

FEINTS & FORESHOTS 8

Australia's Latest & Largest Whisky Distillery Launched

Australia's latest and largest whisky venture was launched this week, when the federal member for Braddon TAS, Mr Mark Baker officially opened the Hellyers Road Distillery and Interpretive Centre in Burnie Tasmania.

Mr Baker said the Whisky Tasmania Pty Ltd development would lead to the creation of up to 25 direct jobs, both in the visitors centre, and in bottling, maintenance and management, and another 30 associated jobs.

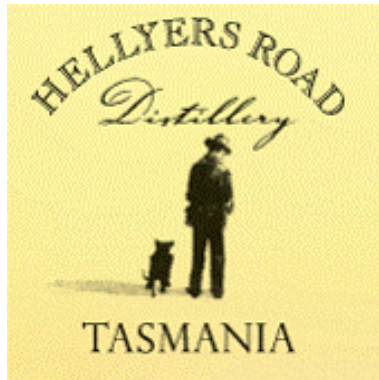
He said the Australian Government had supported the development through two grants totalling over \$840,000.

Commenting on the official opening, Burnie's Mayor, Ald. Alwyn Boyd said, "A tour of the Hellyers Road Distillery is open to all and is a unique opportunity to see a wide range of premium spirits created in the largest distillery in Australia. While there you can also enjoy a meal in their restaurant and their whiskey sampling lounge".

Mr Baker went onto congratulate general manager Laurie House and the Board of Beta Milk, the owners of Whisky Tasmania, on bringing the project to fruition.

"While today marks the official opening of the Hellyers Road Distillery Interpretive Centre it is also the culmination of years of hard work by Laurie House and the Board of Beta Milk," he said.

At the launch, Hellyers Road also announced their new range of spirits:



Southern Fire Single Malt Whisky ~ for export only

Southern Lights Vodka ~ a premium grade grain vodka

Hellyers Road Single Malt Whisky ~ three type of Bourbon wood matured whisky: Original, Slightly Peated & Peated

Hellyers Road Distillers Choice Single Malt Whisky ~ Hand bottled 60 % cask strength whisky.

For more information go to to www.hellyersroaddistillery.com.au

Maxxium Announces New Whisky Brand Manager

Tim Grosser, Senior Brand Manager for Maxxium Australia, has announced that Mr Aren Springvloed is to be the new brand ambassador for the Edrington group of companies. Springvloed is to take over from the well liked Andrew Skehan, who is taking on a senior marketing role within Maxxium Australia.

Speaking from his Sydney headquarters, Grosser said that, "we take the role of the Brand Ambassador very seriously, as it is a critical feature of our whisky portfolio".

Springvloed comes to the company with over 12 years impressive experience in the liquor industry, ranging from Account Manager at Maxxium, Bar Management in Scotland & Ireland, and bartending all over the world.

He was Nominated for Bartender of the Year (Bartender Magazine, Aus) '03, (AHA, Aus) '02. (Class Magazine, UK) '02, (Theme Magazine, UK) '02, 4th Place London Bar show Cocktail Competition '02

WHISKY SCANDEL HITS AUSTRALIA

Breaking news as reported in the *The Australian* of 18th September : An American accountant who tipped investors into a whisky tax minimisation scheme has been caught up in the Operation Wickenby tax fraud and money laundering investigation.

New York-born Jeffrey Leigh Conklin, who lives on the NSW north coast, was allegedly paid hundreds of thousands of dollars, which was sent to overseas trusts and bank accounts, without declaring it as income to the Australian Taxation Office.

It is understood the whisky scheme ran for three years. In 1999, it involved 20 investors who claimed \$18 million in tax deductions.

Mr Seller, a lawyer with Abbott Tout in Sydney, said the cash invested was spent on distilling whisky in Scotland and that in time the product would have matured and would be ready to be sold on the retail market.

