

The Good Life Journal

September 2007 * Vol 7 *

Mc Beth On Whisky Club Newsletter

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BEST OF MOMENTS

August was a jam packed month full of many great whisky moments. I met some inspiring people posted away on my Blog which no one bothers to read or comment on. Every now and then though people come up to me and tell me that they think I am good at what I do and should always continue to do so. So rather than Isolate one particular moment or person. I would like to drink a toast to all of you that read my blurb and say thank you for your feedback and well wishes for these are the best moments.

FEATURED PERSONALITY

In Remembrance, Michael Jackson(03/1947- 09/2007), a Yorkshire man that first elevated beer to its rightful place of one worlds great alcoholic drinks. Later became common place in all things whisky. He wrote many a book and his Malt whisky Companion is still the best selling book on the subject . In 2005 he gave us his final book simply named Whisky, which is one of the best I have ever read and has already won 5 International awards. We will always remember him for his giving nature and his style in which he made things seem simple as well as his great take on all things jazz. Thank You Michael and may God Bless you.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

In Texas it is illegal to be in the possession of a pair of pliers.
It is forbidden to imitate animals in Miami.
The Scotch Whisky Association pursues at least 70 legal actions at any one time.
Legally you may write off 2% of your stock to evaporation each year.
This totals some 16 Million litres a year in Scotland alone.

Spring the final Quarter

Wow it is already spring the final quarter of the year, now is the time to look at what you have achieved this year and finally make good on all those promises you made to yourself at the beginning of the year. Spring means rejuvenation, making way for the new and simply clicking over to that home stretch the festive season. We have to say farewell to our winter procrastination and hello summer with new found energy. Now is the time that you will shine if you convert your plans to actions. Things start to hot up now in the whisky industry in SA we make our final preparations, for the first week in November is Whiskylive festival the biggest whisky event in the world. All the retailers are getting ready with gearing their stocks and negotiating deals with all their suppliers, as they get ready to launch their whisky catalogs for the December shopping spree. Boyoh Boy do you the consumer get really great deals this time of year. So look out for those first beautiful spring buds and those fantastic whisky deals coming in those glossy catalogs real soon. I have decided to make a few changes as well you will note I only feature six new whiskies this month and one themed tasting rather this month its whisky and Sushi hope to see you at a tasting real soon Till then 'Slainte Mhath' Hector Andrew Mc Beth



FEATURED DISTILLERY

Name: Dalmore
Region: Highlands North
Established: 1839
Owners: Whyte and Mackay
No of Stills: 4 Wash 4 Spirit
Grain: Oat
Water Source: River Averon
Expressions: 12, 21 and Cigar malt with special editions aged 30, 52 and 60
Wood: Ex Bourbon and Olroso all finished in sherry butts
Peat: less than 3 PPM

Dalmore is Norse for "big meadowland". The distillery is located on the beautiful shoreline of the Cromarty Firth overlooking the Black Isle. Founded in 1839 by Alexander Matheson. A partner in the Hong Kong trading firm, Jardine Matheson & Co. this company at the time dealt in everything from tea to opium.

Distillation began with a single pair of stills, the distillery having acquired sole rights to draw its water from the River Averon; first the distillery was leased to the Sutherland family who handed over to Robert Pattison sometime during the 1860's. The lease then quickly passed to the Mackenzie family who eventually took full ownership in 1891. Andrew Mackenzie was the driving force of the Mackenzie brothers and cheekily included the word Speyside in their sales pitch for Dalmore whisky. They added a second pair of stills in a separate stillhouse in 1874.

A single branch railway line was used to connect the distillery with the main line at Alness station. This line allowed locally grown barley, peat and coal from the Fife collieries etc. to be delivered direct into the distillery. Also the pier at Belleport on the Cromarty Firth is part of the distillery, again this facility was used for shipments of barley, coals and other stores to be unloaded directly from the steamers.

During World War 1 Dalmore's warehouses were requisitioned by the Admiralty as a Sea mine - production factory,

One million pounds worth of maturing whisky was transferred to three other local distilleries. In 1920 after a fire nearly destroyed the distillery, the warehousing was returned to distillery use and the whisky was transferred back, evidently with not a single cask missing.

A Saladin box system of producing malt was installed in 1956 and continued to operate until 1981. The Mackenzies retained ownership until 1960 when the company merged with Whyte & Mackay forming the Dalmore-Whyte & Mackay Ltd. In 1966 the number of stills increased from 4 to 8. The Mackenzie connection is remembered on the Dalmore labels with the 12 pointed stag's head emblem, of the Mackenzie clan.

