

The Good Life Journal

August 2007 * Vol 6 *

Mc Beth On Whisky Club Newsletter

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Inchmurrin 12 Years Old

Old Malt Cask Royal Lochnagar

Ardbeg 10 years Old

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Join hector for a tasting!

BEST OF MOMENTS

July, I take some time out and enjoy the holiday feeling albeit a working holiday. As such I move the family to Knysna for the oyster festival and we take long days at leisure followed by some hard work at night convincing locals to buy my wares. The festival is known for its bike rides and marathons and all round buzz. So this months best moments goes to slowing down while everyone else exerts themselves. Here is to all that competed in Knysna this year keep fit and keep dramming too.

FEATURED PERSONALITY

This month being womans month we salute Helen Arthur a truly gifted writer who has 3 books on Whisky to her credit. She was the first female author of a comprehensive guide to malt whisky. She has won numerous awards. Helen has worked as a consultant to the industry for over 20 years and runs the biggest whisky tasting in London every 2 years. she also runs a tour company along with Caroline Dewar specifically catering for distillery visits. In 1999 the industry recognised her contribution by making her a lifetime member of the the prestigious Keepers of the Quaich.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

The only 15 letter word that can be spelt without repeating a letter in uncopyrightable.

Elephants are the only mammal that cannot jump.

It is legal to add caramel spirit to whisky, it is said to affect only the colour although that is disputed by many. The Glenavon Special Liqueur Whisky is the worlds oldest bottle of whisky and is 149 years old, it was sold at a Bonhams Auction for GBP 14850.

Woman and Whisky

Certainly my two favorite subjects not that I am going to get into discussing woman here, that would be a newsletter in its own right. Many people find it amazing when I tell them that tasting events I conduct in Capetown often have more woman attendees than male. It seems that almost every successful woman in modern times is doing so in previously male dominated fields. Whisky certainly is one of those fields.

Here is a look at some of the talented ladies currently in the industry. We have Helen Arthur author and independent consultant, Caroline Dewar consultant and educator. Martine Noet malt maniac and whisky chef (you can catch her at this years whisky live Cape Town). Gillian Howell who is a distiller at Penderyn Welsh distillery. Polly Macdonald is a distillery manager at Tomatin distillery and Carol More is a trainee manager at the Royal Brakla Distillery. Pauline Ogilvie became the first woman assistant manager at Glenmorangie distillery after some spells at both Talisker and Dalwhinnie Distilleries. Riannon Walsh is a well respected and loved whisky ambassador. Woman and whisky are not strangers to one another and whilst this list is far from exhaustive, I am very happy that they are a part of this fantastic industry. It is certainly true that woman have been in whisky for many centuries, and we are better off because of their contribution. I hope you find the time to drink a toast to the special woman in your life.

Till then 'Slainte Mhath' Hector Andrew Mc Beth



FEATURED DISTILLERY

Name: Glenmorangie
Region: Highlands North
Established: 1843
Owners: Louis Vetton
No of Stills: 4 Wash 4 Spirit
Grain: Chalice/Optic
Water Source: Tarlogie Springs
Expressions: 10 15 and 18 and many wood finishes and vintage bottlings
Wood: Ex Bourbon Plus various Finishes
Peat : 1-1.4 PPM

Glenmorangie Distillery is situated in the North West Highlands at Cadboll just outside of Tain, about 40 kilometres north of Inverness. The Name Glenmorangie is derived from the Glen of the Morangie Burn which means 'glen of great tranquillity'. The distillery received its licence in 1843 but by that time whisky had probably been produced in the area for at least 250 years. The distillery was originally a brewery but was converted into a distillery by its founders the Matheson brothers.

The distillery was refurbished in 1887 and at the same time the brothers formed the Glenmorangie Distillery Company. The refurbishment included an innovation which meant that the stills were redesigned to be steam-heated. The new technique eliminated the problem of the traditional open flame which sometimes caused particles at the bottom of the stills to be burnt. The innovation was soon picked up by several other distilleries.

In 1918 the distillery was sold to its largest customer, the blending company MacDonald & Muir Ltd. Glenmorangie was mothballed between 1931-1936 as a result of the US Prohibition and the 1929 Stock Market Crash. The distillery was expanded in 1970 and the capacity was doubled. Through an impressive development the distillery was able to double its capacity yet again in 1990 and now uses eight stills. The distillery underwent yet another change in 1996 when they changed the name to Glenmorangie PLC and moved the headquarters to a £12 million facility near Edinburgh airport. The complex houses a fully integrated cooperage, storage, blending and bottling facility.

