

Bunnahabhain to form Highland Distilleries Co., which is now part of the Edrington Group, which also owns Macallan.

After 20 years lying idle in the first half of the 20th century, Tamdhu was brought back to life and then expanded in the 1970s into a modern six-still distillery, which uniquely malts all its own barley on site.

TOMINTOUL

✉ Kirkmichael,
Ballindalloch, Grampian
🌐 www.tomintouldistillery.co.uk

Of all the Speyside distilleries that bolted the magic word “Glenlivet” onto their names in the hope of added luster, Tomintoul-Glenlivet has the best case, being a virtual next-door neighbor. Yet the real



heyday of Glenlivet was already long past when this distillery was built in 1965. Situated 5 miles (8 km) from the village of Tomintoul, it is the highest distillery in the Highlands at 1,150 ft (350 m).

The village was a staging post on the old military road from Corgaff to Fort George, and was built after the Jacobite Rising of 1745 (see p45) in an attempt to bring the Highlands to heel. At first it was little more than a village inn, where travelers would rest and numb the cold with whisky at a penny a dram. By 1823, it had its first licensed distillery called Delnabo.

The Tomintoul Distillery was sited on the Glenlivet estate beside the Avon River to take advantage of the crystal clear water from the Ballantruan spring. It was first bottled as a single malt in 1972, though its main role was to supply whisky for blending by parent company Whyte & Mackay. Now owned by Angus Dundee distillers, Tomintoul’s range of bottlings is set to increase.

■ **TOMINTOUL 10-YEAR-OLD** 40% ABV
A gentle, vaguely spicy malt, with nut and cinnamon notes.

■ **TOMINTOUL 16-YEAR-OLD** 40% ABV
A more sweet-centered texture in the mouth than the 10-year-old expression.

Tomintoul, a near-neighbor of the more famous Glenlivet, is the highest distillery in Speyside.

TORMORE

✉ Grantown North Spey, Moray
🌐 www.Tormore.com

After the spate of distilleries that flooded the region at the end of the 19th century, there was a long wait for the next one. It was not until 1960 that Tormore was built on Speyside. The design, by architect Sir Albert Richardson, president of the Royal Academy, was nothing if not bold, and the original drawings even featured a chimney stack shaped like a giant whisky bottle and a clock that chimed *Highland Laddie* on the hour. The



**Tormore
12-Year-Old**

chimney was rejected by the clients—Shenley Industries of America—but the clock survived into the final build, as did the massive stillhouse, which houses eight stills.

After years as a fairly anonymous blending malt and key ingredient in the Long John brand (see p141), Tormore has more recently rediscovered itself as a single.

■ **TORMORE 12-YEAR-OLD**
40% ABV • A caramel-scented, creamy whisky, with some light spicy notes.

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

As you drive northward from Stirling, leaving behind the Lowlands and entering the Scottish Highlands, the scenery suddenly changes dramatically. If it feels as though you are entering a different world, imagine what it was like before paved roads and gas stations.

The mountainous landscape may have lost some of its stature in the last 400 million years, having once been as high as the Himalayas, but it is still a real and inspiring force of nature.

From the outset, this was prime whiskymaking country. There was no shortage of water, and fuel was plentiful in the form of peat. If the quality of the barley was somewhat poorer than that grown along the fertile east coast, there was an added incentive to distil it into something more valuable, something powerful enough to numb the depressing effects of a long Highland winter.

Whenever the authorities tried to suppress unlicensed whisky, they only added to its allure. For a ferociously independent Highlander of the 18th century, this forbidden fruit suddenly tasted all the sweeter. It was there to toast the Jacobite “King O’er the Water” and raise two fingers to the bloated Hanoverian on the throne.

The trouble with the Highlands as a whisky region is its vastness. It extends from Glengoyne, half an hour’s drive

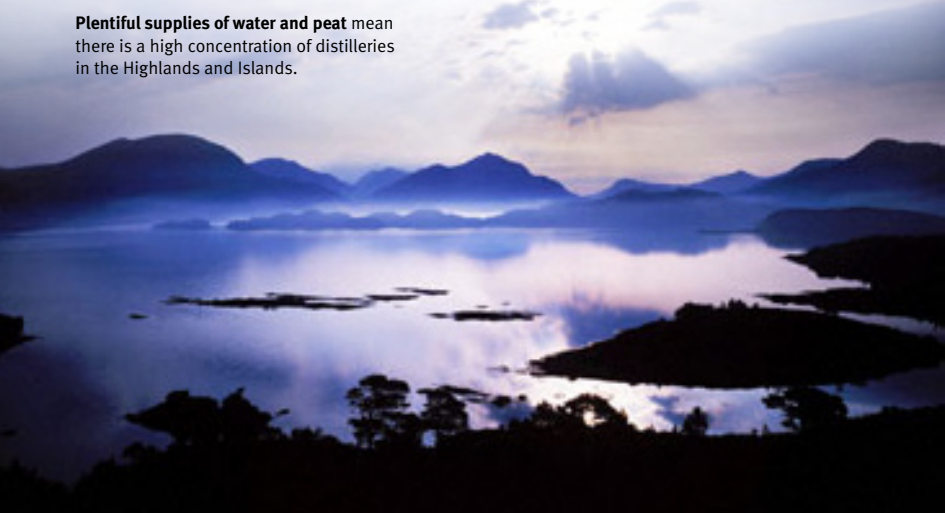
north of Glasgow, to Old Pulteney, just south of John O’Groats, or to Highland Park, on Orkney, if you want to stretch it even further. Taste these three whiskies blind and you would be hard pressed to say they were from the same region.

A MISCELLANY OF STYLES

Those distilleries designated “Highland” have never had the critical mass to create a house style. There are clusters of them on the Black Isle; the northeast corner of Aberdeenshire and the Perthshire glens are dotted with them, but there has never been the concentration that there is in Speyside or on Islay. As a result, Highland distilleries have usually evolved in isolation—they were there to satisfy a local demand and any passing trade.

Perhaps “Highland” whiskies can only be defined by what they are not. They tend not to use heavily peated malt like Islay, though they often carry more of a smoky fragrance than Speyside. Unlike Lowland whiskies, which tend toward dryness on the tongue, Highland whiskies are richer and more robust.

Plentiful supplies of water and peat mean there is a high concentration of distilleries in the Highlands and Islands.





Dewar's White Label Scotch Whisky

you need not berfedy luptuous becoming ilable as 12 expressions.

berdeenshire

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Highland

Cream had become a popular blend in Scotland, with its own network of bars, known as Teacher's Dram Shops, in Glasgow.

His son Adam expanded the business at home and abroad until he felt the need for his own distillery, to ensure a steady supply of malt for his blend. At some point in the 1890s, he stayed at Leith Hall, a fine Georgian house

Ardmore is one of Scotland's biggest distilleries, and most of its malt is used for blending.



Aberfeldy, Perthshire
www.dewarwow.com
Open to visitors

Most of the malt whisky distilleries that sprang up in late-Victorian Scotland were built as an act of faith, in the hope that there would be a ready market among the big blenders once the spirit began trickling off the still.

The story of Aberfeldy is rather different. It was established in the Perthshire town by John Dewar & Sons in 1898 and its role—then as now—was to supply malt for the firm's top-selling blend, Dewar's White Label. Unless the brand falls from grace as the most popular Scotch in the United States, Aberfeldy's purpose in life is unlikely to change.

The site for the distillery was chosen partly for sentimental reasons—it was close to the bothy where John Dewar was born and



At Aberfeldy, there are eight large washbacks made of Siberian larch, with two additional state-of-the-art stainless-steel washbacks nearby.

from where—so legend has it—he walked to Perth in 1828, with his eyes set on making his fortune. More importantly, the chosen site also had a good consistent source of water, as well as a railroad link to Dewar & Sons' head office in Perth.

Aberfeldy's village elders had grown up in the days of illicit whiskymaking and had later witnessed the town's first licensed distillery close for good in 1867. If they had doubts about Dewar's venture and whether it would last

by Kennethmont, in the northeast of Aberdeenshire, and found a suitable site nearby, with its own source of spring water.

The result was Ardmore (named after the Teachers' ancestral home on the west coast), which was finished in 1898, a year before Adam died.

One of the early advertisements for "Teacher's Old Scotch Whiskies" shows Ardmore as a huge industrial distillery, right beside the tracks on the main Aberdeen-to-Inverness line. It was ambitious in scale, but left the business saddled with punitive interest charges for



**Ardmore
Highland
Single Malt**

years, at a time when whisky sales were deep in the doldrums.

Both the distillery and the family firm managed to survive intact until 1976, when the company was bought out by Allied Distillers. By this time, it had expanded—there were now eight stills, with a production of 1 million gallons (4.5 million liters) a year. Today, the Ardmore Distillery

is owned by the makers of Jim Beam, in the US.

Occasional bottlings of a smoky, oily single malt appear, but Ardmore's principal role remains that of supplying malt for blends—notably Teacher's.

DEWAR'S WORLD OF WHISKY AT ABERFELDY

After an almost \$4 million refit in 2000, Aberfeldy's new US owners, Bacardi, reopened the distillery as the all-singing, all-dancing "Dewar's World of Whisky." Visitors receive the full brand experience, as well as an insight into the life of the Edwardian whisky baron Tommy Dewar. Within the exhibition, there is a re-creation of his London office and of the Perth blending room, circa 1929. Outside, standing guard over the distillery is a life-size statue of the famous Pipe Major, whose image appears on every bottle of "White Label."

The distillery gets a little lost in all of this, though the view from the still room is definitely worth seeing. In summer, when the weather is fine, the shutters are pulled up, leaving the room open to the elements, so cool air can blow in and mix with the heat radiating off the stills. To underline the fact that this is all about the blend, at the end of the tour, visitors are given a dram of White Label. You can also try the silky-textured single malt, with its aromas of pear drops and vanilla.



The visitor center at Aberfeldy is a celebration of the Dewar's brand.

BALBLAIR

✉ Edderton, Tain, Ross-shire

🌐 www.inverhouse.com

The original Balblair was built in 1790, making it the second-oldest working distillery in Scotland, according to the claims of its current owners, Inver House.

In truth, Balblair moved from its original site in 1872, but only by a stone's throw and still with the Ross family, who had been in charge almost since day one.

The decision to move was to allow for the expansion of the distillery and to site it right beside the railroad line.

After three generations, the Ross family line petered out and Balblair was acquired by Alexander Cowan in 1894. Cowan promptly rebuilt it

into pretty much what you can see today from the east coast train line.

Over the years, the malt has played its part in many blends, notably Bells, Whyte & Mackay, and—more recently—Ballantine's.

Balblair has recently been relaunched as a vintage malt, in much the same vein as Glenrothes—even the squat bottles are similarly shaped.



**Balblair 1979
Single Malt**

BEN NEVIS

✉ Lochy Bridge, Fort William

🌐 www.bennevisdistillery.com

🏠 Open to visitors

The west coast's island distilleries have tended to flourish, while those on the mainland opposite are few and far between. When Glen Lochy closed for good in 1983, Ben Nevis became the only distillery in Fort William and the most northerly one on the west coast.

Ben Nevis was founded beside Loch Linnhe by



Nestled at the foot of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, is the distillery of the same name.

“Long John” Macdonald in 1825. By the 1880s, when the distillery was producing 150,000 gallons (680,000 liters) a year, the Macdonald family had their own fleet of steamers to carry the whisky down the loch. They also had their own farm, sawmill, and workshops, which, along with the distillery, employed some 230 people. The farm was integrally involved, with barley at one end and 200 head of cattle at the other to eat up the draff produced.

The whisky was called “Long John’s Dew of Ben Nevis,” a name that was to resurface years later as a popular blend owned by Whitbread. In 1981, the brewer bought the distillery outright, owning it until they decided to get out of Scotch whisky altogether a decade later. Since then Ben Nevis has belonged to the Japanese drinks giant Nikka.

Today, the distillery incorporates “The Legend of the Dew of Ben Nevis” visitor center and it is one of the few where you can buy your own cask of malt whisky and have it kept under bond in the warehouse until it is ready for bottling. Over 15 years a sherry butt of Ben Nevis will have lost about a fifth of its contents through evaporation, leaving enough for around 600 bottles.

BLAIR ATHOL’S ASSOCIATION WITH BELL’S

When Arthur Bell bought Blair Athol Distillery in 1933, a year after it had to shut, it was the start of a close association. Blair Athol was a key component of the Bell’s blend (see p120), and in 1970 another pair of stills was added and production was cranked up by 300 percent, as Bell’s sought to increase its market share. Some in the industry felt Bell’s was working its stills too hard and was causing heavier, unpleasant compounds to rise up the neck and into the condensers, thereby adversely affecting the spirit. Bell’s attained its goal, but by the 1980s, had conceded its Scottish market leadership to Famous Grouse.

Subsequently, Bell’s became embroiled in one of the most bitter takeover battles in the industry’s history, when it was acquired in 1985 by Guinness (which later merged with Grand Met to become Diageo, the present owners).

Since the mid-1980s, life at Blair Athol has calmed down considerably. Production has settled at around 8,400 gallons (38,000 liters) a week. Meanwhile, Bell’s has been turned into an 8-year-old blend. It is still a big brand in South Africa and the UK, where it shares the lead position with Famous Grouse.

Comedian Eric Morecambe (left) presents football manager Don Revie with a bottle of Bell’s in the 1970s, the brand’s heyday.



BLAIR ATHOL

✉ Pitlochry, Perthshire
 🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

When the Perthshire town of Pitlochry was little more than a village, and long before the Victorian tourists first arrived, John Stewart and Robert Robertson opened the Aldour Distillery here in 1798. The name came from the Gaelic *allt dour*

Much of the Blair Athol 12-Year-Old produced is consumed here at the distillery, by the 30,000 visitors who turn up each year.



(meaning “burn of the otter”). In an area heaving with illicit stills, business proved tough for this licensed tax-paying distillery, and Aldour soon closed.

In 1826, Alexander Connacher resurrected the distillery, calling it Blair Athol, even though it was some distance south of the village of Blair Atholl. Whether the spelling was different by accident or by design is unclear.

During the second half of the 19th century, it belonged to Peter Mackenzie & Co. and had close ties with the Perth blender Arthur Bell & Sons. Bell steadfastly refused to divulge the recipe for his blends, except to say that they included whiskies from Glenlivet, Stirlingshire, and Pitlochry. The latter was almost certainly Blair Athol.

Some Blair Athol malt is bottled today as a dark, rich, plummy 12-year-old.

CLYNELISH

✉ Brora, Sutherland

🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com

🏠 Open by appointment only

Established in 1819 by the 1st Duke of Sutherland (see below), Clynelish was first rented to James Harpur, from Midlothian, and then in 1846 to George Lawson, who expanded the distillery by adding a new kiln and a new set of stills.

