



MY KEY TO WHISKY

By CLAIRE NICOLL

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FOREWORD

By CLAIRE NICOLL

From a young age I was always intrigued by the distinct aromas of Scotland's most famous drink.

Having grown up as the daughter of a Scottish publican, it was only natural that I would become familiar with the various names of the malts and their distilleries that adorned the walls of my parents bar the Cross Keys.

When I was old enough (honestly!) I began to explore the variety of flavours that were produced from these magical looking bottles with their wonderful Celtic names.

As I have grown older and now run my family's bar, I have had the fortune to visit many of our countries distilleries and fully appreciate the subtle changes in flavour that come from the barrel, region, water, malting or other parts the distillation process can bring about.

The following are my notes and the Key's to Scotland's malts. Enjoy.





AROMAS & FLAVOURS

A QUICK GUIDE TO TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK

FRUITY: *(Alcohol Formed at Fermentation and at Maturation)*

Apple, Pear, Cherry, Stewed Fruit, Dried Fruit, Tinned Fruit, Citrus

Whiskies include: Glendronach, Glengoyne, Old Pulteney, Arran, Linkwood

FLORAL: *(Chemicals Formed at Fermentation and Maturation)*

Lavender, Scented, Honey, Heather

Whiskies include: Cardhu, Glenmorangie, Scapa, Glenkinchie

GRASSY:

Fresh cut, Dried grass, Mint, Straw, Tea, Dried Herbs

Whiskies include: Glenlossie, Auchroisk

WOODY: *(Relating to the Oak)*

Pencil Shavings, Sandlewood, Cigars

Whiskies include: Laphroaig triple wood, Lagavulin, Kilchoman

SWEET: *(Short Fermentation)*

Toffee, Vanilla, Caramel, Crème Brûlé, Molasses

Whiskies include: Dalmore, The Balvenie, Bruichladdich 21, Glenfarclas

SPICE: *(From the Oak in Maturation)*

Cinnamon, Pepper, 5 Spice, Liquorice,

Whiskies include: Talisker, Mortlach, Laphroaig, Highland Park

OILY: *(Longer Fermentation and Slow Distillation)*

Creamy, Silky, Butter, Waxy, Beeswax

Whiskies include: Clynelish, Springbank, Jura, Glengyle

NUTS: *(From Fermentation and Oak Casks)*

Almonds, Hazelnuts, Walnut

Whiskies include: Fettercairn, Cragganmore, Balblair, Longmorn, Edradour

PEATY: *(Where Peat is used to dry the Barley, Usually Coastal)*

Medicinal, Iodine, TCP

Whiskies include: Laphroaig, Caol Ila, Bruichladdich Octomore 167ppm, Ardbeg

SMOKY: *(Peat used to dry the Barley)*

Tobacco, Tar, Fireworks

Whiskies include: Lagavulin 16 year old, Smokehead, Kilchoman

MARITIME:

Brine, Seaweed, Salty

Whiskies include: GlenScotia, Springbank, Old Pulteney

GRAIN:

Porridge, Oats, Biscuits, Cakes, Cereal, Toast

Whiskies include: Glengoyne Tea pot dram, Benromach

MALT: *(Short Fermentation):*

Hops, Horricks, Ovaltine, Malt, Sugar Puffs

Whiskies include: Knockdhu, Singleton, Deanston 12

VINOUS: *(Relating to Wine)*

White or Red, Port, Brandy, Maderia, Sherry

Whiskies include: Glendronach 12, Glentauchers, Mortlach, The Macallan

THE PROCESS OF MALT WHISKY MAKING - STEP ONE, TWO & THREE

MALTING MASHING & FERMENTATION

THE MALTING:

After the barley is grown it is transported to the malting houses where they soak and dry the barley.

Peat can be used to dry the barley in a kiln resulting in a smoky malt i.e. Lagavulin.

A clean hot air dries the barley for un-peated malts i.e. Glengoyne.

The barley is then transported to the distillery, (only a few do the process themselves including: Laphroaig, Bowmore, Kilchomen, Highland Park, The Balvenie & Benriach).

THE MASHING:

The distillery will grind and mill the barley to a rough flour called 'grist' this is then added to hot water in what's called a "mash tun".

This is done in three stages using different temperature hot water; 1st stage at 60°C, 2nd stage at 72°C and 3rd stage at 88°C

The water dissolves the starch, which in turn converts into sugars known as a 'Wort' (sweet barley water).

A fast mashing process will result in a maltier whisky whilst a slow mashing results in a clearer whisky.

The residue husks left behind are called 'draff' which will often be recycled and used as cattle feed.

THE FERMENTATION:

Wort is then cooled and poured into 'washbacks' which are large cylinders that are usually made from Oregon pine, larch and stainless steel.

The distiller will then add yeast to convert the sugars from the barley into carbon dioxide and alcohol, where the liquid will mostly have sweet and floral flavours.

