

Kingston Single Malt Society

www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com

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

MAY 13th, 2019 VOLUME 12; NUMBER 11



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



COST OF THE MALTS

BALBLAIR 1999 HIGHLAND SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY LCBO 430454 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$169.95**
Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

ROYAL BRACKLA 16 YEAR OLD HIGHLAND SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY LCBO 441311 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$147.20**
Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 40.0% Alcohol/Vol.

HEPBURN'S CHOICE TEANINICH 9 YEAR OLD SINGLE CASK SCOTCH WHISKY LCBO 570332 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$108.60**
Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

GLENMORANGIE TAYNE AMONTILLADO SHERRY FINISH VINTAGES 406207 | 1000 mL bottle **Price: \$125.95**
Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Single Malt Scotch 43.0% Alcohol/Vol.

WOLFBURN HIGHLAND LCBO 496295 | 750 mL bottle **Price: \$77.50**
Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

MENU

Soup: Grilled Asparagus, Parma Ham, Lemon and Black Pepper Sabayon

1st Nosing: BALBLAIR 1999
(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

Appetizer: Spring Gem Lettuce, Pork Belly, Pickled Onion, Caper Anchovy, Romano, Crostini, Lemon Garlic Vinaigrette

2nd Nosing: ROYAL BRACKLA 16 YEAR OLD
(introduced by: Chantaille Buczynski)

Main: Grilled Chicken Supreme, Kohlrabi, Eggplant, Buckwheat, Tamoni, Jus

3rd Nosing: HEPBURN'S CHOICE TEANINICH 9YO
(introduced by: Doug Perkins)

4th Nosing: GLENMORANGIE TAYNE
(introduced by: Cindy Gagnon)

Dessert: Carrot Cake

5th Nosing: WOLFBURN
(introduced by: John Leighton)

Upcoming Dinner Dates

June 24th, 2019 - BBQ (Final Exam)
July 22nd, 2019 - 8th Annual Bourbon Night - Matt Jones
Friday August 23rd 2019 - 12th Annual Premium Night
September 16th, 2019 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside / Highlands / Islands / Islay
October 21st, 2019 - Islands / Islay
Wednesday Oct. 30th, 2019 - Macallan / Highland Park / Glenrothes - Cameron Millar
November 18th, 2019 - Islands / Islay
December 9th 2019 - Christmas Dinner
January 20th, 2020 - Robbie Burns Dinner
February 17th, 2020 - Islands / Islay
March 16th, 2020 - Speyside / Highlands
April 20th, 2020 - Speyside
May 25th, 2020 - Speyside
June 22nd, 2020 - BBQ (Final Exam)
July 20th, 2020 - Bourbon & American Whiskey
Friday August 28th 2020 - 13th Annual Premium Night
September 21st, 2020 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside / Highlands / Islands / Islay
October 20th, 2020 - Speyside / Highlands
November 16th, 2020 - Speyside
December 14th 2020 - Christmas Dinner

APRIL - KSMS Financial Statement

(Money from 35 April attendees @ \$70)	= \$2450.00
April dinner 35 persons = \$45.00/ea	= \$1575.00
(Money remaining for buying Single Malt)	= \$850.00
Cost of Single Malts	= \$723.50
Cost of Pours per Person = \$16.67	
KSMS Monthly operational balance	= \$151.50
Cost per person (All inclusive)	= \$60.69

LVMH donates €200m to help repair Notre-Dame

16th April, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

French luxury goods company LVMH has pledged €200 million (US\$226m) to help rebuild the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris after a major fire tore through the famous monument yesterday evening (15 April).



The historic Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris is one of France's most famous landmarks

The fire at the medieval Catholic cathedral began at 6.30pm CEST, quickly reaching the roof of the cathedral and destroying the spire.

Firefighters managed to save the 850-year-old building's main structure, with the fire fully extinguished this morning (16 April). The cause of the fire is not yet known.

In a statement, Bernard Arnault's family and its company, LVMH, owner of brands such as Belvedere vodka and Hennessy Cognac, said "they are committed to assist with the reconstruction of this extraordinary cathedral, symbol of France, its heritage and its unity".

The funds will be used to help reconstruct the cathedral, one of France's most famous landmarks.

The Paris-headquartered firm said: "In the meantime, the LVMH group puts at the disposal of the state and the relevant authorities all its teams – including creative, architectural and financial specialists – to help with the long work of reconstruction and fundraising, which is already in progress."

French president Emmanuel Macron also announced he will launch a fundraising campaign to rebuild the landmark.

Glen Moray releases Bourbon-inspired Scotch

23rd November, 2018 by Amy Hopkins

Speyside distillery Glen Moray has added an "American twist" to its portfolio with the launch of a "sweet and smooth" 10-year-old single malt Scotch whisky.

Glen Moray Fired Oak has taken inspiration from the success of Bourbon

According to the brand, the new expression is inspired by the growing popularity of Bourbon and the "success of sweeter flavours".

Glen Moray Fired Oak has been matured for 10 years in ex-Bourbon casks before being finished for 10 months in heavily charred virgin American oak casks – the same as those used to mature Bourbon.

Master distiller Graham Coull used a 2008 vintage Glen Moray Elgin Classic as the base for the new spirit, and used a "precise firing regime to achieve exactly the right level of char" inside the cask. The whisky is said to be sweeter than other single malts in Glen Moray's collection, with "layers of vanilla bark" and a "hint of smokiness and toasted vanilla" on the finish.

"Fired Oak is all about enhancing flavours rather than adding different character," said Coull. "The virgin oak intensifies the existing vanilla and spice flavours which have come from the ex-Bourbon barrels.

"Two elements are key – quality of cask and timing; both are crucial to obtaining just the right flavour infusion. To create a balance I have selected virgin oak casks with differing lengths of finish to ensure that the final whisky is consistent."

Glen Moray Fired Oak is bottled at 40% abv and has an RRP of £39 (US\$50).

This latest launch follows [the release of Glen Moray Cider Cask Project](#), the first expression in the brand's Elgin Curiosity Range.

Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban 14 Year Old



GLENMORANGIE QUINTA RUBAN UPS AGE STATEMENT

02 May 2019 by [Becky Paskin](#)

Glenmorangie has increased the age statement of its Quinta Ruban Port-finished whisky to a 14-year-old, in order to 'emphasise its flavour'.

Growing older: Longer ageing in Port pipes emphasises Quinta Ruban's chocolate and orange notes

The single malt whisky, distilled at [Glenmorangie](#) distillery near Tain in the Highlands, has been available as a 12-year-old expression since 2010.

Matured for 10 years in American white oak casks, the whisky is then transferred to ruby Port pipes from the Quintas, or wine estates of Portugal for several more years.

It is described as 'the darkest and most intense' whisky in Glenmorangie's core range.

[Brendan McCarron](#), head of whisky stocks at Glenmorangie, said the decision to up the expression's age statement was made, in part, after the company 'listened to its customers'.

He said: 'People appreciate all our whiskies but we're always tinkering with the flavour profile to enrich the flavour.'

'For Quinta, the biggest flavour of them all is dark chocolate and burnt Seville orange.

'We noticed that with a little bit more age those flavours really pop. Our customers always said that if it was older it would be more appealing, and we agree.'



New identity: Quinta Ruban 12 Year Old is now being replaced with the older expression

He added that much of the whisky in Quinta Ruban 12-year-old had already aged for at least 14 years.