Jennifer Sexton and Simon Kearney



MALT WHISKY SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA
INCORPORATED

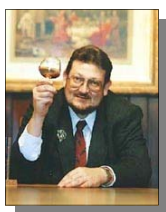
**Australia's 3rd Malt Whisky Convention
August, Melbourne 2007**

FEINTS & FORE- SHOTS 8

Maximising the enjoyment of your dram Part I

Musings from the Chair

What's a definition of a malt tragic? I guess its someone who has a passion for a particular field but doesn't hold a job in the field or has no professional standing in the field of fandom, study or enquiry. Hence our Prime Minister is happy to be known as a cricket tragic. A good starting point for malt tragicdom is not an addiction to alcohol, god forfend, but an abiding interest in all topics and minutiae associated with the hallowed dram, from the mainstream to the truly esoteric. To provide some guidance to others embarking on the wonderful malt exploration journey, the following articles are designed to help you get the most out of your dram of the world's most noble and satisfying spirit.



Article 1: Does your glass affect your dram?

You are well on your way to malt tragicdom, when you actually start to think about the glassware you use when you choose to have a whisky and whether you make a decision to discriminate between how you serve a malt and how you serve a blend. In a philosophical sense you're looking at whether form follows function and whether form can augment function. I mean people argue that way about any article designed for use by humans from hand held blenders to automobile seats and on a macro scale about built spaces from buildings to cities, so why not the glass in which you serve your malt whisky.

I suppose there are two very basic questions that anyone should ask.

Feints & Foreshots...The vaguely official organ of the Malt Whisky Society of Australia, the editor is The Big G, contact: graham@theoddwhiskycoy.com.au, and all errors & omissions are expected. Apologies to all authors of the news articles...but we do love your work!

Does the glass matter and if it does, why is that the case or is there any rational reason why it should?

Do you pay any attention to the glassware you choose when you come home from work and pour yourself a pre-prandial dram or even a digestif? And does it really matter what glass you nose and taste from?

Depending on your purpose you may choose a different glass for judging and evaluation than for enjoyment. Basically the theory is the same - you need a glass that has a bowl shape - this does two things the bowl allows the spirit to have a big exposure to air and to trap the volatiles that come off first and fast so you can smell them before they dissipate into the ambient atmosphere.

Traditional whisky tumblers are primarily designed to reduce the nose on a whisky and work well with a blend with water or soda. They are primarily designed for a relatively long drink rather than to enhance the evaluation. Some also believe that the straight sides are about allowing the aromas to dissipate quickly which would make sense if you're trying to hide a relatively poor spirit, which was probably the case in Prohibition days, but is counter-productive if you've spent \$100 or more on a good single malt and want to savour the experience.

As you can see from the photos, I have a whole stack of different glasses, but I find myself drawn to a small core which I find useful. In the accompanying photos my favourite glass for enjoyment is the Photo 1: Brandy Balloon Glass D which is light, a nice size, good quality with a nice fine rim and affords a reasonable sensory experience with 30ml or so.

For this reason, I very rarely use any of the big balloons for anything as it's too easy to pour yourself a triple without intending to.

As I do a lot of my malt judging with 10-15ml (both your nose and palate get tired after even a small amount of alcohol so if you're evaluating 8 whiskies in a session using a smaller glass makes sense, I use a small brandy balloon (Photo 1 Glass B) or the Glenmorangie/Ardbeg glass (Photo 2 Glass D) as it delivers a reasonable surface area to volume ratio but doesn't let the spirit dissipate too quickly. The little lid is useful if evaluating 6 to 8 whiskies at a time as it allows focus on the whisky in hand without other vapours intruding. I use the small balloons for the Malt Maniacs Awards primarily because I have enough to be able to put 10-12 whiskies on the table at one time.

So basically any glass that has a narrower opening than the diameter of the bowl should work; the rest is personal preference. The slightly flared lip on the Riedel glass and the Australian Brandy snifter gives good palate delivery, but the straight sides on the Riedel doesn't really produce the concentration of aromatics in the head space of the other more efficacious styles.

I want a glass that will give me a reasonable surface area to volume ratio so the whisky doesn't go flat too quickly and allows the volatiles to come off relatively slowly. Then I like it to feel good in the hand and thirdly it should have a nice fine rim for improved palate delivery.

Part II - Coming Next Issue - "How do you measure value for money when choosing a malt?"

Abstract: you've read all the books from Michael Jackson to Jim Murray with the odd side trip to Thierry Benitah or Tucek and Lamond, but the one thing they never tell you is how much the whisky they score 90 actually costs. Can anyone come up with a system that allows "value for money" to be reliably measured? Is there such a beastie as a Quality Price Ratio?

