

# Kingston Single Malt Society

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

A social club for the appreciation of Single Malt Whisky since 1998  
JANUARY 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 VOLUME 12; NUMBER 7



This evening's  
menu celebrating  
the  
260<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of  
Robbie Burns  
Birthday

## MENU

### Ode to the Haggis & Pre-Dinner Toast

1<sup>st</sup> Nosing: KILKERRAN 12 YEAR OLD  
(introduced by: Doug Perkins)

### Soup: Traditional Scotch Broth Soup

2<sup>nd</sup> Nosing: KILCHOMAN PX SINGLE CASK  
(introduced by: John Leighton)

Appetizer: Scotch Cured Salmon Gravlax,  
Pickled Beets, Horseradish, Mustard Greens

3<sup>rd</sup> Nosing: BENRIACH CASK STRENGTH  
BATCH No.1

(introduced by: Ken Goodland)

4<sup>th</sup> Nosing: BENROMACH 18 YEAR OLD

(introduced by: Paul Charbonneau)

Entrée: Venison Stew, Root Vegetables, Potato,  
Braising Jus & Haggis

5<sup>th</sup> Nosing: LAPHROAIG TRIPLE WOOD  
(introduced by: John Creber)

Dessert: Cloutie Pudding &  
Highland Park Valknut Whisky Custard

6<sup>th</sup> Nosing: HIGHLAND PARK VALKNUT  
&

7<sup>th</sup> Nosing: HIGHLAND PARK FULL VOLUME  
(introduced by: Bill Gorham)

## COST OF THE MALTS

**KILKERRAN 12 YEAR OLD** CAMPBELTOWN SINGLE MALT  
VINTAGES 524181 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$87.95** Spirits,  
Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts, 46.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**KILCHOMAN PX SINGLE CASK ISLAY SINGLE MALT**  
LCBO 543496 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$199.95** Spirits,  
Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 57.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**BENRIACH CASK STRENGTH BATCH No. 1** LCBO  
229824 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$150.25** Spirits, Scotch  
Whisky, 57.2% Alcohol/Vol.

**BENROMACH EXCLUSIVE SINGLE CASK SPEYSIDE 8**  
**YEAR OLD SINGLE MALT (DISTILLED; 2009; BOTTLED**  
**2017; Barrel # 122; One of 249 Bottles) VINTAGES**  
133527 | 700 mL bottle **Price: \$ 127.95** Spirits, Scotch  
Whisky, 59.4% Alcohol/Vol.

**LAPHROAIG TRIPLE WOOD ISLAY SINGLE MALT** LCBO  
272195 | 750 mL bottle **Price \$89.95** Spirits,  
Whisky/Whiskey, Scotch Single Malts 48.0% Alcohol/Vol.

**HIGHLAND PARK VALKNUT** LCBO 632687 | 750 mL  
bottle, **Price: \$99.95**, Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 46.8%  
Alcohol/Vol.

**HIGHLAND PARK FULL VOLUME** LCBO 534305 | 750 mL  
bottle, **Price: \$129.95**, Spirits, Whisky/Whiskey 47.2%  
Alcohol/Vol.

## Results of the December Raffle

The winner of the Tomatin Gift Pack and the  
Samuel Adams Utopia was Bill Gorham.

A total of \$590 was raised.

Thank you everyone!

## Results of the Silent Auction

A big thanks to all those who participated.

A total of \$1345 was raised.

Thank you everyone!

## Winners of Gifts from Mrs. Claus (aka Lana Di Fazio)

Peter Clarke, Gordon Hagar, Shelley Hagar,  
Bill Gorham, Conny Leighton, Joe  
Mezzatesta, Anthony Kaduck, & Kim Tufts

## Upcoming Dinner Dates

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 -

Glenglassaugh/Glendonach/Glenfiddich - David Smith  
Friday March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 - Game of Thrones Single Malt Collection

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Balvenie Night - Jamie Johnson

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 - Islay - River Mill

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Speyside

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - BBQ (Final Exam)

July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 - World Whisk(e)y

Friday August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 - 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Premium Night

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside / Highlands / Islands / Islay  
 October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 - Islands / Islay  
 Wednesday Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Macallan / Highland Park / Glenrothes - Cameron Millar  
 November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Islands / Islay  
 December 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 - Christmas Dinner  
 January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Robbie Burns Dinner  
 February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Islands / Islay  
 March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Speyside  
 April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Campbeltown / Speyside / Islands - River Mill  
 May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Speyside  
 June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 - BBQ (Final Exam)  
 July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - World Whisk(e)y - Matt Jones  
 Friday August 28<sup>th</sup> 2020 - 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Premium Night  
 September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 - Campbeltown / Lowland / Speyside / Highlands / Islands / Islay  
 October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Speyside / Highlands  
 November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Speyside  
 December 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 - Christmas Dinner

Other Burns Night facts ...  
 \* Approximately 15 million people worldwide annually celebrate Burns Night.  
 \* There are statues of Robert Burns in Central Park, New York and at Poet's Corner in Hyde Park, London.  
 \* It is estimated that 70% of the UK's annual haggis consumption happens on or around Burns Night.  
 \* Burns Night contributes a staggering £150 million to the Scottish economy each year.  
 \* The poetry of Robert Burns have been translated in to almost every known language and have been used in the works of legendary figures such as Jimmy Hendrix and The Beatles.

## FIRST HIGHLAND WHISKY FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED

24 December 2018 by Matt Evans – [www.scotchwhisky.com](http://www.scotchwhisky.com)  
 Eight Highland whisky producers have teamed up with VisitScotland to create the first Highland Whisky Festival, a 'celebration of the region's finest distilleries' set to run from 12-20 May next year.  
 Road trip: Eight distilleries along the North Coast 500 will celebrate the Highland Whisky Festival  
 Each of the distilleries involved – [Balblair](#), [Clynelish](#), [Glenmorangie](#), [Pulteney](#), [Dalmore](#), [Glen Ord](#), [Tomatin](#) and [Wolfburn](#) – will host an open day during the festival's runtime, featuring tastings and special events designed to showcase 'centuries of tradition, process and craft'.  
 The festival is based along the North Coast 500, a 516-mile driving route along the north coast of Scotland covering distilleries, tourist attractions and areas of natural beauty.  
 The [Highland Whisky Festival](#) will also be arranging partnerships with attractions and local businesses, encouraging attendees to explore the Highlands further.  
 Festival coordinator Kate Waugh said: 'With the continuing increase in whisky tourism, especially along the North Coast 500, we identified an opportunity for the Highland distilleries to have a festival of their own.  
 'The effort of travelling is rewarded not only by world class whiskies but stunning landscapes and the warm welcoming Highland hospitality.'  
 Tickets for the Highland Whisky Festival will be on sale from early March.

