions of Glen X on the shelf at your local liquor store draw you to the brand, or will you opt for the less confronting, less confusing Glen Y, which is sitting next to Glen X on the shelf, and is being represented by just two expressions – say, a NAS, and a 12yo? Or, as Whisky & Wisdom has explored previously, [is the current diversity of whisky bringing overall quality down?](#) As numerous sales and psychological studies have shown, the presentation of too much exotic choice for a consumer often results in them purchasing something safe and simple instead.

Is the sudden gush of so many generic [NAS](#) releases from within the same stables an outcome of having excess 7-10 year old spirit because

predictions made in the 2010's didn't quite work out? We'll explore this in just a moment....

Scotch whisky is, by inherent but unfortunate design, tied to the past. The sales and marketing teams have to work with production decisions that were made ten to twenty years prior. You can't market a 10yo sherried release today if the distillery owner 10 years ago was filling spirit exclusively into ex-bourbon casks. Similarly, a single malt brand can't sell an 18yo expression today if it was strapped for cash 18-20 years ago and sold all its new fillings to blenders at that time.

The Scotch whisky industry cannot afford to be complacent, or to arrogantly assume its position, traditions, and branding will insulate it from consumers changing their buying and spending habits. Australia is a textbook case study: Until recently, Scotch had little to fear from Australian whisky...the local industry's low volumes and high price points meant it wasn't even a contest. However, with an increasingly large number of local, bigger distilleries coming onstream and now releasing quality whisky at competitive prices, the Scotch brands should justifiably be wary of the new kids on the block. To be clear, no one is suggesting that Ned or Starward's Two-Fold is going to put a dent in Johnnie Walker. However, for the consumer who's comfortable spending, say, \$120 on a bottle of single malt every month, there's a good reason why many Aussies are choosing to spend it on a local, richly-flavoured product, rather than on an uninspiring, insipid, NAS single malt Scotch that struggles to differentiate itself from its many competing stablemates. The same can be said in other countries, and also with other competing spirits: The massive resurgence in Irish whiskey cannot be ignored, nor can the second wave of larger scale USA malt whisky distilleries that are rising off the back of that country's craft movement. The chronic undersupply and resulting high prices that have blighted Japanese whisky will also correct itself in time, thus returning Japanese whisky as a viable, affordable alternative for Scotch drinkers. Witness also the increasing number of rum stands that now feature at whisky shows and festivals. And all of that is before we even *think* about the skyrocketing sales of gin, tequila, and Cognac being experienced in many markets (growth of between 15-30% reported for these three categories in 2021). Will the Scotch industry be guilty of standing still while the rest of the spirits world overtakes it?



Ten years ago, the Scotch whisky industry had its sights set firmly on the so-called BRIC markets (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) and the assumption that previous barriers to expansion in these areas would be removed. Both Diageo and Pernod Ricard – collectively accounting for nearly half of Scotland's distilleries, and certainly the biggest selling blends – embarked on huge and costly expansion programs at their distilleries to increase production (i.e. more efficient mashstuns, extra washbacks, extra stills, etc); and many distilleries increased working and production hours to produce more spirit. A decade later, they're *still* trying to crack those markets, but the playing field and strategy has changed tack. The UK government's ongoing attempts to reduce India's 150% import tariff was reset again at the start of this year, while – rather than trying to export Scotch to China – Diageo have decided to make the stuff locally there instead: In November 2021, they announced plans for a huge US\$75M malt whisky distillery in China's Yunnan province. What does this mean for all the extra spirit distilled in Scotland from 2014-2019 that may not have the market(s) it was originally intended for?



Whisky sales through global travel retail were virtually non-existent for 2020 and 2021.

In fairness to the Scotch whisky industry, the last two years have made things difficult to read. The global pandemic and two years of almost zero international travel and tourism have impacted niche corners of the category: Travel retail at airports took a MASSIVE hit, and whatever revenue the industry was bringing in from whisky tourism (distillery visitor centres, tours, cellardoor sales, etc) was also near non-existent. These dented sectors will clearly recover, but how quickly and to what extent? Whilst it's generally true that many consumers stayed home and rode out COVID lockdowns by buying alcohol online – almost every alcohol category experiencing spikes in sales, from wine to sake – *consumer preferences* shifted. And all of this took place against the backdrop of Scotch whisky being affected by the far-reaching impacts of Brexit, supply chain issues, and blips like the USA's 25% import tariff. As was alluded to above, one of Scotch whisky's biggest challenges is that it can be slow to pivot when the playing field changes. Slowing or reducing production volumes now might reduce costs and improve the P&L ledger at the present, but there'll be a reckoning in 5-10 years' time when the industry could be in a different space again.



