

SPECIAL RELEASES

— 2013 —

EXQUISITELY RARE



A LIMITED COLLECTION OF NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKIES
FROM THE ORIGINAL DISTILLERS

2013

SPECIAL ... MEANS SPECIAL

How could these whiskies be anything other than special? Our Special Releases are small annual releases of limited edition, usually natural cask strength single malts. Many are very old and unusual bottlings from famous and closed distilleries. They are highly sought after and collectable, often increasing in value after release.

That said, they are above all magnificent and unusual whiskies for enthusiasts to drink and enjoy. As you buy one for yourself remember too that the gift of a Special Release whisky says the recipient is special. Drinking a Single Malt Scotch Whisky made in the year of your birth is a unique pleasure. Special days can be marked by a suitable 21 year old, say, and there's always Father's Day or Christmas ...

What makes each Special Release so special? Invariably hand-crafted in a traditional distillery and usually bottled at natural cask strength, they give the purest evidence of that distillery's craft. All are very rare. At most there are a few thousand bottles worldwide; on occasion, just a few hundred. All are from casks hand-selected for the highest quality. Many feature individually designed, hand-finished packaging.

Hard to find and reassuringly expensive, Special Releases are available only at specialist retailers, at prices to suit many, if not all pockets.

WONDERFUL TO RECEIVE

All this year's Special Releases offer an intriguing experience for the whisky enthusiast. Many will make a great gift for someone special, for example on birthdays or anniversaries; for a 35th there's our equal oldest ever Special Release of majestic **BRORA** 35 year old, this one distilled in 1977, while our oldest ever **CONVALMORE** is a 36 year old.

Looking for something to lay down on a twenty-first? If you're quick you may catch an unusually luscious, spicy 21 year old from **CARDHU** aged in ex-bourbon American Oak casks or a very rare 21 year old from **OBAN**.

Meanwhile this year's release of a quite wonderful 27 year old from **TALISKER** would make a real treat for Father's Day, as would our first release of a 28 year old **SINGLETON OF DUFFTOWN**. Both are from casks filled in 1985 (at different times of year, to explain the differing ages).

Know someone celebrating a 34th anniversary? This year's release of a perfect **PORT ELLEN** 34 year old, the oldest we have released and surely destined to be among the rarest, would make a very special treat. While for a Christmas whisky gift to end them all, if you're very quick and frankly, rather wealthy, there'll be a fabulously rare **LAGAVULIN** 37 year old casked in 1976.

Fans of Islay malt can also choose the unusual and rare unpeated cask strength **CAOL ILA**, this year coming from a special reserve aged in three different types of cask to honour distillery manager Billy Stitchell's long family tradition, or the pungent, perfect 12 year old cask strength **LAGAVULIN**. Both are excellent. Each is quite different from its sister **CLASSIC MALTS** regular bottling.

No matter which you choose, or why, the result is sure to be Special.

NATURAL CASK STRENGTH

All bar one of our Special Releases have been bottled at the natural cask strength.

Why is this important? Well, any malt not bottled at ‘natural’ cask strength must, by definition, have been bottled at a lower ‘cask strength’, via the addition of water...

When the earliest of these Special Releases were laid down distillers often filled their casks at high strengths – even 75% ABV was not uncommon. Even now, after the angels have taken their share, natural cask strength for the older whiskies can be 55–60% ABV. It would be easy to bottle them at a reduced strength and produce more bottles. We don’t.

Independent cask strength bottlings, which often come from a single cask, inevitably vary. Collectors and connoisseurs can buy Special Releases in safety, knowing that the original distillers have cared for and bottled them and that the casks chosen are the very finest available.

Special Releases can go cloudy or opaque when water is added. The cloudiness is because the malt has been hand-filtered; to preserve its special qualities no Special Release is chill-filtered.



RARITY BEYOND PRICE

BRORA 35 YEAR OLD

CAOL ILA STITCHELL RESERVE

CARDHU 21 YEAR OLD

CONVALMORE 36 YEAR OLD

LAGAVULIN 12 YEAR OLD

LAGAVULIN 37 YEAR OLD

OBAN 21 YEAR OLD

PORT ELLEN 34 YEAR OLD

SINGLETON OF DUFFTOWN 28 YEAR OLD

TALISKER 27 YEAR OLD

Special Releases will never be common and many are vanishingly rare. Unsurprisingly, they have often increased in value after release, though to hoard them would be to deny the great pleasure for which they are always made; that of enjoying and appreciating their unique character.

The entire production of all ten Special Releases for 2013 is just over 85,000 bottles. That may sound quite a number, but even so it's fewer than we could bottle five or six years ago. To put this in context, 2,958 bottles will be available of this year's 34 year old **PORT ELLEN**. One of the world's rarest and most iconic red wines, *Romanée-Conti AOC*, produces 3,500 bottles or more each year.

Just 1,868 bottles will exist of our rare 37 year old **LAGAVULIN**. Around 40,000 examples of one of the most sought after hand-made watches, a Patek Philippe, are said to be produced each year. Around 20,000 examples of the rare and expensive Leica M9 can be produced in a year. There will be just 2,944 bottles of **BRORA** 35 year old.

A REMARKABLE COLLECTION

When you come to own one, a Special Release should feel as special as it is. Some exceptional hand-crafted packaging is used. This year's original designs continue a proud tradition, coming from several award-winning master designers.

To be able to enjoy them all would be a remarkable experience. Be warned though; it isn't easy; there have now been well over a hundred Special Releases, many of them now exceedingly rare and highly prized.



THE SPECIAL RELEASES STORY

During the late 1980s, benchmark expressions of single malt whiskies from six single malt distilleries were released as the **CLASSIC MALTS**. In 1995, with interest rising in single malt whiskies, came the **RARE MALTS**, an acclaimed and still collected ten year series of rare old releases, often from closed distilleries, which ended as stocks declined.

There was a continuing demand for unusual, distinctive, unrepeatable cask strength bottlings, including some from the **CLASSIC MALTS** (which were never available in the **RARE MALTS** series). To satisfy it, Special Releases began in 2001. The first, a mere 100 bottle release of **TALISKER** 28 year old at 43.3%, sold out at once even though priced at £495 (as this is written a bottle is for

sale on a well-known website at £3,500).

A **PORT ELLEN** 22 year old and a **TALISKER** 25 year old followed and as quickly sold out. Both malts would see regular releases in the series.

A year later bottlings came at prices from £40 to £300 and the pattern of annual releases as we now know it was established. **TALISKER** and **PORT ELLEN** were joined by a 30 year old **BRORA**, a 32 year old **OBAN**, a 36 year old **DALWHINNIE** and two special releases of **LAGAVULIN**, a 12 and a 25 year old. **BRORA** and **LAGAVULIN** 12 releases would also feature annually from now on.



2003 saw a further nine releases, including an irreplaceable 50 year old **GLENURY ROYAL** (then the most expensive Special Release, at £950). **TALISKER**, **LAGAVULIN**, **PORT ELLEN**, **BRORA** and **DALWHINNIE** again featured, joined by a 29 year old **CRAGGANMORE**, a 28 year old **GLEN ORD** and a particularly fine 32 year old **GLEN ELGIN**. The following year saw another nine releases from **TALISKER**, **LAGAVULIN**, **PORT ELLEN** and **BRORA**, joined by a splendid **CAOL ILA** 25 year old, a most unusual 10 year old **CRAGGANMORE**, a 25 year old **GLEN ORD**, an elegantly presented 30 year old **LINLITHGOW**, a 32 year old **MORTLACH** and a 20 year old **OBAN**.

In 2005 came ten more astonishing gems, including 28 year olds from **CONVALMORE** and **BRECHIN**, a trio of 25 year olds from **PORT ELLEN**, **TALISKER** and **CAOL ILA**, and a 36 year old **GLENURY ROYAL**. The 30 year olds from **GLEN ORD**, and especially from **BRORA**, continued to impress with their vivacity. Twelve months on a further nine malts included a trio of exceptional 30 year olds from **LAGAVULIN**, **TALISKER** and **BRORA**. Popularly priced, the first bottling of an unpeated **CAOL ILA**, an 8 year old, joined a further bottling of 12 year old **LAGAVULIN**. **PORT ELLEN** 27 year old kept up the high standard, whilst a 17 year old **CRAGGANMORE** and a 20 year old **DALWHINNIE** made for fascinating comparison with earlier Special Release siblings.