During the salmon season, trade was brisk, with hordes of fishermen sipping flasks of whisky on the banks of the Brora River, the town's main tourist attraction.

In 1896, Clynelish was transformed into a classic late-Victorian distillery, with a pair of pagoda roofs and an enclosed courtyard. It was state of the art, except for the lack of electricity.

Clynelish became the "old" Clynelish when it was shut down in 1967 and a brash, box-shaped "new" Clynelish sprang up alongside it. Two years later, the old distillery was back. Operating under the name Brora Distillery, it was charged with



**Clynelish
14-Year-Old**

making a peat-soaked, Islay-style whisky that was much in demand by blenders.

For a while, Brora and the "new" Clynelish bubbled away in tandem, until the former was shut down for good in 1983. You can still see it more or less intact; though, with most of its guts ripped out, it appears rather empty and forlorn.

Traditionalists may find it more pleasing on the eye than the plate-glass 1960s unit next door, but it was probably cramped and drafty to work in. It is unlikely anyone at the "new" Clynelish Distillery would swap their warm well-lit space for one in the "old" building. Besides,



One of the most northerly distilleries in Scotland, Clynelish was completely rebuilt in 1967.

on a good day the views from the still room can be truly magnificent.

🍷 **CLYNELISH 14-YEAR-OLD** 46% ABV
This is relatively rare and has a fragrant, maritime style, a whiff of smoke, and a unique waxiness on the palate.

DALMORE

✉ Alness, Ross-shire

🌐 www.thedalmore.com

🏠 Open to visitors

The name Dalmore is part Gaelic and part Norse and means "the big meadowland." The distillery was set up in 1839 on the banks of the Cromarty Firth, and looks out across the water to the Black Isle, where some of the best barley in Scotland can be found. With good-quality grain, no shortage of peat, and water from the nearby Alness River, the site was well chosen.

Dalmore took a while to get into its stride, however. Its founder, Alexander Matheson, lasted less than a decade, and his successor, Mrs. Margaret Sutherland, had other engagements, to judge from her job title as "sometime distiller."

This all changed in 1886, when Dalmore was bought by the local Mackenzie family, who were soon supplying James Whyte and Charles Mackay, in Glasgow, with malt for their blends.

DISSIPATION AND VICE

The 1st Duke of Sutherland was a landowner on an epic scale, with estates that stretched right across the northern Highlands. Keen to entice his crofting tenants off the land, he started a series of ventures, including a salt factory and a brick works. In 1819, he added a distillery, Clynelish, on the outskirts of Brora.

The duke's other reason for building a licensed distillery was to wean his tenants off moonshine.

According to his land commissioner, James Loch, this had caused "every species of deceit, vice, idleness, and dissipation." If the people would not sober up and leave the land, then they needed encouraging. In the same year Clynelish was built, 250 crofts were burned down in the Highland Clearances, and it is claimed that 15,000 tenants were "persuaded" to make room for sheep on the Sutherland estates.



1st Duke of Sutherland

THE AMERICANS ARE COMING

In 1905, Dalwhinnie was bought by Cook & Bernheimer, the largest distilling company in the US. This was the first US venture into Scotch whisky and it fueled industry fears that this was the start of a giant takeover bid. Flying the Stars and Stripes above their warehouse in Leith can have done nothing to allay those fears. With US Prohibition, however, Dalwhinnie slipped safely back into Scottish hands in 1919.

The bond between the distillery and the firm of blenders has endured ever since, being formalized in 1960, when Dalmore officially became part of Whyte & Mackay.

During World War I, the distillery was used as a place to prepare mines, when a contingent of the US Navy was stationed here. It survived unscathed and, despite a major expansion in the 1960s, the two-story stone buildings retain their solid Victorian feel.

The three spirit stills are clad in copper cooling jackets, and one of them dates back to 1874. What makes them look even more



Picturesquely set on the banks of the Cromarty Firth, Dalmore looks out toward the Black Isle.

eccentric is the way their necks have been abruptly cut off, like those at Cragganmore, on Speyside. Whether this was by accident or by design is unclear, but they certainly seem to work and no one has since dared tinker with the shape whenever the stills have needed replacement. Beside the stills and the gleaming brass spirits safe, there is a giant control console that could have come from a 1950s sci-fi movie.

The Victorian feel of the distillery is enhanced by the dark paneling in the offices above the visitor center, which came from an old shooting lodge that was being pulled down on the Black Isle. There is also the use of the Mackenzie's family crest, with its 12-point stag's head, on the Dalmore label.

■ **THE DALMORE 12-YEAR-OLD** 40% ABV • A distinct sherried nose, in keeping with its polished mahogany color, gives way

to a creamy texture and fruitcake notes on the tongue.

■ **THE DALMORE 21-YEAR-OLD** 43% ABV • Ripe and floral on the nose, with a rich, nutty, spicy character in the mouth.

DALWHINNIE

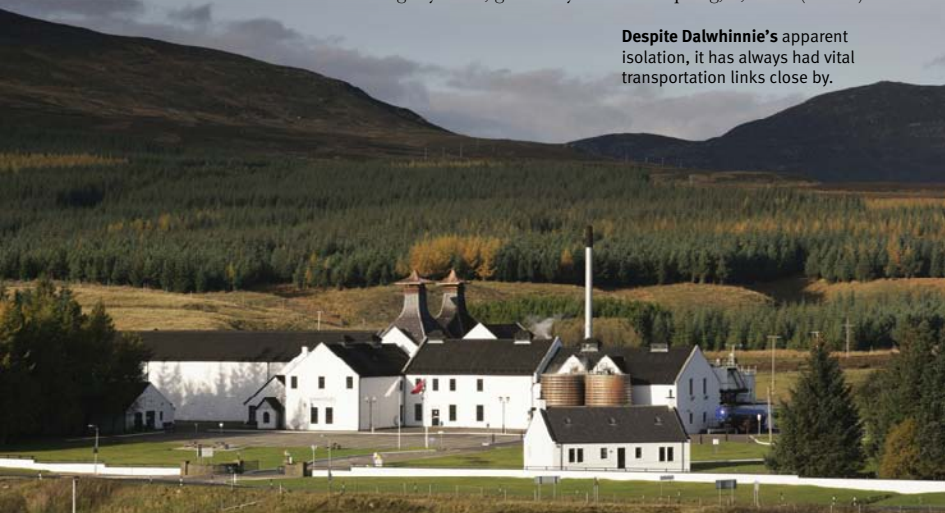
✉ Dalwhinnie, Inverness-shire
 🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Just past Drumochter Pass, right beside the A9, is one of the highest whisky distilleries in Scotland. Dalwhinnie lies in an empty, windswept bowl 1,073 ft (327 m) above sea level. Photographs often show the distillery half-buried in snow, and tour guides tell of the time the workers once had to crawl from their cottages via top-floor windows to get to work, such were the drifts that day. In truth, the snow has been much less reliable of late, as visitors to the country's ski resorts will readily confirm.

Yet, thanks to the wind-chill factor, Dalwhinnie can claim to be one of the coldest inhabited places in Britain, with a mean annual temperature of just 43°F (6°C)—perfect conditions for making whisky.

The water that feeds the distillery is equally chilled, coming from the Allt an t-Sluic spring, 2,000 ft (610 m)

Despite Dalwhinnie's apparent isolation, it has always had vital transportation links close by.



up in the Drumochter Hills. Having cold, pure water was crucial to John Grant, Alex Mackenzie, and George Sillar, who established what was originally the Strathspey Distillery here in 1897. Equally important was the proximity of the railroad and the Great North Road, which passed right in front of the distillery at the time. This allowed easy access for the raw ingredients coming in and the filled casks going out.

Within a year, Strathspey had been sold and renamed Dalwhinnie. After that, the distillery was in American hands for 14 years at the beginning of the 20th century (see page 81). Then, in 1919, it was acquired by the blenders Macdonald Greenlees, who sold it on to the Distillers Company, who (as Diageo) still own it today.

From the early 1920s, Dalwhinnie was a key filling for the Black & White blend.

In fact, it was the brand's spiritual home until it was picked to be one of Diageo's "Classic Malts."

Dalwhinnie is a true Highland thoroughbred, with a dense creamy texture, thanks in part to the use of old-fashioned copper worms to condense the spirit. These sit in outdoor tanks, steaming away like giant hot tubs in the cold air.

🍷 DALWHINNIE

15-YEAR-OLD 43% ABV

Sweet, aromatic, and subtly infused with smoke, this complex malt is thick on the tongue.



Dalwhinnie
15-Year-Old

EDRADOUR

📍 Pitlochry, Perthshire

🌐 www.edradour.co.uk

🏠 Open to visitors

A few new distilleries were built during the postwar boom for blended Scotch, but many more expanded,



with the number of stills doubling or tripling. In the process, whiskymaking lost some of its charm, as it became apparent just how far this industry had come from its artisan roots.

Anyone feeling nostalgic to see how whisky emerged from the farm should head for the hills beyond the Perthshire town of Pitlochry to find Scotland's smallest working distillery.

Founded in 1823, Etrador seems hardly to have changed at all since, with its rough, whitewashed walls giving the building the feel of a farmstead.

It fills just 12 casks of whisky a week from its tiny stills, to produce a raft of different ages and finishes down the line for its owner, Andrew Symington, who bought the distillery in 2002 from the drinks company Pernod Ricard.

Etrador played a bit part in the House of Lords blend, one of many smuggled into the United States during Prohibition. Later, it was a signature malt in King's Ransom, a super-deluxe blend from William Whitely, who bought the distillery in 1933. It was the world's most expensive whisky when a consignment of 200,000 bottles went down with the

Etrador is Scotland's smallest distillery. The whisky is made here by hand by just three men.

SS Politician in 1941, an event that inspired the novel *Whisky Galore* by Compton Mackenzie (see p140).

That the distillery has survived into the 21st century suggests it was simply overlooked by its big-industry bosses. Now back in independent hands, its dollhouse size is very much prized as a virtue.

🍷 **EDRADOUR 10-YEAR-OLD** 40% ABV
Clean peppermint nose with a trace of smoke; richer, nutty flavors on the tongue.

FETTERCAIRN

📍 Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire

🏠 Open to visitors

Despite the abundance of good-quality barley, there are very few distilleries along the east coast of Scotland south of Aberdeenshire. One lone survivor, in the Mearns of Kincardineshire, is Fettercairn, which was an old grain mill converted to distilling in 1823. The village itself stands below the Cairn o'Mount, the high, hump-backed hill that guards the old road over the Grampian Mountains to Deeside.

After various false starts and different owners, the Fettercairn Distillery Co. was formed in 1887, with Sir John Gladstone as chairman. His son, William, was the

Liberal Prime Minister who enshrined the “angels’ share” in law, this being the 2 percent of spirit that is lost through evaporation from the casks each year, and which distillers would no longer be taxed on.

Fast-forward to the present and Fettercairn is now part of the Indian corporation United Breweries (UB Group), who bought it along with then owners Whyte & Mackay in 2007.

GLENCADAM

✉ Brechin, Angus
 🌐 www.glencadam.com
 🕒 Open by appointment

When Allied Distillers closed down Glencadam in 2000 and fired all but one of the distillery workers, no one really believed the distillery would be able to survive.

Established in 1825 by George Cooper, it had played a minor role in Ballantine’s and in Stewarts Cream of the Barley (see p152), a blend that seems to have faded away somewhat, at least in Scotland. Being out on a limb as the only distillery in Angus must have fueled this sense of vulnerability.

But, in 2003, a white knight was found in the shape of Angus Dundee Distillers. After 50 years in the whisky business, they decided it was time to acquire a distillery. As fully matured stocks come on stream, expect to see more Glencadam as a single malt.

GLENDRONACH

✉ Forgue, Huntly, Aberdeenshire
 🌐 www.theglendronach.com
 🕒 Open to visitors

Like its near neighbor Ardmore, Glendronach has been a part of the Teacher’s story almost from the day the famous blend was created in the late 19th

century, though it was only bought by William Teacher & Sons in 1960.

It began life in 1826 as Glendronach Distillery, a partnership of local farmers and traders run by James Allardice. The business was still going strong when the great whisky writer Alfred Barnard visited in the 1880s. He described the distillery, nestled among rolling hills

beside the Dronach Burn, as “quaint and picturesque.”

Glendronach was producing 50,000 gallons (227,000 liters) of malt a year when it was sold to a firm of blenders in 1899, and the distillery struggled on until 1920, when it was bought by Captain Charles Grant, the son of William

Grant, of Glenfiddich. It remained in family hands until the 1960s, and, for a doubling of the stills to four, little has changed since.

On the distillery tour, visitors are shown the old floor maltings, where, until quite recently, the barley was spread out and laboriously turned by hand. All the washbacks are of Oregon pine, and the copper stills have been kept true to the original 19th-century design. Even the dunnage warehouses, with their traditional earthen floors, are evocative of a simpler, bygone era.

GLEN GARIOCH

✉ Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire
 🌐 www.glengarioch.co.uk
 🕒 Open to visitors

The town of Oldmeldrum, on the road to Banff from Aberdeen, has had its own distillery since 1798. Given how many distilleries have come and gone in the northeast, Glen Garioch’s survival into its third century is no small achievement.

With no stainless steel in sight, a visit to Glendronach Distillery is like a step back in time.



**Stewarts Cream
of the Barley**



Inevitably, a successful blend was involved—in this case, Vat 69, the brand created by William Sanderson (see p153), of Aberdeen.

Sanderson first encountered Glen Garioch (pronounced “glen gee-ree”) when it was owned by a firm of blenders in Leith. In 1886, he bought a half-share in the distillery, and by 1921 his son, along with other investors, gained full control of the business.

After numerous changes in ownership since, and extended periods of lying idle, Glen Garioch is now in good hands with Morrison Bowmore. Having bottled a single malt as early as 1972, it now produces a range of smooth-textured malts, aged at 10, 15, and 21 years, and a complex 46-year-old rarity.

GLENGOYNE

✉ Drumgoyne, Stirlingshire

🌐 www.glengoyne.com

👤 Open to visitors

In the sentimentalized view of the Highlands propagated by the Victorians, the epicenter of whisky smuggling was Glenlivet, on Speyside, where every bothy supposedly gurgled with an illicit still. In fact, the production of

Having fallen silent in the mid-1990s, Glen Garioch Distillery is working once again.



Glen Garioch 46-Year-Old

moonshine flourished right across the Highlands, just about anywhere there was ease of concealment and plentiful water.

