

# Kingston Single Malt Society

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

A social club for the appreciation of Single Malt Whisky since 1998  
DECEMBER 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 VOLUME 13; NUMBER 6



## MENU

Welcome & 1<sup>st</sup> Nosing: BENRINNES 12 YEARS OLD  
(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

2<sup>nd</sup> Nosing: BALLECHIN 10 YEARS OLD  
(introduced by: Bill Gorham)

Soup: Buttercup Squash & Maple Soup,  
Pumpkin Seeds, Pumpkin Oil, Sourdough Croutons

3<sup>rd</sup> Nosing: GLENKINCHIE 12 YEAR OLD  
(introduced by: John Creber)

2<sup>nd</sup> Course: Trio of Bruschetta,  
Beets, Copanata, Peperonata, Arugula, Romano

Repos - 4<sup>th</sup> Nosing: BUNNAHABHAIN STIÙIREADAIR  
(introduced by: Conrad Falkson)

5<sup>th</sup> Nosing: GLEN SCOTIA 2003 RUM FINISH 2019  
CAMPBELTOWN FESTIVAL BOTTLING  
(introduced by: Douglas Perkins)

Choice of Main Course Entree:

Grilled Salmon, Curried Lentils, Green Beans  
Or

Roasted Turkey, Mashed Yukon Gold, Stuffing,  
Carrots, Brussels, Cranberry Sauce, Gravy

6<sup>th</sup> Nosing: JURA 18 YEARS OLD  
(introduced by: John Leighton)

Dessert: Chocolate Kahlua Torte,  
Chocolate Ganache & Fresh Berries

## COST OF THE MALTS

**BENRINNES 12 YEARS OLD SINGLE CASK - JOHN MILROY SELECTION** Distilled: 2006; Bottled: 2019; Cask # 309925;  
**Wood: Refill Hogshead; Unchillfiltered; Natural Colour** LCBO  
411090 | 750 mL bottle **Price \$131.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey,  
Scotch Single Malts, 54.9% Alcohol/Vol.

**BALLECHIN 10 YEARS OLD** SINGLE MALT LCBO 183400 | 700  
mL bottle **Price: \$93.75** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, 46.0%  
Alcohol/Vol.

**GLENKINCHIE 12 YEAR OLD** LOWLAND SINGLE MALT LCBO  
69435 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$90.20** Spirits, Scotch Whisky,  
43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**BUNNAHABHAIN STIÙIREADAIR** LCBO 10742 | 750 mL bottle  
**Price: \$65.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Whisky, 46.11%  
Alcohol/Vol.

**GLEN SCOTIA 2003 RUM FINISH 2019 CAMPBELTOWN  
FESTIVAL BOTTLING** VINTAGES 555656 | 700 mL bottle **Price:**  
**\$145.95** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts, 51.3%  
Alcohol/Vol.

**JURA 18 YEARS OLD** LCBO 578419 | 750 mL bottle **Price:**  
**\$147.30** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, 44.0% Alcohol/Vol.

## NOVEMBER - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 54 November attendees @ \$70) = \$3780.00  
November dinner 54 persons = \$45.00/ea = \$2430.00  
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt) = \$1350.00  
Cost of Single Malts: = \$1361.00  
Cost of Pours per Person = \$25.20  
KSMS Monthly operational balance = (-\$11.00)  
Cost per person 26 attendees (All inclusive) = \$70.20

## November Raffle Result

Congratulations to Joe Mezzatesta  
winner of the Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban 12 YO  
During the course of the raffle  
a total of \$300 was raised.  
Thank you everyone!

## Upcoming Dinner Dates

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Robbie Burns - Speyside / Highlands / Islay  
Friday February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Ardbeg Night  
February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Highlands / Islands  
March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Irish / Speyside / Highlands  
April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Campbeltown / Islands / Islay  
May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Campbeltown / Speyside  
June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 - BBQ (Final Exam)  
July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - 9<sup>th</sup> "Matt" Night  
Friday August 28<sup>th</sup> 2020 - 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Premium Night  
September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside /  
Highlands / Islands / Islay  
October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Speyside / Highlands  
November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Speyside  
December 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 - Christmas Dinner  
January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Robbie Burns - Speyside / Highlands / Islay  
February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Speyside / Highlands / Islay

March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Irish / Speyside / Highlands  
 April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Campbeltown / Islands / Islay  
 May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Campbeltown / Speyside  
 June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - BBQ (Final Exam)  
 July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - 10<sup>th</sup> "Matt" Night  
 Friday August 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 - 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Premium Night  
 September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside /  
 Highlands / Islands / Islay  
 October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Speyside / Highlands  
 November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Speyside  
 December 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 - Christmas Dinner

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### Mortlach is final single malt in Game of Thrones range

6th November, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

Diageo is set to launch the final bottling in its limited edition Game of Thrones Single Malt Collection, a 15-year-old Mortlach whisky.



*"Mortlach is one of our most sought-after super-premium single malts", according to Diageo*

The new whisky, called Six Kingdoms – Mortlach Single Malt Scotch Whisky Aged 15 Years, is the ninth and final bottling to join the *Game of Thrones*-inspired range.

The UK drinks giant teamed up with the show's network HBO to [produce the range of single malt Scotch whiskies](#) in celebration of the eighth and final series of *Game of Thrones* this year.

"Eight fantastic Scotches toasted the coming of the final season of the show, and we now look back on the most captivating television show of all time and raise a ninth glass in celebration," said Jeff Peters, vice president, licensing and retail at HBO.

Six Kingdoms (46% ABV) is inspired by the finale of the show and pays tribute to the fate of fictional continent Westeros, when the fictitious realm's Seven Kingdoms became six after the North became independent under queen Sansa Stark.

The new whisky has been matured in first-fill Sherry-seasoned casks and finished in American oak ex-Bourbon casks. It is said to have a fruity character and a "bold, smooth taste with notes of vanilla and spice".

The expression is recommended served neat, over ice or with a small amount of water, which "develops the fresh fruit characters".

Speyside distillery Mortlach, which was built on the site of a historic battle, is thought to be Dufftown's first legal distillery. George Cowie took over ownership of the distillery in 1853.

According to Diageo, Cowie and his son Alexander were "integral influences" for both the distillery and community. Alexander developed Mortlach's signature method of distilling the liquid 2.81 times – a process said to be as unique as the show's Three-Eyed Raven character.

**'Most sought-after'**

The whisky is presented in a metallic gold canister featuring a pen and ink drawing of the Three-Eyed Raven. The design pays homage to the independence of the north, which was granted by Bran Stark, who served as the Three-Eyed Raven. He was chosen as king of the Six Kingdoms in the finale.

"We saw an overwhelmingly positive response to the launch of the Game of Thrones Limited Edition Single Malt Scotch Whisky Collection and as *Game of Thrones* fans continue to explore both the world of whisky and the world of Westeros, we are proud to introduce the final addition to the collection," said Kavita Agarwal, Diageo global brand director, malts.

"Mortlach is one of our most sought-after super-premium single malts, and seemed fitting as the perfect finale to complete the collection."

Game of Thrones Six Kingdoms – Mortlach Aged 15 Years will be available in "extremely limited quantities" in the US this December for US\$150 per 750ml. It will be sold online at [reservebar.com](#) and in select retailers.

In the UK, the whisky is available for pre-order for £120 (US\$154.50) per 700ml on Amazon and will be released on 25 November. It will also be available in select retailers.

