



Newcomers Whisky Club

May 2016

Alcohol and calculus don't mix.
So don't drink and derive.

- Anonymous

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Tonight's Menu

Port Dundas

Old Pulteney

Cragganmore

GlenDronach

Glenfarclas

Highland Park

Caol Ila



Port Dundas 12 year old

Single Grain Scotch Whisky, 40% abv

Total Wine \$39.99

Glasgow's Port Dundas distillery was a landmark, even though not many people actually knew what it was. It was built in 1811 at the highest point in the city next to the banks of the Forth & Clyde Canal. Another distillery, Cowlares, started operation soon after and in 1860 the two sites – by then both with Coffey stills installed – merged. In 1877, Port Dundas was one of the founding members of the grain distillers' conglomerate DCL.

With its good transport links and prime location in the city, which had become the blending powerhouse of Scotland, Port Dundas grew in size to become the largest distillery in Scotland. By 1885, its three Coffey and five pot stills were producing over two million gallons a year and, in an approach we'd today label as innovative, was using 'American corn', barley, and rye.

Its neighbor, Dundashill (which itself would be absorbed within the complex in 1902), was at that time the largest pot still distillery in the world, its two wash stills and 10 spirit stills making both double- and triple-distilled malt, peated and unpeated. There was a cooperage, housed in the former Dundashill building, and a piggery – the swine being fed on draff. The whole site was topped by a 138-metre brick chimney, for a time the highest in the world.



Two fires at the start of the 20th century didn't stop it for long, though by the 1970s it was in need of modernization. At that point, production increased once more and a dark grains plant was installed.

In 2010 however its owner Diageo decided to concentrate its grain production at the vastly expanded Cameronbridge. Although there were offers from rival distillers to buy Port Dundas they foundered – possibly because of the potential cost of another upgrade. In 2011, production ceased and the site was demolished. The landmark had gone.

Distillery Description:

Aged for three years in refill casks, then split up into equal parts and aged in American oak Bodega casks, new charred European oak casks, or first fill American oak Bourbon barrels.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

The colour is pale golden yellow and the nose has a lovely and very promising fragrance. There are initial aromas of golden syrup, vanilla and desiccated coconut, which are backed up by further notes of freshly sawn wood, oak, cinnamon and crisp green apples. On the palate this whisky has an immediate drying woody spiciness, with the cinnamon from the nose especially prominent. As this softens it becomes creamier in the mouth and the sweeter notes come through well. The two that show first are vanilla and golden syrup, although this is now more reminiscent of honeycomb. Then comes some fresh coconut and green apple, followed by a hint of tropical fruit (maybe peach and mango?) and ginger. The vanilla note seems to increase and the combination works very well. The finish is on the short side, but is warming and full of the woody and spicy characteristics.

www.whiskyforeveryone.com

Bottled at 40% abv, this 12-year-old whisky has a light nose with honey, vanilla and a floral note. I also get a hint of buttered bread. The palate stays light as well. Honeyed oats and vanilla bean comprise the majority of the tasting experience. On the back of the palate, a nuttiness appears, as well as candied flower petals. As expected, the finish is crisp and clean. Flavors here are a tad muted, and the whisky is far from complex. However, lemon peel and a splash of soda water added to this would make for a great summer-time drink. www.adventuresinwhisky.com

Nose: Very pleasing mix of bourbon spices, plum wine and black pepper. In fact, there are some almost rum-like aromas conjuring up hints of cinnamon and apple crumble. Definitely a grain whisky, but one with a fantastic pedigree. Palate: A fabulously evocative palate that tastes extraordinarily like rye whiskey. There are hints of liquorice too, and apple pips, burnt brown sugar and maybe a little strudel, but overall rye whiskey is definitely brought to mind. I could even go so far as to say it strongly reminded me of Van Winkle 13! Finish: Long, spicy finish with dark fruit and almond. Overall: A very good and very different old grain whisky. Definitely worth trying!

www.thewhiskyphiles.com

Tasting Notes:



Old Pulteney 12 year old Single Malt Scotch Whiskey, 43% abv Total Wine \$36.49

The Old Pulteney Distillery is a malt whisky production and aging facility in the Pulteneytown area of Wick. Until the recent opening of the Wolfburn Distillery, Old Pulteney was the northernmost distillery on the mainland.

