



# Feints And Foreshots



## WELCOME TO

Feints and Foreshots #33

### CRAIG DANIELS' CHRISTMAS MALTS

Three top Christmas Tipples -

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### WHISKY TASTING IN BERLIN

It's Laphroaig, Jim, but not as we know it! **P. 4 - 5**

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Southern Cross Distillers nearly ready to launch! **P. 2 - 3**

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## FEINTS AND FORESHOTS CHRISTMAS EDITION



Christmas is a time of festive celebration, no matter what your background or beliefs. It's a time of year where you can sit back, enjoy the company of friends, indulge in some cracking Christmas fare and of course break open a spectacular Christmas tipple or two.

In this very festive edition of Feints and Foreshots, there is our usual Christmas Whisky recipe on page 6, along side Craig Daniels' recommendations for some great festive malts on pages 7 to 8.

We also feature one of Australia's newest distilleries, Southern Coast Distillers, in the lead up to their imminent launch on pages 2 to 3.

Editor Nic Lowrey takes a walk on the wild side in the cabaret district of Berlin, and gets more Laphroaig than she bargained for on pages 4 to 5.

And to round out the edition, Chairperson Craig Daniels gives a fascinating and comprehensive overview of this year's MVSoA Whisky Awards on pages 10 to 14.

Plenty of Yuletide reading inside, so grab your favourite couch, a dram of liquid Christmas pud, and enjoy!

Best of the Season to you and yours,

Nic Lowrey, Editor and the committee of your MVSoA



# Feints And Foreshots

## FEINTS AND FORESHOTS - LOCAL DISTILLERS New Kids on the Block Part 4 – Southern Cross Distillers

Writing and photographs - Ian Schmidt, Vic Orlow and Tony Fitzgerald

Southern Coast Distillers is both pleased and proud to announce the bottling of our first expressions of South Australian single malt whisky. Southern Coast Distillers was established in May 2004 by three friends and their wives as a part time venture. We all had other jobs and demands on our time and our funds, such as families, mortgages, business etc. that together limited our ability to devote a lot of time and money to the project.

There has been nothing hurried in this distillery project, as can be seen from the fact that it has taken six years to get our first expression into a bottle! The initial paperwork hurdles were high, and having overcome these we had to build a small stove top still and satisfy ourselves we could make a good product. Having done this, we then set about building a still of commercial size and all this took time and money, both of which were - and still are - commodities in short supply. Whilst making malt whisky is not rocket science, or even particularly difficult, the learning curve to produce really good malt is very steep. We would not have managed to climb that steep curve without the assistance of people like Bill Lark, Patrick Maguire, David Baker and Craig Daniels.

When we embarked on this journey through the mysterious world of malt, smoke, oak and copper, our fall-back position was always that if things went poorly, if all else failed, we would at least be able to drink our investment and have some fun doing it.

Obviously, we got here, and achieved what is a very modest achievement by world distilling standards. The result however, is a distinctive South Australian Single Malt Whisky that we believe is an exceptional 3 year old malt, even by world standards, and of this we are very proud. We are also relieved, because if things go belly up now, worse things could happen to us than be forced to drink our own, rather good, whisky!





# Feints And Foreshots

## FEINTS AND FORESHOTS - LOCAL DISTILLERS

### New Kids on the Block Part 4 – Southern Cross Distillers cont.

Our first expressions are bottled at around four years of age. We have older casks, but have put them aside for later. Batch number 001 is being released as a collectors' edition and will be priced accordingly. Simultaneously we will be releasing Batch number 002 at a more reasonable price for those whisky tragics more inclined to drink their malts rather than just look at them. Both expressions are bottled at 46% and none of our spirits are chill filtered.

We have entered each expression in the 2010 MWSOA Malt Whisky Awards for the purpose of gauging how our whisky compares with other whiskies. We expect to introduce the whiskies and the rums to the market through a website to be launched at the end of this year.

