



THE SCOTCH MALT
WHISKY SOCIETY

OUTTURN

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WHISKY WITH
EXPERT NOSES

ADVENTURES IN FLAVOUR AWAIT AT [SMWS.COM](https://www.smws.com)

TASTING PANEL MORE THAN WORDS

The Society's Tasting Panel is fundamentally unchanged since it first formed in founder Pip Hills's kitchen in Edinburgh in the early 1980s, but more rigorous than ever. Its mission – to assess every sample before it can make it into a Society bottle, to create a name and tasting note and to uphold the Society's mission: to leave no nose upturned.

"It would be a shame to describe such lovely whisky in mere words. Perhaps a pibroch* would do."

If a literary great such as Hamish Henderson struggled to find the right language to capture the complexity and depth of the whisky in his tasting glass, what hope for us mere mortals?

Hamish was a poet, songwriter, soldier – he personally oversaw the formal surrender of Italy in 1945 – folklorist, co-founder of Edinburgh University's School of Scottish Studies and passionate whisky enthusiast. He was also an acquaintance of SMWS founder Pip Hills, who invited him to participate in an early incarnation of what would become the Society's revered Tasting Panel.

The primary intention was around quality control – with the Panel's main purpose to sample various whiskies before deciding whether they were worthy enough to make it into a green Society bottle and offered up to members. More than that, though, the Tasting Panel set out to actually describe the stuff.

We might take that for granted nowadays, but in the early 1980s the language to talk about whisky barely existed, although an early version of the whisky 'flavour wheel' had recently been created by scientists at Pentlands Research, now The Scotch Whisky Research Institute. At the time, whisky was invariably described only in basic terms of how old it was or where it came from, but with little reference or even interest in its actual flavour.

All that was about to change, with or without Hamish Henderson's input.

Whisky writer Charlie MacLean was an early member of the Tasting Panel and a subsequent long-serving chair. He recalls the Society's groundbreaking role in defining how we discuss whisky and flavour.

"The SMWS was the first organisation to focus on flavour, and really invented a new language to talk about whisky," he says. "The whole point of the Society's single cask bottlings is in their variety, they can be so extraordinarily different, and the Tasting Notes need to reflect that."

Poet and songwriter Robin Laing is another mainstay of the Tasting Panel, having racked up 25 years of sampling whiskies and creating bottle names and tasting notes. He brings his own poetic sensibility to the task.

"People say they can tell my notes because there's an element of humour or wordiness in them," he says. "First and foremost I'm a songwriter and a poet, so I do things with words that other people maybe don't, or bring in odd words or different figures of speech. Words are my living and my craft – although I've also had people ask me, 'Who writes this nonsense?'"

"People like Charlie and me are guys of a certain age who grew up in Edinburgh and a lot of time when you are nosing and tasting whiskies, it brings



back childhood memories,” says Robin. “Those memories can be specific, often to do with medicines that you had as a child, or Scottish sweets.”

Not all the references are particular to Scotland, however. The Tasting Panel has always been multinational and includes both women and men – so everyone brings their own points of reference to the whiskies. “The main thing is that the Tasting Notes have to be informative, relevant and accurate,” says Robin. “But it’s also good to have a bit of fun.”

Yes, a bit of fun. But a discerning nose and the ability to judge a whisky are key attributes for any panellist, as well as impartiality in their opinions.

“People come in and they don’t necessarily know the history of the cask or what project it’s a result of, like we do in the Whisky Team,” says the Society’s head of whisky creation, Euan Campbell. “That gives us a chance to put whiskies in front of other expert noses for their opinion. It also means we can cast our net wide because everyone has different sensory abilities, so we’re utilising that across a wider pool of people.

“I think our Tasting Panel is unique in the sense that while we’re looking at it from a quality point of view, we also look at it from the point of view of a member sitting in their armchair pouring a dram. So we have this balance between the technical quality

factor and the enjoyment factor, which perhaps some other panels don’t have as much focus on.”

Julien Willems from the Whisky Team coordinates the Tasting Panel and arranges each session and who will be participating in each one from the wider pool.

“Having a multicultural Panel and different experiences brings a lot of wealth into what we can put forward,” he says. “Not everything is to everyone’s palate, but the Society aims to satisfy the widest number of members across different cultures and around the world.”

So whether your Society whisky inspires a poetic flight of the imagination or a pibroch, let’s celebrate the work of the Tasting Panel and the outstanding quality of the whiskies they allow to pass under their scrupulous noses and into our bottles.

If you’re feeling adventurous, why not set up your own informal Tasting Panel with some friends and try the experience for yourselves? It might just inspire you to some whisky-related poetry – or maybe even a pibroch.

*Pibroch: an extended solo composition played on the bagpipes.

Words: Richard Goslan
Photos: Mike Wilkinson

AN ISLAND REVERIE

PEATED

CASK No. 4.388
£85.00



REGION	Highland
CASK TYPE	1st fill ex-bourbon barrel
AGE	14 years
DATE	29 October 2009
OUTTURN	1 of 225 bottles
ABV	62.2%
DRAM	D

We combined selected eight-year-old hogsheads from this distillery and then matured that single malt further in a variety of casks, of which this first fill bourbon barrel is one. The resulting nose was an island reverie of heather muirburn, smoked kiln rafters, old retired fish boxes, beach barbecues, welly boots and rock pools. On the palate, that smoke was linked with ash, tar, oak, smoked fish, balsamic, chipotle chillies and muscle rub to create a pleasure-enhancing retronasal experience.