A [whisky's age statement](#) refers to the youngest component in the bottle, so a 12-year-old whisky may also contain liquid aged for much longer.

Quinta Ruban 14 Year Old will continue to be bottled at 46% abv, and sold for around £45 a bottle, the same as its predecessor.

It is currently being rolled out in existing Glenmorangie markets where it will replace the 12-year-old expression.

Glenmorangie introduced Quinta Ruban to its core range in 2007, when it was bottled as a no-age-statement single malt. It was replaced in 2010 by the 12-year-old.

Balblair replaces vintages with age-statement whiskies

28th March, 2019 by Melita Kiely – www.scotchwhisky.com

Highland distillery Balblair has moved away from vintages in favour of a new collection of age-statement whiskies that range from 12 to 25 years old.



Balblair has swapped vintages for age statements

The new series comprises four aged expressions: a 12-year-old, 15-year-old, 18-year-old and 25-year-old, all bottled at 46% abv in a new bottle design.

Balblair 12 Year Old has been aged in American oak ex-Bourbon and double-fired American oak casks, and is said to have notes of dried orange, ground spices and vanilla. It will be priced at RRP £45 (US\$60).

The 15-year-old has been first matured in American oak ex-Bourbon casks, before being transferred into first-fill Spanish oak butts to deliver notes of dark chocolate, tropical fruit and vanilla. It will be available for RRP £75 (US\$99).

First left to rest in American oak ex-Bourbon casks, the 18-year-old was then aged in first-fill Spanish oak butts and is said to have flavours of apricots, vanilla custard and raisins. The whisky will be priced at RRP £120 (US\$158).

The oldest whisky in the range, aged for 25 years, was first filled into American oak ex-Bourbon casks before undergoing a second maturation period in oloroso Spanish oak. It is said to have

notes of citrus, chocolate praline, fresh tobacco leaf and blood oranges, and will carry an RRP of £500 (US\$658).

Set to launch in the UK on 28 March, all four whiskies will be rolled out across Russia, France, Germany and China from April. Matthew Jamieson, brand manager for Balblair, which is owned by Inver House Distillers, said: "Our whisky isn't changing: Balblair will always be a single malt Scotch whisky of premium quality, with a true Highland strength of character.

"We're immensely proud of our new collection and confident that the flavour profiles, along with super-premium packaging, will reinvigorate Balblair and excite consumers."

Speyside distillery Glenrothes also made the decision to move away from its usual vintage-approach to whisky last year when it introduced a [range of age-statement Sherry cask single malts](#).

Glenfiddich loses Glenfield trademark dispute

18th April, 2019 by Melita Kiely

The world's biggest selling single malt Scotch whisky, Glenfiddich, has lost a trademark battle with an Indian company accused of copying its brand.

Indian businessman Vivek Anasane wants to expand his Mumbai-based drinks company to the UK with the launch of a Scotch whisky called Glenfield. He applied to register the name of the blended whisky as a trademark.

However, Glenfiddich owner William Grant & Sons opposed the application, arguing Glenfield is "visually and phonetically highly similar to Glenfiddich" due to its use of the prefix 'glen' and the letters 'f' and 'd'.

William Grant & Sons continued to argue that consumers would be likely to associate the Glenfield mark with Glenfiddich "leading to an unfair benefit". It also said it would "cause detriment" to Glenfiddich's reputation and reduce the value of the brand "affecting the purchasing decisions of consumers".

Anasane filed a counterstatement denying the claims from William Grant & Sons. In his defense, Anasane provided a list of third-party marks on the UK register of trademarks that use the word 'Glen'.

He also suggested "no one can claim the right in the world Glen because it describes 'a narrow valley, especially mountain'".

Mark Bryant, trademark hearing officer for the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO), which looks after trademark disputes, ruled in favour of Anasane.

Bryant said: "The relevant average consumer will generally be the whisky drinking general public who will pay a normal level of care and attention during the purchasing process, being neither particularly low or high."

He concluded that each brand shared a "very low level of visual and conceptual similarity and a low to medium level of aural similarity".

Though Bryant acknowledged there were certain aspects that "point towards a finding of a likelihood of confusion", he added that "these factors are more than offset by the differences between the marks".

"I am of the view that the applicant's mark will not even bring the opponent's mark to mind let alone confuse the consumer into believing that the goods sold under the respective marks originate from the same or linked undertaking," said Bryant.

The Spirits Business has contacted William Grant & Sons for comment.

Earlier this year, lawmakers ruled that a [German whisky infringes on the geographical indication of Scotch whisky](#) by using the world 'Glen' in its name.

Ardross Distillery to launch inaugural spirits in 2019

29th April, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

Greenwood Distillers has revealed details of its inaugural spirits range, which will be produced at the new £18 million (US\$23m) Ardross Distillery in the Scottish Highlands.

Highland Council [approved plans for an old farm site](#) to be transformed into the Scotch whisky distillery and tasting room in February 2017. The site will begin production this spring.

Greenwood Distillers will launch seven spirits in the UK this year, with the aim of expanding to exports markets including France, Japan and the US by 2020.

The firm's first product [Theodore Gin](#) launched in February this year, with the aim of selling 50,000 bottles of gin in the UK by the end of 2019. The brand's three-year plan predicts a total of 250,000 bottle sales. Theodore Gin is distilled in a separate gin house on the same site.

Greenwood is also planning to launch a mezcal, Armagnac and Bourbon by spring 2019, as well as a "rare" Scotch whisky by autumn this year.

Located in the Averon Valley, 30 miles north of Inverness, construction of the Ardross Distillery on a private 50-acre site [began in November 2017](#).

The distillery features a still house, tun room, mash house and mill room, which are housed in the main building. It is said to be one of the few distilleries in Scotland to own and manage its own loch.

Greenwood Distillers' team includes Andrew Rankin as chairman and master blender. With 45 years' experience, Rankin joined the distillery in 2015 after holding roles at Chivas Brothers and Morrison Bowmore Distillers.

Rankin will manage inventory of maturing Scotch and Bourbon whiskies at the site, as well as oversee the quality, production and maturation of all spirits at the Ardross Distillery and future sites.

Greenwood Distillers founder Barthelemy Brosseau said: "Greenwood Distillers was founded to fulfil a desire to create a global network of distilleries linked by a common respect for spirits and local traditions, but driven by an explorative mindset.

"We have big ambitions for the company and have collaborated with an eclectic team of individuals who are pushing boundaries to create a portfolio of spirits that will deliver these goals. The Ardross Distillery and Theodore Gin are just the beginning of the story."

Highland Park partners with coastline cleaning scheme

12th April, 2019 by Owen Bellwood

Orkney-based Scotch whisky Highland Park has thrown its support behind The Scottish Coastal Rubbish Aerial Photography initiative to help reduce coastal litter on its island home.

The scheme, known as SCRAPbook, will see Orkney become the first Scottish island photographed from the air to help local communities tackle waste along its coastline.

The project took to the skies above Orkney after Highland Park pledged funding that would support a team of volunteer pilots as they travelled in a light aircraft photographing the island's coastline.

Marie Stanton, distillery manager at Highland Park, said: "Our whisky is a product of our unique environment, from the temperate climate and heather infused peat, to our stories inspired by our Norse ancestry.