Administration, marketing and other functions also reside in the new complex. 1996 also saw the release of a new range of official bottlings called 'wood finish' with releases of whisky finished in Sherry, Port and Madeira casks.

The distillery has 16 employees, the 'Sixteen men of Tain and now 15 men and 1 lady', who are mentioned on the labels of the wood finish bottlings. They turn out 48 casks of whisky every day –most of which will be bottled as single malt whisky. Glenmorangie rarely if ever sell any casks to independent bottlers. The water used by Glenmorangie is very hard and rich in minerals. In fact, they have been forced to drill out limescale from the condenser pipes. The process water is drawn from the Tarlogie Springs, whose water is said to take more than 100 years to filter down to the springs.

Glenmorangie closed their malting facility in 1980 and the lightly peated malt is bought from central malting companies. The mash tun and the eight washbacks are made from stainless steel. The eight boiling ball model stills are the tallest in Scotland with a height of 5.14 metres –the necks almost resemble pipes more then necks.

For their standard bottlings Glenmorangie exclusively use US casks from Missouri which have contained Kentucky Bourbon for four years. Since 1996 they have also experimented with several 'finishes' as for example Madeira and Port casks. All casks are stored in the 14 on site warehouses and bottling is done in the new large complex outside of Edinburgh. Glenmorangie is the second largest as well as the fastest growing single malt whisky in the UK



Runrig to toast gig with special whisky

Celtic rock band Runrig will toast their sell-out concert near Loch Ness next month with their own special commemorative malt whisky. To mark their Beat the Drum gig in front of 5,000 people at Drumnadrochit on August 18, the band have selected a 20-year-old malt with help from Huntly's award-winning whisky merchant Duncan Taylor. The whisky, named after the event, will be limited to just 500 bottles and will be available to buy on-site at the festival. Each bottle is individually numbered and accompanied by a certificate signed by the band. Band member Iain Bayne said: "In this significant year of Highland culture we thought there was no better way to mark our own involvement than to do so in the company of one of the finest, most vibrant and special of Highland malts. It also seemed appropriate and fitting to name it, Beat The Dram." Euan Shand, of Duncan Taylor, said: "This is one of the most exciting private bottlings we have been involved in. The marriage of whisky and music has always been strong, and lovers of both will not be disappointed."

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

David off on his travel as whisky ambassador

A Distillery worker who has been named the brand's global ambassador is preparing to jet around the globe promoting malt whisky. Dufftown-born David Mair is planning trips to Canada, France, Sweden, Russia and Portugal in his new role promoting the Balvenie malt whisky. Mr Mair, who now lives at Lossiemouth, has worked for William Grant and Sons for more than 20 years. Based at Glenfiddich and the Balvenie Distilleries at Dufftown, he helped the development of The Balvenie Distillery Visitor Centre and tour. His new post will see him travelling the world to meet whisky specialists and consumers giving presentations, tutored nosings and tastings. Mr Mair said: "Before the Balvenie Distillery was open to the public it was part of my role to show special visitors around and their reaction has always been extraordinary. "It is a very special distillery that makes a very special whisky so when I saw the role for global ambassador it was irresistible." Mr Mair said the malt's markets were in the UK, France and the United States. It is hoped the new post will help promote the malt in other countries including China, Taiwan, India and Russia.

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

Premium prices strengthen profits

A whisky distiller has reported an improvement in turnover and a sharp rise in profits in its latest financial year. Family-owned Ian Macleod Distillers, founded by Leonard Russell in 1936, says in its annual report just released by Companies House that the whisky marketplace is being influenced by increased long-term forecast demand from emerging markets for premium aged product. The directors add that production costs increased in the year to September 30 as a result of rising energy costs and would rise further in 2007 because of higher cereal prices, in particular malted barley. Their report says: "There is tighter supply of malt whisky and to a lesser extent grain whisky. Selling prices need to rise to fund and cover the rise in costs. "The report also highlights a significant development during the year in the form of a £243,000 investment to upgrade the visitor centre at its Glengoyne Distillery, near Loch Lomond, to provide additional facilities and allow for more visitors to be catered for at any one time. Ian Macleod Distillers, which became a fully integrated distiller, blender and bottler when it acquired Glengoyne Distillery in 2003, shows in its accounts that it achieved pre-tax profits of £783,060 for the year against profits of £156,489 the year before. Annual turnover improved to £24.32million from £22.76million.

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

Inver House Distillers Appoints The Leith Agency for Global Campaign

Inver House Distillers has appointed The Leith Agency to manage their first global direct marketing campaign for their super premium brand, Balblair Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky as part of a six-figure investment in the brand's re-launch. Balblair's striking new vintage identity was revealed in March and now The Leith Agency, Marketing Services Company of the Year 2007, has won a three way pitch to target discerning whisky consumers world-wide through a direct marketing campaign which will include a recruitment drive, trade and consumer incentives as well as an exclusive online membership club for Balblair enthusiasts.

