

The Good Life Journal

July 2007 * Vol 5 *

Mc Beth On Whisky Club Newsletter

THIS MONTH

FEATURED DISTILLERY(Page 2)

Brora

NEWS.(Page 3)

Investment in premium malt brands bearing fruit for whisky producer.

Roths firm bolsters headcount.

BenRiach Launch 3 Heavily Peated Wood Finishes

FEATURED WHISKY JULY (Page 4)

Glenkinchie 10

Clynelish 14

Bowmore 16

Edradour 10

Auchentoshan 18

Yamazaki 12

EVENTS (Page 4)

BEST OF MOMENTS

June was an exiting month in whisky, so much change and so much promise of a bright future for the spirit. Most of you concurred with whisky mag and gave the Talisker 18 a big thumbs up. I finally made it up to Jozie for my first official club tasting the first week in July and all though everything seemed to go wrong (lost luggage, an expired drivers license and missed room booking) it turned out to be a great week so heres to June and all things new.

FEATURED PERSONALITY

Charles Chree Doig is best known for his invention of the Doig Ventilator or as you and I know it the pagoda roof on the top of most kilns. Charles was the Architect on no less than 56 distilleries including Speyburn Abelour Balblair and Dufftown to name but a few. The pagoda style roof is one of the most noticeable and recognisable features of a distillery. Whilst very few distilleries utilise their malting's opting to buy in ready malted barley it was one of the first things I noticed and associated with a distillery as a youngster. So heres to you Charles and your input to the world of whisky.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Of all the english words "set" has the most definitions. Americans choke on toothpicks more than any other object.

There are 17 million casks of whisky maturing in Scotland at any one time.

10 % of Scottish Agriculture jobs are dependant on the whisky industry.

Whisky sales in 2005 would stretch 27900 km if the casks used were laid end to end

Changes and Innovations

Whilst it is true that there is innovation and distilleries do modernise over time, the secret to distilling perfect malts is consistency as well as a healthy respect for tradition. How different marketing and sales are, when compared to this. If you are not the leading edge sales are dismal and to be a brand you have to be the most innovative(having lots of money to spend always helps) and of course tradition is oh so yesterday. What has this got to do me well not much other than the changes I have instituted. July saw me visit Jozie officially for the first time to represent Mc Beth on Whisky it was fun and some new friends have been made as well as some new Members so a warm welcome to you all and lets hope this grows from strength to strength. Other changes about are my new Blog whiskyshop.blogspot.com the hope is that you will go there and post questions and or comments I will try to keep you up to date with whats happening as well as do reviews of tasting events and whisky tasting notes. So go and check it out and post do not be shy now. I am open to suggestions and really would appreciate your comments hints tips and just general points of view. Hopefully by the time my next Newsletter gets to you I would have seen you at a tasting or two or at least got a post from you in Blogosphere

Till then 'Slainte Mhath' Hector Andrew Mc Beth



FEATURED DISTILLERY

Name: Brora
Region: Highlands North Scotland
Established: 1819
Owners: Diageo.
No of Stills: 1 Wash 1 Spirit
Grain: Chalice/Optic
Water Source: Clynemilton Burn
Expressions: 20&24 Rare malts 30 Years Old
Wood: Ex Bourbon and Sherry
Peat :Exact PPM not available estimated at 25-35 PPM



Brora distillery started out in 1819 as Clynemilton distillery it was built by the first Duke of Sutherland. The duke was the architect behind the forced removals of tens of thousands of people to make room for (as he put it) far more profitable sheep.

Many of the evicted tenants turned to illicit distilling, as an attempt to put an end to this illegal activity the Duke built and licensed the distillery so that they would have a legal way to sell their excess grain.

There were several changes in owners until in 1896 it became the property of one of the larger blending companies. The blenders went bankrupt in 1912 and sold on to a Frenchman John Risk and joint partner DCL (now Diageo current sole owners since 1925).

In 1967 a new distillery was built beside the existing one and was named Clynemilton B it was far larger and had 3 pairs of stills as opposed to one. A year later the distillery A was closed only to be reopened in '69 as there was a demand for peated whisky used for blending, Clynemilton A started to produce a heavily peated spirit.

It is not sure if the shortage was caused by the demise of Talisker a decade earlier or the unexpected closure of Caol Ila for refurbishment.

The marked difference in spirit caused the excise and duties officials to force them to run the distilleries as separate entities. The distillery was closed down and reopened as Brora in 1975.

Brora continued to produce a brilliantly peated smoky whisky until 1983 when Diageo closed it down due to a recession in the industry as well as an overproduction of whisky.