"Scotch whisky has been made on the site of Highland Park for more than 221 years, and we believe that thanks to the characteristics of our islands we capture the essence of the Orkney motto of 'the north is our home, the sea is our friend'.

"We are always looking to improve and enhance sustainability at Highland Park, so partnering with SCRAPbook feels like a natural fit and a great opportunity for us to continue to work with our local community to look after both the land we live and work on and the sea that surrounds us."

Once captured, the images will be classified by volunteer citizen scientists and put into an online map that identifies litter hot spots. The map aims to help direct community and volunteer efforts in the clean up of the island.

As well as providing funding for SCRAPbook's Orkney map, employees from Highland Park will be among the first to take part in a volunteer clean-up operation when the results are published later in the year.

Ardnahoe becomes ninth Islay whisky distillery

12th April, 2019 by Melita Kiely

Hunter Laing & Co has officially opened its new £12 million (US\$15.7m) Ardnahoe Distillery on Islay – the island's ninth Scotch whisky producer and the first new site since 2005.



The view from inside the Ardnahoe still house

Set to create up to 30 new jobs on Islay, the distillery hopes to attract 20,000 visitors each year. It was officially opened by Lord George Robertson of Port Ellen.

The brainchild of Hunter Laing & Co owners Stewart Laing and his two sons, Andrew and Scott Laing, Ardnahoe is located on the northeast coast of Islay between Caol Ila and Bunnahabhain.

The "state-of-the-art" distillery features wooden washbacks, Scottish-made lamp glass stills and worm tub condensers.

Ardnahoe will create a "classic peated spirit" that will be matured in ex-Bourbon barrels and ex-Sherry casks. Ardnahoe has already received interest from whisky enthusiasts and collectors for 400 pre-order casks.

Stewart Laing, managing director, said: "Since working as a teenager at Bruichladdich Distillery over 50 years ago, I have had a huge affinity with Islay and its malt whiskies.

"When we decided to build our own distillery, there was only one possible location. We have built a great team to manage the distillery and run the visitor centre and in a few years' time we will be able to drink a great whisky in the classic Islay style, staying true to the island's heritage with a heavily peated malt."

Jim McEwan has been appointed master distiller of the new site. He previously worked as master distiller for fellow Islay producer Bruichladdich, and announced his intention to [come out of retirement to take up the new post with Ardnahoe](#) in 2017.

As well as onsite warehousing, Ardnahoe also boasts a visitor centre complete with a retail store, whisky bar, restaurant and tour facilities built on one level to cater for guests of all abilities.

Scott Laing, business development director, said: "Ardnahoe is one of a series of new developments that will continue to strengthen Hunter Laing over the coming years.

"We have a strong development team working on new international brands and we are targeting several important new markets that will fuel our continued growth.

"Ardnahoe is the catalyst that makes this possible without sacrificing our family's commitment to quality."

Hunter Laing & Co is not the only company that set its sights on Islay. Elixir Distillers, co-founded by Sukhinder Singh, is currently in the process of [gaining planning permission to build a distillery on Islay](#) and formally submitted a planning application in January this year.

Diageo is also in the process of [reawakening silent Islay distillery Port Ellen](#) as part of a £35m (US\$46m) investment plan that includes reviving Brora.



Ardnahoe expects to welcome 20,000 visitors to the distillery each year

GlenAllachie Distillery opens visitor centre

2nd May, 2019 by Nicola Carruthers

Speyside distillery The GlenAllachie has opened its new visitor centre and launched an exclusive single cask bottling for the Spirit of Speyside Festival.



The GlenAllachie Distillery started releasing whiskies for the first time in 2018

The distillery will offer visitors tours of The GlenAllachie for the first time in more than 50 years.

Under Pernod Ricard's ownership, the site was predominantly used for blending and closed to the public.

Billy Walker, [former managing director of the BenRiach Distillery Company](#), bought the GlenAllachie distillery with a consortium of investors for an [undisclosed sum from Pernod Ricard in 2017](#).

The consortium included Trisha Savage, former general manager at BenRiach, and Graham Stevenson, ex-managing director at Inver House Distillers.

Karen McWilliam, who previously worked at the GlenDronach distillery, will manage the new visitor centre. McWilliam said: "This is a historic and exciting time for everyone here at GlenAllachie as we start to welcome people to our new visitor centre and to take a tour of the distillery for the first time in over 50 years.

"For a long time, the distillery has been one of Speyside's best-kept secrets, but now we're creating our own history with our single malts and the gates are open to everyone."

The new visitor centre includes a shop with a range of branded merchandise, plus two single cask whiskies exclusive to the shop and hand-selected by Walker: a 12-year-old and 29-year-old.

The shop also offers visitors the chance to hand-fill their own bottle straight from a cask.

The 12-year-old distillery exclusive was matured in a Bourbon barrel, which Walker describes as tasting of "honey, apricots and mocha, with hints of mint". It has an RRP of £95 (US\$124).

The 29-year-old, which is priced at £350 (US\$457), was matured in a hogshead and has notes of "toffee apples, mocha, pineapples and dark chocolate".

Walker said: "The Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival is a highlight of the year with whisky fans from all the over the world flocking to the region.

"For many, this will be the first chance they've had to visit our distillery, visitor centre and shop and sample our single malt.

"I wanted to make the best possible first impression so I've personally selected two casks, which I believe provide wonderful examples of the type of single malt whisky we're producing here."

During the Spirit of Speyside Festival from 1-6 May 2019, The GlenAllachie Distillery will host three special events and launch an exclusive bottling.

Priced at £95 (US\$124), The GlenAllachie Spirit of Speyside bottling is a 13-year-old malt matured in a Port pipe. Walker describes it as "brimming with heather honey, damsons, nutmeg and cinnamon with hints of mocha and rose hips."

TAMNAVULIN REVEALS TRIPLE-SHERRIED MALT

03 May 2019 by Kirsten Amor

Speyside distillery Tamnavulin has launched its latest single malt, a whisky finished in three different Sherry casks.



Fruity finish: Tamnavulin's Sherry Cask Edition is said to offer 'richness, intensity and complexity'

[Tamnavulin](#) Sherry Cask Edition is the second no-age-statement expression released by the Moray-based distillery, whose whisky is predominantly used in blends by its owner [Whyte & Mackay](#). The expression was matured in American oak barrels before being finished in three different oloroso Sherry casks sourced from individual cooperages in Spain. Bottled at 40% abv, the whisky is said to have 'enticing aromas of vanilla, caramel, banana and milk chocolate' on the nose and a palate with 'warm, sweet flavours of maple syrup, raisin and orange'.

The Sherry Cask Edition is now available

in one-litre bottles at Tesco stores in the UK for £45.

The expression will be sold in a 70cl version at around £32 a bottle in various UK grocers in the second half of 2019.

Whyte & Mackay said the expression was created to 'give shoppers the opportunity to delve into the world of Sherry-finished single malt without breaking the bank'.

Kirsteen Beeston, head of international malt brands at Whyte & Mackay, stated: 'The opportunity for this new expression is two-fold; we know Tamnavulin recruits new drinkers into malts and Sherry finishes are quintessential in malt.

'However, we also know that many whisky enthusiasts want affordable good quality malts.'

Tamnavulin's newest single malt joins its other Sherry-finished no-age-statement expression, [Double Cask](#).