The famed "whisky loch" of the 1990's and early 2000's. (Don't go looking for it. It's dried up now)

The irony is that the industry has been here before. The so-called *whisky loch* that spoiled consumers in the 1990's and early 2000's came about because of the overproduction in the late 70's and early 80's before the industry crashed during the period 1983-1986. And if we look back over 200 years, there is a continual cycle of boom-to-bust and back to boom times again repeatedly impacting the industry.



There were claims being made 10 years ago that the industry had become better at its long-range forecasting, smoothing out the blips, and riding out the whisky scene's volatility. The next few years might reveal if those claims had any merit....

Cheers, AD

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## Membership and Dinner prices for 2021-2022

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

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## Reservation policy

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

## Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
  - Anyone canceling between Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 @ 6pm and Monday September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$90). It is the responsibility of the member who cancels their (or their guest's) reservation to find a replacement. If I am asked to find a substitute and one is found, then the member will be asked to pay for 50% of their dinner cost.
  - Anyone who fails to attend the Monday September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$90). A member will be responsible for their guest's cancellation (\$100).
  - If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 @ 6pm and Monday September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.
- 

## Dinner Payments

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

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## 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.



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## Just a note because we care.

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

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## Kingston Single Malt Society

Roberto Di Fazio, President

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Kingston, Ontario, K7P 1S1, Canada

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# The Scotch Whisky Masters 2022 results

06 JUNE 2022 By Nicola Carruthers

This year's Scotch Whisky Masters showed the diversity of flavours in the sector. Here, we reveal the results from our latest competition.



The Scotch whisky sector is on the road to recovery after its sales were hit by the pandemic and punitive tariffs. The industry's exports returned to growth last year, rising by 19% to £4.51 billion (US\$6.1bn) after hitting their lowest levels in a decade, figures from the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) revealed. There's a strong appetite for Scotch in key emerging markets such as India, China and Brazil, which all grew by double digits. New global developments could also bring a welcome boost to the industry, such as the UK and India's forthcoming free trade agreement (FTA). The deal could lead to the removal of a 150% tariff on Scotch whisky in India, potentially lifting the sector's exports to the country by £1 billion (US\$1.2bn) over five years, the SWA said.

It's welcome news following the US's suspension of the 25% tariff on single malt Scotch in June 2021. All of which could be enhanced further if recent negotiations between the UK and Canada for a new FTA prove to be successful.

## Quality on the market

As Scotch experiences soaring demand, a panel of leading spirits specialists sought to test the quality of bottlings on the market in The Scotch Masters 2022 competition.

Held at whisky bar and restaurant Boisdale of Canary Wharf, London, last month, the blind-tasting competition aimed to celebrate the best of the category, with entries shipped and packed anonymously by Sensible.

Forming the first panel of judges were: Jack Dalton, UK and international sales manager of Edinburgh Whisky Academy; independent spirits consultant Ivan Dixon; Ivan Orsini, senior bartender at The Aubrey, in London's Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park; Malika Kirchel-Sharper, bar manager at Boisdale, Canary Wharf; and Melita Kiely, editor of *The Spirits Business*, who chaired the panel.

Karen Taylor, co-founder of the *Whisky for Everyone* blog, was the chair of the second panel. Her fellow judges comprised: Derek Millar, retired whisky sales advisor; Alan Uresti, head of agave spirits at Annabel's; and Evan Prousaefs, bar manager and assistant general manager of Los Mochis, London.

Chaired by Matt Chambers, co-founder of the *Whisky for Everyone* blog, the third panel included: freelance writer Ian Wisniewski; Michael Fichtner, whisky sommelier at The Connaught Hotel; and Dimple Athavia, founder of All Things Drinks.

Finally, the fourth panel was chaired by Billy Abbott, ambassador at The Whisky Exchange. He was joined by spirits writer Mark Jennings; Nick Larsson-Bell, senior buyer at Harvey Nichols; and Nicola Carruthers, deputy editor of *The Spirits Business*.

The competition kicked off with a blended Scotch flight, resulting in a Gold medal for Diageo's Johnnie Walker Black Label in the Aged up to 12 Years round. Uresti said the whisky was "elegant, subtle and balanced".