Our methods of producing whisky are traditional and hands on, even to the extent that we built our own stills. This hand crafted approach may seem a little out of place in today's world of global distillers, but whisky is our passion. We refuse to make it any other way and look forward to sharing our passion with you. Enquiries: 0412445043

**Writing and photographs - Ian Schmidt, Vic Orlow and Tony Fitzgerald**

### TASTING NOTES

#### **Batch # 001 - 46%    age 3 years**

This whisky exhibits pine needles, spearmint, toffee, cardamom & galangal, mint caramel, charred nuts, toffee and some bitter chocolate, a nice mouth feel – good length and wonderful colour.

#### **Batch #002 – 46%    age 4 years**

This whisky exhibits pine needles, dried rosemary, butter roasted nuts with lots of chocolate, sherried plums, varnish and some leather. It is very easy drinking and again the colour is luxuriant.



# Feints And Foreshots

## UNEXPECTED PLEASURES ON FAR FLUNG SHORES- THE BERLIN WHISKY CLUB LAPHROAIG TASTING NIGHT

by Nic Lowrey

One night during a recent extended stay in Berlin, my partner and I found ourselves in Nollendorf platz, Schoneberg. It is an area renowned for art and outrage - even mentioned in the musical Cabaret - and also for bars and entertainment. In search of one such bar, in the early hours of the evening, we stumbled across a whisky shop, ambitiously entitled Finest Whisky. Could it possibly uphold such a reputation? Actually, as it turns out, yes. A jaw dropping three room collection of rare UK, Japanese, Indian and European bottlings sourced from private collections and trades.. Sadly their Australian collection lacked girth at the present time. Whilst admiring their cache, we could hear laughter from one of the rooms. The helpful yet quiet proprietor alerted us to a Laphroaig tasting occurring in the area adjacent, indicating it was not a closed tasting. So what would you do?? Of course, we joined the festivities!

This particular gathering operated differently to the clubs I've frequented in Australia. The general theme was 'Laphroaig', so each member of the club (apart from our lucky selves) had donated a Laphroaig expression from their private collection. Each bottle was opened in succession and tasted, and each person could opt to buy a taste of that bottle. The cost was set by the owner, and reflected

the rarity of the expression, or the selflessness of the owner, perhaps. Prices were very very reasonable, starting from 2.50 euro, and the highest cost was 12.50 euro for a bottle that was priced well over 500 pounds each.

Attendees travelled from all over Germany for the night, and understandably so, as there were numerous brilliant malts on offer. Caught without pen or paper, I managed to capture some details on my Iphone:

### Malts Sampled:

1. Exclusive Malts - Laphroaig 1990 - Aged 19 Yrs 50.4%
2. The Dram Collection - Laphroaig 11 Yrs Bottled 2010 61%
3. Laphroaig 1977 OB 18 yrs Bottled 1995 43%
4. Elements of Islay LPI 58.8%
5. Kiesek Whisky Shop Private Bottling - Laphroaig 12 yrs Bottled 2010 59.7%
6. La Preceptorie - Laphroaig Cask finished 7 yr old 58.2%





# Feints And Foreshots

## UNEXPECTED PLEASURES ON FAR FLUNG SHORES CONT.

The Laphroaig 1977 in particular was one of the most breathtaking and complex Malts I have had the pleasure of sampling so far. My tasting notes make much of the deep sherry nose and palate, and tasting brought out butterscotch, grape, lemon, vanilla, grapefruit, marzipan and of course a fruitcake accent. It was very dry, far dryer than the nose would lead one to expect, and there were also anodyne notes typical of younger Laphroaigs. I dared to water the last drops, to the horror of my tablemates, and found other notes surfacing of raisins, wax and slate. If I had the 699 pounds to pick up a bottle of this, I certainly would - but would I share it with other appreciators? I'm not sure I could be so noble.

Some photos of the event follow (in order of tasting). Tasting notes for all the evening's malts available by emailing the editor.