When this fermentation process is close to completion the distiller will consider allowing this to continue for up to 48-60 hours longer, this extra time can give a lighter fruitier taste to the spirit as can be found in both Glengoyne and Scapa.



THE PROCESS OF MALT WHISKY MAKING - STEP FOUR

DISTILLATION

THE DISTILLATION:

The wash now resembles a beer and will roughly contain 8% alcohol. The first distillation will take place in the large “wash still” where all the chemicals are separated from the yeast at a temperature of 78°C.

The alcohols then vapourises and rise up the neck of the copper still along the ‘lyne arm’ and into the condenser.

The shape and length of the still can make a significant difference in the whisky, for instance a tall neck copper still will produce a finer, lighter spirit such as a Glenmorangie. A shorter still will produce a richer fuller spirit like the Macallan.

After this process the spirit is now around 17% alcohol and is sometime called the ‘low wines’.

The second distillation sees the liquid flow into the ‘spirit still’ for final distillation, the spirit flows through the ‘spirit safe’ while the stillman will observe and monitor the strength and quality of the spirit.

Some whiskies are Triple Distilled such as Auchentoshan & Springbank.

The middle cut is collected and is considered to be the best part of the spirit. The first cut of the spirit is strongest and contains impurities so this will go back for re-distillation.

When the spirit it reaches the required strength and quality the stillman diverts the spirit into the ‘spirit receiver’ located towards the end of the spirit run where the temperature in the still is increased.

This causes the alcohol to be weakened to around 60% and the clear spirit is then transported to the filling store to be cooled and transported into the distillery vats awaiting transfer into their chosen casks.



THE PROCESS OF MALT WHISKY MAKING - STEP FIVE

MATURATION

THE MATURATION:

Bourbon casks from the USA are imported to Scotland and are put together in the 'cooperage' then charred for extra flavour. The raw spirit is now put into wooden casks.

Depending on the flavour the distiller is trying to achieve these casks may have previously used for bourbon, sherry, wine, previous whisky, or new wood.

Different woods will also alter the colour for example oak wood is best to help the spirit to appear lighter whilst an ex-bourbon cask is less porous and will be used to produce a deeper colour such as Laphroaig, Ardbeg and Glenmorangie.

There are a few distilleries that choose to purely mature its whisky in bourbon casks as part of their signature flavour, such as Makers Mark.

The more expensive whisky tends to be matured in a sherry cask, because the wood is more porous, and they lose more spirit. Sherry casks are often toasted to alter the characteristics, as done by Macallan.

The most used cask used to mature the whisky are refill casks from previous batches, however whisky producers will only use casks up to 4 times.

The size of the casks will also have an effect on the maturation process with smaller casks helping to mature the whisky.

Once filled, the casks are left in stone built warehouses 'dunnages' to mature. If the warehouse is on the coast, the salt air can penetrate into the cask once again influencing the flavour, as Springbank for example.

To call a whisky a 'Malt' it must be matured for a minimum of 3 years. After 8-15 years they will transfer it to port, madeira and wine casks for a further 9 months or more.

It is also quite common to improve the spirit for a distillery to take whisky from different casks and marry it into one malt whisky, for example an 18 year old with a 10 year old although it would only be described as a 10 year old.

The large majority of distilleries will not actually bottle themselves, but will use a specialist bottling plant. The only distilleries that currently bottle their whiskies are Bruichladdich, Edrour and Springbank.

Because of a variety of factors, approximately 2% of the spirit is lost every year and within the whisky trade this is affectionately known as the 'angels share'.



SCOTLAND'S WHISKY REGIONS

DEFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIONS WHISKY REGIONS

SPEYSIDE: *Speyside whiskies are among Scotland's lightest, sweetest single malts. Age often brings a bit more body and the profusion of heavily sherried whiskies from the region exhibit superb power. Though a comparatively small appellation, Speyside has, by some distance, the vast majority of Scotch whisky distilleries. Indeed there are eighty-four working distilleries, including the world's best-sellers: The Glenlivet and The Macallan.*