The next round, Blended – Aged between 13 and 18 Years saw Diageo grab another Gold medal, this time for its 18-year-old Johnnie Walker whisky, which Taylor praised for its "hint of rich toffee and loads of red apples and orchard fruit".

A flight of no-age-statement blends were put to the test next, with one Gold and seven Silvers being dished out. Gold winner Johnnie Walker Blue Label impressed Dixon with its "fruity exotic nose" and "subtle smoke notes".



The blended Scotch category was assessed by price point, with a flight of Standard bottlings tested first by the panel. Three Silvers were handed out, including one to Aldi's Highland Black Blended Scotch Whisky.

Moving up the price ladder and the panel sampled premium blended whiskies costing between £21 and £30, with the first Master medallist of the day found in Lauder's 15 Years Old. Larsson-Bell described the whisky as "malty, with caramel, vanilla and cherry, with a touch of sharpness and citrus. On the palate, it was rich, creamy, with notes of crème brûlée and an oaky tannic finish."

Two Golds were given to Green Isle with its "lovely smokiness on the palate" and Islay Mist 8 Years Old, which was noted for being "easy to drink" with hints of fruit, smoke and spice. The flight concluded with a Silver medal for Islay Mist Original. Of the flight, Jennings said: "It showed the blended category has a strong offering; it's a place where real innovation is happening."

### The bonfire hits

The Blended – Super Premium round bestowed a Gold medal upon 17-year-old Islay Mist, which Taylor said offered "sweet toffee apples then the bonfire hits" with "sherbet on the finish".

A tasting of blended malt whiskies aged 12 years and under discovered three Golds and three Silvers. Douglas Laing & Co scored a hat trick of Golds for its Big Peat 12 Years Old, Scallywag 10 Years Old, and Timorous Beastie 10 Years Old expressions.

The Big Peat bottling was lauded by Chambers for being "peaty and earthy on nose, sweet and syrupy with plenty of powerful peat smoke" with a "hot and peppery finish". Fitchner noted Scallywag's hints of "pineapple, red apples and raspberries" while Timorous Beastie 10 Years Old was described by Athavia as "very delicate, almost floral" with a "very woody- vanilla new oak character".

A pair of Golds went to Diageo in the following flight, Blended Malt – Aged between 13 and 18 Years. Old Parr 18 had "nice maltiness on the nose, with icing sugar sweetness and spice on the palate", said Kiely. The "complex and multifaceted" Johnnie Walker Green Label had a "nice combination of oak and fruit", noted Dixon.

The following flight, Blended Malt – No Age Statement, culminated in six Gold medals and three Silvers. Compass Box walked away with four Golds, including for the "spicy and gingery" The Story of the Spaniard, the "herbaceous and vegetal" Peat Monster, The Spice Tree, with "flowers and honey on the nose", and Orchard House, with "sweet red fruits and a gingery finish".

Gold medallist Old Parr Silver had a "slight Sherry nose and a rounded, long finish" while Douglas Laing's The Gauldrons scored a Gold medal with its hints of "dried apricot" and "red strawberries on the nose".

Moving onto super-premium blended malts, and a worthy Master was awarded to Clydebuilt Shipwright. Larsson-Bell said the whisky had a "nose of lillies, apricot jam and a touch of spice. On the palate, it is delicious, exceptionally balanced and super creamy." Abbott noted "leather and toffee" on the nose, alongside "chocolate and dried fruit on the palate, with some sharpness".

Four Golds were given to Berry Bros & Rudd for its Islay Blended Malt Scotch Whisky with its "superb tropical fruits", "creamy, fruity" Speyside Blended Malt Scotch Whisky, Peated Cask Matured Blended Malt Scotch Whisky with its "coastal smokiness" and "chocolatey and toffee-led" Sherry Cask Matured Blended Malt Scotch Whisky.

Also found to be deserving of a Gold medal in this flight was Waterproof, with its notes of "honey, leather and sharp orchard fruit".

A flight of ultra-premium blended grain whisky saw Compass Box's Hedonism secure a Gold medal. Jennings described the whisky as being "delicate and dynamic at the same time" with a "delicious, powdered sugar nose that leads to overripe pears and a warm, wooded finish".



Single grains were assessed next, with Spearhead Single Grain grabbing a Gold medal in the premium round. Wisniewski described it as having “some nice apple, cider and brioche notes coming through with a hint of crème caramel”. The competition progressed to single malts, with whiskies from the Campbeltown region put to the test.