In 1996 ownership briefly transferred to JBB (Greater Europe) then in 2001 returned to Whyte & Mackay. Dalmore's whisky is used in all Whyte & Mackay blended whiskies.

The essential process of distillation is carried out in the highly burnished copper stills, crafted by local coppersmiths and unique to The Dalmore, having a distinctive chunky shape. There are four pairs of stills, the latter our dating from 1966. The upper parts of the 1874 stills have survived and are still in use today. They create an unusual still outline, by having parallel sides instead of the customary tapering swan-neck. Also running water is fed over the outside of the still necks to cool the stills.



Leading distillery gets go-ahead for major expansion

A leading Speyside distillery has been given the go-ahead for a multi million-pound expansion scheme, which could create up to 10 jobs directly plus spin-off employment for local construction companies. The Edrington Group, owners of the Macallan Distillery, revealed plans earlier this year for six new warehouses, a cooperage and an operations building on farmland near the distillery at Overton, Craigellachie. Moray councilors yesterday gave permission for the development to progress, despite almost 20 objections from people concerned about its impact on the landscape and loss of agricultural land. Councilor Pearl Paul told members of the environmental services committee that this was a major development for Speyside and called on officers to keep councilors informed of any significant changes to the plans once approval had been granted. She said in the past she had been shocked by changes made to applications once they had been determined. "I just want to make sure and I think officers should take it seriously what I am saying. This application is important economically and I would not go against it but I want to make sure people in the area get what they are expecting," she said. When the expansion plans were made public in March, Edrington said increased production and growing demand for the Macallan single malt were behind the proposals. The group's director of corporate affairs, Emrys Inker, said last night he was delighted the plans had met with the approval of councilors. The news comes just weeks after the company announced plans to invest £5million into bringing a dormant still house at The Macallan back into active service after more than 10 years. Sales of The Macallan have almost doubled in the last five years and the refurbished plant comprising mash house, tun room and still house, will aim to increase output by 30% to 8million litres of whisky a year. This, combined with the new warehouses, will form the start of a major investment for the distillery, said Mr Inker. In the short term the plan will be to create two to three warehouses, followed by the rest at a later stage. Mr Inker said he was unable to put an exact figure on the expansion costs but estimated them to be in the region of tens of millions. The project will also create up to 10 permanent jobs at the distillery plus spin-off benefits for local construction companies. Mr Inker said: "This is not only great news for the Edrington Group and The Macallan but also for Speyside and the whisky industry." He added that for the first time in its 183-year history The Macallan had broken through the 500,000-case barrier and demands for the product were continuing to grow in the US and Asia and new markets were emerging in Russia and some Mediterranean countries. The Scottish whisky industry is booming and Edrington is not the only firm with plans for heavy investment in the Moray area. Last month, drinks giant Diageo lodged a planning application with Moray Council to build the first major distillery in Scotland for more than 30 years.

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

Distillers in high spirits after malt win

An Islay malt whisky scooped two major awards at a prestigious spirits competition. Lagavulin Distillers Edition won the Single Malt Scotch Whisky over 15 years old class at the International Wine and Spirits Competition. And the same whisky took the trophy for Special Edition Single Malt Scotch Whisky. In total, Diageo's Classic Malts Selection, which includes six of the company's regional malts, earned two trophies and 31 medals at this year's IWSC, more than any other distiller. The classic malt with the biggest haul of medals was from the Isle of Skye's only distillery. Talisker 18-year-old confirmed its recent accolade at the World Whiskies Awards as "the world's best single malt whisky" by winning Gold - Best in Class in the Islands - 18-Year-Old category, its third victory in a row in the category.

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

Whisky haul seized at coach depot

More than 12,000 litres of whisky were seized in Walsall by customs officers. The Teachers whisky was confiscated at a coach depot in Bentley Lane on Saturday, HM Revenue and Customs said. No arrests were made, although a van was also seized. Customs said that the revenue loss to the nation amounted to more than £100,000. Spokesman Keith Morgan warned the public not to buy illicit alcohol and said it was likely to be both counterfeit and harmful.

Article Courtesy of BBC News

Elgin malt whisky stalwart steps down

The managing director of Elgin-based malt whisky specialist Gordon and MacPhail has retired from the post after 14 years. Ian Urquhart, who has just turned 60 and has been 40 years with the family-owned business, will continue part-time as a non-executive director, with responsibility for a range of special projects. Mr Urquhart's brothers, Michael and David, who were directors at the company, have become joint managing directors. The firm said that, to support them, the four associate directors - Stephen Rankin, Neil Urquhart, Ewen Mackintosh and Derek Hancock - would assume additional responsibilities. Michael, 52, and David, 54, said: "We began our preparations for this change in structure more than 18 months ago with the appointment of four associate directors and investment in a comprehensive management training programme." The firm describes itself as the world's leading malt whisky specialist. It also owns Benromach Distillery.

