

Whiskeria



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sensory overload
of punk, perfume
and performance



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THE MAGAZINE OF



UNLOCKING
THE MYSTERY
OF WHISKY

Excellent Finnish

Get to know Miika Lipiäinen, one of the founders of Finland's gorgeous Kyrö distillery.



➔ You're one of the founders. What inspired you to create the distillery?

My co-founders and I fell in love with rye whisky in 2011. In Finland, we grow up on rye bread, rye porridge, rye everything, and we kept on wondering why no one has started making whisky out of rye in Finland. During a sauna getaway (as you do in Finland) in 2011, passing around a bottle of over-heated rye whisky in the sauna, we decided to do something about it and created an all-rye distillery in an old dairy next to the banks of the Kyrö river.

You've achieved so much in such a short time. Tell us a little bit about the expressions that you create.

We adopted a core philosophy of working with rye and rye only. This focus helped us to nail down decisions in our early days when we created a rye-based gin, which became a massive hit in Finland and well-known in multiple markets. Rather than cashing in on the gin, we decided that this is our one big chance to start distilling enough rye malt whisky to create a new style from a new region with a new philosophy on how to bring out the taste of rye in whisky. Since we are pioneering a style, a region, and an approach, we feel that it is our duty to explore all aspects of how to treat rye. This

is evidenced in our alder wood smoked and fresh water peat mash bills and the great number of cask varieties you would not usually find used in maturing rye whisky.

It's been quite a decade. What has been the highlight for you so far?

For me, it has to be the first batch of Kyrö Malt bottles we released in a format that was to be permanently available for our customers. I salute everyone who takes on the journey of creating their own whisky —no matter where or what the style is. It's a long and arduous journey even if you are able to throw large wads of cash at every problem you encounter on the way and even more so if you do it like us - bootstrapped by taking personal loans, learning on the fly and relying a lot on the kindness of your community to support you. When at the end of it you get a whisky out that scores 98/100 in the International Wine and Spirits Competition you feel that you've made it. Of course, that's when you realise that it's just the end of phase one...

We stock a Kyrö W Club Exclusive bottling (Moscatel). Tell us a bit about the liquid.

Perhaps it was because of the time of the year but I was really drawn into the

summery notes of the latest Kyrö exclusive cask release for The Whisky Shop. With a drop of water, the nose is greeted with floral notes of orange blossom and jasmine under layers of soft spice. Sipping this whisky took me back to warm buttered toast with honey I had as a child. The whisky coats the mouth and gives flavours of poached pears in wine, star anise and ginger. The finish is elegant and smooth, creamy almost with a hint of cherry. Each sip is as intriguing as the last.

What can we expect next from Kyrö?

As our stocks mature, you will see us starting to get our whisky out in larger volumes over the next few years. Even though we can both produce and release more, we are keeping our special releases quite tight which makes this collaboration with The Whisky Shop fantastic for us. All in all, you will see the evolution of both our core expressions and a small number of special bottlings coming out and all of them will have the same task: to show both experienced and new whisky drinkers how great rye tastes when it's the star of the show.



History in the making

As the whisky industry continues to grow and change, The Whisky Shop Chairman Ian P. Bankier ponders how much we can learn from looking back to the past.



➔ Whisky just keeps attracting more and more followers.

Various factors drive this surge and arguably the most powerful one is that producers have become increasingly innovative and creative. We are inspired by beautiful bottle shapes and packaging, enthused by their stories, and blown away by the rich and varied expressions.

Yet Japanese whiskies have met their demand in a different way. Quite unlike many whiskies, their bottles and packs are sober and serious—understated, you might say. The taste profile of their whiskies, in the main, is straight down the middle, containing no big surprises but, crucially, they are hugely popular and highly sought after. Japanese distillers focus on what works for the consumer and they let their whisky do all the talking.

I liken the evolution of Japanese whisky to the motor car industry of the 1970s when the world was dominated by European and American cars. When Japanese manufacturers entered this market, late in the day, the funny little Datsuns were sneered at by the motoring aficionados. What escaped attention, however, was the fact that the Japanese manufacturers had done their homework. They had studied everything on wheels, and they landed on something that the customer wanted most

of all. It was reliability and good engineering. You might have scoffed at the design or been curious about the pronunciation of Mitsubishi, but if you were a sheep farmer in Western Australia, miles away from anywhere, the vehicle you wanted was the one that didn't let you down. And that was Japanese. Once that foothold had been established, Japanese cars went on to dominate world markets and in due course, stylish and innovative products began to proliferate.

The parallel here is that with Japanese whisky, you can be sure that the distillers have done their homework, even if they operate within conservative parameters. And now Beam Suntory has just launched a brand called Arday, literally meaning “towards the light”. It's a new interpretation of blended whisky, not Japanese but Scotch whisky, reflecting the influence of Suntory founder, Shinjiro Torii, and his quest to ensure that his whiskies reflect a better version of themselves. Okay, I grant that this is a bit of a stretch, but as I see it, it's the beginning of something. And the quality of the liquid? Outstanding!

Slainte!
Ian P Bankier, Chairman

THE WHISKY SHOP

I liken the evolution of Japanese whisky to the motor car industry of the 1970s when the world was dominated by European and American cars.

ILLUSTRATION: FRANCESCA WADDELL

Win! The Deanston core range.

To celebrate our Autumn 2023 issue, we are delighted to offer readers of Whiskeria the chance to win four wonderful bottles of Deanston whisky

Deanston Virgin Oak,
Deanston 12 Year Old,
Deanston 18 Year Old, and
Deanston 15 Year Old Tequila Cask

To be in with a chance to win, simply visit:
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Competition closes 16th October 2023
T&Cs apply. Winners will be contacted directly.



Mixing it up ➔ 42



THE MAGAZINE OF

THE WHISKY SHOP

Whiskeria^W

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY OF WHISKY

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CONTACT
enquiries@whiskyshop.com

COMMISSIONING EDITOR
Glenkeir Whiskies Limited

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Frances Wilson
frances@whiskyshop.com
0141 427 2919

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN
Ian P Bankier
ipb@whiskyshop.com

FEATURE WRITERS
Brian Wilson
Charles MacLean
Gavin D Smith
Luke Crowley-Holland
Frances Wilson
Emlyn Firth

CREATIVE DIRECTION
a visual agency
emlyn@avisualagency.com

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY
Brian Sweeney
Armando Ferrari
Christina Kernohan
Elliot Temby

FEATURE ILLUSTRATION
Hrafnhildur Halldorsdottir
Francesca Waddell

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ILLUSTRATION: FRANCESCA WADDELL

Charles MacLean

Whiskeria's resident whisky guru, Charlie has been researching and writing books on the water of life since 1981. Charlie's bestsellers include award-winning *World Whisky and Scotch Whisky: A Liquid History* and his extensive knowledge on the subject led to him becoming the script advisor for Ken Loach's 2012 film *The Angels' Share*. In fact, Charlie's whisky expertise was so hot that he landed himself a part in the film – a feat he claims to be his biggest career highlight to date! Each edition we ask Charlie to try what's new on the shelves of The Whisky Shop, and we're sure you'll agree that his sensational tasting notes never disappoint.



Brian Wilson

Formerly an MP, Brian held several posts during his political career, including Minister of Trade. Brian now lives on the Isle of Lewis where he pursues various business interests, notably in the energy sector. As chairman of Harris Tweed Hebrides, Brian is credited with leading the regeneration of the Harris Tweed industry. Brian's first love is writing, and in his spare time he continues to write books and opinion pieces for national newspapers – as well as delving into the fascinating history of whisky for each edition of *Whiskeria*.



Gavin D Smith

One of the world's most prolific and respected whisky writers, Gavin is regularly published in the top magazines within the whisky scene. He's written and co-authored more than 20 books on the subject, including *A-Z of Whisky*, *The Secret Still*, and *Goodness Nose*. Gavin has the envy-inducing task of scoping out the whisky industry's new and best-loved distilleries for *Whiskeria* readers, visiting a new distillery each edition. With his exquisite palate and whisky credentials, Gavin is undeniably the whisky lover for the job!



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New Releases/ Autumn 2023



Reviewed by
Charles MacLean

Ardray /
The Loch Fyne Fynest Ben Nevis /
Kyrö / Port Ellen / Glenglassaugh /
GlenDronach / BenRiach /
The English Distillery /
Signatory Speyside /
Signatory Orkney

ILLUSTRATIONS: HRAFNHILDUR HALLSDÓTTIR



New Releases

Ardray 2023 Release

70cl 48% VOL

NAS £60

Blended Scotch whisky

Pale gold in colour, the nose is fresh and slightly citric (lemon zest) supported by a delicate floral note (freesia?) and a trace of vanilla cream biscuits. The taste is both lightly sweet and acidic, with a clean, tart finish.

“The taste is both lightly sweet and acidic, with a clean, tart finish.”



This is the first edition of what will be an annual release from Beam Suntory, with recipes adjusted slightly each year, although a proportion of each batch will also be retained to be blended with the next batch. It was devised by their chief blender, Calum Fraser, who worked closely with Suntory's blending team in Japan.

He comments: “In creating Ardray, we have combined an exceptional selection of the very best Scotch whisky has to offer with the inspiring talent of Suntory's blending team to create something new, refreshing, and exciting... The time, care, and attention to detail taken to source both malt and grain whiskies from some of Scotland's most noted distilleries has

allowed us to explore hundreds of blends of Scotch malt and grain whiskies to achieve Ardray's optimum balance of multi-layered flavours”.

The result is a ‘narrow palette’ blend using no more than ten malts, including, of course, Beam Suntory's own malts (Bowmore, Laphroaig, Auchentoshan, and Ardmore) but also malts from Edrington (The Macallan, Glenrothes, and Highland Park). Interestingly, the flavour profile was also inspired by Suntory's founder Shinjiro Torii, who a century ago “envisioned a Japanese approach to create a subtle, refined, yet complex whisky that would suit the delicate palate of the Japanese”.

Calum Fraser's tasting note reflects

this vision: “Ardray promises a rich and complex taste, with a distinctive harmony of flavours: a mild, gently floral, and citrusy fruitiness, with a vanilla custard creaminess and a rich, silky mouthfeel and lengthy aftertaste that is unmatched.”

We are told that “Ardray” means “Towards the Light”. The word does not appear in my Gaelic dictionary, although the prefix “ard-” means “high”, “lofty”, “supreme”. Try it—Calum is to be congratulated: it's a delicious blend.

The Loch Fyne Fynest Ben Nevis 1996 25 Year Old

70cl 47.03% VOL

25 Year Old £320

Single cask Highland single malt

Pale gold in colour, with surprisingly good beading. A mellow, savoury nose led by pea-pods and backed by green apples, gradually becoming sweeter (caramel, fudge), especially with a drop of water—the last comes through in the taste, which starts sweet then dries to a tart finish, with white pepper.

“A mellow, savoury nose led by pea-pods and backed by green apples, gradually becoming sweeter”



The story of Ben Nevis Distillery over the past three decades is the story of its legendary manager, Colin Ross, who was appointed manager in 1983, retired in 2019, and died in 2021.

He joined the whisky trade in 1965, aged seventeen, as a trainee manager at Strathisla Distillery in Keith, then spent twelve years as head brewer at Tormore Distillery before moving to Ben Nevis. I knew him well; we presented tastings together and I had the highest regard for his knowledge and openness. His 54 years as a distiller had given him an invaluable insight into how the whisky trade has changed over this time. He was also the only person I have ever met who tasted

the legendary Malt Mill whisky, celebrated in Ken Loach's film *The Angels' Share* and made in a small distillery on the Lagavulin site from 1908 to 1962.

“We were told that the whisky had been produced prior to the First World War but not bottled until the 1920s,” he told me, adding: “I have to say it was the finest, smoothest whisky I have ever tasted.”

In an interview, he was asked what he considered to be the biggest changes he had witnessed over the past half-century. Without hesitation he said, “the growth of automation over manual work.”

So, were the whiskies better in those days?

“In the 1970s, accountants were

running the whisky businesses and we had to produce at the lowest possible cost. This meant increasing production levels, shorter fermentation times and faster distillation times, which had to be at the expense of quality.”

Of course, in those days, 99% of the malt whisky made went into blends—much Ben Nevis was shipped in bulk to Japan (the distillery is Japanese owned). The situation is different today, with the increased interest in single malts, but Ben Nevis remains uncommon as a single malt, especially at the advanced age of 25 years.

New Releases

Kyrö Malt Single Cask

The Whisky Shop
Exclusive

50cl 51.1% VOL

NAS £75

Finnish single cask rye whisky

Bright amber, faded mahogany. A mellow nose with light prickling. The top notes are of muesli with dried fruits, becoming Ryvita with apricot jam. A clean mouthfeel and a savoury taste overall, after a lightly sweet start and with lengthy pepper and spice finish typical of rye whisky. Ideal for sociable sauna drinking!

“A clean mouthfeel and a savoury taste overall, after a lightly sweet start and with lengthy pepper and spice finish typical of rye whisky.”



What comes to mind when you think of Finland? Perhaps vast forests, lakes galore, and saunas (which were invented in Finland)? Rye probably does not immediately spring to mind, although the cereal grows abundantly in the country's poor soil.

All of these things feature in the opening image of Kyrö's hilarious website [kyrodistillery.com]—well, maybe not the sauna, unless the building in the distance on the edge of the lake is one, towards which five naked men are running through a huge field of rye, but if you scroll down you will see the chaps emerging from a sauna—oh, and there's also a bear.

Their leader is Miika Lipiäinen, who with a group of friends decided to found a whisky and gin distillery using exclusively Finnish malted rye. Predictably, the idea occurred to them in a sauna...

In search of a home for the distillery, the founders first visited a family farm in Isokyrö, but although charming, it didn't quite live up to their ambitious plans. Then on their way to a planning session ["read: dinner and drinks"], they noticed an old empty dairy... While it was being converted into a distillery, they produced their first batch of spirit at a small craft distillery hundreds of miles away. "They were kind enough to let us use their still for our first batch, provided that we transport the wash

there ourselves".

The end result was a clear liquid that smelled and tasted like moonshine. It was impossible to say whether it would make good rye whisky. To get feedback, they smuggled a sample into The Whisky Show in London, "pouring drams in the gents' toilet for tasting and going from stand to stand. The new make gained praise".

Kyrö Distillery went into production in 2014. While the early batches of malted rye whisky were maturing, the founders turned to gin... The following year the gin won a major international award, and its stock sold out in two days. This single cask was apparently ex-Moscatel.

Port Ellen Eidolon 40 Year Old

70cl 56.5% VOL

40 Year Old £4,500

Islay single cask single malt

A bright amber hue and a mellow but vital nose-feel and good beading. The initial aroma is reminiscent of old Lagavulin (aromatherapy oil, bergamot, against a faint backdrop of fragrant smoke). The taste starts lightly sweet, with a pinch of salt in mid palate, drying to a lengthy peppery finish. A fine example of the make, and an outstanding whisky by any standard.

“A fine example of the make, and an outstanding whisky by any standard”



Three or four years ago, Diageo came up with the term 'ghost distilleries' to describe sites which had closed, but from which some whisky still existed. Port Ellen Distillery, which closed terminally in 1983, was one such, but on 9th October 2017, it was announced that it was to be brought back from the dead. Perhaps now it should be described as a 'revenant distillery'.

Not much was left of the original distillery, except some very old warehouses, but such remains have been restored where possible and the site cleared. New building was halted during the COVID pandemic but is now progressing steadily. Diageo is going to great lengths to recreate Port Ellen's original style of spirit by

researching detailed distillery records and interviewing people who worked at the distillery in the past.