Today the distillery acts as a visitors centre and warehouse for its still active sister distillery Clynemilton.

The water source is one of interest as the area is known for rich gold deposits the rumor has it that the water runs through gold veins and as such deposits richly in this truly golden spirit.

As can be seen from the photos the distillery is still very much in tact even though it has been completely dismantled. The spirit itself is really very special it is in my opinion the most Talisker like whisky. So next time you are out in the North of The Scottish highlands take a wee bit of time to visit this site and be sure to taste the Clynemilton too which is always a winner in my books.

Not far from the distillery is the magnificent Dunrobin Castle. It is the most Northerly of Scotland's great houses it has 189 rooms and is one of Britain's oldest continuously inhabited houses dating back to the 1300's.

It has a fascinating History and has seen the Architectural influences of Sir Charles Barry and latterly Sir Robert Lorimer. It was at one time used as a Naval Hospital as well as a Boys School.



Investment in premium malt brands bearing fruit for whisky producer

Edrington Group said sales of its flagship whisky brand, The Famous Grouse, had exceeded 3million cases for the first time and sales of The Macallan single malt had reached a new record of over 500,000 cases in the year to March 31.

Chief executive Ian Curle said yesterday: "Our brand development strategy is bearing fruit as The Famous Grouse, The Macallan and Highland Park all continued to show strong growth, aided by a positive trading environment for Scotch whisky." "Due to the strong performance of our brands and our confidence in their long-term prospects, we plan to invest further in increased distillation and warehousing at The Macallan estate on Speyside." "The investment will take place over the next few years and demonstrates our commitment to support the anticipated growth of our business." "We are well placed to meet future demand."

Privately owned Edrington, which employs more than 800 people, said that The Famous Grouse had been the market leader in Scotland for 27 years and in the past 12 months had improved its position in the UK, its largest market, as a whole. Mr Curle said: "We continue to invest significantly behind The Famous Grouse in international markets and the brand has grown and developed its premium positioning in all of the key territories: Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific." "The Macallan achieved over 500,000 cases sold for the first time in 2006-07." More importantly, the value growth of The Macallan outpaced the increase in volume and reflects how the group is focusing on opportunities to 'premiumise' and broaden our appeal to a wider and more discerning consumer base. "Through development of the premium ranges, single-minded focus on quality, and the success of the new Fine Oak range, The Macallan is now the number two single malt Scotch whisky in the world by value." "Our malt whisky brands are performing ahead of the industry average, both in volume and value, and we believe that this sector will continue to grow strongly in years to come." Mr Curle added, however, that overall, Edrington's strong brand performance had been dampened by more than £3million of negative currency movements, mostly related to the US dollar. He said: "Our results will continue to be affected as long as the dollar remains weak."

Edrington reported pre-tax profits, excluding exceptional items, of £68.9million: up 6.8% from its £64.5million haul the year before.

Turnover was up 5.7% at £278.5million on the previous year's £263.4million.

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

Roths firm bolsters headcount

A North-east design and manufacturing firm has added more than 20 staff.

Forsyths, which has its headquarters at Roth, has expanded its team by taking on an additional 22 employees: four at its Forblast operation at Buckie, 12 at its Buckie base and an additional six at Roth.

This brings the total number of staff to more than 140.

The company said increases in work for both the oil and gas and whisky industries - two of its main areas of expertise - had resulted in a booming business climate.

Forsyths chairman Richard Forsyth said: "With both the whisky and oil and gas industries continuing to thrive, we are in an excellent position to take advantage of the many new business opportunities that lie ahead. The appointment of even more staff will ensure we are in the best possible position to serve both new and existing clients.

"These are exciting times for Forsyths, and although we continue to extend our reach internationally, we are particularly committed to the local area, encouraging local employment and skills.

"Last year, Forsyths had a turnover of £13million, and this looks set to rise by 25-30% this year. All in all, we are extremely happy with the firm's position and, as the main pot-still maker in the world, we are building a reputation as a market leader."

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

BenRiach Launch 3 Heavily Peated Wood Finishes

We are pleased to announce the release of three new 12 years old BenRiach Single Malt expressions, each of which is distilled from heavily peated malted barley and originally matured in American oak, then finished in either Pedro Ximenez Sherry Butts ('Hereditus Fumosus'), Aged Tawny Port Hogsheads ('Importantus Fumosus') or Jamaican Dark Rum Barrels ('Arumatus Fumosus').

Each whisky is non chill filtered and bottled at 46% (92 proof) and natural colour, and comes housed in an individual gift tube. All 3 whiskies were launched towards the end of May 2007, and are available in strictly limited quantities, with a 1st production of just 530 six-packs of Hereditus, 420 six-packs of Importantus and a mere 290 six-packs of Arumatus. With Curiositas and Authenticus we have established a tradition of giving our heavily peated malts Latin names, and we have decided to continue this with the 3 new releases.