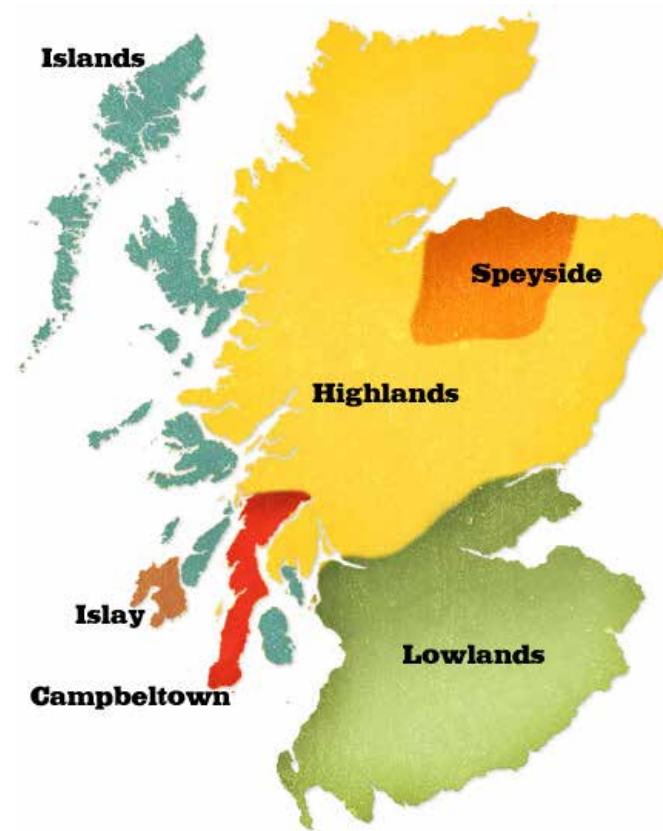
HIGHLAND: *As a very vague rule of thumb, the Highlands region is one of big-bodied whiskies, often peated and smoky, often very powerful. The Highlands is such a large, diverse region that is difficult to categorize their whiskies accurately. Technically speaking, the Islands has not been officially recognised as a region of its own and, as such, is included in the Highlands appellation. Best sellers include Glengoyne, Dalwhinnie.*

LOWLANDS: *The Lowlands produces gentle, light whiskies, often very dry and devoid of peat. Best sellers includes Auchentoshan, Glenkinchie and most of the whisky regions of Scotland, and indeed the world, there can be some crossover. For example, it is quite possible to produce a heavily peated whisky outside of Islay or the Highlands, simply distilling peated barley can facilitate that.*

CAMPBELTOWN: *Campbeltown whiskies are a curious mix. Characteristics include a defined dryness with a pungency, smoke and a solid salinity. Imagine a cross between the Lowlands and the Western Highlands with a pinch of salt thrown in for good measure, i.e Springbank.*

ISLAY: *Islay (pronounced 'eye-luh') whiskies are among Scotland's most powerful, thunderous drams. Often with plenty of peat and smoke, brine and medicinal flavours, of all the whisky regions of Scotland Islay has attained a truly iconic status. Best sellers include Laphroaig, Lagavulin, Caol ila, and Bruichladdich.*

ISLANDS: *There are over 800 islands off the coast of Scotland with the most scattered collection of distillery locations, from Arran in the south to Lewis in the North-West and Orkney (plus soon Shetland) in the North. The flavours tend to be slightly salty with hints of smoke and occasional notes of bleck pepper.*



THE SPEYSIDE MALTS

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND

To some, Speyside represents the jewel in whisky's crown. Speyside is the home of legal whisky production and are probably the best known brands around the world and typify whisky from this region.

Classic examples include Glenlivet, Macallan, Glenfiddich, Glenrothes and Glenfarclas and are widely regarded as some of the best we have to offer.

The heart of the region running from the Monadhliath mountains up to the north sea is the River Spey. It is the fastest flowing river in Britain, and also well known for its salmon fishing.

Speyside is Scotland's principal whisky-producing region and has within it some forty-six operating distilleries - over half the total number in the entire country.

Speysides are essentially sweet whiskies with a little peaty character and are typically HIGHLY PERFUMED, FEMININE, and ELEGANT.

The classical nature of Speyside's malts means that a number of the finest malts are used almost exclusively for blending. It is the top Speysider's that give good blends their 'Top Dressing'.

Malts such as Mortlach, Glen Elgin, Strathmill and Benrinnes are rarely found as distillery bottlings, however when individual casks are often tracked down by independent bottlers.

Following the Excise Act of 1823, the first licence to legally distil whisky in the North Scotland was granted in 1824 to George Smith and his son John Gordon Smith of the Glenlivet distillery in Speyside. For many years afterwards, George carried a pair of hair-trigger pistols to protect himself and his family from reprisals by illicit distillers. John made do with a cutlass.