Prior to closure, Port Ellen spirit was not highly esteemed—its opening price in 1924 was 5/6d per proof gallon, while Laphroaig was 6/3d and Caol Ila 6/—but when Diageo began to release limited annual bottlings in 2001, all from 1978/79, it became a collectors' darling. The first release (at 22 years old) was priced at £95; today it is listed at £3,500. A 41-year-old Diageo bottling under their Prima & Ultima label may be bought for £9,550.

This very limited bottling (403 bottles only) comes from the family-owned distiller, blender and bottler, Hunter Laing

& Co., and is the second in a series of three Port Ellens. In ancient Greek literature an eidolon is a "spirit image of a living or dead person", interpreted by Hunter Laing as "a recollection of something memorable from history... launched in anticipation of Port Ellen being brought back to life".

Hunter Laing & Co. is known for its cask stocks of rare, aged whiskies, particularly from Islay. Founder Stewart Laing's father was particularly fond of Port Ellen Distillery while it was in operation and laid down casks of its spirit for long-term maturation.

New Releases

Glenglassaugh Portsoy

70cl 49.1% VOL

NAS £67

Highland single malt

Dull gold hue, with amber lights and a faint pink blush; excellent beading. The top notes are maritime (rock salt, warm sand, dry seaweed) and savoury (soy sauce, Maggi seasoning, red wine marinade). A smooth, mouth-filling texture and a sweet, salty taste, with some pepper in the finish and aftertaste. Clean and fresh.

“A smooth, mouth-filling texture and a sweet, salty taste, with some pepper in the finish and aftertaste”



Glenglassaugh's slogan is *“A whisky shaped by land and sea”*, on account of the distillery enjoying an attractive location overlooking Sandend Bay on the Moray Firth coast. The company's Master Blender, Dr. Rachel Barrie, expands upon this: *“It's impossible to separate Glenglassaugh the whisky from Glenglassaugh the place. The lush sweetness of this coastal single malt is a complete distillation of its natural surroundings. Its whole essence is created by both the visible and invisible influences of land, sea, air and spring water.”*

As a matter of fact, the mineral-rich, hard water from the Glenglassaugh Spring caused grave problems in the past: The owners experimented with tankering soft

process water from Glenrothes, introducing charcoal filters to the lyne arms of the stills, replacing the stills themselves with replicas of the Glenrothes stills (in 1974) and finally installing a water-softening plant the same year. But all to no avail. The distillery was mothballed from 1907 to 1960 and from 1986 to 2008 (apart from a brief spell in 1998). In 2016, it was bought by Brown-Forman, owners of Jack Daniels Tennessee whiskey.

Glenglassaugh's near neighbour is the picturesque village of Portsoy, from which this expression takes its name. It has been matured in a combination of ex-bourbon, ex-sherry and port casks. The official tasting note identifies soy sauce in its

flavour profile—and I would agree, although I did not detect port!—but maybe this connection inspired the name.

The first harbour at Portsoy was established in the sixteenth century and was considered to be the safest on the northeast coast. From here a lively trade was pursued with the Continent and England—many well-restored old buildings in the town stand witness to its former prosperity—especially in the renowned Portsoy marble, a pretty green or pink serpentine, long appreciated for its beauty. Two chimney pieces at the Palace of Versailles are made from it, although today it is worked on a more modest scale by local craftsmen.

GlenDronach Cask Strength Batch 12

70cl 58.2% VOL

NAS £82

Highland single malt

A mellow nose with some prickle; nose drying and tannic overall. The top notes start with malt loaf and sultanas (typical of European oak), then suggestion of dry Oloroso sherry, but not sweet PX as might be expected. At natural strength it has a creamy texture, with an overall sweet taste, drying on the back of the palate, with some black pepper in the longish, warming, finish.

“A mellow nose with some prickle; nose drying and tannic overall.”



‘Cask strength’ implies that the whisky has been bottled without dilution, but the term is not defined in the whisky regulations and in some cases, it is loosely used to describe high strength spirit. But not in the case of GlenDronach, whose owners have been releasing cask strength bottlings since December 2012.

As with previous editions, Batch 12 is a mix of whiskies matured in casks seasoned with Pedro Ximenez and Oloroso sherry, a practice which was begun by the distillery's former owner and Master Blender, Billy Walker, who also acquired a substantial stock of long-aged sherried whisky when he bought the distillery in 2008. Since then, GlenDronach has won

a very high reputation among lovers of sherried whiskies.

Billy Walker sold GlenDronach to the Brown-Forman Corporation of America (owner of Jack Daniels) in April 2016, along with its sister distilleries, BenRiach and Glenglassaugh. The custodian of GlenDronach's quality and consistency today is the company's Master Blender, Dr. Rachel Barrie, who describes the whisky's style as: *“rich, with maraschino cherries, dark chocolate, layers of damson plum, Morello cherries in dark chocolate, black walnut and truffle on a bed of antique leather and old-fashioned treacle gingerbread”*.

The first distillery to offer ‘cask strength’ malt as part of its core range was Glenfarclas, as early as 1968, later branded as Glenfarclas 105—105 being the Proof strength of the spirit (i.e., 60% abv). The practice became more widespread in the 1980s, following the example of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (founded in 1983). The principal attraction of ‘natural strength’ bottling is that high strength alcohol retains flavour-bearing molecules (called ‘congeners’) better than reduced strength alcohol. But this does not mean the whisky must be drunk straight; when you add a little water, the molecules become volatile, so you can smell the aroma better.

New Releases

BenRiach 1994 27 Year Old

The Whisky Shop
Exclusive

70cl 52.8% VOL

27 Year Old £395

Speyside single malt

The colour of mint humbugs; excellent beading. The top notes are fresh yet dense – spearmint and Highland toffee, surrounded by fragrant smoke – and the taste echoes these aromas: sweet, minty and smoky, with light spice in the finish and a cooling aftertaste. Smoked bacon dominates the aromatic development.

“The colour of mint humbugs; excellent beading.”



Benriach Distillery was founded by John Duff in 1897, designed by Charles Cree Doig of Elgin, the leading distillery architect, to be a typical Speyside distillery in both its construction and spirit character.

Duff was a publican and former manager of Glendronach Distillery. In partnership with a couple of local businessmen, he built Glenlossie Distillery in 1876, then he emigrated to South Africa in 1888 with his entire family where he attempted to establish a distillery in the Transvaal. Gold had been discovered here two years previously, so there should have been a ready market, but for reasons unknown Mr. Duff's scheme failed and he moved on to the U.S.A., where he again

attempted, unsuccessfully, to found a distillery.

Nothing daunted, he returned to Scotland in 1892, commissioning Longmorn Distillery, close to Elgin, then Benriach a quarter of a mile away – at the time it was named Longmorn No.2. The two distilleries were connected by a private railway line. By 1899, John Duff was again in financial difficulties and sold Benriach to his partners at Longmorn, who mothballed it the next year.

Benriach remained closed until 1965 when it was rebuilt and modernised. It passed through several owners until it was bought by a small consortium led by the highly experienced distiller and blender,

Billy Walker, in 2004. The new owner rapidly put Benriach on the map as a single malt—prior to this all but a tiny amount went for blending—then sold the distillery and its siblings, Glendronach and Glenglassaugh Distilleries [see p.15 and p.14], to Brown-Forman, owner of Jack Daniels Tennessee whiskey.

In 1983, Benriach began to produce limited amounts of peated malt each year in its own maltings. The first peated expression was released by Billy Walker in 2004, a 10-year-old named Curiositas. This splendid 27-year-old is also, unusually for Speyside, a smoky whisky.

The English Distillery 13 Year Old Rum Cask Finish

The Whisky Shop
Exclusive

70cl 52.2% VOL

13 Year Old £108

English single cask single malt

Pale amber with tawny lights and good beading. The first impression is subtly smoky – a distant bonfire – backed by fresh apple and a trace of vanilla fudge. A smooth texture and a sweet, slightly mineralic (chalky) taste, finishing pleasantly sour and elegantly smoky.

“The first impression is subtly smoky – a distant bonfire – backed by fresh apple and a trace of vanilla fudge.”



The English Whisky Company founded St. George's Distillery at Roundham, Norfolk, in 2006—the first malt whisky distillery in England for over a century. It was the brainchild of farmer and entrepreneur, James Nelstrop, who comes from a long line of arable farmers and millers in Yorkshire and Norfolk. He was assisted by his son, Andrew, who also supervised the construction of the distillery.

The site for the distillery was chosen on account of it providing access to the famous Breckland aquifer, which lies beneath chalk and wind-blown sand, and after all, Norfolk is famous for the quality of its barley—much used by Scottish distillers. In the early days, the Nelstrops were advised by the

legendary Iain Henderson, retired manager of Laphroaig Distillery on Islay.

When Alfred Barnard embarked on his monumental book *The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom* (1887), he visited four distilleries in England, the last of which—Lea Valley at Stratford, London—ceased production in 1898, but since St. George's was commissioned there has been a renaissance in English distilling: currently, there are twenty-six licensed whisky distilleries in England.

Rum Cask Finish began life as Chapter 7—Chapter 6 was the first whisky to be released by the distillery, at three years old in 2009 (Chapters 1 to 5 were 'spirit drinks'). James writes that “secretly,

it was our favourite whisky. A decade later, it's still a fantastic drop that's perfect to share with friends”. It is a peated whisky (61 Parts per million phenols, for readers interested in such things!)—the influence of Iain Henderson might be detected here—and has been finished in unspecified ex-rum casks, bottled at its natural colour and without chill-filtration.

New Releases

Signatory Vintage Speyside Single Cask 2006

70cl 56.9% VOL

17 Year Old £185

Speyside single malt

Deep amber in colour, with good beading. A dry nose and a rich aroma led by dried mixed fruit, with a suggestion of Seville orange marmalade. A full-bodied texture, and a rich sweet taste, with more dried fruits, cooking spices, Oloroso sherry and malt loaf. European oak maturation.

Many brand owners are profoundly nervous about independent bottlers acquiring casks and releasing them under the distillery name for the understandable reason that they cannot guarantee the quality of the product.

Indeed, dear reader, you may have had the unfortunate experience of tasting a malt from a well-loved distillery which turns out to be disappointing at the very least. I well remember, many years ago, tasting a 25-year-old single cask Macallan, bottled for a Scottish bank. It was the colour of tarnished silver, which set my alarm bells going, and when I nosed and tasted a sample it was still immature and more or

Signatory Vintage Secret Orkney Single Cask 2009

70cl 62.6% VOL

14 Year Old £105

Island single malt

Amber with gold lights; light beading. Nose-drying and maritime (sea breeze, edible seaweed, flaking boat varnish), with a distinct thread of smouldering heather. Surprisingly sweet to taste, with just a pinch of salt and a lightly smoky, warming and lengthy finish.

less undrinkable: the cask was exhausted and had failed to mature its contents.

Some brand owners—Glenfarclas comes to mind—immediately send a lawyers' letter if their name is mentioned and follow up with a writ if the bottling is not withdrawn. Others simply state when selling casks to intermediaries—typically, whisky brokers—that the casks may not be sold on, and make it clear that if they do, they will not be able to buy any further casks.

Well-established independent bottlers—and Signatory is one—have built long-standing relationships with brand owners and based on the quality of their bottlings,

are allowed to state the distillery. Some of them buy new-make spirit and fill their own casks. Since its foundation in 1983, the Scotch Malt Whisky Society has not named the distilleries but given them a number and sometimes provided clues in the tasting notes of where the malts come from—although today you can find the list of distilleries and their numbers online.

Blind tasting with friends is fun, and although guessing the distillery is less important than, say, identifying the region or describing the flavour, it can be part of the game.



“A dry nose and a rich aroma led by dried mixed fruit, with a suggestion of Seville orange marmalade.”

“Amber with gold lights; light beading.”

Whisky business



1 Too much water can cause whisky to taste the same

A study completed by Washington State University has found that adding too much water to whisky can cause the liquid to lose its distinctive flavour and scent. It was concluded that if the dram reached 40% dilution, it would taste very similar to other drams diluted to the same level. The study examined the impact of dilution on three Scotch whiskies and three bourbons. The researchers recommend that whisky should not be diluted by more than 20%.

2 Keanu Reeves and Sofia Coppola help House of Suntory celebrate centenary

Keanu Reeves and Sofia Coppola have joined forces with House of Suntory to celebrate the brand's 100th anniversary. A video, created by Coppola and featuring Reeves, showcases some of the most iconic moments and adverts in the iconic whisky group's history. Marketing Director Jon Potter said of the collaboration, "As the pioneer of Japanese whisky, the House of Suntory played a significant role in shaping culture and leading craftsmanship in Japan over the last century. To mark this historic milestone, partnering with Sofia and Keanu, who are Suntory Whisky fans, makes perfect sense."



SUNTORY TIME

100 Years of Suntory Whisky.

Enjoy Responsibly. Hibiki® Blended Japanese Whisky. 43% Alc./Vol. ©2023 Beam Suntory Import Co., Chicago, IL.



3 Remembering Ivan Menezes

Former Diageo CEO Ivan Menezes has died after a brief illness. Menezes was awarded a knighthood at the beginning of 2023, after 10 years in his role as CEO and over 25 years with the company. We send our love to Ivan's family and friends and remember his remarkable leadership and the positive impact he had on the drinks industry.



4 Chivas Brothers shares carbon-saving tech with the wider whisky industry

Chivas Brothers has been using cutting edge heat recovery technology in order to lower the carbon emissions at Glentauchers distillery. This technology has managed to reduce the distillery's energy consumption by 48%. Due to its success, Chivas Brothers has decided to make the technology 'open source' to the rest of the industry. The CEO of Chivas Brothers, Jean-Etienne Gourgues, said: "Heat recovery forms a critical part of our commitment to achieve carbon neutral distillation by 2026. Findings with such significant impact must be shared, this technology has the potential to transform our industry and accelerate its progress to net zero."

W Club Update



W Club Manager, Luke Crowley-Holland, shines a light on the upcoming **W Club Awards**, and runs through what members can look forward to towards the end of the year.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ELLIOT TEMBY

W Club Awards

In our Summer Issue of Whiskeria, we revealed the inaugural **W Club Member's Choice Awards** to the world, the judging of which is now in full swing. Here we have some tremendous images captured at a recent event in Multrees Walk, Edinburgh. Most of our stores in the UK have had at least one tasting session since we kicked off the Awards earlier this year, with lots more events due to take place between now and October when we announce our winners.

From each tasting we've had overwhelmingly positive feedback, although many members are understandably anxious to discover what it is they have sampled. But my friends, you'll have to wait until the big reveal! Each tasting is either free to members, or with a small fee which is then donated towards a charity chosen by the branch of The Whisky Shop hosting the event. The full amounts raised, and the causes donated to will be announced along with the winning whiskies.

In addition, what makes these awards so special is not that the outcome is entirely decided by our W Club Members, but that each whisky is judged blind, based on specific scoring criteria. We remove branding, price point, style, and other factors that might bias outcomes. The judging criteria are as follows:

1. Nose/Aroma (25 points)

How does this whisky welcome you into the glass?

2. Mouthfeel & Taste (25 points)

Let us know how good the flavours are, but also how does it feel? Texture and viscosity should be considered here.

3. Finish (20 points)

What variety of flavours do you find on the end of the whisky and how long does it last?

4. Overall Impression (30 points)

Considering all the above and your own personal preferences, what thoughts and impressions are you left with?

An aggregated score of each whisky compiled from dozens of W Clubbers from around the United Kingdom will give us our category winners and medallists from the following groups: **Single Malt 12 Years and Under**, **Single Malt Over 12 Years**, **Blended Malt**, **Blended Whisky**, and **Alternative Mash Bill Whisky**. We will then pit all the whiskies from across these categories against each other, which will give us our official **W Club Whisky of the Year**; as chosen by our members.