The reduced nose delivered harbours, salted caramel and chalk dusters; the palate gave us perfumed garden smoke, liquorice, black pepper, toffee and thyme.

LIFE'S A RIOT

HEAVILY PEATED

CASK No. 10.274
£82.00



REGION	Islay
CASK TYPE	2nd fill ex-sherry butt
AGE	10 years
DATE	17 October 2013
OUTTURN	1 of 446 bottles
ABV	60.5%
DRAM	D



The neat nose suggested to us such appealing things as caramelised ginger, heather ales, buttered pumpernickel bread and salted Dutch liquorice. With time a really deep and potent peat smoke aroma unfurled itself, along with impressions of kerosene, roof pitch, bitumen and exploded first aid kits.

With water we got a campfire topped up with camphor, plus burnt heather, salted honey, smoked meats and fruity chutney sharpened with sherry vinegar – what a riot... what a beast! The palate was alive with raw seawater, petrol, hot and salty chips, green olives bobbing in a sea of dirty martini, pure iodine and industrial-strength mouthwash.

DELIGHT IN THE UNCANNY

JUICY, OAK & VANILLA

CASK No. 19.103

£149.00



REGION	Highland
CASK TYPE	1st fill ex-bourbon hogshead
AGE	21 years
DATE	17 February 2003
OUTTURN	1 of 241 bottles
ABV	56.4%
DRAM	G



The nose took us simultaneously to a farm shop café and to the orangery, where we found warm rubber boots, a shaved fennel salad topped with rapeseed oil, coffee grounds and cola. The palate was oozing with strawberry, melon, passion fruit and blackberry pie, and offered a touch of mace to a steaming bowl of custard sprinkled with sugared almonds.

Water amplified the custard, added a raspberry slushie and gave coconut on the nose. The palate was now just like the nose, uncanny, but with a spoon of orange marmalade, coconut taffy and ginger. A vocal Panel thoroughly enjoyed this dram.

DRAM - Cierge

TO DRAM, TO SERVE

MEET YOUR DRAM-CIERGE

To help you make the most of your SMWS membership, we've introduced a whole new level of tailor-made member services and personal guidance. With our members at the heart of everything we do, our DRAM-cierge is here for friendly advice, whether it's a question about us, your membership or if you'd like us to share some whisky wisdom and recommendations. And if we don't know the answer – we'll track it down like a whisky ninja!

GET IN TOUCH

We promise we're not robots. We're a small team, all of us members, and would love some chat from kindred spirits – if only to hear what you've been doing and what you're drinking.

Call us on **0131 555 2929** or email **dram-cierge@smws.com**



SOCIETY CASK NO. 30.124 / ODTURN: 1 of 181
SUNSHINE ON THE SOUL

A welcome glow illuminates the soul as warm enissants, fruittake and honeycomb dance with joy alongside allspice, mango and raspberry ice cream.

THE SCOTCH MALT WHISKY SOCIETY

31 YEARS AGED
DISTILLED: 26 APRIL 1993
REGION: SPEYSIDE
CASK: REFILL EX-BOURBON HOGSHEAD

SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY 56.7% VOL 70cl e

CASK NO. 30.124: SUNSHINE ON THE SOUL

A SNAPSHOT INTO TIME

Old whisky is expensive. The first part of that is down to how few bottles there are, and the second part is about the highly-desirable flavours older whisky imparts. But the third and most important part is wrapping your head around how few casks actually go this distance without becoming over-oaked hot messes unworthy of the Society's monogram. When many whiskies hit between five to 19-years old, that's when they'll reach the sweet spot to bottle.

Older whisky isn't necessarily "better" than younger, and I personally love a young distillate-driven whisky, but just take a moment to appreciate just how few casks go this kind of distance, in wood, and not be completely out of balance and still be

a glorious snapshot of another era. It's mind-boggling when you think about it.

Then add in the fact that the vast majority of distillate anyone sees out of distillery 30 is ex-sherry, and this one is refill ex-bourbon. The last thing to remember is how long it took for this to get to us. It takes a day to make a vodka, but it took 31 years for this to be ready. What were you doing in April 1993? Now that really lends some perspective...



Matt Bailey
European Managing Director
#MYWHISKYADVENTURES

SUNSHINE ON THE SOUL

SPICY & DRY

CASK No. 30.124
£425.00



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>Refill ex-bourbon hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>31 years</i>
DATE	<i>26 April 1993</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 181 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>56.7%</i>
DRAM	<i>K</i>

A warm glow flickered and radiated as a Christmas cake, liberally doused in brandy, was set ablaze. The glow illuminated handmade croissants fresh from the oven, soft and chewy flapjacks, and chunks of dark chocolate. Glorious silky textures of salted butter embraced a palate abundant with almond biscuits, fennel liqueur and heart-warming mace and allspice. With a dash of water a wave of fruitiness flooded the soul. Fresh strawberry tarts, raspberry ripple ice cream and tutti frutti danced with joy as they united with slices of charred pineapple, sticky honeycomb and white chocolate. With a rapturous conclusion, mango, melon and grapefruit lifted the spirits with a zingy vitality that gently faded into gentian, crushed chalk and coriander seeds.