The Campsie Fells, east of Loch Lomond, were ideal, especially the hidden glen beneath Drumgoyne Hill. The hill represents the first volcanic outcrop of the Campsies, and down its steep, southern flank runs a burn, which ends in a waterfall. Whether it was the sound of the cascade that attracted the first whiskymakers is unknown, but certainly, once here, they found plenty of foliage to provide cover.

Before the 1823 Excise Act changed the whisky industry for good in the following years, there were at least 18 illegal distillers in this pocket of Stirlingshire. Among

them was probably George Connell, who finally took out a license for his Burnfoot Distillery (later renamed Glengoyne) in 1833.

With nearby Glasgow expanding at breakneck speed, the timing was good. Before long, the whisky was being sold there by Hugh Lang, who ran a pub in the Broomielaw district.

From selling jugs of Glengoyne malt, the Langs progressed to blending, which they did with considerable success, such that in 1876 they were able to buy the distillery, which was then called Glen Guin (Gaelic for “glen of the wild geese”).

The distillery was rebuilt in the mid-1960s, having been taken over by the Robertson Trust, part of the group that now owns Famous Grouse and Macallan. It lost its tall chimney, and smoke no longer billowed from its handsome pagoda roof.

Other than that, the distillery has changed little. It has always fitted snugly into its tight-sided glen, and further expansion is not an option. Due to lack of space, the eight warehouses, where 440,000 gallons (2 million liters) of Glengoyne lie in cask, are across the road and officially in the Lowlands, the distillery being situated right on the Highland Line.

After years in the shadow





Originally called Burnfoot, the distillery at Glenngoyne has had a license since 1833.

of its stablemate Macallan, Glenngoyne was bought by Ian Macleod Distillers in 2003, and, as their only distillery, it is clearly a cherished asset.


GLENNGOYNE 10-YEAR-OLD


43% ABV • Appealing cut-grass aromas with notes of apple peel, nuts, and caramel.


GLENNGOYNE 12-YEAR-OLD

57.2% ABV • A cask-strength take on the above, using the same unpeated malt and some sherry casks to give a marzipan-scented, mouth-filling dram.

GLENMORANGIE

 Tain, Ross-shire

 www.glenmorangie.com

 Open to visitors

The “Glen of Tranquillity” suggests a bucolic valley hidden deep in the Highlands. Instead, Glenmorangie is down by the shore of the Dornoch Firth and positively bustling these days as the top-selling malt in Scotland, with increasingly ambitious plans abroad now that it is part of the French luxury goods group LVMH.

The distillery has come a long way since its farmyard roots in the mid-19th century, when it was converted from a brewery by William Matheson, who had been involved in Balblair since the 1820s. It had been an adjunct to the old Morangie farmhouse, and probably operated on a seasonal basis whenever there was grain to spare after the harvest. By

the time the great whisky writer Alfred Barnard visited in the 1880s, he declared it was “the most ancient and primitive [distillery] we have seen” and “almost in ruins.”

William’s eldest son, John Matheson, was now in charge, and before the distillery collapsed altogether, he dragged in outside investors to form the Glenmorangie Distillery Company.

They rebuilt the distillery, and production doubled to fill demand down south, with the odd cask getting as far as San Francisco. When a local newspaper discovered that a shipment had been sent to Rome, the townspeople wondered whether the Pope himself had asked to sample “the Mountain Dew of Easter Ross.”

One of Glenmorangie’s main customers was the prominent firm of blenders Macdonald & Muir, in Leith, who bought the distillery and its stocks for £74,100 in 1918. Production was increased to 110,000 gallons (500,000 liters) a year, much of which went into blends like Highland Queen and Martin’s VVO. But for a

five-year period in mothballs during the Depression of the 1930s, the distillery was kept busy by the US market, where most of Macdonald & Muir’s brands were sold. As long as sales there continued to flourish, Glenmorangie’s future looked secure.

Unfortunately, in the 1970s, the United States began to fall out of love with blended whisky, as sales of vodka began to boom. This persuaded the owners of the distillery to follow Glenfiddich into the brave new world of single malt.

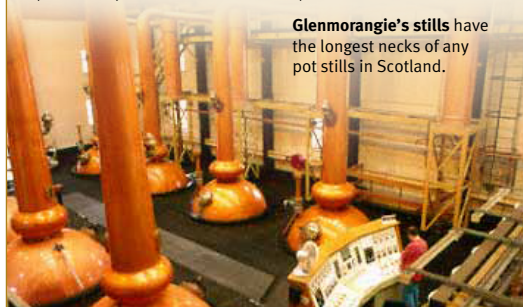
It turned out to be the best decision they could ever have made, and today all but a drop is bottled as Glenmorangie, mainly as a 10-year-old, though surrounded by a family of different finishes.

The use of special casks to “finish off” the whisky for a few months before bottling was pioneered by the company. Today, after its relaunch in 2007, there are three main whisky finishes: La Santa, (from sherry casks), Quinta Ruban (from port casks), and Nectar d’Or (from Sauternes casks).

GLENMORANGIE’S STILLS

When William Matheson first obtained his license to distill at Glenmorangie in 1843, he bought a pair of second-hand gin stills from a firm in London. These have been endlessly reproduced ever since, in the sure knowledge that to change their unique design would be to alter Glenmorangie for good. The necks are the tallest in Scotland and start with a boil ball (see p28) that rises almost 17 ft (5.2 m) into the air. This increases the reflux, so the alcoholic vapors condense on the inside of the neck and run back into the still. The result? A particularly fresh and clean final spirit.

Glenmorangie’s stills have the longest necks of any pot stills in Scotland.






GLEN
GARIOCH
WASH STILL



CONTENTS
25.000
LITRES





GLEN
GARIOCH
SPIRIT STILL
N°1
CONTAINS
100% PURE
MALT SCOTCH
WHISKY

Glen Garioch's stills have provided whisky for the famous Vat 69 blend for much of their lives, but now the distillery's output is geared towards a range of smooth single malts.

GLEN ORD

✉ Muir of Ord, Ross-shire
 🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Despite the name, Glen Ord lies not in a valley but in the fertile flatlands between the mountains and the sea, 15 miles (24 km) northwest of Inverness at Muir of Ord. Not far away, Ferintosh Distillery once stood—the first one of any size in Scotland. It closed in the late 18th century, and some 50 years later, Alexander Mackenzie built Glen Ord in 1837.

With issues over water rights, which it shared with a mill, and fierce competition from nine rival distilleries nearby, Mackenzie's venture stumbled at first, until the widow of his successor married a local banker, who had the funds to maintain it.

In 1923, Glen Ord was swallowed up by the joint forces of Johnnie Walker and John Dewar &

Sons, along with Pulteney and the now-defunct Parkmore, in a deal worth £2 million.

The total stocks of maturing whisky were put at 8 million gallons (36 million liters)—something of a whisky loch on its own. But, with the vast

market in the US officially out of bounds because of Prohibition, supply within the whisky industry was fast outstripping demand.

Glen Ord can boast its own maltings on site, though not in the sense of traditional floor maltings, where the grain is turned by hand and then malted over a peat fire. Those at Glen Ord are on an industrial scale, to supply not just this distillery, but its Diageo stablemates in the



Renovated and expanded to six stills in the 1960s, Glen Ord now produces 750,000 gallons (3.4 million liters) of whisky a year.

north of Scotland also. Various single malts have appeared, from Ord, to Glenordie, to Singleton of Glen Ord, which was launched in 2006. After ageing in predominately European oak, it has a fragrant marzipan nose and a silky texture in the mouth.

GLEN SCOTIA

✉ Campbeltown, Argyll

Springbank was almost the only surviving distillery of Campbeltown's spectacular boom and bust, but not quite. Smaller and far less well known is Glen Scotia, which was first licensed in 1835, to Stuart Galbraith & Co. The family firm kept control until 1895, giving Glen Scotia the same sense of continuity as Springbank. After that, it was passed between various owners.

In 1930, at the low point of Campbeltown's whisky trade, the distillery manager committed suicide in Campbeltown Loch. His name was Duncan MacCallum and his ghost is said to haunt the still room to this day.

After periods of inactivity recently, Glen Scotia's pair of stills is back in action under its present owners, the Loch Lomond Distillery Co. The malt is lightly smoked, with a rich, silky texture.

GLENTURRET

✉ Crieff, Perthshire
 🌐 www.thefamousgrouse.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

As well as its claims to be the oldest working distillery in Scotland, Glenturret is the spiritual home of Scotland's favorite blend of Scotch whisky, The Famous Grouse. This fact is made clear before you even enter the Perthshire distillery by a grouse that acts as a road sign pointing the way just beyond Crieff, and by a giant 17-ft (5.2-m) sculpture of the same bird in the parking lot.

In the past, the only animal visitors were told about was 'Towser, the distillery cat. As the celebrated catcher of nearly 30,000 mice from 1963 to 1984, she secured a place in the *Guinness World Records*. A small statue of her stands by the entrance. In comparison, Brooke, the current distillery cat, is a much less accomplished mouser.

For today's visitors, though, it is the full grouse and nothing but the grouse, with the cheeky cartoon version of the bird popping up just about everywhere on the official distillery tour.

Glenturret was licensed in 1775 and was one of the very first farm distilleries to go legal in a region that brimmed with illicit stills.

Glenturret is not only the oldest distillery in Scotland, it is also the most visited.



Singleton of
Glen Ord



DISTILLING ON ORKNEY

To early explorers, Orkney was the “Ultima Thule,” the most northerly fringe of the known world. Far from the watchful eyes of the excise men, it was the perfect place for distilling, and, whenever there was barley to spare, whiskymaking thrived in a small, underground way.

Having secured the grain, outwitting the law was a relatively easy matter for one Magnus Eunson, whose day job gave him the perfect cover. Eunson was an elder of the Kirk in the island’s capital, Kirkwall. He began distilling in 1798 on land known as the “High Park” and used to stash the barrels of whisky under his pulpit. Once, he was allegedly almost caught in a raid, when the casks were still out in the aisle, but, so the story goes, he quickly covered them with a coffin lid and white sheet just before the troops burst in. Then, he “let up a great wail for the dead” as one of the congregation whispered the dreaded word “smallpox” and the excise men fled.

Eunson was finally caught in 1813 by John Robertson, the chief excise officer, who decided to turn distiller himself. The illicit still became the

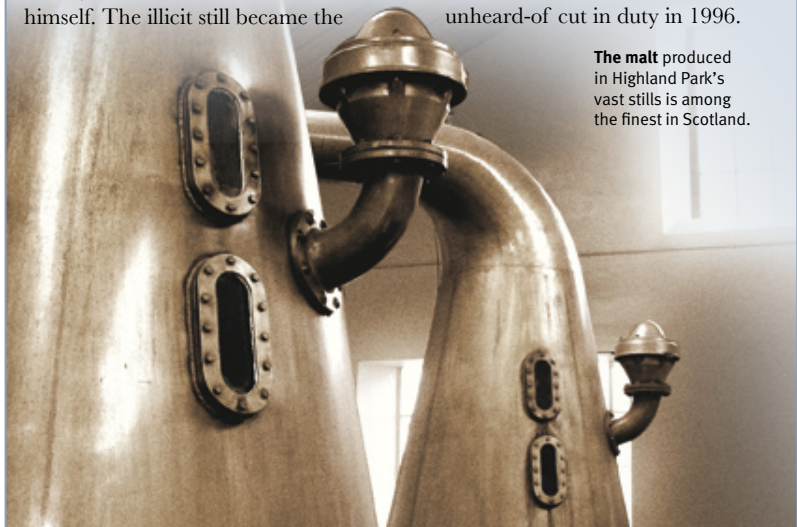


**Highland Park
30-Year-Old**

Highland Park Distillery under Robertson’s partner, John Borwick, who died in 1860. The business passed to a relative in Fife, the Reverend James Borwick, for whom whiskymaking caused the sort of moral dilemmas that had never troubled Eunson, and the distillery was sold for £450 to a firm of brokers called Stuart & Mackay, who supplied the big blenders.

The quality of the whisky was put down to the use of “bere”—a primitive strain of barley—and to the tradition of laying heather on top of the smoldering peat in the kiln. Though the practice has long been abandoned, Highland Park retains a subtle heathery sweetness. It has been praised as the greatest all-rounder among malts and was sipped by the Conservative chancellor Ken Clarke when he announced an almost unheard-of cut in duty in 1996.

The malt produced in Highland Park’s vast stills is among the finest in Scotland.





Highland Park 15-Year-Old

Wedged in by the landscape and unable to expand, the distillery would probably not have survived without its link to the popular blend.

It was closed in 1921 and remained so until the late 1950s, when it was restored and reopened by a new owner, James Fairlie, who later sold it to one of his biggest customers, the French group Cointreau, in 1981.

Ten years later, it joined Highland Distillers, now the Edrington Group, who spent millions in 2002 creating “The Famous Grouse Experience” visitor center.

Of what little Glenturret is bottled as a gentle, aperitif-style single malt, most is drunk at the distillery itself.

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

When the Bangalore-based billionaire Vijay Mallya bought Whyte & Mackay in 2007, the main attraction was doubtless the stocks of maturing Scotch whisky in bond for bottling in India and for blending with his own Indian whiskies. (India is the largest “whisky” market in the world, depending on your definition of what constitutes whisky.) Yet, there was also a sentimental element to Mallya’s \$1 billion purchase. Whyte & Mackay’s portfolio included the small Jura Distillery (see right), whose malt was also a much-loved favorite of his father’s.

HIGHLAND PARK

✉ Kirkwall, Orkney
 📍 www.highlandpark.co.uk
 🏠 Open to visitors

Founded in 1798, Highland Park (see also p89) is the most northerly of all Scotland’s distilleries. Perhaps its greatest triumph is to have survived at all, given the distance from the big blenders, who have long dominated the whisky industry. Yet, survive it has, and with some aplomb, producing one of Scotland’s very finest malts.

Highland Park is a favorite dram of Inspector Rebus—Ian Rankin’s hard-boiled fictional cop—whose 20th anniversary in print was celebrated with a special single-cask bottling of Highland Park in 2006.

🍷 **HIGHLAND PARK 12-YEAR-OLD**
 40% ABV • Smooth and well rounded with a smoky, orange-peel sweetness and a trace of heather.

🍷 **HIGHLAND PARK 15-YEAR-OLD**
 40% ABV • Sweetly aromatic, fading to dry on the palate.

ISLE OF ARRAN

✉ Lochranza, Isle of Arran
 📍 www.arranwhisky.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

In 1995, Harold Currie, previously MD of Chivas Brothers, achieved his dream of building a new distillery. The site was Lochranza, on the northern tip of Arran. It marked the return of whiskymaking to an island that once had almost 50



distilleries, most of them illegal, in the 19th century.

The first spirit flowed from the solitary pair of stills on June 29, and at the opening ceremony, a pair of golden eagles soared high above the distillery. This unanticipated fly-past was taken as a very good omen. Two years later, the Queen herself turned up to open the visitor center.