As you may have deduced already, we have not recognised typical whisky borders or regions. We have instead allowed whiskies to be judged against other whiskies of a similar style or mash bill. For example, there are whiskies from Ireland and England in the 'Single Malt' categories, as well as Scotch. Whiskies from as widespread as America, Scotland, and the Nordic countries will feature in the 'Alternative Mash Bill' category and so on. So, the winner will truly be the best whisky available this year at The Whisky Shop, regardless of the origin.

The results of each category, and the reveal of **The W Club's Whisky of the Year 2023**, will be announced in the Winter Edition of **Whiskeria**. We are confident that, as we are democratic and members driven, **The W Club Awards** will be one of the most important Awards in the UK Whisky Industry!

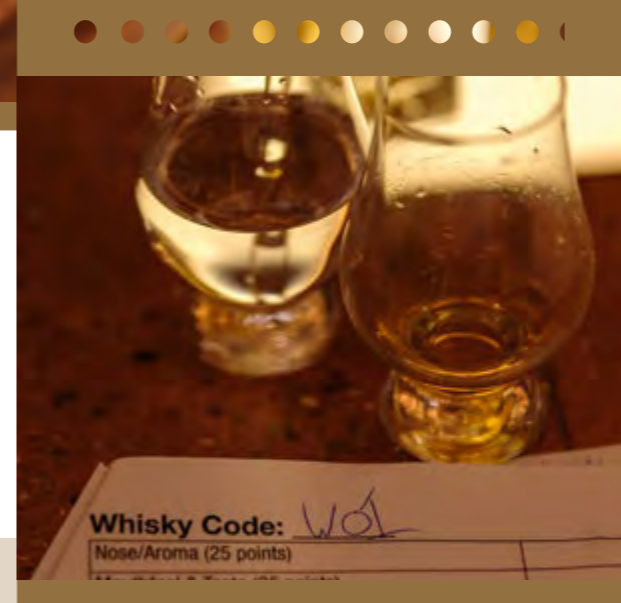
Digital Drams

Our virtual tastings continue to be a very popular and great value way to develop your whisky knowledge, whether you're a whisky novice or veteran whisky enthusiast. So far in 2023, we've hosted Elements of Islay & Port Askaig, Lagavulin, Highland Park, Waterford Whisky, The Singleton, Michter's American Whisky, Deanston, House of Hazelwood, Johnnie Walker & the 'four corners of Scotland', That Boutique-y Whisky Company's 'Return to Oz', Loch Lomond, Tobermory & Ledaig, and anCnoc.

For the second half of the year, we have an action-packed calendar of virtual events. If you've not yet joined us for one, we highly recommend you do so. Each tasting is recorded, so—while we love when you join live and ask questions—you can always catch up in your own time. And after each event, everyone who attended gets a 15% discount code to use on the whiskies sampled on the night (with the rare exception of some limited-edition releases).

You can go back and watch or buy some old tasting packs by going to the Members Hub Tastings (or scanning the QR Code below). On each past event, the recording is embedded on the product page. Lots of the videos are fun to watch back even without the samples, and doing so will give you a feel for how each tasting unfolds.

Members Hub:



Knowledge Bar TWS Unlimited



In June, The Whisky Shop launched **Unlimited**. This meant that for £14.95 customers of TheWhiskyShop.com could get 12 months of Next Day Delivery as standard, on every web item, with no minimum spend.

To celebrate the launch, we've given Unlimited as a standard to existing W Club members for the remainder of their membership. What an incredible addition to an already great-value membership. Sign up today, if you haven't already, and get free shipping on all orders.

By joining The W Club, you will receive a subscription to this very magazine! Have every issue of Whiskeria delivered directly to your doorstep!

Sign Up To The W Club by scanning the QR code:





FETTERCAIRN

18 YEARS OLD

Fettercairn 18 Years Old has been created using a handpicked selection of first fill and refill ex-Bourbon American white oak casks and then finished in **100% Scottish Oak**. This unique approach produces a beautiful richness and depth in harmony with the tropical house style from the unique copper cooling ring distillation process.

- Non chill filtered
- Natural colour
- ABV: 46.8%



OUR AWARD-WINNING AND PIONEERING SCOTTISH OAK PROGRAMME

- Nurturing partnerships to become a leader of responsibility sourced Scottish Oak within the whisky industry.
- Over 13,000 trees planted creating The Fettercairn Forest in 2021.
- In 2022, Fettercairn became the first whisky-makers to curate a family of casks finished in 100% Scottish Oak barrels.
- Winner for Innovation in Production – Spirits Business Award 2022.
- Pioneering Whisky Maker Gregg Glass named Master Distiller of the Year – Icons of Whisky Scotland Awards 2023.

[FETTERCAIRNWHISKY.COM](https://fettercairnwhisky.com)

drinkaware.co.uk



A long time coming



Whisky distilling has hit the Outer Hebrides in a big way. With the Isle of Harris Distillery gearing up towards their highly anticipated whisky launch, Brian Wilson gives us some insight into three of the most exciting whisky ventures coming soon from the Western Isles.

➔ Put this appointment in your diaries. At 13.00 hours on September 22nd 2023, the first dram of 'The Hearach', produced by the Isle of Harris Distillery will be poured with due ceremony.

Like everything else about this exceptional Hebridean venture, the launch has been promoted with style. In a crowded field of recent distilleries, Harris has managed to make itself stand out as a master of marketing. The roll on the drums leading to the Single Malt launch has been building towards a crescendo for years. Shona Macleod, who welcomes me to the distillery, says the great moment in September will come as a relief: *"We have been asked, on the island and from all around the world, every day of our lives—when is the whisky going to be ready? We always answered that 'it will be ready when it is ready.' Now we are able to name the day."*

The multi-award-winning Isle of Harris Gin, which the distillery has been producing since 2017, proved such a success that any pressure to push ahead with a whisky release evaporated. However, Shona who, like many of the 51-strong workforce is a Harris native, is in no doubt: *"Whisky is the product which will secure the business in the long term."* Shona is the distillery's Guest Services Manager and has been there since the start. In addition to welcoming around 60,000 visitors a year, she has added "Distillery Blender" to her job description. It is an example of how the Harris venture—which describes itself as a "social distillery" to reflect deep roots in the community—is opening up new career paths for young islanders.

Now The Hearach is finally ready to go,

the first iteration will consist of just 1,916 bottles pre-purchased by individuals as part of a scheme which features their names on the distillery's wall of staves. Seven limited-volume batches are also being produced. The number 1,916 is significant in the distillery's *raison d'être*. In the 2011 census, the population of Harris was 1,916—and falling. In 1951, it had been 3,991; in 1981, when Anderson "Burr" Bakewell, was first getting to know the island, 2,879.

An American musicologist and man of independent means, Burr had witnessed this decline and seen promises of jobs and investment come and go. His ambition was to create something appropriate to Harris which offered long-term sustainability. The answer he came up with was a distillery, rooted in the island's culture and using its natural resources.

The site in the main village of Tarbert is a great location, close to the ferry point of entry to the island. Fortuitously, it also has the pure water source vital to any distillery. Shona says: *"We started making spirit for whisky at the end of 2015."*

By then, there was already a lengthy back-story, much of it devoted to raising the necessary investment. The executive chairman of Isle of Harris Distillers Ltd., Ron MacEachran, had an industry background as Chief Financial Officer with Whyte and Mackay as well as a Harris family connection. He was taking a break when approached by a head-hunter in 2011 *"about this strange project"*.

He explains: *"By then, Burr had been at it for four years and this was him giving it one last try. I met him in London and was fascinated by the concept he described. Around the same time,*

he met Simon Erlanger (formerly Glenmorangie PLC Sales and Marketing Director), and we both decided to give it a go. My initial job was to oversee the fundraising and construction. Simon became Managing Director."

Finding investors who shared the vision and were not looking for rapid returns proved to be a three-year roller coaster. A turning point came in December 2012 when the project secured a £1.9 million EU grant: the largest ever for a food and drink business in Scotland. This attracted attention from the Financial Times and a glowing article that was read by a wealthy widow sitting in the west of Ireland, Eva Tenback-Biesta.

Ron recalls: *"Her financial adviser happened to be with her, and she asked him to make inquiries. This led to a meeting in London with Burr, Simon and myself. She was an elegant lady, experienced in managing a substantial family business, who asked all sorts of incisive questions. The outcome was an investment of £1 million."*

Eva visited Harris and *"really bought into it"* but then she died from cancer in early 2014. *"After the initial shock over such sad and unexpected news, we wondered what this would do to the project but within a few days were assured she had arranged her affairs so that there would be a seamless transfer to her niece,"* explained Ron. This critical investment was secure—and explains why the spirit still in Harris Distillery is named "Eva" in her memory.

The long gestation period allowed stocks to build, and three large, bonded warehouses have been constructed in the nearby village of Ardhasaig. If the quality of both product and marketing that have



characterised the Isle of Harris Distillery's progress to date is maintained, then few will doubt that the success story Burr Bakewell set out to compose will keep developing for generations to come.

Given their "whisky galore" image, the development of whisky distilleries in the modern age has come late to the Outer Hebrides. However, they are now making up for lost time with two new whisky distilleries in Uist due to start production in the coming months.

One of them, the Benbecula Distillery, has already contributed a new landmark to the island—a replica lighthouse tower which commands views from Barra to Harris and across to Skye. The distillery is being developed by a father and son team, both named Angus Macmillan.

Angus Snr. explained: *"It was inspired by our maritime history and seafaring experiences and replicates the Stevenson Lighthouse on Heisgear, west of Benbecula."*

For the time being, Macmillan Spirits are marketing Wheelhouse Whisky, an eight-year-old single cask malt produced on Islay, as well as Machair Gin and Molucca Rum. Whisky distillation should be underway by the end of this year.

Twenty years ago, Angus was the driving force behind Stòras Uibhist which achieved the community buy-out of South Uist—the largest in Scotland—and his intention was that a community-owned distillery would feature in the redevelopment of the Lochboisdale port area. When his successors at Stòras Uibhist dropped the idea, Angus and his son decided to do it themselves, to create jobs for islanders.



Like everything else about this exceptional Hebridean venture, the launch has been promoted with style.

Meanwhile, North Uist Distillery Company has built an impressive reputation since formed in 2019 by Kate Macdonald and Johnny Ingledew, two young islanders who found their way back home by creating their micro drinks business. Their Downpour Gin has scooped a few awards and the offer of casks which will contain their planned Nunton Whisky, using locally grown bere barley, has had a great response.

The Outer Hebridean whisky trail may have been late in starting but over the next few years will undoubtedly become another good reason to take the road to these isles, just as surely to Islay and to Skye.

Knowledge Bar
Isle of Harris Distillery



ISLE OF HARRIS DISTILLERY

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“I took on my father’s dream to push the boundaries of what a Japanese whisky could be.”

KEIZO SAJI *Second-Generation Master Blender*



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“I took on my father’s dream to push the boundaries of what a Japanese whisky could be.”

KEIZO SAJI *Second-Generation Master Blender*



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THE HOUSE OF SUNTORY
The Nature and Spirit of Japan

Closing the curtain



With the last remaining casks of Littlemill due to be bottled this decade, Master Blender Michael Henry gives us some fascinating insight into what it takes to be the final custodian of an iconic piece of whisky history.

➔ Could you tell our readers about Littlemill's fascinating history?

The real story of Littlemill distillery begins over two centuries ago. In 1750, Archibald Buchanan purchased Auchentorlie Estate, just a few miles west of Loch Lomond on the banks of the River Clyde, and with it, a brewery called Littlemill.

It is suggested there was brewing on the site since the 14th century, but the new owners had their eye on making something infinitely more complex and significantly more valuable. In 1772, the distillery was officially founded.

After one year, on the 2nd of November 1773—this is when things start to get interesting—local Justice of the Peace records for Dumbarton show that 'Robert Muir of Littlemilln', an employee, was granted the first ever known licence on record by the Government of King George III to "...retail ale, beer and other excisable Liquors."

We found this out after setting a few of our archive wizards loose to have a look at records and newspapers. We discovered this a bit by surprise. We realised this was a cornerstone in the whisky industry.

In 1929, Littlemill was bought and then reopened in 1931 by American entrepreneur and chemist Duncan Thomas. Throughout

this time, Littlemill was at the forefront of still innovation, boasting a unique ability to create three styles of single malts—a light and delicate traditional Littlemill Lowland whisky and two experimental malts—the heavily peated Dumbuck and a full-bodied whisky named Dunglass, after the castle nearby.

Then fast forward to the 1990s—in 1994, the distillery went silent then in 1997, it was dismantled. In 2004, a fire destroyed much of the remnants. Thankfully, by this time the last remaining precious casks were owned by Loch Lomond Distillers and stored a short distance up the road from their original home. Loch Lomond Group has had full control and custodianship over the last casks since. I'm the last custodian if you like!

How does it feel to have this level of responsibility as the last custodian?

I've been working in beer and whisky for over 25 years now. When I left school, I studied brewing and distilling. Distilling was always something I wanted to do—I grew up near Bushmills distillery. The impact of distilling on a community, the history, and the respect that people have for distilleries is something that I grew up with.

The kind of history that's involved with Littlemill is exciting to work with when

you've got a love for whisky. It comes with an expectation and a duty to look after it, as well as to respect what other people have done for it before. We need to present every release we do in the best possible condition and character and also to do that in a way that's respectful of the history that's there.

The Vanguards Collection will be launching shortly. Can you tell us the story behind the range?

Littlemill may have been Scotland's first licensed distillery, but the journey thereafter is what makes it remarkable.

Its legacy is defined by unsung heroes and quiet trailblazers pioneering at its helm. These vanguards of their time were overturning traditions in the liquid, innovating with still designs and craftsmanship, and quietly leaving their fingerprints not just on Littlemill but the wider whisky industry.

For example, it was Robert Muir who we celebrate as the distillery manager with the first license to his name, but over a century later American scientist Duncan Thomas was turning his hand to distilling, creating the patented straight neck stills that we still use at Loch Lomond Group today.

Much like Littlemill itself, these individuals passed into history before



Littlemill may have been Scotland's first licensed distillery, but the journey thereafter is what makes it remarkable. Its legacy is defined by unsung heroes and quiet trailblazers pioneering at its helm.

One of the remaining casks of Littlemill from 1990



My aim has been to preserve the past through these last casks and ensure that they are the very best reflection of the Littlemill style. What was also apparent is the crossover between what my work requires and what an artist requires are astonishingly similar—patience, passion, and a deep respect and understanding of the craft.



Littlemill and the surrounding village, Bowling; Littlemill distillery

their contribution could ever be applauded, but their influence on the whisky industry endures, and it further lives on in these last precious casks that are now in my care. This four-part series is a long overdue tip of the hat to them as a cornerstone of the whisky industry.

Each release of no more than 250 bottles is dedicated to one of the Vanguards from Littlemill's history and undertaken in collaboration with an artist and kindred spirit that works with me to revive a piece of the past. It is presented in a handmade display cabinet which houses artwork from the partner as well as a handblown and cut bespoke Glencairn crystal decanter that is individually numbered. The whisky itself comes from our oldest remaining reserves, which is from the 1970s, making these remarkably well-aged releases.

How did the idea for the collection come about?

We had done some archival research on Littlemill, standing on the shoulders of Arthur Motley and Dave Broom who had independently done some great discovery work around the distillery and others of that time. It was a conversation and some digging through books with a good friend, neighbour (and friend of the brand), Charles MacLean, that really started to build a picture of the legacy and Littlemill's place in the world of whisky. When you start to piece it all together, there is this remarkable story to tell, and some remarkable individuals that only the most

well-researched and knowledgeable whisky collectors and enthusiasts might be aware of, so we felt it was the right time to shine a spotlight on them.