The distillery was established in 1826 in the name of Sir William Pulteney (who died in 1805), and for whom Pulteneytown is named. For many years the distillery was quite inaccessible, except by sea; barley was brought in by sea, and the whisky was shipped out the same way. Many of the distillery workers were also employed as fishermen. The herring fishing industry is no longer part of daily life in Wick but the distillery continues to operate, producing a Highland single-malt with a reputation as one of the finest available. Characteristics of the whisky are attributed to exposure to sea air during maturation.

The distillery closed in 1930 due to declining trade after the local parish enforced prohibition laws but it re-opened in 1951, four years after Wick's 'Prohibition' ended, when local businessman Robert 'Bertie' Cumming bought it. Cumming sold Pulteney and his other distillery, Balblair, to Canadian giant Hiram Walker in 1955 and from there, through a series of mergers, it ended up in the Allied Distillers' stable. When Allied sold Pulteney and Balblair to Inver House in 1995, the distillery it was in dire need of repair. Since then, the distillery has been renovated, a visitors' center has opened and the Old Pulteney brand has been successfully established.



Odd-shaped stills are found throughout various Scottish distilleries, but Old Pulteney has perhaps the strangest of all. Pulteney's wash still has a massive boil bulb almost as large as the base of the still and a flat top. This odd configuration helps to produce high levels of reflux and to separate specific alcohols. The spirit still has both a purifier pipe and a very convoluted, coiling lyne arm. Again, reflux is maximized here, with that purifier conceivably adding oiliness to the character. Condensing takes place in worm tubs which add weight.

Distillery Description:

Matured wholly in air-dried, hand-selected ex-bourbon casks, the 'unashamedly excellent' Old Pulteney 12-years-old is the definitive expression in the Old Pulteney family. Traditionally crafted using techniques that other distillers have long abandoned, this winner of numerous gold medals at the most prestigious international competitions is a high water-mark of quality spirits.

Tasting Notes:

APPEARANCE: Deep amber, red golden (with a slight pink hue) sparkling with a copper glow. AROMA: Medium to high intensity with a briny hint of sea air. TASTE: Dry, medium bodied and smooth, redolent of honey and cream, faintly salty with a slight spicy note and a sweet long-lasting finish.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

Nose. Crunchie bars, salt and poached pears all swirl around the glass, fruitiness, grape juice with rosewater. Palate. Loads of Orange marmalade, icing sugar, that Lemon Curd coming through again. Salted caramel. Finish. Short, sharp and well balanced, I get a little honey and orange again and some oak for the first time. So, aye, this is a whisky I would happily have on my shelf, in fact I do have a bottle sitting in my storage cupboard, it's under thirty pounds and is another honest whisky giving us an age statement with minimal fussy packaging or marketing, it is what it is and it's braw. (www.whiskyapocalypse.com)

Nose: On the nose, the sherry and bourbon aromas readily apparent when consumed neat are barely noticeable. In its' place is the air of the sea with definite salt attributes. Pleasant and very unique. **Palate:** Light bodied. Much more sea salt initially on the palate with some brine flavors. The sherry and bourbon are toned down a great deal by the ice. This is a good thing in my opinion. The palate presents essentially a mouthful of sea water. **Finish:** A "clean" finish with a faint sherry note lingering. When I say "clean" think of a little lemon zest with Perrier. Again very unique flavor to emerge from a single malt scotch. (www.jason-scotchreviews.com)

Tasting Notes:



Cragganmore 12 year-old Single Malt Scotch Whisky, 40% abv Total Wine, \$53.99

Cragganmore, its name in Gaelic means "Big Rock," is located in the village of Ballindalloch in Banffshire, Scotland. The distillery has a storied history due to its founding by whisky legend John Smith who had spent time at Macallan, Glenlivet, and Glenfarclas. Now owned by Diageo, and marketed under its Classic Malts brand, Cragganmore is rated A1 for blending and it has such a significant role in a number of prominent blends,

including Johnnie Walker Black Label, that it only releases two regular expressions, a 12-year-old and a Distiller's Edition finish.

The famed whisky writer, Michael Jackson, described Cragganmore as having, "the most complex aroma of any malt....astonishingly fresh and delicate." Strangely for such a complex malt, and one recognized so highly within the industry, Cragganmore has never achieved the same status as some of its Speyside neighbors.