# Feints And Foreshots



## WHISKY: A FINE CHRISTMAS TRADITION



The Swedes know how to work whisky into traditional Christmas recipes to excellent effect. One of their greatest creations is Glogg. Meant to warm the cockles on winter nights, Australia's unpredictable summer temperatures can often accomodate the idea of a warm whisky treat.



### Glogg

- 1/4 c Whiskey
- 2 ts Raisins
- 1 ts Honey
- 4 ea Whole, Blanched Almonds
- 1 ts Finely Shredded Orange Peel
- 1 ea Inch Stick Cinnamon, Broken
- 1 ea Whole Clove
- 1 ea Cardamom Pod, Opened
- 1 3/4 c Sweet Red Wine

For spice bag, tie orange peel, stick cinnamon, whole clove and opened cardamom pod in cheesecloth. In a 4-cup measure combine wine, whiskey, raisins, honey and spice bag. Micro-cook, uncovered, on 50% power about 6 minutes or till heated through, but not boiling. If desired, cover and let stand at room temperature for 2 to 3 hours to develop more flavor. If wine wine mixture is allowed to stand, micro-cook, uncovered on 50% power about 6 minutes more or till heated through, but not boiling. Remove spice bag. Serve in mugs. Add some almonds to each mug.



# Feints And Foreshots

*A Yuletide Trio* - by Craig Daniels

**Reviews on three whiskies that I think should please almost everyone, I hope. One sherry monster, one elegant and sophisticated and one for the raw and youthful peat fans out there in our Diaspora. It might be too late for some of our membership, yet I have a drive to provide a buying guide for members; so at least you can track down the whiskies that are reviewed.**



***Aberlour a'bunadh NAS Batch # 28 OB, 59.7% -      Score 90      Price ~\$100***

**Nose:** Big oloroso sherry, toffee, fruitcake, lifted alcohol, Christmas cake, roasted nuts, creamy wood, brandy macerated fruits, raisins, sultanas, prunes, caramel & mint toffee.

**Palate:** Sherry along with lifted ethereal alcohol. Toffee, fruit, fruitcake, cocoa, some toffee apple, cherries, apricots (stewed and dried), warming alcohol then nutty; quite full and mouth-coating, yet never oily.

**Finish.** Liquid toffee, cherries, then red apple and oloroso sherry; some dark chocolate and praline, long and warming

**Overall Comment:** This is the Christmas malt *par excellence* because of the boiled fruitcake and brandy like alcohol. I'd like to recommend it as the perfect 'sauce' for boiled fruitcake, if you'd like a winning alternative to brandy. There's something appropriately seasonal about the a'bunadh profile, but don't serve it until the pudding. You might not be able to locate Batch # 28, it might be Batch #31 by now, but the good thing about this whisky is that each batch is pretty much as good as another. This has been especially true since about batch # 20, which is regarded as a bit of a classic.

**Awards – Trophy (Best Value Malt) and Gold Medal – MWSOA Malt Whisky Awards 2010**

**(Batch #30 won a Trophy and Silver medal in the Malt Maniacs Awards 2010)**

Chairman's précis: Exceptional value for money as it was the only one out of our five gold medals to cost less than \$100



# Feints And Foreshots

A Yuletide Trio cont - by Craig Daniels



**Yamazaki 12 OB 43% Score 87 Price ~ \$85**

**Nose:** Polished wood, toffee, some dark fruits (plums, prunes, raisins), a hint of incense or sandalwood, nougat and praline, some dark chocolate, whiffs of crème caramel.

**Palate:** Slightly sweet, hint of cream sherry, nicely balanced with some toffee and some aromatic wood

**Finish.** Sweet then some burnt toffee, cocoa or carob and drinking chocolate.

**Overall Comment:** Incredibly refined and yet solid malt. Nothing effete about this dram yet displays elegance well beyond its years. Never, ever let anyone tell you that the Japanese can't make great whiskies as this demonstrates their capacity at a fair and decent price.