THE LAND OF MAKE BELIEVE

SPICY & SWEET

CASK No. 35.390
£50.00



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-oloroso hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>9 years</i>
DATE	<i>11 August 2014</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 295 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>62.3%</i>
DRAM	<i>A</i>

Fresh tangerine juice joined an effervescent sparkle in a classic buck's fizz while strawberries and cream were served alongside dark cocoa powder and tobacco. The spicy tingle of padron peppers excited the tongue before stem ginger in honey combined with raisins and a hint of chocolate.

With a drop of water we were transported to the land of make believe as we strolled through orchards of orange blossom, branches loaded with cherries and cedar trees bearing marzipan. Clementines tumbled into our buck's fizz while sherry clouds gathered above. Finally, as hibiscus petals began to blow in the breeze, we broke apart a block of salted orange fudge.

NECTAROUS TENEBROSITY

JUICY, OAK & VANILLA

CASK No. 44.185
£115.00



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>2nd fill toasted hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>18 years</i>
DATE	<i>31 May 2005</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 250 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>60.0%</i>
DRAM	<i>F</i>

This multidimensional nose ranged from toasted nuts and jamon serrano to chocolate raisins, lavender oil and the smoky dryness of spiced vanilla. We found reassuring sweetness within the intensity of the palate – caramel logs, chocolate hazelnut spread, honey and cherries dipped in dark chocolate; plus white pepper, coffee, fig and eucalyptus.

The reduced nose suggested dark sweetness (dates, brandy snaps, demerara) with lighter fragrances of laurel hedge and orange blossom. On the palate we now found oatly cereal bars with dark chocolate and cranberry pieces, cinnamon, pomegranate, peppercorns and oak.



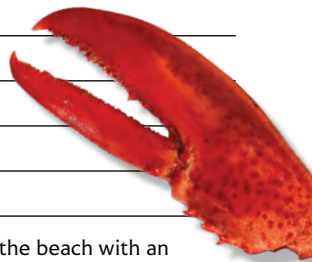
HEATHER HONEY CASHEW NUTS ROASTED WITH SEA SALT

PEATED

CASK No. 53.490
£84.00



REGION	<i>Islay</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>2nd fill ex-bourbon hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>12 years</i>
DATE	<i>5 March 2012</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 257 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>57.7%</i>
DRAM	<i>D</i>



We imagined joining a barbecue on the beach with an array of shellfish just about ready for us to enjoy. What a choice – prawns, shrimps, crabs and lobsters, as well as scallops and octopus. We however took the roasted skate wing prepared with dried chilli flakes, lemon and vinegar.

Following reduction, we had seared ahi tuna with a sesame crust and wasabi served on a bed of seaweed salad seasoned with sesame oil, vinegar and honey. As the evening became night, we gazed into the starlit sky while snacking on heather honey cashew nuts roasted with sea salt.

TEMPURA TOAST

OILY & COASTAL

CASK No. 59.89
£100.00



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-oloroso butt</i>
AGE	<i>17 years</i>
DATE	<i>29 January 2007</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 498 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>56.4%</i>
DRAM	<i>E</i>

Perusing the library shelves, we found a slice of toast among the dusty leather-bound volumes, accompanied by seaweed, rapeseed oil and toffee. To taste, the dram mirrored the nose, with an added side dish of tempura buna-shimeji mushrooms and wasabi peas tossed in coal soot and basil.

Water gave both the nose and palate orange oil, coffee grounds, salted crème caramel and a pinch of peppermint.





SOCIETY CASK NO. 60.41 / OUTFURN: 1 of 234

IT'S TIME TO SPICE THINGS UP

A scent of fresh grass and soft fruits is followed by grapefruit segments mixed with banana slices. Water adds a nettle tea and ginger snaps.

10
YEARS OLD

DISTILLED:	10 SEPTEMBER 2013
REGION:	HIGHLAND
CASK:	1ST FILL EX-BOURBON HOGSHEAD

SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

57.3% VOL. 70cl e

THE SCOTCH MALT WHISKY SOCIETY

IT'S TIME TO SPICE THINGS UP

SPICY & DRY

CASK No. 60.41
£65.00



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-bourbon hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>10 years</i>
DATE	<i>10 September 2013</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 234 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>57.3%</i>
DRAM	<i>C</i>

A fresh aroma greeted the Panel with the scent of grass, cherries, strawberries and gooseberries, while in the background we noted hints of heather honey and a floral perfume. On the palate, as the nose suggested, this was zingy and fresh, with flavours of grapefruit segments mixed with slices of ripe banana and blackcurrants. In the very pleasant dry finish came bitter chocolate with almond cocoa.

Following reduction we found a freshly brewed nettle tea as well as apple cordial and canned pineapple rings. To taste, ginger snaps and nutty fudge brownies were served with a strong cup of coffee, or a hot chocolate made with cardamom and long pepper.

STILL LIFE WITH FLAVOURS

LIGHT & DELICATE

CASK No. 80.56
£69.00



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-bourbon hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>13 years</i>
DATE	<i>6 December 2010</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 285 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>58.6%</i>
DRAM	<i>C</i>

This complex, slightly understated nose combined light-touch brush strokes of fruit with impressionistic dabs of chamomile, geranium, cinnamon and white pepper. The palate initially offered fruitiness again; grapefruit, tangerine and toffee apple blending with some subtle aromatics, such as jasmine and bergamot, then finishing with various spice notes, releasing nutmeg, ginger and cumin – but it was gently warming, not hot.