In addition to the single malt range, Diageo's blended Scotch whisky brand Johnnie Walker launched two limited edition *Game of Thrones*-themed expressions, [called A Song of Ice and A Song of Fire](#).

The partnership between Diageo and HBO began in October 2018 with the release of blended Scotch whisky [White Walker by Johnnie Walker](#).

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### Highland Park Triskelion brings together three master whisky makers

7th November, 2019 by Owen Bellwood

Edrington-owned Scotch brand Highland Park has brought together three master whisky makers to collaborate on single malt release Triskelion.



*Gordon Motion (left), John Ramsay (centre) and Max McFarlane (right) collaborated on Triskelion*

Current Highland Park master distiller Gordon Motion worked with [former master whisky maker Max McFarlane](#) and master whisky maker emeritus John Ramsay to produce Triskelion, which brought together more than 100 years of whisky-making experience. Launching globally this month, Highland Park Triskelion uses whisky matured in a combination of first-fill Sherry-seasoned Spanish oak butts, first-fill Sherry-seasoned American oak casks and first-fill Bourbon barrels and hogsheads.



*Highland Park Triskelion was matured in three different types of cask* These three principal cask types were balanced with a small quantity of refill casks to add "a degree of softness" to the whisky.

Motion said: "It was fun and a real honour to work again with John and Max. We decided to create an un-aged single malt as this gave us complete flexibility to consider a whole range of different cask types,

flavour profiles as well as ages. To quote John Ramsay 'You don't need an age statement to deliver real quality'.

"It took us a while to agree on the final flavour profile, but we are very proud of the result – it tested our skill set, our craftsmanship but not our friendship!"

The "deep russet" coloured spirit is said to have aromas of "Seville oranges, coriander seeds, crème brûlée, cloudy honey, lightly peated with a hint of rose". On the palate, it is said to have notes of "orange peel, apricots, cumin, vanilla and light smoke".

Bottled at 45.1% ABV, Highland Park Triskelion carries an RRP of £170 (US\$218) in the UK.

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## Glen Scotia unveils rum cask-finished single malt

17th June, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

Scotch whisky distillery Glen Scotia has released a limited edition single malt finished in a rum cask to celebrate the Campbeltown Malts Festival.



*Glen Scotia Campbeltown Malts Festival 2019 Limited Edition Rum Cask Finish is limited to 9,500 bottles* To mark its biggest festival events programme, the distillery has released Glen Scotia Campbeltown Malts Festival 2019 Limited Edition Rum Cask Finish.

The Campbeltown Malts Festival was held last month (21-24 May) in celebration of single malts from the whisky-producing region.

The 2003 vintage has been bottled at cask strength 51.3% abv and is non-chill-filtered.

Limited to 9,500 bottles worldwide, the expression is described as having "sea spray and sweetness on the nose, with notes of melted brown sugar, pineapple and citrus fruits developing before delivering a long dry finish, with spice and sweet peat".

Iain McAlister, distillery manager

at Glen Scotia, said: "Our new limited edition rum cask single malt offers whisky fans something very special, bringing together the maritime influences associated with Campbeltown and the sweet, tropical notes of rum – another sea-faring spirit.

"As someone who was born and bred in Campbeltown, I am very proud of our distinctive history and heritage. I hope whisky lovers have fun discovering our latest exceptional single malt."

In October last year, Glen Scotia [adopted 100,000 bees](#) to help "preserve the endangered species" and improve the company's sustainability credentials.

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## GlenAllachie adds 10-year-old to Cask Strength series

7th October, 2019 by Melita Kiely

Speyside distillery GlenAllachie is celebrating two years since coming under new ownership with the launch of Batch 3 of its Cask Strength series, plus five new single cask bottlings.



*GlenAllachie has released six cask strength whiskies*

Batch 3 of GlenAllachie's Cask Strength series is a 10-year-old single malt that was matured in first- and second-fill Bourbon barrels, a PX puncheon, an oloroso hogshead and virgin oak casks.

Bottled at 58.2% ABV, the whisky was chosen by [master distiller Billy Walker](#), who [took over the distillery with Trisha Savage and Graham Stevenson](#) on 3 October 2017.

A total of 3,500 cases of Batch 3 will be made available globally, priced at £58.99 (US\$72) per bottle. The whisky is said to have notes of dark chocolate, heather honey, sweet spices and orange peel.

Furthermore, GlenAllachie has released five single cask, single malts exclusively in the UK. The range comprises a 10-year-old matured in a Marsala hogshead (57.4% ABV, RRP £85/ US\$105); a 12-year-old aged in a Madeira hogshead (60.8% ABV, RRP £95/ US\$117); a 13-year-old from a PX hogshead (60.1% ABV, RRP £100/ US\$123); a 15-year-old aged in an oloroso puncheon (56.7% ABV, RRP £110/ US\$135); and an 18-year-old matured in a PX puncheon (55.1% ABV, RRP £135/ US\$166). Walker said: "A lot has happened and changed since we took over exactly two years ago – from opening our new visitor centre to winning the Scottish Whisky Distillery of the Year award last month.

"One thing that hasn't changed, however, is our dedication to selecting the finest casks from the stocks we're fortunate to have in our warehouses and using our passion for wood management to bring whisky fans truly exceptional releases.

"Batch 3 of our Cask Strength series, and the new collection of five single casks, are wonderful examples of the exceptional whisky that can be found among our 50,000 casks."

This year has seen numerous milestones for the company, [including opening The GlenAllachie visitor centre and shop in May](#) – the first time visitors have been welcomed on site since the distillery was built in 1967.

The team has also grown over the last two years from seven employees to 22, including the recent addition of Ronan Currie to the sales team.

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## Big Peat prepares for Christmas 2019

23rd September, 2019 by Melita Kiely

Independent whisky bottler Douglas Laing is gearing up for the festive season with the release of a cask strength Christmas expression under its Big Peat brand.



*Big Peat Christmas 2019 is available globally from specialist whisky retailers*

This year marks 10 years of Big Peat, which has grown at an average rate of 29% year-on-year since 2009, according to Douglas Laing. Big Peat Christmas 2019 is a blend of Islay single malt whiskies that have been bottled without chill filtration.

It is available to purchase from Scotch whisky retailers globally, including Europe, the US and select Asian markets, priced at RRP €55 (US\$60) per bottle.

Fred Laing, chairman of Douglas Laing, said: "Roll out the barrel – let's have a barrel of fun" was seldom a more appropriate refrain than for this year's Christmas bottling.

"Every year we create a slightly different seasonal recipe but always use the same Islay single malts, which include amongst others Ardbeg, Bowmore, Caol Ila and even some soft, chewed-leathery Port Ellen; but we do so in different proportions, releasing it as cask strength – this year, a punchy 53.7% alcohol strength."

Earlier this year, Douglas Laing released a limited edition Big Peat blended malt to raise money for the RAF Benevolent charity, called [Big Peat The RAF Edition](#).

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## LOCH LOMOND DEBUTS 25-YEAR-OLD THREE WOOD

08 July 2019 by Matt Evans

Highland whisky distillery Loch Lomond has released Loch Lomond Three Wood Matured 25 Year Old, a limited edition single malt commemorating the 1997 Ryder Cup victory of the distillery's golf ambassador, Colin Montgomerie.



*Open mind: The whisky commemorating a Ryder Cup shot has been released in time for the Open*

The whisky was initially laid down in refill American oak casks before undergoing secondary maturations in a combination of first-fill Limousin French oak and ex-oloroso Sherry casks for up to six months. Three Wood is named after Montgomerie's famous winning shot of the 1997 Ryder Cup contest between Europe and the US, made using a three wood club. Montgomerie said: 'Scotland is world-renowned for both our whisky and our unrivalled golf courses – I am thrilled that the [Loch Lomond](#) Three Wood Matured 25 Year Old will celebrate both worlds.

'My shot [in 1997] is one that will live long in the memory for me and to know that it has inspired a single malt which carries my signature is a huge honour.'

Created by Montgomerie in partnership with Loch Lomond master blender Michael Henry, the whisky is said to be full of 'fruit notes of peach and pear', with 'cloves and cinnamon' on the finish. Bottled at 46.3% abv, only 500 bottles of the Three Wood expression have been released worldwide, priced at £250.

Last year, Loch Lomond announced a five-year partnership with The Open Championship golf tournament, declaring itself the '[spirit of the Open](#)'.

This latest limited edition release comes shortly before the start of The Open Championship 2019, which begins on 14 July at Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland.

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## Glencairn is official glassware for Council of Whiskey Masters

30th October, 2019 by Melita Kiely

Education and certification body The Council of Whiskey Masters has partnered with Glencairn to exclusively endorse the crystal glassware producer across its courses.



*Glencairn is the official glassware for Council of Whiskey Masters*

[The Council of Whiskey Masters recently launched a certification programme](#) for whiskey professionals, leading to the level one title of 'certified Scotch professional' or 'certified Bourbon professional'.

The self-study courses culminate in an exam that can be taken anywhere in the world.

Jörn Kleinhans, executive director at The Council of Whiskey Masters, said: "Glencairn is the perfect complement to our study and

certification programme; we are confident in recommending the Glencairn glass to our candidates as the best whiskey glass to accompany their studies.

"It is important that our students not only become competent in whiskey but also understand and appreciate the importance of using the best tools to enhance the whiskey drinking experience."

The Glencairn partnership with The Council of Whiskey Masters comes as the education body prepares to announce a list of leading whisk(e)y experts who will be joining the advisory board.

Jason Kennedy, sales director at Glencairn Crystal, said: "Glencairn Crystal is excited to recognise the great opportunity of a worldwide consistent education path dedicated to whiskey.

"The four-level study and exam programme provided by The Council of Whiskey Masters may assist the overall industry with a clear education path, as well as transparency on competence within the global whiskey professional community."

In October last year, Glencairn was named the [official whisky glass of US trade body the Distilled Spirits Council](#).

Earlier this year, the glassware manufacturer [reported its 15<sup>th</sup> year of consecutive growth](#) after turnover topped £11.3 million (US\$14.2m).

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## Glen Moray Scotch launches cocktail bitters

28th October, 2019 by Amy Hopkins

Speyside distillery Glen Moray is aiming to promote the use of single malt Scotch in cocktails with the launch of its own bitters.



*Glen Moray Bitters is aiming to engage with on-trade with single malt Scotch* Glen Moray Bitters has been created by macerating and distilling rosemary and pepper with natural quinquina, dry gentian, absinthe, angelica and whisky. Described as a "perfect addition" to an Old Fashioned cocktail, the new product aims to "change perceptions around the use of single malt whiskies as an ingredient in cocktails".

Spirits experts Neil Ridley and Joel Harrison recently hosted a series of Old Fashioned masterclasses to showcase the bitters in the run-up to Old Fashioned

Week (1-10 November). The bitters will also be showcased in masterclasses, pop-ups and food and drink festivals in the UK over the coming months.

With an ABV of 46%, bottles of Glen Moray Bitters are available for the UK on-trade to buy direct from Glen Moray's sales team.

Brand owner La Martiniquaise-Bardinet also launched its Griottines Cherries in the UK this month.

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## Auchentoshan 'steps away from stereotypes' with new branding

28th October, 2019 by Owen Bellwood

Beam Suntory-owned Scotch whisky Auchentoshan has updated its packaging design with the aim of encouraging younger drinkers to "share, mix and enjoy".



**Auchentoshan's new "bold" design incorporates a city skyline**  
 Beam Suntory hopes the new branding will help Auchentoshan step away from "traditional stereotypes" of single malt Scotch whisky by taking the whisky to new places, including bars, offices and shared working spaces in cities across the world. The new packaging design, which will roll out globally, aims to capture how Auchentoshan is "born and raised in the city" of Glasgow. The new "bold" design incorporates a city skyline, tasting notes and a focus on the brand's "urban heritage". Eileen Livingston, senior director of Scotch whisky for Beam Suntory at Auchentoshan, said: "Auchentoshan is a whisky that knows the ins and outs of the city. It is honest, innovative, disruptive and fun to be around. This is reflected within our bold new packaging design. We want to connect with a younger generation of drinker that would enjoy a more approachable, accessible and more experiential drinking experience of single malt." "Auchentoshan is the urban city single malt whisky, unlike typical single malts. With our three copper stills, located right in the heart of Glasgow, we always pay homage to the city and bring to life the urban cityscape that is our home that we want to take to the world." Earlier this month the [Beam Suntory-owned Scotch whisky brand announced it was "shaking up" its travel retail offerings](#) by replacing its Springwood and Heartwood Scotch whiskies with American Oak Reserve and Dark Oak, respectively.

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**SMOKY & FRUITY: PEATED SHERRY CASK WHISKIES UNDER \$100**

by [Stephanie Moreno](#) - October 30, 2019

Peated whisky is quite a polarizing drink. You either love or hate that smoky, earthy goodness. Fortunately for those of us who love it, there are a wide range of options to choose—from Scottish single malts to Japanese blends. More notably en vogue at the moment are whiskies which have been aged in sherry casks. Typically these will be former oloroso or Pedro Ximénez casks made from European oak. These casks bring a fruity richness to the party. But what if you brought the two worlds together ala Reese's Peanut Butter cups? Peated sherry cask whiskies—two great tastes that taste great together! Again, there's a whole world of peated sherry cask whiskies out there for you to try. You can begin your journey with any/all of these suggestions. Plus, each can be had for under \$100.

**[ARDBEG UIGEADAIL](#)**

First launched in 2003, Ardbeg Uigeadail [Oog-a-dal] is a marriage of some young and some very old oloroso sherry aged single malt along with Ardbeg aged in ex-bourbon barrels. The name Uigeadail means "a dark, mysterious place". Fun to say and even more fun to drink. It is also the name of the loch from which Ardbeg gets its water. This expression is bottled at cask strength with no age statement.



**Ardbeg Uigeadail / Photo Credit: Ardbeg**  
[KILCHOMAN LOCH GORM \(2019 RELEASE\)](#)  
 Loch Gorm is the name of the series from Kilchoman which features single malts matured exclusively in sherry casks. The 2019 Release for Kilchoman Loch Gorm includes single malts distilled in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011. All were matured fully in ex-oloroso sherry butts. Additionally, only 15,000 bottles were produced from the twenty sherry butts used for this release. This whisky is bottled at 46% ABV.  
[BOWMORE 15 YEAR](#)  
 Fans of peated sherry cask whisky, step right up! Bowmore 15 Year is aged in a combination of ex-bourbon and sherry casks. However, it's the portion of the whisky that ages the final 3 years in first fill sherry casks that really gives this whisky that deep rich color and fruity taste. Note: this expression was formerly called [Bowmore Darkest 15 Year](#).



**Bowmore 15 Year / Photo Credit: Bowmore**  
[COMPASS BOX GREAT KING ST GLASGOW BLEND](#)  
 Compass Box's Great King Street line of blended whiskies has a new addition with the Glasgow Blend. Created to highlight a more robust and smoky whisky as, according to some, historically Glaswegians preferred this style, the brand has succeeded in doing just that. A blend with a large (67%) malt base, Compass Box uses a combination of barrels for aging: first fill sherry, first and refill ex-bourbon, and a small amount of new French oak barrels.  
[LAGAVULIN DISTILLERS EDITION](#)  
 Pedro Ximénez, or PX, is a style of sherry wine that is noted for its extreme sweetness. Without going into too much of the production details, PX grapes are dried in the sun prior to being pressed and fermented which concentrates the sugars. Lagavulin, with its bold peaty and salty profile takes on this wine finishing incredibly well and creates an enticing sweet and savory dram. There is a new Distillers Edition released each year with the distillation and bottle date displayed.



**Lagavulin Distillers Edition**

**[BENROMACH PEAT SMOKE SHERRY CASK MATURED 2010](#)**

Benromach Peat Smoke Sherry Cask Matured was distilled in 2010 and made with heavily-peated malted barley. The single malt matured in first-fill sherry hogsheads until it was bottled in 2018 at 59.9% ABV. This bottling marks the first time the brand has released a peated sherry cask whisky. Only 6,500 bottles of this limited edition were created. It is available as of March 2019 in select markets.

**[NIKKA TAKETSURU PURE MALT](#)**

Taketsuru Pure Malt, released in the summer of 2015 without an age statement, replace the now extinct aged Taketsuru expressions. It is a blend of malts averaging 10 years of age, with a high percentage of Miyagikyo malt, with some Yoichi added in. The whiskies were aged in different cask types, including ex-sherry barrels.

Nikka Taketsuru Pure Malt / Photo Credit: Nikka Whisky

**[HIGHLAND PARK 12 YEAR VIKING HONOR](#)**

Highland Park is renowned for its usage of peat and for its exclusive use of ex-sherry casks. The climate on the Orkney Islands is quite windy and sea swept creating a dismal environment for trees. As such, the Orcadian peat bogs have more heather, grass and plants than those on Islay. Highland Park 12 Year got a name upgrade (Viking Honor) and package redesign in 2017, although the juice remains the same as the [classic 12 Year release](#).

**[BUNNAHABHAIN TOITEACH A DHA](#)**

The sequel to [Bunnahabhain Toiteach](#) which means “smoky” in Gaelic, Toiteach A Dhà means “smoky two”. While Bunnahabhain isn’t necessarily known for creating peaty whiskies, the Toiteach release was so popular that this follow up was created. This takes the Bunnahabhain Mòine whisky and matures it in ex-bourbon and sherry casks in the brand’s coastal warehouses on Bunnahabhain Bay. This peated sherry cask whisky is bottled at 46.3% ABV without chill-filtration.

**Cardhu visitor centre upgrade marks ‘major milestone’**

8th August, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

Diageo has been granted planning permission to renovate the Cardhu Distillery visitor experience in Speyside, the final project to gain approval as part of the firm’s £150 million (US\$215m) investment in Scotch whisky tourism.



*Cardhu will become the “Speyside home” of Johnnie Walker*

Johnnie Walker owner Diageo [lodged the planning application](#) with Moray Council to “transform” the visitor experience at Cardhu in April 2019.

The Smirnoff maker unveiled its [£150m Scotch whisky tourism investment plans](#) in April last year, which also includes a new “state-of-the-art” Johnnie Walker experience in Edinburgh. The Johnnie Walker centre plans [were approved in April this year](#).

Cardhu is one of four Diageo-owned Scotch whisky distilleries chosen to represent the ‘four corners of Scotland’ as part of the parent company’s tourism investment plans. The other three distilleries are Glenkinchie in the Lowlands, Caol Isla in Islay and Clynelish in the Highlands.

The approval marks a “major milestone” for the UK drinks giant, which has now secured the green light for all of its transformation projects. Cardhu’s revamped visitor centre will highlight the story of Helen and Elizabeth Cumming, the women who established and ran the distillery in the 19th century. Meanwhile, plans for new external landscaping around the distillery will enhance access and create a new orchard space for visitors.

‘Important step’

David Cutter, chairman of Diageo in Scotland, said: “We are delighted to have received planning permission for the transformation of Cardhu Distillery in Speyside.

“This gives us the green light on all of our key Johnnie Walker tourism investment projects from Edinburgh to the four corners of Scotland.” Cristina Diezhandino, Diageo global Scotch whisky director, said: “This is another important step on our journey to create visitor experiences for Johnnie Walker in Scotland as we prepare to celebrate the brand’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, and as we work to make new generations of people around the world fall in love with Johnnie Walker, Scotch whisky and Scotland.”

Laura Sharp, Cardhu Distillery brand home manager, added: “This announcement is very exciting and we want to thank Moray Council and all our neighbours for their continued support.

“This is an important step forward on our journey to transform Cardhu’s visitor experience and everyone involved is very much looking forward to work getting underway.

“Speyside is a hugely important part of the Scotch whisky tourism map and we are very excited to bring new visitors to the region.”

**Aberfeldy debuts Bordeaux wine cask-finished whisky**

29th October, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

Bacardi has expanded its Aberfeldy single malt Scotch whisky range with the launch of a 15-year-old expression finished in Bordeaux wine casks.



*Aberfeldy 15 Years Old is bottled at 43% ABV*

To create Aberfeldy 15 Years Old, red wine casks from Pomerol were selected to finish the limited edition bottling. It spent 15 years in a combination of Bourbon re-fill and re-charred casks, followed by a second maturation period of around four to five months.

The use of Pomerol casks “intensifies Aberfeldy’s signature honeyed fruitiness with luscious layers of red berries and stone fruits”, according to malt master Stephanie Macleod.

Wines from Pomerol are said to be “powerful and robust”, providing Aberfeldy with “ripe fruit notes”.

Pomerol is the smallest of all the major Bordeaux wine-producing appellations and is said to be home to some of the most expensive wines in the world.

Bottled at 43% ABV, Aberfeldy 15 Years Old is priced at £55 (US\$70.80) and is available to buy in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK.

The project has been the subject of a pre-planning application, with a full planning application being prepared for January 2020. The duo plan to open the distillery by the Fèis Ile festival in Islay in 2021.

### Islay Ales owner seeks funding to build rum and whisky distillery

29th October, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

The businessmen behind Islay Ales are planning to build a combined brewery and distillery, which will produce single malt and the Scottish island's "first" rum.



L-r: Donald MacKenzie and MacKay Smith, founders of Scotch whisky bottler The Islay Boys

Independent Scotch whisky bottler The Islay Boys, owner of Islay Ales brewery, is looking to relocate its Islay Ales site in Bridgend to a site at Glenegedale in Laggan Bay.

The new one-hectare site, which will incorporate a whisky and rum distillery, will be called Laggan Bay Brewery & Distillery. The distillery will have the capacity to produce 150,000 litres of pure alcohol and a 1.5 tonne mash tun. The site will use double distillation in traditional copper pot stills – a 7,500-litre wash still and a 5,000-litre spirit still. The site will also have a multiple plate column still for rum production. It will also include an upgrade of its brewery from a four-barrel capacity to 12 barrels.

The Islay Boys is owned by two local businessmen, Donald MacKenzie and MacKay Smith. The pair purchased Islay Ales, the island's only brewery, in 2018.

MacKenzie was trained in whisky production by Jim McEwan at Bruichladdich and has "extensive" experience in the distribution of spirits, mostly in France.

Smith has managed a number of projects, from strategy development to implementation, as well as supporting alcohol companies to export from Scotland. He has worked in sales of Scottish craft spirits and beer in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific.

The duo launched their single malt Scotch whisky brands Flatnose and Bärelegs six years ago. The brands are available in around 15 countries.

Jim McEwan and Scott Williams of independent Scottish brewery Williams Bros will act as advisors to the new site, using their combined knowledge in spirits and beer.

'Islay's first rum'

"As Islay boys, we are delighted to announce our plans for a major expansion of our brewery Islay Ales, adding a craft distillery for peated Islay single malt, and more radically, Islay's first rum, with the world's best distiller, Jim McEwan, a fellow Islay boy, giving us a big helping hand," MacKenzie said.

McEwan retired as production director and master distiller of Bruichladdich Distillery in 2015.

MacKenzie and Smith are currently seeking fundraising for the new site and are looking for 500 investors to join Laggan Bay as shareholders in the new 500 Founders Club.

Each investor will be required to provide £10,000 (US\$12,850), which is split into £7,000 (US\$9,000) for a first-fill ex-Bourbon barrel of either peated whisky or molasses-based rum, and £3,000 (US\$3,857) of equity in the new venture. In the following years, the firm will offer private single casks for sale to members.

MacKenzie and Smith will launch a Laggan Bay Islay single malt range in the future, which will sit at a "more premium level" to the existing Flatnose and Bärelegs brands.

The firm's rum range will consist of both spiced and aged variants and "will have its own brand identity". The site also plans to develop a range of whisky barrel-aged beers.

### The 25 Best Scotch Whiskies You Can Buy in 2019

AUGUST 23, 2019 DRINKS By J. TRAVIS SMITH Photo by CHANDLER BONDURANT



This definitive guide to the best Scotch whiskies of 2019 explores everything you need to know about Scotland's favorite brown spirit, including important terminology, a cheat sheet for each distilling region, and, of course, a list of the best bottles for sale at your local liquor store, and beyond.

Prefer to skip directly to the picks? Click [here](#).

#### The Short List

#### Old Pulteney 12 Years Single Malt Scotch Whisky



Best Scotch Whisky Under \$50: Far at the northern end of the Highlands region is Old Pulteney, a distillery that popped up to satiate local fishing villages. This 12-year-old expression, which took home the gold at the 2018 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, is the perfect intersection of price and quality. It's aged entirely in ex-bourbon barrels, so expect it to be sweet and briny, with vanilla from the wood.

ABV: 40%

Price: \$40 – \$50

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

#### Lagavulin 16 Years Old



**Best Scotch Whisky Under \$100:** Need a crowd pleaser? Here's your go-to bottle. Popularized by the character Ron Swanson in *Parks and Recreation*, this legendary bottle merges peat with campfire smoke. It's aggressive and mouth-wateringly savory, like brisket on a hot summer day.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$65 – \$75

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Highland Park 18 Year Old Viking Pride



**Best Scotch Whisky Under \$200:** Highland Park Distillery is based on the largest of the wild, peat-filled islands off of the northern tip of Scotland. Its brightly peated whisky sits in sherry-seasoned European oak casks and ages in the extremely mild climate of the islands, for a gentle maturation that hits its stride at 18 years. Ignore the eccentric variants and go straight for Highland Park's classic 18-year expression. This whisky has too many awards to name, including being named Best Spirit in the World in *Spirit Journal*, twice.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$145 – \$160

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### How to Buy Scotch Whisky

Peated or unpeated? Sherry-cask aged, ex-bourbon cask aged or some combination of the two? The tweaks and variations that go into each bottle of Scotch are intimidating, especially for bourbon and rye drinkers who may not be accustomed to the price of a whiskey that's been aged for 18 years or more.

We recommend thinking of each bottle of Scotch as falling somewhere along two spectrums: from light to rich; delicate to smoky. From there, it's easy to move along those two spectrums to find bottles you like. Novices should start by exploring the regions of Scotland.

For starters, there are five Scotch regions: Speyside, Highlands, Islay, Lowlands and Campbeltown. While every distillery is unique, there are unofficial "regional styles" that can help cut out some of the noise when browsing a liquor store.

In general, bottles coming from Islay, such as Laphroaig and Ardbeg, are the smokiest. Whiskies from the Lowlands (like those from Auchentoshan and Glenkinchie) tend to be light and delicate. Speyside, to the east, with distilleries like The Macallan or The Balvenie, is known for whiskies with a delicate richness that doesn't rely on peat — so, expect a lot of sherry and rum casks for aging. Meanwhile, distilleries

from the Highlands, the largest region in Scotland, take cues from each of the other regions.

#### Scotch Terms You Should Know

**Single Malt Scotch Whisky:** This is whisky distilled at a single distillery using a pot still from a mash of malted barley. To be legally considered Scotch whisky, the whisky must be distilled in Scotland and aged in oak for at least three years on Scottish soil.

**Single Grain Scotch Whisky:** This is whisky distilled at a single distillery using a Coffey (or column) still from a mash of cereals, such as wheat, corn or rye, either malted or unmalted. The cereal mash and Coffey still produce light-bodied liquid using cost-efficient, industrial-scale distillation, meaning this whisky is most commonly used in blended Scotch.

**Blended Malt Scotch Whisky:** This is whisky made by blending single malt Scotch whiskies from two or more distilleries.

**Blended Grain Scotch Whisky:** This is whisky made by blending single grain Scotch whiskies from two or more distilleries.

**Blended Scotch Whisky:** This is whisky made by blending one or more single malt Scotch whiskies and one or more single grain Scotch whiskies. While there is no standard ratio to blends, typically grain whisky lends an inexpensive body while malt whisky imparts unique flavors.

**Independent Blenders or Bottlers:** This is a third-party operator who buys casks of Scotch from distilleries and blends them together, creating unique and sometimes superior flavors to the original distillery. Brands like Signatory, Gordon Mccail, and The Scotch Malt Whisky Society are all top tier examples.

### Best Islay Scotch Whiskies



Islay is a small island that's believed to have played a major role in distilling crossing the sea from Ireland to Scotland in the 13th century. So, despite its small size, the area carries an outsized distilling resume, with heavies like Laphroaig, Lagavulin and Ardbeg residing there. Expect peaty drams of some of the best whisky in the world.

### Bruichladdich Port Charlotte 10





While Bruichladdich's main lineup consists of unpeated Scotches, Port Charlotte is aggressively peated in a way that stinks up the room when you pour a dram. Bottled relatively young after spending 10 years in a mixture of first- and second-fill bourbon casks, and second-fill French wine casks, it's an aggressive Scotch. And the 10 year statement is a huge upgrade from what was originally a no-age-statement offering.

ABV: 50%

Price: \$65 – \$75

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Lagavulin 16 Years Old



Need a crowd pleaser? Here's your go-to bottle. Popularized by the character Ron Swanson in Parks and Recreation, this legendary bottle merges peat with campfire smoke. It's aggressive and mouth-wateringly savory, like brisket on a hot summer day.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$65 – \$75

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Caol Ila Distillers Edition



Caol Ila, Islay's largest distillery, is a go-to brand for easy, entry-level Scotch from the region. (It famously produces much of the Scotch for blending in Johnnie Walker expressions.) The story behind this edition is that the whisky was finished in barrels that once held Moscatel sherry wine, making for an extremely sweet barrel that balances the smoke and peat nicely.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$70 – \$80

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### Laphroaig 10 Cask Strength



If widely available, massively peated Scotch is what you desire, Laphroaig is your distillery. It's the type of Scotch you can smell from across the bar. The 10-year expression bottled at cask strength is unadulterated Laphroaig and the best regular bottle in its lineup. Laphroaig's Càirdeas series hits shelves every summer and it's certainly worth checking out if you're looking for a more-complex bottle.

ABV: ~58.5%

Price: \$80 – \$90

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### Ardbeg Corryvreckan



Named for the famous whirlpool that lies to the north of Islay and winner of The World's Best Single Malt in 2010 by the World Whiskies Awards, Corryvreckan is intense, non-chill-filtered experience of peat and pepper aged in virgin French Limousin oak. If you're looking for more fruitiness than spice, another fantastic Ardbeg is Uigeadail, which substitutes virgin French Limousin oak for ex-Sherry casks and was named 'World Whisky of the Year' by Jim Murray's 2009 *Whisky Bible*.

ABV: 57.1%

Price: \$90 – \$100

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### Bunnahabhain 18 Year Old



The Bunnahabhain Distillery was first founded at the mouth of Margadale Spring in 1881. Its 12-year-old expression premiered in 1979, and in 2006, as part of a rebrand, the 18 and 25 years were added to the lineup. The 18 is its most perfect bottle, having been upgraded from 40% to 46.3% ABV and bottled un-chillfiltered; it blends ex-sherry cask and ex-bourbon cask notes, with much, much less peat than other Islay examples.

ABV: 46.3%

Price: \$120 – \$130

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### Signatory Cask Strength Laphroaig



This will be nearly impossible to find, but this cask strength Signatory blend is included because any serious Scotch fan needs to explore the wonderful world of independent bottlers. This is 17-year-old Laphroaig juice blended in a limited run by Signatory, which, along with Gordon Mccail and The Scotch Malt Whisky Society, brings beautiful bottles of Scotch into the world, despite not distilling anything itself.

ABV: 51.3%

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Best Campbeltown Scotch Whiskies



Campbeltown juts out toward Ireland from mainland Scotland; it's a peninsula sandwiched between Islay to the west and the Lowlands to the east. Once home to 34 distilleries and considered the whisky capital of the world, a post-war economic downturn left the region with only a handful of active distilleries. In general, expect Campbeltown whiskey to be dry and pungent, with a peatiness that's less smokey and meaty, like that found in Islay, and more earthy decay and fantastic funk.

### Kilkerran 12 Year Old



The great-great nephew of William Mitchell, the founder of Glengyle Distillery, reopened his family's distillery in 2004. The distillery had remained quiet since 1925, when it closed following an economic

downturn, and August 2016 was the first time Glengyle's new flagship hit shelves. Kilkerran 12 has since proved a worthy torchbearer, with light peat working off bright sherry and bourbon casks.

ABV: 46%

Price: \$70 – \$80

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Springbank 12 Year Old



Springbank was founded in 1828 by Archibald Mitchell and today is owned by Mitchell's great-great-great-grandson, making it one of the few independent distilleries trading blows with giants like Diageo. Beginning in 2010, the distillery releases its 12 year expression, which blends juice aged in bourbon and sherry cask, semi-annually at cask strength. It's well worth grabbing a bottle when they hit shelves.

ABV: ~54%

Price: \$80 – \$90

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Longrow 18 Year Old



Longrow has been distilling Islay-style single malt at Springbank since 1973. This is double-distilled and aged in bourbon and sherry barrels. These bottles are hard to come by, and carry a high price tag, but are worth picking up to explore Campbeltown's take on peated Scotch.

ABV: 46%

Price: \$180 – \$190

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### Best Speyside Scotch Whiskies



Bisected from north to south by the River Spey, Speyside is a little pocket of land in the northeast of Scotland, surrounded on three sides by the Highlands and the North Sea. It's home to the highest number of distilleries in Scotland, with well over 60 at present, including Glenfiddich, the world's best-selling single malt Scotch. The region falls on the opposite side of the flavor spectrum (and map) from the peatiness of Islay. Because of this, Scotches from the region make great entry-level offerings.

### The Balvenie DoubleWood 12 Year Old



The Balvenie is a great distillery. Like at Springbank, every phase of whisky production takes place at The Balvenie. Their core lineup is diverse enough to satisfy most palates, with bottles showcasing sherry, bourbon, port, and rum, and peat week releases that crank the smoke. And while other distilleries are removing age statements to cut corners, The Balvenie has been doubling down on incredible, aged offerings like Tun 1509, which releases yearly in small quantities and should be on your wishlist. The Balvenie DoubleWood is 12-year-old whisky that's spent nine months in ex-Oloroso sherry casks and makes for a great intro to the distillery at a fabulous price.

ABV: 40%

Price: \$50 – \$60

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### The Glenlivet Nàdurra Peated Whisky Cask Finish



The Glenlivet is a name known everywhere. The Nàdurra line is named for the fact that it's released non chill-filtered and at cask strength, or "natural." While the rough cut Nàdurra is fantastic and the winner of Double Gold at the 2010 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, those who want a little more refinement should look no further than The Glenlivet 18.

ABV: ~57.6%

Price: \$80 – \$90

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Glenfarclas 17 Year Old



Glenfarclas is one of the few remaining family owned and operated distilleries in all of Scotland. Their core line-up is packaged without fuss or frills, making them a great value (Glenfarclas 12 is great for those on a budget) and the 17 year just gets it right. Matured exclusively in ex-Oloroso sherry casks, this has big butterscotch and sherried fruit, mix with a little peat smoke for an easy-drinking, reliable Scotch.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$95 – \$105

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### Glenfiddich Bourbon Barrel Reserve 14 Year Old



One of the newest Glenfiddich permanent releases, the 14 Year Bourbon Barrel Reserve is aged for 14 years in ex-bourbon casks before being transferred to first-fill, heavily-charred American oak barrels from Louisville, bringing more wood. The 43% ABV, as opposed to their standard 40%, fixes the wateriness (or smoothness, depending on your preference) and helps tip this as our go-to Glenfiddich bottle. ABV: 43%

Price: \$60 – \$70

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Aberlour 18 Year Old



Aberlour keeps things simple. Their core line-up consists of bottles of their Scotch aged 10, 16 and 18 years old, with A'bunadh representing their cask strength offering and occasional releases of 12 or 15 year old Scotch keeping things interesting. For our money, the 18 hits the sweet spot for an occasional dram.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$160 – \$170

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### The Macallan 18 Sherry Oak Years Old



Great Scotch? Yes. Smooth? Ridiculously? Overpriced? Definitely. The Macallan 18 Sherry is the perfect Scotch for non-Scotch drinkers. It's difficult not to love it, but as a luxury Scotch bottle isn't designed to challenge you, but rather to open the door for anyone to enjoy what 18 years can do to transform whisky. It makes for a (really) nice gift, and is a showcase of what 18-year-old sherry-bombs can taste like, but the more adventurous should look elsewhere.

ABV: 43%  
Price: \$300

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### Best Highlands Scotch Whiskies



Under the official Scotch Whisky Association guidelines, the Highlands region is made up of all Scottish islands (except Islay) and the mainland of northern Scotland (except Speyside). Some consider the Islands (and distilleries like Arran) as their own unofficial region. The flavors of the Highlands are too diverse to pin down with a single broad stroke; the region is so big that it's home to distilleries that represent the entire flavor spectrum. But in general, the north brings rich body and sweetness; the west brings rich body and peatiness; the south brings delicate drams with light body; and the east brings similar lightness with a touch more fruit.

### Old Pulteney 12



Far at the northern end of The Highlands region is Old Pulteney, a distillery that popped to satiate local fishing villages. This 12 year old expression, which took home the gold at the 2018 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, is the perfect intersection of price and quality. Aged entirely in ex-bourbon barrels, expect it to be sweet and briny, with vanilla from the wood.

ABV: 40%  
Price: \$40 – \$50

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Ledaig 10



Ledaig comes from the Tobermory distillery in the northwest corner of the Isle of Mull, just a short hop across the water from the mainland Highlands. In contrast to Tobermory single malts, Ledaig is heavily peated and made in small batches. This un-chillfiltered bottle is a standout for the price, and a better value than the distillers more expensive, and more refined, Ledaig 18.

ABV: 46.3%  
Price: \$50 – \$60

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Glenmorangie Nectar d'Or



With few exceptions, since 1983 Glenmorangie has been the best selling single malt Scotch in the world. And for our money, the Nectar D'Or and the 18 year expressions are the best of the lot. The Nectar

d'Or is Glenmorangie Original finished in Sauternes casks, a white dessert wine from Bordeaux, for an incredibly smooth and fruity Scotch at a great price. Pro tip: As of summer 2019, the Nectar D'Or swapped to a "no age statement" release. So if you see bottles with age statements (12 years), make sure to snap them up.

ABV: 46%

Price: \$60 – \$70

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Talisker Distillers Edition



This yearly release is, for the price, among Talisker's best. Of Highland's distilleries, Talisker tends to bring high octane peat bombs, and if that's where your heart lies I'd stick to Talisker 10, which is a fantastic, go-to bottle for entry-level smoke. But for those of us who want a bit more sherry sweetness, from the finishing months spent in Amoroso casks, this is a must.

ABV: 45.8%

Price: \$75 – \$85

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Highland Park 18 Year Old Viking Pride



Highland Park Distillery is based on the largest of the wild, peat-filled islands off of the northern tip of Scotland. Their brightly peated whisky sits in sherry seasoned European oak casks and ages in the extremely mild climate of the islands, for a gentle maturation that hits its stride at 18 years. Ignore the eccentric variants and go straight for Highland Park's classic 18-year expression. This whisky has too many awards to name, including being named Best Spirit in the World in Spirit Journal, twice.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$145 – \$160

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Oban 18 Years Old



Oban is a port city in central Scotland, and its namesake distillery borrows a little of this and a little of that to produce an extremely well balanced Scotch that displays all the extremes of Scotland flavor. The distillery uses some of the smallest stills in Scotland, meaning that the 18 year release is a hard to find, limited-release, despite being a flagship product. This is a perfect starting point for those first wading into Scottish waters.

ABV: 43%

Price: \$150 – \$160

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### The GlenDronach Parliament Aged 21 Years



An early distillery founded in 1826, was one of the first licensed distilleries in Scotland and a pioneer of sherry cask maturation. While sticker shock might steer you toward their more economical and no less worthy 12-year-old bottle, the extra age on this bottle — 21 years in Oloroso and Pedro Ximenez sherry casks — is outstanding for special occasions. Located in the far east of Scotland, near the Ardmore Distillery, come expecting whisky that's extremely rich, sweet, and fruit, but don't expect much peat this far from Islay.

ABV: 48%

Price: \$240+

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Best Lowlands Scotch Whiskies



ABV: 43%  
Price: \$65 – \$75

Large in land but small in output, the Lowlands is home to only a handful of distilleries, with Auchentoshan and Glenkinchie being the most well-known. Traditionally, Lowland Scotch was triple distilled using unpeated malt for a light, simple sweetness. This simplicity lends the region to provide the base to many blends, though a few distilleries have been kicking out some peated options recently.

### Glenkinchie 12 Years Old



For much of its history, Glenkinchie was producing the light-bodied Scotch typical of the Lowlands for use in blending. But in 1998, after changing hands to Diageo, the brand was selected to represent the Lowlands and the 12 year old expression hit shelves. This is a super easy-going Scotch, with delicate sweetness and little in the way of smoke, oak, or complexity.

ABV: 43%  
Price: \$55 – \$65

[LEARN MORE: HERE](#)

### Auchentoshan Three Wood



Auchentoshan is the only distillery to triple distill their Scotch, making for an extremely smooth, and a bit muted, Scotch. The three wood variation gets a bit more complexity from being aged in bourbon casks and finished in Oloroso then Pedro Ximénez casks. Expect some more fruit than the Auchentoshan 12.



# WHISKY & WISDOM

## Islay – Its distilleries and its whiskies



With Islay's smoky, pungent, peaty whiskies gaining increasing popularity and traction around the globe, and with whisky tourism to Islay growing, now is a great time to come to terms with the island and its whiskies. Here's a unique and new way of presenting Islay's critical information....

### The distilleries

There are currently nine operating distilleries. In order of (supposed) establishment, these are:

Bowmore (1779), Ardbeg (1815), Laphroaig (1815), Lagavulin (1816), Caol Ila (1846), Bruichladdich (1881), Bunnahabhain (1881), Kilchoman (2005), and Ardnahoe (2017).

The old Port Ellen distillery – closed, silent, and as good as demolished since 1983 – is currently being re-built with plans to re-open in 2021.

The distilleries vary in size and how much they produce. If we consider the distilleries in terms of their potential production capacity in litres of pure alcohol per annum, we can list them in the following order:

[Caol Ila](#) (6.5M), [Laphroaig](#) (3.3M), [Bunnahabhain](#) (3.2M), [Lagavulin](#) (2.53M), [Ardbeg](#) (2.4M, recently expanded from 1.4M), [Bowmore](#) (2.0M), [Bruichladdich](#) (1.5M), [Ardnahoe](#) (1.0M), and [Kilchoman](#) (0.46M). *Clicking on each of the distillery names will take you to its official website.*

To put those figures in context, consider the following equivalent capacities for some of the mainland's well-known distilleries: Glenlivet (21M), Glenfiddich (13.7M), and Glenmorangie (6.2M).



The world's current love affair with Lagavulin began back in 1989 when it was launched as one of the six UDV "Classic Malts".

#### The whiskies

Not surprisingly, each distillery produces a very unique and different whisky. Despite the island's reputation and primary style, there were – until the 2000's – two distilleries that made an *unpeated* whisky, namely Bruichladdich and Bunnahabhain. However, whilst both those two distilleries continue to make unpeated spirit, they now also make heavily peated whisky during various campaigns each year.