The distillery has survived into its second decade thanks to sales through the distillery shop and a raft of different releases, including malts as young as three years—the absolute legal minimum. There was some criticism of releasing such youthful whisky, but maybe whisky does mature quicker here, in the slightly warmer and often wetter climate of Arran. The island is tucked down the Firth of Clyde, protected from the west by the sheltering arm of the Kintyre peninsula.

JURA

✉ Isle of Jura, Argyllshire
 📍 www.isleofjura.com
 🏠 Open by appointment only

Like every Hebridean island of any size, there was a long-established tradition of illicit whiskymaking on Jura before the first distillery was licensed in 1831. It had been built 20 years earlier by the local laird, Archibald Campbell, and, after many false starts, the distillery was finally leased to James Ferguson, who rebuilt it in 1875.

Hampered by the harsh conditions of the lease, the Fergusons decided to abandon the business in 1901. Having first ripped out all the distilling equipment, they sold it off. The laird pursued them in the courts for the next 20 years.

Meanwhile, the roofs of the distillery were removed

One of the last few independent distilleries in Scotland, Arran uses only traditional distilling methods.



to avoid paying rates. With each passing year, hopes that malt whisky would ever be made again on the island of Jura appeared to be fading away.

In the late 1950s, two of Jura's estate owners met to see what could be done to halt the ever-declining population on the island, due to lack of regular employment. With the aid of investment from Scottish & Newcastle, they recruited the architect and engineer William Delmé-Evans to resurrect the Jura Distillery.

Though on the same site, the distillery was to produce whisky that was totally different from the powerful, phenolic spirit made in the past. Using lightly peated malt and particularly large stills, which increased the ratio of copper to spirit, they created a softer Highland-style of whisky.

Lying just off the northeast tip of Islay, Jura has always lived in the shadow of its more famous neighbor, especially when it comes to malt whisky. It was not surprising then that its distillery chose to offer the world something different from Islay's muscular, peat-smoked whiskies.

ISLE OF JURA 10-YEAR-OLD 40%
ABV • Relatively light bodied for a west coast whisky, with



Jura Superstition

a trace of almonds and the faintest wisp of smoke on the tail.

JURA SUPERSTITION 43%
ABV • A bigger, more succulent malt, with nutty, woody flavors of pine and marzipan.

LOCH LOMOND

✉ Alexandria, Dumbartonshire
🌐 www.lochlomonddistillery.com
🏠 Open to visitors

The malt whisky favored by Captain Haddock in the *Tintin* books comes from a large distillery by the southern shores of Loch Lomond. The original Loch Lomond Distillery existed for just a few years in the early 19th century and it was only resurrected in name in the 1960s.

It was bought in 1985 by Glen Catrine, a massive bottler of own-label whisky, which found itself needing malt for its blends.

With its mix of equipment—two conventional pot stills and four with rectifying heads—Loch Lomond can play many tunes. It can produce grassy, Lowland-style whiskies alongside meaty, full-bodied malts.

To complete the sense of self-sufficiency, there is also a continuous still for producing grain whisky. Two malts are produced—an unaged version that is popular in

Rebuilt in the 1960s, Jura Distillery uses lightly peated malts to produce Highland-style whiskies.

Germany and the 21-year-old Black Label; there are occasional single-cask releases too.

OBAN

✉ Oban, Argyll
🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com
🏠 Open to visitors

Dubbed “The Gateway to the Isles,” the port of Oban barely existed when John and Hugh Stevenson set up a distillery here in 1794. It was a tiny west coast fishing village at the time the Stevensons moved here from Port Appin and built

THE SCOTI FIND

Being hemmed in while the town grew up around it, Oban Distillery has always been hampered by lack of space. In the late 19th century, owner J. Walter Higen was forced to blast into the rock face behind the distillery to create a new warehouse. When he did so, he discovered a secret chamber, with tools and bones from a prehistoric tribe. These were identified as Scoti, cave-dwellers from around 5000 BCE. The remains are now on display in Edinburgh's Museum of Scotland, while the cave was blocked up again.



The still house at Oban was rebuilt in the 1960s and 70s, but its single pair of stills was left untouched.

a fine Georgian house. The distillery grew up next door, right by the water's edge, apparently. If this is true, it means the sea has retreated several hundred feet since.

Oban was always a sideline to the Stevensons' main business interests, which included shipping, property, and quarrying slate. The distillery remained in family hands for three generations, until it was sold to J. Walter Higgen in 1883.

Oban had recently been connected by train down the west coast to Glasgow and this no doubt boosted demand. To maintain supply, Higgen kept his two stills working while carefully rebuilding the distillery over the next four years. What he created is more or less what you can still see today.

Oban was impressively self-sufficient, with water coming from two lochs in Ardconnel, a short distance behind the distillery, and a shed containing two years' supply of peat. The only problem it has ever had is one of space (see p91).

By the start of the 20th century, Oban was already being sold as a single malt, though with a production of just 35,000 gallons (160,000 liters) a year it was

never in huge supply. The distillery later joined forces with Glenlivet and Aultmore, before the three were bought out by John Dewar & Sons and then became part of the Distillers Company in 1930.



Oban
14-Year-Old

Given its size, Oban was never the first distillery the big industry bosses sought to close during periods of overproduction. But for a few years in the 1930s and 1960s, when the still house was rebuilt, Oban Distillery has been in continuous production.

Since 1990 it has been one of Diageo's "Classic Malts," which has done nothing to dampen the demand for it. Today, it is sold on allocation in selected markets.

■ **OBAN 14-YEAR-OLD** 43% ABV • A mix of sea spray and citrus fruits on the nose, luscious and oily in the mouth, drying to a smoky finish.

OLD PULTENEY

✉ Huddart Street, Wick, Caithness

🌐 www.oldpulteney.com

🕒 Open by appointment only

The most northerly distillery on the Scottish mainland once stood in the midst of a late-19th century boom town. In its heyday, Wick had the feel

of the Wild West, especially in summer, when a 10,000-strong, itinerant workforce assembled to process the catch landed by Europe's largest herring fleet. At its peak, there were as many as a thousand fishing boats crammed into the harbor, such that you could walk from one side to the other from deck to deck.

Cutting fish was thirsty work, as James Henderson soon realized when he set up the town's first licensed distillery in 1828.

Henderson had made whisky on the side before and he decided to name his new venture after Sir William Johnstone Pulteney, who had helped establish the town in 1801 on behalf of the British Fisheries Society.

The distillery took its water from the Loch of Hempriggs, which was famously peaty—a characteristic that was enhanced in the whisky by malting the barley over a peat fire. The result, drunk unaged, would have been a robust, tarry spirit that perfectly reflected its maritime environment.

Coming from a town so impregnated with the reek of fish and the tang of the sea, a whisky that was gentle and understated would never have caught on. With a captive audience and no fear of illicit competition, thanks to a strong and active

contingent of excisemen, Old Pulteney seemed ideally placed. There was also ready access to markets across the North Sea, in Russia, Germany, and the Baltic States, where most of the pickled, salted herring ended up on sale.

By the start of the 20th century, however, Wick was slipping into decline, along with its herring fleet, while whisky was taking the rap for all



Old Pulteney
12-Year-Old



**Royal
Brackla
10-Year-Old**

manner of social ills in the town. In 1922, the citizens voted to go dry—a state that remained until after World War II.

It did splutter into life once again in the 1950s, but only as an anonymous supplier of malt for blends such as Ballantine's. In 1957, it was rebuilt in a functional, bare-bones style, losing its original pagoda roof and gaining a modern chimney stack.

By the 1990s it was looking distinctly unloved when it was bought by its current owners, Inver House. In 1997, playing heavily on the whisky's maritime roots, they launched it as a single malt.

OLD PULTENEY 12-YEAR-OLD
40% ABV • Clean, bracing style, with a faint nutty sweetness that dries on the tongue.

ROYAL BRACKLA

✉ Cawdor, Nairn
🌐 www.dewarswow.com

Whisky had barely moved in from the cold to become a legitimate business when Captain William Fraser managed to secure the first-ever royal warrant for a whisky distillery in 1835.

He had built Brackla 23 years earlier between the Findhorn River and the Murray Firth. Being near

LOCHNAGAR'S ROYAL WARRANT

In 1848, John Begg, of Lochnagar, decided to invite the neighbors round to his three-year-old distillery on the banks of the Dee River. These were not just any old neighbors, however, but Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who had acquired Balmoral Castle the same year. Begg walked the short distance from Lochnagar to drop them a note. Life was clearly pretty relaxed in those days—the invitation was only issued at 9pm, but the very next day the royal entourage arrived at the distillery door. “We have come to see through your works, Mr. Begg,” boomed Albert.

And so began possibly the first-ever official distillery tour, followed by a dram for all, including the children. As the party moved from the still house, Prince Albert noted the spirits safe, as Begg recorded in his diary: “I see you have got your locks there,” he said. On my replying, ‘These are the Queen’s locks,’ Her Majesty took a very hearty laugh.”

Lochnagar received a royal warrant shortly after the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.



Cawdor Castle, where Macbeth allegedly murdered King Duncan, perhaps gave it a royal connection anyway. Whether this helped persuade King William IV to bestow his blessing on Brackla we will never know, but Fraser wasted no time in promoting his malt as “The King’s Own Whisky.”

Soon, much of the production was heading south to Andrew Usher, in Edinburgh, the original

pioneer of blended whisky.

The distillery was rebuilt in the 1890s and again in the 1970s, when the brief was clearly functionality. Whatever Prince Charles might think of its aesthetics, the modern, box-shaped Brackla, with its corrugated-steel roof, is still “royal.”

Brackla was the first distillery to be granted a royal warrant, by King William IV. Henceforth, it became known as Royal Brackla.





Production at Royal Lochnagar is on a small scale. Most of its whisky is used in Johnnie Walker blends.

ROYAL LOCHNAGAR

✉ Ballater, Aberdeenshire
 🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Royal Lochnagar Distillery was originally called New Lochnagar, as it was the replacement for a distillery that had stood on the opposite bank. This had been established in 1825 by James Robertson, but had burned down and then been swept away in a flood.

The new distillery was built in 1845 by John Begg, and, once he had obtained a royal warrant (see p93), both distillery and whisky were renamed Royal Lochnagar.

Begg prospered and soon set up an office in Aberdeen, where he developed a blend to satisfy a wider audience. Meanwhile, he made sure he had plenty of casks on site to supply nearby Balmoral

Scapa Distillery produces only single malts, with a flavor of heather and honey all their own.

Castle and keep John Brown's hip flask topped up. John Brown was the loyal manservant of Queen Victoria (he was portrayed by Billy Connolly in the 1997 film *Mrs. Brown*). John's relationship with Victoria aroused plenty of gossip. When he fell flat on his face after one dram too many, the Queen leaped to his defense, pronouncing that she too "had felt the earth move."

As John Begg & Sons, the business remained in family hands until 1916 when it was bought by John Dewar & Sons. By then, Lochnagar was a key component in Vat 69, the blend created by Begg's friend William Sanderson.

With its solitary pair of stills, Royal Lochnagar is almost a boutique distillery, but one highly cherished by its owners, Diageo.

🥃 **ROYAL LOCHNAGAR 12-YEAR-OLD**
 40% ABV • A ripe sherried nose with notes of fruit cake, spice, and old leather.

SCAPA

✉ St Ola, Orkney
 🌐 www.scapamalt.com

Besides Highland Park, the only other surviving distillery on the Orkney Islands is Scapa, whose origins go back to 1885. Its prospects had not looked so good, however, when the distillery was closed—seemingly forever—in 1994. It was rescued a decade later, and its future now appears secure as a boutique distillery determined to make a virtue of its far-flung location. Its then owner, Allied Domecq, embarked on a rebuilding program that restored Scapa

to full operation, before selling it to Pernod Ricard in 2005.

🥃 **SCAPA 14-YEAR-OLD**

40% ABV • Rich, spicy fruit-cake notes, with an impressive, lingering finish.



Scapa
 14-Year-Old

SPRINGBANK

✉ Campbeltown, Argyll
 🌐 www.springbankdistillers.com
 🏠 Open by appointment

When Springbank was founded just five years after the Excise Act of 1813, there

were 13 licensed distilleries in Campbeltown. By the 1830s, the number had jumped to 20, encouraged by the ever-expanding, ever-thirsty Glasgow, just a short sail up the Firth of Clyde.

Later, when the railroads gave Speyside the chance to seduce the big blenders with



TALISKER

The story of Talisker begins with the MacAskill brothers—a pair of farmers from the Isle of Eigg. They arrived on Skye to take a lease on Talisker House and were soon encouraging the locals to emigrate to make room for sheep, this being the time of the Highland Clearances.

When the MacAskills built Talisker in 1830, it was much to the distress of the local minister, who preached against the evils of drink. His prayers were finally answered when the brothers sold up 24 years later.

Talisker limped on until the 1880s, when it was bought by Roderick Kemp, from Aberdeen. Unhappy that it had no jetty—which meant the barrels of whisky had to be floated out to the puffers waiting offshore—Kemp wrote desperate letters to his landlord at Dunvegan Castle, begging him to build a proper pier. Although the laird happily accepted Kemp's rent of £45 a year and a 10-gallon (46-liter) cask of Talisker every Christmas, he did nothing about the pier until 1900. By which time, Kemp had given up and left Skye to run Macallan.

The distillery teamed up with Dailuaine, on Speyside, to form a limited company in 1898, which was



440,000 gallons (**Two million liters**) of whisky are made at Talisker Distillery each year.

bought by the Distillers Company in 1925. At the time, Talisker was triple distilled, like an Irish whiskey. The new owners changed back to double distillation, but otherwise left things as they were, including the use of coal fires under the stills. In

1960, this almost caused the end of Talisker, when someone left the manholes off one of the wash stills, causing the liquid to bubble over. The blackened stills were replaced using the same design, only this time they were fitted with internal steam coils.

One thing that has never changed is the curious lyne arms. These wide copper pipes poke through the wall of the still house, kink upward in a large U-bend, and then plunge into the worm tubs. What this does for Talisker is hard to stay, but judging by the accolades heaped on this “Classic Malt,” it cannot be all bad.

There were once seven distilleries on Skye but, without barley crops on the island, they struggled, and Talisker is the only one that remained.



its softer, gentler malts, the town's distillers looked west to the United States. When that market shut down as a result of Prohibition, Campbeltown's demise was swift. By the mid-1930s, the only distilleries left were Glen Scotia and Springbank.