Article Courtesy of Inverhouse Distillers

The Good Life Journal

Diary of Events July & August 2007

August 22 Club Tasting :FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651
August 27 Sushi and Whisky Tasting : Winesense Melrose Arch Contact watt 011 684 1487
August 28 Club Tasting : Johannesburg Wanderers Club Illovo : Contact Andre on 011 788 5010
August 29 Rotary Tasting : Johannesburg Wanderers Club Illovo : Contact Andre on 011 788 5010
September 5 Club Tasting :FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651

Featured Whisky

This month I feature some whiskies that are not available in RSA , and maybe we can convince the powers that be to change it. We start with **Bladnoch**, the distillery founded in 1817 closed a few times the last being 1993, it reopened in 2000 and is privately owned by Raymond Armstrong (Irish) he is producing small batches of spirit due for release 2010/12. This is an independent bottling by Douglas Laing bottled in winter 1991. The whisky is a light and fruity affair with rich oils which lead to barley sugar and a hint of peat in a dry finish. **The Glenlivet** officially founded in 1824 when George Smith became the first to receive his licence in his area, the law passed in 1823 allowed the excise men to come down hard on his neighbours which left him with no competition. After many years of success his son applied successfully for the exclusive use of the words The Glenlivet. The spirit has a light vanilla and honey on the nose on the palate a rich spicy dram slowly dissipates to a sweet finale which is long and smooth. **Tomatin** distillery built in 1897 amidst the victorian boom steadily grew till in 1974 it had more than 23 stills in operation producing close on 13 million litres of alcohol whilst it remains one of the biggest malt producers it is down to only 12 pot stills. The distillery is Managed by Polly MacDonald. The dram is a malty spice with green grass and barley sugar, it goes down warmly and sweetly and finishes with a lush fruity dryness. **Isle of Jura** was established in 1810 it lay dormant from 1918 to 1960 when it was rebuilt and extended again in the 70's. The island itself has just one tar road that leads, yup you guessed it straight to the distillery. With a population of less than 250 people it is more famous for being the location that George Orwell wrote his novel 1984 and of course it is estimated that the deer outnumber the humans by 30-1. The spirit is full and rich on the nose with hints of ginger amongst a floral bouquet. The palate has soft peaches with honey citrus and marzipan and a long smooth silky finish. **Laphroaig** the definitive Islay distillery, claim to officially be founded in 1815. With a long history including a dispute over amongst other things water with their neighbours at Lagavulin. They have endured they were the first to use ex bourban barrels for ageing whisky and were presented with the Royal warrant by the Lord of the Isles Prince Charles. They remain the no1 selling Islay malt. A fruity overlay and the inevitable trace of peat and tar, A sweet gentleness that develops to a rounding peat and smoke fest with abundant wood character an everlasting succulent finish. **Brora** a closed distillery that produced some of the best malt whisky of all time. Originally known as Clynelish when the accountants last checked they thought they knew better and closed down a Classic. The premier barrel is limited to only 151 Bottles but what an exceptional whisky this is closer to Talisker than any other malt on the Planet, or is Talisker closer to Brora. The nose is of fine vanilla and fruit infused with burnt eucalyptus rich and warming with brackish sherry and a meaty middle that explodes with a spicy long smoky finish. **Inchmurrin** from the Loch Lomond distillery the unusual stills allow 8 malts to be produced from this distillery the Inchmurrin is a rich fruity malt with soft tannins and an endearing finish. **Knockando** distillery is the home of J&B every year they produce a vintage 12 year old malt as featured a very enticing and alluring fruity sweet malt nose with a very unique palate the **NOX** is a vatted malt made for the Spanish market and is young and intense perfect for drinking with a mixer. **Ardbeg** distillery was founded on Islay in 1815 and although it had its problems recently, it is fast becoming a most sought after classic Islay malt. The nose is typically Islay with a soft light and elegant styled nose the palate is sweet and rich with layers of barley and oak that are rich and complex and open a surge of spice, the finish is a sheer mirror image of the Island itself ever changing with stark contrasts and an undeniable fact that you will return over and over again. **Royal Lochnagar** this distillery only produces 500 000 litres a year and is the signature malt in Johnnie Walker Blue Label need we say more. **Highland Park** still rates as one of my top 8 of all time whiskies the nose is sublime with honey malt and the slightest hint of peat, it leads a rich soft mouth that endures and is truly close to perfect with a finish of complex oak sherry and cocoa a earthy natural beast.

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