Article Courtesy of Press & Journal

The Good Life Journal

Diary of Events August & September 2007

August 28 Club Tasting : Johannesburg Wanderers Club Illovo : Contact Andre @ 011 788 5010
September 12 Club Tasting :FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651
September 19 Club Tasting :FBG Green market Square Contact Anthony: @ 021 426 1651
September 26 Whisky and Sushi: Wine Sense Melrose Arch : Contact Adri @ 011 684 1487
September 27 Club Tasting : Johannesburg Wanderers Club Illovo : Contact Andre @ 011 788 5010

Featured Whisky

This month I feature six whiskies by flavour as well as a themed tasting of whisky and Sushi.

Glen Grant how many times have you passed this malt not knowing what to make of it yep its as cheap as chips but remember always it is great value for money. Founded in 1840 by James and John Grant the distillery has some interesting features, an exotic Victorian garden and original nineteenth century house which is a classic example of the Baronial style. The distillery is well worth a visit and you can have a sample in either the generals Study or weather permitting the Dram hut in the Garden. The spirit itself is light and malty with slight vanilla on the nose a clean and easy drinking spirit with delicate fruity flavours still young so no real oak complexity fine dram. **Glenmorangie** gaelic for "Glen of Tranquility". Situated far North in Tain originally a brewery this distillery produces some of the most pleasant whisky in the world from the tallest stills in the Highlands. The original innovators of the "wood finished" drams. The spirit itself is so delicate yet so aromatic with a Jasmin perfume of oak and vanilla on the nose and a sweet complex enduring yet light palate pure complexity at work with an enduring finish and near perfect balance. **Glenfiddich** gaelic for "valley of the deer" is the biggest selling single Malt in the world, hand built by the Grant Family in 1896 its first spirit ran on Christmas day 1897. It is still owned by the same family five generations later and remains a leader and highly respected innovator. The Solera Reserve is a combination of 15 year old whiskies that are finished in three different wood finishes and then vatted in a Solera European Oak cask which is always kept half full resulting in older whiskies combining with newer whiskies these whiskies are then drawn off to marrying tuns for a further six months resulting in a complex dram. On the nose there is a citrus note as well as vanilla and rich sherry the palate is delightful sweet honey moving into a rich spicy festival and a cocoa finish which is long and fulfilling. Besides the 30 this is my favorite from the distillery. **Benriach** had a chequered start built at the turn of the century only to find itself closed for 60 years during which time it produced malt for Longmorn. It was restarted in 1965 and extended in the mid 80's and is a part of the Chivas blend it was closed in early 2001 and finally bought out in 2004 by Intrabrand its current owners (one of which is a South African.) Curiositas is part of an experiment that took place in the nineties and is one of only a few examples of a peated Speyside malt. On the nose it is a sweet Islay style smoke and ash with some Creosote. On the palate it is rich and sherried sweet with nutty intensity and loads of turfy peat and smoke the finish is medicinal still sweet though, an interesting dram indeed. **Caol Ila** gaelic for "the sound of Islay" the straight of water that separates it from the Isle of Jura. One of the most picturesque distilleries with the view from the still room by far one of my most favorite. The malt specified is identical to that of Lagavulin although the end resultant spirit is very different. They have experimented with an un peated version but this is not available as a single malt (yet). The 12 year old has a oily and pungent dry nose of peat and turf the mouth is sweet and pungent with immediate waves of smoke and vanilla with an enduring oily finish and hints of toffee and breakfast fruits. **Brechin** distillery was closed in 1983 and finally demolished in 1994 today it trades as a safeway supermarket. The distillery was in the North gate of one of the last walled cities in Scotland hence was also known as North Port distillery. The spirit is fruity and sherried with an intense complex aroma of oak and perfumed heather on the palate it is intense and rich with mouth numbing malt and a finish of sheer class another Old Malt Cask dream team malt. Join me this month as we experience Whisky and Sushi a look at the origins of this popular cuisine as well as a few drams that match this food to perfection included in this tasting is the formidable Yamazaki 12 years Old Japanese Single Malt . Kaim Pai or Slainthe but to your health.

**Comments and inquiries to admin@whiskyshop.co.za
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