The Vanguards Collection is about identifying these unsung heroes. Most of them did their job, had their time at Littlemill, and left without applause. This has really been the opportunity to put them in the spotlight and celebrate them with these special releases and artistic collaborations.

The first expression is focused on Robert Muir. Tell us more about him.

Very little is known about him, except that the owners of Littlemill felt he was important enough and were confident enough in him to put his name to the license. What he stands for, however, is remarkable.

You're working in partnership with a craftsman on each release. Who did you work with on this initial release?

My aim has been to preserve the past through these last casks and ensure that they are the very best reflection of the Littlemill style. What was also apparent is the crossover between what my work requires and what an artist requires are astonishingly similar—patience, passion, and a deep respect and understanding of the craft.

Each release partners with an artist and kindred spirit, also working to revive the past through their art, the way I do with the last precious casks. The craft has close parallels with the Vanguard in question, and

what they produce will be one-of-a-kind to Littlemill. It feels like a lovely way for two worlds to meet and to give a last homage to the Vanguards.

For this first release, we're delighted to be partnering with London-based artist, Vic Lee. Vic's use of the written word in his art, and his ability to transform calligraphy into something breath-taking both in design and scale just felt like the perfect homage to those all-important words in Robert Muir's license that would pave the way for more to come.

Vic's art is the perfect example of where the past meets the present to create something exceptional. And having been lucky enough to be part of Vic's work for the first release, exceptional is the right word.

Vic is producing 250 unique one-of-a-kind pieces of art that will be placed into each Vanguard's cabinet. There is a portal in the cabinet door of each one—a rare window into the history of Littlemill, if you will—that displays this amazing work.

How would you describe the liquid?

It was laid to rest in 1977 in refill American oak. In the mid-1990s, it was vatted and recasked into the same wood. Then, in 2017, it was moved to a first-fill Oloroso hogshead to finish. Oloroso works really well with Littlemill. It really complements the distillery style that Littlemill has.

The liquid has been double distilled, however, because of the design of the still, it has a very much triple distilled character.



Michael Henry samples liquid from a cask



The first release from The Vanguard Collection, in honour of Robert Muir. The whisky comes in a bespoke presentation box. Bottled after a 45-year slumber

It's the traditional delicate, fruity, floral Lowland style that fits the distillery character. The refill wood of the American oak cask has had low influence over the spirit, so it really retains the distillery character.

Although it was laid down in 1977, because it has been matured in refill wood, it's had a very low influence over the spirit. So even though it's a 45-year-old, it still retains its distillery character as the wood hasn't over-balanced it.

On the nose, there is elderflower, pineapple, and sharp, fresh citrus notes alongside roasted hazelnuts, cinnamon, and nutmeg. The palate has a silk-like mouthfeel with melted brown sugar, crème brûlée, crisp apple, ripe pear, lime juice, sultana, and citrus peel—very mouthwatering! The finish is long with grilled grapefruit and sweet caramelised sugars balanced with sharp citrus. For a whisky that is 45 years old to have that freshness and vibrancy, I think is what makes Littlemill stand out.

For this release, we've kept that distillery character at the front and centre and have used the historical cask influence. Oloroso is a historic cask for distilling in Scotland, with sherry coming through in the

late 1700s and early 1800s. The distillers would have access to those freshly emptied sherry casks though they didn't put all their whisky into first fill casks. Distillers would have reused the cask four or five times which meant that there was never a big sherry influence on the whisky. We've tried to be respectful of that, so this release has only been matured for five years in the sherry. The Oloroso is just complementing the distillery character that is already there.

How did you decide that this was the whisky to assign to Robert Muir?

Because Robert Muir was the first in the Vanguard Collection, we wanted to go with the classical Littlemill character. That's why Oloroso felt like the natural fit for that.

When we're presenting Littlemill, we want to respect the philosophy that went into the spirit at the time it was distilled. The casks are very much secondary to how the spirit itself is made.

What do you see for the future of Littlemill?

The lamentable but also wonderful thing about Littlemill is we really are talking about a limited number of previous remaining casks and thus releases. There is a very real



The lamentable but also wonderful thing about Littlemill is we really are talking about a limited number of previous remaining casks and thus releases.

time limit on what remains—unlike other mothballed or silent distilleries, which are now being resurrected, Littlemill is very much never coming back. The distillery is burnt down and gone—we couldn't bring it back if we wanted to. What remains is these releases and me as the last custodian to determine how and when we release them. We are in the final chapter of Scotland's oldest licensed distillery. What a remarkable legacy to get to be a part of though!

I imagine it must be quite emotional to play such a pivotal role in a distillery's final chapter. How do you feel about the end drawing closer?

Whisky is a consumable product and the best way to appreciate it is by drinking and tasting it. Doing the releases that we're doing is the best way of honouring the legacy of the people who have been involved with Littlemill. There's a romanticism and historical aspect to whisky, though the people who are involved at the time aren't thinking about the history and tradition. They're making whisky to be sold and enjoyed. When you bring it back to its core, whisky is about making something that is drunk and shared.

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THE W CLUB



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A new dawn

Gavin D Smith explores Glen Scotia and gives us the inside details of what we can expect next from this icon of Campbeltown.



Knowledge Bar Glen Scotia



GLEN SCOTIA DISTILLERY

12 HIGH STREET

CAMPBELTOWN

PA28 6DS

One of only three distilleries remaining in Campbeltown, Glen Scotia is one of the biggest names in Scotch whisky history. Founded in 1832, this fairly small distillery has proved itself as a real titan for almost 200 years with its distinctive, classic Campbeltown style.



Distillery Visit

Knowledge Bar
Sound of Glen Scotia


Every year Glen Scotia partners with an artist or artists, and this year was the turn of musician and drinks writer Neil Ridley, singer and songwriter Jenny Sturgeon, and producer Dean Honer. Together, they created a three-minute song called 'Copperheart', written by Jenny Sturgeon and using sounds of the distillery as a backing track. Additionally, an 18-minute composition following the sounds of whisky being made at Glen Scotia was produced, along with an accompanying music video.

Listen at:
www.glenscotia.com/pages/the-sound-of-glen-scotia

or purchase a limited-edition vinyl record at:
www.glenscotia.com



Campbeltown was once the malt whisky capital of Scotland, with nigh on a distillery on every corner and its harbour lined with casks.

But fortunes changed, and the Victorian whisky-making empire that was Campbeltown eventually fell, with only two of its distilleries surviving beyond the 1930s. Today, Campbeltown is experiencing something of a resurgence of interest and investment, with plans for three new distilleries around the town currently on the drawing boards.

Through all the ups and downs, the changes in fashion and fortune, one distillery that has endured is Glen Scotia, now enjoying a well-deserved renaissance thanks to its award-winning single malts and the enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable staff who make spending time in this characterful historic distillery such a pleasure.

What's more, Glen Scotia has been notable for the array of awards it has won in recent times, with Senior Brand Manager Nick Bradley declaring that *"We've had an incredible run over the last two and a half years in particular. Our Glen Scotia 25-year-old won 'Best in Show' and thus the best whisky in the world in 2021 at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. This year it also took home its second platinum award (for which it needed to have all 80 judges independently score the liquid at 90/100 or better for six consecutive years)—a first for any distillery for a single expression, let alone consecutively."*

"Together with being named Distillery of the Year in 2021, it is a real testament to the whisky-making team creating these remarkable expressions, but more than that it all helps to put the fifth whisky-making region firmly back on the map as it deserves. We're delighted to be witnessing a real resurgence of interest across the globe for our style of whisky."

Glen Scotia is situated on High Street in the Dalintober area of Campbeltown, on the north side of Campbeltown Loch, and unless you happen to be sufficiently monied to travel by helicopter, there are no shortcuts to reaching Campbeltown. The port is located near the tip of the Kintyre peninsula in Argyllshire, and some three hours' drive from Glasgow.

DISTILLERY EXPERIENCES

So, if you are going to make the long trip to the former whisky capital, it makes sense to opt for the very best that Glen Scotia has to offer, which comes in the shape of

the Dunnage Warehouse Experience and the Distillery Manager's Experience (pre-booking required at www.glenscotia.com). Distillery Manager and Master Distiller at Glen Scotia is Iain McAlister, a Campbeltown native and fount of all knowledge on all things relating to Campbeltown in general and Glen Scotia in particular. McAlister started out as a fisherman on trawlers after leaving school, going on to work with Scottish Water for eight years before joining Glen Scotia in 2008.

As something of a distilling novice at the time, Iain describes his appointment as *"a wonderful way to learn the secrets of making a Campbeltown whisky"* and there is no better man than Iain to guide you through the extraordinary tale of the rise and fall—and ongoing rise once more—of the whisky region of Campbeltown.

Three new distilleries are currently being planned for the Campbeltown area, and Iain says that *"I couldn't understand how it's taken so long to get to this point! Why nobody has built a brand-new Campbeltown distillery before. More distilleries are good for the town in terms of jobs and in attracting visitors, and we welcome them."*

During his Manager's Tour, Iain first ventures back in time, outlining the development of Campbeltown through its Victorian whisky-making heyday, via a heritage of illicit distilling in the Kintyre peninsula. He then focuses on Glen Scotia, originally just named Scotia, and established in 1832, though it was three years later before Stewart, Galbraith and Company got around to applying for a licence.

Local historian Angus Martin is the author of *Glen Scotia Distillery: A History*, and the booklet, available to purchase from the distillery, is highly recommended for anyone who wants to dig deeply into the distillery's history. Suffice to say that, as Martin puts it, *"Glen Scotia changed hands many times and survived against the odds."*

According to former mariner Iain McAlister, *"Campbeltown has one of the finest natural harbours in the world, and wealth came from herring fishing. Once the 1823 Excise Act was passed and the basis for viable legal distilling was established, Campbeltown soon became the place for Scotch whisky production. You could pretty much sail up to the front door of most distilleries."*

However, as blended whisky began to sweep the world during the second half of the 19th century, Campbeltown's distinctive,



Master Distiller Iain McAlister noses a dram

Distillery Visit

oily, robust spirit fell out of favour with blenders. As Iain says, *“Speyside now became the place. Stylistically, it was more conducive to blending. Campbeltown had run its course (for a time at least). It had been the Victorian whisky capital of the world.”*

MAKING SINGLE MALTS

Specific to Glen Scotia, Iain declares that *“Essentially, we’ve produced our whisky the same way for over 100 years. The mashtun plays a huge part in the spirit character. It’s a rack and pinion mashtun, which gives cloudy wort—leading to a slightly more robust and complex distillate. The mashtun is over 100 years old but you get wonderful new make spirit off it. There’s lots to be said for it compared to a semi-lauter, and it’s ideal for small batches like ours.”*

Mashing is controlled by an operator with a series of valves and levers, and information is recorded in ledgers. There is not a computer in sight in the entire production area. Glen Scotia is a distillery of thermometers, dipsticks and old-school record books. *“Everything is done by sight, sound and experience,”* notes Iain. Nine stainless steel washbacks date from 2012, and while six of them are cosily situated indoors, three are externally located and exposed to the elements. Iain explains that *“They can be very sluggish in summer – and we have to allow longer fermentations for them. The opposite is the case during a hot summer. We practice 70-140-hour fermentations, with an average of 128 hours, which helps the whisky to be good at a younger age.”*

Glen Scotia’s single pair of stills is controlled by two hand-turned valves per still, with the wash still having a capacity of 11,800 litres, while the spirit still can hold 8,600 litres. *“The shape and height of the stills will give heavy, robust, oily distillate,”* notes Iain. *“The wash still is wide at the base, short and stocky, with a long, wide lyne arm. We start to cut to the heart of the run at 72/73% abv and cut again at 63% abv. We run relatively slowly at 280-300 litres per hour. The harder you run it, the more you burn off and lose positive character.”*

On the Manager’s Tour, participants get the opportunity to sample new-make spirit, straight off the still, and Iain characterises it as *“Bright, with slight salinity and oiliness. On the palate, there are intense fruit notes, with a bite!”*

The Manager’s Tour or Dunnage

Warehouse Experience comes to its conclusion in a marvellously atmospheric space, occupying one of the oldest parts of the distillery. This dunnage warehouse was originally a maltings, with two floors taken out, leaving a high, raftered ceiling. Here and there, openings have been bricked up, and areas plastered over. The warehouse bears the scars of an old building repaired and repurposed during the passing years, decades and even centuries, giving it a wonderful sense of authenticity.

Five cask samples are presented, varying in age, wood type and even peating level, and on a Manager’s Tour Iain might just wander off into a corner and come back with something you would not otherwise get to try, perhaps dating back to the late 1980s or very early ’90s.

According to Iain, *“The whisky’s ready faster, at an earlier age now than used to be the case, and that’s because we’ve tweaked some of the processes, including fermentation, and changed cut points slightly to give better quality younger whisky. And we’re paying very careful attention to the wood. We’re always looking at which are the best bourbon casks for our particular spirit.”*

Glen Scotia boasts 13 staff, with seven employed in production, and the distillery operates seven days per week, with two twelve-hour shifts per day. The annual output is now around 700,000 litres, up from 500,000 litres, and one month per annum is devoted to making peated spirit. Iain sums up the essential character of Glen Scotia as *“Coastal, marine, with oiliness. Robust, with the potential for smokiness. ‘Funk’ sometimes—not quite in balance but an incredibly interesting flavour profile.”*

THE WHISKIES

In terms of single malt expressions, the latest addition to the core range is Double Cask Rum Finish, and Iain explains that *“In its day, Campbeltown was one of the most internationally connected ports in Scotland. There were plenty of rum casks in the town during the Victorian era, hence creating this expression, which spends eight or nine months in rum casks.”*

Double Rum joins the existing line-up of Double Cask, matured in first-fill bourbon barrels and finished in Pedro Ximénez sherry casks, 10, 15, 18, and 25-year-olds, plus the cask-strength award-winning Victoriana, with whisky from heavily charred casks in its profile, along with

the NAS lightly-peated Glen Scotia Harbour.

This year’s Campbeltown Malts Festival, staged in May, also saw the release of an 11-year-old lightly peated expression, finished for 12 months in white port casks and available via The Whisky Shop, plus a five-year-old aged in a single first-fill bourbon cask, exclusive to the distillery. Eagerly awaited is the arrival of the first in a brand-new series, named Icons of Campbeltown. As Nick Bradley explains, this is *“A celebration of The Campbeltown market cross—a community meeting point for storytelling. Each release in this annual five-part series takes its inspiration from the series of saints and beasts carved into the cross’ face.”*

The initial release is named The Mermaid and is a 12-year-old Unpeated Palo Cortado Cask Finish, bottled at 54.1% abv. Additionally, lovers of veteran Glen Scotia can look forward to a new expression of an as-yet-undisclosed vintage, which is expected not to fall too far short of its half-century.

Nick Bradley adds that *“Glen Scotia has doubled in size and is one of the fastest growing single malt whiskies in the world. We have a growing group of passionate fans coming from Asia to the USA, from Europe to Australia, and everywhere in between. It’s particularly pleasing that it’s not just awards judges, whisky writers, and influencers but also whisky lovers who enjoy the unique flavour of Campbeltown!”*



The view from inside the mashtun



A pair of stills



Glen Scotia casks



The mashtun



Opening a still



Drams enjoyed at sunset



The mash house entrance



LUST FOR LIFE

Katie Puckrik's sensory overload of punk, perfume and performance

PHOTOGRAPHY: BRIAN SWEENEY
ART DIRECTION: A VISUAL AGENCY
ASSISTANT: MARK CAMERON
HAIR AND MAKE UP: IAN MCINTOSH
STYLIST: ANIYA GORGEY
LOCATION: THE BARBICAN
MARTINI BAR AND GARDEN

Katie Puckrik first came to nationwide attention in the early 90s, on the infamous Channel 4 show *The Word*. In a career spanning over 40 years, she has played a huge variety of roles—performing as a dancer with Michael Clark and The Pet Shop Boys; as a broadcaster on national television and radio; as a columnist and YouTuber with a niche in perfume critique; and podcaster in pop history. Her latest incarnation as a frontwoman with a live punk supergroup sees her singing the hits of Iggy Pop on the *Lust for Life* tour.