Part of the reason that Springbank survived was that its malt was a little less heavy than the usual Campbeltown style, which blenders had grown weary of. Also, the distillery never compromised on quality—unlike many of its rivals, who had grown complacent through years of supplying Glasgow blenders. People in the business began referring to the “stinking fish” aroma of the region's malts, though it seems extremely unlikely that anyone really did use old herring barrels to mature their whisky, as was the implication.

The other factor that has been instrumental in Springbank's success is continuity. It has been in the same family's hands since the very start. In 1992, the Mitchells decided to restore the floor maltings, in a bid to control the whole process from start to finish and be more self-sufficient. The rest of the industry, meanwhile, was busy contracting into an ever-declining number of ever-larger corporations.

That same year, it was also decided not to sell the distillery's whisky as fillings for blends, but to concentrate on releasing it as single malt.

Alongside its namesake whisky, Springbank also produces Hazelburn and the heavily peated Longrow. In 2004, its owners opened a new distillery in the town, on the site of what was the Glengyle Distillery. Its single malt—to be called Kilkerran—will be available in 2014.

SPRINGBANK

10-YEAR-OLD 46% ABV

Notes of leather, nutmeg, and orange peel, with a tang of salt and smoke on the finish.

LONGROW 10-YEAR-OLD

46% ABV • Spicy, sherry notes are soon enveloped by dense aromatic smoke.

TALISKER

☒ Carboist, Isle of Skye

📞 www.discovering-distilleries.com

📍 Open to visitors

In 1823, there were seven licensed distilleries on Skye. Today, there is only one—Talisker. Unlike the more fertile Islay, the island lacked barley of its own, which meant the early distillers on Skye always struggled.

The grain now all comes from Scotland's east coast, and, with the advent of paved roads and the Skye Bridge, life is considerably easier these days.

TALISKER 10-YEAR-OLD 45.8% ABV

A feisty, bracing malt that is initially sweet on the palate and then hot and peppery on the finish.

Springbank uses a variety of oak casks, some having previously contained sherry or bourbon, to mature its whisky.



Talisker
10-Year-Old

☒ **TALISKER 18-YEAR-OLD** 45.8% ABV • Candied fruit and toffee on the nose, with a beguiling, mellow smokiness in the mouth.

☒ **TALISKER 21-YEAR-OLD** 57.8% ABV • A giant, brooding malt that crashes over the tongue like breakers on the beach.

TEANINICH

☒ Alness, Ross-shire

Hidden on the outskirts of town in an industrial estate beside the Cromarty Firth is

Dalmore's neighboring distillery, in Alness.

It was founded by Captain Hugh Munro in 1817 and was named after his estate of Teaninich (pronounced “chee-an-in-ick”). In the 1850s, Munro was posted off to India, and the distillery was leased out.

When the whisky writer Alfred Barnard paid a visit in 1885, it was said to be the only distillery north of Inverness to boast telephonic communication. By then, it was producing up to 80,000 gallons (365,000 liters) of “pure Highland malt” a year, which went straight off to the blenders down south.

Little changed until the 1960s, when the still house was refitted and then expanded in 1970 to fit six stills, losing whatever old-world charm it once had in the process.

TOBERMORY

☒ Tobermory, Isle of Mull

📞 www.tobermory.co.uk

📍 Open to visitors

If the art of distilling came to Scotland from Ireland, then it was perhaps on Mull that the first Scotch whisky was made. After all, it was to Iona, the small island off the southwest tip of Mull, that





Tobermory markets two whiskies—a malt and a blend—as well as a single malt bottled under the site's old name of Ledaig.

St. Columba sailed in his coracle in 563CE, although there is no actual mention of him bringing a still, and it seems unlikely the islanders would have kept it secret for so long if he did.

Whatever the truth, there is now just one distillery on Mull. It was officially founded in 1823 by John Sinclair, whose first application to the powers that be was turned down. The Fisheries Society of the British Isles, who created Tobermory as a model village at the end of the 18th century, suggested Sinclair build a brewery instead. Once his distillery was up and running, he gave it scant regard as he dwelt on his main business of supplying kelp for making soap and glass. When Sinclair died in 1837, the distillery at Tobermory closed for the next 40 years.

But for grain, which came from the mainland, Mull had everything else. It had plentiful water, peat, and a ready market, with the island population approaching its peak of 10,600. Yet, the distillery was only brought back to life in 1878. It then tottered on until 1916, when it was acquired by the Distillers Company. During the Depression of the 1920s and 30s, it was shut down, as if for good.

The next lull in trading was even longer, and when a business consortium took it

on in 1972 there was precious little left. Armed with a hefty development grant, they put in new stills and all the equipment needed. The timing was terrible, however, with the industry awash with whisky in search of a home. Their venture failed, but at least they had done enough to save the distillery, and in 1993 it was once again kicked into life by Burn Stewart Distillers, who own it today.

☑ **TOBERMORY 10-YEAR-OLD** 40% ABV • A crisp, tangy unpeated malt that dries on the finish.

☑ **LEDAIG 10-YEAR-OLD** 42% ABV • The strong, peat-smoked big brother of Tobermory.

TOMATIN

✉ Tomatin, Inverness-shire

🌐 www.tomatin.com

🏠 Open to visitors

Situated halfway between Aviemore and Inverness, Tomatin attracts a steady stream of passing trade, which rattles past on the A9. It has always been a staging post on the main road north, if not always with a gift shop and parking lot.

Long before there was a licensed distillery here, there was an illicit still attached to the laird's house, supplying whisky to the drovers on their slow journey from upland grazing land to the cattle markets down south.



As with most Scotch whiskies, the wash at Tomatin is distilled twice in copper pot stills.

Though it was a long way from Speyside, the original distillery called itself the Tomatin Spey District Distillery Company when it opened in 1897. It survived for just eight years before going under.

It quickly resurfaced as Tomatin Distillers Ltd and grew to become a monster distillery, with 23 stills and a production of 12 million gallons (546 million liters) by 1974, putting it second only to Glenfiddich in scale.

Twelve years later, Tomatin was bought by the Takara Co. Ltd and became the first distillery in Scotland to be owned by a Japanese firm.

TULLIBARDINE

✉ Blackford, Perthshire

🌐 www.tullibardine.com

🏠 Open to visitors

Writ large on the side of this modern-looking distillery beside the A9 are the words “Tullibardine 1488,” the year being a reference to when King James IV bought beer from an old brewery sited here for his coronation at nearby Scone.

The brewery survived into the 20th century, and was bought in 1947 by the noted distillery architect William Delmé-Évans, who was also involved with Glenallachie and Jura. His real passion was Tullibardine, however, and he successfully converted the brewery to a distillery. Sadly, failing health forced him to sell up in 1953.

The distillery spent the 1990s in mothballs and, as each year passed, the chances of resuscitation appeared to fade. A rescue package was finally agreed in 2003, and in December that year the boiler was fired up once again. The new independent owners are doing everything they can to sustain the business through tours, a restaurant, and a shop until they deem that the new spirit has reached maturity.

ISLAY

Of all Scotland's whisky regions, Islay has the strongest identity. Being an island helps, but there is also its signature tune of peat smoke. Apart from Bunnahabhain, which "gracefully declines to run with the pack" (to quote its website), all Islay's whiskies are peated.

This was never a collective decision. It was simply that peat was the only source of fuel to be found on the island. It was how people heated their houses, with a fire in the middle and the smoke wafting up through a hole in the roof. Peat's uniquely pungent aroma would have impregnated people's hair, clothes, bedding, and food. As such, the idea of an unpeated whisky would have been totally unimaginable—it just wouldn't have been whisky.

In addition to the plentiful supplies of peat to malt the grain and fire the stills, there was no shortage of soft, pure water. Yet, this was true of other islands. What set Islay apart was that it was the most fertile of the Hebrides, and the presence of barley gave its distillers a head start. With gale-force winds and no shelter to speak of, the barley harvest was often meager, but there was usually enough to make whisky. The first imports of grain on to Islay did not arrive until 1815, by which time distilling was there to stay.

The pier at Bunnahabhain was built shortly after the distillery was founded in the 1880s, so boats could easily dock to load up with whisky.

No one knows when whisky making began, though with Ireland just 20 miles (32km) away it may have been very early, if Irish monks really did convert the west coast to whisky as well as Catholicism in the 6th century. Yet, until some evidence is unearthed from a peat bog, we will never know for sure.

What we do know is that Islay's first licensed distillery was Bowmore, which was established in 1779. It was joined by more than 20 distilleries during the 19th century, of which six survive today. The most recent casualty was Port Ellen, in 1984, though its maltings continue to supply most of the distilleries on the island with malt. The peat used is entirely from Islay and is said to give whiskies like Ardbeg their uniquely medicinal, mildly antiseptic tang.

Not long ago, the prospects for Islay looked bleak, and many feared that Ardbeg or Bruichladdich would also have to close for good. Even Lagavulin was once on a three-day week. Today, the situation is far healthier, as more and more whisky lovers gravitate to this beautiful island, hooked on the strange, bitter-sweet taste of peat.



ISLAY DISTILLERIES



Ardbeg Distillery—in a precarious state for much of the 1980s and 90s—is now very much on the up.

ARBEG

✉ Port Ellen, Isle of Islay
 🌐 www.ardbeg.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Ardbeg took out a license in 1815, the same year as Laphroaig and a year before Lagavulin. These three distilleries on the coast road from Port Ellen, in the parish of Kildalton, produce big, pungent malt whiskies smelling strongly of peat; none more so than Ardbeg.

This is not a whisky to drink beneath a smoke alarm, unless you enjoy upsetting the neighbors. Besides, it is a real outdoor whisky, and—like all malts—is best enjoyed in situ, next to the distillery that produced it.

Having visited Ardbeg in the 1880s, the whisky writer

Alfred Barnard wrote that its “isolation tends to heighten the romantic sense of its position.” Yet by then, as Alexander MacDougall & Co., it was fully connected to the whisky industry. Its four stills produced 250,000 gallons (1.1 million liters) of “Pure Islay Malt”, which was then sold on by Buchanan’s, in Glasgow, to blenders keen to add weight and texture to their blends.

Like most other remote distilleries, Ardbeg supported a whole community, providing not just jobs, but a social life for the village. From a peak of 60, Ardbeg’s workforce declined to just 18 in 1981, when the distillery was mothballed by Allied Distillers. The workers were laid off and the last vestiges of a community crumbled away. Being in the same stable as Laphroaig (also owned by Allied Distillers) had not helped. Ardbeg was

virtually unknown outside the industry and the heavily peated malt it produced was not sufficiently different.

In 1989, with demand for blended whisky about to recover after the bad years of the early 1980s, production resumed on a small scale. Whether those re-employed at Ardbeg felt secure is unlikely. Somehow, there was already an unofficial “For Sale” sign over the door. The eventual sale

did not take place until 1997, when the owners of Glenmorangie beat off seven rival bids and bought the distillery for an estimated £7 million. They then spent a further £1.4 million on repairs, to crank Ardbeg fully back to life. Today, Ardbeg is a famous single malt with an ever-growing band of admirers.

■ **ARBEG 10-YEAR-OLD** 46% ABV
 Notes of creosote, tar, and smoked fish on the nose, while any sweetness on the tongue quickly dries to a smoky finish.

■ **ARBEG “UIGEADAIL”** 54.2% ABV
 Fragrant notes of pot-pourri and leather give way to an intense earthy character in the mouth, tempered with sweet sherry notes.



BOWMORE

✉ Bowmore, Isle of Islay
 🌐 www.bowmore.co.uk
 🏠 Open to visitors

Bowmore stands right on the shore of Loch Indaal, whose salt-laden breezes blow into the warehouses and presumably seep into the casks. As with the majority of Islay distilleries, however, most of the whisky produced at Bowmore is transported off the island for maturing on the mainland. This is due to lack of space, which



Bowmore Legend



With waves crashing on to the shore at the feet of the distillery, Bowmore produces characterful whisky that echoes its position.

shrank even further in 1991, when warehouse No.3 was converted into Islay's only community swimming pool, its water warmed by recycled heat from the distillery.

Bowmore's own water comes from the River Laggan via a 7 mile (11km) aqueduct and is used to mix with the mash, cool the stills, and steep the barley, this being one of the few distilleries to have its own floor maltings.

The majority of the barley arrives pre-malted, but part of what makes Bowmore

Distillery different is having a proportion created here on a stone floor, turned by hand, and dried over a peat fire. Whether it really affects the quality of the whisky would be hard to prove, but it certainly makes the distillery, with its blue smoke wafting from the pagoda roof, well worth a visit.

BOWMORE: ISLAY'S OLDEST DISTILLERY

The oldest distillery on Islay was founded in 1779, when there was little more to Bowmore than a curious round church. It was started by part-time distiller and farmer David Simpson. Like all early distillers, Simpson would have relied on local barley, and in 1800 he and a neighboring distiller complained that Islay's illicit distillers were denying them their share of barley. This, coupled with Simpson's farming interests, ensured that Bowmore remained tiny. It was producing just 800 gallons (3,640 liters) a year when it was bought by the Glasgow firm of W&J Mutter in 1837. Some 50 years later, the



A W&J Mutter's poster

distillery was greatly expanded, and annual production soared to 200,000 gallons (900,000 liters). The whisky was shipped off the island to be stored and bottled beneath the arches of Glasgow's Central Station.

In 1890, W&J Mutter were forced to sell the distillery, which was then passed from one owner to the next until the Glasgow-based whisky firm Stanley P. Morrison Ltd.

bought Bowmore in 1963. Production was cranked up again, this time reaching 880,000 gallons (4 million liters) by the end of the 1960s. It became the flagship distillery of Morrison Bowmore, which itself became part of the Japanese Suntory group in the mid-1990s.

The round church was the focal point of the village when Bowmore was founded.





Twenty years later, its four stills went cold once more and Bruichladdich was back on the market. It was finally rescued at the end of 2000 by a consortium led by Mark Reynier, an independent whisky bottler. At his side was Bowmore's former manager, Jim McEwan, who was charged with the job of bringing Bruichladdich Distillery back to life again.



**Bowmore
12-Year-Old**

BOWMORE LEGEND 40%

ABV • A dry, bracing malt whisky with a faint citrus flavor that develops into a smoky finish.

BOWMORE 12-YEAR-OLD

43% ABV • The smoke comes through on the nose and mingles with citric notes of lemon zest and barley sugar on the tongue.

BRUICHLADDICH

📍 Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay

🌐 www.bruichladdich.com

👤 Open to visitors

Set on the shores of Loch Indaal, facing Bowmore, the oldest established distillery on Islay, Bruichladdich was built in 1881 by Robert, William, and John Harvey. Their family had been making whisky for over a century and already owned Yoker and Dundashill, in Glasgow, the latter being the largest malt whisky distillery in Scotland at the time.