The celebrations will take place in the same month as two other established regional Scotch whisky festivals: [Spirit of Speyside](#), which will run from 1-6 May 2019, and [Fèis Ile](#), situated on Islay, which will take place from 24 May-1 June 2019.

## SCOTCH WHISKY DISTILLERIES TO OPEN IN 2019

01 January 2019 by [Becky Paskin](#) – [www.scotchwhisky.com](http://www.scotchwhisky.com)  
 The past 12 months have been relatively quiet in terms of new distillery openings, but as Becky Paskin reveals, 2019 will be an even more exciting year for Scotch whisky.  
 Scotch drinkers have never had so much choice. With more than 130 whisky distilleries now operational in Scotland – each making its own unique style of grain or malt spirit – the world has arguably hit peak whisky fever.  
 Scotch distilleries are opening at an unprecedented level not seen since the late 18th century, with more than 40 new and resurrected sites set to open this decade alone. But in comparison to recent years, 2018 was relatively calm on the new distillery front.  
 Just a handful of new players were welcomed to the Scotch whisky scene, including [Borders](#) distillery in Hawick; Burnbrae in East Kilbride; and Chain Pier in Edinburgh, the city's first malt distillery since the closure of Glen Sciennes in 1925.  
 This year was primed to be a biggie, [with at least 10 new operations slated to open](#), although anyone involved with bringing a multi-million pound project to life will know that deadlines are moveable targets. Several sites have therefore tipped over into 2019's court.  
 Although life has been quiet in terms of ribbon cutting, there's been plenty of news regarding plans for new sites. Elixir Distillers submitted [plans for its contemporary distillery](#) at Farkin on Islay; Speymalt – the owner of indie bottler [Gordon & MacPhail](#) – launched a public consultation regarding its [plans for a distillery at Craggan](#); Historic Environment Scotland hinted that [Dallas Dhu could be revived](#); plus plans for a 'Whisky Galore' distillery on South Uist were floated.

There are currently around 30 new distilleries in the planning or construction phases, with most opening dates diarised for 2020 and 2021. The most progressed projects include Edinburgh's fourth distillery in the shape of the [vertical Port of Leith](#); a distillery and microbrewery at [Ardgowan](#); Elixir Distillers' aforementioned 'contemporary' distillery on Islay; plus the resurrection of [Brora](#), [Port Ellen](#) and [Rosebank](#).

Other distilleries working through funding or planning issues include [Dunrobin](#) in Sutherland, which is seeking investors to raise the £6 million needed for the project; [Portavadie](#) at Polphail Village which is continuing to go through the planning process; [Toulovaddie](#) distillery at a Fearn naval base; and Islay farm distillery [Gartbreck](#), a long-awaited distillery which may still come to fruition as owner Jean Donnay continues talks with interested investors.  
 For now though, these are the nine Scottish whisky distilleries set to open in 2019.

## Explain about ... Burns Night

<http://whiskyforeveryone.blogspot.com/2010/01/explain-about-burns-night.html>

Burns Night is an annual festival that celebrates the life and works of Scottish poet and lyricist Robert Burns (also known as Rabbin' to his friends) and has a strong association with whisky. Burns is widely regarded as Scotland's national poet and the festival has become Scotland's unofficial national day. It is celebrated on January 25th, the date of Burns' birth. Burns Night has a rich heritage in Scottish culture and combines two of the nation's favourite pastimes, eating and drinking whisky, with the legendary poetry of Robert Burns.

Robert Burns was born in 1759 in the small town of Alloway, Ayrshire. The town is located two miles (3km) to the south of Ayr in the Lowland region of Scotland. The house where he was born is now the Burns Cottage Museum. Burns was tutored mostly by his father for his early education before starting formal schooling in 1772. His first attempt at poetry was in 1774 - it was entitled *O, Once I Lov'd A Bonnie Lass* and was inspired by his first love. He went on to write hundreds of poems and songs including famous works such as *Tam O'Shanter*, *My Love Is Like A Red, Red Rose* and *Auld Lang Syne*, which is traditionally sung around the English speaking world on New Year's Eve.

As time passed and Burns' work became more renowned, so did his reputation for liking whisky and women. His heavy drinking and adultery gained him notoriety and scorn within literary circles, although the quality and output of his works remained consistently high. His first illegitimate child was born in 1785 and he went on to father 12 children with four different women (although these totals are believed to both be higher!). He died on July 21 1796, aged just 37, of rheumatic fever that is believed to have been accelerated by a degenerative heart condition from his childhood. His final child was born two days later, on the day that he was buried with full civic and military honours. Burns' grave stands in a graveyard in Dumfries.

So how did Burns Night begin and what does it involve? It is believed that the first Burns Night took place over 200 years ago in 1801. This is less than five years after Burns' death and was celebrated by a group of scholars who were fans of his works. In the early days, it was seen as the perfect platform to celebrate Scotland and being Scottish, incorporating Burns' poetry, Scottish food (most notably haggis, neeps and tatties) and copious amounts of whisky. The popularity and celebrations grew year on year until we have the Burns Night that we know today.

The modern Burns Night supper has evolved over time but remains quintessentially (some would say, stereotypically) Scottish. The core of the supper is the haggis (a mixture of offal, cereal grains, oatmeal, herbs and spices wrapped in the lining of a sheep's stomach) and this is served with neeps and tatties (turnip/swede and potato). This can be preceded by a soup based starter - the three most common are Scotch Broth (a thick soup that contains barley and anything else that you may have), Cullen Skink (a fish based chowder) or Cock-a-leekie soup (the clue is in the name - it's chicken and leeks, then prunes are added). Dessert can take any form (if you have space or haven't had a heart attack by this point!), with cheese, Cranachan (whipped cream, whisky, raspberries and oatmeal) or Cloutie Dumpling (a cake made with dried fruit, condensed milk, spices and golden syrup, then cooked in a cloth or *clout* in Gaelic) being the most popular. These are traditionally accompanied by whisky at every opportunity.

The main ceremonial part involves the reading of [Address To A Haggis](#) - a poem written by Robert Burns to celebrate Scotland and its national food. The haggis is bought in and placed on a table and then the reader performs the poem to the haggis and the crowd. This can be accompanied by bagpipes at larger events (as seen in the image, left). The final act of the poem is to slash the stomach membrane of the haggis to reveal its contents and for the reader to down a dram of whisky (occasionally, another dram can be poured over the steaming haggis). Then the rule is to toast the haggis, have a fun evening and drink whisky!

## ARDNAHOE DISTILLERY

Hunter Laing had hoped its first whisky distillery would be open in time for the 2018 [Islay Festival](#) last summer, though as with many distillery projects, commencement dates are always taken with a pinch of salt.

Ardnahoe is currently in the commissioning phase as its distillers – and [production director Jim McEwan](#) – check all its equipment works and fine-tune the spirit to ensure the quality is as expected.