The distillery was founded in 1869 by John Smith on land leased from Sir George Macpherson-Grant. The site was chosen by Smith both for its proximity to the waters of the Craggan burn and because it was close to the Strathspey Railway. Smith was an experienced distiller, having already been manager of the Macallan, Glenlivet, Glenfarclas and Wishaw distilleries.

If location showed his skill as a businessman you only have to enter the stillhouse to see evidence of his talent as a distiller. The two wash stills are large but with very acutely-angled lyne arms which descend into worm tubs. The spirit stills are small with flat tops and a long, gently angled lyne arm sticking out of the side of the still. They too end up in worms. It is the latter pair – the only such type in Scotland – which help to generate the make's complexity.



Smith died in 1886 and his family ran the plant until 1923 when it was owned by a partnership of the Macpherson-Grants of Ballindalloch Estate and White Horse Distillers. While the White Horse half of the shareholding passed to DCL it wasn't until 1965 that the Macpherson-Grants sold their shareholding.

Distillery Description: Back in the 1920s this was voted the finest of all Scottish Malt Distillers' malts by their blenders, being titled "A1" for blending. On tasting it, it's not hard to see what those blenders saw. Mature and well balanced, with an astonishingly fragrant aroma, the slight fruitiness on the palate is overlaid with sweet, smoky notes

with hints of sandalwood. A long finish packed with hints of smoky sweetness brings this delightful, refined experience – so accessible, yet so rewarding – gently to a close.

Tasting Notes: Appearance: Pale straw. Nose: Subdued, citric fruitiness; a whiff of bath oil and dentist’s mouthwash. A fresh and appetising nose, with little or no trace of smoke. Body: Smooth, pleasant mouth-feel: firm with a light to medium body. Palate: Drinks well at natural strength; sweet start; pleasant, light fragrant smokiness and a lengthy finish. Finish: Sweet smokiness in the lingering, slightly sour finish.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

In the glass, Cragganmore has the color of white wine with the kind of rich substance that leans out of paleness and into gold. The nose is fragrant with spring meadow scents, heather, hay and wildflowers, mingled with a tinge of smoke, as if a fire were downwind. The taste is quite light compared to the scent, mixing honey with a basket of nutty flavors. The finish starts off a little peppery, and rolls out into pleasant, smoky warmth. It’s a pleasant, and only slightly complex sipper, just the sort of thing for a go-to single malt for everyday drinking or to use as a starter or next step Scotch. (www.whiskeyreviewer.com)

The nose instantly reminded me a Scapa 14, with its notes of heather and honey. Also present is an abundance of floral notes and a strong herbal overtone. The nose on Cragganmore 12 is very pleasantly complex. The body was medium, with a long-lasting creaminess on the tongue. The palate was quite sweet and fruity, again reminding me of Scapa 14. A little bit smoky and salty as well. The finish is long and light. I am shocked at the complexity. Every sip brings different flavors and thoughts. Chestnuts? Toffee? Grapes? Ginger? Lemon? Vanilla? Potentially one of the most complex whiskies I’ve tasted, and given I predominately prefer strong peaty Islays and this is a Speyside; that is really saying something. You can clearly see why it has historically been used in blends, adding considerable depth in any situation. Cragganmore 12 is definitely worth a try. (www.aspiringgentleman.com)

Tasting Notes:



GlenDronach 12 year-old

Single Malt Scotch Whisky, 43% abv

Total Wine, \$53.99

GlenDronach distillery is located near Fergie, Aberdeenshire, in the Highland whisky district. One of a trio of distilleries in “*the Garioch*,” GlenDronach was founded in 1826 by a partnership of local farmers headed by James Allardice (referred to often as Allardice) and was the second distillery to apply for a licence to legally produce whisky under the Excise Act of 1823.

Under Allardice’s lead, GlenDronach built a strong reputation, reaching all the way to the markets in London, but tragedy struck in 1837 when a fire virtually destroyed the distillery. The bad news continued when Allardice went bankrupt in 1842.

The GlenDronach distillery went through a series of owners before being purchased by Teachers and Sons Ltd around 1960. Teachers acquired the distillery in order to supply component whisky for their popular blend and they soon increased the number of stills from two to six.