2007 saw ten more stories unfold. A sublime 21 year old **LAGAVULIN** soon sold out, while a glorious 30 year old **TALISKER** and a 36 year old **GLENURY ROYAL** shone brightly. A **PORT ELLEN** 28 year old and a rare **ROSEBANK** 25 year old complemented them, whilst a **LAGAVULIN** 12 year old and an unpeated **CAOL ILA** 8 year old also featured, along with a robust 25 year old **TALISKER** and a smooth **ROYAL LOCHNAGAR** Selected Reserve. The following year's ten newcomers were led by a very unusual triple release of the same 12 year old **LINKWOOD**, given a further 14 years maturation in variously sweet red wine, port and rum cask woods. Others to star were 25 and 30 year old releases of **TALISKER**, a 12 year old **LAGAVULIN** and an unpeated 8 year old **CAOL ILA**. A 29 year old **PORT ELLEN** and a 25 year old

BRORA added depth while a 16 year old **GLEN ELGIN** from European Oak rounded off the year.

In 2009 nine more stars sparkled in the firmament. A trio of Speyside malts were bright newcomers; a well-muscled **BENRINNES** 23 year old, a rare **MANNOCHMORE** 18 year old and a **PITTYVAICH** 20 year old. Another star trio comprised 30 year old releases of **TALISKER**, **PORT ELLEN** and **BRORA**, while a classic 12 year old **LAGAVULIN** and the now 10 year old unpeated **CAOL ILA** completed the list. The following autumn more new names joined the familiar players. 20 year olds from **AUCHROISK** and **GLENKINCHIE** and 21 year olds from **GLEN SPEY** and **CRAGGANMORE** were overseen by three much older whiskies, a 30 year old **TALISKER**, a 30 year old **BRORA** and a 31 year old **PORT ELLEN**, while another classic

12 year old **LAGAVULIN** and the now 12 year old unpeated **CAOL ILA** rounded off the cast of nine.

2011 was remarkable for the (temporary) absence of a **TALISKER** from the eight strong line up. Big-hitting releases came from **PORT ELLEN**, **BRORA**, **ROSEBANK** and **GLENURY ROYAL**, whilst a most unusual 20 year old **PORT DUNDAS** single grain and a 25 year old **KNOCKANDO** became the only Special Releases not of a single malt and not bottled at natural cask strength, respectively. Twin **CAOL ILA** and **LAGAVULIN** 12 year olds put many older malts to shame. One year on there were just eight releases, but they were of outstanding interest.

The oldest **AUCHROISK** released, a 30 year old, was accompanied by assured 35 year olds from **BRORA** and **TALISKER** and a 32 year old **PORT ELLEN**. Anniversaries were well served by a complex 21 year old **LAGAVULIN** and a plump 25 year old **DALWHINNIE**, while at the more affordable end of the range another stunning **LAGAVULIN** 12 was joined by a 14 year old unpeated **CAOL ILA** from ex-bodega European Oak.

Bottlings will continue until stocks are exhausted, with numbers usually limited to between 100 and 6,000 of each make bottled. As the series enters its thirteenth year a total of one hundred and thirteen Special Releases has been announced so far.



In the 1860s there was a gold-rush near the distillery in the Strath of Kildonan, Scotland's very own Klondike. Gold is still found there and permits to pan for gold are still issued locally today.

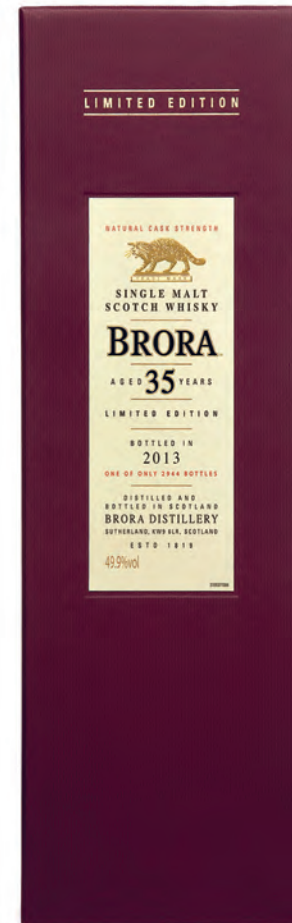
DISTILLED 1977 ABV 49.9%
BRORA
 35 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK STRENGTH
 SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY FROM THE
 COASTAL HIGHLANDS

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt. From a closed distillery at Brora on the Sutherland coast. The equal-oldest Brora we have ever bottled. Twelfth of a very limited series of annual releases. Annual allocation has extended availability of this irreplaceable malt but stocks are now depleted. From refill American Oak and European Oak casks over 35 years old that were filled in 1977. Just 2,944 individually numbered bottles worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP £750 per bottle.



A Brora classic: a mature, sweetly pleasing, tongue-coating, softly smoky malt that rewards deep study, evoking a tranquil beach scene rather than the drama of the high seas. Fans of Brora will not be disappointed by this superb, comforting, old-fashioned whisky.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Yellow gold or polished brass.
Lightly oily.

NOSE

Initially clean, fresh and bracing; then warming, developing depth and richness. Creamy top notes of warm scented wax or vanilla-custard float above a herbal note (basil?) and a sharper, cereal base, all suffused with just a thread of smoke. The nutty, waxy notes sweeten into honeycomb and toasted coconut. The sea appears very late, as a fresh sea breeze. Adding a little water softens the impact and brings up the scented wax, with honey and lemongrass subduing the more subtle vanilla aromas.

BODY

Light and softly coating.

PALATE

Good texture and a surprising taste: much sweeter than you expect from the nose, and much more smoky, with a most attractive tongue-coating smoothness. A leafy hint of fresh picked strawberry introduces lemon zest and candied peel to set the tongue tingling. Then damp beach notes of wood, sand and sea air round off a beautifully balanced palate. With water added this is a very easy-drinking, rewarding dram: fuller in texture than when at full strength, it is also less sweet, becoming mouth drying, cleansing and softly smoky.

FINISH

Coating, chewy and softly drying, with minty chocolate (after-dinner mints). Wood smoke lingers in the complex, fresh and spicy conclusion.



DISTILLERY FACTS

Founded 1819 as Clynelish by the Marquess of Stafford, soon to be Duke of Sutherland. Cost to build £750. Would buy just a single bottle today! One of Scotland's earliest purpose-built malt whisky distilleries. Leased to James Harper, then Andrew Ross and George Lawson – all local men. Sold in 1896 to Leith blenders, Ainslie & Co. 'A singularly valuable property, as the make has always obtained the highest price of any single Scotch whisky' Harper's Weekly 1896. Rebuilt & steam power introduced 1897. Closed 1931–38, 1941–1945. Stills direct coal-fired until 1961. New Clynelish distillery built 1967–8 and old distillery closed. Old distillery re-opened with re-built mash house 1975. Now named Brora. Produced alongside new Clynelish into the early 80s in a heavily peated 'Islay' style. Closed 1983. As a big whisky, well suited to long ageing in cask; only small stocks remain. The first Brora 30 year old won a Gold medal at IWSC 2003. A 25 year old bottled in 2008 won Gold at San Francisco World Spirits Competition 2009. A Rare Malts Brora 20 year old won the Trophy for Best Cask Strength Malt at IWSC 2004.