The Aged up to 12 Years round saw Loch Lomond grab a Silver medal for its 10-year-old Glen Scotia whisky. It was followed by the Campbeltown – Aged between 13 and 18 Years round, with Glen Scotia 15 Years Old walking away with a Gold medal. Fichtner enjoyed the expression’s notes of “pink grapefruit, juicy fruit bubblegum and Guadeloupe melon”.

A no-age-statement round of Campbeltown single malts saw a Gold go to the “well- rounded” Glen Scotia Double Cask, with its “nice spiciness and peppery finish”. A tasting of single cask Campbeltown whiskies saw the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS) walk away with the Master accolade for its 93.133 – Apocalypse Cow single malt.

Athavia said: “Without dilution, it’s intense with great complexity, the alcohol is warming instead of burning. With dilution, it’s a bit more elegant, and the balance of fruit and peat is good.”

The final Campbeltown flight to be blind tasted was cask strength single malts with Glen Scotia Victoriana Cask, with its notes of “roasted coffee beans, bananas, pomelo peel, and honey”, taking home Gold.

A selection of single malts from the Highlands and Islands were presented next, starting with expressions aged up to 12 years old. Three Golds were given out, to the “savoury, sweet and textural” Talisker 10 Years Old, the “light and grassy” The Deveron 10 Years Old, and the “bright and tropical” Glencadam 10 Years Old.

In the next age bracket of Highland and Island single malts – aged between 13 and 18 years – seven Gold medallists were found. Among them were Aberfeldy 16 Years Old with its “maritime nose and subtle smokiness”, Aberfeldy Madeira Cask 16 Years Old with “woodfire smoke on the nose”, and Royal Brackla Palo Cortado 18 Years Old, which was “biscuity with some roasted malt notes on the palate”.

Moving onto Highlands & Islands – Aged between 19-30 Years, three Golds were given to Aberfeldy Madeira Cask 21 Years Old, with its “rich ripe melon nose”, “smooth and subtle” Aberfeldy 21 Years Old, and Royal Brackla Oloroso, Palo Cortado and Pedro Ximénez 21 Years Old, lauded for having “red fruits, spices and honey on the nose”.

Three Golds were found in the no-age- statement Highlands and Islands single malt round – Glencadam American Oak Reserve, with its hints of “ripe banana and bubblegum”, the “very woody” and “lightly smoky” Isle of Raasay Single Malt, and Glencadam Reserva Andalucía, noted for its “big and bold Sherried notes”. One Silver rounded off the flight.

Chambers said: “The Highlands and Islands has come across as a strong category; it’s consistently good, with a lovely mix of characteristics.”

Moving onto a single cask flight within the Highlands and Islands, and the SMWS took its second Master medal of the day for 112.55 – The Devil in Pink Silky Pyjamas. Jennings enthused: “A tropical fruit explosion, deceptively drinkable at full strength, and with water it just sings from the rafters ‘drink me all day long’. I adored this.”

Abbott added: “The palate is well integrated, with the briny side and chocolatey sides very well balanced. “A few drops of water take out the heat and reveal rich toffee.” The SMWS also walked away with a Master and Gold medal in the following flight, Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Cask Strength. Master medallist 94.10 – The Gentle Sparkling Beast From the East impressed Athavia with its nose of “tropical coconuts, bananas and melons”.

She said: “The palate is generous and intense with lots of beautiful custard, crème caramel notes.” Gold medal winner 68.51 – Sacher Torte and Simnel Cake was described by Fichtner as “very herbal, with hints of Chartreuse, extremely nutty, marzipan, milk chocolate and mint”.



### Peaty on the palate

The Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Special Edition bestowed a Gold on Isle of Raasay Distillery Special Release, which Athavia praised for being “peaty on the palate but not smoky, which is delicious. Lots of umami – perfect with smoked foods and even barbecued foods.” In more single malts, the Highlands and Islands region was divided by price bracket, with Standard single malts up first. Highland Shepherd Single Malt Scotch Whisky took home a Gold in the round, said to be “subtle and malty on the nose with cereal notes”. Premium bottlings from the Highlands and Islands were evaluated in the next flight. Five Golds were dished out to: Highland Park 12 Years Old, with “touches of almond and spice”; Loch Lomond 12 Years Old: Perfectly Balanced with notes of “tropical fruit and star anise”; Triplewood 2021 Release, with its “oak-focused palate”; “soft and floral” Celtic Revival Single Malt Scotch Whisky; and McKintyre’s Single Malt Scotch Whisky, which had “grassy notes” and a “touch of cream and spice”. The next price tier, super-premium, saw a Master medal go to The Glenturret 10 Years Old Peat Smoked 2021 Release. Prousaefs said: “Peaty and herbaceous on the nose. The palate has depth with peat, red fruits, honey and spice and a long, sweet finish. Very smooth for 50% ABV.” The Glenturret also grabbed a Gold in the flight for the “bold and expressive” 12 Years Old 2021 Release, noted for having “red fruits on the palate and a long Sherry finish at the end”. Highland Park 15 Years Old was the final Gold medallist in the round, with its “green apple and honey notes”.