The Double Cask expression was released in 2016 to celebrate Tamnavulin's 50th anniversary, and was the first single malt released by the distillery in 20 years.

The distillery was built in Tamnavulin by [Invergordon Distillers](#) in 1966 to meet the high demand for whisky at the time, and sold to Whyte & Mackay in 1993.

Its new owner mothballed the distillery two years later and it lay silent until 2007, when production restarted.

KILCHOMAN SET TO RELEASE STR CASK WHISKY

02 May 2019 by Matt Evans

Islay distillery Kilchoman is set to release a limited edition STR Cask Matured whisky next week, distilled in 2012 and fully matured in rejuvenated red wine casks.



New life: Kilchoman has used rejuvenated, STR red wine hogsheads to mature its latest single malt

The casks have been treated with the 'STR' method, which stands for shaving, toasting and re-charring, a process pioneered by the [late whisky consultant Dr Jim Swan](#).

The insides of the casks are shaved in order to expose the whisky to new oak, before being toasted and charred to 'maximise flavour extraction'.

[Anthony Wills](#), founder and managing director of [Kilchoman](#), said: 'The STR

cask balances influences from both new and used oak to create a powerful combination of rich fruit, oak, spice and maritime peat smoke.'

Kilchoman STR Cask Matured 2019 is said to take a different approach than the distillery's previous red wine cask release in 2016, as the treatment is said to have 'reduced some of the bolder flavours

on the surface of the oak' to provide 'a more subtle red wine influence'.

The whisky is said to contain 'summer fruits with a hearty measure of cinnamon spice' on the nose and 'soft caramel at first with layers of red berries' on the palate.

Bottled at 50% abv, a total of 14,500 bottles have been produced from 30 ex-red wine hogsheads.

Priced at £78.98 per 70cl bottle, Kilchoman STR Cask Matured 2019 will be on sale worldwide from 8 May.

The STR method has been used by many of the distilleries Dr Swan worked with as a consultant, including [Kavalan distillery](#) in Taiwan and Cotswolds distillery for its [Founder's Choice release](#).

Six historical whiskies you MUST try



You've probably been at a whisky event amongst a bunch of people and you were tasting a whisky from a particular distillery when someone around you remarked, "Ah, it's not as good as it used to be...their whisky was so much better 20 years ago!" Or words to that effect. It's a sentiment I've heard a lot lately. Mostly because I'm the old fart repeatedly saying it.

But I know I'm not alone – it's an observation shared by many, and particularly amongst some of the pals I've been dramming with for 15-20 years. We're often accused of wearing rose-coloured glasses or getting caught up in sepia-toned memories. To be clear, I'm not referring to all whisky per se ... it would be folly and a blatant mistruth to suggest all whisky was generally better in the past. However, there are some distilleries that, on the whole, are releasing whiskies today that are a far cry from the bottlings they released in years gone by. I hesitate to suggest that their *quality* has gone downhill, since quality or flavour preference can be a subjective thing.

But, having said that, if you've been enjoying single malt whisky for over 20 years, there are a few *benchmark* drams that some of us hang our hats on. You may have heard of these drams in the past and wondered what all the fuss is about? Why are they so revered? The fact is, they are snapshot drams – time capsules, if you like – that demonstrate that whisky changes over time...and not always for the better. Brand Ambassadors insist that a distillery's style or flavour doesn't change over the years, but that's marketing spin at best and, at worst, a downright lie. A distillery's whisky *will* change over the years and we know the reasons why: Production methods change (e.g. direct heating gives way to indirect heating of stills); raw ingredients change (e.g. the varieties of barley change as producers seek increasing yields – possibly at the expense of flavour); and the abundance and quality of maturing wood changes (e.g. the availability of quality sherry casks).

The following is a short list of some of these revered, benchmark drams that the long-term drinkers look back on fondly and lament their passing. The cost of these whiskies on the secondary market makes them an expensive prospect if you're wanting an unopened bottle for your shelf at home, but there's a good number of noted whisky bars around the world that typically stock and sell these malts by the dram – a far more attractive option for your wallet. If you should happen to stumble across a bar that offers these whiskies by the dram, then invest in your tastebuds and experience what all the fuss was about....

Aberlour a'Bunadh - Batch 6



Aberlour a'Bunadh has been a staple of the whisky scene for over 20 years now, showcasing how good whisky can be when it's filled into quality oloroso sherry casks and bottled at cask-strength. One of the great appeals of a'Bunadh is the fact that Aberlour identifies and distinguishes each batch with its own incrementing number. The latest release at the time of writing is Batch 63. Whilst there is little to distinguish or differentiate between two or three batches (in other words, Batch 46 won't taste

too wildly different from Batch 45 or 47), it's a very different story when you compare across a wider spectrum. Compare Batch 55 with Batch 10, and you won't believe they both came from the same distillery!

For many long-time drinkers and observers, Batch 6 remains the defining benchmark or pinnacle of a'Bunadh. Released in 1999, it rivals the best of what Glenfarclas and Glendronach had on offer at the time, and some even felt it was the equal of the famous Macallan Cask Strength from that era.

The a'Bunadh has suffered the same fate that's impacted the other respected sherry-dominant distilleries such as Macallan and Glenfarclas – namely, a surge in demand and popularity that has coincided with a massive decline in the quantity (and, arguably, *quality*) of available sherry casks. Early batches of a'Bunadh were said to have been matured in 1st fill oloroso casks, whereas an objective tasting of current releases suggests that either refill casks might now make up a healthy portion of the vatting, or that the proportion of European oak used has greatly reduced relative to the proportion of American oak.

If you're a fan of a'Bunadh, track down Batch 6 and discover how and why this expression earned its reputation.

Lagavulin 16yo (any release bottled prior to 2010)

Of those that started drinking whisky 15-20 years ago, it's ridiculous how many state that Lagavulin 16yo was the first single malt they ever tried. (It's a story I'm repeated told by people who come up to



me at tastings I host). Brought to prominence by virtue of Diageo's "Classic Malts" range, Lagavulin 16yo was an exceptional whisky that introduced many to the charms of Islay. But the Lagavulin 16yo of the 1990's and early 2000's was a very different whisky to that which you'll taste in today's bottles.

The primary reason for this is the change that was made to the malt's peating levels, which in 1994 was reduced from 50ppm down to 35ppm. Fast forward the 16 years of maturation, and thus 2010 was the last year that the 16yo was released with the higher phenols in the malt. In the immediate years after 2010, the releases were

carefully vatted with ever-reducing levels of the older, heavier peated stock so that the change would not be immediately obvious from one production batch to the next. However, the higher ppm whisky would eventually run out (or be held back in cask to be released as older whisky in the future), leaving the 16yo release with spirit distilled entirely from 35ppm malt. Find a bottle released prior to 2010 and you'll discover a dram that is drier, smokier, and peatier than the current offerings. You'll also discover why so many have a sentimental place in their heart for Lagavulin 16yo. And, if you can find a bottle or even just a dram of the 1980 or 1981 vintage Distillers Edition, you'll taste a little piece of heaven.

Ardbeg 1974 Provenance



Ardbeg will always have its fans, but – like Macallan – they tend to fall into generational groupings. There are those that remember the Ardbegs distilled prior to the distillery's closure in 1983 and those that only know the Ardbegs distilled after Glenmorangie brought the distillery back to life in 1997. (I'll conveniently ignore the short and sporadic periods of production between 1989 and 1996).