A sea view

This peaceful if rather smoky image of Brora distillery in full flow dates from the 1930s. In 1886 the whisky chronicler Alfred Barnard described this as 'always the highest priced of any Scotch whisky'; founded in 1819, the distillery was always known for its supreme quality.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



*The Stutchell family story ...
Billy Stutchell has worked at Caol Ila
during five decades, for the last 15 years
as Manager. Billy's father went to work
there before him, in 1950. As did his
father before him, in 1949. Billy's other
grandfather had done so rather earlier,
in 1914. As had his father before him
in 1888. And his father-in-law before
him, earlier in the 1880s. Which makes
five generations; keeping up with the
Stutchells is no easy task.*

ABV 59,6%

CAOL ILA STUTCHELL
RESERVE

NATURAL CASK STRENGTH SINGLE
MALT SCOTCH WHISKY FROM THE
ISLE OF ISLAY.

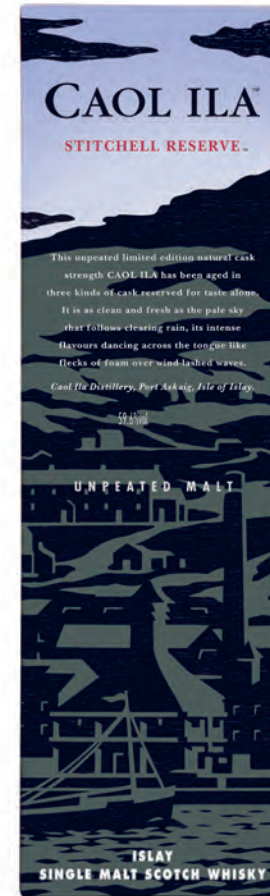
15
generations

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt. From Caol Ila, an active distillery on the Isle of Islay. A eighth limited release of unpeated Caol Ila. From a batch made only once a year, from unpeated malt, for blending in the 'Highland Style'. From a mix of refill American Oak, rejuvenated American Oak and ex-bodega European Oak casks, so interesting to compare with expressions from first fill Bourbon previously released at 8, 10 and 12 years old and a 14 year old from ex-bodega oak, released in 2012. Limited availability worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP £70 per bottle.



A smooth-talking, easy-drinking powerhouse. A powerfully, punchy, warming and sweet-spicy whisky with a mighty vitality and a smooth texture: the clean, fresh bitter-sweet nutty flavours give it a character all of its own and it's a perfect testament to a remarkable whisky making dynasty.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Clear, olive gold. Light beading.

NOSE

At full strength, immediately clean, aromatic and fresh: like inhaling Friar's Balsam. After this first blast, more reticent; softly sweet, then a vivid freshness like that of crisp green fruit or lemon zest. Water raises a fruity, nutty honeyed sweetness and a faint note of treacle, with perhaps just a hazy hint of smoke.

BODY

Light to medium. Oily, yet firm.

PALATE

Drinks well straight; has an intense and in your face style, with a most appealing smooth, lightly oily texture. Firm, clean and fresh throughout. Intense and mouth-filling, with a great initial surge of sweet spiciness unaccompanied by the usual signature phenols of peated Caol Ila or indeed, much fruit. Becoming honey-nutty (nut brittle, with a dark edge of treacle bitterness) then finally, warming and drying. A good splash of water develops these flavours; it's tongue-coating and appetisingly bitter-sweet now, leaving a spicy dryness as the tide of flavour ebbs.

FINISH

Aromatic, spicy and drying; a balancing bitter edge embraces more of the soft nutty, biscuity notes, always maintaining that essential freshness overall.



DISTILLERY FACTS

Established in 1846 near Port Askaig, by Hector Henderson. **Caol Ila means ‘Sound of Islay’ in Gaelic.** A waterfall supplied power for the barley hoists and pressure for the fire hydrants. **Today, a novel heat exchanger uses the sea to cool hot process water before returning it to the condensers.** 12 year old, 18 year old and cask-strength regular bottlings since 2002. Both 12 and 18 year old won IWSC Gold Medals in 2004 and 2005, 2008. 12 year old wins Double Gold at San Francisco World Spirits Competition 2010; Master at Scotch Whisky Masters (SWM) 2010, Gold 2011. New 25 year old and Moch bottlings extend the range with new packaging throughout in 2010. First 8 year old Unpeated bottling voted Best Islay (unpeated) single malt whisky under 12 Years Old at the World Whiskies Awards, 2007. Distillers Edition (DE) Gold & Best in Class at IWSC 2009, Gold at ISC 2009, Scotch Whisky Masters 2010, Double Gold & Best Single Malt Scotch whisky, SF 2011. Caol Ila Moch, Master, SWM 2011. Sweet starting, maritime style with (in peated bottlings) a characteristic lingering, smoky finish.

A secret cove

A single track road twists and turns down into Caol Ila’s secret steep-sided cove near Port Askaig to find the distillery in full production in this 1930s picture. On the shores of the Sound of Islay, eagerly facing the morning sun, this is the first distillery on Islay to see the dawn each day.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



When Helen Cumming waved a red flag to warn her neighbours that excise-men were in the vicinity no-one had any idea that her farm would one day become a legal distillery, still less that its malt whisky would become one of the world's most famous. But her family's generosity of spirit was reflected in the liquid itself, and as the years went by her daughter in law Elizabeth, dubbed 'The Queen of the Whisky Trade' took Cardhu, as it became known, to greatness.

DISTILLED 1991 ABV 54.2%
CARDHU
21 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM SPEYSIDE.

21

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt. From the renowned Cardhu distillery on Speyside. A second limited release in this series. Interesting to compare with the 22 year old 1982, released in 2005. From ex-bourbon American Oak casks filled in 1991. Fewer than 6,000 individually numbered bottles worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP £160 per bottle.



Clean and precisely structured; delicate and feminine on the nose, yet also robust, assured and unusually spicy. A beautifully balanced malt in which lusciously rich and indulgent vanilla notes are complemented by elegantly aromatic and refined tannins in the palate and finish.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Old gold; richer amber depths.
Good beading.

NOSE

Mild and at first quite shy. An early creamy, fruity note of vanilla and boiled sweets (bubble gum!) is faintly underscored by a rich, floral perfume with a cleansing edge. The creamy fruitiness persists as dried figs, rum-and-raisin ice cream, red apple skins and beeswax. Later a malty, biscuity base layer is revealed, as the cleansing edge becomes a sharply defined top layer. Overall, it's a richer vanilla custard and fruit trifle creaminess that emerges. Water opens things out, raising both fruit and floral scents slightly, the boiled sweets now mandarin-flavoured.

BODY

Fine and light.

PALATE

At natural strength, smooth and savoury, with light acidity. Clean, refined, pleasantly drying and delicate. Then wonderfully aromatic with notes of black cherry; growing spicy, warming and elegant, with nutty, dark chocolate offset by buttery shortbread. It's even softer with a drop of water. Now the taste starts cooler and sweeter; still savoury (mint on a fresh fruit salad) but also newly spicy across the tongue.

FINISH

Long, aromatic and warming; smooth vanilla balanced by juicy tangerine and faint orange oil with spicy cedar, late silky-smooth dryness and a wisp of smoke.





DISTILLERY FACTS

From 1811 John and Helen Cumming kept an illicit still at Cardow in the Knockando valley, a wooded rural district midway between Keith and Rothes. Cardow became a legal distillery in 1824 and Helen was instrumental in its growth. She was helped in this by her son Lewis, who died in 1872, and especially then by his widow, Elizabeth, dubbed 'Queen of the Whisky Trade', who rebuilt the distillery in 1884. The single malt Elizabeth made here was 'of the thickest and richest description', and was sold under the trademark, Cardhu. There have been three previous distillery releases. A 25 year old cask-strength 1973 was released as a Rare Malt in 1998, followed by a 27 year old in 2000. In 2005 a cask-strength 22 year old 1982 was also released in Spain and France. A particularly smooth malt with refined aromas and creamy-sweet, golden flavours, it was well-balanced with good viscosity.

Workers at Cardhu in 1885

In the early years at Cardhu distilling was a family business. The young apprentices in the foreground probably played in the yard as children while their fathers worked the distillery.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



Convalmore was built for founder Peter Dawson, whose well-known brand Dawson's Perfection took as its motif the bluebell, Scotland's national flower and a common springtime sight in these parts.