**Awards – Trophy (Members' Choice) and Silver Medal – MWSOA Malt Whisky Awards 2010**

Chairman's précis :This was one of the more remarkable malts for me in 2010 as every time I've come across it (whether disclosed or blind) I always scored it roughly the same and in the mid to high 80s. I think it is a whisky that deserves to find a following amongst the malt savvy public in Australia.



**Big Peat NAS 46% (Douglas Laing & Co) Score 85 Price ~ \$65**

**Nose:** Raw peat, freshly laid tar, coal tar, something juicy, tart and zesty (lime peel, fresh coriander) then sappy and resinous (vine cane), alongside honey roasted peanuts and some slightly sweetened cream.

**Palate:** Tar, rubber, sweetness (honey and cream), then the sappy notes punch through, gets much more phenolic.

**Finish.** Tar, rubber, lingering hints of coal smoke. Drier lingering smoke; drying wood, with a tiny hint of metal.

**Overall Comment:** It's a vatting of Ardbeg, Caol Ila, Bowmore and Port Ellen, although I can't imagine how much Port Ellen would be in there. I must confess that the Ardbeg and Caol Ila are fairly easy to identify but I didn't find much to suggest Bowmore. However, it's a very nice dram, clean and zesty in its youthfulness. For me there are big echoes of the Ardbeg Committee bottlings, especially the Still Young and the honey coated peanuts are a classic marker for Caol Ila.

**Awards – Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2010 – Best Vatted Malt Award, World Whisky Awards 2010– Best Blended Malt, Malt Maniacs Award 2009 – Best Peated Malt (Daily Drams)**

Chairman's précis: Performed exceptionally well across a variety of competitions with the Malt Maniacs Award 2009 especially noteworthy. This means it beat all other peated malts (including singles) in the sub 50 euro price category entered into the competition in 2009. The good thing to remember is that the one on the shelves in Australia now is the one that the Malt Maniacs judged in 2009 as Big Peat was released in 2009.

Chairman's précis : Very sound whisky and great value for money, especially *if* you're not a single malt snob.



# Feints And Foreshots

## FEINTS AND FORESHOTS

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## ❧ MWSOA EVENTS 2011 ❧

Southern Coast Distillers will be launching their malt range in Feb/March at a MWSOA event. Details TBA

## Non MWSOA EVENTS 2011

Chez Regine Bar, Melbourne - Whisky Education Course

Begins Jan 2011. For more details:

<http://chezreginemelbourne.blogspot.com/>



# Feints And Foreshots

## YULETIDE MUSINGS FROM THE CHAIR

With Chairperson Craig Daniels

### Whisky Awards – Reflections

The dust has finally settled on the Whisky Awards for 2010 and looking back at the awards in both 2010 and 2009, there are two main conclusions; the Award standard of all whiskies was higher (66% of all entries awarded medals) in 2010 and the standard of Australian whiskies was considerably higher.

#### Comparison between 2009 and 2010 – All Malt Whiskies

Year	2009	2010
Total Entries	49	73
Total medals & %	26 (53%)	48 (66%)
Gold & %	3 (6%)	5 (7%)
Silver & %	11 (22%)	18 (25%)
Bronze & %	12 (24%)	25 (34%)

#### Comparison 2009 and 2010 – Scotch Malt Whiskies (including vatted)

Year	2009	2010
Total Entries	40	53
Total medals & %	22 (55%)	39 (74%)
Gold & %	3 (8%)	5 (9%)
Silver & %	9 (23%)	14 (26%)
Bronze & %	12 (30%)	25 (38%)

#### Comparison 2009 and 2010 – Other Malt Whiskies (Australia, Japan & Sweden)

Year	2009	2010
Total Entries	9	20
Total medals & %	2 (22%)	9 (48%)
Gold & %	0	0
Silver & %	2 (22%)	4 (20%)
Bronze & %	0	5 (40%)

**Ok, so what do the numbers above really tell us?** I guess there are two possibilities; either the standard of entries improved or our scoring got easier. I'd like to advance the former as the stronger proposition. The entries in 2009 included more (both in total terms (7) and in percentage terms (14%) of vatted malt whiskies and entry level or supermarket malts, while the very small number of vatted entered into 2010 (2) or (3%) were major "quality brands". This doesn't mean that the supermarket malts are necessarily poor or inferior, however you wouldn't really expect them to shine in a competition where all the whiskies are assessed blind by the same judges, using the same criteria, otherwise why would so many of us find a \$80 single malt preferable to a \$40 vatted malt.