THE SPEYSIDE MALTS

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

ABERLOUR: *Sweet And Spice, Peppery, Smooth*

ABERLOUR ABYNADH: *Rich, Creamy, Cherry Brandy, Full Bodied*

AUCHROISK: *Light And Fruity, Figs, Nuts, Shortbread Little Peat*

ARDMORE: *Oily, Full, Savoury, Peat*

AULTMORE: *Light vanilla, Citrus, Refreshing*

THE BALVENIE DOUBLE WOOD: *Nutty, Sweet Sherry, Oranges, Little Spice*

THE BALVENIE 14 CARIBBEAN CASK: *Apple Spice, Citrus Fruit, Brown Sugar*

THE BALVENIE 17 PEATED CASK: *Gentle Floral And Smokey Aroma, Balanced Honeyed Vanilla And Oak Spice*

THE BALVENIE 17 NEWWOOD: *Rich And Spicy, Dark Cherry And Creamy Berry Fruits, Winter Spice And Oak*

THE BALVENIE 21 PORT WOOD: *Very Complex, Creamy, Winey, Oak, Aniseed*

BENRIACH CURIOSITAS: *Peat, Sugar And Spice, Creamy Fruit*

BENRIACH HEREDOTUS FUMOSUS: *Soot Smoke, Oily, Mouth Coating, And Sweet Blackcurrants*

BENRIACH AROMATICUS FUMOSUS: *Peat Fire, Yellow Fruits, Coffee, Spices*

BENRIACH RUM FINISH: *Rum And Raisin, Vanilla, Touch Of Spice And Oak*

BENRINNES: *Dry, Licorice, Vanilla, Little Smoke*

BENROMACH 100% PROOF 57%: *Intense and Complex, Light Smoke, Heavy Sherry*

BENROMACH MARSALA WOOD FINISH: *Juicy Texture, Spicy Cooked Fruit, Malty, Little Smoke*

BENROMACH 2000 PORT FINISH: *Thick, Long, Toffee Apples, Cinnamon, Cigar Smoke, Creamy*

BENROMACH ORGANIC: *Malt, Soft Toffee, Oak And Spice*

BENROMACH PEAT SMOKE: *Smoky, Fruity, Sweet Peat*

BENROMACH TRADITIONAL: *Sweet, Gentle Spice, Smoky And Rounded*

CARDHU: *Smooth, Gentle Sweet, Very Soft Peat, And Very Little Smoke*

CARDHU 18: *Pear Drops, Creamy, Toasted Oak, Spicy, Dark Chocolate*

CRAGGANMORE: *Light, Clean, Delicate, Herbal And Flowery Notes*

DAILUAINE: *Sherry, Barley Sugar, Oak Background And Smooth*

DALWHINNIE 15: *Smooth, Heathery Notes, Aromatic, Little Peat*

GLEN MORAY: *Pears In Cream, Light, Fresh Oak, Smooth*

GLEN MORAY PORT FINISH: *Light Raisins, Vanilla, Golden Barley, Touch Of Cinnamon*

GLENFARCLAS: *Crisp And Dry, Sweet And Nutty*

GLENFARCLAS 105 60%: *Very Sweet, Rich Nectar, Honey, Rounded*

GLENFARCLAS 15: *Sherry Oak, Smooth, Long And Hit Of Smoke*

GLENFARCLAS 18: *Sweet Honey, Citrus Notes, Creamy Fudge, Smooth And Long*

THE SPEYSIDE MALTS (CONTINUED)

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

GLENFARCLAS 25: *Very Long, Complex, Rich Oak, Cocoa And Buttery, Little Tangy*

GLENFIDDICH: *Sweet, Touch Of Oak, Oily And Smooth*

GLENGLOSSAUGH: *Sweet, Creamy, Oranges, Nuts, Spiced Oak*

THE GLENLIVET 12: *Flowery, Peachy, Vanilla And Delicate*

THE GLENLIVET NADURRA (NATURAL): *Liquorice, Dark Chocolate, Spicy, Oranges,*

GLENLOSSIE 10: *Light, Smooth, Malty, Sweet And Spicy*

GLENROTHES SELECT RESERVE: *Sherry, Balanced Spice, Gentle & Full*

GLENTAUCHERS: *Toasted Oak, Light Creamy Vanilla, Fudge, Little Spice*

LINKWOOD 12: *Fresh Sweets, Floral, Citrus, And Rounded*

LONGMORN 16: *Oats, Nuts, Peppery, Big Floral And Fruit Notes, Full Bodied*

THE MACALLAN GOLD: *Citrus, Boiled Sweets, Hints Of Spice, Little Oak And Apples*

MANNOCHMORE 12: *Light, Liquorice, Gentle Sweet*

MORTLACH: *Sherry, Little Smoke, Little Peat, Full*

SPEY: *Soft, Smooth, Fruity, Malty And Nutty*

STRATHISLA: *Sherry, Violets And Vanilla, Mouth Coating*

TAMDHU: *Clean, Sweet, Toffee, Little Peat And Light*

TOMINTOUL 10: *Cereal, Honey, Vanilla And Light*

TOMINTOUL 16: *Creamy, Nutty, Sweet And Coffee*





THE HIGHLAND MALTS

MID NORTH SCOTLAND

The few distilleries remaining within easy reach of Glasgow and Stirling illustrate this diversity in microcosm: from GRASSILY INTENSE, deceptively powerful Glengoyne to multi-faceted, iconoclastic Loch Lomond; and from the evolving character of ex-mill Deanston to the NUTTILY FRAGRANT resurrected plant at Tullibardine.

