

Kingston Single Malt Society

www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com

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

OCTOBER 17th, 2011

VOLUME 5; NUMBER 4



Distilleries in Lowlands

Many distilleries in this region have been using using triple distillation, and the whiskies from Lowlands are often light in colour, have a dry finish and are elegant. The malt used is often unpeated.

Auchentoshan	Active
Bladnoch	Open
Glenkinchie	Active
Inverleven	Closed
Kinclaith	Closed
Littlemill	Mothballed
Rosebank	Mothballed
St. Magdalene	Closed



\$ 149.95 Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Blended Scotch 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

- **EDRADOUR DOUGIE MACLEAN'S CALEDONIA SELECTION 12 YEARS OLD HIGHLAND SINGLE MALT VINTAGES 242578** | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$ 89.95**
Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Single Malt Scotch 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

Win Me!!

Ardbeg Corryvreckann

Price: \$179.95; 750mL;
57.1% Alcohol/Vol

Starting September 19th, 2011 tickets can be purchased for a chance to win this bottle. Tickets will be \$3 each, two tickets for \$5, or \$20 for an arm-length. Tickets will be on sale at each dinner until the January 23rd, 2012 Robbie Burns dinner when the bottle will be raffled. The winner must successfully answer the skill testing question: What country does single malt come from?



This evening's menu in the company of Single Malts from the **LOWLANDS & HIGHLANDS**

Soup: Celtic Blue (a local light vein blue cheese) & Pear

1st Nosing: **AUCHENTOSHAN 18 YEARS OLD**
(introduced by: Sylvain Bouffard)

Salad: Arugula Salad with Toasted Walnuts And Vanilla Poached Pear

2nd Nosing: **LITTLEMILL 19 YEARS OLD**
(introduced by: Elsabe Falkson)

Entree: Oat Crusted Arctic Charr

Vegetables: Sautéed Spinach, Braised Carrots, and Smoked Parsley Oil

Rice: Honey Thyme Risotto

3rd Nosing: **EDRADOUR DOUGIE MACLEAN'S CALEDONIA SELECTION 12 YEARS OLD HIGHLAND**

(introduced by: Rob Arnoth)

Dessert: Sticky Toffee Pudding with Scotch Caramel Sauce, Drambuie Anglaise

COST OF THE MALTS

I know members are always interested in the cost of the single malts we taste. Plus the \$75 Special Occasion Permit and the 16% levy charged by the LCBO for all alcohol served at the dinner.

- **AUCHENTOSHAN 18 YEARS OLD LOWLAND SINGLE MALT VINTAGES 143339** | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$ 94.10** Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Single Malt Scotch 43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

- **LITTLEMILL 19 YEARS OLD LOWLAND HART BROTHERS LTD VINTAGES 220004** | 700 mL bottle **Price:**

SEPTEMBER - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 49 September attendees @ \$60) = \$2940.00
September dinner 49 persons = \$36.50/ea = \$1788.50
Special Occasion Permit @ LCBO = \$75.00
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt) = \$1076.50
Cost of Single Malts: = \$1403.08
KSMS Monthly operational balance = (\$326.58)
Cost per person 49 attendees (All inclusive) = \$66.66

Upcoming Dinner Dates

November 21, 2011 – Speyside - VIMY
December 12, 2011 – Speyside – Fort Henry
January 23, 2012 – Robbie Burns Night - VIMY
February 20, 2012 – Highland - FFOM
March 19, 2012 - St. Patrick's (Irish) – Kingston Yacht Club
April 16, 2012 – Island - VIMY
May 28, 2012 – Islay - VIMY
June 18, 2012 - BBQ (Final Exam) - VIMY

Membership and Dinner prices for 2011-2012

Membership Fee:	\$40 (singles) \$60 (couples)
One Time Initiation Fee:	\$15
Standard Dinner Fee:	\$60 (member) \$70 (non-member)
Dinner only - No Single Malt:	\$50 (member) \$60 (non-member)
Robbie Burns Dinner Fee:	\$70 (member) \$80 (non-member)
(includes \$5 donation per attendee to RMC Pipes & Drums with Highland Dancers)	
June BBQ Dinner Fee:	\$70 (member) \$80 (non-member)

The Case Against Using a Rating System

By Matt - May 29, 2011 – www.scotchblog.ca

A+. 95. Nine thumbs up. What does all this mean?

Sure, they provide a frame of reference to someone. But who?

That point of reference can only be in relation to the palate of the reviewer. Therefore every rating system out there is predicated on the tastebuds of the provider, and who's to say that your tastes are aligned with theirs?