We attempt to join up the dots of Katie's extraordinary life, discuss the parallels of perfume and whisky, and unveil her secret backstage Japanese cask-strength ritual.

Knowledge Bar

Lust for Life Tour



The **Lust For Life** Tour is an all-star line-up celebrating Iggy Pop's classic *Lust For Life* album, including legendary **Blondie** drummer, **Clem Burke**, **Sex Pistol** and punk pioneer, Glen Matlock on bass; **Iggy Pop** and **David Bowie** collaborator, **Kevin Armstrong** on guitar are joined by **Katie Puckrik** on vocals;

Fronting the band, the irrepressible Katie Puckrik proved a rock 'n' roll revelation to many on the last tour. As Clem Burke said: "Katie is fantastic and she's joined the ranks of the other brilliant women I've been fortunate to play with: Debbie, Annie, Nancy, Wanda, The Go Go's and Joan!"

Following glowing reviews, sold-out venues they have announced a second UK tour for 2024

Photos:
Paul Forrester



➤ We're huddled into a cosy corner of one of Katie Puckrik's favourite cafés in Bloomsbury, central London. Katie is reflecting on our cover shoot in the iconic Barbican building the previous day.

"It's funny how, with the advent of smartphones, everyone has become a performer. I was aware that there we were in a public place, dolled up to the nines, throwing shapes, and nobody was really paying any attention to us, because everyone is so used to people making podcasts and mini tv shows on the street."

"That venue, too. There's something so aspirational about the time right before you were born, or when you were too young too fully understand the mysteries of adulthood, and for me The Barbican Centre symbolises that—the glamorous Martini Bar. A martini is my favourite cocktail, I love a straight-up vodka martini with a twist, with an Italian aromatic vermouth. Drinking a Martini, or a whisky, or any of these 'adult drinks' in a space like that, it makes me think 'wouldn't it have been wonderful to have been a grown up in the 50s or 60s'. So getting myself all dressed up and being very playful in here was my chance to indulge in this fantasy.

The Barbican also being a theatre and art gallery seemed apt, too.

My factory settings are that I love to perform, to entertain. It's about transmitting joy and sweeping other people up in my enthusiasms. And I have a lot of enthusiasms. I love sensory overload, I love anything that enhances and elevates



Interview



My factory settings are that I love to perform, to entertain. It's about transmitting joy and sweeping other people up in my enthusiasms. And I have a lot of enthusiasms. I love sensory overload, I love anything that enhances and elevates any experience...

Knowledge Bar

Katie Puckrik



1988: Katie dances in Michael Clark's ballet *I Am Curious, Orange*.

1991: Katie is a dancer on the Pet Shop Boys' *Performance* tour

1991: Katie becomes a presenter on *The Word* on Channel 4

1994: Katie starts presenting Channel 4's Glastonbury highlights series, *4 Goes to Glastonbury*, with Mark Kermode

1996: Katie produces and presents ITV's *Pyjama Party*

2008: Launches YouTube perfume review series *Katie Puckrik Smells*

2019: Katie presents the BBC series *I Can Go For That: The Smooth World of Yacht Rock*

2021: Katie starts hosting the *We Didn't Start the Fire* podcast with Tom Fordyce

2022: Katie starts writing her perfume column *Message in a Bottle* for *ES Magazine*

2023: Katie embarks on the *Lust for Life* Tour



any experience, so if it's a great whisky, a beautiful garment, a lovely location, a passionate performance—all those things that make you feel more, that's what I'm all about.

It's impossible to describe you as one thing—you're a bit of a polymath. Perhaps what links it all together is a desire to express creative ideas. You've always been surrounded by iconoclasts and punks and people who disrupt their artforms—is your comfort zone actually about being out of your comfort zone?

I hadn't ever thought of it that way but there is definitely something to that. I enjoy extremes, but I'm not an extreme person. I'm not someone like an Iggy Pop in his 20s type character, someone who just loses themselves. I don't want to lose myself, I want to be really present and part of what is going on. Whether it's as a dancer or as a writer or as a perfume critic who makes the invisible visible, or broadcasting where I'm meeting inspirational people.

I like being challenged, trying new things and I don't mind being scared. I also enjoy that sense of vulnerability. When I was touring with the *Lust for Life* band, that was something where I knew the material, I rehearsed with the band, but it wasn't until we got on the stage on the first night that I understood what it was—the missing ingredient was the audience and the communion that we make...

You described it in your tour diary published in *ES Magazine* as 'like an anxiety dream'?

It's always nerve-racking to make yourself vulnerable and accessible to being judged, but what's even more thrilling is to have this unique experience that you wouldn't have had unless you put yourself out on the line like that.

There's an incredible lineage of people you've worked with. Your first jobs before TV were with Michael Clark (ballet dancer / choreographer), Leigh Bowery (costume designer), The Fall, and then the Pet Shop Boys, who are all icons. That might have been enough for some people!

It's amazing when I look back on my career, it seems very curated, like 'oh you know I need to tick off these cultural icons to work with.' But really, it was dumb luck. I moved to London from Virginia when I was in my early 20s, and was working as a contemporary dancer and wanted to be a pop singer. I just happened to do a workshop with DV8 physical theatre, which was a lucky break, and similarly I did a

workshop in Glasgow in 1987 with Michael Clark, and I was brought into the *I Am Curious Orange* run—his collaboration with The Fall—at Sadler's Wells.

From there I got together with Jacob Marley, who was the choreographer for The Pet Shop Boys second big world tour, which was called *'Performance'*. So it's not like I sat down and made a list and said 'I must perform at the top of my profession with every innovator' but it was more right time, right place, and I had the right stuff.

You were ballet trained originally, in the States, and then Russia?

My background is pretty peripatetic. My dad was in the Air Force so it meant my parents were always working as de facto diplomats which meant I spent a good part my childhood in Berlin and Moscow.

Along the way I was doing after school ballet classes, it's not like I went to some super-duper dance academy. A big turning point for me was when I had to have back surgery at 19 for a spine curvature. In my teenage mind, scoliosis had been this big existential plight of my young life, because my idea was I would be a ballet dancer, after all the years I'd put in. In fact, once I had the surgery, and I was in this big heavy plaster body cast for 9 months, I made a pact with myself: *If I could still dance by the time I got out of this, I would.*

But the reason I say it's the best thing that ever happened to me was because I realised I had to change direction to contemporary dance because I was no longer technically able to do classical ballet. Contemporary dance is much more loosey-goosey and interpretive, and it actually matched my temperament and personality and creativity. That's what led me to come to Britain and work with amazing creators.

You go from there to performing on a global tour with the Pet Shop Boys. Is that where your love affair with Japan first started?

I was so lucky doing that tour. It kicked off in Japan and we played Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto. This was in 1991. Talk about sensory overload and stimulation! Japan knows exactly what its culture is—it has a heritage, a legacy that stretches back centuries, but at the same time they are excited by influences from around the world. You can see that in street fashion—they put quotes around something then make it their own.

The whisky culture is a good example of that, too. Japanese culture embraces drink and the finer things in life, the sybarite pleasures and rituals around drinking. The fact that they can take

a Scottish tradition, and in the case of Suntory, it becomes a love story.

I also read you have a tour ritual of a post-show Japanese whisky in a tea-cup?

I do love rituals. It's a practice of gratitude. I feel like I'm under a halo of appreciation and I am surrendering to the moment. Being completely present.

"When I was doing the *Lust for Life* Tour, the tour manager asked everyone what they would like on their dressing room rider (so rock 'n' roll!). I just had two things—dark salted chocolate for before the gig, and Japanese whisky for after. And, of course, it would have been nice to have had a lead crystal tumbler with maybe a chip of ice, but more often than not we were in a punk rock club, and a tea cup would be the best thing that I could find. So that would be my ritual, that little slug of Nikka From The Barrel in my teacup, which then enabled me to keep it under wraps—like a refined lady in the olden days might do to stop people to know she was enjoying a tippie. I'm being stealthy and elegant at the same time!

Knowledge Bar

The Barbican



The Barbican in London is one of the world's most iconic arts centres. It was created by architects **Peter Chamberlin, Geoffrey Powell, and Christoph Bon.** Aside from being a flourishing home to the arts, it is also one of the UK's most famous brutalist buildings.

The Martini Bar features beautiful views of the lakeside, complemented by the warm orange mood lighting synonymous with the bar. The perfect location for a cocktail or two before a show. **The Theatre** regular hosts performances from theatre and dance groups from around the globe. With a capacity of over 1,100, it was designed by and for the use of the Royal Shakespeare Company. **The Conservatory** was opened in 1984 and is home to three pools (two of which are full of koi fish), coffee plants, orchids, and more.



It also feels like a slight flipping of that rock 'n' roll cliché of the likes of Lemmy with his bottle of Jack. You just have that one special dram in a teacup. Have you got any of the others in the band into this?

Yes! They help themselves, even though they don't have my permission! Everyone has their preferred tittle. Our drummer, Clem Burke, likes his fine red wine, for example. Once they clocked my whisky all bets were off!

I came off the stage at the end of the final night, was ready for my self-congratulatory dram, and I held aloft this empty bottle and said *'what the hell, what the heck'*—to quote Iggy Pop in *Five Foot One*—and guitarist Kevin Armstrong shamefacedly admitted they were playing some sort of poker game the night before that involved knocking back slugs of whisky. I felt like I was being penalised for having good taste! Clem's red wine wasn't being necked! So yes, they are all into Japanese whisky now. One thing we'd love to do is bring *Lust for Life* to Japan, so we could kill a lot of birds with one great big stone there!

There's a big UK Tour next year, isn't there?

Yes there is, early 2024. And we're looking at further ramblings across Europe and the US, too.

If there's any drawback to having world-class musicians like Clem Burke from Blondie and Glen Matlock from The Sex Pistols in the band, it's that they're quite busy and often on the other side of the globe, and it's a question of getting everyone's diaries coordinated.

You seem to have galvanised a community of old punks and rockers...

There's no way I could have anticipated what a love-in that tour would be. Initially I just wanted to do a good job and not let down these amazing musicians, and do justice to Iggy Pop's incredible songs and performance. The thing that I couldn't have known is that the audiences had the same attitude—they brought such good will, they had such affection for Iggy, they loved that *Lust for Life* album, they were thrilled to see the tornado of drumsticks that is Clem Burke, the menace of Glen Matlock, the mastery of Kevin Armstrong... but I'm the wildcard. It felt like we were going to punk rock church together—sacred anarchy.



Anything that you enjoy, be that a beautiful whisky, or feeling the soft air after the rain, or listening to an amazing performance... all these things are life-affirming, a celebration. Perfume, for me, is an invitation to a dream. Just one sniff can transport you.

Taking a gear shift now, from punk to perfume—your perfume writing was the thing that initially started this whole conversation with Whiskeria (see Katie's reviews, overleaf). The wonderful thing about your Evening Standard column *Message in a Bottle* is that they are very funny, pithy, sexy and close to the bone...

I love writing for them, they get a kick out of me. They encourage me to fly my freak flag high!

Your writing projects the reader into another life or mindset with the way you expressively describe scents...

My approach to writing about perfume is really my approach to everything, which is completely holistic. Anything that you enjoy, be that a beautiful whisky, or feeling the soft air after the rain, or listening to an amazing performance... all these things are life-affirming, a celebration. Perfume, for me, is an invitation to a dream. Just one sniff can transport you.

I like to treat it like a character. For example, *'did you know that this scent is*

Interview

Knowledge Bar
Whisky tasting

Katie gives her verdict on...

Suntory Toki
70cl | 43% VOL | £40

You can ditch the log cabin/crackling fire/bear rug setting for Suntory Toki, because this blended delight smiles into the sunshine with a festival of honeyed apple, almond and ginger. Throw on your shades and class up your highball.

Hatozaki Pure Malt
70cl | 46% VOL | £58

Put on your big boy pants for this one, because Hatozaki Pure Malt funks yer trunks with honeyed malt and buttery smoke. Confident, but not arrogant.

Hibiki Harmony
70cl | 43% VOL | £86

Ding-dong! Suntory Hibiki Japanese Harmony's at the door with an armful of roses, white chocolate and, it says here: "a mature woodiness with a tender long finish". Can this whisky be my new boyfriend?

Nikka Single Malt Yoichi
70cl | 45% VOL | £84

"Everything is a cosmic battle between faith and chance," says Michael Caine as the bohemian elder in sci-fi epic Children of Men, which is also a handy way to describe Single Malt Yoichi from Nikka. Who cares if tomorrow is a question mark? This densely-loaded memory hole of loamy liquorice, candied fruit and smoldering earth packs the best things in life into one luxurious sip.



Put on your big boy pants for this one...

Hatozaki Pure Malt



...this blended delight smiles into the sunshine with a festival of honeyed apple, almond and ginger"

Suntory Toki



Ding-dong! Hibiki Japanese Harmony's at the door with an armful of roses, white chocolate and, it says here: "a mature woodiness with a tender long finish"...

Hibiki Harmony



Who cares if tomorrow is a question mark? This densely-loaded memory hole of loamy liquorice, candied fruit and smoldering earth packs the best things in life into one luxurious sip.

Nikka Single Malt Yoichi



The *We Didn't Start the Fire* podcast is greater than the sum of its parts... we would have authors, scholars, historians... I always thought of it as a sort of intellectual lap-dance.

based on vetiver, which is a root from Haiti that has a smoky, vegetal smell to it'... is all very interesting, but I think it's even more relevant to talk about what vetiver does to your persona: your idea of yourself; how it can make you aspire to be a better version of yourself; or disguising yourself, becoming someone else; or a protective device, a shield, or plinth. It's psychological, perfume, as well as something which is a sensual enjoyment.

When I first started my YouTube channel 'Katie Puckrik Smells...' and my columns, I would get a lot of questions from fumeheads—well, mainly young men—who wanted to know what the best perfume to attract women is. To me that's like asking 'what is women's favourite food?'—you can't just say there is one thing. Obviously it's your personality that they're after, or there's some chemical combination that is going to click—it's not some smell that is going to tip the balance, but I love this idea that rather than it being a spell you cast on someone else, that it's a spell you cast on yourself. You can wear something that makes you feel subtle, or amplified, or powerful, or in disguise. I love that witchcraft.

I'm so enthusiastic about sensual pleasures in general. I do like to make it accessible too, I don't like to use a lot of jargon. When I started writing about perfume in the mid-2000s, there wasn't much of a lexicon for it, but I like to use it as an opportunity to be playful with words, to be titillating and provocative as well as conveying information.

The one word that perhaps joins all of your career up, then, is 'storytelling'.

I would submit that storytelling is really the base of any experience in which you immerse yourself. Whether it's whisky aficionados or fumeheads, or people who follow a band around a world... it's not just chasing the story, it's *being* the story. The people who fly from Sweden or Montana to a little island in Scotland to see where their favourite whisky was born. It's the same with anything you're enthusiastic about. You want to know about the creator of this magic, what was the brainwave? It's humbling and inspiring at the same time. You think: 'I'm enjoying consuming, or wearing, or experiencing this, but also might I be somebody who could aspire to make something of this level of beauty?' There's so much hopefulness and positivity in every work of art for that reason.