### Silky smooth

The Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Ultra Premium round awarded a Gold to Highland Park 18 Years Old and a Silver to Highland Park 21 Years Old 2020 Release. Kiely said of the former: “Lovely texture, silky smooth with hints of resin, dried fruits, some cherry and oakiness. Hints of dark chocolate and a lot of complexity. Very good balance.” Scotch whiskies from the Lowlands were judged next, with Bladnoch Alinta taking home Gold in the no-age-statement round. Chambers enjoyed the whisky’s “fudge and toffee” on the nose and “soft and creamy” palate with “plenty of vanilla and citrus peel and lemon zest”. A pair of Masters were discovered in the next flight, Single Malt: Lowland – Premium (£26-£50). The first, Glasgow 1770 Single Malt Scotch Whisky – Triple Distilled, offered notes of “banana and tropical fruit”. Kiely noted: “Fruitiness follows on the palate with caramel and toffee sweetness. A lot of flavour for the price – I’d be very happy to pay this for a bottle.” The other Master winner, Aerstone Land Cask, was praised by Dalton for offering a “complex nose” and a “smooth palate with nice smoke flavours with fresh and dried fruits. A pleasant and long finish.” A Silver medal concluded the flight. The Master standard continued in the super-premium segment of Lowland single malts. Glasgow Distillery Company secured its second Master for Glasgow 1770 Single Malt Scotch Whisky – Sauternes Cask Finish. Fichtner found notes of “sweet paprika powder, Hungarian goulash and manuka honey. Very savoury but sweet at the same time with smoke, pine, and banana flambé.” The Speyside region then came under the spotlight with an array of Golds found in a tasting of single malts aged up to 12 years. Seven Golds were awarded, including Tomintoul 12 Years Old Oloroso Sherry Cask Finish with its “butterscotch nose with a touch of aromatic oak”, Tomintoul 10 Years Old with “creamy toffee and gentle spice that builds”, and The GlenAllachie 8 Years Old, praised for its “floral and red fruit notes”. Other Gold winners included Darkness 8 Years Old, noted for having “vanilla, bubblegum and woody elements on the nose”, The Deveron 12 Years Old with notes of “apple and cinnamon” and “soft and floral” The Singleton of Glen Ord 12 Years Old and stablemate The Singleton of Dufftown 12 Years Old, with its “subtle fruits” and a “touch of cream and spice”. Three Silvers added to the round’s medal tally. The panel stepped up to taste the next age bracket, 13-18 years, with four Golds given out. Bacardi swiped two for its 13-year-old and 17-year-old Craigellachie expressions, with the former praised for its “lovely sweetness on the palate, medjool dates, some ginger cake, and spice”. The latter impressed Kiely with its “big, bold palate, lots of fruit and sweet baking spices”. Glen Grant 18 Years Old scored a Gold with its “nutty nose, smoky aspects and earthy undertones”, while Gold winner Benromach Aged 15 Years was deemed “quite fresh and light for a peaty whisky”. The flight ended with four Silvers. Speyside single malts aged between 19 and 30 years were tasted next, with two Golds awarded to Benromach Aged 21 Years and Aultmore 21 Years Old. The Benromach bottling was said to have “burnt caramel and popcorn aromas, plenty of Sherried fruit and a nutty characteristic, rounded and bold on the palate”. The “silky and luxurious” Aultmore 21 Years Old was described as “juicy and vibrant on the palate with tropical fruits and heather honey”.

## Pastel de nata

A flight of no-age-statement single malts from Speyside resulted in four Golds: Tomintoul Peaty Tang, Tomintoul Tlath, Tomintoul Cigar Malt, and Spey Trutina. Tomintoul Peaty Tang offered a “peaty, vegetal and herbaceous” nose, while Tlath provided a “creamy palate with pastel de nata, vanilla and a very smooth finish”.