From the start, their new operation was a serious venture, boasting cavity walls and a prototype form of concrete made from pebbles on the beach. This was radical stuff in those days.

The Harvey family remained involved until 1929, when the distillery shut down for a decade. It was then bought and sold repeatedly until owners Invergordon Distillers took it on in the mid-1970s.

While the new spirit has been maturing in cask, a raft of regular bottlings and special editions has been released for sale from inherited stocks. The traditional style, using lightly peated malt—in contrast to most other whisky distilleries on the island—was not dissimilar to Bunnahabhain.

In 2002, Bruichladdich's new owners decided to expand the range with a heavily peated whisky, called Port Charlotte after a nearby village. They have since added Octomore, named after an Islay distillery that closed in 1852. Available at some point after 2010, it promises to be one of the most pungent, smoky whiskies yet made.

With its solitary distillery, Bruichladdich has always had to try to punch well above its weight to compete against much bigger rivals. But the ever-growing interest

A MINI BUILDING BOOM

In 1881, the whisky industry on Islay enjoyed a mini building boom, with Bunnahabhain and Bruichladdich springing up in the same year. Though it may not have been on quite the same scale as the Campbeltown boom before it or the one that was about to hit Speyside, it demonstrated that the whisky industry already valued the intense, full-flavored house style of Islay in its blends.



Bruichladdich "1986"

in single malts, and in Islay in particular, means that for the moment Bruichladdich is definitely in the right place at the right time.

BRUICHLADDICH 10-YEAR-OLD

46% ABV • Fresh, floral nose, with a malty, cereal aroma, a trace of brine, and a light oily texture.

Stored two-high on an earth floor, Bruichladdich's oak casks are regularly checked to see how well the whisky is maturing.



MODEST BEGINNINGS

The distillery at Bunnahabhain was established beside a shingle beach by two farmers in 1881. At the time, there was no infrastructure of any kind, and the contractors had to start by building a road and then cottages for the workers, followed by a schoolroom and a pier. The total venture, including distillery, cost £30,000, yet it was making a profit of £10,000 by its second year. It was then called the Islay Distillery Company, and its directors were delighted with the manager and asked him to name his terms. It seems his only request was that “not less than £30” be spent on furnishings for his cottage. His bosses were happy to oblige.

A signpost to Bunnahabhain Distillery.



BUNNAHABHAIN

✉ Port Askaig, Isle of Islay
 🌐 www.bunnahabhain.com

Of the seven distilleries on Islay, Bunnahabhain has always been the least typical. It forsook the use of peated barley, with a view to creating something a little more gentle. This point of difference is now marketed as a virtue, though the original motives for it were rather different.

Famed for their “hair-on-the-chest” style, Islay malts have long been used as a top dressing in blended Scotch. Although highly regarded, they were added sparingly, since more than a few

spoonfuls per bottle might unbalance the blend, especially if it was predominantly Speyside.

Bunnahabhain’s decision to forsake peated barely meant it now offered a low-tar alternative, which, it was hoped, blenders would use more generously.

A few years after it was established (see above), the distillery was gobbled up by Highland Distillers, which later became part of the Edrington Group; they owned it until recently. Whether Edrington

ever really appreciated what they had is unclear. So much attention was being paid to their flagship malts—The Macallan (on Speyside) and Highland Park (on Orkney)—that their outpost on Islay may at times have felt neglected. But Bunnahabhain played an important role in The Famous Grouse (see p132) and Black Bottle (see pp123), a strong, fulsome blend that includes whiskies from every distillery on Islay.

A single malt was made available, but it never quite rode the wave of popularity that engulfed the island’s whiskies, largely because it lacked the signature tune of peat. If you were expecting a huge smoking volcano of a malt whisky that would

erupt on your tongue and leave a trail of ash, Bunnahabhain was bound to disappoint.

Aware of this problem, the new distillery owners, Burn Stewart, began filling casks with a well-peated version, alongside the existing style, for those who don’t want hairs on their chest.



Bunnahabhain whisky label

🍷 **BUNNAHABHAIN 12-YEAR-OLD**
 40% ABV • A bracing, maritime malt on the nose which displays a malty sweetness on the tongue.

Bunnahabhain Distillery produces the sweetest and least peaty of Islay’s malts.





CAOL ILA

☒ Port Askaig, Isle of Islay
 📄 www.discovering-distilleries.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Until recently, few people outside the whisky industry knew about Islay's largest distillery. While its island stablemate, Lagavulin, basked in the limelight as one of Diageo's "Classic Malts," Caol Ila kept a low profile. Its role in life was simply to provide backbone and peat smoke to blends created on the mainland. There were occasional independent bottlings, it is true, but on the whole it was unknown as a single malt.

This has all begun to change, partly because Lagavulin can barely keep up with demand and partly as a result of the ever-growing interest among whisky drinkers in Islay malts.

Caol Ila is Gaelic for the Sound of Islay, the narrow channel that separates the island from Jura, to the north. The distillery stands on the shore, just beyond Port Askaig, where the Caledonian Macbrayne ferry calls from the mainland.

It was built by Hamish Henderson in 1846, on the

site where people used to wash lead ore in a burn that flows down from Loch nam Ban. Henderson had been looking for a suitable spot for six years, and perhaps it was the sound of running water that brought him here. Either way, he was soon using it to mash the grain, condense the spirit, and power the distillery via a set of turbines.

In 1863, Caol Ila was bought and then extended by the Glasgow distillers Bulloch Lade, who built a pier in front of the distillery. Within 20 years, two steamers a week were calling to deliver the grain and take away the filled casks. Caol Ila later acquired its own "puffer", the Pibroch, which was only decommissioned in 1972, when the distillery was shut down for large-scale refurbishment. When it reopened, some two years later, the only building still standing from the past was the warehouse. The still room was completely



Caol Ila
12-Year-Old

new and now had six stills and a capacity of 660,000 gallons (3 million liters) of alcohol a year. It also had a huge, almost floor-to-ceiling window that gives the stillman on duty one of the

Caol Ila's east-facing windows offer views across the sea to the neighboring Isle of Jura.

best views in the whisky industry. Often, there will be seals playing on the rocks, alongside cormorants and eider duck. Beyond are the Paps of Jura—the famous breast-shaped peaks of Islay's neighbor.

🍷 **CAOL ILA 12-YEAR-OLD** 43% ABV
 The fresh citrus tang on the nose gives way to gentle aromatic smoke in the mouth.

🍷 **CAOL ILA 18-YEAR-OLD** 43% ABV
 Sweeter than the 12-year-old, with a more creamy texture in the mouth that develops a smoky edge before the finish.

KILCHOMAN

This boutique operation, which began distilling in the summer of 2005, models itself on an old farm distillery. It was the first to be built on Islay for 124 years and is the most westerly. Every stage of the process is highly traditional, from the use of locally grown barley to maturation on site. The distillery aims to release bottlings at various ages, starting with a 5-year-old in 2010. It is open to visitors. For more information, visit www.kilchomandistillery.com.

LAGAVULIN

✉ Port Ellen, Isle of Islay
 🌐 www.discovering-distilleries.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Every summer a flotilla of yachts sails past the ruins of Dunyvaig Castle into Lagavulin Bay for the climax of the Classic Malts Cruise. Those who have arrived early can sit back and watch latecomers negotiate their way in over the submerged rocks. Often, someone will come to grief with an expensive scraping sound. Consolatory drams are offered and any damage is forgotten until the morning, as the farewell ceilidh heats up.

Many centuries ago, these rocks protected the Lord of the Isles, whose power-base was Dunyvaig. If invaders came too close, they risked being shipwrecked, an event the islanders doubtless celebrated with whisky.

Illicit distilling had been endemic here in the parish of Kildalton for years when a number of smuggling bothys merged to form Lagavulin in 1817.

In 1836, Alexander Graham took on the lease of Lagavulin, whose whiskies were sold through The Islay Cellar, his shop in Glasgow.

The rocky shoreline where Lagavulin is based once offered protection from invaders; it still catches out an occasional yacht.

Later, his partner's nephew, Peter Mackie, created the White Horse blend (see p153), with Lagavulin at its heart. To meet demand for the blend, he relied on neighboring Laphroaig, and when that distillery stopped supplying him, he decided to build a Laphroaig of his own and call it The Malt Mill. The distillery stood within the grounds of Lagavulin, which Peter Mackie finally acquired in 1921, three years before he died.

The Malt Mill was said to produce one of the most heavily peated malts of its day, though whether it ever resembled Laphroaig is unclear. The mill was demolished in the 1960s, leaving only a couple of millstones painted with a white horse beside the gate. The design of its pear-shaped stills, however, was copied for two of Lagavulin's four stills. These are run at a slow pace, just five hours for the first distillation, but nine for the second. All that contact with the copper helps lighten and polish what might be a very heavy, phenolic spirit, given the amount of peat used on the barley. All the grain is malted at nearby Port Ellen. The whisky then mellow for



Lagavulin
16-Year-Old

16 years in cask before being bottled as one of Diageo's Classic Malts.

🍷 **LAGAVULIN 16-YEAR-OLD**
 43% ABV • Beneath the layers of peat smoke that first dominate the nose and palate lurks a beguiling sweetness and complexity.
 🍷 **LAGAVULIN DISTILLER'S EDITION** 43% ABV • The 16-year-old whisky "finished" in a sherry cask, to give an initial sweetness that fades to a long smoky, salt-flecked finish.

LAPHROAIG

✉ Port Ellen, Isle of Islay
 🌐 www.laphroaig.com
 🏠 Open to visitors

Laphroaig has always reveled in its harsh, peat-smoked character—a seemingly unappetizing mix of hemp, bonfires, iodine, and seaweed, wrapped in peat smoke. With a flavor profile as far as it is possible to be from a sweet, crowd-pleasing drink like Baileys Irish Cream, there is nothing gentle about Laphroaig. Yet, every day whisky drinkers new to this uncompromising malt break through the pain barrier and become hooked.

Laphroaig's origins go back to the Johnston brothers, who arrived from the mainland to graze cattle on the southern shores of Islay.





PRINCE CHARLES' FONDNESS FOR PEAT

Prince Charles numbers among the fans of Laphroaig, and his crest appears on the label of the bottle. In 1994, he dropped in on the distillery after overshooting Islay's tiny airstrip. The heir to the throne had made the near-fatal mistake of landing with a tail wind. All four tires went pop before the plane came to a halt nose-down in a peat bog. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the incident.

Laphroaig uses American oak to mature its whisky, with plenty of sea air seeping into the wood.

They were soon making whisky on the side and in 1815 Laphroaig was officially born. Donald Johnston was in charge from 1836 until his death 10 years later, when, tragically, he fell into a vat of his whisky and drowned.

The distillery stayed with the Johnstons and the Hunters—who they married in to—for over a century. During this time there was a bitter and often litigious dispute with neighboring Lagavulin Distillery, or rather its owner, the whisky baron Sir Peter Mackie, who used to buy half of Laphroaig's production for his blends. When the contract was rescinded, he reacted with spite, ordering Laphroaig's water supply to be cut off. This resulted in yet another court case, which Mackie lost.

Relations had improved by the time Ian Hunter took over in 1927. He was the first to bottle Laphroaig and began to build its reputation abroad, including in the US, despite Prohibition there. Helped perhaps by its mildly antiseptic taste, Laphroaig

was accepted as a “medicinal spirit” and could be acquired on prescription from a sympathetic doctor (see p211).

In the 1930s, Ian Hunter recruited a young Glaswegian woman called Bessie Williamson to help out in the office. The arrangement was originally just for one summer, but Bessie never left and she eventually inherited the distillery when Hunter died without an heir in 1954.



Laphroaig 10-Year-Old

In the 1960s, Laphroaig became part of Allied Domecq, and remained so until the distillery was sold to Fortune Brands (owners of Jim Beam) in 2005.

■ **LAPHROAIG 10-YEAR-OLD**
43% ABV • An intense, smoky mix of hemp and sea spray, with a little malty sweetness on the tongue.

■ **LAPHROAIG 15-YEAR-OLD**
43% ABV • A richer, more-rounded flavor than the 10-year-old; the smoke does still dominate, but it is more aromatic.



The stills at Laphroaig are small and onion-shaped, and seem to maximize the tarry smokiness.





Ardbeg Distillery provides some of the most coveted malts for use in blends.

LOWLAND DISTILLERIES

The overriding image of malt whisky is of a Highland spirit made against a backdrop of barren peaks or heather-clad hills in a remote glen, or on the west coast lashed by wind and rain. The soft, rolling farmland south of Edinburgh somehow just doesn't fit the bill.

The whisky industry has been bedevilled by periodic lean times, and many a far-flung outpost of whiskymaking has survived decades of inactivity, only to sputter into life in the good times. A silent distillery in the Lowlands, however, faces a much higher risk of being redeveloped into executive flats or a supermarket parking lot. Not so very long ago, there were more than 20 licensed distilleries in the Lowlands. Now, there are just two of any size—Auchentoshan and Glenkinchie, with two others, Bladnoch and Daftmill, recently in resurgence. All but Daftmill are open to the public.

AUCHENTOSHAN

Originally built as the Duntocher Distillery by John Bulloch in 1817, Auchentoshan (www.auchentoshan.co.uk) stands on land once owned by Paisley Abbey, whose monks might have been the first distillers in these parts. Bulloch's son renamed the distillery Auchentoshan (Gaelic for "corner of the field") before it was sold to a local family. It then changed hands a number



of times, but still retained the feel of a farm distillery. When Alfred Barnard (*see p50*) paid a visit in 1878, he described Auchentoshan as a "little distillery...

situated in a romantic glen, with a stream of water running past it." The romantic glen subsequently disappeared in Glasgow's expansion, leaving Auchentoshan at the end of the Great Western Road, close to the Erskine Bridge. Its proximity to the city meant that its whisky could almost be piped into the warehouses of the Glasgow blenders direct from the still.

At some point, Auchentoshan increased its pair of stills to three and began triple-distilling its spirit, as though it were making Irish whiskey. The whisky has been triple-distilled ever since. Morrison Bowmore took over the distillery in 1984.

Auchentoshan Select has a fresh approachable style, with citrus aromas and an Ovaltine sweetness on the palate.



Bladnoch 15-Year-Old

BLADNOCH

Founded in 1817, tiny Bladnoch Distillery (www.bladnoch.co.uk), near Wigtown, remained in the same family hands—the McLelland's—until 1930.

It was then repeatedly bought and sold, spending prolonged periods lying idle until it was finally rescued in 1994 by Raymond Armstrong, from Northern Island, who spent a small fortune restoring it to a tiny boutique distillery.

Bladnoch is available bottled, or by the cask for around \$2,000, which includes eight years' storage but not the tax.