When Glenmorangie acquired the distillery in 1997, they inherited a pot-holed inventory of stock that had large gaps due to the many years of silence between 1983 and 1997. This included the casks of stock distilled in the early 1980's that were largely unpeated. However, many of the whiskies from the 1970's proved to be absolutely stunning, and there were several retail releases as well as many Ardbeg Committee releases of vintage-dated whiskies that demonstrated that

Ardbeg was making exceptionally delicious spirit in the 70's. The Ardbeg 1977 remains a highlight for many; 1978 was also a great year; and the original release of "Lord of the Isles" also confirmed that this was one very special distillery.

However, the 1974 release – tagged *Provenance* – carries a bit more weight and sentimental value. (*There were a surprising number of OB Ardbeg single cask releases from 1974, but Provenance – a vatting of several casks – is the main attraction.*) 1974 is a key date on Ardbeg's timescale as this was the last year that Ardbeg did all its own malting on site. Commentators and contemporaries of the time have remarked that there was admittedly an occasional inconsistency to the maltings, with some batches being more heavily peated than others. The 1974 Provenance – released in 1997 as a 23yo – is thus the last release to feature 100% Ardbeg malt made on site. After 1974, increased demand required the distillery to start combining its homemade malt with malt sourced from offsite, and the maltings closed for good in 1981 – heralding in a significant change to the flavour and peat profile of all subsequent Ardbeg distillates.

The late 1990's and early 2000's were great years to be an Ardbeg fan, as Glenmorangie released many of the iconic bottlings in those years – all at highly affordable prices. If you can taste a dram of the 1974 or, failing that, the 1977, you'll taste a very different Ardbeg to the releases of today.

Highland Park 12yo (any bottling from the 1990's)



Long before Highland Park's marketing team decided to play the [viking angle](#), Highland Park was once one very highly respected whisky. "The greatest all-rounder in the world of malt whisky" wrote Michael Jackson in his *Malt Whisky Companion*, and when you tasted the 12yo in the 1990's and early 2000's, it was hard to argue with him. A little bit of peat and smoke; a decent dollop of oloroso sherry; the perfect balance of malt and oak; and that alluring heather honey note made the Highland Park releases from that era nothing short of spectacular – the 18yo and 25yo expressions were also class leaders.

In 1996, Highland Park and

Macallan came under the common ownership of Highland Distillers, which would later be absorbed into the Edrington Group. It's been speculated that one of the reasons for Highland Park's change (some would say decline) in flavour profile is that Edrington began directing its better-quality sherry casks to Macallan at Highland Park's expense, but that's drawing a long bow. A more rational observation is that Highland Park simply became yet another distillery to suffer from the shortage of good quality sherry casks, at a time when its own popularity was on the rise. Once it came under the ownership of Edrington, there's little doubt that Highland Park's production regime

and supply chain of materials would also have been tweaked to take advantage of broader company policies, efficiencies, and economies of scale.

Regardless of the reasons, the irrefutable fact is that tasting a bottle of Highland Park 12yo from the 1990's – even into the early 2000's – is a very different experience to tasting a Highland Park 12yo bottled today. And I'm bold enough and brave enough to assert that the bottlings from 20 years ago were, quite simply, better. Significantly better.

1960's Bowmore



Stanley P. Morrison purchased Bowmore in 1963 and the following year acquired what must surely have been the finest parcel of sherry casks ever seen in the industry. The sherry casks laid down in that year would go on to contribute to some of the most legendary bottlings of all time – including the famous Black Bowmore. There were originally three commercial releases of Black Bowmore. (*A little known fact: The name "Black Bowmore" was actually coined by The Gillies Club, Australia, believed to be the world's oldest single malt appreciation club. The club bottled two private casks of 1964 Bowmore for its members as a 17yo and a*

21yo in 1981 and 1985 respectively. They gave them the name Black Bowmore due to the insanely dark colour. Brian Morrison of the distillery was also a member of The Gillies Club, courtesy of time spent in Australia and, when the distillery bottled its commercial version a few years later, he was given permission to re-use the name.) The first edition was bottled in 1993 as a 29yo, and was still on the shelves of several liquor stores in Australia in 1999 for around \$200. Today, bottles change hands for prices north of \$20,000! The Bowmore Bicentenary (there were several releases for different markets) bottled in 1979 from the same parcel of 1964 casks is another worthy pursuit. There are several of us who vigorously debate which is the better dram between the Bowmore Bicentenary and the Black Bowmore, giving you some indication as to the quality of both.

Both whiskies – and many other Bowmores from the 1960's – strongly exhibit what Bowmore became famous for: An extraordinary tropical fruitiness. Together with the peat, smoke and the influence of the sherry, these old Bowmores exhibit hints of mango, stonefruit and – to my palate – red currants. All traits that you won't find in today's Bowmores. And we'll save the discussion about FWP Bowmores for another day.

Macallan 18yo (any vintage released prior to 2002)



Any noob getting into whisky today must wonder about Macallan's aura and wonder why its whiskies are, generally and on the whole, more expensive than other brands. Whisky & Wisdom has written much about Macallan and its changes and evolution over the years, so we won't repeat it all here – but you may wish to read [The highs and lows of Macallan](#) or [Macallan – The past, present, and future collide](#). In the meantime, suffice it to say, much of Macallan's esteem and legend was built on the whiskies that were released in the 1980's, 1990's and just into the early 2000's. For many, the annual vintage release of Macallan 18yo was considered the pinnacle of single malt whisky. The 1984 vintage (released in 2002) was the last *true* vintage of its era. Macallan subsequently released two more year-stamped 18 year olds

with 1985 and 1986 on the label (released in 2003 and 2004 respectively), but both those releases were vattings with casks from older years, rather than true vintages. By 2003, Macallan was a victim of its own success and could no longer keep up with demand.

Coupled with the rapid decline in the availability of sherry casks, Macallan had to make big changes and 2004 saw the emergence of, first, *Elegancia*, and then the release of the Fine Oak range. Macallan had built its name and reputation on the back of maturing its whiskies exclusively in oloroso sherry casks and yet, suddenly, its whiskies were forced to change.

Macallan's portfolio today is a confusing mix of different ranges and names, all using different permutations of 1st fill, 2nd fill, and refill casks across both European and American oak, and utilising casks that previously served both the bourbon and sherry industries. Yes, there is still a line of Macallan that is matured exclusively in sherry, but it comes with a price tag and – in the opinion of many – is not a patch on the whiskies they released 20 years ago. Some put this down to the cessation of Golden Promise barley; others to the decreasing quality of sherry casks (including the presence of sulphur); and others simply shrug and accept that as Macallan has had to increase production and volume to meet demand, quality must naturally have a corresponding decline.

Regardless, if you're a fan of sherry-matured whisky and can find a dram of Macallan 18yo back when Golden Promise ruled the roost, you're in for a treat. And if that 18yo should happen to be one of the famed *Gran Reserva* vintages released between 1979 and 1982 – that's about as good as whisky got. Have a dram and discover why older drinkers can't shut up about what Macallan *used* to be.