The first casks of Ardnahoe new make spirit will be filled in ‘very early’ 2019, as the distillery finally opens its doors to visitors.

This year Ardnahoe will definitely share its Ilay Festival open day with [Bowmore](#) on 29 May.

[Find out more about Ardnahoe distillery.](#)

## ARDROSS DISTILLERY

The construction of the £18 million Ardross distillery at Ardross Mains, roughly 30 miles north of Inverness, is in its advanced stages and set for completion in early 2019. Having [first secured planning permission in February 2017](#) and slated to open last year, the project is now within months of becoming operational.

The main distillery will produce single malt whisky, while a gin still and botanics mixing lab are also being planned for a separate tenement building on-site.

The site is the first outside London for Vevil International, which owns the Ned hotel and The Wolseley restaurant.

[Find out more about Ardross distillery.](#)

## CABRACH DISTILLERY

The conversion of traditional farm steading buildings at Inverharroch Farm into a ‘working historical’ whisky distillery and heritage centre is well underway.

Once operational, the Cabrach distillery, operated by the Cabrach Trust, will distil, mature and bottle 150,000 bottles of single malt whisky each year, using ‘historical’ whisky-making methods from the 1820s.

All ingredients will be sourced locally, with the spirit matured in quarter casks and bottled on-site.

A heritage centre associated with the distillery will explore the Cabrach’s distilling history, from the early days of farm distilling through to illicit distillation and beyond.

[Find out more about Cabrach distillery.](#)

## CLUTHA DISTILLERY

Independent bottler [Douglas Laing & Co.](#) revealed its intentions to build a £10.7m distillery, bottling hall, visitor centre, whisky archives and head offices at Glasgow’s Pacific Quay development in July 2017.

The project is now in the advanced stages of planning, and although construction is yet to begin, Douglas Laing remains confident ‘Clutha will happen in 2019’.

Once it is up and running expect a ‘specialist, high-end’ single malt which will ‘differ from traditional Lowland styles’.

Unlike some new operations, the distillery will not release a whisky younger than at least six years old, which means we’ll be waiting until at least 2025 to sample the whisky.

[Find out more about Clutha distillery.](#)

## DORNOCH DISTILLERY 2

The Thompson brothers began distilling in February 2017 in a disused fire station close to the family-run Dornoch Castle Hotel in Sutherland.

Since then, Dornoch distillery’s gin has become so popular that the brothers are planning a move to much larger premises, just 200 metres away from their existing site.

While the additional capacity will allow Dornoch to operate a more energy efficient operation, and produce 20-30% more whisky and gin, it will not affect the quality of spirit produced, which the Thompsons describe as being similar to distillates commonly made in Scotland prior to the 1960s.

[A crowdfunding campaign](#) – which is still open – has helped raise the cash needed to purchase a building on an old slater’s yard. With the purchase set to complete this month, Dornoch intends to relocate its operations to the new site by the summer, and begin distilling by the autumn.

[Find out more about Dornoch distillery.](#)

## FALKIRK DISTILLERY

Without a doubt the most long-awaited distillery to open this year is Falkirk, a project that’s taken more than 10 years to realise.

The family-owned Falkirk Whisky Distillery Company secured planning permission back in 2009, and began ground work in November 2010. However it’s taken until 2019 for the Stewart family’s dream to become a reality.

Set to open by the summer, Falkirk distillery will produce up to 750,000 litres of spirit a year, using a 4.5 tonne mash tun and two of the old stills from Speyside’s [Caperdonich](#) distillery, which was demolished in 2011.

The Lowlands distillery is set up to produce a lighter style of whisky, with maturation taking place in an on-site dunnage warehouse.

## HOLYROOD DISTILLERY

Holyrood was one of the distilleries that made last year’s list, having been down to open by the end of 2018. With the transformation of Edinburgh’s old Engine Shed into a visitor-centric whisky distillery finally kicking off last autumn, Holyrood distillery is now expected to open in mid-late 2019.

Once up and running, the distillery will produce around 100,000 litres of spirit per year, which will be used to create whisky, gin, vodka and other spirits such as liqueurs.

With its central location just yards away from the famous Royal Mile, Holyrood is expected to attract 45,000 visitors a year, eventually building to 200,000.

[Find out more about Holyrood distillery.](#)

## JOHN CRABBIE DISTILLERY

Last summer spirits producer Halewood International revealed plans to build a £7m whisky distillery in Leith, from which it would spearhead the revival of the [John Crabbie](#) name.

Crabbie was a pioneer in Scotch whisky, being a co-founder and the first chairman of the [North British](#) grain distillery, and establishing a whisky blending company based in Leith.

The new distillery on Graham Street will become home to the [newly relaunched Crabbie’s whisky brand](#) when it opens later this year.

The distillery will run concurrently with Halewood’s new [Chain Pier whisky distillery at Granton Harbour](#) in Edinburgh, where distilling commenced in December.

[Find out more about John Crabbie distillery.](#)

## LAGG DISTILLERY

Arran’s second distillery is [close to completion](#) on the south end of the island. Early this year the site will commence production of a heavily-peated (50 ppm) spirit that will eventually become Lagg single malt whisky.

The distillery will take on production of all [Isle of Arran Distillers’](#) peated whisky, leaving the company’s original site at Lochranza to make unpeated malt.

Lagg distillery will become dedicated to exploring the impact peat has on the flavour of whisky, so expect experimental runs with peat sourced from all across Scotland and the world.

The site will also produce its own cider and apple brandy using fruit grown in the estate’s orchards.

The first 700 casks of Lagg single malt have [already been offered for sale](#) to those keen to get their hands on some of the distillery’s very first whisky.

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## Highland Park debuts Amazon UK-exclusive whisky

19th November, 2018 by Melita Kiely

Orkney-based single malt Scotch brand Highland Park has released an Amazon UK-exclusive expression, called Viking Tribe.

[Highland Park Viking Tribe is available exclusively on Amazon UK](#) A first for the brand, no-age-statement Highland Park Viking Tribe has been matured in refill casks to deliver notes of vanilla, citrus and pepper with a “peaty edge”.

The whisky, bottled at 46% abv, will be permanently available on Amazon UK at an RRP of £43 (US\$55) per 700ml bottle.

Jason R Craig, brand director at Highland Park, said: “This Viking Tribe expression is exclusively available through Amazon UK as we share their vision that consumers are increasingly looking to the online environment for new, exciting whiskies.

“The digital world can bring modern tribes together. This is a legacy we bring to our whisky and share with our own Highland Park tribe today.”

Highland Park is not the first Scotch whisky brand to introduce an Amazon-exclusive bottling. Last month, [Bowmore released a 19-year-old single malt](#) exclusively through the online retailer.