DISTILLED 1977 ABV 58.0%
CONVALMORE
36 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM SPEYSIDE.



RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt whisky. From Convalmore, a closed distillery in Dufftown on Speyside. A very rare malt, highly prized by collectors. A very limited release of individually numbered bottles. Latest of three limited releases to be offered by the distillery. Interesting to compare with a 28 year old 1977 we released in 2005. From European Oak refill casks. Just 2,980 bottles available worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP £600 per bottle.



A subtle, big whisky with an astonishing rich velvet texture that wears its age lightly yet has developed a wonderful complexity. The young-seeming, sweet and succulent nose leads, via the smooth, comforting palate, to a drying conclusion of marked aromatic complexity, masterminded by long years of maturation.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Vibrant amber or faded polished mahogany. Medium beaded and very viscous.

NOSE

Mild and profound, opening scented with eucalyptus oil and a trace of leather infusing a soft pillow of marshmallow and creamy toffee. Through this runs a rich vein of clean, tropical fruit sharpness, underscored by soft, crumbly, malty notes with a wisp of smoke. In time, the appetising fruit retreats into a rich, creamy shell. A little water brings up the soft toffee creaminess and a little mint, as the fruity complex becomes fresher.

BODY

Lightly oily. Smooth.

PALATE

Big and oily in texture; gently warming and extremely soft and comforting, like a whisky syrup! The taste is immediately sweet yet, with a note of aniseed, not cloying. Successive waves of pepper, salt and smoke follow, revealing a mouth-drying nature. With water, the texture remains big, thick and tongue-coating; the taste is sweeter, cooler and minty; slightly dusty, too, with hints of shortbread and scented smoke.

FINISH

Superbly balanced, with an unusual aftertaste of perfumed smoke. There's still sweetness but it's in essence drying, with notable cedar-rich hints of cigar box.



DISTILLERY FACTS

Production began in 1894 just outside Dufftown, near the River Fiddich at the heart of Speyside. Designed by local man Donald Mackay, the distillery took its name from the Conval Hills. Founder, Peter Dawson, took as motif for his well-known brand Dawson's Perfection the bluebell, symbolic flower of Scotland and a common springtime sight on Speyside. The same motif appears on the packaging of this 36 year old. His distillery enjoyed good railway links and its whisky was always in demand by Glasgow merchants, including James Buchanan, who took over in 1906. However, fire broke out in the area of the tunroom on 29 October 1909. Rebuilt in 1910, the distillery now dallied with a patent still for some years before reverting to traditional methods, it being found that the patent spirit did not age well. It produced steadily, save in wartime, until finally falling silent in 1985.

A peaceful setting

Here's Convalmore in 1934, when it was forty years old and producing steadily, as it did right up until falling silent in 1985. The distillery was named after the Conval Hills, which rise south west of Dufftown.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



*If you should visit Lagavulin by sea,
beware. Not all the rocks in the bay are
easy to see or to miss when the light is
difficult. Many are the stories told at
the distillery; of things that go bump
in the night ...*

DISTILLED 1977 ABV 55.1%
LAGAVULIN
12 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM THE ISLE OF ISLAY

12

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt whisky. From the essential Islay distillery, Lagavulin, on Islay's rocky south coast. Twelfth in a series of special 12 year old releases from the original distiller's stocks. Vatted from refill American Oak casks, each at least 12 years old. Available in limited quantities worldwide. UK RRSP £80 per bottle. A perfect introduction to the sheer excellence of Special Releases.



An initially reserved member of the Lagavulin family, which grows much more at ease and expressive with water. As you might expect, this is a wonderfully appetising, invigorating and cleansing malt; soaring pine and pungent smoke invite you to pair it with lean, intense foods.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Extremely pale green-gold.

NOSE

Soft, beguiling and cautious at first, when an appetising sharpness slowly crystallises into red berry fruit, then developing soft, savoury aromas and a delicious smoky sweetness. Savoury hints of charred baked potato skins cooked in a bonfire come first, then peat smoke and a box of spent matches come through. Later still, there are teasing, oily hints of sharp tropical fruit (lime pickle?). These aromas are altogether softer with water; less tense and underscored by youthful sweetness. There are smoky-fresh notes, then raisins and dried fruit, with distant wood smoke.

BODY

Light. Oily.

PALATE

Cooling at first, then salty, drying and dusty, with a good balance of sweetness and acidity. Beautifully cleansing, like a salad of tarragon and peppery rocket, then really appetizing, as if a char-grilled endive splashed with peppery olive oil. The charred notes then strengthen, into smoky wax. Sweeter with water and more accessible, as captivating notes of aniseed and fennel seeds give way to charred fruit scones and burnt jam tarts.

FINISH

Simultaneously sweet and savoury, dominated by pungent smoke and appetising aniseed. With growing warmth, it becomes oily near the end. With water it is sweet and abrupt with subdued smoke; pleasantly drying and piney.



DISTILLERY FACTS

On Lagavulin Bay, overlooked by Dunyvaig Castle, ancient stronghold of Lords of The Isles. **Founded 1816 by John Johnston on site of earlier illicit stills. Succeeded by Alexander Graham 1836.** Peter Mackie takes over 1890. Opens a second distillery on site, Malt Mill, 1908. **Lagavulin closed for one season 1918. Mackie & Co. becomes White Horse Distillers 1924.** Closed 1941–45. Electric light 1948. Rebuilding begins 1951; explosion and fire 1952; production resumes 1953. Malt Mill closes 1962. Lagavulin converted to steam heating 1969. **Bottled at 12 years until 1987; since then, bottled as a 16 year old Classic Malt.** Lagavulin 16 year old has won more than a dozen International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) Gold Medals. Also Gold at ISC 2009. Master at Scotch Whisky Masters (SWM) 2011. Distillers Edition released 1998 – winner IWSC trophies for Best Single Malt over 15 Years and best Special Edition Single Malt 2007, best Special Edition again in 2009, Gold Medals in 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010. Double Gold at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition (SF) 2009 & 2011. Gold, International Spirits Challenge 2010. Master, SWM 2010, 2011. Earlier 12 year old Lagavulin Special Releases won Gold at 2004 and 2005 IWSC, and Gold, 2011 SF.

Lagavulin in days gone by

Malting floors such as this one at Lagavulin were once a common sight in all Scotland's malt whisky distilleries. Malted barley was laid on these floors to dry and turned frequently by distillery workmen such as these. Note the moustache!



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



*If you should visit Lagavulin by sea,
beware. Not all the rocks in the bay are
easy to see or to miss when the light is
difficult. Many are the stories told at
the distillery, of things that go bump
in the night ...*

LAGAVULIN
37 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM THE ISLE OF ISLAY
DISTILLED 1976 ABV 51.0%

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt whisky. From the essential Islay distillery, Lagavulin, on Islay's rocky south coast. The oldest Lagavulin ever bottled by the original distillers and exceedingly rare. From refill American Oak and European Oak casks filled in 1976. Just 1,868 bottles available worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP £1,950 per bottle. The longest-aged Lagavulin we have released, so highly desirable and likely to sell rapidly.



This outstanding mature Lagavulin is a perfectly balanced, calm and confident malt that is utterly wonderful and understated even at cask strength and becomes joyously delicate with water. Smoky flavours can fade with age, but they are undimmed in this elegant yet robust whisky.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Rich amber with copper lights.
Good beading.

NOSE

Modestly low key, setting the tone for a maestro's 'less is more' performance. Yet still the aroma could only be that of Lagavulin: rich and complex, an artist's oils wreathed in scented smoke. The top notes are elusive: is that menthol or beef consommé? Further in, though, there's honeyed toffee with hints of lime zest, and a cigar-box made of resin-rich sandalwood. With water the aroma is joyously sweet and lightly oily.

BODY

Medium. Lightly coating.

PALATE

At natural strength, the taste is sensational, rounded and comforting. There's a nice cooling mouthfeel, while the sweet-smoky start of charcoal and ripe tropical fruits is followed by gathering wood smoke leading to a palate-cleansing, black tea dryness. Along the way waves of honey, pine, treacle tart and roasting chestnuts interact. It's really delicate with water, which pulls back the curtain of smoke to reveal a sweetly coating, softly warming and gingery character that is honeyed yet still refreshing.