Now before readers assume this author is wantonly harassing modern bottlings and asserting that today's whisky isn't a patch on yesteryear's drams, let's restore some balance and recognise that a number of brands and distilleries are releasing whiskies today that significantly outpunch their counterparts from decades gone by. Glenmorangie and Glenfiddich are two high-profile examples. Tobermory/Ledaig is another, as are Loch Lomond and Glen Scotia. For these distilleries, much of their improvement is due to their wood regime and the simple fact they've invested in and filled their spirit into quality casks. In the 1990's and early 2000's, some of these distilleries were still particularly focussed on fillings for the blenders, but as their own-brand single malt profile has grown (or, perhaps more accurately, as their owners have sought to see their profile grow), they've been obliged to lift their game.

But the main thrust of this article remains: Make it your objective to track down any of the six abovementioned whiskies. Not only will your tastebuds thank you but, the next time you're at a tasting and some old fart says, "It's not as good as it used to be", you can nod and sagely agree.

Cheers, AD

Glenlivet rebrands Master Distiller's Reserve whiskies

16th April, 2019 by Owen Bellwood

Single malt Scotch whisky brand The Glenlivet has relaunched its Master Distiller's Reserve range as the travel retail-exclusive Triple Cask series.



The Glenlivet Triple Cask series includes Distiller's Reserve, White Oak Reserve and Rare Cask

Launching this month, The Glenlivet Triple Cask collection has been developed to "bring a new visual identity" to the range, which reflects the triple maturation process of each expression.

The changes include replacing the Master Distiller's Reserve with the Distiller's Reserve; replacing Solera Vatted with White Oak Reserve; and renaming Small Batch as Rare Cask.

The Glenlivet Triple Cask Distiller's Reserve (US\$53) is created with spirit influenced by three cask types, ex-Sherry, American oak and

European oak – said to give the whisky "a harmonious balance of fruity notes and smoothness".

White Oak Reserve (US\$75) uses a higher proportion of spirit matured in first fill American white oak casks, giving the whisky "sweet velvety" notes and flavours of "creamy coconut and vanilla".

Finally, the Rare Cask whisky (US\$115) will be bottled and released in numbered small batches. A higher proportion of ex-Sherry casks is said to give this whisky "unrivalled richness in taste and depth of flavour".

Alongside the launch of the three new whiskies, The Glenlivet will "enhance the in-store experience" with a new personalisation service, which allows travellers to add a personal message to any of The Glenlivet Triple Cask bottles.

Laura Lung, marketing manager, malts at Pernod Ricard Global Travel Retail, said: "Personalisation continues to be a key purchase motivator for consumers, especially when it comes to their favourite brands and products. It provides consumers with multiple opportunities to shop for different gifting occasions, from Father's Day to birthdays and anniversaries.

"The activations we have created to support the launch of The Glenlivet Triple Cask series capitalise on this enduring trend and show how we are constantly evolving the brand to listen and respond to the needs of our consumers.

"With The Glenlivet Triple Cask Flavour Discovery and the personalisation service, we hope to have crafted a unique experience that will both help inspire consumers to discover which of The Glenlivet Triple Cask expressions is best matched to their taste preference, as well as provide a one-of-a-kind gift and treasured memory."

To support the launch of the new range, Pernod Ricard Global Travel Retail has created a series of in-store activations in major airports across the globe, called The Glenlivet Triple Cask Flavour Discovery.

SCOTCH ISLANDS

GOING BEYOND ISLAY FOR SINGLE MALT WHISKY

by [Stephanie Moreno](#) - April 18, 2019

Whenever the Isles of Scotland are discussed in the whisky world, nine times out of ten it will be regarding whiskies from the Isle of Islay. With [Ardnahoe Distillery](#) having recently opened, there are now nine working distilleries on the isle, and counting. Granted, those [Islay distilleries are certainly worthy of exploration](#). But Scotland has hundreds and hundreds of islands to explore, and lucky for us whisky fans, some of them have distilleries.

Some brands will be recognizable, but perhaps you didn't know where exactly they call home. Other distilleries are just now in the production phase with single malt whisky still to come, which we've indicated with an asterisk below. We'll make sure to update this list as needed. But now, let's all get (re)acquainted with the other scotch islands, beyond Islay.

ISLE OF SKYE

TALISKER DISTILLERY

Year Founded: 1830

Location: Carboist, Isle of Skye

Things to Note: The house style is a medium-peated malt with a maritime character. Fun fact, up until 1928, the distillery triple-distilled its whisky. There are still three spirit stills on site along with its two wash stills.

Notable Bottles: [Talisker 10 Year](#) is the standard-bearer for this brand. It's a classic whisky that is thankfully widely available. Others include the [no-age statement Storm](#) and [Dark Storm](#) bottlings.

Current Owners: Diageo



Talisker Distillery / Photo Credit: Gordon Hatton
*TORABHAIG DISTILLERY

Year Production Began: 2017

Location: Teangue, Isle of Skye

Things to Note: Torabhaig plans to produce a peated malt whisky with the peat level still to be revealed. Also, multiple varieties of barley and casks will be used. Distillery output is said to be 1.5 million bottles of single malt scotch whisky per year.

Current Owners: Mossburn Distillers & Blenders

ISLE OF ORKNEY

HIGHLAND PARK DISTILLERY

Year Founded: 1798

Location: Kirkwall, Isle of Orkney

Things to Note: Orcadian peat is quite different from both mainland peat and Islay peat because it contains more moss and heather due to its northerly location. The peated malt is heavily-smoky, but it only comprises 20% of the mash with unpeated malted barley making up the bulk of the malted barley recipe. Additionally, 100% ex-sherry casks are used for maturation, both in American and European oak.

Notable Bottles: Too numerous to count. Any of the core age-statement single malts are must-try whiskies and each received a [recent name change and makeover](#).

Others to Try: [Highland Park Dark Origins](#), [Highland Park Valkyrie](#), and if you can find any of the [Valhalla Collection](#) on a bar, make sure to get yourself a dram.

Current Owners: Edrington Group



Highland Park Distillery / Photo Credit: Highland Park Distillery

SCAPA DISTILLERY

Year Founded: 1885

Location: Kirkwall, Isle of Orkney

Things to Note: Scapa's house style single malt is unpeated, although in 2016 the brand released a no-age statement single malt called Glansa. Unusually, the distillery uses a Lomond still in its whisky production.

Notable Bottles: [The 16 Year](#), first introduced in 2008 was the standard malt for this brand, but in recent years it seems to have fallen out of production. The [Scapa Skiren](#) is a serviceable dram if the price is right.

Current Owners: Pernod Ricard's Chivas Brothers

ISLE OF ARRAN

ARRAN DISTILLERY (FORMERLY CALLED ISLE OF ARRAN DISTILLERY)

Year Founded: 1994

Location: Lochranza, Isle of Arran

Things to note: The distillery produces both unpeated and peated

single malt whiskies. Also, a variety of fortified wine finishes are included in its portfolio. In addition, the distillery produces blended whiskies as well as a whisky cream liqueur.

Notable Bottles: Peat lovers should seek out the [Machrie Moor limited editions](#) and as an everyday dram, you could do worse than [The Robert Burns](#) single malt. We think the [Bard of Ayrshire](#) would approve.

Current Owners: Isle of Arran Distillers



Arran Distillery / Photo Credit: Arran Distillery

*LAGG DISTILLERY

Year Production began: 2018

Location: Lagg, Isle of Arran

Things to Note: The distillery expects to produce a heavily-peated single malt with a new-make that is much heavier and more rustic than its sister distillery, Arran.