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## OUR FAVORITE BREAKFAST WHISKEY PICKS

<https://distiller.com/lists/our-favorite-breakfast-whiskey-picks>

Since whiskeys are made from grains, it's no wonder some of them venture into breakfast territory. Toasted cereal, orange peel, honey...the list goes on. Serve neat, on the rocks or in your favorite eye-opener cocktail. These are all easy like Sunday morning (and all under \$50).

### 10. [THE GLENLIVET FOUNDER'S RESERVE](#) - 83- FRUITY & SWEET

In 1824, farmer George Smith was one of the first to obtain a distiller's license. Neighbors hiding illicit stills from the law resented Smith's new freedom. They reacted by threatening to burn down Smith's distillery – with him in it. Smith retaliated by openly carrying two pistols. The neighbors cowered and he got busy creating the iconic Glenlivet whisky. This new expression is a tribute to Smith and the techniques he used to produce whisky. Master Distiller, Alan Winchester, distills his spirits using the same lantern shaped stills designed by Smith. Whiskies aged in traditional oak casks and first-fill American oak casks are blended based on flavor for this NAS whisky.

### 9. [KILBEGGAN SINGLE GRAIN](#) - 84 - SWEET

Released in late June 2017, this single grain whiskey will first be made available in the US. It is made from 94% corn and 6% malted barley. The initial maturation is done in ex-bourbon barrels with further finishing in a marriage of ex-bourbon and various fortified wine barrels. Bottled at 43% ABV.

### 8. [THE SINGLETON OF GLENDULLAN 12 YEAR](#) - 84 - TART & FRUITY

You might be surprised to learn that the Glendullan distillery produces almost 4 million liters of whisky per year. Most of the whisky is used in blends such as Old Parr and, until 2007 when they were reintroduced as a single malt by Diageo that was their only function. The Singleton distilleries will vary throughout the world so if you order a Singleton in Asia, you'll get whisky from Glen Ord and in Europe you'll be poured Dufftown.

### 7. [GLENMORANGIE ORIGINAL](#) - 85 - FRUITY & VANILLA

Naming your Scotch whisky "The Original" takes fortitude, but when you've got a product that is at once accessible and complex, well, it's only natural to have a moniker that compliments it. The Original serves as the base for their Extra Matured whiskies that spend 2 more years in a variety of wine barrels such as Sauternes and Port. Famous for the height of their pot stills (the tallest in all of Scotland), The Original is a quintessential Highland style Single Malt.

### 6. [GLEN GRANT 12 YEAR](#) - 87 RICH

Glen Grant 12 debuted in a handful of U.S. markets in June 2016, with a nationwide release slated for 2017. The release was made partially in honor of the 55 years that Master Distiller Dennis Malcolm has spent in the industry. It's also said to show off the unique-to-Speyside Glen Grant process, with water-cooling purifiers used on both of the distillation runs, allowing only the lightest vapors through. An 18 year-old is being rolled out as well, along with revamped labeling and logos for the entire portfolio.

### 5. [TYRCONNELL SINGLE MALT](#) - 87 FRUITY & VANILLA

Tyrconnell was an Irish whiskey brand produced at now defunct Watt Distillery. They named a whiskey after their horse, The Tyrconnell, which subsequently won a race at 100 to 1 odds back in 1876. This whiskey is currently distilled at Cooley Distillery (and soon at the refurbished Kilbeggan Distillery) and is a double distilled single malt whiskey. Most Irish whiskeys on the market are triple distilled and/or blended, but that is trend is slowly changing.

### 4. [NAKED GROUSE BLENDED MALT](#) - 88 - FRUITY & SWEET

Naked Grouse Blended Malt first started to roll out in August 2017 in select global markets and is expected to appear in select US markets beginning April 2018. This is a blended malt whisky featuring single malts from Glenturret, Glenrothes, Highland Park and The Macallan. These were aged in first and second-fill American and European oak before blending together. The blend then finished in first-fill oloroso sherry butts for six months further. It is chill-filtered and bottled at 43% ABV. This replaces the Naked Grouse Blended Whisky which has been removed from the market.

### 3. [TEELING WHISKEY COMPANY SMALL BATCH](#) - 89 - SWEET & RICH

After its initial aging in oak barrels, this blended whiskey is further aged in casks that previously held Flor de Caña rum. The whiskey is currently sourced from Cooley Distillery, a distillery previously owned by the Teeling family now owned by Beam. It is then further matured in Teeling's own warehouses. The Teeling Whiskey Co is expected to begin producing its own whiskey in late 2014. It will be Dublin's only working distillery.

### 2. [MAKER'S MARK](#) - 90 - FRUITY

Established in 1954, Maker's Mark is one of the nation's best selling small batch bourbons. While the majority of bourbons on the market are made with corn, rye, and malted barley, Maker's Mark is a 'wheated'

bourbon, replacing rye in the mashbill with red winter wheat. It is bottled at 45% ABV.

### 1. [BERNHEIM ORIGINAL WHEAT WHISKEY](#) - 91 - SWEET & FRUITY

First introduced into the market in 2005, this is the first wheat whiskey released in the US. The mash bill is predominantly winter wheat with corn and malted barley taking supporting roles. Recently (Spring 2014) this whiskey has gone from having no age statement to having one of 7 years, quite the reverse of what large whiskey brands are releasing.

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## AMERICA'S AGE STATEMENT OBSESSION IS FADING

28 November 2018 by Colin Spoelman – [www.scotchwhisky.com](http://www.scotchwhisky.com)

Once considered the ultimate sign of a quality whiskey, age statements are becoming obsolete among drinkers disillusioned with rising prices, writes Colin Spoelman, co-founder and head distiller of New York's Kings County distillery. The era of age statement dominance is over.

The dominance of age statements is coming to an end. At least that's my view of American whiskey, where a long fixation on age statements is now giving way to a perception that focus on age is the telling mark of a novice.

The age obsession really started with people's disinterest in the category before it took off in the early 2000s. This led to a lot of cheap, well-aged whiskey that people got very excited about because it was accessible and affordable. Whereas most Kentucky Bourbon and rye was in the five-to-nine-year-old range, you started seeing things that were 18 or 20 years old, which were genuinely different in a world that had become a little homogenous.

Over the past decade intense interest in that speciality stuff has cultivated a slight obsession with age statements, and a feeling that age is almost the exclusive determinant of quality. It seems many people were buying whiskey by arithmetic, preferring, say, a seven-year-old to a six-year-old, regardless of other factors.

Because [Scotch tends to be older](#) and has such a powerful reputation internationally, I think it may have also contributed to American whiskey drinkers dwelling inordinately on age, and perhaps conflating the age advantage on Scotch with American Bourbon and rye, not accounting for the differences in barrel and climate. There is also the impact of marketing and a general lack of deeper consumer education, and a certain romanticism where people buy older whiskeys because maybe it's a date they want to remember. That aspect of romance is never going disappear from old whiskey.