**Craig Daniels,
Chair MWSOA**



The Brandy Balloon Style...

A ~175ml crystal - nice but too dinky

B ~ 190ml crystal - my preferred choice for blind evaluation **Rank 4 ~ 78pts**

C ~ 210ml glass - does a job but not a favourite

D ~ 240ml crystal (not sure of the brand - looks like a mini Bormioli or Schott Zweisel) my favourite dramming glass at home **Rank 3 ~ 79pts**

E ~ 250ml crystal (Bohemia Claudia 22% lead crystal) - Earls of Zetland Trophy glass - good but a bit clunky

F ~ 280ml glass - too chunky and I hate the rim

G ~ 300ml crystal - very nice bowl shape and works very well for nosing but the short stem is a trap for fingers

H ~ 350ml glass - too clunky

I ~ 390ml crystal - OK but too big for everyday purposes

J ~ 400ml glass - David McCoy "The Scotch Doc" glass. Weighs a ton and I hate the wide lip. Not used for evaluation or recreation



Odds & Sods Glassware...

A ~ short stem version of the Glenmorangie glass identical bowl shape and capacity 120 ml (4fl oz)

B ~ Arcoroc Viticole Sherry Copita 4 fl oz - SMWS (Australia) tasting glass - makes a half nip look like a decent drink. Works well with OP's, but opening is a bit on the small side

C ~ Australian style brandy snifter with flared lip 125ml . Works well all round - very solid performer especially for evaluation **Rank 1 ~ 84pts**

D ~ Ardbeg/Glenmorangie style tulip with straight chimney style opening - lid is a bonus when evaluating lots of whiskies. 120ml **Rank 2 ~ 83pts**

E ~ Riedel malt whisky glass 12 fl oz 200ml - lip is good for delivery, but nose is let down by lack of headspace **Rank 5 ~ 77pts**

F ~ ISO wine taster - ranks after C & D/A **Rank 7 ~ 75pts**

G ~ Bowmore thistle glass - OK but 15ml of spirits gets lost - better for recreation rather than evaluation

H ~ Balvenie straight sided tumbler - befits whisky and soda

Apart from the Riedel, Balvenie tumbler, Bohemia Claudia and Arcoroc Viticole, all the others were purchased in second hand and "opportunity" shops. I would spend at least three Saturday mornings a year scouring these places for little brandy balloons and any of the snifter style glasses.

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Derbidge Responds

I read with amusement - and slight confusion - Paul Rasmussen's article on Macallan in Feints & Foreshots No. 7, in particular his singling me out as "being among the most severe of the Australian critics" regarding Macallan's Fine Oak range of whiskies.

My confusion stems from the fact that I've only committed to print one review/article of Macallan on this subject. This was a direct comparison of Macallan's "traditional" 12 year old sherried expression with the new-at-the-time 12 year old Fine Oak expression. The article was posted on Australian Gourmet Pages and distributed to all subscribers in June 2005. Interested readers can view the entire article at <http://www.classic.com.au/wizard/Macallan.htm>

The purpose of my article at that time was simply to compare the 12 year old sherried version with the 12 year old Fine Oak version and to qualify which was the better dram. In essence this would be no more sinister than comparing Glenmorangie's Port Wood Finish with their Madeira Wood Finish and saying which one I liked the most. There's no harm in anyone comparing two whiskies and stating which one they prefer.

Without meaning to sound like a jilted critic, I believe the good doctor has drawn a very long bow in his extrapolation of my thoughts on Macallan. Contrary to Paul's inference that folk such as myself do not approach the Fine Oak range with an open mind, I stated twice in the article that I endeavoured to shed the baggage and judge the Fine Oak expression on its own merits. And this is where my confusion with Paul's comments stems from - my review of the Fine Oak 12yo was generally positive: "It was still a pleasant nose and as attractive as most going around Speyside." "A perfectly good palate in its own right." "It must be said that the Fine Oak was still a pleasant whisky, and was reasonably well crafted."