You mentioned at the shoot how the Hibiki bottle reminded you of a perfume bottle. You're interested in the design and value of these object, being seduced by them, and the act of treating yourself?

One of my most overused expressions is 'we're so lucky!', because I always feel that we have organised our life in such a way that, for example, here we are sitting on a Saturday afternoon having delicious food and coffee and talking about lovely things. It comes down to gratitude. Life is hard, and you have to scramble to force your life to go in a certain direction that isn't going to bulldoze you into a flattened roadkill version of yourself. It's like landing on a lovely little lily pad—when you're able to pause and say 'oh, here I am drinking delicious Nikka From the Barrel'. Or to watch an exquisite flamenco performance, as I did the other night at Sadler's Wells—my God, talk about lust for life! It's so proud, it's so sexy, so powerful, so emotional, so passionate—that's the stuff that floats my boat.

Your articulation is a unique thread in all of this. You've just completed the podcast series *We Didn't Start the Fire*, where you take seemingly disconnected people and events [following the lyrics of the famous Billy Joel song] and turn historical facts into something unexpectedly entertaining.

Much like the *Lust for Life* tour, the *We Didn't Start the Fire* podcast is greater than the sum of its parts because yeah, I've got a nose for news and I'm genuinely interested in people, however our experts were fantastic, and that's because our producers were wonderful on that show. My co-host, Tom Fordyce—what a talent, what a charmer, and such a generous broadcaster. He and I had an instant chemistry—we never needed to discuss our approach before any interview.

The song itself lists approximately 120 different topics from when Billy Joel was born in 1949 to when he released the song in 1989, so it's a potted history of post-WWII culture. So we would have authors, scholars, historians, and occasionally relatives to some of the subjects of the song.

I always thought of it as a sort of intellectual lap-dance. You would get this expert coming in and telling you his grandfather was Josef Stalin's last bodyguard, or learning about Donald Trump's villainous lawyer Roy Cohn, from the man who made a documentary about him. It's not all bad guys though, we also hear about amazing leaders, inventors, scientists, actors—all from the horse's mouth.





Much like perfume or whisky writing, writing about music is subjective, it's almost like reporting from the battlefield of your heart. You're in this moment and you're trying to convey this rainbow of emotion.

Apart from the tour, what's next Katie?

I'm putting the finishing touches to a Yacht Rock compilation! This is off the back of various Yacht Rock specials I've done for BBC Radio 2 and a two part documentary for BBC4. It's basically millionaires' make-out music that emanated mainly from the West Coast of America from the mid-70s to the mid-80s, personified by the likes of The Doobie Brothers, Steely Dan, Hall & Oates and Carly Simon. Yacht Rock a witty little bumper-sticker name for a genre of music that tangentially has something in common. It's very smooth, aspirational, expensive-sounding music, that makes you feel sexy, happy and rich just listening to it. It's like what I was saying about perfume—it's a spell that you cast on yourself.

Much like perfume or whisky writing, writing about music is subjective, it's almost like reporting from the battlefield of your heart. You're in this moment and you're trying to convey this rainbow of emotion.

...

Our lunch meeting has raced by, and it feels like we've barely skimmed the surface of Katie's myriad careers, ideas and tales, before she has to skip off again for a radio appearance. A lust for life never sated.



The *Lust For Life* 2024 UK Tour begins 29 February 2024. Tickets and info at www.lustforlifetour.com

Styling:
Rings: Alice Cicolini
Dresses: Stine Goya; Olivia Rubin

Katie's perfume column *Message In A Bottle* can be found at www.standard.co.uk/esmagazine

The *We Didn't Start the Fire* podcast can be accessed via crowdnetwork.co.uk/podcasts/we-didnt-start-the-fire/



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ESTD 1875

WELCOME TO GLENGLASSAUGH

There's a place where the land meets the sea. Where the senses are awakened and sweet air mingles with a crack of sea salt. Where flavours ride the waves of sea and air. Until they come to rest, in a place of perfect harmony.

A taste of Glenglassaugh is a pull to the lush shores of Sandend Bay. Where, in curving copper stills and dark casks of oak, a coastal single malt is born. Softly rolling surf sweeps across a scattering of ancient harbour towns here, while dolphins play, gannets dive, and spirits are renewed by the joy of life at a gentler pace.

Glenglassaugh 12 Year Old embodies our signature coastal style. Matured in bourbon, sherry and red wine casks for luscious waves of ripe fruit carried on an ocean breeze.



COLOUR

Luminous gold

NOSE

Sweet coastal waves of ripe apricot and fig meld with toasted vanilla and tropical flora, carried on a warm ocean breeze

TASTE

Candied pistachio, date and sweet fig roll into waves of morello cherry and whipped cream, infused with fresh coastal air

Mixing It Up

WAXING LYRICAL

Deanston's signature waxy drams get a glow-up, with tequila cask and virgin oak finishes making a sharp impression in the smoothest cocktails.

Photography: Armando Ferrari
Art Direction: A Visual Agency

1. Aye Si

- 50ml Deanston 15 Year Old Tequila Cask Finish
- 25ml Lemon juice
- 20ml Agave
- Half a skinned Raeburn apple
- 2 dashes Orange bitters

Glass: Coupe

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker with ice / Muddle well / Strain into coupe

Mixing It Up

2. Beeswax Highball

50ml Deanston Virgin Oak
25ml Honey syrup
2 dashes Angostura bitters
Ginger ale to top

Cubed ice / Garnish: Stroopwafel piece /
Glass: Highball

Pour Deanston Virgin Oak, honey syrup,
and Angostura bitters into glass / Mix well /
Fill glass to the brim with ice / Top with
ginger ale / Add Stroopwafel piece to garnish



Mixing It Up

3. The Perfect Pair

—
50ml Deanston 18 Year Old
20ml Xante
2 dashes Cocoa bitters

Block ice / Garnish: Pear twirl / Glass: Rocks

Stir Deanston 18 Year Old, Xante, and cocoa bitters in cocktail shaker / Put block ice in glass / Strain cocktail into glass / Add pear twirl to garnish

+ Deanston 18 Neat

—
Perfect as it is.



Mixing It Up

4. Honey Pot

—
50ml Deanston 12 Year Old
20ml Honey syrup
Handful of fresh mint leaves
Aromatic bitters

Crushed ice / Garnish: Mint sprig / Glass: Rocks

Add Deanston 12 Year Old, fresh mint leaves, and honey syrup to a cocktail shaker with ice / Churn well with mixing spoon / Fill glass with crushed ice / Pour cocktail over ice / Top with mint sprig to garnish





5. Palomalba

- 50ml Deanston 15 Year Old Tequila Cask Finish
- 20ml Fresh grapefruit juice
- 20ml Lime juice
- 10ml Sugar syrup

Ice: Cubed / Garnish: Slice of lime / Glass: Highball

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker /
Shake well / Strain into glass over cubed ice /
Garnish with slice of lime



➔ These perfect serves were put together by Angostura Brand Ambassador Anna McFarlane. Deanston's sublimely waxy character makes it the ideal whisky for mixing and experimenting. The taste and texture still holds its own against other ingredients, whilst simultaneously complementing each element of the serve. Don't believe us? Try it and see for yourself!

BRAND AMBASSADOR: ANNA MCFARLANE
 MODELS: ASHLEY POLLOCK,
 CHINOYEREM ORISAKWE
 ADDITIONAL STYLING: ASHLEY POLLOCK
 LOCATION: MAX'S BAR / LA CHEETAH,
 GLASGOW

Knowledge Bar Deanston



Deanston 12 Year Old

70cl | 46.3% VOL | £49

A sweet, honeyed expression from Deanston. Expect vibrant notes of malt loaf, baking spices, and vanilla.

Deanston 18 Year Old

70cl | 46.3% VOL | £96

Matured in hogshead casks before a finish in first fill Kentucky bourbon casks. A rich and spicy Highland single malt.

Deanston Virgin Oak

70cl | 46.3% VOL | £42

After a maturation in ex-bourbon casks, this whisky has enjoyed a finish in new oak barrels to create a zesty, sweet, and spicy expression.

Deanston 15 Year Old Tequila Cask Finish

70cl | 52.5% VOL | £95

An experimental limited edition release from Deanston. This whisky has been finished in tequila casks to create a truly unique flavour profile.

A touch of class

Back in June, the Whiskeria team were granted exclusive access to one of Diageo's World Class GB Finals at Johnnie Walker Princes Street in Edinburgh. Spectacular cocktails were prepared, emotive speeches were given, and eventually, Birmingham's Matt Arnold was crowned Bartender of the Year.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTINA KERNOHAN
ASSISTANT: CAT THOMSON
ART DIRECTION: A VISUAL AGENCY

➔ For those unfamiliar with the event, World Class GB is a competition which sees the top bartenders in Britain go head-to-head to earn the title of Bartender of the Year. The winner then progresses to the Global Final. This year, the Global Final will take place in Sao Paulo.

The World Class GB finals took place over two days. We attended day one of the finals and witnessed dazzling cocktails all being created using whisky from The Singleton. These cocktails were created with the theme of a "dream gathering" in mind, and paired with a dish from chef (and judge) Mark Moriarty. The finalists had ten minutes to prepare their drinks for six judges, whilst giving a speech about how their concoction came to be—no mean feat!

Day two of the finals saw the contestants work in pairs to make either an Old Fashioned or a Highball using Johnnie Walker. At the end of these two full-on days, Matt Arnold of Passing Fancies in Birmingham was named winner and will proceed to the Global Final in Brazil later this year.

Pictured right are: Katie Strouse, Jacob Clarke, Danilo Frigulti, Michael Dylan Edwards, Emanuele Mensah, Alex Taylor, Judge and Diageo Brand Ambassador Jo Last, Judge and founder, editor, and publisher of Cocktail Lovers, Sandrae Lawrence



Whisky People

Knowledge Bar

Dream Gathering Drinks

① | **Katie Strouse | Stirchley Gatherings**

A carrot and fig leaf concoction inspired by Katie's local neighbourhood. The carrots used in the drink were sourced from Katie's local grocers!

② | **Josh Linfitt | Riding the Wave**

Each of the ingredients in Josh's drink tie into memories from his past or are linked to dreams for the future of his career. Bursting with sweet, nutty flavours that complement The Singleton of Dufftown's flavour profile.

③ | **Jacob Clarke | Seven Still Interlude**

A unique cocktail combining The Singleton of Dufftown 12 with pickled bell pepper and eucalyptus "designed to cleanse the palate in between bites to recreate the experience of the first taste with each bite."

④ | **Hollie Bennetts | Seize the Hay**

Holly's Seize the Hay is primarily inspired by togetherness. The end result is an intensely fruity and nutty drink that is bound to put a smile on any face.

⑤ | **Emanuele Mensah | Bese Saka**

Bese Saka is a cocktail inspired by finding a community who can make you feel at home, regardless of where in the world you are. A harmoniously well-balanced drink created by Emanuele Mensah.

⑥ | **Danilo Frigulti | Dream Weaver**

Danilo created his dreamy drink with the ambition of showing to his family and friends in Puglia that whisky can be enjoyed in a cocktail and that it is not something that must be drunk neat.

⑦ | **Matt Arnold | The Happy Accident**

The World Class GB winner described The Happy Accident as "A drink designed around the unplanned moments of life that we look back on with rose-tinted glasses."

⑧ | **Tom Fastiggi | Flowers of the Forest**

Tom Fastiggi imagines himself enjoying this drink in a beautiful forest setting, surrounded by his best friends. Perfectly paired with chef Mark Moriarty's Chicken Liver Royale.

⑨ | **Alex Taylor | The Hard Shake**

Working in a milkshake bar as a teen was Alex Taylor's awakening into the world of hospitality, and the name of his drink pays tribute to this fact. Hosting and recommending is when Alex finds himself at his happiest.

⑩ | **Michael Dylan Edwards | The Missing Link**

A Sherlockian serve, bursting with refreshing fruity flavours. A stunning partner to Mark Moriarty's passionfruit petit four.



Pictured above are World Class GB Winner, Matt Arnold, Josh Linfitt, Judge and manager of The Connaught Bar, Maura Lawrence Milia, Judge and Owner of Panda & Sons, Iain McPherson.

INSPIRED ON THE SHORES OF LOCH FYNE



CREATED WITH
SCOTTISH COASTAL BOTANICALS

ISSUE

Autumn 23

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whiskyshop.com

THE WHISKY SHOP

UNIQUE
DIFFERENT
INTERESTING



Autumn Almanac

As people get together, hiding from the weather, make sure you're stocked up on our handpicked collection of drams for Fall gatherings.

Taste of Japan

Old Gold

Smokeshows

Savoury Delights

Please note: prices accurate at the time of printing. These may not be in line with subsequent duty increases.

THE WHISKY SHOP

Taste of Japan

Take your taste buds on a journey with these incredible Japanese whiskies.

① Yoichi 15 Year Old

70cl | 45% VOL | £1080 Cloves / Oak / Walnut whip

- Matured for 15 years in well-aged casks
- A phenomenal balance of florals and spice
- Distilled in Hokkaido, a region of Japan with a very similar climate to Scotland

② Hatozaki Pure Malt

70cl | 46% VOL | £58 Dried fruit / Smoke / Orchard fruit

- Made exclusively from malt whisky
- Aged in a combination of imported bourbon casks, imported sherry casks, and Mizunara oak
- This whisky is named after Hatozaki Lighthouse, the oldest stone lighthouse in Japan

③ The Chita

70cl | 43% VOL | £62 Rose / Honey / Oak

- House of Suntory's exceptional single grain whisky
- This liquid is normally used as the "dashi" to enhance House of Suntory blends, but it is given the chance to shine on its own here
- Soft, smooth, and sublime

④ Yamazaki 12 Year Old 100th Anniversary Release

70cl | 43% VOL | £200 Cloves / Cranberry / Coconut

- A special anniversary release
- Celebrate 100 years with this delectable 12-year-old expression
- A cracking bottling of Japan's number-one single malt

⑤ Hibiki Japanese Harmony Ryusi-Hakka Limited Edition 2021

70cl | 43% VOL | £699 Oak / Rosemary / Honey

- Presented in a beautiful limited edition bottle
- Created with a combination of grain and malt whiskies from Yamazaki, Hakushu, and Chita
- Inspired by the idea of harmony

⑥ Miyagikyo

70cl | 45% VOL | £85 Turkish Delight / Vanilla / Candied rose petals

- A highly impressive no age statement expression
- Hailing from the second distillery built by Masataka Taketsuru
- An award-winning single malt

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THE WHISKY SHOP

Savoury Delights

Looking to satisfy some salty cravings? We've got you covered!

① Talisker Distiller's Edition

70cl | 45.8% VOL | £71 Vanilla / Malt loaf / Dark chocolate

- A delectable dram from Skye's oldest distillery
- The perfect balance of sweetness and smokiness
- Matured in American oak and finished in Amoroso sherry casks

② Old Pulteney Huddart

70cl | 46% VOL | £53 Leather / Burnt toffee / Salted caramel

- Matured in American oak ex-bourbon barrels before enjoying a finish in ex-peated malt casks
- Inspired by the multi-award-winning Old Pulteney 1989
- Named after the distillery's location, Huddart Street

③ Highland Park 18 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £135 Orange peel / Sea salt / Peat smoke

- One of the most awarded whiskies of all time!
- A sweet and gently smoky stunner
- Highland Park is the most northern single malt distillery in Scotland

④ Ben Nevis Loch Fyne Finest 1996

70cl | 47.03% VOL | £320 Dark chocolate / Exotic fruits / Highland toffee

- A beautiful dram from Ben Nevis distillery in Fort William
- Just 289 bottles have been filled
- Aged for 25 years in a single refill hogshead

⑤ Signatory Vintage Secret Speyside 2009 14 Year Old

70cl | 63.5% VOL | £105 Marmalade / Sea salt / Baking spices

- Distilled in a secret Speyside location
- Try with your friends and try to guess what distillery this cracker came from!
- A fabulous bottling, exclusive to The Whisky Shop

⑥ Glenturret 12 Year Old

70cl | 46% VOL | £73 Fruit cake / Toasted oak / Cinnamon

- Matured in European sherry oak casks
- Decadence in a bottle
- A must-try Highland whisky

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THE WHISKY SHOP

Smoke-
shows

Walk on the smoky side of life with these cracking drams.