However I feel there's been a bit of a correction to this fixation on higher age statements, which is coming from two different places. One is from craft distillers who are making younger products that hold up against older rivals in blind tastings, which are becoming more common as drinkers get deeper into whiskey connoisseurship.

The other comes from consumers who really love Kentucky Bourbon and who've been paying exorbitant prices for older bottles. Some of them are not that good, and some buyers feel they've been burned a little. As those two cultural shifts play out, I think age statements will ultimately have a lesser part in the day-to-day conversation about whiskey.

That said, I do think age statements are a mark of transparency that help consumers understand what they're drinking. At Kings County distillery we put them on everything. A four-year-old whiskey doesn't require one by law, but we'll do it because we're proud of it and because it differentiates us from those small distillers who don't have whiskey that old. I believe in listing age statements and the distillery involved, and in publishing mash bills, grain sources, and as much information as possible. It makes for a more informed consumer.

In a sense you have to hold two tasting philosophies in your head at the same time. You want to know everything possible about the whiskey you're drinking, while trusting your own taste through blind tasting. It's what I call the 'Woody Allen conundrum' of whiskey appreciation: there is the art (or whiskey) for its own sake, and there's the backstory that colours and changes how you view it. It's crucial to juggle both these ideas simultaneously to find the balance of what matters most. We don't drink whiskey for flavour alone; it is cultural too – and that's where things like age statements, distillery ownership and method of distillation make a difference beyond mere taste preference.

By supplying details other than age, people will be less inclined to judge solely by a single number. In my experience, the most important thing in determining a whiskey's character is the people involved and the hundreds of choices they made in bringing it into the world. Distilling or even stewarding a storied brand is really a human endeavour, and I think that gets lost when you focus only on numbers.

US craft distillers are using smaller barrels which can expedite certain aspects (but not all) of maturation, while many of the big distillers have been using climate controlled warehouses for more than a century to

artificially cycle the seasons, and get whiskey to market faster. A lot of those brands are very beloved, but people don't necessarily realise that there's more going on than just 'Mother Nature' and 'Father Time.' I think what we're doing is pulling back the curtain on years of marketing to expose real production techniques, which are all very interesting to people and not necessarily disqualifying.

However, there are plenty of US producers who are really trying to shortcut or eliminate the ageing process. They present themselves as tech-oriented companies, though their whiskeys often taste heavily of oak chips with a syrupy, artificial flavour. Some are aged using light or vibrating techniques – I don't think anyone's going to be too interested with that kind of short-cutting – but again, it's up to the consumer to taste and decide what matters most to them. Since straight Bourbon has to be aged for at least two years, and Scotch for at least three, I believe distillers and consumers are protected by those rules in the US and Europe. And with four-year-old American whiskeys I feel some of the aspects of maturation that are hard to shortcut do get addressed during that time.

As the focus on age diminishes, the door will be opened for more creativity, and that's something we haven't seen a lot of for US whiskey or Scotch. In the US, that would include different types of distillation techniques, different ingredients and barrel finishing which we haven't done much of over here until recently. Because Bourbon has been almost exclusively distilled on conventional column stills by the big players, the mechanism of distillation is something that hasn't really been discussed here for a long time.

In fact you could say the focus on wood is actually slightly cynical because it allows distillers to de-emphasise what is the most important part of the process. With some big American distillers selling and trading barrels behind the scenes, it furthers the sense that a lot of commercial whiskey is interchangeable, rather than singular, which is another reason age stands out when so many other variables are the same bottle to bottle.

There is an interesting parallel with wine where an obsession with vintage in the 1980s has evolved into more of an interest in the producer. Of course very old vintage wines command extravagant prices, but the niche audience concerned is hardly representative of the average well-informed wine consumer. I think whiskey may move in this direction, where anything very old generates a great deal of hype, but coming from the sensationalist mainstream press rather than those who write about whiskey regularly. And frankly, that's not going to change anytime soon. But we are starting to have a clearer understanding of the difference between quality and rarity that for too long have been assumed to be synonymous.

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## The Scotch Whisky Distillery Building Boom

The Scottish whisky distillery construction business is in a true boom cycle at present, with the building pursuit effectively splitting itself into four vastly different endeavours.

The first is the raft of new, relatively small distilleries being built. Of course, this got its start a little over 10 years ago or so with the likes of Daftmill and Abhainn Dearg, but has exploded more recently with the likes of Kingsbarns, Ballindalloch, [Ardnamurchan](#), Wolfburn, Glasgow...and well, the list goes on, right down to the tiny operations of, say, Strathearn and Dornoch. If you haven't kept up, it's almost alarming to discover that over 30 *new distilleries* have recently started up or are currently under construction from the Lowlands to the Islands and everywhere in between. The new Kingsbarns distillery in Fife, where new spirit flowed in early 2015.

Ballindalloch Distillery in Speyside.

The tiny Dornoch distillery, with a capacity of just 30,000L

Wolfburn distillery on Scotland's far north coast, which began distilling in 2013.

*(Mouse over or click on gallery images to enlarge)*

The second is the extensive expansions or re-builds taking place. Whilst the list of distilleries involved is greater than just three, focus and attention has been directed chiefly at the likes of Glenlivet, [Glenfiddich](#), and Macallan. It was only eight years ago that these three distilleries boasted the industry's highest production capacities of 10.5M, 10M, and 8.75M litres respectively. Today, those figures are 21M, 13.7M, and 15M litres respectively. Whilst [Glenlivet](#) and Glenfiddich have merely "tacked on" new production houses and expanded laterally, Macallan's new distillery is another world again. Further south, Aisla Bay, already an impressive bespoke distillery built within William Grant's Girvan complex with a capacity of 6M litres in 2007, was also recently expanded to a capacity of 12M.

Macallan's new distillery broke the mould. Photo by Mark Power / Magnum Photos

The third – and perhaps most attention-grabbing of the lot – is the restoration and renewal of distilleries previously termed "lost", "dead", or "silent". The two stand-out examples here are Port Ellen and Brora. Cynics may point to the vast appeal and value these two whiskies enjoy in Diageo's [Special Releases](#) range and claim Diageo are cashing in or capitalising on the legacy and fame of both distilleries. However, the reality is that the industry is growing; Diageo needs more capacity; and their requirements for peated whisky (both within for their own brands, and outside for trading) cannot entirely be borne by Caol Ila and Lagavulin. (Of course, it's worth noting that this all comes on the back of Diageo already having spent many millions of pounds upgrading and expanding production at several of their workhorse distilleries, such as Teaninich, Mannochmore, and Linkwood). And, still in the category of restoration and renewal, Rosebank looks set to get a new lease of life. And, for the umpteenth time in the last 15 years, we are again hearing about plans to revive Dallas Dhu.