Granted, I concluded by stating that I preferred the sherried version to the Fine Oak version. (An opinion still shared by many, including some notable MWSoA colleagues!). I scored the Fine

Oak version at 7.3 and the sherried version at 7.85. Ironically, I note that my scores resemble very closely the corresponding scores that Paul presents in his Feints & Foreshots article: The Fine Oak 12yo scored 7.4 and the cask-strength sherried version (generally acknowledged as being around 10 years old) scored 7.9! With a difference in scores of 0.1 and 0.05 respectively, I'd suggest we're talking the same language.

At the time I contributed my article to AGP, Macallan was copping an enormous amount of flak from whisky enthusiasts around the world



for the way they were marketing their Fine Oak range. Comments from some quarters were particularly vitriolic, but the majority of opinions expressed concerned themselves with Macallan's apparent back-flip in marketing 100% sherry-matured malt, rather than to actually focus on the quality of the Fine Oak range. In this respect, my article went against the trend. The global sentiment at the time could be likened to what might occur if Kentucky Fried Chicken suddenly announced they were only going to use nine secret herbs and spices, but then go on to tell us their chicken would taste better than it did with eleven. And what if some select markets were to continue to get all eleven spices, whilst some markets, including Australia, were to get the watered down version? The analogy is an accurate description of the context and mood in the malt community at the time, yet I don't believe my article bought into that side of the debate.

I enjoyed Paul's amusing comments on my age. Yes, when

Macallan's famed 1976 vintage was filled into cask, I was a mere three years old. However, when it was subsequently bottled as an 18 year old in 1994, I was 21 and able to pick and enjoy a good dram. I guess I'm lucky that I fell in love with malt whisky at a (relatively) early age. But no matter how young we were or how old we become, a bottle of 18 year old whisky remains a bottle of 18 year old whisky, and it's there for all of us to return to and learn what that distillery was doing at the time the cask went to the bottling plant. Still, whether I'm now 33 or 63, I've been enjoying malt whisky passionately for 12 years, and sherried Macallans for 11 of those years. So when sherried Macallans have been around for 92% of your whisky-drinking life and are then suddenly removed from your local market, I believe one is reasonably entitled "to be writing about sherried Macallans with 'Sepia-toned, when I was a boy' anachronisms"!

Given my input and activities in the malt whisky community here in Australia, I regularly liaise and encounter the good folks at Maxxium. So it's only fair I be able to put Paul's reference to me in context, as well as have my own views accurately on the record: Yes, I'm disappointed that I can't walk into my local bottleshop and buy a sherried Macallan anymore. But that doesn't mean I'm a critic of the Fine Oak range. (I'm also disappointed I can't walk into my local bottleshop and buy a Black Bowmore for \$250, but that's another story!) I still believe Macallan make great quality whisky, and it's clearly inherent in the new-make spirit before it even finds its way into oak - be it sherry or bourbon wood. I've sampled new-make Macallan straight off the stills, I've tried their Elegancia expression, and I've enjoyed several bottlings of single-cask Macallans from ex-bourbon casks. (Three from the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, and a beauty from Douglas Laing's Old Malt Cask range). As the bloke responsible for deciding which whiskies the SMWS should bring into Australia, I've also had a few other Macallan samples pass by my desk (and my kidneys). I concluded many years ago that good whisky is good whisky - no matter how it's badged.

**Slainte Mhath,
Andrew Derbidge**

Whisky News

SINGLE MALT.tv

The world's first internet television channel dedicated to single malt Scotch whisky launches this month. Singlemalt.tv, the brainchild of Hollywood film producer Rob Draper, will offer news, features and specialist programmes. The 24-hour channel, hosted by whisky expert Charlie MacLean, aims to tap into the growing worldwide interest in single malts.



Whisky – the 12 tastes of single malt perfection

Smoky, honey, body, sweetness, medicinal, tobacco, spicy, winey, nutty, malty, fruity and floral.

After sampling malt whiskies at almost 100 Scottish distilleries, Dr David Wishart is still standing -- and his classification has won official endorsement from the Scotch Whisky Industry.

"The industry has endorsed it," Wishart said.

It appears this month in his book "Whisky Classified: Choosing Single Malts by Flavour", published in seven languages.

"I went through well over 1,000 tasting notes by other whisky writers and publications," he said.