Over the past several months I have been asked many times why we don't use a ratings system here at ScotchBlog. I have thought about that long and hard. I've raised it at meetings. Hell, Scott and I even devised a carefully constructed mathematical formula whereby a perfect rating would be 12.7. But that's just as absurd as anything else because it is only built on the tastes and predisposition of the writer, thereby rendering the rating entirely useless to anyone but themselves.

After all, rating an Islay whisky at 97.5 means nothing if the person using that rating to guide their purchase can't stand peat and knows little outside of the big names from Speyside. All this ends up doing is unfairly turning someone completely off that whisky, distillery, and ultimately one's rating system, leaving the consumer more confused than ever.

I feel it is our duty as whisky writers to help educate the masses. To do so is to teach the uninitiated about the glory that can be found in a glass of something that has been so carefully matured and developed over years, even decades, and borne of a craft that has been honed for centuries. There is a passion that goes into creating a liquid with such care to deliver an intense complexity of flavours so deep that it takes 40 minutes of sipping to just begin to figure out that this one provides vanilla, citrus, and spice notes that morph into something reminiscent of a Christmas cake. To deny that passion its due respect is simply unjust. To distill this craft down to a number based on one's preferences for one style of whisky over another is to ultimately deny the consumer a tool they can truly use to make a decision as to whether or not this is a whisky worth their hard earned money.

That should be what it all comes down to in the end. Providing the person spending anywhere from \$30 to thousands of dollars on something that they are looking to bring them enjoyment, a means of making that decision based on a something they understand. Their own palate.

Yes, I fully understand and even appreciate the argument that whisky (especially single malt Scotch whisky) is seen as a luxury good. But shouldn't anyone looking to get the most enjoyment out of their hard earned cash by spending it on a whisky be at least given a chance to know what is in the bottle in terms of flavour? Rather than having just some number arbitrarily slapped on that product by someone who feels that they know more about what makes one whisky good and one whisky great?

That is why I am abstaining from using a rating system. I don't see them as fair to the whisky maker, the distributor, and most certainly not to the end consumer. You know, the one whose purchases of whisky make all of the careers and good products available by maintaining demand.

So here's what I will do instead. I will continue to do what I have always done: give you my best attempt at describing the flavours, scents, and overall experience derived from opening that bottle, pouring the whisky into your glass, and sitting back to enjoy it. I pledge here that from this point on I will attempt to highlight the three or four core elements in a whisky's flavour profile in my final analysis. Will there be opinion in my reviews? Of course.

But will I tack on some number or letter in an attempt to sell myself as some sort of judge of your palate as a consumer? Absolutely not.

Down With Whisky Regions!

by Oliver Klimek - June 13, 2011 – scotchblog.ca

All aspiring whisky aficionados will sooner or later be confronted with the concept of Scotch whisky regions. Most likely this first encounter will happen in a whisky shop – either online or offline – where the stocked bottles are grouped into “Highlands”, “Speyside”, “Lowlands”, “Islands” and “Islay”. Sometimes even “Campbeltown” is treated as a proper region.

They may think “Why not?”. After all it is the same with wine. There is a difference between Bordeaux and Bourgogne, and Italian Pinot Grigio is clearly an all different stuff than German Grauburgunder. So they are not surprised to learn that the regions concept is also officially codified in the regulations of the Scotch Whisky Association that have even made it into UK law.



Digging a bit deeper they will find out that the reasoning behind the Scotch whisky region concept is based on historical differences in the styles of whisky produced in the regions. It is “light and grassy” for the Lowlands, “maritime” for the Islands, “peaty” for Islay and ... errr ... what was it for Highlands and Speyside again?

Everyone who has tasted whisky from more than ten Scottish distilleries knows that this is only a

very crude approximation; or should I say rubbish?

Yes, there are the Islay peat monsters like Lagavulin, Ardbeg, Laphroaig or Caol Ila. But what about Bunnahabhain? The first time I tasted the Bunnahabhain 18 yo I was immediately reminded of the Macallan 18. Also the whisky from the Highland distillery of Dalmore is closer to Speyside heavyweights Macallan and Glenfarclas than to their relative neighbours of Teaninich or Balblair.

And things really get whacky when you look at the “Islands” region. Talisker is definitely at least as “Islay” as Bowmore and Bunnahabhain, Highland Park may just go along with the “maritime” label but with their “house style” they are pretty much a singleton on the Scotch whisky map. Their immediate neighbours on Orkney are Scapa who make a totally different whisky. Tobermory and Ledaig are pretty different incarnations of the same distillery, and Arran might as well be a Highland or Speyside distillery.