The eastern coastline north of Inverness is a hotbed of whisky individuality. There's a general tendency towards medium-weight spirit with a hint of brine, but here you'll also find the lightly fragrant spice of Tomatin, the rich complexity of Dalmore, and the uniquely waxy Clynelish.

The Eastern Highlands, taking in Banff and Aberdeen, and heading south towards Montrose, are home to wildly differing distilleries, from Glendronach and Glenglassaugh – tending towards a richer Speyside style – to the more austere, smokier delights of Glen Garioch and Ardmore.

Perthshire once counted 70 or so distilleries within its borders; now there are only six in the whole of the Central Highlands. The survivors range from the thickly fruited spice of Aberfeldy, Edradour and grassy Royal Lochnagar in the shadow of Balmoral, to the succulent honeyed richness of Dalwhinnie.

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

ABERFELDY: *Fruit, Oranges, Little Spice, Light*

ABERFELDY 21: *Honey, Oak, Oranges, Little Peat And Smoke*

ARDMORE: *Medium Peat Smoke, Savoury, Full And Rich*

BALBLAIR 8: *Light, Sweet Vanilla, Nuts*

BALBLAIR 1989: *Vanilla Caramel, Crunchy Barley*

BEN NEVIS: *Light, Toffee, Little Peat, Dark Chocolate*

CLYNELISH: *Creamy, Herbs, Orange, Spicy, Mustardy*

THE DALMORE 12: *Sherry, Spice, Citrus, And Ginger*

THE DALMORE 15: *Sherry, Christmas Spices, Small Hint Of Vanilla*

THE DALMORE KING ALEXANDER 111: *Sherry, Fresh Berries, Vanilla And Toffee And Treacle*

DEANSTON 12: *Soft, Honey, Caramel, Malt, And Oak*

DEANSTON VIRGIN OAK: *Toffee Sweets, Cream, Oak*

EDRADOUR 10: *Rich, Sweet, Spicy And Fruity*

FETTERCAIRN FIOR (TRUE): *Rich, Cocoa, Espresso, Spices, Nutty*

FETTERCAIRN 30: *Toasted Oak, Thick Barley Malt, Sweet Honey*

GLENDRONACH 12: *Cranberries, Blueberry, Pepper, Little Peat, Savoury*

GLENDRONACH 15: *Sweet, Fruit Cake, Little Smoke And Little Peat, Pepper, Very Complex*

GLENDRONACH CASK STRENGTH: *Heavily Sherried, Orange Marmalade, Oak*

GLENDRONACH 18: *Rich, Sherry, Deep Red Fruits, Little Peat, Very Bold*

GLENGARIOCH FOUNDERS RESERVE: *Chocolate, Lime, Creamy, Salty, Little Smoke*

GLENGARIOCH RENAISSANCE: *Unpeated, Sweet, Rich Honey, Long Finish*

GLENGOYNE 10: *Clean, Grassy, Fruity, Smooth And Oak*

GLENGOYNE 12: *Sweet, Spice, Pepper, Savoury*



THE HIGHLAND MALTS (CONTINUED)

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

GLENGOYNE 15: *Sweet, Unripe Plums, Spice Notes*

GLENGOYNE 17: *Deep, Rich, Clean Sherry Fruit, Nuts, Oak, Very Mature*

GLENGOYNE 21: *Very Firm Malty Notes, Dry Creaminess, Vanilla And Cinnamon*

GLENGOYNE CASK STRENGTH: *Dried Fruits, Licorice, Raisins, Spices, Ginger, Cinnamon*

GLENGOYNE DISTILLERY CASK: *Sweet, Molasses, Thick and Creamy, Stewed Fruit, Bam!!!!*

GLENMORANGIE ORIGINAL: *Fresh, Vanilla, Boiled Sweets, Creamy, Toffee*

GLENMORANGIE LASANTA: *Rich, Dark Chocolate, Dried Fruit And Fresh Honey*

GLENMORANGIE NECTAR D'OR 12: *Barley Sweet, Malty Spice, Oak, Herbal And Light*

GLENMORANGIE COMPANTA: *(Matured In Burgundy Cask, Rhone Valley) Massive Spice, Pepper, Little Smoke, Sherbet and Ginger & Chocolate*

GLENMORANGIE ARTEIN: *(Matured In Super Tuscan Wine) Rich, Spicy, Creamy, Sweet Parma Violets, Vanilla*

GLENMORANGIE FINELTA: *Little Peat, Little Smoke, Sweet Vanilla And Lime, Hints Of Sherry*