In 1996 the distillery was mothballed, then reopened in 2001 by Allied Distillers Limited, who sold the distillery to Chivas Brothers Ltd in 2006. Chivas, part of the Pernod Ricard group then sold the distillery to the BenRiach Distillery Company in 2008. In April 2016 GlenDronach Distillery was sold to Brown-Foreman Corporation; the deal included BenRiach and Glenglassaugh distilleries.



The distillery draws its water from the Dronac burn within the distillery grounds. It has its own floor maltings; they use a traditional rake and plough mash tun, wooden washbacks and four stills which were coal fired until 2005, the last in Scotland to be heated in this way. The oddly shaped wash still and the plain sides of the spirit still cut back on reflux, helping to build weight in the spirit.

These days, ex-Sherry casks are the distillery’s signature style. Some is 100% Sherry matured, some is started in ex-Bourbon casks to pick up vanilla sweetness before being racked into ex-Sherry.

Distillery Description:

This superb richly sherried single malt is matured for at least 12 years in a combination of the finest Spanish Pedro Ximenez and Oloroso sherry casks. Non-chill filtered, of natural colour and bottled at 43%, the GlenDronach 12 year old Original is a sweet, creamy dram.

Tasting Notes:

APPEARANCE: Deep amber-red gold. **NOSE:** Sweet, creamy vanilla, with hints of ginger. Spiced mulled wine and pear. **PALATE:** Rich, creamy, silky-smooth. Warm, rich oak and sherry sweetness, full mouth feel, raisins and soft fruits. Spicy with medium length and a dry finish. **CONCLUSION:** Long, full and firm, slightly nutty.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

NOSE: Sherry lolls out of the glass along with some sweet vermouth, ripe juicy dark fruit, cocoa and honey. Light notes of sweet malt dance with an earthy avocado like undertone and a touch of tobacco. Not wildly complex, but pleasant nonetheless. **PALATE:** Moving out first is some sweet ripe red fruit like strawberry, cherry and raspberry. A sherry that is more subtle than on the nose mixes with some malt, a hint of wood, a bit of citrus, leather and sweet tobacco. The palate is a bit more complex than the nose, but not wildly so and again it doesn't really matter because what's there is very nice. **FINISH:** Malt and tobacco and oak and ambiguous sweetness oh my! Long and tasty it's not a bad way to end a dram. **BALANCE, BODY & FEEL:** Nicely balanced with a full body and a luxurious syrupy texture. **OVERALL:** its 12 years of tastiness all rolled up and dumped into a 750ml glass bottle. It's a really nice, accessible and tasty single malt that just about anyone could easily grab off the shelf and enjoy. There's enough complexity for "seasoned pros" to enjoy while not so overly complex that less experienced drinkers would feel lost or overwhelmed. It's a simple, straightforward and tasty whisky that I'm enjoying every single second of. (www.thewhiskeyjug.vom)

Nose: Meaty, sherried nose with lots of dark red plum, chewing tobacco, and a savory quality – like glazed short ribs. Lots going on under the surface – thankfully not too sweet nor too fruity. Just right, in fact. After developing in the glass, there's a little Maraschino cherry, and maybe some wood varnish. **Palate:** Medium-bodied and mellow. Initially there is a rush of cherry and a rye-like spiciness, which subside into barbecue sauce, dried plums, coconut butter, and dark chocolate shavings. **Finish:** Not long, but tasty. The lingering effect of the wood tannin dries the mouth, while a burnt sugar taste like cola persists, but isn't bitter. After a while the malt finally shines through, with a marshmallowy powdered-sugar-covered cereal flavor. Good stuff. (www.scotchnoob.com)

Tasting Notes:



Glenfarclas 12 year-old Single Malt Scotch Whisky, 43% abv Total Wine, \$45.99

Glenfarclas means 'valley of the green grass', an indication of the richness of the pasture land which surrounds the distillery; indeed, the distillery farm ran from the late 1790s until 1988. Like so many of the oldest sites, the farm buildings would have been pressed into service as a site for illicit distillation prior to passage of the 1823 Excise Act; however, it took original owner Robert Hay an additional 13 years to take out a license. When Hay died in 1865 his

neighbor John Grant bought the distillery for £512 and Glenfarclas has remained in the Grant family's hands ever since. This continuity has allowed Glenfarclas to still reflect an older way of making whisky, but this willingness to retain tradition is not down to a romantic belief in the past. Glenfarclas is nothing if not a successful business.