Additional impressions on the reduced nose included garibaldi biscuits, vanilla, coconut and liquorice. On the palate, the toffee sweetness, the aromatics and the spice were all held lovingly together by a fresh oak and liquorice-flavoured lozenge tang and tickle.

A NEW GUARDIAN

There's a fresh face holding the fort at The Vaults, our spiritual home in Leith where The Scotch Malt Whisky Society was founded in 1983. Give a warm welcome to new manager Joshua Hampshire, who's come all the way from Melbourne, Australia.

Making the pilgrimage to The Vaults in Leith is something every member should tick off their whisky bucket list at some point. By Leith's shore, which was once the heart of Edinburgh's international trade, you'll find an imposing yet familiar building, with a history that goes back to medieval times. You might even recognise it at the heart of the Society's monogram.

Steeped in over 600 years of spirits industry history, the ancient, vaulted cellars still lie below the Members' Room today. The addition of a fourth storey was completed by wine merchants JG Thomson & Co, who leased the building for over 200 years before it became the Society's home in 1983. Through a combination of good fortune and a sense of adventure, founder Pip Hills bought The Vaults in the very first year the Society was born, and we haven't looked back since.

At the start of 2025 The Vaults welcomed in a new manager in Joshua Hampshire, having relocated all the way from Melbourne, Australia. The Vaults will be in safe hands with Josh, with his wealth of experience in fine dining and cocktails.

"My background is mostly around cocktail bars, but quite a lot of the bars I've managed have housed interesting whisky collections," he says. "I'm also someone who enjoys both drinking and talking about whisky. I'm fascinated by the science behind distillation and how different wood types and ageing techniques influence flavour. I'm also interested in distilleries that break the mould or try something different.

"Through my extensive hospitality career I've worked in a variety of different places, and I hope to bring that experience to The Vaults to refresh it, while also honouring its history as the inaugural venue of The Scotch Malt Whisky Society. It's certainly a significant role and the historical value of the venue to the Society and its members is not lost on me. It's a great pleasure to be allowed to safeguard its legacy."

Photo: Mike Wilkinson



THE COASTLINE IN WINTER

PEATED

CASK No. 93.220
£62.00



REGION	<i>Campbeltown</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-bourbon barrel</i>
AGE	<i>8 years</i>
DATE	<i>9 May 2016</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 215 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>59.3%</i>
DRAM	<i>B</i>

A coastal scene in winter: with reeking lums, saltwater-soaked hessian on freshly laid tarmac, and the scent of applewood-smoked bacon in the air. The palate followed with gusto, serving lollies of beechwood tar, smoked tomato soup, an oily sausage roll and salted popcorn.

Water gave a lighter feel to the nose, revealing hair wax smeared on linen, smoked raspberry jam and lemon zest. The palate finished with smoked blueberry angel delight alongside kippers.

RUM 'N' RAISIN ICE CREAM WITH FLORENTINES

SPICY & SWEET

CASK No. 105.54
£64.50



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-oloroso hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>6 years</i>
DATE	<i>10 September 2014</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 240 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>61.9%</i>
DRAM	<i>B</i>

An inviting aroma of figs drizzled with honey and buttery toffee was followed by rum and raisin ice cream with florentines. To taste, we found caramel and vanilla panna cotta sprinkled with roasted hazelnuts and served with a 'Black Forest coffee' – cherry and chocolate liqueur, coffee, whipped cream and green crème de menthe.

Following reduction, sticky toffee popcorn, treacle and maple syrup with aromatic eastern spices danced in the background. There was now a drier mouthfeel, with sweet and spicy notes of traditional mince pies made using shortcrust pastry.

ALPINE SCENE

SPICY & SWEET

CASK No. 108.75
£73.50



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-bourbon barrel</i>
AGE	<i>13 years</i>
DATE	<i>9 May 2011</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 210 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>56.6%</i>
DRAM	<i>C</i>



We imagined walking on a sunny afternoon through alpine meadows with snow-capped mountains wherever we looked and, around us, a sea of flowers: yellow gentian, edelweiss, vanilla orchids and alpine crocuses. On the palate a touch of spice, ginger, cinnamon and clove was soon met by the sweetness of lemon honey scones and refreshing strawberry soda.

Following the addition of water the sweet freshness developed as we found ourselves on a porch, on a sunny winter's day, wrapped up in our favourite blanket. As we sat enjoying a mug of hot loose-leaf hibiscus tea we cheekily added a splash of spiced rum from a pewter hipflask.

ISLE OF AMBULANCE

PEATED

CASK No. 121.109
£57.00



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill ex-bourbon barrel</i>
AGE	<i>8 years</i>
DATE	<i>27 November 2015</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 227 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>61.0%</i>
DRAM	<i>B</i>

The Panel immediately noted such things as bandages, ointments, mouthwash, plasters, mercurochrome and all things hospital! Behind that was a beautifully aromatic and brittle smokiness and the salinity of beach pebbles and seawater.