Tomintoul Cigar Malt had hints of red fruit, demerara sugar and raisins, and Spey Trutina was described as “juicy with tropical fruits”. One Silver rounded off the flight.

A pair of Masters were unearthed in the Speyside single cask, single malt round. Old Particular Dailuaine 18 Years Old – Old Particular Midnight Series was praised by Prousaefs for its “red fruits, honey and allspice on the nose and palate. The nose is a bit reserved, but the palate is very expressive and complex”.

The other Master winner, “creamy and fruity” 63.63 – Funky Old Bodega from SMWS, was “considerably smooth for the very high ABV” at 66.2%, Prousaefs said. “Very good integration between alcohol and spirit, and a long, smooth finish.” The cask strength segment saw a Gold go to Spey Tenne Cask Strength Batch 3, which Abbott said had a “sweet and jammy” palate with notes of “menthol and building smoke”. The addition of water brought a “fruity sweetness” he added.



## Flowers and honey

The last Speyside single malt flight, Special Edition, resulted in a Master win for Benromach Contrasts: Organic. The expression impressed Prousaefs, who said: “Brilliant on the nose, with red fruit, flowers and honey. The palate is very expressive and smooth, with similar notes, and a long Sherry finish.”

The Islay region was up next, with single malts aged up to 12 years put to the test. Atom Brands took home two Golds for Seaweed & Aeons & Digging & Fire 10 Years Old, and Aerolite Lyndsay. The former had a “complex nose, subtle barbeque and smoke with fresh fruits still breaking through” while the latter expression was enjoyed for its “sticky fudge on the palate”, and “nice texture and good balance – a lovely sipping whisky”.

The Single Malt: Islay – No Age Statement round saw Kilchoman Distillery walk away with a Master for Sanaig, and a Gold for Machir Bay. Chambers said the Master winner had a “bold nose with peat vs Sherry in good balance”, while the palate was “bold and punchy, with caramel and dried fruits, late nuttiness – the smoke holds strong”. Machir Bay impressed with its “elegant, sweet peat on the nose, candied fruits and vanilla”, while the palate offered “white chocolate and vanilla with plenty of lemon zest”.

The last Master of the day was awarded to the SMWS’s 53.324 – Lighthouse to Smokehouse in the Islay single malt, single cask flight. Chambers said: “Punchy and powerful peat on the nose, vanilla custard and peachy on the palate with a pinch of cocoa and gingerbread. The peat is super punchy with lovely acrid coastal notes, seaweed and iodine.”

## Different flavours

The Single Malt: Islay – Standard round saw Glen Marnoch Single Malt Whisky – Islay from Aldi secure a Silver medal. Dixon said of the Islay single malt round: “It showed different flavours. People associate Islay with one thing, it’s very typecast, big smoky peat bomb. But these showed different characteristics and expressions of this style.”

And in the final round of the day, Flavoured Spirit Drink, Diageo’s Black & White Orange was awarded a Silver medal. As with every blind tasting in The Global Spirits Masters series, it was time to pick the cream of the crop from the Master medallists.

Following a tasting of the highest scorers, it was Old Particular Dailuaine 18 Years Old – Part of the Old Particular Midnight Series that was crowned Scotch Whisky Taste Master 2022.

The judges reflected on the Scotch category following the conclusion of the competition. Dalton singled out the Highlands and Islands, and Lowland regions as areas that took him by surprise for their quality.

He said: “They’re the regions with newer distilleries and the ones being more innovative, which is reflected in my scoring. It’s good to see – especially the Lowlands, which are usually seen as fuller whiskies, but the single malts were exceptional.”

Dixon was hugely impressed by the quality found across the competition. He said: “The quality was really exceptional – you can see why Scotch commands such a place in the world whisky market. Price points over-delivered on value for money. In general, looking at the styles, there is literally a whisky for all palates or occasions, moods and contexts.”