The fourth category involves the construction of the all-new, all-in-one "super" distillery, purpose built with an annual production capacity of over 10 million and the capability of making several different styles or *campaigns* under its roof. Diageo's Roseisle (see title photo at top) led the way here in 2009, both in terms of its state-of-the-art kit and facilities, and also its nod towards energy efficiency and the environment. But it wasn't long before Pernod Ricard followed suit: Dalmunach is their new jewel in the crown, entering production at the end of 2014. I've had the privilege of extensively touring both facilities (including a run through of the full kit with Roseisle's mechanical engineer), and both distilleries display a stark contrast to the centuries-old distilleries that started as farms or small concerns but have been tacked onto and bastardised as the inevitable refurbishments and expansions consumed them. Inside the tunroom at Dalmunach – 16 washbacks each holding 59,000 litres of wash!

So what does all this new construction mean? An historical, if not pessimistic review of the industry suggests the boom will be followed by the inevitable bust. But is the industry more robust now to deal with a decline in global demand? Have the distillers and big brands learned from the past and put better contingencies in place? Or will we again see the development of another "whisky loch"? Which – if the last one is anything to go by – could certainly benefit consumers wanting aged, affordable whisky. In fact, if anything, it was the whisky loch from the 1980's that laid the foundation for the growth that commenced in the late 1990's and fuelled the boom we're now in.

But looking at the new super distilleries, they offer a fresh take on distilling to the traditional form we're all familiar with, and they're worth exploring in detail. Whisky & Wisdom's next article will be an in-depth feature on Dalmunach Distillery. Stay tuned...

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## Glengoyne unveils latest cask strength whisky

18th May, 2018 by Amy Hopkins - <http://www.thespiritsbusiness.com>

Highland distillery Glengoyne has launched the first fully Sherry cask-matured expression in its series of cask strength single malts.

*Glengoyne Cask Strength Batch No. 6 is the brand's first cask strength whisky fully matured in Sherry oak*

Bottled at 59.8%, Glengoyne Cask Strength Batch No. 6 has been matured in a combination of first-fill European oak Sherry casks, American oak Sherry butts and refill Sherry butts.

"We are absolutely delighted to introduce Cask Strength No. 6, the first ever exclusively Sherry oak-matured expression in the Cask Strength Series," said Katy Macanna, brand manager for Glengoyne.

"As tradition dictates for the Glengoyne collection, this single malt has a deep golden colour, created by time and cask alone."

Glengoyne Cask Strength Batch No. 6 is said to have an aroma of ripe banana, custard, digestive biscuits, oak and sherbet. Its flavour is described as having notes of rosehip syrup, Demerara sugar and gooseberry.

Last year, the brand [unveiled its Spirit of Oak collection](#), which is exclusive to travel retail.

Glengoyne is owned by Ian Macleod Distillers, which also produces the Tamdhu and Smokehead single malts. Last year, the group [announced plans to revive Rosebank distillery](#).

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## SCOTCH WHISKY TO DISPLAY CALORIES ON LABELS

13 March 2018 by Matt Evans - [www.thespiritsbusiness.com](http://www.thespiritsbusiness.com)

Scotch whisky bottles will feature calorie information by 2022, thanks to a new industry-wide commitment supported by the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA).

**Numbers game: Johnnie Walker Red Label already displays calorie information on its label**

The SWA is falling into line with other, similar commitments from across the drinks industries, reacting to the European Commission's request to provide drinkers with clear nutritional and ingredient information.

'It's important that consumers have the information they need to make the right choices that fit with a healthy lifestyle, including on calorie intake,' said chief executive of the SWA, [Karen Betts](#).

'We're very pleased to exercise today's commitment to provide calorie information on labels, and to report on progress in October 2019.'

The information will be displayed as the amount of calories in a standard single measure rather than the total calories in the bottle, with a serving of 25ml containing between 55-56 calories at 40% abv.

'We believe this information should be provided in a format that is easy to understand, and linked to serving sizes,' said Betts.

Some producers have been displaying similar information for some time, with [Diageo](#) announcing that it would list calorie and serving size information on its entire portfolio [as far back as October 2015](#).

The commitment to display the information by 2022 was submitted to the European Commission yesterday (12 March), as part of a joint proposal by leading wine, beer and spirits producers in Europe.

[Benromach Organic 2017](#)—87 points, \$70

A rare certified organic Scotch whisky with vanilla, toffee, and banana flavors.

[Glen Garioch Virgin Oak](#)—85 points, \$100

Heavily charred American oak meets Highland whisky. A rich array of soft peach, vanilla, and wood.

[Octomore 7.4](#)—83 points, \$250

A heavily peated, high-strength whisky that delivers a skillful balance of sweetness and peat smoke.

#### VIRGIN OAK FINISHED

[Deanston Virgin Oak](#)—82 points, \$35

Candied fruit, heather honey, and apple frame this great value from the southern Highlands.

[Dewar's Scratched Cask](#)—85 points, \$25

Finishing in virgin and first-fill bourbon casks coaxes out sweet toffee, vanilla, and cocoa powder.

[Midleton Dair Ghaelach](#)—90 points, \$270

The first Irish oak-finished single pot still whiskey. Chocolate-covered honeycomb, succulent fruits, and pot still spices.

#### BLENDED WITH VIRGIN OAK

[Amrut Spectrum 004](#)—94 points, \$165

New French and American oak barrel staves influence this whisky with lush dark berries, dried fruits, and cinnamon.

[Ardbeg Kelpie](#)—88 points, \$120

Black Sea virgin oak casks contribute to a peaty whisky with herbal notes, dark chocolate, and hickory wood.

[Octomore 8.4](#)—Feb. 2018 release

Heavily peated Scottish barley from the 2008 harvest endows this with delicate smoke, mellow oak, and toffee popcorn.

[Tomatin Dualchas](#)—84 points, \$25

A fragrant, fruity whisky made using both bourbon and virgin oak casks.

#### WHISKY'S JOURNEY BEGAN MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO

26 September 2018 by [Dave Broom](#) - [www.scotchwhisky.com](#)

'Why aren't we told about this stuff?' my walking companion asked. I'd been pointing out the rickle of stones and the lines of lazy beds the slanting sunlight was picking out among the heather. The stones would have been a small township, the lazybeds its occupants' strips for cultivation, fertilised by seaweed dragged up from the bay where we'd landed, spread on piles.

I'd started to explain that the abandonment was unlikely to have been optional. We were on South Uist – north-east South Uist to be precise. Between 1841 and 1851 the island's population was halved as its then landlord, John Gordon of Cluny, embarked on brutal clearances of the island, Benbecula, and Barra. His former tenants were forcibly shipped to Canada and left abandoned on the dockside.

'It's a forgotten history,' he said, shaking his head as we head along the moor towards the lighthouse. 'It needs to be told, it explains so much about how people spread over the world.'