Water brought out a blade of pure, brilliant peat smoke, with lashings of pin-sharp citrus fruits and iodine drops. The palate was full of pure, crystalline peat smoke, with bags of oceanic coastal freshness and character – delivering lots of pure seawater, grapefruit juice and phenol antiseptic. There were still many other medicinal things such as gauze and ointment lurking about. Reduction added some wonderfully big notes of camphor, putty and bandages soaked in more antiseptic.





SMILE AND NOD FOLKS, SMILE AND NOD

YOUNG & SPRITELY

CASK No. 122.69
£55.00



REGION	Highland
CASK TYPE	1st fill ex-bourbon barrel
AGE	9 years
DATE	6 May 2014
OUTTURN	1 of 228 bottles
ABV	58.4%
DRAM	B

At first sniff our body language included nodding and smiling – under the influence of vanilla, barley sugars and syrup tarts, lemon, dried pineapple, polished wood and a forest walk. The palate was a pleasing combination of an apricot danish, vanilla custard and orange fondant, with a delicate woody touch of coconut, sweet ginger, eucalyptus and Thai red curry.

Apricot jam, peach melba and lemon meringue pie graced the nose after adding a drop of water, while on the palate the spice held up well and the sweetness turned just a little sharper – conjuring up marmalade, stewed rhubarb, ginger snaps and green apple skins dipped in honey.

AND ME AND MY TRUE LOVE WILL YET MEET AGAIN

SPICY & SWEET

CASK No. 135.62
£95.00



REGION	Highland
CASK TYPE	New oak HTMC hogshead
AGE	16 years
DATE	30 July 2008
OUTTURN	1 of 293 bottles
ABV	55.1%
DRAM	E



A wonderfully zesty and vibrant initial nose was dominated by crushed nettles, tart exotic fruits and impressions of New Zealand sauvignon blanc. This evolved quickly into passion flower, mint julep cocktail and tropical fruit teas.

Reduction brought a more floral profile, scented hot-house flowers, runny honey, firm wood-resin notes and still-abundant tropical fruit aromas. The palate was similarly dominated by tropical fruits and showed a gorgeously syrupy texture, full of sweet mango, passion fruit, pineapple and impressions of very old Irish whiskey. Water maintained this superb fruitiness and oiliness of mouthfeel, the overwhelming feeling being of a beautiful balance between wood and distillate having been achieved.

UNSUNG HERO MILTONDUFF

While high-profile distilleries such as The Glenlivet, Cardhu and The Macallan celebrated their official bi-centenaries last year, Miltonduff's 200th anniversary passed almost unnoticed, in keeping with the distillery's long-standing below-the-radar profile.

Miltonduff distillery – also sometimes Milton Duff – was named after the high-profile local landowning Duff family on whose estate it was constructed by Robert Bain and Andrew Peary, soon after the transformative Excise Act of 1824.

The distillery was subsequently acquired by William Stuart, co-owner of Highland Park, during 1866, and in 1895, Thomas Yool & Co became involved in Miltonduff's ownership, ultimately taking full control.

The plant was extended during the whisky boom of the 1890s, and by the end of the century, Miltonduff was one of the largest whisky producers in the country, capable of making more than one million litres of spirit per year. Most unusually, the distillery practised triple-distillation, very rarely encountered in the Highlands, and most readily associated with Lowland whisky-making operations.

Miltonduff remained in the ownership of the Yool family until 1936 when it was purchased by Canadian distilling giant Hiram Walker Gooderham & Worts, which also acquired Glenburgie, having taken control of the popular Ballantine's blended Scotch brand the previous year. Miltonduff subsequently became part of Hiram Walker's subsidiary George Ballantine & Son.

Hiram Walker had made a great deal of money during Prohibition, 'allowing' its whiskies to be shipped into the USA, and was keen to gain a foothold in the Scotch whisky industry to secure supplies of malt spirit for use in Ballantine's. The company also constructed Dumbarton grain distillery, near Glasgow, during 1938.

“THE SOCIETY HAS BOTTLED WELL OVER 100 EXCEPTIONAL CASKS OF MILTONDUFF”

Since its acquisition by Hiram Walker, Miltonduff has been at the heart of Ballantine's, which for some years has been the second-best selling blended Scotch in the world, behind Johnnie Walker, retailing 107 million bottles during 2022.

For a time, however, Miltonduff also produced spirit of a different character, as Hiram Walker installed a pair of Lomond stills there during 1964. Those stills, fitted at several of the company's sites, boasted conventional pots, along with perforated plates in the necks, allowing the production of varying spirit styles. At Miltonduff, they were responsible for a variant

named Mosstowie, and the presence of Lomonds was intended to expand the palate of malts available to the company's blenders.

Mosstowie was lighter in body than 'standard' Miltonduff, sweet, gently spicy and grassy, while some batches exhibited soft smoky notes, due to the use of lightly peated barley.

As demand for Ballantine's grew, Miltonduff was almost entirely rebuilt during 1974, when the complement of stills was increased to six, and seven years later, the pair of Lomond stills was decommissioned.

In 1986/87 Allied Lyons plc took over Hiram Walker's distilling interests, and during 2005 Miltonduff was one of the distilleries to come into the possession of Chivas Brothers Ltd, following their purchase of what had by that time become the Allied Domecq Group.

Just as increasing demand for Ballantine's led to the reconstruction and expansion of Miltonduff during the 1970s, so an even more ambitious project to grow capacity was unveiled in 2022.