When you finally take a closer look at the Speyside distilleries, the stupidity of the regions concept can no longer be denied. What is a typical Speyside whisky, a sherry monster like Glenfarclas, a fruit bomb like Glenlivet or a light dram like Cardhu?

Especially in Speyside, many distilleries operate for large conglomerates that produce top selling blends like Johnnie Walker, Ballantine’s or Grant’s. The whisky style of a distillery is often dictated by the needs of the blenders. To see this phenomenon in a nutshell you should best visit Dufftown. Grant’s own Glenfiddich and Balvenie which are literally next door to each other. Glenfiddich has a rather light and fruity style, Balvenie is a bit richer and famed for its honey flavours.

Even more striking is the difference between Mortlach and Dufftown distilleries. Both are owned by Diageo, and they are located just half a mile apart in the same beautiful glen, but they produce entirely different whiskies. Mortlach is a full-bodied, rich and “beefy” single malt while Dufftown whisky is rather light and grassy. Dufftown used to make richer and nuttier whisky in the past, but with more and more Lowland distilleries closing, Dufftown distillery was ordered to produce a mock Lowland malt to secure the supply of this whisky style for the Diageo blends.

To further complicate things, there are the chameleon distilleries like Bruichladdich or Benriach that produce such a wide variety of whisky styles that any attempt of categorization is futile. What does the Laddie Classic have in common with the Port Charlotte?

Is There Such A Thing As A Whisky Terroir?

The regions concept is based on the assumption that like in the wine world the location of a whisky distillery has an influence on the character of whisky. The examples cited above clearly show that this is not the case. There are just too many variables involved in whisky making to justify such an approach.

And there is also a big difference between the production of whisky and wine: Apart from the cheapest adulterated supermarket brands, wine is grown and produced locally or at least regionally. Pomerol wine is made from grapes grown in Pomerol, Mosel riesling is made from grapes grown on the steep slopes bordering the Mosel river.

The barley for Scotch whisky may come from virtually everywhere. A large quantity is grown in Scotland, that’s true, but apart from very few examples the barley is not harvested and malted in the immediate surroundings of the distilleries. And of course some barley is also imported, with quite a bit even coming from England. Oh dear. And don’t get me started on the maturation issue...

Do We Need Regions Only To Sort Distilleries?

I shamefully admit it. I too have grouped the distilleries for my tasting notes according to the traditional whisky regions. It’s hard to give up a habit. But I may just do it. Get rid of this useless nonsense.

When I told my friend Keith Wood of [Whisky Emporium](#) about my intention to write this article, he asked me if he could contribute his feelings about the issue. How could I refuse?

“Whisky Regions”, now there’s a good concept Oliver and one which I think deserves one of those infamous Gold Medals when it comes to tourism, but whisky?

Let me begin by reminding everyone about the new laws regarding Scotch whisky, its production, ageing process and labelling which came into force as of 30th November 2009, in which the five so called whisky regions were defined as Highlands, Lowlands, Campbeltown, Speyside & Islay.

All well and good one may say, but I personally used to subscribe to the concept of six whisky regions as I also included ‘Islands’.

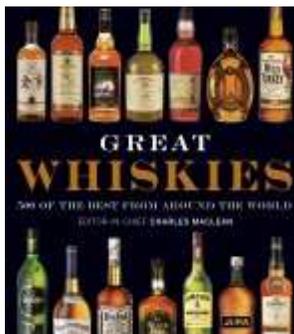
“Used to”? You ask.

Well, if I’m honest I guess I still do, albeit only really geographically as I truly believe the days of categorising and identifying whisky characteristics by geographical location are over.

Yes, in general Islay whiskies tend towards peatiness. Lowland whiskies towards a certain lightness and freshness, complex Speysiders etc You already probably know all the wonderful fairy stories explaining how local water, warehouse location and just ‘terroir’ itself define a distillery’s product, which is often very different to the product of the distillery right next door!

What about the recent proliferation of peated Speyside whiskies, or unpeated Islay ones, none of which exactly enforce the terroir or connected arguments. Then there’s the fact that a large proportion of distillery product isn’t even warehoused at the distillery any more as it’s carted off to massive centralised warehouse complexes owned by the large corporates, as you so eloquently [E-Pistled for the Maniacs](#) last year.