KNOCKDHU ANCNOG 12: *Sweet Barley, Clean And Herbal*

KNOCKDHU ANCNOG 16: *Sweet Barley, Yellow And Orange Fruit, Oak And Spice*

OBAN 14: *Perfume, Fruit, Salty, Little Smoke, Smooth*

OBAN DISTILLERY CHOICE: *Citrus Fruits, Nuts, Sea Salt, Full Bodied*

OLD PULTENEY 12: *Light, Honey, Nuts And Salty*

OLD PULTENEY DUNCANSBY HEAD: *Chocolate, Honey And Orange, Full Bodied*

OLD PULTENEY SPECTRUM: *(1920 Boat) Sweet, Spicy, Citrus, Sherry, Full Bodied*

OLD PULTENEY 17: *Sweet Green Fruits, Barley, Soft Spice*

OLD PULTENEY 21: *Soft Toffee, Salt, Pepper, Creamy And Oily*

ROYAL BRCKLA: *Light, Vanilla, Gentle Spice*

ROYAL LOCHNAGAR: *Smooth, Light, Sweet And Barley*

SINGLETON OF DUFFTOWN TAILFIRE: *Fruitiness, Oats, Hint of pepper*

SINGLETON OF DUFFTOWN SUNRAY: *Honey, Malt and Soft Stewed Apples*

TEANINICH: *Sweet, Dry, Chocolate Limes, Light Peat, Little Herbal And Rounded*

TOMATIN CU BOCAN: *Smoke Start, Sweet Chilli, Nuts*

TOMATIN 18: *Oak, Raisins, Honey Heather, Little Smoke, Hint Of Spice*

TULLIBARDINE: *Cooked Fruit, Butterscotch, Nuts, Creamy And Spicy*

TULLIBARDINE: *(Burgundy Cask Finish) Creamy, Nutty, Sweet Custard, Red Berries, Spice And Rich*



THE LOWLAND MALTS

SOUTHERN SCOTLAND & THE BORDERS

The Lowland region lies south of an imaginary line drawn from the Clyde estuary, on the west coast, to the Tay estuary, on the east coast. Whiskies from Lowland distilleries tend to be much SOFTER and LIGHTER in character. They often display very MALTY, GRASSY characteristics and more SUBTLE DELICATE AROMAS than whiskies from the other regions.

Mass production was the enemy of single malt production in the Lowlands – including Edinburgh and Glasgow – with distillers earning the region a bad reputation in the 18th and 19th centuries by flooding the market with poor-quality spirit.

Already impacted by the rise in popularity of blends – suffering in comparison with their more ‘characterful’ Highland rivals – Lowland malt distilleries were dealt further blows by tax hikes, the First World War and the onset of Prohibition in the US.

These factors ruined the finances of many distillers, leading them to close their facilities or refocus on making grain spirit to be combined with Highland and Island malts for the rising number of blended Scotch brands.

Thankfully, a few hardy Lowland distilleries survived the bad times, continuing to produce the gentle, grassy and easy-drinking single malts that are the signature style of the region, including Glenkinchie just east of Edinburgh and Auchentoshan on the outskirts of Glasgow – whose triple-distilled whisky offers an echo of Lowland distillation history.

There are new arrivals, too: tiny Daftmill in Fife, which began production in 2003, and Ailsa Bay on the Clyde coast; a much bigger affair and – perhaps appropriately given its Lowland location – with all of its production destined for blends. Another distillery, Annandale in Dumfriesshire, is slated to open later in 2014.

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

AILSA BAY: *Sweet, Vanilla, Smokey, Spicy Wood*

AUCHENTOSHAN CLASSIC: *Very Sweet, Vanilla, Light, And Apples*

AUCHENTOSHAN 12: *Smooth, Caramel, Hint of Sherry, Oranges*

AUCHENTOSHAN THREE WOOD: *Oily, Sweet, Floral, Nuts, Fresh Oak, Long And Creamy*

AUCHENTOSHAN AMERICAN OAK: *Citrus Peel, Peaches, Buttery, Toffee*

AUCHENTOSHAN VALINCH CASK STRENGTH: *Crème Brûlée, Creamy Fresh Fruit, Custard*

AUCHENTOSHAN BORDEAUX WINE MATURED: *Tiramisu, Fruit, Spices, Nutty Chocolate*

AUCHENTOSHAN VIRGIN OAK: *Fruit, Vanilla, Orange, And Nutmeg, Brown Sugar*

GLENKINCHIE 12: *Simple Sweet And Fruit, Oak, Apple*





THE CAMPBELTOWN MALTS

SOUTH WESTERN PENINSULAR

Campbeltown whiskies are a curious mix. Characteristics include a defined DRYNESS with a PUNGENCY, SMOKE and a solid SALINITY. Imagine a cross between the Lowlands and the Western Highlands with a pinch of salt thrown in for good measure.

There was a time when Campbeltown was the most prolific of all of Scotland's whisky regions. Around a century ago there were as many as twenty-eight distilleries in the geographically smallest of Scottish appellations.