Ladybank: Members Only Distillery

James Thomson is the man behind Ladybank. His previous career in marketing whisky showed him that "what consumers like is to get close to the producer. You can't do that when staff are working for large companies. So I asked myself how I could fill that disconnect." His solution? "Let's build a distillery for members only."

There will, says Thomson, be a maximum of 1,250 members. He anticipates that distillation will begin at the end of 2007. The first tranche of 300 memberships, priced at £1,850 for UK residents, was sold by 2003; a second tranche of 250 is part-sold at present, though the price has now risen to £3,250 for UK residents. Overseas members are welcome and pay a lower membership charge (€3,950 or \$4,750), on the basis that they are likely to use the distillery facilities less. There is no annual fee for members thus far, though Thomson hasn't ruled out instituting one for those who join later.

Andrew Jefford

Whisky's No 1 Woman

A distillery manager has become the first woman to join the whisky industry's powerful governing body in their 132-year history.

Polly MacDonald, 23, has been voted on to the Malt Distillers Association of Scotland management committee.

Tomatin Distillery production manager Polly, who graduated from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, hopes it will pave the way for more women to enter the traditionally male-dominated world of whisky.

At the Inverness-shire plant, Polly supervises the production of more than two million litres per year with a team of three mash-men, four still-men and a quality control analyst.

She oversees the Antiquary range of blended whisky and Tomatin's 12-year-old and 15-year old single malts.

Australian wines inspire new whisky range

One of Scotland's oldest family firms has launched a range of branded whiskies it hopes will revolutionise the way drinkers perceive and buy the spirit. Fife-based Wemyss Development Company, is launching three blended whiskies: The Peat Chimney, The Spice King and The Smooth Gentleman.

Wemyss chairman William Wemyss said the aim is to do for the Scotch whisky industry what putting the grape variety on the label did for Australian wines. He said: "There is so much terminology within the industry - vatted, blended and single malt - that it is often very confusing for the consumer.

"What we are trying to do is to use what the Australian wine industry has learned by clearly telling the consumer what is in the bottle.

William Lyons

Ed...I wonder how the boys at JMR think about this?

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Diageo Brands Claim 66 Medals and 3 Trophies at the 2006 International Wine and Spirit Competition

Diageo, the world's leading spirits, beer and wine company, announced today that it has received 66 medals and 3 trophies at the prestigious International Wine and Spirit Competition. The annual event, which was held over the course of four months, hosted the most renowned food and beverage professionals who sampled products across several different drinks categories in a blind tasting.

Diageo's beverage portfolio received numerous accolades from the judge's panel collecting a total of 13 Gold/Best in Class, 1 Gold, 8 Silver/Best in Class, 34 Silver and 10 Bronze medals. Diageo Scotch whiskies performed exceptionally well garnering three trophies, Blended Scotch Whisky, Single Malt Scotch Whisky (15 years & under) and Single Malt Scotch Whisky (over 15 years).

Some of the standout winners included...

TROPHIES

Glenkinchie DE 1991

Talisker 18 Year

GOLDS

Johnnie Walker Green Label 15 YO (Dalwhinnie Distillers Edition Clynelish 14

Talisker Distillers Edition

Talisker 10 Year Old

Talisker 18 Year Old

Talisker 25 Year Old *

Lagavulin Distillery Edition 1989

Glenkinchie The Distillers Edition 1991

* Convalmore 28 Year Old

SILVERS

Brechin 28 Year Old

Caol Ila 18 Year Old

Caol Ila Cask Strength

Johnnie Walker Red Label

Johnnie Walker Black Label 12 YO

Johnnie Walker Blue Label

Lagavulin 16 Year Old

BRONZES

Bushmills 16 YO Malt

Cragganmore 12 Year Old



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Ask The Good Doctor?



Dear Dr Paul,

*I'm having trouble
in understanding
why some
maturing spirits
alcohol strength
rises and some fall*

over time?

Constance E Little, Swan Reach

Well Constance, the alcoholic strength doesn't rise as such, it just reduces less under some conditions and the red herring here is the temperature ! The deal is all about vapour pressure.