As George Grant, 6th generation of the family, says: "We have lived through twenty-two recessions; we make what we can afford to make, and never borrow money to make it." During the 1980s, as the industry was cutting back on production, Glenfarclas' was increasing. When an upturn in the market came eventually, it had the stock to sell. A balance between supplying stock for third-party blends and retention of a significant percentage for single malt bottlings has also resulted in Glenfarclas having more significant volumes of aged stocks than most distilleries. An aversion to independent bottlers using the distillery name on their (rare) offerings has also helped maintain a strong brand identity.



Glenfarclas has resisted changing their production methods as indicated by their retention of direct fire. Steam heating was tried in 1981, but the conclusion was that the guts went out of the new make spirit, and direct fire went back in; after all, a rich distillate is needed to cope with the tannic structure and rich fruits of ex-Sherry casks.

Today, Glenfarclas uses a mix of ex-Oloroso butts and hogsheads, all made from European oak. The core range is aged in a mix of first-fill and refill. Yet, their traditional approach doesn't mean that there is a lack of innovation at Glenfarclas. Given the depth of stock, the most comprehensive of a single distillery in Scotland, in 2007 the firm released 'The Family Casks' – vintage releases from every year between 1952 and 1998. Today, the starting point of the range is 1954, which is no insignificant achievement.

Glenfarclas also claims to have pioneered the cask-strength bottling, when it launched its 105° in 1968. In 1973 the distillery also was one of the first to open its doors to

visitors. This forward-looking mindset, and a long-term belief in single malt whiskies (rather than only selling fillings for blends) is now paying off for Glenfarclas as an export-led strategy has seen it expand globally, selling in excess of 700,000 bottles annually

Distillery Description: An excellent introduction to the distillery style. Glenfarclas means Glen of the Green Grassland, and the freshness on the nose reminds one of grassland in spring. In 2006 this was named the 'Best Sherried Whisky' in the Single Malt World Cup. More recently Glenfarclas 12 Years Old won Gold at the Stockholm Beer & Whisky Festival in 2007 and again in 2008.

Tasting Notes: Colour: Vibrant amber-gold. Nose: Fresh and beautifully light, sherried fruit combined with a tempting spicy sweetness and a hint of sappy oak. Flavour: Full bodied, delightful sherried fruit, with oak, a hint of peat and delicious sweet sensations. Finish: Long and flavorsome, with a lingering spiciness.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

NOSE: Light and smooth aromas of fruit, sherry and dark sweets like caramel and toffee intermingle with hints of vermouth and melon. **PALATE:** Sherry and a complex fruit come through with notes of banana, peach, apricot and red apple. A bit of spice shows up and notes of honey, dark sweets and a mild earthiness join the party and add a nice bit of dimension to the flavor. **FINISH:** A bit dry but fueled by fruit and sherry and peppered with spice and an ambiguous sweetness. **OVERALL:** Sherry dipped fruit drizzled with dark sweets on the nose with a palate and finish to match, it's a little basic, but well put together. I'm enjoying it quite a bit and I like the way the darker notes play off of the sweeter lighter fruit notes with the sherry weaving in-between everything. It's a tasty, simple, sherried highland single malt that comes together nicely and I'm really glad I picked it up. A good straightforward daily drinker. www.thewhiskeyjug.com)

Nose: Light and creamy with a mix of supple, soft sherry and Manuka honey. Gentle and well-balanced, there are hints of smoke, rich oak, and a little pine resin. Palate: Medium-bodied, with notes of date and walnut cake, Oloroso sherry and hints of earthy forest floor. A beautiful note of malt, with toffee apple and a touch of smoke. Finish: Spicy and long, notes of allspice, cinnamon and cloves, with orange zest and sherry. (www.masterofmalt.com)

Tasting Notes:



Highland Park 12 year-old

Single Malt Scotch Whisky, % abv

Total Wine \$42.99

The origins of distilleries are often, as they should be, obscured by the clouds of half-truth and myth. Such is the case with Highland Park. Was it founded by famed priest turned smuggler Magnus Eunson, or by farmer David Robertson in 1798? The distillery's ornate wrought ironwork gate certainly attests to the 1798 story.