# Feints And Foreshots

## YULETIDE MUSINGS FROM THE CHAIR cont.

With Chairperson Craig Daniels

Secondly, the spread of scores in 2009 (93-71) was wider than in 2010 (92-74) so there wasn't score inflation at the top end in 2010. The number of gold medals (whiskies scoring 89.5 and over) remained remarkably stable across the two competitions with 6% in 2009 compared with 7% in 2010. The Silver category (84.6 to 89.4) was also fairly stable with a slight rise from 22% in 2009 to 25% in 2010. Bronze showed a significant rise (from 24% in 2009 to 34% in 2010). Also in 2010 there were less whiskies in percentage terms that missed out on a medal (34% versus 47% in 2009) and a big cluster of 15 or 21% of whiskies in 2010 in the 78-79 score range, while in 2009 the 'just missed out on a medal' group was only 7 or 14%.

While there may have been some score inflation at the lower end the numbers tend to reinforce the Award impression that the general standard of whiskies had improved rather than our scoring standards slipped.

### Australian Malt Whisky – Breaking Out and Heading in the right direction; Heavenward.

**The really significant outcome of the awards** was the marked improvement in Australian whiskies across the two competitions. In 2009, two out nine Australian whiskies won medals (22%) compared to eight out of eighteen (44%) in 2010. Also it is worth noting that 5 Australian whiskies were in that big cluster just outside the medals all scoring 79.

The other notable thing was that three of the top ten Australian whiskies were first releases from very recently commissioned distilleries. Timboon which was the second highest scoring Australian (86) was remarkable for a three year old as was Southern Coast Cask #002 (85) and the Nant First Release was a classy dram (79). Nant was the highest scoring whisky out of the medals.

## Tasting Notes – The Top Ten Australian Whiskies

### **Hellyers Road NAS Peated 46.2%– Award score 87, Chair's score 85**

No age stated but is at least six years old.

Nose: Grassy, sappy (hints of chlorophyll, irish moss, eucalyptus, thymol) ground peanuts, fireplace ash, tar, honey and popcorn, some fresh cream.

Palate: Warm, peated (tar and rubber, ashes, coal) sweet (honey, nuts and cream). Pretty clean and the wood is balanced and doesn't take over.

Finish: Warming, long, clean, sweet and tarry, lingering 'green' character.

Comment: Interesting malt with a mix of Scottish (tarry peat) and Irish (green, sappy) characters, along with a hint of thymol. Some eucalyptus, burnt nuts and popcorn add an Aussie touch to round out the signature.

### **Timboon Port Cask 3YO First Release 40% - Award score 86, Chair's score 87**

Nose: Attractive and lively berry fruit (raspberries, blueberries, cherries) then drier richer fruit (dates, prunes), mint both fresh and dried, almond meal, fresh milled pine, pine needles, kirsch, wine gums.

Palate: Rich and fruity, fruit leather, berry and plums, stewed fruit and brandy liqueur, some minty oak. Unctuous mouth-feel.

Finish: Fruity, with minty oak wood, sour plums, mint leaves & fruit brandy.

Comment: Exceptional quality and highly individual profile, with breadth and depth. Both the distillate and wood are first class. Develops character in the glass way beyond its years.



# Feints And Foreshots

## YULETIDE MUSINGS FROM THE CHAIR cont.

With Chairperson Craig Daniels

### **Southern Coast Cask #002 First Release 46%** Award score 86, Chair's score 85

Nose: Varnish, polished floorboards, dried mint, mint sauce, fruit cake

Palate: Sweet and sour, mint toffee, rich and rounded

Finish: long with rich toffee, then slightly sour with a woody tail.