In the spring of that year, Chivas Brothers announced that it was to spend some £88m in total, doubling potential output at its Aberlour distillery, while Miltonduff's expansion was to include the construction of a new state-of-the-art sustainable distillery next to the existing facility. The distillery, including a bio-plant and evaporator, would add 10m litres of alcohol to the annual production capacity.

Each of Miltonduff's three existing onion-shaped wash stills has a capacity of 22,730 litres, while the trio of spirit stills can hold 18,200 litres.

'House' bottlings of Miltonduff are rare beasts, currently comprising a 24-year-old in the Secret Speyside range, and a 12-year-old cask strength variant in the Distillery Reserve Collection, available only at Chivas Brothers' distillery visitor centres. However, the Society has bottled well over 100 exceptional casks of Miltonduff during its existence, including the outstanding 40-year-old Vaults collection bottling Cask No. 72.121: **All the right steps.**

Words: Gavin D Smith

Photos: Courtesy of Friends of Single Malt



FULL-THROTTLE COAL SCUTTLE

PEATED

CASK No. 138.24
£79.50



REGION *Taiwan*

CASK TYPE *1st fill ex-bourbon barrel*

AGE *5 years*

DATE *30 March 2018*

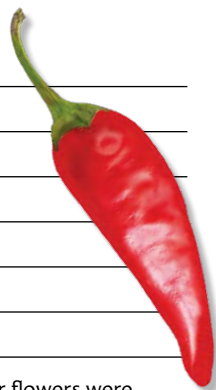
OUTTURN *1 of 201 bottles*

ABV *57.1%*

DRAM *D*

Bunches of fragrant lavender and heather flowers were blackened and sooty with the dark dust from a coal skuttle. Packed beneath we discovered smoked ham, glazed with honey, and grilled peaches arranged beside dairy fudge. Then chillies and ginger chocolate danced around the edge, making way for chunks of barbecued butterscotch.

A little water softened the delivery. Ripe honeydew melons now emerged, wrapped in floral-scented bed sheets. The tongue was caressed by gentle herbal teas, merging chamomile and verbena with smoky lapsang souchong. Hickory-smoked butter finally arrived, spread over charred hot cross buns with a carefree abundance, and served with sweet and spicy roasted peanuts.



HIGHER POWER

LIGHT & DELICATE

CASK No. 138.31
£79.50



REGION *Taiwan*

CASK TYPE *1st fill ex-bourbon barrel*

AGE *5 years*

DATE *30 March 2018*

OUTTURN *1 of 190 bottles*

ABV *55.2%*

DRAM *D*

We closed our eyes, sat back and relaxed. Freeing our minds in a haze of sandalwood incense, cinnamon spice and fragrant rosewater, we drifted away to a distant world of nectarines, scented earl grey tea, and Turkish delight dipped in dark chocolate.

A sprinkle of sacred water brought further enlightenment in the shape of juicy jelly sweets and bitter lemons. Exotic aromas embraced cumin, caraway seeds and fresh peppermint leaves. A touch of pink Himalayan salt then combined with sweetened butter on popcorn, creating a delicate balance that could be quashed with too much water. Divine fruit juices mingled on the finish, highlighted by fragrant petals and a slice of pink grapefruit skin.



THIS IS WHISKY WEATHER...

I'm from Australia. The lucky country. The convict paradise. The place where every spider and snake is out to kill you, or at least that's what we tell the tourists...

The middle of each year is our winter back home, where we proudly exclaim: "Now THIS is whisky weather!"

That's when the peated whiskies come out of the woodwork, we rug up in woolly jumpers and jackets, thick beanies, and clink our whisky glasses. Why? It's winter, and it's nearly as low as 14C! It's safe to say we don't get that cold in most parts of Australia, but we do hot really well.

This means it's a period of adaptation for how to enjoy whisky in all weather. I don't ever see whisky as a seasonal drink anyway. However you enjoy it, in whichever weather, on any continent. All that I know for sure is that it's best appreciated with friends and putting flavour first in your journey. The rest is detail.

We've seen a massive influx of new members coming on board to the SMWS in the last two months, which has been fantastic to see. But for those starting off, some of this might seem a bit intimidating. All these bottle codes? What's a hogshead? What's an ex-oloroso cask?

Before getting too wrapped up in this stuff, here's my personal guide on how to pick your first Society bottle to proudly share around with some like-minded guests:

- *Look at the flavour profile. Our flavour profiling approach has been carefully developed to make picking the whiskies based off flavour, first. Flavour always comes first. Does Sweet, Fruity & Mellow sound appealing? Maybe Spicy & Sweet?*
- *Read the tasting notes. Our expert Tasting Panel produces these notes every month and is meticulous about every cask we bottle. Some of the notes will be serious, some jokey, some straight-up ridiculous. That's in the fun of whisky, it's not meant to be taken too seriously after all.*
- *Look at the price. We try our best to ensure we release a whole gamut of flavour profiles and price points every month, so we're sure you'll find something that tickles your fancy here. It's always free post, so load up!*

I hope to meet you all at one of our events around the place, but in the meantime, happy adventuring, and happy dramming!
Cheers,



Matt Bailey
European Managing Director
#MYWHISKYADVENTURES

A ROSE-TINTED SPECTACLE

AMERICAN RYE WHISKEY

CASK No. RW1.10
£75.00



REGION	<i>Chicago</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>#3 Char new oak barrel</i>
AGE	<i>4 years</i>
DATE	<i>20 July 2018</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 235 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>61.7%</i>
DRAM	<i>D</i>

Juicy berry fruits opened the doors to a world of sunshine on orange skins and spicy cinnamon mingling with crushed coriander seeds. Silky textures flowed over dried cherries, raisins and currants in crunchy breakfast cereal served alongside coffee with ginger syrup and soft Turkish delight.