DAFTMILL

A tiny farm distillery near Cupar in Fife, Daftmill was created within a converted mill house dating from the late 17th century. The creators were Francis and Ian Cuthbert, whose family had farmed the land here for generations. The distillery went into production in December 2005, and can produce 4,400 gallons (20,000 liters) per annum—as much as a large distillery produces each day.

GLENKINCHIE

Founded at Pencaitland in East Lothian in 1825, Glenkinchie (www.discovering-distilleries.com) was originally known as the Milton Distillery. The stills ran cold in the

mid-1850s and for the next 30 years it became a saw mill. It was resurrected by an Edinburgh brewer and a pair of Leith wine merchants, who rebuilt Glenkinchie as a highly efficient, state-of-the-art operation. It had a siding connected to the railroad, its own overhead rails inside the distillery to carry the barley to the malting floor, and mechanical rakes in the mash tun.



**Glenkinchie
10-Year-Old**

Glenkinchie was also totally connected to the land, with fields of barley close at hand to supply the grain, which was malted on site until 1968. It provided whisky for Haig—

Britain's biggest whisky brand until the mid-1970s—but with Haig's sharp decline of fortunes in the UK, Glenkinchie faced an uncertain future. Until, that is, it was elevated by current owners Diageo to sit alongside the likes of Lagavulin and Oban in their "Classic Malts" series.

Glenkinchie 10-Year-Old has a malty, cut-grass sweetness on the nose with vanilla notes on the palate leading to a faint spiciness on the finish.

Bladnoch, near Wigtown, is a small boutique distillery, with an annual production of just 11,250 gallons (51,000 liters).



GRAIN DISTILLERIES

There is a common misconception that grain whisky is virtually neutral alcohol, lacks character, and is produced principally to provide comparatively cheap spirit to bulk out blends. Ask any Scotch whisky blender, however, and they will tell you that this is far from the case.

Every Scotch grain whisky available varies significantly in style and adds different dimensions to the particular blend that is being constructed.

We rarely get the opportunity to sample single grain whiskies in their own right because almost all the grain output is destined for blending, and few bottlings are made available by the distilleries. However, independent bottlers offer a surprisingly wide selection of older single grains, many of which come from distilleries that have fallen silent (*see p111*).

In 1980, there were 12 working grain distilleries in Scotland, but today just seven survive, with five in the industrial

Until 20 years ago, shipments of corn from North America were disembarked at the port of Girvan. They were then transferred by road to Grant's grain distillery nearby.

“Central Belt,” one at Invergordon, in the Highlands, and one at Girvan, on the west coast of Ayrshire.

GRAIN WHISKY DISTILLATION

Grain whisky is distilled in column stills in a continuous process, as opposed to malt whisky, which is made in batches in pot stills.

Scottish distiller Robert Stein pioneered continuous distillation, but it took the Dublin-born, former exciseman Aeneas Coffey to perfect the process in 1830 (*see p172*).

Coffey's invention revolutionized the production of grain whisky—not only could cheaper raw materials be used, but the alcohol content of the spirit distilled was higher, too. It paved the way for the creation of blended whisky later in the century. To this day, most of the stills used in the manufacture of Scotch grain whisky are called Coffey stills.



Grain whisky is a mix of cereals, including some malted barley.



CAMERONBRIDGE

✉ Windygates, Leven, Fife

Founded in 1824 by John Haig, Cameronbridge was the first distillery in Scotland to produce grain whisky in column stills. It was also one of the six founding distilleries of the Distillers Company in 1877. Today, Cameronbridge has three Coffey stills, and, along with Port Dundas, is one of the two grain whisky distilleries wholly owned by Diageo.



**Cameron Brig
12-Year-Old
Single Grain**

Cameronbridge does not only distil grain whisky, however; a further nine stills also make “grain neutral spirit” for use in gin and vodka distillation. As such, it is the largest grain distillery in Scotland, with a capacity of 15.5 million gallons (70 million liters) of grain whisky a year and a further 6.6 million gallons (30 million liters) of grain neutral spirit.

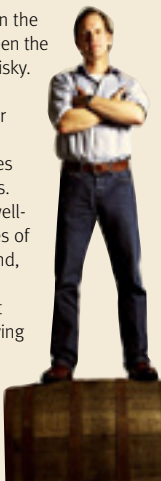
Cameronbridge

HEDONISM BLENDED GRAIN WHISKY

One of the most interesting developments in the world of grain whiskies in recent years has been the release of the first blended (vatted) grain whisky. Going by the name of Hedonism, it was the brainchild of innovative whisky entrepreneur John Glaser and his Compass Box company. It comprises a blend of grains of varying ages from the Cambus and Caledonian distilleries.

“I believe that great grain whiskies from well-chosen casks are the undiscovered treasures of Scotland’s whisky kingdom,” says Glaser. And, indeed, Hedonism is a smooth, silky, and eminently drinkable whisky—soft and sweet with a comparatively complex palate, displaying vanilla, toffee, coconut, and cocoa notes.

For John Glaser, “grain whisky is one of the most elegant, delicious whiskies on the planet”.



is a key component of Bell’s, Johnnie Walker, and White Horse blends, and is considered to be one of the fuller-bodied grain whiskies on the market.

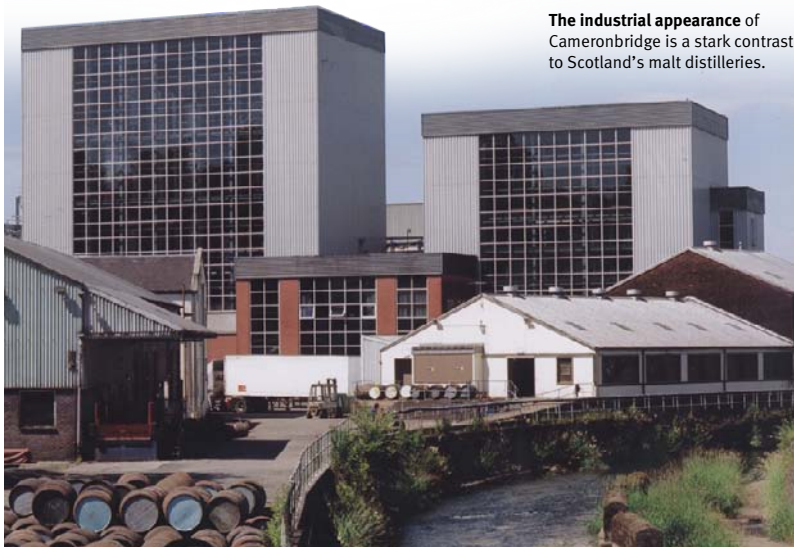
■ **CAMERON BRIG SINGLE GRAIN WHISKY** 40% ABV • Bottled by Diageo, Cameron Brig is the most readily available of the Scottish single grains. A clean nose, smooth and elegant, sweet and slightly spicy, with a more sherried character than might be expected.

GIRVAN

✉ Grangestone Industrial Estate, Girvan, Ayrshire
 🌐 www.williamgrant.com

After Bladnoch (*see p108*), Girvan is the southernmost working distillery in Scotland. It was constructed in 1963 by William Grant & Sons, its west-coast location chosen partly to facilitate the import of corn by sea from North America. However, since

The industrial appearance of Cameronbridge is a stark contrast to Scotland’s malt distilleries.



the mid-1980s, Girvan has distilled from wheat, in common with most Scottish grain distilleries.

The original Coffey stills have been superseded by a complex, five-column vacuum-distillation plant, unique to Girvan, which produces some 11 million gallons (50 million liters) of grain whisky and grain neutral spirit a year.

Girvan is also now a major blending and warehousing center for Grant's operations. Between 1966–1975, the Girvan site was home to the Ladyburn malt distillery.

Girvan grain whisky is one of the lighter grains used by blenders, and is at the heart of Grant's Family Reserve.

BLACK BARREL SINGLE

GRAIN WHISKY 40% ABV

Delicate and fragrant on the nose, fruity, with vanilla and a hint of spice. Soft on the palate, with sweet cereal notes.

INVERGORDON

☒ Cottage Brae, Invergordon, Ross-shire

📞 www.whyteandmackay.com

Invergordon's eastern Highlands location, far from the blending halls of central Scotland, was chosen to boost the area's flagging economy. Built between 1959 and 1961, the distillery belongs to Whyte & Mackay, who purchased the Invergordon Distillers Group in 1993, principally to acquire the Invergordon grain distillery and thereby secure a guaranteed supply of grain spirit for its own blending requirements. A small malt facility was installed in the Invergordon complex in 1965 and operated for 11 years.

Invergordon grain distillery has four Coffey stills and a capacity of 8.8 million gallons (40 million liters) a



year. For some years, a 10-year-old expression of Invergordon single grain was marketed. It was soft, clean, and straightforward, with big, sweet toffee notes.

LOCH LOMOND

☒ Alexandria West, Dunbartonshire

📞 www.lochlomonddistillery.com



An early bottling of Girvan Single Grain

Loch Lomond is the newest recruit to the line-up of Scottish grain distilleries and is the only one that produces both malt and grain whisky. The distillery dates from 1965, and was initially constructed to produce just malt whisky. The grain distillery was built alongside the malt plant in 1993–4 and its single Coffey still turns out some 2.2 million gallons

(10 million liters) a year.

The whole complex is owned by the Bulloch family, who can trace their involvement in the Scotch whisky trade back to 1842, when Gabriel Bulloch partnered JH Dewar in a Scotch wholesaling business in Glasgow.

LOCH LOMOND DISTILLERY SELECT SINGLE HIGHLAND GRAIN

WHISKY 45% ABV • In 2005, Loch Lomond released Scotland's first single cask, organic, single grain whisky, which was matured in French organic wine hogsheads.

When it came on stream in 1887, North British produced 25,000 gallons (114,000 liters) a week. Today, it turns out 10 times that.

Initial wine notes on the nose, then fresher vanilla and cereals emerge. Well mannered on the palate, with caramel, vanilla ice cream, and a hint of ginger. Malty caramel notes linger in the finish, with a sting of pepper in the tail.

NORTH BRITISH

☒ Wheatfield Road, Gorgie, Edinburgh

📞 www.northbritish.co.uk

North British is Edinburgh's only surviving distillery and is located in the capital's Gorgie suburb. It was set up in 1885 by a group of influential blenders, and the "NB," as it is affectionately known, retained its independence until 1993, when it was jointly acquired by Diageo and The Edrington Group.

Three Coffey stills turn out around 14 million gallons (64 million liters) a year. North British is unique among grain distilleries in that it operates its own maltings and continues to distil from maize, rather than the cheaper alternative of wheat. Additionally, it uses around 15 percent of "green malt," compared with the more usual 10 percent of dried malt content used in other grain distilleries.

The result is a rich, full-flavored whisky, much

tangier and sharper than that made from wheat, and with a more obvious vanilla note that is characteristic of corn distillation.

PORT DUNDAS

☒ North Canal,
Bank Street, Glasgow

One of Glasgow's two grain distilleries, Port Dundas stands beside the Forth & Clyde Canal and dates back to the early 19th century. Until the 1860s, when they amalgamated, there were two neighboring Port Dundas distilleries. Both began to make grain whisky using Coffey stills in 1845.

Port Dundas operates under the auspices of Diageo, who boast between 35–40 percent of Scotland's total grain whisky output. Port Dundas contributes significantly to all the principal Diageo blends, including Haig, Johnnie Walker, and White Horse.

Traditionally, Port Dundas was considered one of the more full-bodied and characterful grain whiskies, but has become rather lighter in recent years. Three Coffey stills are in operation, producing around 8.6 million gallons (39 million liters) of whisky a year.

STRATHCLYDE

☒ Moffat Street, Glasgow

The first grain spirit flowed from Strathclyde in 1928. The distillery was constructed by Seager Evans & Co., the owners of Long John blended whisky, in the Gorbals district of Glasgow. Through a series of takeovers, it passed to Allied Domecq, and the plant has been owned by Chivas Brothers since its acquisition of Allied Domecq assets in 2005.

Having closed Dumbarton grain distillery in 2002, Allied spent more than \$13 million

FOUR GRAIN DISTILLERIES THAT ARE NOW SILENT

Caledonian

Along with North British, Caledonian was one of two working grain distilleries in Edinburgh, until its closure in 1988, two years after Guinness took over its owner, the Distillers Company. Established in 1855, in the Haymarket area, Caledonian was the largest grain distillery in Britain for some years. Some of the warehouses survive, while the still house has been converted into apartments. Caledonian's tall, brick chimney continues to act as a landmark in the Scottish capital.

Cambus

Located at Tullibody, in Clackmannanshire, and dating from 1806, Cambus was well-regarded by blenders for the quality of its spirit. Part of the Distillers Company, it became surplus to requirement when Guinness took over, and closed in 1993. The site is now used by Diageo for cask filling and maturation.

Carsebridge

Like Cambus, Carsebridge was a large-scale Clackmannanshire distillery. It was built by the Bald family in 1799, and switched from malt to grain whisky production in the early 1850s. Carsebridge closed in 1983. From the site, Diageo now runs its "Spirits Supply, Scotland" operation, which is responsible for the company's entire UK spirits production.

Dumbarton

The vast, red-brick Dumbarton Distillery was constructed on the Clyde coast in 1938 by the Canadian distiller Hiram Walker, though it ultimately became part of the Allied Domecq empire. It is the most recent Scottish grain distillery to close, falling silent in 2002. Dumbarton distilled with corn rather than wheat and produced a full-bodied and distinctive grain whisky.

increasing Strathclyde's capacity from 7 million gallons (32 million liters) a year to 8.6 million gallons (39 million liters) a year. The facility is equipped with two column stills, which manufacture grain whisky, and five that make grain neutral spirit.