Today there are but three: the newly founded Mitchell's Glengyle, though it will be a few more years 'til any Glengyle single malt whisky is bottled, Glen Scotia and Springbank, a distillery which produces three very different whiskies using different levels of peat and still combination.

Campbeltown sits on the Mull of Kintyre peninsula protruding from the western coast, 'mist rolling in from the sea'.

It is the proximity to the coast that gives the whisky its salty tang. Campbeltown single malts are often superb aperitifs.

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

GLENGYLE KILKERRAN BOURBON FINISH: *Rich Oily Nuts, Herbal Sweetness, Rich Sugared Apricots*

GLEN SCOTIA 18: *Lemon, Marmalade, Vanilla, Dried Fruits & Pepper, Woody*

HAZELBURN 8: *Malt, Banana, Sherry, Vanilla, Spicy Oak And Caramel*

LONGROW 14: *Sweet, Fruity, Peppery, Smoke And Oily, Peat*

SPRINGBANK 10: *Dry And Sweet, Tinned Pears, Citrus, Little Smoke, Mouth Coating*

SPRINGBANK 15: *Smoke, Nuts, Sweet Dried Apricots, Little Malt & Complex*





THE ISLAY MALTS

NORTH EAST ISLANDS

The Northern Islay Distilleries - Bruichladdich (the 'ch' is silent) and Bunnahabhain ('Boona-hah-ven') are, by contrast, much milder. These draw their water direct from the spring, before it has had contact with peat, and use lightly or un-peated barley.

The resulting whiskies are lighter flavoured, mossy (rather than peaty), with some seaweed, some nuts, but still the dry finish. Bowmore Distillery, in the middle of the island on the shore of Loch Indaal, stands between the two extremes - peaty but not medicinal, with some toffee, some floral scents, and traces of linseed oil.

Caol Ila ('Cal-eela'), although close to Bunnahabhain, produces a delicate, greenish malt, with some peat/iodine/salt balanced by floral notes and a peppery finish.

The Southern Distilleries - Ardbeg, Laphroaig, and Lagavulin, also referred to as the Kildalton Distilleries, and Port Ellen (the latter was closed in 1983) - are the most powerful, producing medium-bodied whiskies, saturated with peat-smoke, brine and iodine.

Not only do these distilleries use heavily peated malt (54 ppm at Ardbeg, 40 ppm at Laphroaig), they use the island's peaty water for every stage of production - until they were closed in the early 1980s, Ardbeg had its own floor maltings and used to steep the barley in the same water.

Islay Peat and Water Islay is very largely composed of peat, layer upon layer of sphagnum mosses and other vegetation have been rotting away and created the compact black banks of peat which are used for home fuel and for the whisky industry.

Most of the water on Islay is brown, even the water in the burns is brown, and winter gales drive salt spray far inland, and this saturates the peat, which is dried again by the briny, seaweedy breeze. All these characteristics go into the whiskies of Islay, to a greater or lesser extent.

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

ARBEG: *Burning Peat, Sweet, Little Licorice*

ARBEG BUIGEADAIL: *Firm, Smooth, BBQ Smoke, Quite Alcoholic*

ARBEG BLASDA: *Sweet Peat, Peaches, Apples*

ARBEG CORRYVRECKAN: *Dry, Spicy, Nutty, Fruit, Peppery, Salt & Peat*

ARBEG AURIVERDES: *Sweet, Light Peat, Creamy Coffee, Dark Chocolate*

ARBEG ARBOG: *Salted Raisins Nutty, Chilli Spice*

ARBEG GALILEO 49%: *Big smoke, Cream, Apricots, Earthy Smoke*

ARBEG PERPETUUM: *Full bodied, Vanilla, Smoke And Coastal Peat*

BOWMORE: *Smoky, Citric, Cocoa Notes, Little Peat*

BOWMORE SHERRY FINISH: *Rich, Woody, Treacle, Spice, Smoke*

BOWMORE 18: *Floral, Plum, Sweet Peat Smoke*

BRUICHLADDICH SPECIAL EDITION: *(St.Andrews edition) Zesty, Light, Fruity*

BRUICHLADDICH PORT CHARLOTTE: *Very Full But Soft, Heavy Peat, Fruit, Smoke*

BRUICHLADDICH ANCIEN REGIME: *Oak, Soft Bananas, Floral*

BRUICHLADDICH BERE BARLEY: *Lemon Meringue, Honey, Soft Fruits, Oak*

BRUICHLADDICH RENAISSANCE: *Light, Zesty, Toffee, Nutty*

BRUICHLADDICH 21: *Smooth, Oloroso Sherry, Barley Sugar, Exotic Fruits*

THE ISLAY MALTS (CONTINUED)

NORTH EAST ISLANDS

BRUICHLADDICH OCTOMORE 167: *(Heavily Peated) Big Peat Smoke, Smooth, Salted Biscuits, Little Citrus, Bit Of Juniper, Wow*