FINISH

Initially sweet then drying, a little like a treacle tart made with burnt pastry, but it's the lingering, all-pervading fragrant smoke that seeps into your very soul.





DISTILLERY FACTS

On Lagavulin Bay, overlooked by Dunyvaig Castle, ancient stronghold of Lords of The Isles. Founded 1816 by John Johnston on site of earlier illicit stills. Succeeded by Alexander Graham 1836. Peter Mackie takes over 1890. Opens a second distillery on site, Malt Mill, 1908. Lagavulin closed for one season 1918. Mackie & Co. becomes White Horse Distillers 1924. Closed 1941–45. Electric light 1948. Rebuilding begins 1951; explosion and fire 1952; production resumes 1953. Malt Mill closes 1962. Lagavulin converted to steam heating 1969. Bottled at 12 years until 1987; since then, bottled as a 16 year old Classic Malt. Lagavulin 16 year old has won more than a dozen International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) Gold Medals. Also Gold at ISC 2009. Master at Scotch Whisky Masters (SWM) 2011. Distillers Edition released 1998 – winner IWSC trophies for Best Single Malt over 15 Years and best Special Edition Single Malt 2007, best Special Edition again in 2009, Gold Medals in 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010. Double Gold at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition (SF) 2009 & 2011. Gold, International Spirits Challenge 2010. Master, SWM 2010, 2011. Earlier 12 year old Lagavulin Special Releases won Gold at 2004 and 2005 IWSC, and Gold, 2011 SF.

In the still house

A low wines still at Lagavulin, which has four stills, two of them pear shaped and inherited on its closure from a sister distillery on the site, Malt Mill. 1,450 gallons may sound a lot, but a similar still at another distillery might hold ten times as much. Add to this Lagavulin's slow, perfect pace of fermentation and distillation, and you can be sure that production will never keep up with demand.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



Now the capital of the Western Highlands, the town of Oban grew up around the distillery, which was founded here in 1794. As befits its mainland setting facing the Hebridean islands, Oban combines some of the pungent style of the islands with the lighter, fruitier style of a Highland malt.

ABV 58.5%
OBAN
21 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK STRENGTH
SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY FROM THE
WESTERN COASTAL HIGHLANDS.
21

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt. From Oban, a tiny distillery on the west coast of Scotland, gateway to the islands. A very rare extra-mature Oban, the first for ten years in this series of limited releases. From rejuvenated American Oak and second fill ex-bodega casks. Just 2,860 individually numbered bottles available worldwide. From specialist retailers only. Interesting to compare with a 20 year old from refill casks released in 2004. UK RRSP £225 per bottle.



Oban, and then some. A beautifully paced, confident and assured malt; complex and contradictory; yet always rewarding. Rich and sweet then briny and spicy; at once conveying the freshness of walks along the coast and through apple orchards early on a crisp, autumn morning.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Polished beech-wood; richer and deeper in sunlight. Moderate beading.

NOSE

Full, accessible and oily, with rich caramel notes embracing sweet, ripe apples set in burnt pastry yet also with fresh and cleansing maritime notes; fragrant dried seaweed, hot sand dunes. Then darker, linseed-oil-rich aromas like those found at a furniture restorer's lead to a briefly salty, then spicy, aromatic conclusion. It's more complex and sweetly rounded with water, with lighter caramel, more ripe autumn fruit, and a trace of smoke, delivering a pleasurable, moreish malt.

BODY

Rich.

PALATE

Warming overall, the dense, oily texture beautifully coating and liqueur-like. The taste is first sweet, with fruity vanilla toffee, then salty, with pistachio shells, and burnt pastry. Becomes sweeter and less salty: less the old sea-dog! Mouth-cleansing, cool and fresh, and drying. Water emphasises the cooling, sweet and salty notes; rich dark chocolate and minty smoke.

FINISH

Lengthy and drying, starting sweet and savoury with raspberry juice, dark smooth chocolate, ginger and clove, yet with an attractive salty, oily aftertaste, all brine and smooth olive oil.

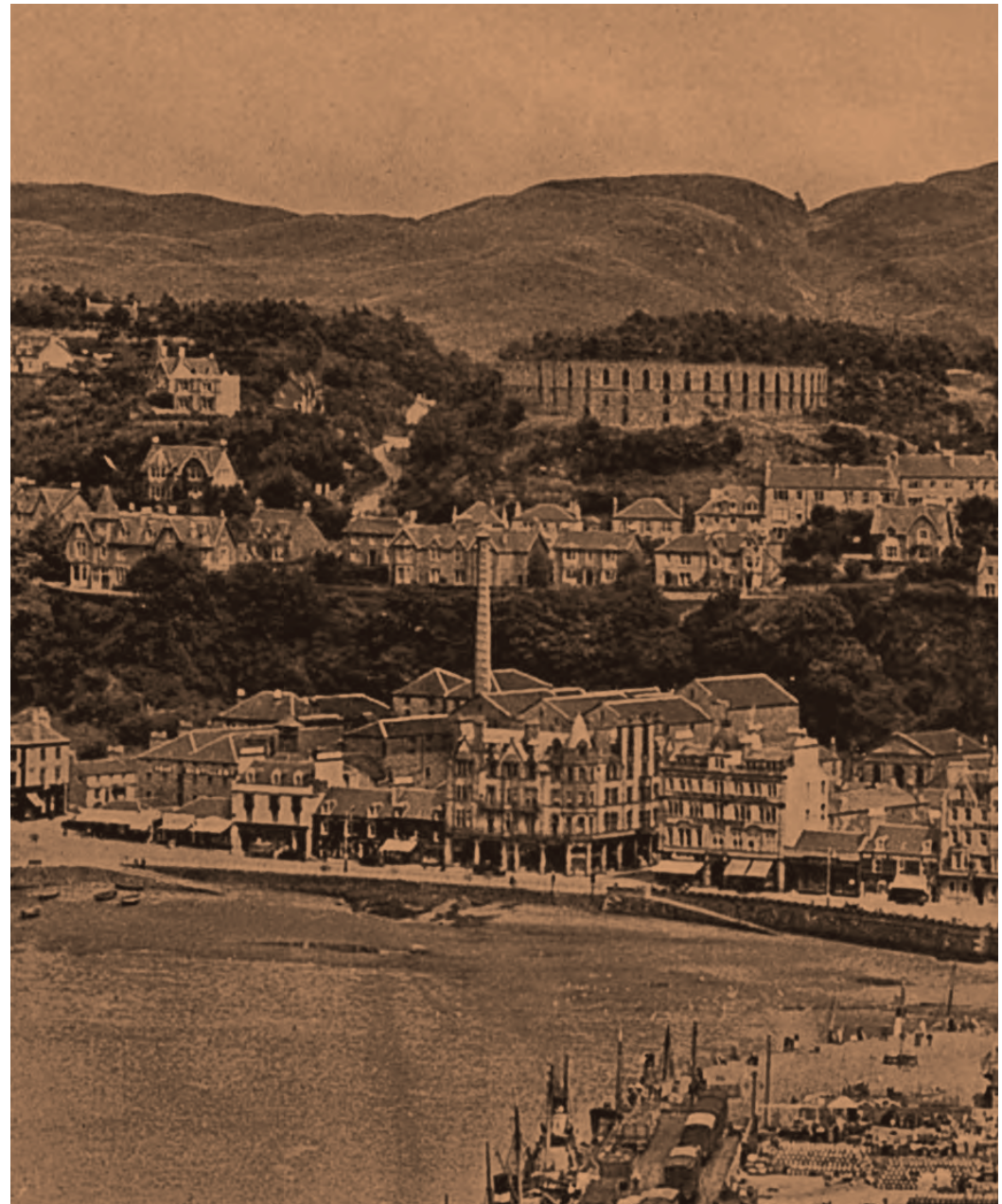


DISTILLERY FACTS

Founded by Hugh and John Stevenson 1794. Advertised to be 'the finest sma' still whisky in the Highlands' by new owner J. Walter Higgin in 1883. Acquired in 1898 by Alexander Edward, also owner of Aultmore. Edward sells Aultmore, founding Oban Distillery Company 1923. Part of Scottish Malt Distillers 1930. Stills converted to mechanical stoking 1960. Closure announced 1968 – reprieve granted and a new still-house built 1972. 14 year old becomes a Classic Malt 1989. Wins an IWSC Gold Medal in 2004. Distillers Edition wins IWSC Gold Medal in 2002. Previous distillery releases include a 20 year old released in 2004. Pleasant mouthfeel with good acidity. Fresh and slightly spritzich; traces of peach and acid drops. As it developed it faded gently, but retained a delicate lavender-like perfume.