Adding water unveiled delightful realms of Portuguese custard tarts, dusted with soft brown sugar and bitter orange peel, joined by brioche and toasted malt loaf. Roasted peaches then merged with wild strawberries as rose-scented Turkish delight returned, combining with honeycomb and coconut water before orange, thyme and pine sap converged on the finish.



HERESY TRIPLE TREAT



AVAILABLE
ONLINE
ONLY

£175

70'S CHART TOPPER

SINGLE ESTATE COGNAC



REGION *Cognac Petite Champagne*

CASK TYPE *Cognac barrel*

OUTTURN *1 of 1451 bottles*

ABV *53.0%*

Here we have a rarity indeed. A small batch, decades old cognac from our friends at cognac house C5. While the batch does not meet the requirements to be labelled as vintage, the eau de vie was produced in a single year some decades ago. A perfect snapshot in time.

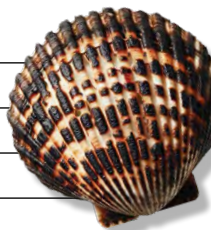
Drawing closer the aromas began to excite the senses, a heady hybrid of fruit and wood. A strong scent of linseed oil recalled memories of polished leather ricocheting off cricket bats in the hot sun of a summer's day. Subtly spiced apple chutney and tarte Tatin meandered with pears poached in rum agricole on a sturdy table of polished Limousin veneer. Green apple and crunchy pear offered a freshness that, when combined with ginger marmalade, honey roast parsnips and sweet tobacco leaf, created a harmonious sense of the divine. Hints of fennel and herbes de Provence whispered in the distance and continued through to a delicious finish of marzipan, walnuts and tingly ginger.

UNDERWATER BARBECUE

SMALL BATCH BLENDED MALT



CASK TYPE	<i>Bourbon and Spanish & American oak oloroso hogsheads</i>
AGE	<i>12 years</i>
DATE	<i>27 April 2011</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1 of 210 bottles</i>
ABV	<i>50.0%</i>



This had a bountiful aroma at first, one chock full of smoke-laced flowers, liquorice, smouldering heather, sweeter sherry impressions and singed orange peel. We also found deeper tones of barbecue smoke, coconut shavings, suncream and silky trails of distant peat smoke.

Water brought wet moss, sandalwood, shoreline freshness, wet seaweed and wood-smoked ham. The neat palate balanced sweetness and salinity very evenly, with rich umami broths, charred shellfish, dark chocolate-coated stem ginger, salted caramel and smoked butter. With reduction came seawater, soy sauce, peat embers, cloves, and fragrant wood smoke from a beach bonfire.

SPANISH SPLENDOUR

SMALL BATCH SINGLE MALT



CASK TYPE	<i>1st fill American & Spanish oak oloroso and refill bourbon hogsheads</i>
AGE	<i>10 years</i>
DATE	<i>9 October 2013</i>
ABV	<i>50.0%</i>
DRAM	<i>D</i>

TAKE ME TO THE
BOTTLE SHOP

An abundantly, almost extravagantly, rich aroma filled the room with the scent of chocolate truffles, rum-soaked raisins, butterscotch sauce and prunes stewed in port wine. The taste was just as luxuriant, with flavours of a Seville orange cake prepared with raw forest honey, which is a little less sweet and has a slightly salty note.

With a drop of water we cracked the crunchy, caramelised crust of an authentic crema Catalan to release the characteristic citrus and cinnamon aromas. On the palate, we cut slices of a cake from Brittany, a Far Breton – a flan-style egg and milk custard with prunes which reminded one of us of a similar dessert served in the Spanish Cantabria region, Quesada pasiega.



TASTING EXPERIENCES & EVENTS

SNEAK
PEEK



THE VAULTS

The Vaults, 87 Giles Street, Leith EH6 6BZ

WHISKY WEDNESDAYS: BURGERS & DRAMS

*Wednesday, 5 & 12 February 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Members & Guests: £35*

Every Wednesday, we invite you to join us for a midweek indulgence at SMWS. Experience the perfect pairing of a juicy venison burger and three expertly selected drams of whisky for just £35. This weekly event celebrates the bold flavours of our handpicked whisky selection, expertly matched with the rich, smoky taste of a venison (or vegan) burger. Whether you're a whisky lover or simply looking for a new midweek treat, our Whisky Wednesdays offer is the perfect blend of comfort, flavour, and fun.

WHISKY MATCHMAKER: IN THE HEART OF THE RUN

*Thursday, 13 February 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Members & Guests: £45*

Step into the world of whisky matchmaking, where your perfect dram awaits! In this fun and interactive blind tasting experience, you'll explore five carefully curated drams, each representing the heart of the run - the purest, most desirable part of the distillation process. As you taste each one, you'll fill out a playful questionnaire, capturing your impressions and preferences. By the end of the evening, your "whisky soulmate" will be revealed – discover which dram is the perfect match for your palate. A society supper is included.