BUNNAHABHAIN: *Light Peat, Fresh, Sherry, Little Salt*

CAOL ILA 12: *Light Oily, Vanilla, Peppery*

CAOL ILA 18: *Sweet, Crushed Nuts, Cedary*

KILCHOMAN 100% ISLAY: *Sharp Citrus Fruits, Dark Chocolate, Coal Smoke, Peaty And Oily*

KILCHOMAN COULL POINT: *Earthy Peat, Sweet Vanilla, Savoury, Chilli Spice, Long*

KILCHOMAN LOCHGORM: *Fruity, Peppery, Peat Smoke*

KILCHOMAN SANAIG: *Peat, Chocolate Raisins, Pepper, Peach*

LAGAVULIN: *Peat Dryness, Oily, Grassy, Salty, Peat Fire, Very Warming*

LAPHROAIG: *Seaweed, Salty, Oily, Medicinal*

LAPHROAIG QUARTER CASK: *Smoke, Sweet Barley, Intense Peat And Salty*

LAPHROAIG TRIPLE WOOD: *Dry and Medicinal, Exotic Spice, Smoke*

LAPHROAIG 15: *Sweet, Grassy, Burning Peat, Intense, Dry And Long*

LAPHROAIG 18: *Liquorice, Pepper, Long Peat Coating The Mouth, Intense Smoke*

LAPHROAIG CAIRDEAS ILEACH EDITION: *Oily, Huge Peat Smoke, Creamy Buttery Sweetness, Hints Of Chocolate And Apple*

LAPHROAIG AMONTILLADO SHERRY: *Smoky, Spicy, Honey, Bbq Salt, Nutty And Cereal*

LAPHROAIG PX CASK: *Peat, Sweet Sherry, Peat Smoke, Dry And Deep*

SMOKEHEAD: *Smokies, Rich, Peat, Salt And Pepper, Soft And Rounded*

SMOKEHEAD 18: *Thick, Dense Peat Smoke, Citrus Fruits, Salt And Pepper, And Chilli*





MY KEY TO WHISKY

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THE ISLANDS MALTS

SCATTERED ACCROSS THE COAST OF SCOTLAND

The Islands classification of single malt whiskies is a category of convenience, since these distilleries officially fall under the Highland denomination. They're also the most scattered collection of distillery locations, from Arran in the south to Lewis in the North-West and Orkney (plus soon Shetland) in the North.

INNER STRENGTH

If such a disparate collection of distilleries has a heart, it is the Inner Hebrides, which apart from Islay includes Skye, home to Talisker's mix of peat and pepper; Jura's eponymous malty slow burner; and on Mull, gale-lashed Tobermory's fruity malt, alongside its smoky alter ego, Ledaig.

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

Moving north and east and crossing the Pentland Firth, we hit Orkney and a contrasting pair of malts: Highland Park's richly sweet peatiness and Scapa's gentle fruit. Further north still, the Shetland Distillery Company plans to start making whisky in 2015 at Saxa Vord, on Unst.

TO BE FOUND IN THE KEYS BAR - ST ANDREWS

ARRAN: *Clean, Sweet With Gentle Spice*

ARRAN CASK STRENGTH: *Strong Barley, Sweets, Rich And Clean*

ARRAN THE DEVIL'S PUNCH BOWL: *Big Notes Of Vanilla, Wine Sweetness, Pepper, Orange Peel, Spicy*

ARRAN TOKAJI FINISH: *(Hungaria Wine) Chocolate, Tropical Fruit, Slight Oaky finish*

ARRAN FINO SHERRY: *Thick, Barley Sweet, hint of seaweed, Toasted Oak*

ISLE OF JURA: *Sweetish, Light Peat, Little Salt, Light And Soft*

ISLE OF JURA SUPERSTITION: *Honey, Creaminess, Little Salt, Smooth And Waxy*

HIGHLAND PARK 12: *Succulent, Smoky Dryness, Heather Honey*

HIGHLAND PARK 18: *Remarkably Smooth, Lightly Salted, Pine Nuts, Honey, Spice Little Smoke*

LEDAIG: *Little Peat, Rich Spice, Smoke*

SCAPA 16: *Clean, Fresh, Sweet Custard, Floral And Smooth*

TALISKER 10: *Smoky, Sweet, Big Pepper, Full Bodied*

TALISKER PORT RUIGHE: *Thick Mouth Coating, Chilli, Sweet Chocolate Orange, Oak, Little Peat Smoke*

TALISKER 18: *Richer, Big Fruit, Oak And Peat Perfectly Balanced, Creamy*

TALISKER 57°NORTH: *Salt, Creamy Honey, Spice, Smoke*

TOBERMORY: *Un-Peated, Light, Sweet, Little Cinnamon*