Oban Distillery

The pitched roofs and tall chimney of Oban Distillery overlook the harbour of this small West Highland town, gateway to the Western Isles. In 1890, during a rare phase of building work here, Mesolithic remains were discovered in a cave behind the distillery. People have lived here for a very long time.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



Port Ellen is for many Islay's iconic forgotten distillery. After a successful early life, it closed for more than thirty years in the depression of the 1930s, only to rise again, re-equipped, in 1967. For the next decade and a half it triumphantly produced what we now know to be some of the finest whisky in the world, before falling victim to a wave of closures in the 1980s. Its enduring legacy is found in an unique series of annual releases, of which this is the thirteenth.

34
PORT ELLEN
34 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM THE ISLE OF ISLAY.
DISTILLED 1978 ABV 55.0%

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt. From Port Ellen, a closed distillery on the Isle of Islay. Now very rare and highly sought after at this age. Thirteenth of a very limited series of annual releases. Annual allocation ensures availability of this irreplaceable malt for just a little longer. From refill American Oak and refill European Oak casks filled in 1978. Just 2,958 individually numbered bottles available worldwide. From specialist retailers only. The oldest release of Port Ellen to come from the original distillers. UK RRSP £1500 per bottle.



A phenomenal, mighty and utterly compelling Port Ellen with astonishing complexity and huge character. The refined nose gives no clue to the vivid, immediate onrush of astonishing flavours; a fine interplay of clean citrus, alluring smoke and salt with honeyed sweetness.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

A clear amber, like antique gold in sunlight. Dense beading, suggesting rich texture.

NOSE

Cautious and clean at first, with hints of dark toffee wrapped in wood smoke, then cooling oil of eucalyptus and a trace of bruised apple fruit. The wood smoke parts to reveal a savoury, meaty scent, then sweet honey, toasted cereals and a whole artist's studio of oils. With water, it starts smoky (like vegetables on a barbecue) the underlying oiliness now punctuated by hints of lime.

BODY

Light, oily, smooth.

PALATE

Stunning. Caution is thrown to the winds as sweet and intense smoke races across the palate chased by fresh lemons, lemon zest and butter. This rich, fruity smoky-sweetness becomes tongue-coating, smooth dark chocolate enveloped in exquisite wood smoke. It drinks very well straight and when the attack slows, there's yet more honey, lemon and a sprinkling of sea salt. If water is added it is smooth, lightly oily, much sweeter now and more accessible; still some salt, with a new spicy tingle.

FINISH

Long, coating, intense and sustained, all pervading scented smoke, hints of mint and bergamot, then finally dense and savoury, with an aftertaste suggesting cloves.



DISTILLERY FACTS

Port Ellen was established as a malt mill on Islay's famous south coast in 1825. It developed into a major distillery under John Ramsay from 1833–92. Trading directly with North America, in 1848 Ramsay secured the right to export whisky in larger casks and to store it in bonded duty free warehouses prior to export. The system endures. The warehouses he built also still exist, and are listed buildings today. In 1967, the distillery was rebuilt, producing throughout the 1970s before closing in 1983. The Port Ellen name is kept alive by the island's maltings. Previous Special Releases of Port Ellen have regularly won Gold or Silver Medals at IWSC. A 29 year old was also voted Best Single Malt Scotch, winning Double Gold at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, 2009. We think that this is yet another example destined for high praise.

Port Ellen distillery in its heyday

Port Ellen's setting alongside a busy harbour on Islay was deliberately chosen, and enabled the building of Scotland's first bonded warehouses to hold stock that was directly exported to America by the far-sighted owners, beginning in the 1840s. This picture was taken during the decade in which this Special Release was distilled.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



The leaping salmon, symbol of The Singleton, is a common sight along the River Spey near Dufftown distillery, which makes its home in this, the capital city of single malt Scotch whisky. The Singleton of Dufftown enjoys the smooth, balanced character that has made this Speyside malt popular since its foundation near the end of the nineteenth century.

DISTILLED 1985 ABV 52.3%

THE SINGLETON OF
DUFFTOWN
28 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM SPEYSIDE.

28

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt. From Dufftown, an active distillery on Speyside. A first limited cask strength release of The Singleton in this series. From American Oak refill casks filled in 1985. Just 3,816 individually numbered bottles worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP £235.



A wonderfully appetising, full flavoured and mature malt, made subtle by long ageing, yet retaining its malty/nutty distillery character. Beautifully structured and paced, it is at once fresh and alive on the palate, yet also evocative of the past; complex and exciting, intricate and intriguing.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Deep antique gold. Good beading.

NOSE

Grand and mild; compact yet detailed, with ripe apple and pear fruit or perhaps beeswax and heather pollen, and scents of moorland herbs. Quite autumnal, with faint smoke and a savoury cereal note, and like an old dusty library carrying scents of wax and worn leather. Later, orange oil underscores the complex floral notes. In time some vanilla develops, becoming intense buttercream. Water lightens it considerably and brings out the malty, cereal character (like being in a grain loft), with leafy strawberries, more waxiness and the merest trace of smoke.

BODY

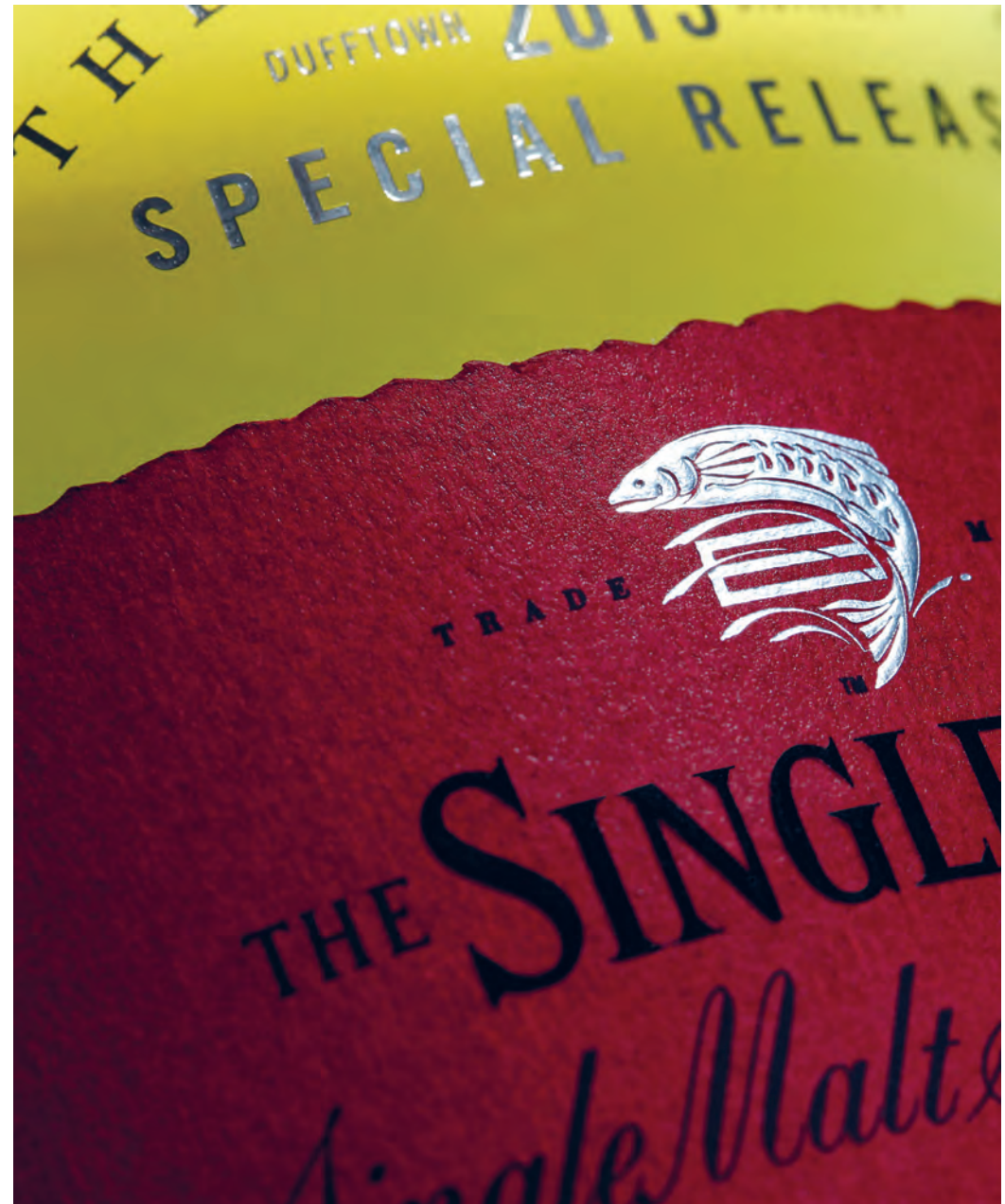
Oily, dense.