*Ancient foundations: This South Uist rock pool is lined with impenetrable Lewisian gneiss*

Maybe wandering, whether by choice or enforced, is in Scottish bones. Over a week's expedition we'd followed the whale-rod from Orkney to Loch Ewe, Rum, and now the Uists (an attempt to reach St. Kilda having been nixed thanks to stormy weather). On board the ship I gave talks, wandering through whisky's roots, flavours, styles often picking up on what information we'd gleaned in the morning hikes with the attendant geologists, historians, and naturalists.

A new picture of Scotland was beginning to form. One rooted in rock and migration. A year ago [I wrote of shearwaters](#), now they were on the waves once more getting ready to head south. We travelled, picking up knowledge, fitting pieces into this new frame. The Clearances were now part of it.

On one side, over the Minch, were the hills of Skye, to the north the shattered landscape of the Hebrides. We sat next to one of the pools which stud the Uist landscape, its dark brown waters lit by flashes of cornflower blue.

I picked up a fist-sized lump of rock, gritty, zebra-striped, kibbled with crystals. Lewisian gneiss. It is old, and I mean *old*. 3,000 million years, which is so absurd a number it is impossible to compute. It is so ancient it contains no fossils, just the sparkles of

#### Tamdhù swaps 10yo for Sherry cask-matured 12yo whisky

1st October, 2018 by Nicola Carruthers - <http://www.thespiritsbusiness.com>

Ian Macleod Distillers has replaced its 10-year-old Tamdhù single malt Scotch whisky with a new 12-year-old Sherry cask-matured expression.

*Tamdhù 12 Year Old is Ian Macleod's new "entry-level" whisky*

Bottled at 43% abv, Tamdhù 12 Year Old has been fully matured for 12 years in first-fill and refill American and European oloroso Sherry casks from Jerez.

It is described as being "complex and rich" with flavours of cinnamon, dried fruit, banana and classic Sherry oak depth.

Tamdhù 12 Year Old launches globally with a new marketing campaign and packaging design, under the strapline 'Only the Best' and through the brand's From Spain to Speyside activation.



The activation pays homage to the Spanish oloroso Sherry oak casks which were recorded as being first used by Tamdhù Distillery to mature its Speyside single malt whisky in 1898.

The new packaging features the story of Tamdhù Distillery and the importance of Sherry casks and natural colour.

Tamdhù distillery manager Sandy McIntyre, said: "We're delighted to introduce the new Tamdhù 12 Year Old as our new entry-level expression.

"All our whisky at Tamdhù is exclusively matured in the finest oloroso Sherry oak casks. The American and European oak soaks up nearly 35 litres of oloroso Sherry during the seasoning process in Jerez, which gives our new Tamdhù 12 Year Old its distinctive flavour and striking natural colour."

Tamdhù 12 Year Old has been rolled out globally and will make its debut in the UK next year. It will have an RRP of £45 (US\$58.63).

#### 11 Great Scotches Aged in Virgin Oak

JULY 16, 2018 | JONNY MCCORMICK | FROM [WINTER 2017](#)

Whereas bourbon has its own barrel regulations, the scotch industry places no mandate on the casks used. As a result, [many scotches rely on ex-bourbon barrels](#), and some take it a step further, [integrating virgin oak](#) at various points along the maturation process. From full aging to finishing to blending, these 11 scotches showcase the influence of new wood.

#### FULL VIRGIN OAK

[Auchentoshan Virgin Oak](#)—84 points, \$130

A Lowland single malt aged in fresh American oak for flavors of nutmeg, chocolate, and spiced orange.

those early minerals. I hold the roughness of unimaginable time in my hand, a rendering of liquefied rock from the earth's heart, warped and buckled over eons.

As tectonic plates shifted, these rocks were heaved out of the planet's belly to its surface to cool. They drifted across the globe as the continents continued their slow dance, starting close to where Antarctica is now, then settling into what is now Canada, before splitting off and fusing with what is now England. Odd that the emigrants took the same journey, but in reverse. Wandering rock, people, ship.

*Distant beginnings: Looking out from South Uist across to the Isle of Skye*

When the gneiss appears we have reached the basement. It is the bedrock, obdurate, unchanging, impermeable, and because of this, water cannot penetrate hence the pools, and the boggy ground. Gneiss flares red on geological maps, which is appropriate enough for these boggy, oxygen-starved conditions, and means that peat starts to build up, and peat means fuel, and fuel means home.

The thin soils were suitable only for some crops: kale, potatoes, bere barley or oats. Basic sustenance, and also the roots of what we call whisky.

All that's left behind are the stones, the lines in the turf and the lost memories of the songs they sang and the drink they made. The scent of peat gone as they started their wanderings. The memories fragile, worn away. It's perhaps too neat a metaphor.

We've caught up with Chris Edwards, the expedition's geologist. I ask him if this scoured landscape is the result of erosion, is this is what was left behind after people, rock and soil had been removed?

'We don't know fully, but what we can say is that this landscape now is what it would have been like just after the ice left,' he replies. 'Isn't that amazing? How things stay the same, and yet change.' Time seems to compress, the houses rebuilt, smoke through the thatch, boats in the bay, crops in the field, the buzz of bees and, who knows, a wee sensation of spirit after the day's work is done.

This is how it started. This is whisky's bedrock.

## Whisky is just like Sudoku

<https://www.whiskyyandwisdom.com/whisky-is-just-like-sudoku/>



Whisky is like Sudoku. Or, depending on which pursuit you got involved with first, Sudoku is just like whisky. Sound a bit far-fetched? The two have more in common than you think...

Contrary to its appearance, Sudoku is *not* a maths puzzle or an exercise in arithmetic. Despite the array of numbers and a crossword-like pattern, it's merely a logic puzzle based on nothing more than *elimination*. The puzzle is solved by eliminating incorrect possibilities as you fill in the blanks. Sudoku's similarity with whisky becomes apparent when you look at the journey an individual goes on as they transition from novice to expert.

We'll paint the analogy by looking at Sudoku first, and then join the dots as we compare it to the journey of discovery most drinkers embark on when they start taking whisky seriously.

Sudoku puzzles can be extremely easy or extremely difficult, depending on how much of the grid is pre-filled in for you. When you start out as a novice and can attempt only the *easy-grade* puzzles, there are no special tricks to learn or employ, and no need to keep track of "possibles". A cursory glance, simple observation, and deducing is all that is needed. It's the equivalent of

being introduced to whisky via a simple, unchallenging blend at 40% ABV that is pleasant and enjoyable for you...but you don't yet know what else is out there, and you're happy with what you know.