Comment: High quality distillate and very good wood. Brilliant opening salvo.

### **Southern Coast Cask #001 First Release 46%** Award score 82, Chair's score 84

Nose: Mint leaves, eucalyptus, pine needles, oak, smoked almonds, pink peppercorns, roast meat and toast, late dry wood.

Palate: Rich with toasted nuts, brioche, bread pudding and dates.

Finish: Mint and eucalyptus, nutty toffee, long and drying, oaky reprise.

Comment: Drier and more wood extracted than Cask # 002, but almost of equal class.

### **Lark Distiller's Selection LD109 46%** Award Score 81, Chair's score 82

Nose: Fruity, burnt nuts, some earth, roast meat, more dried fruit, burnt jam

Palate: Warm and juicy fruitcake, mint, thyme, sweet sherry, fruchocs and leather, slightly tarry jam and a little bit of earth and smoked nuts.

Finish: Warming, slightly short and a tad dry, slightly smokey.

Comment: Nice rounded malt but a little short in the palate and finish.

### **Bakery Hill Double Wood 46%-** Award score 81, Chair's score 81

Nose: Vanilla, pine, toffee, apples and pears

Palate: caramel, toffee, malty, linen, muslin

Finish: woody and drying, hint of ginger

Comment: Pleasant, palatable, but not overly exciting, yet cleaner and better balanced than most previous versions.

### **Smith's Angaston 8YO 40.0%** - Award score 80, Chair's score 84

Nose: Wet & dry straw with cellophane or plastic, lemon barley sugar, confectionery (bon bons, nougat) straw, unripe apples and nashi pear, cream and roast chestnuts.

Palate: Toffee, crème caramel, brioche, malty with some sour fruit.

Finish: Sour fruit chews, sherbet and fruit tingles, drying wood.

Comment: Highly individual and eerily reminiscent of some of the more idiosyncratic Scottish single malts from the Lowlands (Bladnoch, Rosebank) and Highlands (Scapa, Clynelish). I obviously think it a more estimable dram than my fellow judges.



# Feints And Foreshots

## YULETIDE MUSINGS FROM THE CHAIR cont.

With Chairperson Craig Daniels

### **Hellyers Road 8YO 'Original' CS 68.3%** - Award score 80, Chair's score 79

Nose: lemon zest, popcorn, big spirit, fresh and bottled lime juice, creamy and nutty malt peeks out from underneath the spirit and wood.

Palate: Hot spirit, marmalade on toast, lemon butter, lime juice cordial, vine cane sap, some citrus oils.

Finish: Lemon zest, barley sugar honey and cream on toast.

Comment: Nice package, but just too hot to score better. Everything about the distillate and wood is fine, but I'd like to try it as an OB at 50% or 54%.

### **Nant First Release 43%** - Award score 79, Chair's score 80

Nose: Fruit & nuts, hint of sappy wood, apricots and calvados, macerated stone fruits, slight hint of cardboard, lint, muslin/papyrus, wheat bags then gets nuttier.

Palate: medium rich with sour wood, some tannins, nuttiness,

Finish: Starts rich with apricot brandy, then gets slowly drier, more woody with a hint of ginger

Comment: Some flat spots (cardboard, wheat bags) in the nose knocked down the overall score, but it's another impressive effort for a first release.

### **Lark Cask Strength LD119 58.0%** - Award score 79, Chair's score 80.

Nose: Varnish, fresh celery, celeriac, rich meat stock, some grilled meat with a touch of sauerkraut and boiled cabbage.

Palate: A mixture of mint toffee and slightly burnt toffee, some stewed and sour fruit (plums and rhubarb) some boiled veggies, then more burnt toffee.

Finish: Sweet and meaty, then slightly sour and woody.

Comment: The slight hint of sulphur spoiled an otherwise solid package.

If you'd like to compare notes, agree or disagree, drop me a line on [chair@mwsoa.org.au](mailto:chair@mwsoa.org.au)