TASTING EXPERIENCES & EVENTS



BATH STREET

40 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 1HG

A TASTE OF LOVE & WHISKY TASTING

Friday, 14 February 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Members & Guests: £35

Celebrate all things love on this Valentine's day. A three-dram tasting followed by a society supper and live music from 5.30pm.

THE BATTLE OF THE PEATS

Thursday, 20 February 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Members & Guests: £45

This week we are exploring the different types of peat found around the world and looking at how the region the peat comes from can influence the whisky that you drink. This tasting includes 5 drams and a society supper.

BEAT THE AMBASSADOR

Thursday, 27 February 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Members & Guests: £45

Back by popular demand! A blind tasting that will feature 5 glorious SMWS whiskies. Our members will have multiple choice options to guess the whisky they will be drinking and ultimately the goal is to beat the ambassador who will be leading the tasting but will also not know what these whiskies are and will be guessing along with you!

Enjoy 5 drams accompanied by a society supper. A prize will be awarded to the winner!

TASTING EXPERIENCES & EVENTS

**SNEAK
PEEK**

QUEEN STREET

28 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JX

WEDNESDAY, WINGS & WHISKY

Wednesday, 5, 12, 19 & 26 February

7.00pm – 8.00pm

Members: £20 Guests: £25

Come for the whisky, stay for the wings.

Join us for a deliciously fun midweek whisky flight featuring three drams, followed by three varieties of seasoned wings.

I.J MELLIS CHEESE AND WHISKY PAIRING

Every Tuesday 7.00pm – 8.00pm

Members: £30 Guests: £35

Get ready for our weekly Cheese and Whisky evening

Sample our cheeseboard with 3 fine Scottish cheeses from award-winning cheesemonger I.J Mellis, and sip on three handpicked Society whiskies, all introduced with flair by our fabulous Society Ambassadors.

It's the ultimate pairing you didn't know you needed.



WHISKY BY CANDLE LIGHT

Friday, 14 February 7.00pm – 9.00pm

Members: £45 Guests: £52

Discover bold whisky pairings with plant-based bites.

Candlelight permits the eyes to both see and rest, the perfect bridge between the world of the awake and the world of dreams. A wonderful selection of 5 drams which promise sensory delight! A romantic French inspired main course and sweet treat will be served at this tasting event.



SCAN HERE TO SEE THE FULL LIST OF SOCIETY EVENTS AND WHISKY EXPERIENCES.



TASTING EXPERIENCES & EVENTS



GREVILLE ST

19 Greville Street, London EC1N 8SQ

INDUSTRY GIANTS: COLIN DUNN

Tuesday, 18 February 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Members: £39 Guests: £45

The whisky industry is full of knowledgeable people, those who not necessarily are in the spotlight but are well known on the inside. This is your chance to listen to their stories, learn from them, be mesmerized by their trajectory and have fun! To help you, they will guide a tasting of at least four whiskies they have selected, regaling us with facts and memories of the distilleries chosen. Colin Dunn is one of the biggest names in the spirits industry! Having worked in it for more than 20 years as whisky ambassador for Diageo and Suntory, Colin is part of a whisky band, lover of Cornish pastries and all-around drinks guru!

BELGIUM MEETS SCOTLAND: CHOCOLATE & WHISKY TASTING

Tuesday, 25 February 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Members: £39 Guests: £45

Our Belgium lassie, Amber Janssens will showcase her knowledge on one of her countries' most famous products, as well as her love for whiskies. Prepare to be indulged with four delicious Belgium chocolates and four superb drams.



SCAN HERE TO SEE THE FULL LIST OF SOCIETY EVENTS AND WHISKY EXPERIENCES.

**FOR ALL OUR EVENTS AT GREVILLE STREET,
PLEASE ARRIVE AT 6.15PM FOR A 6.30PM START.**

SMWS ON THE ROAD

**SNEAK
PEEK**

*You can't visit our Members' Rooms?
No problem!*

*Our SMWS Ambassadors are always
out and about, so come and see us
when we're on the road!*

NEWCASTLE: THE VAULTS ON THE ROAD

Saturday, 22 February 7.30pm – 10.00pm
The Caledonian Hotel,
Osborne Rd,
Jesmond,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2AT,
United Kingdom

Members: £40 Guests: £50

Join us at The Caledonian Hotel, Newcastle,
for an extraordinary evening of whisky
exploration and camaraderie. Led by our
SMWS Ambassadors, immerse yourself in
the world of exceptional drams.

Enjoy 6 drams, included in your ticket, from
a handpicked selection of 18 unique whiskies.
Bottles will also be available to purchase at
exclusive event discounts.

To fully enjoy the experience, we recommend
having a meal beforehand.

Secure your ticket today and raise a glass
to an evening of unforgettable whiskies and
great company!



**FOR TICKETS AND
MORE INFORMATION,
EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE.**



**ADVENTURES IN FLAVOUR
AWAIT AT
SMWS.COM**

February Outturn is available
from Friday, 7 February

0131 555 2929

Mon-Fri 9.00am – 4.45pm

 @SMWSUK  THESMWSUK  SMWS_UK