Whatever the slight mystery over its origins, it is accepted that it wasn't until the late 19th century that Kirkwall's then only distillery found its feet properly in the 1870s under the ownership of first William Stuart [who owned Milntonduff] and from 1885 with his business partner James Grant (previously the manager of The Glenlivet) who took full control in 1895. It was Grant who expanded the distillery twice and built up a strong relationship with Robertson & Baxter (R&B).

Highland Park first appeared as single malt in the late 1970s, as an 8-year-old, but the packaging was revamped in the 1980s (and repeatedly ever since) when the 12- and 18-year-old expressions were introduced. It soon built up a strong, following with the range expanding continually. In addition to the core range with age statements, various series have been released themed around Orcadian history and Norse gods.

Peat is made up from semi-decomposed vegetation laid down over thousands of years. That vegetation differs across Scotland depending on climatic condition all these millennia ago. When the peat is dried and then burned, the phenols (smoky aromas) released will have different aromas generated by this vegetation. Mainland peat is smokier because of there being more lignin from trees; Islay's peat appears to have more marine vegetation and contains more creosol (picked up as tar); while Orcadian peat is composed entirely of sphagnum moss and heather. The result, once again, is a different aromatic spectrum, lightly smoky, but significantly more fragrant... heathery even.

Highland Park's peat is burned in its own kiln and the resulting smoky malt makes up just 20% of the barley used for each mash. The remainder of the barley is unpeated and comes from the mainland. The other signature of Highland Park comes later in the process with maturation. The regime has been 100% Sherry casks since 2004, with a mix of European and American oak (as well as refill) being used. These add a layer of richness to the lightly smoky, fragrant and fruity character.

Distillery Description:

The expression that started it all for Highland Park. First introduced in 1979, the 12 year old is at the very heart of our core range and demonstrates rich, well balanced malty



tones, with the subtle floral smoke which makes Highland Park such a distinctive single malt whisky.

Tasting Notes:

Colour: Glowing amber. Nose: Heather-honey sweetness, peaty smokiness. Palate: Rounded smoky sweetness, full malt delivery. Finish: Sweet and lingering with heathery notes and subtle smoke

Miscellaneous Reviews:

Nose: Fine sherry, Florida oranges, majestic Orcadian peat, subtle wood smoke, and a handful of stones. Palate: The finest Oloroso sherry, orange rind, raspberries, wild honey, and a thin layer of pomegranate. Underneath all that is heather and subtle Montecristo smoke. Great and a very unique floral complexity for a 12 year old single malt. Finish: Dry, tingling pomegranate, Australian red licorice and the distinctive heather of this distillery that cannot be replicated by any other distillery. (www.jason-scotchreviews.com)

NEAT: The color is medium to dark gold with a little rosy mahogany. The nose is full of American oak, with the sherry subtly around the edges. There are big coastal notes, think dockside. Some charred peat, a little alcohol prickle, and maybe maple syrup. Then there's the palate. Barbecued peat, burnt plastic-y phenolics. Silky and lightly floral. More spirit than oak here. Cigar tobacco. The sherry's around the edges again, and grows with time. Band-Aids and barbecued hay in the finish, a little wood smoke and sherry. A nice length. WITH WATER (approx. 33% ABV): Two oaks and Orkney peat in the nose. Salty roasted smoked peat. Some vanillins and dried fruit (raisins and prunes) from those oaks. A little farmyardy too. In fact, the water has little effect in taming the nose. The palate holds bright briny peated malt with a touch of sherry. There are grasses (dried and fresh) and that barbecued peat smoke. Hay and a hint of sherry in the finish, followed by some salt and that fragrant BBQ peat. Comment: Dang, if that's not the stuff right there, I don't know what is. The oaks and the peat and the malt merge marvelously for such a young whisky. For peat-phobic folks, this is not as peaty as Laphroaig and Ardbeg. The Orcadian peat is much different than the Islay peat. Orkney's rough winds keep the vegetation short and close to the ground, so the peat comes from mosses and grasses. There's a lot of unpeated malt in this too. I recommend it to anyone just beginning to expand their whisky palate. (www.divingforpearlsblog.com)

Tasting Notes:



Caol Ila 12 year-old

Single Malt Scotch Whisky, 43% abv
Total Wine \$47.99

Caol Ila (pronounced "Cull Eela") is derived from Gaelic Caol Ìle for "Sound of Islay" (lit. "Islay Strait") in reference to the distillery's location overlooking the strait between the islands of Islay and Jura, part of the Inner Hebrides along the western coast of Scotland.