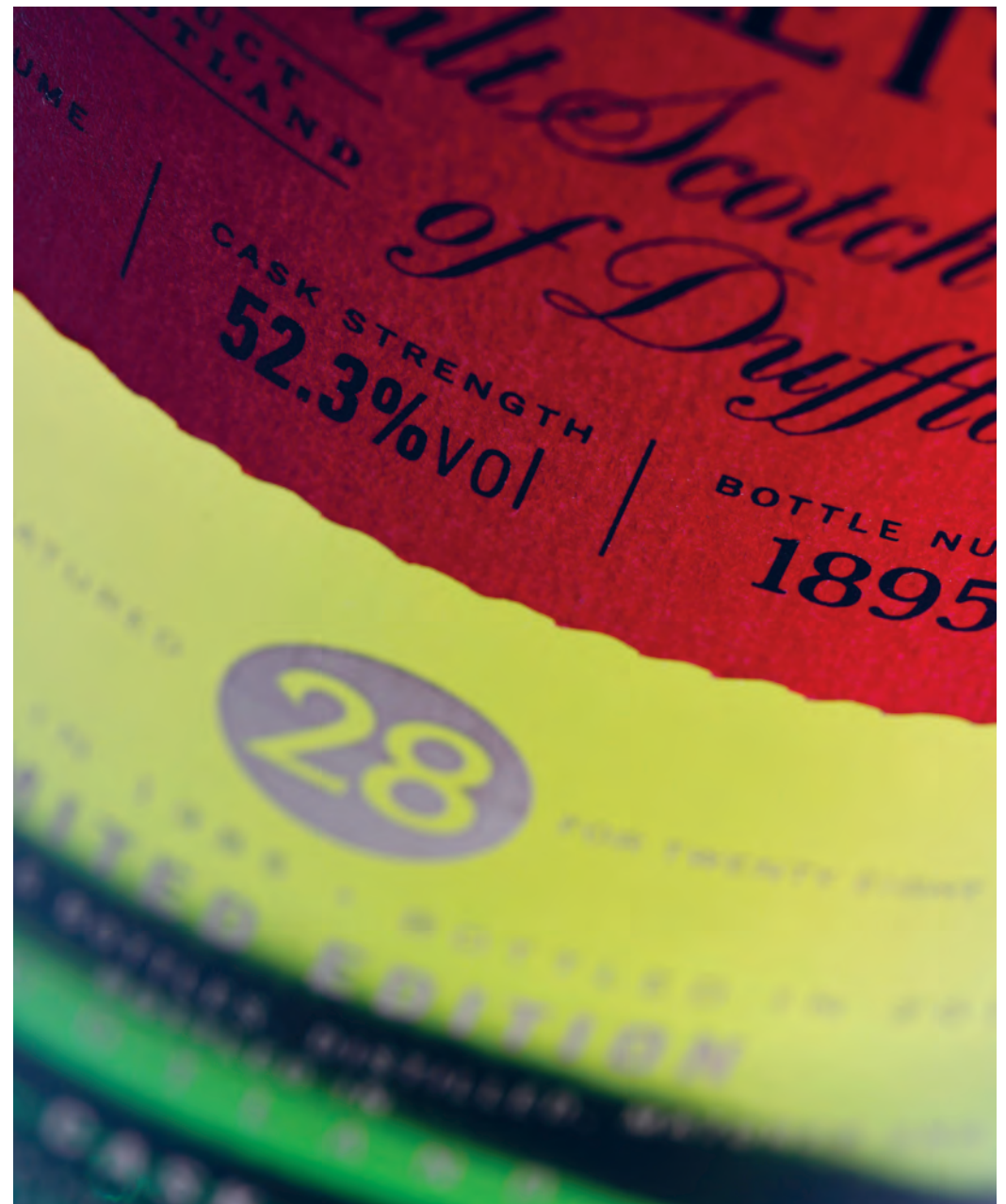
PALATE

At natural strength, this malt has a big, oily feel; sweet and reminiscent of a whole wheat breakfast cereal coated with honey. The initial effect is warming, with an instantly appetising astringency. Below this lie minty and faintly smoky notes and rich chewy liquorice with a digestive biscuit sweetness. It's all sweeter and less oily with water; losing that piercing aromatic dryness and with the cereal note dimmed, it's altogether gentler and more approachable.

FINISH

Invigorating, warming and gloriously astringent at the end, with notes of pine and cedar to leave the palate tingling over a lingering last wisp of smoke.