If conditions are damp, the air is saturated with water vapour and therefore the water in the barrels doesn't evaporate off (in fact it does but as fast as one molecule leaves, another from the air condenses back in to maintain an equilibrium, so the net effect is no loss of water). However, the amount of alcohol in the air is low if the cellar is well ventilated so alcohol boils off quite readily and hence the abv in the barrel falls.

If the cellar is dry, then both water and alcohol evaporate off quite happily, the net effect is that you lose alcohol but you also lose some water too so the abv reduces less.

If you were able to saturate the air with ethanol vapour, I guess you could get just the water to evaporate off and therefore cause the abv to rise.

Of course, in all these examples your total volume in the barrel will reduce but it's a case of which component you lose...the alcohol, the water, or both.

Does it make more sense now ?

Members Have Their Say!

Imagine running a few kms in the desert (Adelaide) and the same distance in the tropics (Cairns). Your body will sweat a lot but you'd be dripping wet in Cairns and just have the odd bead in Adelaide because the sweat evaporates off much faster in dry Adelaide air but can't evaporate off in the wet Cairns air.

However, spray some aftershave on your skin in either place and it evaporates off quite happily as the air has no alcohol in it.

Cheers, Dr Paul.

Dear Graham,

Thankyou for F&F no 7.

In a note to Dr Paul, we have experienced TCA in spirits and have found it in Malt Whisky, Bourbon and Brandy. As a part of my presentations a sample of cork tainted whisky is passed around for attendees to nose!

We welcome Melbourne as the venue for the 3rd MWSOA Convention next year.

The dates have been passed onto our Head Office and Glenfarclas.

Best wishes,

Jim Kelly

Life Member Replies...

Hi All,

Sorry for the delayed / belated thank-you for the life membership / wooden platter / nice write up in F&F #7. It was a great 4 1/2 years down under, and the last couple of weekends made me realize how much I'm going to miss getting together with the usual suspects.

We've been trying to get our new house (new to us) ready for occupancy, and most days have seen several work trucks in the yard - painters, plumbers, roofers, carpet guys, etc. Hopefully we'll get the first part of our stuff moved in next week, and then I'll have to go and recover what remains of my scotch collection from the various repositories around town. We do have a reasonable guest room/bath/rec room on the lowest level, so we hope some of you will be able to make the trip over for a visit sometime. Take care...Tim Tibbetts

"Corio! Corio!

**If you want a little bit
of what the other fellows got
why not try Corio"**

I was recently in the US doing business with a company that was founded by an American gentleman who flew planes in the second war and was based in Queensland.

He told some lovely stories about Corio Whisky. I am now in search of a bottle to send to him but it seems that it is no longer made or at least is not stocked by the outlets I have tried.

Can you help me find such a bottle. I would be most grateful for any assistance you can offer.

Cheers,

Amanda

Ed...can anyone help?

**And Another New Distillery
Is Set For Tassie!**

Graham, Thanks for the invitation. I'm heading to Scotland end of next week to visit a number of distilleries to get some inspiration for the Nant Distillery in Tasmania so I won't be around for the Brisbane Tasting. The renovation of the Old Mill and whisky production facility at Nant will commence in October and we hope to have production come on line in March/April next year. We have also included a Visitors Centre and Whisky Bar (150 to choose from) to make the experience complete.

Look forward to inviting you and the MWSA down for a dinner or something in the New Year.

Cheers,

Keith Batt

Ed...do tell us more!

The Back Page

Whisky Podcasting Arrives!

Don't know what we are talking about? Well podcasting is the new way of listening to radio programmes on your computer. And you've guessed it, WhiskyCast is all about our favourite tippie from an American perspective. The website is pretty basic, but you have to remember its about the spoken work not the printed variety.



WHISKYCAST

The Cask-Strength Podcast from the charming, yet regrettably dry town of Haddonfield, New Jersey

<http://www.whiskycast.com/>

An approved Malt Maniacs Website!

Beware of Chinese Spirits!

Writing about spirits on a regular basis and always being interested to try something new, I recently opted for a bottle of Chinese 'white wine', a euphemism for very potent, clear rice spirit (52% a/v). Not sold by the glass but only by the bottle, my curiosity nevertheless won out and I ordered one, admittedly over the loud and insistent objections of the restaurateur.