### Blended – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Black Label	Gold

### Blended – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Aged 18 Years	Gold

### Blended – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Blue Label	Gold
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Gold Label Reserve	Silver
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Red Label	Silver
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Double Black	Silver
Compass Box	Artist Blend	Silver
Compass Box	Glasgow Blend	Silver
Sassenach Spirits	The Sassenach	Silver
Diageo	Black & White	Silver

### Blended – Standard

Company	Product	Medal
Aldi	Highland Black Blended Scotch Whisky	Silver
MacDuff International	Lauder's Finest	Silver
Lighthouse	Lighthouse Blended Scotch Whisky (unpeated)	Silver

### Blended – Premium

Company	Product	Medal
MacDuff International	Lauder's 15 Years Old	Master
Atom Brands	Green Isle	Gold
MacDuff International	Islay Mist 8 Years Old	Gold
MacDuff International	Islay Mist Original	Silver

### Blended – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
MacDuff International	Islay Mist 17 Years Old	Gold

### Blended Malt – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Douglas Laing & Co	Big Peat 12 Years Old	Gold
Douglas Laing & Co	Scallywag 10 Years Old	Gold
Douglas Laing & Co	Timorous Beastie 10 Years Old	Gold
Diageo	Old Parr 12	Silver

Douglas Laing & Co	The Epicurean 12 Years Old	Silver
The GlenAllachie Distillers Co	MacNair's Lum Reek 10 Years Old Cask Strength Batch 1	Silver

### Blended Malt – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Old Parr 18	Gold
Diageo	Johnnie Walker Green Label	Gold

### Blended Malt – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Compass Box	The Story of the Spaniard	Gold
Compass Box	The Peat Monster	Gold
Compass Box	The Spice Tree	Gold
Compass Box	Orchard House	Gold
Diageo	Old Parr Silver	Gold
Douglas Laing & Co	The Gauldrons	Gold
Diageo	Old Parr Superior	Silver
Diageo	Copper Dog	Silver
Douglas Laing & Co	Rock Island	Silver

### Blended – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Ardgowan Distillery Company	Clydebuilt Shipwright	Master
Berry Bros & Rudd	Islay Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Berry Bros & Rudd	Speyside Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Berry Bros & Rudd	Peated Cask Matured Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
Berry Bros & Rudd	Sherry Cask Matured Blended Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
MacDuff International	Waterproof	Gold

### Blended Grain – Ultra Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Compass Box	Hedonism	Gold

### Single Grain – Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Loch Lomond Group	Spearhead Single Grain	Gold

### Single Malt: Campbeltown – Aged up to 12 Years

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

### Single Malt: Campbeltown – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
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Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia 15 Years Old	Gold
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### Single Malt: Campbeltown – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
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Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia Double Cask	Gold
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### Single Malt: Campbeltown – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
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The Scotch Malt Whisky Society	93.133 – Apocalypse Cow	Master
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### Single Malt: Campbeltown – Cask Strength

Company	Product	Medal
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Loch Lomond Group	Glen Scotia Victoriana Cask Strength	Gold
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### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
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Diageo	Talisker 10 Years Old	Gold
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	The Deveron 10 Years Old	Gold
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Angus Dundee Distillers	Glencadam 10 Years Old	Gold
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Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 10 Years Old	Silver
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aberfeldy 12 Years Old	Silver
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Royal Brackla Oloroso 12 Years Old	Silver
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### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aberfeldy 16 Years Old	Gold
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aberfeldy Madeira Cask 16 Years Old	Gold
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Angus Dundee Distillers	Glencadam 17 Years Old Port Cask Finish	Gold
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Angus Dundee Distillers	Glencadam 15 Years Old	Gold
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Royal Brackla Palo Cortado 18 Years Old	Gold
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Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 18 Years Old	Gold
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Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 14 Years Old	Gold
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### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Aged between 19-30 Years

Company	Product	Medal
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aberfeldy Madeira Cask 21 Years Old	Gold
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aberfeldy 21 Years Old	Gold
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Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Royal Brackla Oloroso, Palo Cortado and Pedro Ximénez 21 Years Old	Gold
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### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
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Angus Dundee Distillers	Glencadam American Oak Reserve	Gold
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Isle of Raasay Distillery	Isle of Raasay Single Malt	Gold
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Angus Dundee Distillers	Glencadam Reserva Andalucía	Gold
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Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond Original	Silver
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### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	112.55 – The Devil in Pink Silky Pyjamas	Master

### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Cask Strength

Company	Product	Medal
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	94.10 – The Gentle Sparkling Beast From the East	Master
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	68.51 – Sacher Torte and Simnel cake	Gold

### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Special Edition

Company	Product	Medal
Isle of Raasay Distillery	Isle of Raasay Distillery Special Release	Gold

### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Standard

Company	Product	Medal
Highland Shepherd	Highland Shepherd Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold

### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Edrington	Highland Park 12 Years Old	Gold
Loch Lomond Group	Loch Lomond 12 Years Old: Perfectly Balanced	Gold
The Glenturret	Triplewood 2021 Release	Gold
Celtic Revival Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Celtic Revival Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold
McKintyre's Single Malt Scotch Whisky	McKintyre's Single Malt Scotch Whisky	Gold

### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
The Glenturret	10 Years Old Peat Smoked 2021 Release	Master
Edrington	Highland Park 15 Years Old	Gold
The Glenturret	12 Years Old 2021 Release	Gold

### Single Malt: Highlands & Islands – Ultra Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Edrington	Highland Park 18 Years Old	Gold
Edrington	Highland Park 21 Years Old 2020 Release	Silver

### Single Malt: Lowland – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Bladnoch Distillery	Bladnoch Alinta	Gold

### Single Malt: Lowland – Premium (£26-£50)

Company	Product	Medal
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Glasgow Distillery Company	Glasgow 1770 Single Malt Scotch Whisky – Triple Distilled	Master
William Grant & Sons UK	Aerstone Land Cask	Master
William Grant & Sons UK	Aerstone Sea Cask	Silver

### Single Malt: Lowland – Super Premium

Company	Product	Medal
Glasgow Distillery Company	Glasgow 1770 Single Malt Scotch Whisky – Sauternes Cask Finish	Master

### Single Malt: Speyside – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Angus Dundee Distillers	Tomintoul 12 Years Old Oloroso Sherry Cask Finish	Gold
Angus Dundee Distillers	Tomintoul 10 Years Old	Gold
Diageo	The Singleton of Glen Ord 12 Years Old	Gold
Diageo	The Singleton of Dufftown 12 Years Old	Gold
Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	The Deveron 12 Years Old	Gold
Atom Brands	Darkness 8 Year Old	Gold
The GlenAllachie Distillers Co	The GlenAllachie 8-Year-Old	Gold
Diageo	The Singleton of Glendullan 12 Years Old	Silver
Aldi	12 Years Old Speyside Single Malt Whisky	Silver
Benromach Distillery Company	Benromach Aged 10 Years	Silver

### Single Malt: Speyside – Aged between 13-18 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Glen Grant	Glen Grant 18 Years Old	Gold
Benromach Distillery Company	Benromach Aged 15 Years	Gold
Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Craigellachie 17 Years Old	Gold
Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Craigellachie 13 Years Old	Gold
Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aultmore 18 Years Old	Silver
Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aultmore 12 Years Old	Silver
Angus Dundee Distillers	Tomintoul 16 Year Old	Silver
Glen Grant	Glen Grant 15 Years Old	Silver

### Single Malt: Speyside – Aged between 19-30 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Benromach Distillery Company	Benromach Aged 21 Years	Gold
Bacardi   John Dewar & Sons	Aultmore 21 Years Old	Gold

### Single Malt: Speyside – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Angus Dundee Distillers	Tomintoul Peaty Tang	Gold
Angus Dundee Distillers	Tomintoul Tlàth	Gold

Angus Dundee Distillers	Tomintoul Cigar Malt	Gold
Speyside Distillers Company	Spey Trutina	Gold
Speyside Distillers Company	Spey Tenne	Silver

### Single Malt: Speyside – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
Douglas Laing & Co	Old Particular Dailuaine 18 Year Old – Part of the Old Particular Midnight Series	Master & Taste Master
Scotch Malt Whisky Society	63.63 – Funky Old Bodega	Master

### Single Malt: Speyside – Cask Strength

Company	Product	Medal
Speyside Distillers Company	Spey Tenne Cask Strength Batch 3	Gold

### Single Malt: Speyside – Special Edition

Company	Product	Medal
Benromach Distillery Company	Benromach Contrasts: Organic	Master

### Single Malt: Islay – Aged up to 12 Years

Company	Product	Medal
Atom Brands	Seaweed & Aeons & Digging & Fire	Gold
Atom Brands	Aerolite Lyndsay	Gold

### Single Malt: Islay – No Age Statement

Company	Product	Medal
Kilchoman Distillery	Kilchoman Sanaig	Master
Kilchoman Distillery	Kilchoman Machir Bay	Gold

### Single Malt: Islay – Single Cask

Company	Product	Medal
The Scotch Malt Whisky Society	53.324 – Lighthouse to smokehouse	Master

### Single Malt: Islay – Standard

Company	Product	Medal
Aldi	Glen Marnoch Single Malt Whisky – Islay	Silver

### Flavoured Spirit Drink

Company	Product	Medal
Diageo	Black & White Orange	Silver