Founded in 1846 by Hector Henderson, the distillery did not fare well, and changed hands in 1854 when Norman Buchanan, owner of the Isle of Jura Distillery, took over. In 1863 the business was acquired by Bulloch Lade & Co, of Glasgow, traders in whisky stocks. By the 1880s over 147,000 gallons of whisky were produced there each year.

In 1920 Bulloch Lade went into voluntary liquidation, and a consortium of businessmen formed the Caol Ila Distillery Company Ltd. In 1927 the Distillers Company Ltd (DCL) acquired a controlling interest in Caol Ila, and in 1930 Scottish Malt Distillers Ltd obtained ownership of all the shares.

The distillery closed during World War II, from 1942 to 1945, because of wartime restrictions on the supply of barley to distillers. After the war, Caol Ila restarted and production continued until 1972, when the distillery was demolished replaced by a new, significantly larger, distillery now with six stills rather than the original two stills. In doing so Caol Ila was transformed into Islay's largest producer. The company eventually became part of Diageo.



The 1970s were still the days before the boom in the single malt market and Caol Ila's whisky was destined for a huge array of blends across the whole whisky industry – most notably within its parent company it filled requirements for Johnnie Walker. When the downturn came in the 1980s Caol Ila began producing unpeated 'Highland style' spirit destined for various blends. Along with its massive production capacity, Caol Ila's ability to produce both peated and unpeated spirit allowed the distillery to stay open amidst the wide-ranging closures that hit the industry.

Distillery Description:

Like sea air and peat fires: the distinctive Islay smokiness makes Caol Ila whisky a reference point for connoisseurs of Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky the world over. It's dry, sea air aromas and pleasing smoky-smoothness evokes a certain sense of place for the drinker – whether you've visited this magical island or not.

Tasting Notes:

Nose: Subdued, citric fruitiness; a whiff of bath oil and dentist's mouthwash. A fresh and appetising nose, with little or no trace of smoke. **Body:** Smooth, pleasant mouth-feel: firm with a light to medium body. **Palate:** Drinks well at natural strength; sweet start; pleasant, light fragrant smokiness and a lengthy finish. **Finish:** Sweet smokiness in the lingering, slightly sour finish.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

Nose: On initial pour, an ashy coal dust smoke rises into the air. Letting it rest a minute, and taking a couple of whiffs out of the glass, the smoke dissipates and leaves a fair amount of lemon, with a hint of furniture polish. The smoke is less noticeable, but still there, along with some peat and a little barley. Sometimes I get a salty, vegetable soup type of smell at the end. More so on initial pouring, dropping off after letting the whisky sit in the glass for a while. **Palate:** Juicy, peaty and fairly viscous, yet somehow still "fresh" and lively. Turns a bit hot and peppery in a good way, similar to the Talisker pepper kick. **Finish:** Heading into the initial finish, there's a bit of a raw barley present that reminds me of younger peated whiskies. That dies off and leaves a combination of lemon and that ashy coal smoke. No tar like you find in Ardbeg or Laphroaig, and only a tiny bit of iodine making an appearance. The smoke lingers for a medium duration in the back of the nostrils. (www.scotchhobbyist.com)

Nose: The nose on Caol Ila is very powerful, but not quite as dominating as some other Islay malts - it's still a serious Islay whisky, but turned down just one notch so that you can hear what's going on behind the peat. There are notes of damp, muddy grass, hints of honey, leather and springtime rain. The peat is out front, but plays well with the other aromas, especially as the drink sits for a bit. **Flavor:** Caol Ila is a light, clean tasting single-malt. The flavors are mostly peaty and smoky, but I also taste buttered corn, honey, some oaky-tannins, and a bit of sweet malt. It's a relatively simple-tasting whiskey, but it's very well balanced and enjoyable, even a bit refreshing which isn't what you expect in an Islay whisky. **Finish:** The peat flavors linger for a while along with cinnamon and spice later in the finish. Overall the finish is very long and this whisky is at its best towards the final fade-away, encouraging you to take that next sip and start the process all over again. (www.whiskeyrambler.com)

Tasting Notes:

