



SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW

EDITION 3

SPRING 1995

BRITISH WHISKY REVIEW?

Being based in Inveraray, a sizeable proportion of the visitors to our shop in the Summer come from overseas and one of our lots is to try and explain why Scotch is dearer in Scotland than it is in the vast majority of countries. Explaining that it is the duty (and the tax on the duty) does not ease their bewilderment; why is such a tax levied on a British product by the British Government? Answers on a postcard please.

In November a confident Chancellor boasted that he understood the injustice of the tax regime on drink, particularly Scotch. However, hopes for a reduction in the rate of duty were little compensated by a third successive freeze. The following week a spiteful Mr Clarke lashed out a 4% increase in alcohol duty to plug a hole in his assumptions.

Last time the duty on spirits was raised, Exchequer revenue reduced by £80m.

Spirits carry two times the duty of wine. Scotch, the indigenous British product, has been penalised at twice the rate of the imported product. While the Chancellor argues in the European Union that discrimination in duty is unlawful, he applies discriminatory taxes at home. While the government argues around the world that British spirits (principally Scotch) should not be hampered by high taxes it applies some of the highest taxes by way of example. More perplexing is the degree of tax breaks handed out to "the City"—certainly an important revenue earner but now less than twice the size of the Scotch Whisky Industry.

Perhaps it would be better calling it 'British Whisky'.

Very many thanks to all our customers for a great Christmas spending spree with Loch Fyne Whiskies and for your nice comments about the *SWR*; we hope you appreciated the free delivery bonus. Once again, this edition is an exercise in distilling and condensing and we must think hard about the addition of more pages to accommodate the enthusiasm of contribution from the industry.



Photo courtesy Customer Commit

'INTRODUCTION TO MALT WHISKY' WEEKENDS

Hosted by The Great Inn, Inveraray, the two night events include a guest tasting in the Magnificent Court Room of Inveraray Jail which should be a unique and truly memorable occasion. 19/20 May, 16/17 June and 14/15 July, price £125 all in. Further details from The Great Inn, (not us!) telephone 01499 302466.

BRUICHLADDICH MOTHBALLED

In recognition of excess stocks within the industry and due to over-capacity of production facilities, the Whyte & Mackay Group, following its acquisition of Invergordon Distillers in 1993, has mothballed production at three of the newly acquired distilleries—Tullibardine and Tamnavulin in the Highlands and Bruichladdich on Islay. The other four malt distilleries within the group—Dalmore, Jura, Fettercairn and Tomintoul—remain operational. The three mothballed distilleries remain in trading and continue to provide warehousing facilities for customers. The single malts from these distilleries will still be available for sale, as there are sufficient stocks laid down for a number of years requirement.

The four distilleries remaining operational within the group continue to provide single malt whisky stocks, both for bottling as brands and for inter-industry trading purposes.



£2.00 OFF!
your next purchase of
cask strength whisky

LONG-TERM OFFER

Remember, all our independent cask strength bottlings include a voucher worth **£2.00 off** a future purchase of a similar bottling.

Offer applies to *Cask*, *C*, *JM* or *S* labels of over 46% Alc. Does not apply to *MH* bottlings or those 46% and under.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Another great interview from an industry leader, our most common questions and some tremendous offers in conjunction with United Distillers. Read on.

THE SALES MAN



Andrew Dewar-Durie is Managing Director of Allied Distillers Ltd. which, after United Distillers, is Scotland's leading Whisky producer and exporter.

Mr. Dewar-Durie found time in a very busy diary to talk to Loch Fyne Whiskies for a wide ranging discussion on some of the complexities of Whisky marketing.

LFW: Please tell us something of yourself and your company.

Allied Distillers is the flagship company of Allied Domeq which is a new company formed following the purchase last summer of the spirit company Pedro Domeq by Allied Lyons.

Allied Domeq is concentrating on retailing, and wines and spirits globally. Allied Distillers (ADL) is the single largest component accounting for the majority of profit and turnover.

My background is as a salesman, an export salesman in particular, and I came latterly to 'marketing' when the word came in to the language in the 1980's! I have been MD for three years and my job is now more production oriented than it has ever been before.

I joined the whisky industry in 1968, as an export trainee at White Horse Distillers and spent the first part of my career in all parts of the world including six years in Latin America and six in the Far East. I left White Horse in 1983 to join Long John International, the spirits arm of Whitbread, and was with them until they were acquired by Allied Lyons in 1989.

ADL has what I believe to be the most balanced portfolio of any company in the industry. Balanced in its brands and balanced in its primary production.

LFW: ADL own many whisky brands, some of which we do not see in Britain very often, why is that?

There is a limit to how many brands you

can actively market in any one place. In the UK we lead with the premium Teacher's and then the value for money Stewart's Cream of the Barley. Black Bottle which is linked to Laphroaig, is our super premium blend and a big player in Scotland but has yet to be promoted in the English market. These three satisfy the home trade.

Ballantine's developed outside the UK, Teacher's inside the UK and in the old Empire, Long John developed in Western Europe and it is from those roots that their strengths are today. It is our great fortune that there is very little conflict in how the histories of our core brands have brought our portfolio together. Other brands such as *Islay Mist* have been sold off because we felt that we could not devote sufficient funds, time or effort to the brand. Rather than let the brand and its history fade away, we sold it to allow another company to develop and expand.

If we tried to handle them all in one market it would inevitably lead to muddling the distribution chain and to us losing focus. Our brands are complementary to each other, not conflicting.

LFW: Brand price is sensitive.

I believe that's what gives our portfolio a large degree of strength.

Teacher's is the number three in the UK with its price between Grouse and Bell's. The UK is a very tough market, and you see a number of instances where brand market share rules. This has forced producers to make decisions that they probably would not like to make. They may talk up their market shares, but are they really getting the profit that they want? Things are further confused with the various offers that come in throughout the year. That's why the current success of Teacher's, the fastest growing premium brand, is very pleasing to see.

LFW: Some may claim that all brands are the same but with a different label.

Absolutely not! Anyone can clearly differentiate and discriminate between different brands. Each of ADL's brands is individually crafted in order to be unique. But it is more than taste. Each brand carries the promise of satisfaction for its target drinker's needs but also offers its consumers added value through a unique identity or image with which they empathise.

Individual malt whiskies are brands and surely none tastes more different than Laphroaig!

LFW: Malts account for only 5% of all whisky sales. Aren't they an irritation?

Unfortunately, as yet, the industry fails to generate that all important purchase by the consumer. Despite very positive support from the trade and press writers, I wonder why are we not getting the

sales that we could expect?

Are we creating an elitism about single malts that is putting potential entrants off? Or have we got the prices so high that so few people are prepared to take the step of paying £25-30 for a bottle? That's a lot of money to ask a new consumer to pay to experiment, and it's unfortunate that the tax element in that price accounts for some 67% of the total cost.

LFW: Could it be that people think they don't like whisky?

Well, quite often they don't the first time they drink it! But malts do come into their own and there is a malt to suit every taste. Someone who is new to whisky when faced with a Laphroaig may say "But this isn't whisky! This is something else. Where have you been all my life?" Or equally they may say "Wow! Are you truthfully trying to sell this stuff?!"

“Creating an elitism?”

LFW: Apart from Laphroaig, why don't you market many other malts?

Four years ago we marketed Laphroaig with Glendronach, Miltonduff and Tormore. Since then we've had a change in policy. In order to maintain that all-important focus we now have one strategic brand and that is Laphroaig. I can't resist telling you of our absolute delight with the brand; last year we saw 23% growth in sales (better than the market 17%) and it was awarded the Prince of Wales's Royal Warrant. That, and a royal visit to the distillery last June, was a big boost for all at ADL.

Our number one priority is to get that strategic brand exactly where we want it in terms of volume objectives and focus through our distribution system. Other malt brands will be worked on a tactical basis where the opportunity exists. In the UK the others are used tactically rather than strategically. At present Glendronach is widely available, Scapa and Miltonduff is in duty-free shops and Tormore in Victoria Wine, an associated company.

Tactical opportunities are where the distributor in a particular country has need in his portfolio for a second or third malt; it's niche marketing to put it another way. So many distributors have problems with overlong portfolios that there is a lack of focus within them. It's our job—particularly as we are cousins to that distribution system—to help them get that focus.

I'm not going to say no more malts, but it's going to be on a tactical basis.

We have fourteen malt distilleries and in nearly every case between our own bottlings and those of Gordon & MacPhail, the singles are available.

LFW: But very few independent bottlings of Laphroaig.

Independent bottlings of Laphroaig occur very rarely now. There were clashes where independent bottlers were clearly riding on the back of our marketing effort. This is, we hope, a thing of the past and there is a much better understanding of our roles.

Where there are distilleries whose singles we are not selling we are perfectly happy to work hand-in-hand with responsible bottlers who are meeting that niche demand.

LFW: We get a lot of Islay fans who would very much appreciate the return of your Ardbeg, 10 years old.

What could there be beyond Laphroaig? It's very interesting to hear that from you and it's up to us to respond to that. We are aware of great interest in Ardbeg and we are working on how to meet it but it would be on a very limited basis. We are aware that there are independent bottlings of Ardbeg.

LFW: ADL Exports a higher proportion than the industry average.

That's true. Last year we won the Queen's Award for Export, a major achievement for ADL and the business in Scotland. Some 85% of our whisky is exported. Ballantine's is our premium brand throughout Europe. Teacher's, historically a 'colonial' brand, is almost a new item as it moves into Germany and Eastern Europe. Long John has traditionally been at a standard pricing level across western Europe and is a strength. All played a major part in seeing the Award last year.

“Or have we got prices too high?”

LFW: Yet the overall market for Scotch is reducing.

There has been a lot of criticism over the last 18 months of whether the Scotch Whisky Industry is addressing the new growing youth market. I think that historically it has not, and I think that with brands like Black Bottle we actively are. Certainly our competitors are doing some very good work in that area too. I don't think we should go overboard with the youth market especially in the UK, but we must find out what they want. We've got work going on in cocktails and pre-mixers, all aimed in this direction. Look at the success of Ballantine's in Spain. Something like 80% of it's con-

sumer profile is between 18 and 25, the vast majority of them are drinking Ballantine's with Coke or another mixer, actively demanding the brand by name. Scotch Whisky's image could not be higher, it has real social caché. It's brands that people want.

LFW: Presumably, who distributes is important.

Control of distribution has been a primary objective for some time within our group as it has been within our industry.

Now we own a major or minor share holding in 90% of our distributors worldwide there is a danger that we are so eager with our portfolio that we overburden them. Our job is to help distributors in all countries to pick the right brands. Throwing the whole lot at one market is going to work against us.

Getting control of our distribution in France and Germany has undoubtedly been a big step forward for Ballantine's. Gold Seal, the 12 year old, was launched five years ago but never quite got the focus it needed. No surprise when you consider that we shared two European distributors with our competitor, Chivas Regal! Now we have control of distribution the results are very pleasing.

LFW: And prospects for the future?

It's a tough market out there, it's tougher than it's ever been. The problem is that it is damned difficult to get the price increases that we need but we are optimistic as Western Europe and Japan come slowly out of recession.

We've certainly got exciting markets for the future. Latin America and Eastern Europe are obviously going to be key, also the Pacific rim and China beyond that. I don't like to talk too much about Russia—it's white spirits first for Russia—but we remain very optimistic.

We have also taken a bold step to launch Teacher's for local bottling in India. That certainly won't be easy but it's a first step. It raises some eyebrows but I would point out that India is a huge domestic whisky market; the decision needs the same courage as that of the board of Teacher's deciding to bottle in Brazil which has proved a real success and helped to expand the whole range of all Scotch whiskies in that exciting market.

It is a wonderful industry, a truly global business. The interest in Scotch whisky is enormous and it's our job to satisfy that interest.

With a portfolio such as ours I feel enormously proud and enthusiastic at prospects facing Allied Distillers.

LFW: How much do you talk to your competitors?

Well, we have that strange contrast in this industry in that we work very closely in primary production but once in the market place, we fight like hell!

LFW: Mr. Dewar-Durie, Thank you.

ALLIED DISTILLERS LIMITED



ADL began operations in 1988 from Allied Lyons and now represents the operations of George Ballantine, Wm. Teacher's, Stewart's of Dundee and Long John International.

The second largest whisky company worldwide and the only industry major with its headquarters entirely based in Scotland. From its Dumbarton home, this totally integrated company manages its production 'from grain to glass'. It has its own cereal and malting company and owns 14 malt and 2 grain distilleries as well as the industry's most advanced bottling plant.

Sales of 8.5 million cases of Scotch per year of which over 80% is exported.

Brands

Blended Whisky

Ballantine's Finest, Gold Seal, 17, 21 & 30 year olds
Teacher's Highland Cream & 12yo
Long John & 12yo
Black Bottle
Stewart's Cream of the Barley
Old Smuggler
Doctor's Special

Malt Whisky

Laphroaig
The Glendronach
Miltonduff
The Tormore

Other distilleries

Ardbeg	Inverleven
Ardmore	Scapa
Pultney	Glencadam
Balblair	Glenburgie
Imperial	Glentauchers

Profits

Turnover 1993/94	£335m
Profit 1993/4	£137.5m

Losses

1.5m cases per year due to evaporation during maturation.

Market

15% of world market; ADL is number two in the world.

13% of the vital Duty Free market.

11% of UK domestic market.

Ballantine's (5m cases/year) is sold in 170 countries and is the leading brand in Europe.

Teacher's (UK #3) sells in 150 countries. Laphroaig is the UK #5 and in the top 10 selling malts around the world.

The USA market accounts for 250,000 cases (3% of sales) so the downturn in the US has not significantly affected overall performance.

Employees

2,100 people in 23 sites across Scotland. Also employed is 1 gooseman and 100 Chinese Geese, the 'Scotchwatch' whose job is to protect the massive Dumbuck maturation site.



"The wonderful thing about whisky, apart of course, from drinking it, is that it contains more bluffing elements than almost any other subject—far more than supply-side economics, more even than wine. Wine breeds envy, discord and snobbery, whisky promotes fellowship, amiability and quiet, unassuming superiority. Supply-side economics produced Donald Trump."

David Milstead

Bluffer's Guide to Whisky

NEW CUSTOMER PAGE

Summer is a time when we meet new as well as old customers and get the chance to introduce many to the wonders of Scotland's Greatest Gift, Scotch Whisky. This section aims to answer some of the more frequently asked questions.

What is whisky?

The alcohol spirit produced by distilling fermented cereals. Whisky is produced in many countries, historically those that had climates more suited to growing cereals rather than grape/wine production.

Scotch Whisky is the world's most popular spirit and must be (amongst other things) made and matured in an oak barrel for at least three years in Scotland, otherwise it cannot be called *Scotch*.

How is whisky made?

Easy, mix some grain with water and yeast and let it ferment in the same way that beer is produced. Boil up your beer and collect the steam which will be mostly alcohol. Voilà, whisky! Throw this away as it is probably poison, your hair will fall out—apart from which it's illegal.

Scotch whisky must contain barley and Malt Whisky exclusively *malted* barley.

What is the difference between a single malt and a double malt?

A **single malt** is the product of one malt whisky distillery and that one distillery only. There is no such thing as a double malt unless you are with your rich father-in-law at the bar (technically—'a large one').

Malt whisky is one of four types of Scotch. The most common is **blended whisky**, a mix of many different single malts and grain whiskies prepared by a 'blender' using his sense of smell and years of experience. 95% of all whisky sold is blended whisky and is appreciated the world over for its satisfying subtlety and complexity.

Grain whisky is industrially produced alcohol from a variety of cereals including malted barley. The spirit is not fully distilled—a degree of impurity is permitted to add character. It is also stored in Scotland in oak barrels for at least three years before being used for blending. Occasionally you may come across a single grain whisky but its use is mainly as a carrier for malts in blends.

A fourth category of whisky is a **vatted malt** which is a blend of several malts but no grain. Bottles lacking the word 'single' may well be vatted; other clues are descriptions such as 'Pure Malt' or '100% malt'.



GORDON & MACPHAIL

The leading independent bottler, G&M mature and bottle a bewildering range of single, vatted and blended whiskies from their Elgin, Speyside base. Shown above are examples of the *Connoisseurs Choice*, *Cask* and *G&M* range.

A single malt is a happy accident of science, nature and circumstance. Blended and vatted whiskies are one man's opinion of what he thinks you think a good whisky should taste like. Many members of the industry claim to appreciate blended Scotch the most.

Why don't you stock a certain brand I had once?

Whisky brands tend to fade away faster than get created as the industry changes from hundreds of brand owners to just a few. As big companies expand by the acquisition of small they find that they have two brands on the same shop shelf at the same price so one has to go. Some brands are only available overseas because they are better established there than in the UK.

How am I supposed to drink malt whisky?

How you like! Although it does seem a shame to mix a £25 malt with a sweet, fizzy mixer. Addition of water (anything from a drop to 50:50, depends on the bottling) often reveals more character because your nose is happier at lower alcoholic strengths, so experiment

with a new bottling. Bear in mind you have four senses of taste and these are in your mouth, not in the back of your throat. Plus you have some 30 or more senses of smell so use the schnoz. Ice in malts is also a no-no; you put ice on bruises and in blended Scotch in hot climates.

How do I know which malts I will like?

Most single malts will have the region of origin on the label, either Lowland, Highland, Speyside or Islay and these give a clue to the character of the contents but there are many exceptions to the rule. **The Lowlands** are the most gentle; mild almost wine like. **The Highlands** can be further divided; those from the south are akin to the lowlands, those from the north are fuller flavoured. **Speyside** is a category of its own within the highlands. The whiskies are complex and half of Scotland's distilleries are found here. The most fully flavoured whisky is produced on the island of **Islay** (pronounced eye-la). Islay whiskies are unguided missiles in the wrong hands—you will either love them or wonder what the attraction is in smelling hospitals.



MARKET HOUSE (MH)

Distillery owners produce their own bottlings of single malts, described as market house bottlings. These are "The Classic Six" from United Distillers.



CADENHEAD

Specialise in Cask Strength Whiskies

Books are useful sources of information and we recommend three in particular: value for money—*Collins Gem Whisky* £3.50 most informed—*Pocket Whisky Book* £7.99 taster's bible—*Michael Jackson's Malt Whisky Companion* £12.99

How come they taste so different?

Malted barley has to be dried before milling and fermentation and traditionally this has been done over an open fire. In Scotland a variety of fuels is found locally including peat (decomposing heather) and coal. The amount of **peat** used to dry the barley has a big influence (on Islay it is the only source of fuel). Other influences are the style of apparatus employed in the production, particularly the **still** and how that still is operated by the stillman. The final big influence is the type of oak **barrel** employed; it could be one of eight categories from a brand new barrel to a well-used second hand sherry or bourbon cask.

Where's Cadenhead's/Connoisseurs Choice/Gordon & MacPhail's Distillery?

These bottles are from Independent bottlers who buy the whisky from a distillery and bottle it with their name foremost as their badge of quality. With all these independent bottlings look for the distillery name which will be in smaller print.

What are 'Cask Strength' Whiskies?

Whisky matures in the barrel at about 65%. Prior to bottling it is diluted to 40% so as to incur the least alcohol duty (originally a wartime measure). Cask strength whiskies are at natural, barrel strength which provides more impact and immediate flavour. These whiskies should be diluted in the glass after exploratory sips otherwise anaesthesia will numb the pleasure, (remember doctors use alcohol as an anaesthetic). Because of the variety of casks employed in the industry each cask strength bottling will have the character of the barrel as well as that of the distillery so there is great variation.

Why are some whiskies so expensive?

The first thing to check is the age of the whisky. If it is say 21 years old (the time



SIGNATORY

A small, carefully selected range

spent in the cask—once bottled it does not 'age', it will be dearer because of the additional storage required. Also whisky evaporates in the barrel by about 2% per year so after 21 years only two thirds remain. The other thing to look out for is the degree of alcohol strength as duty is applied according to percentage alcohol. Most whiskies are bottled at 40% alcohol by volume (abv), some at 43% or 46%—15% stronger and so dearer than the 40%. We stock many whiskies with strengths of up to 65% so these are the equivalent of over a bottle and a half!

What is the Scotch so beaucoup pounds in Scotch-land?

The British Government has applied a tax to sales of wines, beers and spirits and now by successive increases the duty on a bottle of Scotch (at 40% abv) is nearly £6. Added to this, value added tax is applied to the total price (including the duty—a tax on a tax). The tax on a £40 cask strength bottle is £15!

Is that bottle really £7,500?

Yes. It was distilled in 1919 and when it was bottled in 1970, only 24 bottles were in the cask. One is sold every two years or so.

What's your favourite?

They all are, depending on the circumstance. We recommend exploration, (try the Classic Six miniature pack as a mini tour of taste regions) and do not disregard the good blended whiskies.

We had a whisky in a dumpy green bottle but I can't remember the name. Bunnahabhainn! (Boo-na-ha-venn).



LOCH FYNE WHISKIES

Stocks the lot!

OTHER WHISKIES

Our collection of whiskies from unexpected sources grows with samples from as near as Lancashire and as far afield as India and Thailand.

Our thanks to Customer Sangster for returning with two whiskies from Japan, *Hi, Nikka Whisky* and *Golden Horse*. Customers Henk Eggens and Els van der Linden of the Grant Cafe de Still in Amsterdam (Holland's whisky café) sent us a bottle of Dutch *Maltky* whisky, "a well balanced mixture of real Scotch Whisky, matured for at least three years in oak-wooden casks, and authentic Dutch neutral spirit, prepared according to the original method of distillation."

Customer de Barras secured a bottle of *India No. 1* and a quarter bottle *Fine Old Whisky* from Cyprus. That and a bottle of *John Brown Whisky* from Malta retrieved by Customer Bannister are somewhat cheeky. Although they lack the word *Scotch* on the label, the John Brown (Queen Victoria's "Game" Keeper—allegedly) has a splendid chap in Kilt and Harris Tweed and the Cypriot *Fine Old* is adorned by familiar lions rampant.

We also received from Customer Herron a neck tag from India that reads, "Now enjoy the magic of India's first and only whisky to offer "Good Mornings After Great Evenings—Drink to evenings of Joy. Experience mornings of cheer." Sounds like they've got a substitute for Irn-Bru! (We note the bottle didn't survive the long flight home!)

If you are going overseas and would like to retrieve an unusual or indigenous whisky for our collection please contact us for a list of what we have already and what we seek. We offer swaps from our stock list for your trouble, but no guarantees for the morning!

1995—ANNIVERSARY OF...

1895—The Famous Grouse brand launched by Matthew Gloag.

1920—The Distillers Company Ltd entered the motor fuel business with 'Discol', a molasses-based distillation.

USA Introduced Prohibition.

1945—"On no account reduce the barley for Scotch whisky. This takes years to mature and is an invaluable export and dollar producer. Having regard to all our other difficulties about export, it would be most improvident not to preserve this characteristic British element of ascendancy."—Winston Churchill.

1970—Highland Distillers purchase Matthew Gloag & Son, owners of the Famous Grouse. Sale caused by the untimely loss of Freddie Gloag aged 61 whose death caused an unexpected death-duty liability.

Source — H Charles Craig
The Scotch Whisky Industry Record.



UNIQUE 500th ANNIVERSARY AWARD

Whyte & Mackay's master blender, Richard Paterson, won The Spirit of Scotland Trophy at the recent International Wine and Spirit Competition awards. The trophy was introduced to the competition to mark the 500th anniversary of the first recorded reference to Scotch whisky in the Scottish Exchequer Rolls in 1494. The challenge was for Scotch whisky companies to create a special anniversary blend using whiskies between 18 and 25 years old. Seven major players in the industry entered blends for the award and the Whyte & Mackay 500th anniversary

blend was voted the winner by an international selection panel. The entrants, pictured above were (l to r) Allied Distillers, Burn Stewart Distillers, Wm. Grant & Son, Inver House Distillers, Morrison Bowmore, United Distillers and Whyte & Mackay. The limited edition bottles pictured above were auctioned at Christie's and raised £1,600 for charity, especially The Benevolent Society of the Licensed Trade of Scotland. (Thank you chaps!)

Photo courtesy Christie's Scotland.

GLEN SCOTIA AND LITTMILL —“NO PLANS”

Following the receivership last autumn of Gibson International, Canadian owners of Littlemill and Glen Scotia distilleries, the assets have been acquired by Glen Catrine Bonded Warehouse Ltd. As owners of Loch Lomond Distillery (Inchmurrin & Rhosdhu) and brands including High Commissioner Scotch Whisky, Glen Catrine specialise in producing 'value for money brands' particularly for retail chains. Glen Catrine sought to acquire Gibson's brands and inventory of maturing whisky. As a bonus they also acquired the distilleries. Both distilleries are in a mothballed state and there are no plans to either restart distilling or to close them down. Glen Scotia (Campbeltown) is in a particularly good state of repair and could be re-commissioned relatively quickly. Production is possible if there is sufficient interest in the product as 'fillings', the requirement of blenders. Campbeltown fillings have traditionally been very popular with blenders. The Lowlander Littlemill is not so tidy and requires a considerable degree of investment. Glen Catrine recently expanded their Loch Lomond distillery at Alexandria, expanding the malt distilling capacity and adding a grain distillery alongside.

TOBERMORAY BECOMES SINGLE, UNPEATED MALT

Tobermoray, the vatted malt is to become a single following its acquisition by Burn Stewart Distillers in 1993. Furthermore, in future, most distillations at the Isle of Mull distillery will be from unpeated malt to allow perception of the Mull character. Fans of the characteristic, peated, current single, Ledaig, will not be neglected. Occasionally peated malt will be run through the distillery to produce a more typical island style like the Ledaig we see today. Supplies of this will be limited. The new Tobermoray will carry no age statement until stocks are adequately established and there are no plans to change the distinctive green bottle. Most of the unpeated product will be used for blending purposes including Burn Stewart's Scottish Leader.



Customer Campbell sent us this card to notify us of his change of address. Please make sure you tell us if you are moving.

'HAIRY HILL' TO RE-START DISTILLING SOON

The buildings of Benromach Distillery, Forres, were bought by the independent bottlers Gordon & MacPhail in 1993 for the purpose re-commissioning. Since then G&M, under the direction of 'retired' Chairman George Urquhart have been re-equipping (or utensiling as Barnard would say) the distillery, particularly with smaller stills than before. It had been hoped that the first distillation might take place in this, their Centenary year but 1996 looks more likely. Built in 1898, Benromach, which literally means 'hairy hill', was innovative in its use of pumps to supply and discharge water to the Mosset Burn some distance from the site. Ownership changed several times until 1953 when acquired by the Distillers Company Ltd. Benromach has been silent since 1983. G&M have a superb 22 year old bottling in their Connoisseurs Choice range and will be releasing a specific label some time this year.

OOOOPS! — Grovel dept.

In the last edition of SWR we stated that Gordon & MacPhail's whiskies were colour corrected. This is not true. No colour correction is employed, it's just that the glow from the whiskies is a result of the superior casks they employ.

NOW EUROPE NOSE

Walter Schobert, Whisky Author

It is precisely 30 years now since I discovered my first Malt Whisky.

It happened in a bar in Rome with a Glen Grant, still the number one in Italy. This incident turned the whisky-world of the young German student up side down, for although Scotch was a synonym for freedom and democracy and above all the only possible drink for an intellectual, my knowledge of whisky was limited to the blends.

From that day on I was on the lookout for the best, the true, the only whisky — Malt. I was studying Protestant theology, but my bible became the German edition of David Daiches "Scotch Whisky—Its Past and Present". In the early seventies The Glenfiddich was the malt that had made the world realise that there existed something else apart from blends. The Glenlivet was easy to come by too.

There also existed a Glen Grant—and a ten year old at that, not the dodgy one without the age given that is sold now which conceals the quality of the malt rather than revealing it. Aberlour, in its quadrangular bottle was available, but only in one shop in Berlin. Every now and then, one came across a Laphroaig, a Lochnagar or a Cardhu which were warmly welcomed. That was it.

Fortunately I was to travel a lot and able to make some discoveries in Duty Free shops. Italy remained the country where I could taste many malts in bars and I bought some rare specimens—a Glen Mhor bottled by the distillery— even a Caperdonich! The only drawback was the Italians preference for young, five year old whiskies.

At the end of the eighties Michael Jackson's big Whisky had been translated into German and became a best-seller. I made up my mind to purchase a bottle from every distillery in Scotland, a decision that was often smiled at and betted on.

I have won all of them, the wagers. The only whisky that I was unable to pour from a bottle into a glass myself is from a distillery that is no longer in existence: Ben Wyvis. Trevor Conan of Invergordon, who ought to know, consoled me, explaining that they had never bottled one. This consolation was short lived; a Canadian friend has recently sent me a photograph of his bottle—alongside an invitation to come over and taste it!

The hunt for the bottles has often taken me to Scotland which has become my second home—and motivated me to write my own book, *the Malt Whisky Guide*, which after two years is in its second edition here in Germany.

Now in Germany, France and Italy an unbelievable variety of malts is on offer, all because of the independent bottlers—Gordon & MacPhail, Cadenhead's and above all Signatory—and the family run such as Macallan, Balvenie, Glenfarclas or Springbank.

Their success has finally woken the big ones! They too have noticed that of all the spirits only malt sales are increasing. Thanks to this discovery we now have UD's "Classic Malts" and the "Distillery (Flora and Fauna) Range" or the "Heritage Collection" by Seagram's. So great is the success of the malt that there have even been attempts to produce some in France and Germany. But that is a story for another time.

Walter is author of *Malt Whisky Guide*, *Führer zu den Quellen*, pub. Hädecke

LETTERS

Congratulations on Issue two of your Scotch Whisky Review—this is truly high fibre and packed with interest. It's particularly useful to read the background and methods of the independent bottlers.

Your long interview with Dr. Alan Rutherford of United Distillers was also very revealing. While not doubting UD's commitment to Scotch Whisky in general and malts in particular, it's depressing to read that Rosebank, that historic 'funky little distillery' (as Michael Jackson has described it) faces total extinction simply because it happens to be in the wrong place!

I likewise feel that Bladnoch is a sad loss — no doubt there were good commercial reasons for this closure but apart from producing a characterful malt, it had an excellent visitor centre—it was packed out when I visited in the summer of 1991.

Michael Vardy, Cheshire

We have very much enjoyed the Scotch Whisky Review and wish you and your excellent journal much success.

We would like to propose a minor sponsorship for your letters column. For each issue of the SWR we would be willing to reward the writer of the best letter with a bottle of Springbank 21 year old single malt whisky. To start the ball rolling, for the best letter printed in your Autumn 1995 SWR we would like to award a bottle of 1974 Longrow. This unique, peaty whisky is extremely rare now and will be so for the next few years or so. A very desirable item.

I hope that this will produce some good correspondence and debate. The prize is open both to customers and members of the industry. If you require assistance with the adjudicating of the best letter please do not hesitate to ask. Good luck to all— let the debate begin!

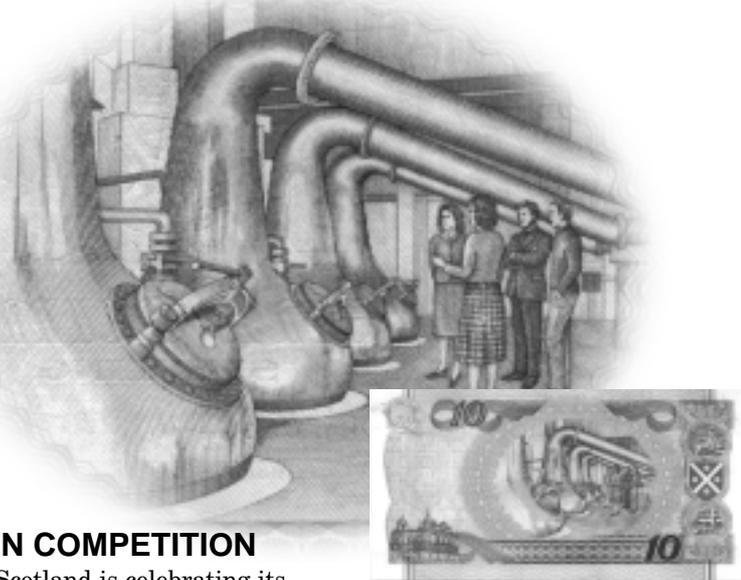
Gordon Wright,
Director, Springbank Distillery.

This edition's winner of the Springbank Letter would be Mr. Gordon Wright from Campbeltown—congratulations Gordon! The Editor's decision is made (I think).

Something smells here—sub Ed.

TRENDY — OR WHAT?

In a recent interview cult folk singer Bob Dylan stated he thought Springbank to be "really amazing—incredible". Good to see he's got some good taste.



CAPTION COMPETITION

The Bank of Scotland is celebrating its Tercentenary with a new series of bank notes. The reverse of each depicts the Bank's 'involvement in the modern community'. This recently issued £10 note appears to be of a distillery tour in progress. A crisp new tenner to the person who comes up with the most amusing caption which will be announced in the Autumn SWR. Bribes of value exceeding £9.99 accepted!

**NEW!
PERSONALISED BOXES...**



Customer Horsford is a cabinet maker and has been making special presentation boxes for us. Paul is now making his services available to anyone who wishes to impress a friend or client. Our boxes shown above have our logo laser-etched and the result is outstanding. A custom label and one of Paul's boxes with your logo laser-etched can cost less than a 12yo malt— a worthwhile way to really impress.

...AND CUSTOM LABELS

A very popular way of solving 'special' present problems, our custom label service provides a special label to your specification for only £ 2.50 extra.



RARE MALTS SELECTION

We asked Michael Jackson if he had tried UD's Rare Malts Selection. So far there are four limited bottlings from their stocks of long-gone distilleries. MJ's comments included: "syrupy body, toffee, candy and exotic fruit" from the St. Magdalene; "a nose of cachous and vanilla in the Dallas Dhu—best after dinner". Millburn's "for a book in front of a log fire" and of the wonderful Brora "peaty, oily, seaweed aroma—a smoky, salty, oaky palate and medicinal finish." Order soon, as stocks are very limited.

**MAIL ORDER OFFERS WITH
UNITED DISTILLERS**

Flattery gets us everywhere! After our nice comments towards United Distillers in the last SWR they came up with TWO great customer offers for you.

**— OFFER ONE —
April to June
THE DISTILLERY MALTS**

Order any two bottles from the list to the right and we will include a **free 20cl bottle Glen Ord 12 yo single malt**. The distillery malts are not commonly available but include some truly exceptional malts (try the Clynelish, Linkwood or Benrinnes—Ed.). Your order must be received during April, May or June and applies to UK mail order business only. As supplies are occasionally sporadic please give an alternative if possible.

**— OFFER TWO —
July to September
THE CLASSIC SIX**

Buy any two from the Classic Six range below and receive **2 Classic Six miniatures plus the Michael Jackson tasting video—free!** Our offer is only open between July and September to UK mail order customers. The Classic Six range is selected from their huge portfolio as six of the best examples of the typical regional styles. Pictured on page 4, they are:
GLENKINCHIE 10yo, the smokiest of Lowland malts. A pre-dinner malt, it has a light delicate nose, clean aroma and pale colour. The taste is smooth and pleasing with a hint of dryness.
DALWHINNIE 15yo, Highland, light with a fruity sweet aroma. Very easy to drink.
CRAGGANMORE 12yo, Speyside. The perfect after dinner malt with a good firm body and malty smoky finish.
OBAN 14yo, West Highland, an excellent all round malt. A fresh delicate hint of peat, and a long smooth finish.
TALISKER 10yo, Isle of Skye. Full flavoured with a distinctive peaty base, it explodes on the palate and lingers on.
LAGAVULIN 16yo. Probably the most pungent Islay malt, distinctive and robust with a heavy, powerful aroma. A malt to be spiced and savoured.

SCOTCH WHISKY REVIEW is free to all *bona fide* mail order customers. If you have not bought by mail order from the last (Autumn) catalogue and do not buy from the accompanying (Spring) list then we will not be troubling you again.

PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT US!

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**UNITED DISTILLERS
THE DISTILLERY RANGE**

Choose any two from:

Lowland

ROSEBANK 12yo, triple distilled which accounts for its light distinctive nose and well balanced flavour.

Highland

ABERFELDY 15yo, distinctive peaty nose.

BLAIR ATHOL 12yo, a mellow deep toned aroma, a strong fruity flavour and a smooth finish.

CLYNELISH 14yo, fruity, slightly smoky and much appreciated by connoisseurs.

TEANINICH 10yo, one of the largest distilleries in Scotland. This is assertive with a spicy, smoky satisfying taste.

Speyside

AULTMORE 12yo, smooth, well balanced with a mellow finish.

BENRINNES 15yo, rounded and mellow. Favoured by blenders.

BALMENACH 12yo, rich flavoured single malt of exemplary quality.

CRAIGELLACHIE 14yo, excellent, light and smoky character.

DAILUAINÉ 16yo, full bodied fruity nose and a smoky finish.

DUFFTOWN 15yo, typically Speyside in character with a delicate, fragrant, almost flowery aroma and taste which lingers on the palate.

GLENDULLAN 12yo, a firm, mellow single malt with a fruity bouquet and a smooth lingering finish.

GLENLOSSIE 10yo, The three spirit stills at the distillery have purifiers installed between the lyne arm and the condenser. This has a bearing on the character. A fresh, grassy aroma and a smooth lingering flavour.

INCHGOWER. 14yo, one of the most distinctive in Speyside. It is a malt for the discerning drinker—a complex aroma precedes a fruity, spicy taste with a hint of salt.

LINKWOOD 12yo, one of the finest single malts available—full bodied with a hint of sweetness and a slightly smoky aroma.

MANNOCHMORE 12yo, a light fruity aroma and a smooth, mellow taste.

MORTLACH 16yo, delightful, smooth and fruity.

PITTYVAICH 12yo, a perfumed, fruity nose and a robust flavour with a hint of spiciness.

Islay

CAOL ILA 15yo, unusual for an Islay Malt. Has a fresh aroma and a light yet well rounded flavour with a tremendous finish.