① **Caol Ila 2007
15 Year Old
Connoisseurs Choice**

70cl | 59.2% VOL | £175 **Cloves / Cherries / Raspberries**

- Bold smoky flavours, exclusive to The Whisky Shop
- Matured in a first fill sherry butt to create a seriously delicious expression
- Independent bottlings don't get much better than this

② **Duncan Taylor
Single Cask Bunnahabhain Peated 2014
8 Year Old**

70cl | 53.9% VOL | £95 **Peat smoke / Barbecued meat / Orchard fruits**

- Fabulous fare from Duncan Taylor
- Crafted using Bunnahabhain's peated spirit, Moine
- Just 435 bottles of this smoky delight have been filled

③ **The English Distillery
13 Year Old Rum Cask**

70cl | 52.2% VOL | £108 **Smoke / Tropical fruits / Milk chocolate**

- Another exceptional bottling exclusive to The Whisky Shop
- This expression has undergone a unique rum cask maturation
- Just 216 bottles produced

④ **Stauning
Smoke
Single Malt**

70cl | 47% VOL | £82 **Honey / Smouldering oak / Citrus fruits**

- A beautiful Danish single malt, crafted using locally sourced Nordic ingredients
- The barley used is smoked over locally sourced peat, then mixed with dried heather
- Double-distilled in small flame-heated pot stills, and maturing in first-fill wine and spirits casks

⑤ **Lagavulin
16 Year Old**

70cl | 43% VOL | £88 **Islay smoke / Peat / Vanilla**

- The flagship expression from Lagavulin
- Fermented for an unusually long 75 hours
- Smoky and spicy, this is truly a dram to behold

⑥ **Kilchoman
2015
Pedro Ximenez Sherry Cask**

70cl | 56.6% VOL | £110 **Citrus fruits / Peat / Honey**

- This exciting exclusive bottling was chosen by our first-ever Cask Committee
- This delightful dram was matured for seven years in a Pedro Ximenez cask
- Exclusively available to members of The W Club

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THE WHISKY SHOP

Old Gold

The best drams to have in your cabinet to commemorate life's special moments.

① The Glenlivet 25 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £628

Dark chocolate / Walnut whip / Cinnamon

- Carefully matured for a quarter of a century
- Finished in hand-picked ex-sherry butts to create beautiful rounded sweet notes
- Each cask is individually monitored in the finishing process for optimum sherry note balance

② Bunnahabhain 40 Year Old

70cl | 49.1% VOL | £2,225

Milk chocolate / Heather honey / Sea salt

- A small batch expression from Islay's Bunnahabhain distillery
- An invitingly sweet and nutty number
- Encased in a beautiful grey and copper presentation box

③ Strathclyde 1987 35 Year Old Sovereign

70cl | 53% VOL | £199

Menthol / Milk chocolate / Apple

- Bottled by Hunter Laing & Co. as part of their The Sovereign collection
- Aged in a single refill barrel for 35 years
- Bottled in April 2023 at an impressive 53% abv

④ Signatory Vintage Glen Grant 1966 50 Year Old

70cl | 54.6% VOL | £4,995

Ripe fruit / Dark chocolate / Brown sugar

- An extremely rare 1966 vintage from Glen Grant
- Released as part of Signatory Vintage's Cask Strength Collection
- Just 108 bottles of this sherry-matured wonder have been filled

⑤ Benriach 1994 27 Year Old

70cl | 52.8% VOL | £395

Red berries / Caramelised pine nuts / Stewed fruits

- A gorgeous The Whisky Shop exclusive from Benriach
- A peated 27-year-old dram that has been entirely matured in a single Oloroso sherry puncheon
- Just 653 bottles filled

⑥ Laphroaig Trio Coronation Edition

3x70cl | VARIOUS | £3,900

Chocolate strawberries / Charred oak / Apple pie

- Created by Duncan Taylor to celebrate King Charles III's Coronation
- Containing an 18-year-old whisky, a 23-year-old whisky, and a 26-year-old whisky
- Presented in a bespoke case tastefully decorated with gold mirror accents

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THE WHISKY SHOP

Customer Favourites

Light / Floral

① Bunnahabhain 12 Year Old

70cl | 46.3% VOL | £51 Dried fruit / Honey / Chestnut

Bunnahabhain's whiskies are quite distinct from other single malts of the Islay region, in that the majority are produced with unpeated malted barley. Toast the versatility of Islay with this superb 12-year-old expression that showcases Bunnahabhain's 'fruit and nut' signature style.



"It's not just the name that's a bit of a mouthful - this classic takes you on a wondrous journey of flavour! Sherry, light peat and coastal salt lead on the palate, with an overall fruit and nut character. The perfect all-rounder." Chris, Norwich

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② Fettercairn 12 Year Old

70cl | 40% VOL | £56 Nectarine / Ginger / Pear

Hailing from the village of the same name, this whisky is a masterclass in fruity Highland flavour - perfectly embodying Fettercairn's exotic fruit-driven character. It has been matured in American oak ex-bourbon for its full 12 years in cask. Simply delicious.

③ Loch Lomond 14 Year Old

70cl | 46% VOL | £61 Green apple / Grapefruit / Vanilla

A 14-year-old single malt from the Loch Lomond Distillery, made using unpeated spirit. This liquid matured in refill American oak casks and lightly toasted French oak from the Limousin region for up to twelve months.

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④ Balblair 12 Year Old

70cl | 46% VOL | £55 Sultanas / Honey / Apple

Matured in American oak, ex-bourbon, and double-fired American oak casks, this twelve-year-old whisky has an elegant complexity and warmth - the defining expression of Balblair Distillery.

⑤ Balblair 15 Year Old

70cl | 46% VOL | £84 Apple / Dates / Caramel

An older sibling to Balblair 12 Year Old, this whisky perfectly balances unique distillery character with smoothness of age, thanks to a flavour profile of tropical fruits and a texture of melted chocolate. Gorgeous.

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⑥ Auchroisk 10 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £56 Orange zest / Cut grass / Roasted nuts

Hailing from the village of the same name, this whisky is a masterclass in fruity Highland flavour - perfectly embodying Fettercairn's exotic fruit-driven character. It has been matured in American oak ex-bourbon for its full 12 years in cask. Simply delicious.

⑦ Glengoyne 12 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £48 Honey / Ginger / Lemon zest

A real smooth sipper from Glengoyne distillery. Matured in hand-selected sherry casks crafted from European and American oak, this multi award-winning expression is sure to keep you coming back for more.

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THE WHISKY SHOP

Customer Favourites

Rich / Sweet

1 anCnoc 12 Year Old

70cl | 40% VOL | £40 **Banana / Butterscotch / Custard**

Produced at Knockdhu Distillery in the Highlands and matured in a combination of second-fill American oak, ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks, this is an award-winning expression that should sit proudly on your spirits shelf.



"Such a soft, lovely dram! This sweet, Highland whisky is a go-to favourite of mine. Notes of runny honey, barley sugar and buttery stewed red apples. Warm and smooth on the finish; beautiful!"

Monique, Victoria Street

2 The Dalmore 15 Year Old

70cl | 40% VOL | £106 **Terry's Chocolate Orange / Fruitcake / Sherry**

An older sibling to The Dalmore 12 Year Old, this expression has been matured for 15 years in a trio of ex-sherry casks, as well as ex-bourbon barrels. It offers all of the sweetness and spice expected of The Dalmore.

3 Glenrothes 18 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £159 **Sweet vanilla / Wood oil / Ginger biscuits**

An exceptional 18-year-old Speyside single malt. Released as part of The Glenrothes' Soleo Collection, this expression has been exclusively matured in sherry seasoned oak casks.

4 Blair Athol 12 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £55 **Walnut / Cinnamon / Fruitcake**

Established in 1798, Blair Athol is one of Scotland's oldest working distilleries and is famed for producing the signature malt for Bell's blend. A delicious dram, this is one of only a few official bottlings ever released from the distillery.

5 Old Pulteney 15 Year Old

70cl | 46% VOL | £79 **Honey / Salted caramel / Fruitcake**

An incredibly balanced single malt that has spent time in American oak ex-bourbon casks and finished in Spanish oak. Spice and sweetness combine with the refreshing coastal notes expected from this seaside distillery to create a delicious dram.

6 Arran 10 Year Old

70cl | 46% VOL | £47 **Apple / Cinnamon / Digestive biscuits**

An award-winning whisky that captures the fresh and unique style of this island distillery. A worthy addition to your whisky cabinet, this expression offers a fantastic introduction to the flavours from Arran.

7 Benrinnes 15 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £60 **Toffee apple / Sherry / Malted biscuit**

This 15-year-old Speyside single malt is partially triple distilled at Benrinnes Distillery, resulting in a sultry expression that packs in plenty of body and character. It is another bottling from Diageo's Flora & Fauna series, highlighting the versatility of distilleries producing liquid for blends.

8 Benriach The Twelve

70cl | 46% VOL | £50 **Honey / Maraschino cherries / Cocoa**

Part of the refreshed core line-up from Benriach, this new recipe brings intensified notes of baked fruits and a rich smoothness, thanks to time spent in a combination of sherry casks, bourbon barrels and Port pipes under the expert care of Master Blender Rachel Barrie.

9 The Dalmore 12 Year Old

70cl | 40% VOL | £70 **Cocoa / Marmalade / Milk chocolate**

This single malt is a Highland triumph: full-bodied, thick and sweet. A popular dram, known for its long and spicy finish, and a beautifully rich expression for its 12 years of age.



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THE WHISKY SHOP

Customer Favourites

Rich / Sweet

1 Oban Distillers Edition

70cl | 43% VOL | £86 Milk chocolate / Sea salt / Christmas cake

A distillery renowned for its innovation, each expression of Oban Distillers Edition undergoes double maturation in casks that have previously held a fortified wine. This edition has been finished in a Montilla Fino cask - a rare type of finish and a complete treat!



"Complex on the palate, yet blissfully smooth, with notes of dried fruits (think mince pies), milk chocolate and maple syrup. Full of flavour; another sip reminds you just how good it is!"

Donald, Glasgow

2 Glen Scotia Victoriana

70cl | 54.2% VOL | £81 Creme brûlée / Cocoa / Caramel

Inspired by the whiskies produced at Glen Scotia Distillery in the Victorian times, this expression has been relaunched at a slightly higher strength and bottled straight from cask to better reflect how historic expressions of this era would have tasted. Delicious!

3 Glen Scotia Double Cask Rum Finish

70cl | 46% VOL | £55 Toasted coconut / Baking spices / Molasses

A beautiful dram that pays homage to the rum casks that were on sale in Campbeltown in 1815. Matured in ex-bourbon casks before an eight-month finish in ex-Demerara rum barrels, the result is something simply spellbinding.

4 Mortlach 12 Year Old The Wee Witchie

70cl | 43.4% VOL | £61 Toffee / Marmalade / Raisins

Known as 'the Beast of Dufftown', Mortlach's spirit is distilled 2.81 times in a complicated process referred to simply as 'The Way'. Named after a tiny still that distils a portion of Mortlach's whisky, this 12-year-old is a perfect example of the distillery's intense character.

5 Mortlach 16 Year Old Distiller's Dram

70cl | 43.4% VOL | £105 Gingerbread / Orange peel / Sultanas

An older sibling to Mortlach 12 Year Old, this dram offers plenty of sweet and sticky Christmas spice thanks to maturation in sherry casks. A combination of first-fill and refill sherry casks gives this 16-year-old a wider range of sherry flavour, from dried fruits to juicy berries.

6 The GlenDronach 12 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £55 Marmalade / Sherry / Raisins

An award-winning expression from the distillery famous for its richly sherried offering - this 12-year-old is a firm favourite amongst our customers. Matured in both Pedro Ximénez and Oloroso sherry casks, this expression offers an indulgent portfolio of flavours.

7 Benromach 10 Year Old

70cl | 43% VOL | £48 Green apple / Toffee / Black cherry

Produced at the family-owned distillery in Forres and aged for a decade in first-fill bourbon and sherry casks, Benromach's 10-year-old is a dram that is unmistakably Speyside in flavour. It is the proud winner of multiple gold awards.

8 Jura 18 Year Old

70cl | 44% VOL | £80 Dark chocolate / Coffee / Blackcurrant jam

Matured for 18 years in American white oak ex-bourbon barrels and enriched by Premier Grand Cru Classé red wine barriques, this expertly crafted single malt is a unique island whisky that has truly come of age.



THE WHISKY SHOP

Customer Favourites Smoky

1 Caol Ila Distillers Edition

70cl | 43% VOL | £80 Malted biscuit / Peat smoke / Cinnamon

A sweeter expression from the Islay distillery due to time spent in Moscatel casks at the end of its maturation process. The result is a delicious layer of sweetness and dried fruits on top of classic Caol Ila peat smoke.



"An absolute must for all Islay fans, to be enjoyed by the fire whilst rain beats against the windows. Smoky bacon, sweet fruits and warm leather emerge on the nose before soft smoke, salt taffy, green apples, and cinnamon biscuits on the palate."

Darren, National Store Manager



4 Torabhaig Allt Gleann Legacy

70cl | 46% VOL | £60 Sea salt / Peat smoke / Lemon peel

The second release in Torabhaig's Legacy series is an impressively peaty malt. The series consists of small batch bottlings, all drawn from 30 casks or less.

5 Ailsa Bay 1.2

70cl | 48.9% VOL | £64 Vanilla / Shortbread / Campfire ember

Ailsa Bay 1.2 has undergone the distillery's signature micro-maturation process - rapid maturation in ex-bourbon casks before ageing in virgin American oak casks for several years - achieving a single malt that's even sweeter and smokier than its predecessor. Beautiful.

6 Ledaig 10 Year Old

70cl | 46.3% VOL | £50 Gingerbread / Sea salt / Stewed fruit

This beautifully smoky dram is one third of the Ledaig core range. Hailing from the Isle of Mull's only distillery, this an impressively balanced maritime whisky that is sure to keep you coming back for more.



7 Glenturret 10 Year Old Peat Smoked

70cl | 50% VOL | £66 Citrus / Smoke / Sea salt

This exceptional single malt has been crafted in the same stills that the distillery's unpeated spirit runs through. Sweet and smoky, this is a simply delightful expression from an exemplary Highland distillery.

8 Highland Park 12 Year Old

70cl | 40% VOL | £46 Honey / Cream / Floral smoke

An intriguing expression from Scotland's most northerly distillery. This beautiful dram is the flagship expression of Orkney's Highland Park.

9 Lagavulin Distillers Edition Double Matured

70cl | 43% VOL | £105 Maritime smoke / Peat / Spiced oak

Powerfully smoky and surprisingly sweet, this release of Lagavulin Distillers Edition has been double matured in Pedro Ximénez seasoned American oak casks to create a spectacular flavour profile.

THE WHISKY SHOP

Customer Favourites International

① Maker's 46

70cl | 47% VOL | £46 **Nutmeg / Mulled wine / Caramel**

Filled into a barrel partly made of seared French oak staves, this stunning Kentucky bourbon packs plenty of spice and is named after the final recipe chosen by its creators - recipe number 46.