Current Owners: Isle of Arran Distillers

ISLE OF MULL

TOBERMORY DISTILLERY

Year Founded: 1798

Location: Tobermory, Isle of Mull

Things to Note: This distillery produces both an unpeated (Tobermory) and peated single malt (Ledaig). Recently, production stopped for 24 months to upgrade the distillery and visitor centre. The expected relaunch is set for summer 2019.

Notable Bottles: [Tobermory 12 Year](#), [Ledaig 10 Year](#) and 18 Year.

Also, the brand has introduced a gin. Tobermory Hebridean Gin is made with botanicals from the Isle of Mull as well as new-make malt spirit that is typically used to produce the brand's unpeated scotch whiskies.

Current Owners: Distell Group

ISLE OF JURA

JURA DISTILLERY (FORMERLY CALLED ISLE OF JURA DISTILLERY)

Year Founded: 1810, then known as Small Isles Distillery

Location: Craighouse, Isle of Jura

Things to Note: Although heavily-peated whisky was featured in the past, currently it releases more non-peated offerings with peated releases having a more subtle smoke factor. In addition, more thought is considered when selecting barrels for maturation in order to bring out certain characteristics in the malt whisky.

Notable Bottles: Recently (2018), the brand launched its [The Signature Series](#) which marks a new look for Jura. Seek out [Jura Seven Wood](#) and [Jura 18 Year](#).

Current Owners: Whyte & MacKay



Jura Distillery / Photo Credit: Jura Distillery

ISLE OF LEWIS

ABHAINN DEARG DISTILLERY

Year Founded: 2008

Location: Uig, Isle of Lewis

Thing to Note: The distillery intends to be a true field-to-bottle distillery in order to reduce its carbon footprint and be entirely self-sufficient. Abhainn Dearg is pronounced *Aveen Jarræk* which means Red River in Gaelic.

Bottles Available: The first single malt was released in 2011 as a special three-year whisky. The distillery released its first 10 year single malt, [Abhainn Dearg X Single Malt](#), this past winter.

Current Owner: Mark Tayburn

ISLE OF HARRIS

*ISLE OF HARRIS DISTILLERS

Year Founded: 2015

Location: Tarbert, Isle of Harris

Things to Note: The first whisky release is still TBA, but the name will be The Hearach Single Malt Whisky. "Hearach" is the name for the people of the Isle of Harris.

Currently Available: [Isle of Harris Gin](#)

Current Owners: Isle of Harris Distillers Ltd.

ISLE OF RAASAY

*ISLE OF RAASAY DISTILLERY

Year Founded: 2017

Location: Kyle, Isle of Raasay

Things to Note: The style for the distillery will be a lightly-peated single malt, with the first single malt whisky expected for 2020 release. Raasay offers luxury accommodation within the same building as the distillery, a Victorian-era villa called Borodale House.

Currently Available: [Raasay While We Wait](#)

Current Owners: R & B Distillers

Distillation begins at Lagg Distillery

25th April, 2019 by Melita Kiely

Production is officially under way at Isle of Arran Distillers' new Lagg Distillery, which will create heavily peated whiskies.

Lagg Distillery is situated to the south of the Isle of Arran

The first cask, a Sherry butt, was filled on 10 April and has been reserved for members of the Lagg Cask Society.

In contrast to Isle of Arran Distillers' Arran Malts range, the whiskies produced at Lagg will be "rich, earthy" and peated expressions with a registered phenolic content of 50ppm (parts per million).

James MacTaggart, master distiller, said: "It's incredibly exciting to be taking the very first steps in producing what will eventually be a magnificent Lagg single malt Scotch whisky and something truly unique to anything we've produced previously."

[Construction of Lagg Distillery started in February 2017](#) and is not yet finished. The visitor centre is still being built, but the distillery aims to welcome its first guests by early summer 2019.

Lagg Distillery is situated on the south of the Isle of Arran and will be led by distillery manager Graham Omand.

Once fully operational, Lagg Distillery will increase Isle of Arran's production capacity to two million litres. Total visitor numbers to both distilleries are expected to surpass 200,000 by 2020.

Last year, Isle of Arran gave whisky enthusiasts the opportunity to [purchase the first casks of heavily peated single malt](#) from Lagg Distillery for £6,000 (US\$8,360).

Caol Ila given green light for visitor centre upgrade

25th April, 2019 by Melita Kiely

Diageo has been granted planning permission to renovate the Caol Ila Distillery visitor experience as part of its £150 million (US\$215m) investment in Scotch whisky tourism.

Argyll and Bute Council has approved plans for the development, which will transform Caol Ila into the Islay home of Diageo's blended Scotch brand, Johnnie Walker. Work is expected to begin in the next few weeks.

The upgrade will include a new "state-of-the-art" visitor centre inside the Caol Ila warehouse, complete with a bar looking out across the Sound of Islay.

Visitors will be able to enter through the roof of the distillery warehouse by crossing a new footbridge that will be connected to a new car park hidden on the hill above the distillery.

Caol Ila 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, Cardhu in Speyside and Clynelish in the Highlands.

Leigh Aitken, Caol Ila Distillery brand home manager, said: "This is a major investment project that will not only transform the Caol Ila visitor experience, but will add further to Islay's reputation as the greatest whisky island in the world."

Diageo 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 Edinburgh building will become a new 'hub' for Diageo's business in Scotland and will allow the firm to "mentor Scotland's next generation of entrepreneurs and exporters".

It is said to be the biggest single investment in Scotch whisky tourism's history. The funding will be phased over three years.

In August last year, it was reported that [Scotch whisky tourism reached a record high in 2017](#) as 1.9m people flocked to distilleries across Scotland.

WOMEN OFFERED WHISKY-MAKING INTERNSHIPS

25 April 2019 by [Becky Paskin](#)

A Highland whisky distillery is hoping to encourage more women to consider a career in Scotch by giving away two all-expenses-paid summer internships.



Picturesque placement: The successful interns will be hosted at the scenic Ncn'ean distillery

[Ncn'ean](#) distillery, situated on the Movern peninsula, is offering two women the opportunity to experience hands-on how whisky is made, from mashing and distilling through to maturation.

The interns also teach cocktail making and how to forage for the local plants that are used in Ncn'ean's Botanical Spirit.

The initiative has been launched to raise the profile of distilling as a career option among women, and to 'challenge gender-based stigmas associated with the whisky industry'.

[Annabel Thomas](#), founder of Ncn'ean, said: 'I wanted to challenge the outdated views a lot of people still have. The number of times people ask me "do you actually like whisky?" just because I am a woman, and the lack of gender balance in the industry in Scotland suggests we all still have more work to do.

'The internship will be a chance for two women to experience all aspects of the small operation and invite them to understand what working in a distillery really involves.

'We hope that women from all walks of life that want to try their hand at something new will apply.'



Leading lady: Annabel Thomas hopes to encourage more women to work in whisky

Ncnean opened in 2017 as [Scotland's first 100% organic whisky distillery](#), using only renewable sources for its energy.

Situated in converted farm steadings on the grounds of the historic Drimnin Estate, the distillery produces a light and fruity spirit using several innovations, including climate-controlled warehouses, designed by late distilling consultant [Dr Jim Swan](#).