There again, ‘Guilty as Charged’ I plead as I look back at my notes from 2006 when I ran a series of whisky tastings and sure enough, one was entitled “Regions” and if wish to know the drams I used were; A G&M Bladnoch, Springbank 15y, Benromach 21y, a 1989 Highland Park, Glen Garioch 8y and a Bruichladdich Links (just to disprove the terroir thing!). So yes, I will talk about whisky regions, in fact they are a brilliant marketing tool when introducing someone new to whisky, but we do have a saying in England that rules are there to be broken, possibly this one comes in that category!



Guest post: Book review of “Great Whiskies: 500 of the Best from around the world”

JOHN HANSELL - JUNE 13TH, 2011

Jonny McCormick, regular *Malt Advocate* magazine contributor, joins us today with a new book review. Editor-in-Chief Charles MacLean Published by DK (Dorling Kindersley) Hardcover; 384 pages

My mission is to sift through the new whisky book titles to help you choose the right books for you, in the same way as whisky reviews can be the next best thing to sipping a new release. Hopefully, this will mean everyone gets the most for their dollars and the publishing world will continue to intrigue us with interesting and creative whisky books.

Today's offering is more suitable for those in the earlier stages of their whisky journeys, or those people who could use a handy reference book in the bar to educate their staff and customers. Dorling Kindersley have filleted *World Whisky* (DK, 2009) to produce *Great Whiskies*, a straightforward A-Z handbook of fantastic whisk(e)y brands. One of the pleasures of whisky is the unquenchable capacity for new learning – even the greats of the industry will admit there are always fresh aspects to discover. The achievement of this book is the wealth of information packed into a chunky handbook.

DK are to be congratulated and Charles MacLean, to his great credit, has performed a fine job as editor-in-chief in ensuring the book has a consistency of style that masks the collaborative variance of using multiple authors. This is matched by the clarity of the layout, and the conceptual simplicity and uniformity of the bottle photographs.

Amongst the contributing writers are fellow *Malt Advocate* regulars Dave Broom and Gavin D Smith who have covered Japanese and American whiskies, respectively. Peter Mulryan manages the Irish whiskies, Tom Bruce-Gardyne covers single malts from Scotland, Ian Buxton acts as the curator of blended whisky, Hans Offringa tackles European whisky whilst MacLean himself has handled Canada, Australasia and Asia.

A concise column on each brand covers history and production in about 100 words, before succinct tasting notes are provided on key bottlings. Certain world-beating brands are given space over two pages with four reviews. Double spread touring guides of Islay, Speyside, Ireland, Japan and Kentucky periodically interrupt the alphabetical format.

One missed opportunity was to not update the information from *World Whisky* before pulling this text together so for example, tasting notes for the Buffalo Trace Antique Collection are from the 2008 releases. On occasion, this can make the page look slightly dated particularly when examining the newer distillers (where we are shown Mackmyra Preludium or Kilchoman New Make Spirit products) or the brands benefitting from recent repackaging initiatives (see Deanston, Tobermory or Fettercairn).

While there are 500 listed bottlings in *Great Whiskies* (but not 500 brands), there is no mention of the criteria used to define their greatness. The most obvious parallels are with **Ian Buxton's 101 Whiskies to try before you die** but the whiskies chosen here have a broader price range (the most expensive is probably The Last Drop) and the range of blends marketed the world over mean that you're not going to be able to easily get your hands on certain bottles.

This is the perfect topic crying out for an e-book version for easy reference on the move – how about it DK?

Reservation policy

- Our contract with the Officer's Mess Kitchen requires that we provide seven (7) business days notice for them to guarantee accommodation for our requested numbers. Each month an invitation will be sent out to all members of the Society in the first week of the respective month in which the dinner will be held. 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. After that members will be placed on a waitlist.

- For these individuals the process will be as follows, using the September 19th 2011 dinner date as an example:

- Dinner invitations will be sent out Saturday August 27th, 2011. Please respond to me (rdifazio@cogeco.ca). 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 (613-634-0397).
- Accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 2nd, 2011 @ 6pm.

Cancellation policy

- Using the same example as above, anyone who cancels anytime prior to Wednesday September 7th, 2011 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Wednesday September 7th, 2011 @ 6pm and Monday September 19th, 2011 will be expected to pay for the cost of the dinner and scotch (\$60). 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 available, then the member will be asked to pay for 50% of their dinner cost.
- Anyone who fails to attend the Monday September 19th, 2011 dinner without having cancelled and been successfully replaced will be expected to pay the full cost (\$60). A member will be responsible for their guest's cancellation (\$70).
- If a member asks to be included at the dinner between Wednesday September 7th, 2011 @ 6pm and Monday September 19th, 2011, their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.



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.

If you have any questions or comments please free to contact me. Thank you for your understanding, Roberto



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