Article Courtesy of Benriach

The Good Life Journal

Diary of Events July & August 2007

July 25 Club Dinner: Five Flies restaurant Contact Hector: @021 674 7311 or 0833771113
July 31 Club Tasting: FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651
August Marimba Tasting: Marimba Restaurant and Cigar Bar: contact Ntombi @ 021 418 3366
August 8 Club Tasting :FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651
August 22 Club Tasting :FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651
August 28 Club Tasting : Johannesburg Wanderers Club Illovo : Contact Andre on 011 788 5010

Featured Whisky

For the Month of July I feature no new whiskies, with all my traveling as well as taking a wee break(unpaid mind you, the joys of self employment)there just is not enough time.

What I do feature is my favorite six whiskies so far this year and why.

I also will be conducting a whisky dinner and will look at some tips to matching food and whisky together.

Glenkinchie 10 years old the Edinburgh Malt as its known, is a classic Lowland malt breaking away from the traditional method of triple distillation yet somehow still produces a light easy drinking whisky with loads of fruity complexity, for me this is a palate pleaser and works well with novice and connoisseur alike. I chose it because it always pleases. **Edradour** 10 years old what can we say of Scotland's smallest distillery other than its good to see it back on SA shelves and with signatory behind it I am told we will see much more consistency in product. This is an obviously sherried whisky with a mint and sherry aroma to a feinty nose. The malt is full and creamy on the palate with a cleansing finish for such a light malt. Edradour wins a position simply for nostalgia. **Yamazaki** 12 years old, well what can I say this is a firm favorite without a doubt. The Japanese oak used allows for that cherry pip (unique) aroma and flavor ,a spicy gem on the palate with long thin cleansing finish ,a very rich malt which copes well with lots of water. My current addiction to Sushi and the endearing combination is probably what allows this whisky to feature here. **Clynelish** 14 years old this malt almost always finds its way to my list of favorites this year is no exception with a toasty malt and fruity nose to a subdued sweet palate interlaced with full bodied spice a bold whisky that hold back nothing. **Auchentoshan** 18 years Old Limited edition. This is a big cask strength whisky which belies its lowlands and triple distilled lightness. It forgoes these characters a delivers a complex brown sugar and oak combo that allows for a long intense and rich finish. One, most may have overlooked, with all the hype over the three wood and 21 year old and as such on my list.

Bowmore 1989 limited edition. Wow candied fruit with marzipan and brimstone flinty bonfires this whisky delivers much like the 4th of July celebrations a richly sweet malt with a sherbet delight and soft smoky finish. Bowmore is the oldest Islay whisky still in production and this fine dram truly celebrates its rich heritage with style. Without a doubt this whisky finds itself in my top 10 of all time for its subtly and charm. I must confess this is by no means my definitive list for this year I only used whisky that I presented to my Club since March this year and even there are some whiskies like Glenfarclas 105 and AnCnoc 12 as well as the Balvenie 1993 Port wood which are probably better quality and would score higher. I tried to still capture the essence of a tasting starting from light style to a sherry note ending with peat and as such only had 6 slots.

Whisky and Food, many people will tell you a great many things about this subject. They will all swear it to be the absolute truth and more, give you strict guidelines of what works and what does not. That is not my aim at all I have conducted well over a hundred whisky dinners in my life and they work for me and mostly for the guests too. People it tends not to work for are the gulpers amongst us as they prefer a full mouth as apposed to a sip. As to flavors, with the enormous palate whisky has and the high alcohol ,whisky adores high acidity and fatty omega 3s as well as mouth coating products like cheese or chocolate. Also a simple rule is match like with like except when a cigar is involved look for an off note to balance. But cardinal to all rules experiment and have fun.

Some Classics in my book are a Peated whisky with oysters or shellfish as well a good quality smoked or peppered meats. A good breves blue or Stilton with peated malt is also an experience to have. Salmon is a sheer winner with a spicy sherried whisky much in the speyside region. Look no further than sushi and green Thai curries for a classic highland whisky with rich character again really prominent where sherry wood is used. 70 Cocoa chocolates rich enough for those highland drams. Lighter style lowland malts adore light white cheeses like Parmesan, Camembert or a good Roydon. Till next time
Slainte Mhath

**Comments and inquiries to admin@whiskyshop.co.za
Editor: Hector Mc Beth Owner :Hector Mc Beth
Contact 021 674 7311 Mobile : 083 377 1113**