The internships, which are open to all women aged 18 or over, will take place from 15-20 July, with all travel, accommodation and food included.

More information and details of how to apply can be found at: [ncnean.com/internship](#).

Several distilleries across the UK [offer hands-on whisky-making experiences](#) from half-day distilling tutorials to week-long immersive schools covering the whole process from malting to maturation.

MARVEL'S CAUTIONARY TALE FOR WHISKY MAKERS

01 May 2019 by Jason Thomson

With the box office success of Avengers: Endgame this weekend it's hard to imagine Marvel was near bankruptcy 23 years ago, when its pandering to the collectors market almost saw its demise. There's a lot whisky can learn from comics, writes Jason Thomson.



Collectors items?: Like whisky, some comic books are created for trading on the secondary market

Comic books and whisky.... what could they have in common? At first glance it seems not much. But, if you look closer, you'll see that there are similarities scattered over their past, present and, even possibly, their future.

Historically both have used a foundation of a dedicated and passionate fan base as a launch pad to skyrocket to mainstream success. In recent years Marvel, one of the world's biggest comic book publishers, has now become an entertainment behemoth, with its latest release – *Avengers: Endgame* – shattering box office records and making US\$1.2 billion in its opening weekend alone.

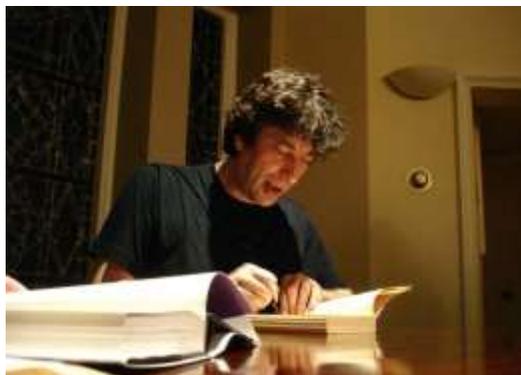
But it wasn't always rosy for Marvel. In fact, in 1996 the company was almost pulled into bankruptcy due to a whole host of problems, mostly of its own making, but problems that the whisky industry might do well to take note of in the current climate.

Marvel's financial issues weren't unforeseen either. The publisher, and even the whole comics industry, were warned about the fate that

they were courting several years beforehand.

In 1993 comics were booming. Sales were at an all-time high and new comic book stores were sprouting up wherever there was space.

Everybody agreed that this



was a golden time for the industry; everyone it seems except Neil

Gaiman. Writer of some of the era's best stories across the genre of comics, his work on *Miracleman* and the *Sandman* series is still praised today. He was a respected and heralded voice within the industry. However, people were not ready for his frank assessment of what was happening to comics at the time.

Power of foresight: Writer Neil Gaiman predicted the crash of the comic book industry

In April 1993, Gaiman took his place on stage in front of 3,000 eager attendees at the Diamond Comic Distributors' 10th Annual Retailers Seminar, and pulled the rug from under them. He declared they were living in a bubble. A bubble that had been manufactured by the industry and one that was doomed to do what all bubbles must – burst.

For years publishers had been cashing in on a market fuelled not by eager readers, but by speculators. People were buying comics, just not in a way that was sustainable. Individuals were hoarding up to 20 copies of the same issue; one to consume and 19 others to be tucked away and (theoretically) sold later for a hefty profit.

Far from finding this to be a problem, publishers leaned into the trend. Issues were released with multiple covers or collectible trading cards and packaged in foil bags, necessitating the need to buy many more than could ever be needed to ensure that the buyer had a full set.

Gaiman compared the current boom to the 'Tulip Mania' that brought Holland to its economic knees in the 1630s. This was a strange time where money was to be made in the frenzied buying and selling of tulip bulbs and is often thought of as the first speculative bubble.

'You can sell lots of comics to the same person, especially if you tell them that you are investing money for high guaranteed returns,' Gaiman told the attendees. 'But you're selling bubbles and tulips, and one day the bubble will burst, and the tulips will rot in the warehouse.'

All this rings alarmingly true with the current whisky marketplace, especially with the growth of online whisky auctions. For years the whisky-buying public have voiced their rage at missing out on the newest limited release to 'flippers', those only interested in whisky for its short-term increase in cash value. The whisky industry itself seems to have escaped the backlash even if they are, for lack of a better word, pandering to these most ardent of speculators.

This was seen recently with [Diageo's Game of Thrones releases](#). A wonderful bit of fan service and a nice tie-in with a pop-culture phenomenon, but one that led to some of the most blatant cash grabs the whisky world has seen in some time. As the first online auctions rolled around after the UK release, these bottlings numbered in the hundreds.

Lannister, Stark, Tyrell and the rest of the great houses were there in such high numbers that it was a chore to scroll past them to see what else was available. It isn't a particularly new trend either. With each Punchbowl, Devil's Cask, [Committee bottling](#), [Genesis expression](#) or entirely [auctioned-off first release](#) from a new distillery, the buy, flip and profit consumer base grows. Until the profits stop. And then what?



Quick flip: Game of Thrones whiskies flooded the secondary market soon after release
Comics, whisky, tulips – it doesn't really matter. Once the profits stop the speculators will move on. They always do.

In his impassioned speech Neil Gaiman suggested a solution to all this. His idea? He asked people to focus on writing and selling good stories and to move the focus away from selling several of the same issue to a single person. As he put it: 'I don't write collectibles, nor do I write investment items. I write stories. I write the best I can. I write stories for people to read.'

A noble sentiment, and one that easily translates into the whisky world without much being lost in translation. Swap out writing stories for making whisky, and people reading for people drinking, and you can easily picture a whisky maker imparting these words.

The short-term profits from selling all these limited and rare drams are just that – short term. The rise of special edition and limited release whiskies in the past decade has been huge, and the secondary market driving them has inevitably grown too. You need only have a passing glance at any whisky auction site to see that. However, when we look at similar situations in the past, these models are not built to be sustainable – never mind thrive – in the long term.

None of this is to say that limited editions or auctions are necessarily bad things. Both have a place within any well-balanced marketplace, but finding that balance is key. It's obvious to say that whisky is very different to comic books, but there are similarities that are undeniable. Hopefully the two industries don't share the same mistakes.

Membership and Dinner prices for 2018-2019

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 17th, 2018 dinner date as an example:
 - Dinner invitations will be sent out Friday August 24th, 2018. Please respond to me (rdifazio04@gmail.com). I will then acknowledge that you have a seat. Please understand that if you do not receive a response you are not guaranteed a seat at the respective dinner. In such circumstances (e.g., computer glitches) please e-mail me again or call me (613-532-5285).
 - Unless otherwise stated accommodation at the dinner will be guaranteed for all members who respond by Friday September 7th, 2018 @ 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 7th, 2018 @ 6pm will be removed from the list.
- Anyone canceling between Friday September 7th, 2018 @ 6pm and Monday September 17th, 2018 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 17th, 2018 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 7th, 2018 @ 6pm and Monday September 17th, 2018, their name will be placed on a wait-list and be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis.

Reserved Seating

- 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.

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.

Just a note because we care.

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



Kingston Single Malt Society

Roberto Di Fazio, President

827 Old Colony Road

Kingston, Ontario, K7P 1S1, Canada

613-532-5285

rdifazio04@gmail.com

<http://www.kingstonsinglemaltsociety.com>