I knew better! I grew up with strong spirits, (Swiss spirits are generally around 50% a/vol) so this didn't frighten me at all. The bottle arrived at the table, was opened with much oohing and aahing from the many tables nearby, occupied by Chinese customers, and everyone watched closely as I first sipped, then threw the first nip of spirit back, finishing with a contented sigh.

It had been worthwhile! Aromas of cleaning fluids and turpentine mixed with rotten durian were confirmed on the palate and the only redeeming feature was that I could easily follow the spirit's body-numbing progression through my gut. Obviously my palate was not yet attuned to the taste... Not wanting to be considered a 'wooz' I

braved another couple of shots, realising that this had nothing to do with Ying and Yang but more with Fling and Bang. I almost managed to focus on the bill (and a generous tip, of course) before retreating to my wife's car, eminently grateful for a lift home, although it was rather cold as she insisted on having all the windows open. Interestingly this was the 'good' one (spell that expensive at \$ 148 per bottle) and they also stocked a 'cheap' version (\$16.50 per bottle).

I'd hate to think what the cheap one would do to you as I nursed a thousand little dwarfs in my head who all wanted to sit with only one chair between them for two days and my trusted hangover cure, a Berocca and Aspalgin thickshake, had absolutely no effect.

This Chinese specialty is made by the Wu Liangye Yibin Company and although millions of Chinese drink it with no obvious side effects, I suggest that if you ever see this clear white bottle with the red and gold label you run a mile!

Franz Scheurer

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The Value Of A Drink

"Sometimes when I reflect back on all the wine I drink I feel shame Then I look into the glass and think about the workers in the vineyards and all of their hopes and dreams . If I didn't drink this wine, they might be out of work and their dreams would be shattered. Then I say to myself, "It is better that I drink this wine and let their dreams come true than be selfish and worry about my liver."

~ Jack Handy

"I feel sorry for people who don't drink. When they wake up in the morning, that's as good as they're going to feel all day."

~Frank Sinatra

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may create the illusion that you are tougher, smarter, faster and better looking than most people.

"When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading."

~ Henny Youngman

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may lead you to think people are laughing WITH you.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol is a major factor in dancing like a retard.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may make you think you are whispering when you are not



BRITAIN'S oldest person has died at the age of 111.

Emmeline Brice put her long life down to good food and a whisky last thing at night.

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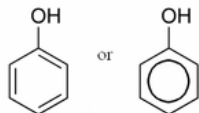
The Whiskies

Monkey Shoulder, Bowmore 17, Bowmore Darkest, Highland Park 18, MacLeod "As we get it".

Our warmest thanks to Jon Howells and Suntory Australia for supporting the Society through the provision of the Bowmores; David Baker from the Bakery Hill Distillery for providing the Bakery Hill Peated Cask Strength; and Ken Bromfield from Barmania for providing the MacLeod 8.

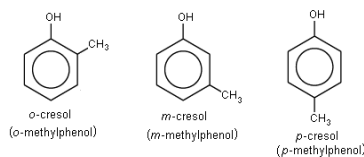
The Chemistry

The cornerstone of peat at the chemical/molecular level is phenol, a highly reactive chemical which is characterized by its burning taste, sweet bland aroma; and in pure form an ability to rapidly denature proteins (all of your body except for your bones). Phenol is not to be messed with: a vapour exposure level above 5 parts per million (ppm) per 8 hours not considered safe. Don't get concerned though that your favourite Islay is slowly killing you, ppm is measured in SI units (litres), so you are a long way from 5 or 50 ppm in a glass.

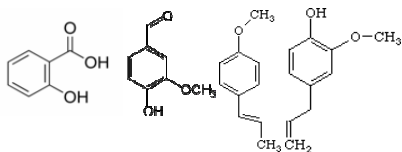


The simplest derivatives of phenol are the three cresol variants, commonly found in coal tar and petroleum products.

Then come a whole range of



monophenols with a range of different side groups, the names of which you will be familiar with (left to right: aspirin, vanillin, anise, clove)



The trend in these monophenols is that the taste and aroma generally become sharper, more spicy and complex as the phenol ring is decorated with more side groups.

A raft of polyphenols are the next level

Tasting Report with Paul Rasmussen "When too much peat is barley enough"

of complexity and there are simply too many to present.