There are many factors that contribute to how peaty/smoky a whisky is, and it's not *just* how heavily they smoke the barley whilst malting. How they do their fermentation; the shape of their stills; and how they run their stills all have an impact on the final peatiness perceived in the whisky. (As a good example of this, Lagavulin and Caol Ila both use identical malt, but obviously produce two *very* different whiskies). You can read more about this aspect of production here.

The peat levels in the malted barley are defined and described by measuring its phenol content in parts per million. For the general, every day spirit being produced as part of the distillery's *main product*, the peating levels for each distillery are generally as follows:

- \* Ardbeg – 55<sub>ppm</sub>
- \* Ardnahoe – 40<sub>ppm</sub>
- \* Lagavulin, Laphroaig, and Caol Ila – 35<sub>ppm</sub>
- \* Bowmore – 25<sub>ppm</sub>
- \* Kilchoman – 20-40<sub>ppm</sub> #
- \* Bunnahabhain\* and Bruichladdich – 0-3<sub>ppm</sub>.

#(Kilchoman is a *trickier distillery to pigeonhole*, as it imports and uses "Ardbeg specification" malt at 55<sub>ppm</sub> from Port Ellen, but produces a portion of its own malt on site at a lower 20<sub>ppm</sub>, hence the above range is an average. Different bottlings and releases use different combinations of these two malt sources. Similarly, roughly 40% of Bunnahabhain's production is now heavily peated at around 40<sub>ppm</sub>. Its peated whiskies are released with *gaelic nomenclature*.)

Of course, some distilleries have different or experimental campaigns where they produce spirit to different specifications. In some cases, these get bottled under different brands, or are given a specific name.

For example:

- \* Octomore (super-peated Bruichladdich) – upwards of 160<sub>ppm</sub>, but each annual campaign differs slightly.
- \* Port Charlotte (heavily-peated Bruichladdich) – 40<sub>ppm</sub>
- \* Ardbeg Supernova – 100-120<sub>ppm</sub>

It's important to appreciate that the distilleries chiefly produce whisky to supply the blends, and – if their owners require it – the Islay distilleries have, at times, been called upon to produce *unpeated* or *lowly-peated* whisky. Both Ardbeg and Caol Ila have done this at times. Islay whisky is not as easy to pigeonhole as you might think!



The main street of Bowmore, with the iconic Round Church at the top of the hill.

#### The geography

Islay has villages and communities scattered all across the island, but the three main centres are Bowmore (considered the "capital" of Islay), Port Ellen, and Portnahaven.

Transport to the island is either by light aircraft from Glasgow (Islay has a tiny airport roughly halfway between Bowmore and Port Ellen), or by ferry. The ferry departs the mainland from Kennacraig, with sailings to two different Islay locations: Port Ellen in the south, and Port Askaig in the north-east. Sailing time is around two hours.

The distilleries are also scattered around the island. The "old" distilleries are all located on the water in bays and inlets, so established because materials and product transport in and out of the distilleries was by water.

#### Visiting the distilleries

All the operating distilleries on Islay have visitor centres and conduct excellent tours. Tours can range from very basic "see-around" tours, to more in-depth and detailed tours that give more information and provide great tastings and warehouse experiences at the end.



One of the maltings floors at Bowmore.

Islay is also great in that it is home to three distilleries that still use traditional maltings floors – allowing you to see how the barley is traditionally steeped, laid out, turned, and kilned to become malt. There are just seven distilleries in all of Scotland that still do this, so to witness three of them on Islay – namely Bowmore, Laphroaig, and Kilchoman – is a great experience. Bruichladdich has recently announced plans to build their own onsite maltings also.





The peat fire burning underneath Laphroaig's kiln.

### The Port Ellen Maltings

By the late 1960's, some of the distilleries were battling inefficiencies and rising costs in importing barley to the island by themselves and producing their own malt. Scottish Malt Distillers, a subsidiary of the company we know today as Diageo, owned three distilleries (Port Ellen, Lagavulin, and Caol Ila), and decided to build a single maltings plant that could supply malt for its three distilleries. Built directly behind the Port Ellen distillery, the Port Ellen maltings commenced operations in 1973. A downturn in the industry in the 1980's led to the closure of the Port Ellen distillery and the island's remaining distilleries greatly reducing their production. With the maltings being uneconomical to run in these conditions, it was facing closure itself until the other distilleries on the island (and also Jura) signed an agreement in 1987 that they would take a proportion of their malt from the maltings. Today, the maltings supplies malt (both peated and unpeated) to seven of the island's distilleries.



The Port Ellen maltings, sitting behind the original Port Ellen distillery.

### Conclusion

Of course, there's a lot more to tell and learn about Islay, but if we added all the Islay information here, it would no longer be a short article! However, you'll find plenty of extra information about Islay and its distilleries in other articles and archives here at Whisky & Wisdom. Here's just a selection of Islay-related articles we've written in the past....

[Lagavulin or Laphroaig – which is better?](#)

[Port Ellen and dram envy](#)

[10 things every whisky lover should know before heading to Scotland](#)

[An evening with Laphroaig & John Campbell](#)

[When fixation on peat and PPM gets OTT](#)

[Bruichladdich – the Gathering](#)

....plus we've published plenty of reviews and feature pieces on many of the recent releases from the Islay distilleries (particularly Ardbeg).

Use the search bar feature on this page.

Cheers,

AD

### Membership and Dinner prices for 2019-2020

Membership Fee:	\$50 (singles) \$75 (couples)
One Time Initiation Fee:	\$15
Standard Dinner Fee:	\$70 (member) \$80 (non-member)
Christmas Dinner Fee:	\$75 (member) \$75 (non-member)
Robbie Burns Dinner Fee:	\$75 (member) \$85 (non-member)
June BBQ Dinner Fee:	\$80 (member) \$80 (non-member)

### Reservation policy

- The agreement with the Kitchen's requires that we provide seven (7) business days notice for them to guarantee accommodation for our requested numbers. To accommodate the Kitchen's needs and meet our contractual obligation with them; our members are requested to respond to the emailed invitation seven (7) business days prior to the respective dinner to guarantee a seat at the dinner. Following the RSVP date members will be placed on a waitlist.
- For these individuals the process will be as follows, using the Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 dinner date as an example:
  - Dinner invitations will be sent out Friday August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019. Please respond to me ([rdifazio04@gmail.com](mailto:rdifazio04@gmail.com)). I will then acknowledge that you have a seat. Please understand that if you do not receive a response you are not guaranteed a seat at the respective dinner. In such circumstances (e.g., computer glitches) please e-mail me again or call me (613-532-5285).
  - Unless otherwise stated accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 @ 6pm.
  - Once the RSVP date has been achieved I will e-mail a spreadsheet informing everyone of their status and amount due.

### Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Friday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Friday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 @ 6pm and Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$70). It is the responsibility of the member who cancels their (or their guest's) reservation to find a replacement. If I am asked to find a substitute and one is found, then the member will be asked to pay for 50% of their dinner cost.
- Anyone who fails to attend the Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$70). A member will be responsible for their guest's cancellation (\$80).
- If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Friday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 @ 6pm and Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.

### Assigned / Reserved Seating

- Assigned Seating will be offered for the 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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### **Dinner Payments**

- Please consider sending your payment by e-transfer prior to the dinner. The password will be "KSMS", 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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### **Just a note because we care.**

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



## Kingston Single Malt Society

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