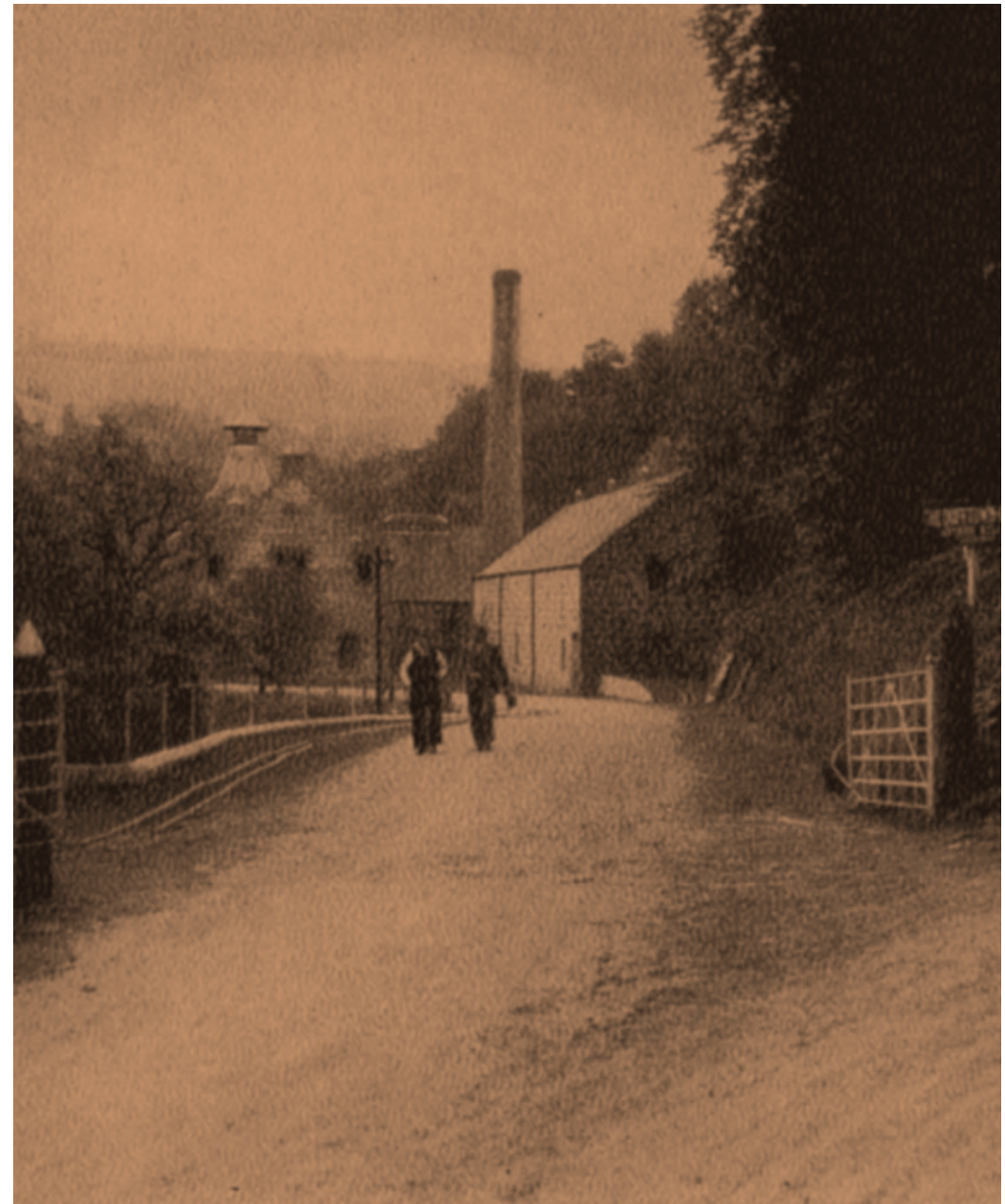


DISTILLERY FACTS

Founded in 1896 Dufftown was sixth to rise of seven distilleries here at the heart of Speyside. In the early years, its right to draw spring water from the finest local source, Highlandman John's Well, was challenged by established rivals downstream. It was said at the time of the water used that it 'comes from the Conval Hills, and the famed (Highlandman John's) Well, and is of excellent quality'. Things got pretty heated; the then owners of neighbouring Mortlach even resorted on occasion to diverting Dufftown's supply in the early hours of the morning. Persistence and common sense eventually resolved such early differences and this cask-strength 28 year old happily reveals some of the reasons behind rivals' jealousies. This is the first long-aged release of THE SINGLETON OF DUFFTOWN, a well-balanced single malt bursting with rich, smooth taste and popular throughout Europe.

Dufftown distillery

Conditions at rural malt whisky distilleries were often quite primitive until well into the 20th century. In this early picture of Dufftown the road is untarred. Then, the railway carried its casks to the merchants of Dundee, Edinburgh or Glasgow. Only in the second half of the 20th century did roads begin to play a greater part in the distillery's story.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH



*No whisky could carry the words
‘Made by the sea’ with more pride
than Talisker, made on the shores of
Loch Harport since 1830 and the only
malt whisky made on the Isle of Skye.
Its maritime character perfectly reflects
that of its rugged island surroundings,
its smooth, peaty, malty surge of flavour
reaching a satisfying, spicy peppery
crescendo as with ocean waves
crashing over rock.*

DISTILLED 1985 ABV 56.1%
TALISKER
27 YEARS OLD NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY FROM THE ISLE OF SKYE

27

RELEASE NOTES

A limited edition, natural cask strength single malt whisky. From the only distillery on the Isle of Skye. The seventeenth release in this series from the distillery. From American Oak refill casks filled in 1985. Interesting to compare with previous bottlings in the same series, all of them whiskies of great dignity, subtle nuance and easy balance. Just 3,000 individually numbered bottles available worldwide. From specialist retailers only. UK RRSP of £475 per bottle.



A supreme Talisker; wonderfully classic in style and as sophisticated as its peers but with an extra 'chilled' self-assurance and even an edge of darkness. A malt that lives life to the full and doesn't take itself too seriously: it's also ever-so-slightly edgy, with suggestions of a volcanic heritage.



TASTING GUIDE

APPEARANCE

Rich, clear amber with notes of antique gold.

NOSE

Absolutely classic Talisker. First soft and sweet, with shortcrust pastry and rich warm dark chocolate. Next, after the faintest mention of raspberry juice, comes waft upon waft of warming, homely smoke. Through this rises the buttery, oaty aroma of home-made chocolate chip cookies, offset by sharp mixed-berry jam and ripe red apples. There are late top notes of beeswax and polish on new shoes fresh from the box. Water makes it all sweetly smoky and liberates mysterious volcanic fumes.

BODY

Medium. Oily.

PALATE

Cool, salty and sweet; then warming and spicy, with notes of ginger and clove. Growing rich and malty, with helpings of plum pudding and fruitcake. Then resin-rich, dense, fragrant pine-wood smoke. Soft, smooth and bitter-sweet with water, with gently pervasive smoke.

FINISH

Long and silky-smooth, with more of that drying, unctuous and soft dark chocolate, and chewy, with ripe plums. Late warmth, cigar-box cedar and coal smoke.





DISTILLERY FACTS

Only distillery on Skye, founded 1830 by Hugh and Kenneth MacAskill. Sold 1848 to North of Scotland Bank; leased to Donald MacLellan (bankrupt 1863) then John Anderson (bankrupt 1879). Alexander Grigor Allan and Roderick Kemp take over—by 1898 TALISKER is one of the largest selling single malts. Distillery pier and cottages built 1900. Closed 1941–45. As flaming whisky runs into Loch Harport, seeming to set the loch itself ablaze, fire destroys the still-house 1960. Re-opened 1962 with exact replica stills heated by coal furnaces, featuring U-shaped lye pipes that yield a form of double distillation responsible, together with cooling in traditional worm tubs, for Talisker's unique texture and character. Floor maltings close 1972; stills now steam heated from oil fired boiler. Sold as an 8 year old until 1987, when 10 year old Classic Malt released. Refit including new mash tun and five new worm tubs 1997–8. 10 year old wins six IWSC trophies 1993–1997–1999–2001–2002–2004 for Best Single Malt under 12 Years Old, and so far, thirteen IWSC Gold Medals. 18 year old also wins Gold in 2005–2008, takes 2006 IWSC Trophy for Best Single Malt over 12 Years Old, then wins World's Best Single Malt at 2007 World Whiskies Awards. DE wins its eighth IWSC Gold Medal and Double Gold at San Francisco (SF), as does the 10 year old, in 2009. Special Release 20 year old wins Gold Medal at IWSC 2004 and SR 25 year old wins three, at IWSC 2005–2007. SR 30 Years Old wins Double Gold at SF 2007, Gold 2008. Best Island Single Malt over 21 yrs at WWA 2008.

1892 workforce at Talisker

Since earlier days life on Skye has often been the hard-won reward of manual labour. The men of Talisker in this 1892 picture are leaning on their malt shovels, which were used to turn the malted barley laid out to dry on the distillery's malting floors.



TASTING NOTES

COLOUR

NOSE

BODY

PALATE

FINISH

The Classic Malts Selection, Auchroisk, Brora, Benrinnes, Brechin, Caol Ila, Cardhu, Clynelish, Convalmore, Cragganmore, Dalwhinnie, Glen Elgin, Glen Ord, Glen Spey, Glenkinchie, Glenury Royal, Knockando, Lagavulin, Linkwood, Linlithgow, Mannochmore, Mortlach, Oban, Pittyvaich, Port Dundas, Port Ellen, Rosebank, Royal Lochnagar, The Singleton of Duftown, and Talisker words and the Quaich device and associated logos are trade marks. © 2013

EXQUISITELY RARE



A LIMITED COLLECTION OF NATURAL CASK
STRENGTH SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKIES
FROM THE ORIGINAL DISTILLERS