Phenol in peat comes from decaying vegetation in bogs, with mosses and lichens comprising the topmost layer, grading down to petrified mud at the bottom. The bog is like a time capsule of decaying vegetation from the local area and no two bogs are exactly the same. The degree of phenolic contents in many plants is surprisingly high, with an example like oregano being 60-80% polyphenol (thymol).

Phenolic compounds are also not surprisingly found in wood, although the range is narrower (since we are talking about a single species of tree). Phenolic compounds leached from barrels tend to be more complex than simple and vary noticeably between different types of oak (white versus dark oak).

In general the simple phenol derivatives in peated whisky are extracted from peat, whilst the more complex phenolics come from both the peat and the wood. What should be obvious at this point is that there is a perfectly logical explanation for why the many descriptors of taste and aroma in peated whiskies are as they are (rubber, oil, rope, tar, disinfectants). It comes down to the chemicals swimming around inside the glass.

The Music

In a vain attempt to generalize about good peated whiskies, I proposed the following musical analogy.

Wood: contributes the notes (high, middle, low)

Grain: contributes the rhythm (dictates consistency and background)

Spirit: contributes the tempo (aggressive and fast or integrated and slow)

Peat: contributes the soul (unique component that adds depth)

The Tasting Results

Crowd favorite was the **Highland Park 18**, characterized by a great integration between the wood and peat, and maybe the fanatical way HP deal with their peat to try and ensure consistency really does work. Judges favorite was the **Bowmore Darkest**, a whisky that had a little too much of everything and yet still held it all together.

The tearaway winner of the song competition was the **MacLeod 8 "As we get it"**, alternatively being described as most reminiscent of *The Ring* (Wagner), *Thunderstruck* (AC/DC), and *Comfortably Numb* (Pink Floyd [RIP Syd Barrett]) among other classic songs. The whiskies were an excellent set to examine the impact of peat and wood on

the product.

The **Monkey Shoulder** was quite oily then acid in the mouth, with fatty potato chip notes

on the nose, counterbalanced by a lemon drop/orange blossom fruitiness. Quite woody (7.65/10)

The **Bowmore 17** was as bright as ever, bursting with aggressive florals (geranium, violet, lavender), softened by tropical fruit characters (mango, guava, nectar) and underpinned by that metallic taste which some love and some don't. The peat hung around quite a long time in the finish before burning out (8.5/10).

The **Bowmore Darkest** had everything, including caramel, and this is one of the few times I will say "the caramel really worked". The gravy/vegemite flavours of the caramel filled a nice hole in the flavour profile between sweet (red berries, cinnamon, date), spicy (menthol, mint toffee, clove), salty, and sour (bitter herbs). There was a real waxiness on the nose and an unpredictable aspirin hit in the smoky finish. For hedonists (8.6/100).

The current version of the **Highland Park 18** is a Rolls Royce whisky. Really well integrated right thru the palate with a natural progression from toffee apple sweetness, to the cider, cinnamon, orange and caramel richness, into the fruitcake; and off onto the long dry peaty finish. Class. Should give most overpriced cognacs a run for their money. (8.4/10).

What difference does a cask make? The current **single barrel peated C/S Bakery Hill** maintained what was great about the previous version, a straightforward and just plain good white oak profile (mint, syrup, glycerol, vanilla) balancing off some serious peat smoke but adding a little more savouriness (hot buttered popcorn). Under the radar good (8.3/100).

We have seen this **MacLeod 8** before but tasted it in isolation. Trying it against the other peated whiskies in what was strong competition had one immediate effect, it made up our minds that this must come from Ardbeg not Caol Ila. This is a peat purists malt. Lighter in colour than the Ardbeg 10, in this whisky there was little or anything tugging at the basic taste drivers extracted from the peat. Very clean and seaside with some ozone and fresh rainwater notes, oily and slick in the mouth with glycerol and machine oil, traces of white oak with coriander and some cream; but shot through with an unmistakable smoky, bicycle tire peatiness (8.4/10).

Thanks Go to Craig Daniels and Martin Brackman-Shaw, co-presenters, and all the tasters who made the afternoon a lively occasion. Pictures of chemical structures are from the following free internet source (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