As Sudoku puzzles get harder, there is less information to work with. There are too many gaps and unknowns in the grid. Suddenly, the techniques and strategies you got by with when solving the Easy puzzles are no longer enough. To solve the Medium and Hard puzzles, you actually need to *learn* new techniques and do a bit of training if you are to progress anywhere. And thus, just like whisky, you dive into a world that is known only to those who have also immersed themselves in the culture. You become familiar with terms and techniques known as *naked pairs* and *hidden triples*.

You have an understanding and speak a language that not everyone knows or appreciates.

The process is similar in whisky: When you first sip and get into whisky, you merely recognise and enjoy a generic whisky taste. You're aware that, for example, some whiskies are sweet; some are grassy; and some are smoky. But, through continued training (i.e. *drinking*) and research/teaching, you learn and experience that whisky is matured in different types of casks (e.g. ex-bourbon and ex-sherry) and in different types of wood, e.g. American oak and European oak. In the early days of your journey, it's unlikely you'll immediately recognise or easily discern these. But, with time and experience, you're able to nose a dram and say with confidence, "Yes, there is some sherry influence in this," or "The vanilla and pineapple on the nose of this whisky tells me it's from a 1<sup>st</sup> fill bourbon cask".

You'll also no doubt have started to dabble in higher-strength whiskies – whiskies bottled at 46%, 50%, and eventually cask-strength whiskies, possibly as high as 65% or more. Your palate is now trained and comfortable in enjoying whisky at this strength, where once it was not something you found overly pleasant. Your palate might now even be able to detect whether or not a whisky has been chill-filtered. By now, you've also probably learned a few tasting tricks along the way. Like learning how to read the bubbles in a shaken glass to estimate the ABV; or learning to discern where the heat concentrates on your palate to estimate a whisky's age. You're also probably starting to get proficient at blind tastings and recognising/identifying a whisky's provenance or other unique aspects of its maturation.

Whisky takes on new levels of enjoyment and appreciation as you learn more about what's in your glass and what you can discern.

Sudoku then reaches the Expert level. Again, you need to learn and be shown new techniques if you are to solve the seemingly impossible. You learn about things called *x-wing* and *swordfish*; and you can actually spot a *hidden quad*! You're at the top of your game. And, in all likelihood, there is no appeal or attraction in looking backwards and trying an Easy puzzle.

Again, there is the equivalent level in whisky. You're now at a stage where you almost exclusively drink cask-strength whisky – in fact, 40% ABV bottlings hold little appeal to you anymore. (A sad and unfortunate place to be, if you allow this to occur. You should read the articles "[Cask-strength blues](#)" and "[40% whisky – friend or foe?](#)" to explore this further and take care to avoid the pitfalls.)

At this expert level of whisky appreciation, you get particularly excited about single-cask releases. Not only can you pick a sherry-matured whisky, but you can confidently detect whether the sherry was fino, oloroso, or PX. In fact, you can be presented with a single cask, 1<sup>st</sup> fill sherry bomb and you can confidently tell whether the oak was quercus alba or quercus robur. Your palate is a walking hydrometer capable of detecting the ABV within +/- 1%, and your nose and palate can discern "age". You can read and interpret the viscosity of the legs in your glass; you can taste/detect E150 when it's present; you can even detect when a whisky has TCA. (And, for the uninitiated or for those who don't have the olfactory capabilities, it's far more common than you think).

Whisky appreciation and perception is like Sudoku: Not everyone is capable of solving the puzzle.

Sudoku shares another trait with whisky, although it's an aspect that's a little uncomfortable to discuss or admit. The skills needed to solve and reach expert level of Sudoku require a certain brain wiring that not all people possess. It requires the ability to apply multiple layers of logic and it requires a level of spatial awareness and interpretation; the ability to "see through" rows, columns, and blocks. At the risk of making a gross generalisation, these are skills and talents commonly associated with *left-brained* people. In short, it's a vaguely scientific way of stating that not everyone will be capable of reaching the top.

Similarly, expert-level whisky tasting (or the expert appreciation of any category of food and beverage) requires particular anatomical minimums and a certain level of sensory perception that not everyone is blessed with. For example, if you have a poor sense of smell, you'll struggle with detecting the subtle nuances or features previously discussed. Likewise, some people have a genetic blind spot to sulphur, which no amount of training will overcome. (For more on this subject and the use of and influence of sulphur in whisky, read this [article here](#)).

That's not to say that you should despair or give up – either with whisky or sudoku – nor is it to imply that there is some higher level of *illuminati* or secret club that is only for the elite few. It's simply an unfortunate reality that we're all unique individuals and we're born with different natural talents and capabilities. Just because you can look at nine squares in a row at once and pick a missing number in a tenth of a second doesn't mean the next person can. And just because you can clearly smell and identify peat phenols in a whisky at 10 parts per million doesn't mean the person next to you will be as capable. Some whisky commentators would do well to remember this. All that's important is that you enjoy your dram. Ultimately, whisky and Sudoku share one final commonality: They're both an enjoyable pastime. And, best of all, you can do both at the same time.

Thanks to Scott Drummond and Bruce Thompson for this:

Sir Winston Churchill's vocabulary and command of the English language were unparalleled.

Not many know, perhaps, or remember that he won the Nobel prize in literature.

He was once asked about his position on whisky. Here's how he answered: "If you mean whisky, the devil's brew, the poison scourge, the bloody monster that defiles innocence, dethrones reason, destroys the home, creates misery and poverty, yea, literally takes the bread from the mouths of little children; if you mean that evil drink that topples men and women from the pinnacles of righteous and gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation, shame, despair, helplessness and hopelessness, then, my friend, I am opposed to it with every fibre of my being.

However; if by whisky you mean the oil of conversation, the philosophic wine, the elixir of life, the ale that is consumed when good fellows get together, that puts a song in their hearts and the warm glow of contentment in their eyes; if you mean good cheer, the stimulating sip that puts a little spring in the step of an elderly gentleman on a frosty morning; if you mean that drink that enables man to magnify his joy, and to forget life's great tragedies and heartbreaks and sorrow; if you mean that drink the sale of which pours into our treasuries untold millions of pounds each year, that provides tender care for our little crippled children, our blind, our dumb, our pitifully aged and infirm, to build the finest highways, hospitals, universities, and community colleges in this nation then, my friend, I am absolutely, unequivocally in favour of it!"

This is my position and, as always, I refuse to compromise on matters of principle!"

DECEMBER - KSMS Financial Statement

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Includes items like 'Money from 64 December members @ \$75 = \$4800.00', 'December dinner 64 persons = \$50.00/ea = \$3200.00', etc.

Membership and Dinner prices for 2018-2019

Table with 2 columns: Fee Type and Amount. Includes 'Membership Fee: \$50 (singles) \$75 (couples)', 'One Time Initiation Fee: \$15', etc.

Reserved Seating

- Reserved Seating will only be provided in the case of groups consisting of four (4) or greater.

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.

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.

Just a note because we care.

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



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