"A whisky close to my heart and the first new product Maker's released in over half a century. The French oak influence delivers coffee, butterscotch, and honey, and with the higher ABV everything becomes a real experience for the senses. A drop of southern hospitality and Kentucky heat to get you through those colder British days."

Phil, Manchester

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② Widow Jane 10 Year Old Bourbon

70cl | 45.5% VOL | £88 **Sandalwood / Tobacco / Madagascan vanilla**

A fabulous bourbon from Widow Jane Distillery in Brooklyn. Each bottle of this ten-year-old tippie has been drawn from a single barrel, meaning that no two bottles of this fabulous expression will be exactly the same.

③ Bushmills 16 Year Old

70cl | 40% VOL | £96 **Almond / Currant jam / Dark chocolate**

Triple distilled at Northern Ireland's Bushmills Distillery, this 16-year-old Irish single malt has been matured in oloroso sherry casks and bourbon-seasoned casks for just over 15 years, before being finished in Port pipes for nine months to impart sweet, jammy flavours.

③



④



④ Hatozaki 12 Year Old Umeshu Cask Finish

70cl | 46% VOL | £80 **Apricot / Pear / Plum**

A striking twelve-year-old pure malt whisky from Kaikyo Distillery. Created by combining various small batch single malts, the expression was matured in American oak casks before enjoying a six-month finish in Umeshu casks.

⑤ Waterford The Cuvée

70cl | 50% VOL | £72 **Orange zest / Barley sugar / Lemon peel**

An outstanding release from Ireland's Waterford Distillery. This impressive expression draws together spirits from the distillery's Single Farm Origins series to create this striking single malt.

⑥ The Irishman Single Malt

70cl | 43% VOL | £35 **Crystallised pineapple / Ripe stone fruits / Honey**

A bourbon and oloroso matured dream! This whiskey wonderfully balances sweet, fruity, and woody flavours to create this gorgeous Irish tippie. This small batch expression won Gold at the International Spirits Challenge 2022 - get your hands on one now!

⑤



⑥



⑦



⑦ New York Distillers Ragtime Straight Rye

70cl | 45.2% VOL | £47 **Liquorice / Cinnamon / Marmalade**

An impressive rye from New York Distilling Company. Specially created to be used in cocktails, this expression will be right at home in a delicious Manhattan! A must-have addition to your drinks cabinet.

⑧ Stauning Smoke Single Malt

70cl | 47% VOL | £82 **Digestive biscuits / Apple / Campfire smoke**

A real triumph from Denmark's Stauning distillery. This Danish expression is full to the brim with seductively smoky notes that give way to soft, sweet, fruity hints.

⑨ Kyro Wood Smoke

70cl | 47% VOL | £50 **Rye / Black pepper / Smoked meat**

A magnificent smoky triumph from Kyro. This Finnish whisky was made by smoking rye with alder wood, creating its wonderfully unique flavour profile.

⑧



⑨



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Auctions

Collector's edition



With almost a decade's worth of experience in our Manchester shop under his belt (and a hugely successful YouTube channel), Store Manager **Phil Dwyer** spills the details on how to put together a whisky collection that's as impressive as his own!



You're part of the team that helps select exclusive casks for us. What's that like?
It's always an exciting day when I receive a package from Neil [our Whisky Specialist]. It always contains samples full of very high-quality whiskies, and I need to pick which one is my favourite. When you see the final product sitting on a shelf, it's exciting and very cool.

On top of your role with The Whisky Shop, you also have a very successful YouTube channel, @WhiskyWednesday. How did that come about?
I took it over from the founder Joe Ellis when there were about 4,000 subscribers and now it's sitting at over 10,000.

When it comes to a huge audience like that, you need to always find ways to keep it interesting and I always think about what kind of whiskies people would want to hear about. This year, there seems to be a real interest in Islay whiskies.

How often do you use Auctions to gain access to unique bottles that we don't stock anymore?
Quite a bit! I'm always chasing down unusual stuff, often in miniature form, from closed distilleries. I've managed to get a cask strength 12-year-old Pittyvaich and a 1980s bottle of Littlemill. I find myself browsing our Auctions site all the time to see if there are any unusual bargains there. We see a lot of great stuff in the shop through our Auctions drop-off, and I love to follow up and see how they do on the site. With the nature of my job, if I don't get hold of a new release, someone I know likely will and I'll be able to try it. That's why at Auctions I'd rather look for obscure and unique bottles that I've never tried.

What distilleries would you encourage collectors to keep an eye on in the coming years?
Benromach. They bottle their core range at 43% and people tend to ignore it because of this. To me, Benromach has a very similar profile to Springbank and Longrow and I think it's a bit of a dark horse, especially with their single barrel releases.

Ardnamurchan is another one. They're owned by an independent bottler. They've done their first-ever sherry cask recently which has been getting rave reviews. I think in a few years' time their first releases will be worth quite a bit of money.

In terms of older releases, Arran. I've never seen demand for old whisky from a new distillery as much as I do with Arran. I just feel that with the way the distillery is going and the fact that they've opened a peated distillery on the island means they're tapping into all sides in the best way possible.

What would be your top tips for someone looking to grow a great whisky collection using Auctions?
Get something from a big distillery – The Macallan, Bowmore, Springbank – ideally a limited edition release. I'd also say look out for bottles that are particularly dark in colour, too. Older bottlings are great, too, especially stuff from the 60s and 70s, because most distillery stock of this kind is running out. After this goes, we get to a pinch point as we know historically that whisky didn't do well in the 1980s and a lot of distilleries were running on part-time hours and weren't running to full capacity, so the stock there is automatically limited, too. It's worth getting whisky at Auctions that you'll never be able to try again!

Knowledge Bar

Phil's Fill



Role
Store Manager, Manchester.

Responsibilities
Overseeing everything in the shop from making sure we've got great looking displays to handling our social media to dealing with our customers who are looking for investments or new releases. It's a lot of things rolled into one.

Favourite exclusive cask that you've been involved in selecting?
A tie between all the **Maker's Mark** casks and a **Kavalan Virgin Oak** cask that we did a few years ago.

Current go-to whiskies?
Loch Lomond 14 Year Old;
Maker's Mark Private Select Batch #5;
Benromach #333

If you have an interesting bottle at home that you'd like to auction, we'll pick it up from your doorstep, free of charge!

Email auctions@whiskyshop.com to find out when your dram can be collected.



THE WHISKY SHOP
AUCTIONS

Fèis Ìle diaries

Whiskeria Producer Fran Wilson and Art Director Emlyn Firth give us their first impressions of this year's spectacular, sun-drenched edition the Islay festival.



Fran Wilson
Whiskeria Producer
Fri 2 June, Bunnahabhain

06:00 Arrived at Glasgow airport after an early rise to catch the plane to Islay for Fèis Ìle – it is also my first ever visit to the island.

08:00 We take off on the smallest plane I've ever been on. I have a crippling fear of flying so I'm thankful for the swift 20-minute flight.

09:00 Check in at the hotel, dump the bags, and hop a taxi over to Bunnahabhain. It's a scorching hot day without a cloud in sight.



I have another go of the 12 Year Old and Canasta Cask, as well as sampling the other two Fèis Ìle releases—the 1998 Manzanilla Cask and the 17 Year Old Mòine Triple Cask—and a distillery exclusive bottling which has been matured in a Banyuls wine cask

10:00 We arrive at Bunnahabhain Distillery. I start the day off with a classic dram – Bunnahabhain 12 Year Old—whilst taking in the mesmerizing views of the Paps of Jura.

10:30 It's time for the second dram of the day, the Bunnahabhain Fèis Ìle 2023 Canasta Cask. I enjoy this spicy, fruity expression alongside a couple of absolutely phenomenal Islay oysters (another first!).

11:00 We head to the Master Distiller's Day Drams in the Filling Shed. The session is led by the knowledgeable and witty pairing of Master Blender Julieann Fernandez and Distillery Manager Andrew Brown. I have another go of the 12 Year Old and Canasta Cask, as well as sampling the other two Fèis Ìle releases—the 1998 Manzanilla Cask and the 17 Year Old Mòine Triple Cask—and a distillery exclusive bottling which has been matured in a Banyuls wine cask. Without a word of a lie, this distillery exclusive bottling is the nicest whisky I have ever tasted. If seductively sweet whiskies are your thing, it is well worth a visit over to Islay just to pick up a bottle of this beauty.

12:00 After finishing up the tasting with Julieann and Andrew, we hop onto a boat at Bunnabhain's pier and set out to sea. Bottles are cracked open, and I enjoy another serving of the Mòine Triple Cask, my favourite of the festival releases (think barbecued meats and sweet pineapple salsa!). The view of the distillery from the sea is really a sight to behold, but unbelievably, this wasn't the most special scene from the boat trip. A pod of

dolphins leapt alongside our boat for the final 15 minutes of our journey. In a day full of firsts for me, I'd have to say this was the most spectacular.

13:30 We return to the distillery and source some pizza from the Scozzese stand. I enjoy a Stornoway black pudding and caramelised onion number whilst listening to Rollin' Drones—the band that had set up whilst we were gone—performing rousing, bagpipe-heavy renditions of Daft Punk's *Get Lucky* and George Michael's *Faith*.

15:00 Our last event of the day is a walk through Warehouse 9 led by team member, Torran. Attendees were given the opportunity to re-gauge casks and get a bit of behind-the-scenes insight into what goes on at the distillery on a daily basis.

17:00 I take a moment to stand by the sea to enjoy some of the best views in Scotland before heading back to the hotel.

19:00 I'm treated to a gorgeous dinner of chicken liver pâté, mussels, and chocolate mousse. My fellow attendees and I reflect on everything we've seen and done today, all feeling immensely grateful to have been a part of it.

22:00 Full of whisky and food and ready to sleep, it's time for bed before another early rise to head home tomorrow. As I drift off to sleep, I am thankful for how fortunate I am – the perks of a job don't get much better than this.

Emlyn Firth
Whiskeria Art Director
Mon 29 May—Fri 2 June
Laphraoig, Bowmore,
Kilchoman, Ardbeg

I've lived in the west coast of Scotland for almost all of my life, but, I confess—I'm an Islay virgin.

When I was a boy, my father would frequently take me to the mountainous areas of the Highlands & Islands of Scotland, as his obsession with exploring all of the Munros [mountains over 3000ft] grew.

Islay does not really have hills. (*Jura*, next door, has Beinn an Òir [Gaelic: *mountain of gold*] but at 2,575 feet it is just a Corbett, and of lesser interest to a Munro bagger). Why the height discrimination? And what has this got to do with a whisky festival? Well, let me explain...

A revered tome called '*Munro's Tables*' divides Scotland into distinct areas. Each area and mountain range has its sub-section, and each summit or 'top' (with its own collection of poetic Gaelic vowels and consonants) has an entry to underline in pen or pencil.

We would take long winding journeys—via car, train, and Cal Mac ferry, trudge through bogs and streams, tame scree paths up the Cuillin on Skye, or hike into remote valleys from overnight stays in youth hostels.

What was apparent to me very early on was that the grizzled, bearded, gore-texed men of the mountains we met along the way (and it was predominately, but not exclusively middle-aged men) prized certain more remote, precariously knife-edged ridged hills than others. You were part of an

exclusive club if you'd scaled these rarer peaks. Moreover, a mountain's real qualities could be dramatically affected by which time of year you visited, which route you took, or even who you encountered that day. Yes, something so simple as a-n immovable rock could ignite intense discussion, fierce debate, much sharing of wayfinding and hidden gems, and, of course, that deep desire some people have to collect. Gotta underline them all.

One other thing that always struck me, especially as we ventured to the more remote locations, was the higher proportion of camper vans and touring cars with Scandinavian and German number plates and stickers on. Weathered VW Westfalias and Volvo estates making passing-place pilgrimages to the remotest outposts of Western Europe—it seemed extreme and absurd to me, as a boy, that they would come all this way, especially when there were bigger, more spectacular mountains on their doorstep. Similarly, we'd often meet North Americans in guest houses or bothies, who were on some crazed whistle stop 'Europe' tour and were 'doing' Scotland that lunchtime. What drew them here?

...

Fast forward to Fèis Ìle 2023. Here I am making conversation with middle-aged men from Scandinavia and Northern Europe, along with a smattering of excitable North Americans. The itineraries and pace of the exploration of all the islands distilleries, their separate tastings, tours and exclusives, are mind-boggling. Designated drivers take their turn shuttling mini-buses full of whisky-head friends between events, and hangovers are set to snooze.

Drams are thrown back, personal



bottles are produced to share, and opinions constantly offered and sought. There is a code of generosity, of good manners, egalitarianism ... but also a steely eyed determination to find a rare or unique expression. A prized exclusive invite that will let you try the floor maltings at Bowmore. That one Bunnahabhain single cask on the menu in the Ballygrant Inn that my new Swedish friends insist I try. The Ardbeg special release that must be bought twice—one for the collection, the other for drinking.

One midnight around a table filled with cheeses, meats and miniature bottles, I asked my new friends... *what drew you here?* And they almost always said, unprompted, it was *storytelling*. Specifically, the stories of the whisky making craft, and places.

So yes, I've dragged you all this way to make this parallel between Munro baggers and these whisky obsessed festival goers. Scotland—its landscape, its language, its craft, its people, its stories—has an enduring appeal for a certain type of person who is compelled to collect, but also wants to share in the rarest of experiences and warmest rituals.



I've lived in the west coast of Scotland for almost all of my life, but, I confess—I'm an Islay virgin.

Yamazaki 18 Year Old Mizunara Anniversary Edition



Charlie MacLean dives into a beautiful 18-year-old bottle of Yamazaki, a special edition that has been released to celebrate House of Suntory's 100th anniversary.

➔ In 1923, Shinjiro Torii built Japan's first malt whisky distillery in the Vale of Yamazaki, at the foot of Mount Tenno on the main railway line linking Kyoto with the port of Osaka.

As with other Japanese single malts, each expression of Yamazaki is a vatting of different styles of whisky as well as different cask types. This is quite unlike Scotch malt, where most distilleries make only one style of whisky, and gives the Japanese product an interesting extra dimension.

What is this 'extra dimension'? How do Japanese malt whiskies differ from their Scottish cousins? After all, the production and maturation processes are identical, and it may be said that, of all the world's whiskies, Japanese malt is the closest in style to Scotch.

The most noticeable difference is a lack of any cereal flavours. Many Scotch malts have malty notes—especially younger expressions—by design. Japanese distillers exclude these notes in several ways:

First, by making sure their wort is crystal clear.

Second, by using a mix of distillers' and brewers' yeasts, some unique to the individual distillery. This used to be the case in Scotland, but now all Scottish distillers use only distillers' yeast.

Third, by long fermentations—typically around 72 hours. Some Scottish distillers ferment for as short as 48 hours, and many others for around 60 hours.

Dr. Mas Minable, a senior chemist at Suntory (which owns Yamazaki Distillery), defined the difference between the flavour of Scotch malt and Japanese malt whiskies as "transparency" in conversation with my colleague Dave Broom, who went on to explain:

"On the one hand, this means a precision of character, an ordered array of aromas and flavours that seem to line up on the palate and can be tasted almost individually while still making up a complex whole. Which isn't to say that these are light whiskies. Transparency is spot on. You can see into them".



Yamazaki 18 Year Old Mizunara Anniversary Edition

70cl	48% VOL
18 Year Old	£1,600
Japanese single malt	

Deep gold, with amber lights. The early top note is of orange zest, soon overtaken by dried fruits (dates, figs) on a base of malt loaf (with sultanas). Complex and elusive. A smooth texture and a sweet taste, finishing with milk chocolate.

"Complex and elusive. A smooth texture and a sweet taste, finishing with milk chocolate."

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