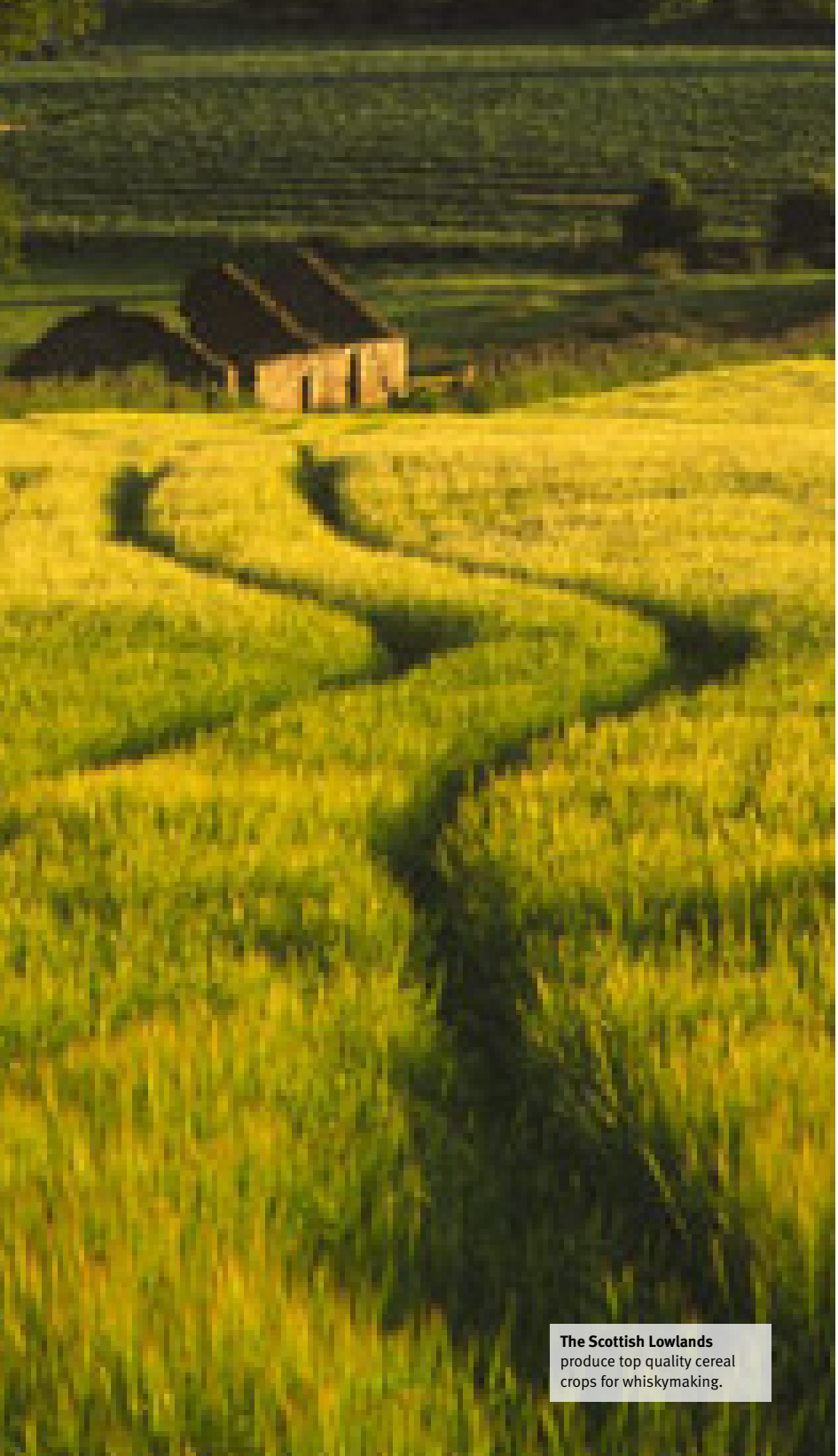
Strathclyde is considered to be one of the fullest-bodied

and most "meaty" of the grain whiskies, especially when young. As at Girvan and Invergordon, a small malt distillery operated within the Strathclyde complex between 1958–1976 under the name Kinclath.

Port Dundas was modernized in the 1970s, gaining new, up-to-date whiskymaking facilities.







The Scottish Lowlands
produce top quality cereal
crops for whiskymaking.

BLENDED WHISKY

“The art of combining meticulously selected, mature, high-quality whiskies, each with its own flavor and other characteristics, with such skill that the whole is better than the sum of its parts, so that each makes its contribution to the finished blend without any one predominating.”

These were the words of David MacDonald, the last member of the MacDonald family to be chairman of Glenmorangie, before its sale to LVMH, the French-based luxury goods conglomerate, in 2004. It is a definition of blending that has seldom been bettered. Yet, it is perhaps somewhat idealized, ignoring as it does the pricing pressures that drive the creation of so many standard and secondary (cheaper) blends. It also reflects only the skill of blending and not its troubled history.

Despite the fact that the whisky industry makes much play of its roots in the 15th century, few distilleries can trace their history back beyond the 1820s. The reason

In the blending room of John Walker's and Sons' Barleith complex, barrels of whisky are poured into 16 troughs in readiness for blending.



Grant's Premium
12-Year-Old

for this is that for much of the 18th century there was an ongoing battle between legal and illegal distilling. By the 1780s, large-scale distilling from grain had been developed in the Lowlands by the Haig and Stein families. In contrast, it was the smaller, pot still production, largely artisanal in nature, that characterized the Highland output. Disputes between the two were constant.

NEW LAWS

In the 1820s, new legislation helped the whole industry to legitimacy (*see p47*), and its potential was transformed in 1827 by Robert Stein, who invented a method of continuous distillation. Rapidly perfected by Aeneas Coffey (*see p172*), the continuous still allows the production of a more lightly flavored spirit from cheaper ingredients. It is a more consistent



method of distillation, too, and achieves a higher alcohol content in the spirit than the product of a pot still.

Yet, blending as we understand it today did not emerge until after the Spirits Act of 1860. Importantly, this legislation permitted whiskies from different distilleries to be blended “under bond” (before the payment of excise duty). By reducing the amount of cash tied up in stock, the blender was able to experiment more freely, and, in an unforeseen but wholly beneficial consequence, it became possible to “marry” (age) the resultant blend, thus further improving its flavor.

The first man to realize the full potential of blending was Andrew Usher, who, since 1853, had been selling Usher’s Old Vatted Glenlivet, a blended malt. He could see the possibilities of a consistent and repeatable product that combined the full flavor of the Highland single malts with the lightness and economy of grain whisky.

SCOTCH SUPREMACY

At about the same time, several trends combined to favor blended Scotch whisky. Scotland had become popular with the English. The opening of railroad links to the Highlands began the development of mass tourism, initially with the upper classes (strongly influenced by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert), who came for the field sports. They were subsequently followed by middle-class tourists, who saw Scotland as fashionable, its rugged landscape more grand and romantic than any English vistas. Sir Edwin Landseer’s painting *Monarch of the Glen* (1851) expresses this relationship.

The role of Scottish regiments, administrators, and traders in the creation of the British Empire helped



Haig Gold Label and The Dimple

spread whisky’s fame, and the fashion for drinking whisky with soda water helped the new blends. The depredation of the French cognac industry, caused by the destructive phylloxera louse in the 1880s, opened a gap in the market that was quickly exploited by innovative, energetic entrepreneurial whisky blenders such as Usher, Alexander Walker, John and Tommy Dewar, and James Buchanan. Their

names live on in the names of some of the famous brands, even if the companies they created have long since been absorbed in the ruthless consolidation that followed World War II.

ANTI-BLEND FEELINGS

But not everyone cared for the impact of “silent spirit,” as grain whisky was known. Sir Walter Gilbey, proprietor of Glen Spey, Strathmill, and Knockando Distilleries, railed against it as “nearly free from taste and smell,” and the Irish distilling industry, in a commercially suicidal move, turned their face against blending (see p159). The North of Scotland Malt Distillers’ Association also fought a long rearguard action against the incursions of grain.

The argument was settled, at least in a legal sense, by the 1908–1909 Royal Commission on Whiskey. In a landmark decision, it resolved that both grain and single malt spirit could be sold as “whisky,” clearing the way for the modern industry.

Today, more than 90 percent of all the Scotch whisky sold in the world is a blend, with the great brands each selling well over a million cases annually.

As the foundation stone of the Scotch whisky industry, blended whisky is today in good heart and its future seems assured. The whole is indeed better than the sum of its parts.



Nosing has always been the key to creating great blended whisky.

SCOTCH BLENDS

The general trend in recent decades has been toward rationalization, with fewer and fewer companies controlling more and more brands. But there are signs of a renaissance in craft blending, too, with both independent companies and large players producing limited edition blends.

100 PIPERS

Owner: Chivas Brothers

The sight of 100 pipers in full flow would undoubtedly be an awe-inspiring one, and it did indeed inspire a well-known Scottish air, which commemorates the march of Bonnie Prince Charlie on the city of Carlisle. As the song relates, the English army reacted as you might expect: “Dumfoun’er’d they heard the blaw; Dumfoun’er’d they a’ ran awa’, awa.”

When the Seagram Company was looking for a contender in the “value” sector of the Scotch whisky market in 1965, they too drew inspiration from the song and named their brand 100 Pipers. No doubt, they had similar hopes that the competition would flee in fear.

With a competitive price tag, 100 Pipers proved an immediate success in many markets, but not in the UK, where it was rather looked down upon, perhaps unfairly. The blend contains Braeval and Allt a’ Bhainne among its fillings, and probably some Glenlivet and Longmorn as well, and it may be that its pale color affected the perceptions of some UK drinkers accustomed to darker colored blends.

Seagram’s developed the brand very effectively and it has continued to grow under its new owners, Chivas Brothers (the spirits division



100 Pipers

of Pernod Ricard), so that today it is one of the world’s top 10 selling blends. It is the best-selling whisky in Thailand, a dynamic market for Scotch, and is growing rapidly in many other countries, especially Spain, Venezuela, Australia, and India.

■ **100 PIPERS** 40% ABV

A light and very mixable whisky, with a smooth, subtly smoky taste.

THE ANTIQUARY

Owner: Tomatin Distillery

This famous old blend, first introduced in 1857 by John and William Hardie, takes its name from a novel by the early 19th-century writer Sir Walter Scott. For many years this blend was the product of William Sanderson (of VAT 69 fame), until it was sold by United Distillers (forerunners of Diageo) in 1996.

Today, it is owned by The Tomatin Distillery Co., which is itself a subsidiary of Takara Shuzo and Okura Ltd of Japan.

For many years, The Antiquary was a well-regarded luxury blend, packaged in a handsome faceted

bottle that looked similar to a decanter.

Sadly, it was not regarded as a priority by United Distillers and sales fell away, until the name and blend recipe were eventually sold.

The new owners now offer 12 and 21-year-old versions of the brand, and appear to be making some effort to



The Antiquary 12-Year-Old

re-establish The Antiquary. New packaging that harks back to the old bottle has been introduced.

■ **THE ANTIQUARY HOUSE STYLE**

As befits its deluxe status, there is at the heart of The Antiquary a very high malt to grain ratio, which includes some of the finest malts from Speyside and the Highlands. Their flavors are balanced by Lowland malt, which adds gentleness to the profile. The subtle fruitiness has a hint of apples. The result of the high malt content is depth of flavor, outstanding smoothness, and a long aftertaste.

■ **THE ANTIQUARY 21-YEAR-OLD**

40% ABV • This is a premium blend that combines the

PERCENTAGE ABV

The vast majority of Scotch blends are bottled for the market at 40 percent ABV (alcohol by volume). Malt whiskies tend to be a little higher, commonly 43 percent, while cask-strength whisky is bottled at a strength of between 50–60 percent ABV.

signature style with a dash of Islay malt to create an exceptional dram. A light maltiness with muted peaty notes allows the heather, dandelion, and blackcurrant notes to flourish. A smooth, full-bodied whisky with a lingering taste.

ASYLA

Owner: Compass Box Whisky Company

Asyla is a blended whisky produced by the Compass Box Whisky Company, headed by self-styled “whisky zealot” John Glaser, who works rather in the manner of a *negotiant*, aiming to create some of Scotland’s premier whiskies through the art of blending.

The name Asyla comes from the plural of the word “asylum.”

As Glaser explains: “It is simply a word I like because of the various connotations it can have. Are we talking sanctuary, madhouse, a little of both?”

From this you may discern that Compass Box is not your average whiskymaker. In fact, though the company is relatively small, it enjoys a disproportionate influence on current thinking within the industry and has won a high number of awards.

Compass Box whiskies are not cheap, for which Glaser makes no apology. They are, however, beautifully packaged and very, very good.

ASYLA 40% ABV • The blend comprises equal proportions of single grain and malt whiskies, containing Cragganmore, Linkwood, and Glen Elgin malts, and Cambus and Cameron Bridge grains, all from first-fill bourbon barrels, naturally colored, and non chill-filtered. Asyla is a *tour de force* from a true lover of whisky.

BAILIE NICOL JARVIE

Owner: Glenmorangie

Bailie Nicol Jarvie, or BNJ as it is commonly known in Scotland, is produced by Glenmorangie and has long been rated by enthusiasts as a particularly fine blended whisky. Accordingly, it has acquired something of a cult following, with its acolytes torn between wishing the company would promote the brand a good deal more enthusiastically and savoring the idea of being one of the cognoscenti.

Reputedly first produced in 1893 by Alexander Muir and Roderick Macdonald (the predecessors to the Glenmorangie Company), Bailie Nicol Jarvie is named after a character in Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Rob Roy*. In one famous incident in the book, the

Bailie, a Scottish magistrate, distinguished himself by tackling a fierce Highlander with a red-hot poker. The poker itself (actually a plough coulter) remains on display outside the Bailie Nicol Jarvie Hotel, in Aberfoyle.

Long reputed to contain a healthy measure of both Glenmorangie and Glen Moray single malts, Bailie Nicol Jarvie has one of the highest malt contents of any blended whisky on the market, and contains only “first-class” ranked malts in the blend.

The bottle label has a delightful period feel, apparently untouched by the hand of marketing—though in fact it was subtly revamped in the mid-1990s.



Asyla from Compass Box

BAILIE NICOL JARVIE 40% ABV

Smooth, subtle, and full of character, it has a delicate balance of sweet Speyside, aromatic Highland, and peaty Islay malt whiskies blended with only the finest grain whisky. Definitely one to show off to your friends.

BALLANTINE'S

Owner: Chivas Brothers

Ballantine’s may have the most extensive range of blended Scotch in the world today. It includes Ballantine’s Finest and a host of blends with various age statements, among them 12, 17, 21, and 30-year-old versions.

Ballantine’s were pioneers of aged blends and first produced their flagship 30-year-old in the late 1920s, from special stocks of malt and grain Scotch that had been set aside years before, with the idea of creating a super-premium product already in mind.

This foresight enabled the brand to establish a strong, competitive position at the top of the market, which, despite various changes of ownership (see p121), has stood the company in good stead ever since.

Relatively hard to find in the UK market, Ballantine’s Finest has long been popular

elsewhere in Europe, and the more premium expressions enjoy huge success in the Far East, especially in China, Japan, South Korea, and Asian duty-free markets.

The range now sells nearly 5.5 million 2-gallon (9-liter) cases a year, making it the world’s third-biggest selling Scotch whisky by volume.

The blend is noted for its



Ballantine's Finest

complexity, with more than 40 different malts and grains being used in the mix. The two Speyside single malts from Glenburgie and Miltonduff form the base for the blend, but malts from all parts of Scotland are also employed. For maturation, Ballantine's favor principally the use of ex-bourbon barrels, for their vanilla influences and sweet creamy notes.

■ BALLANTINE'S HOUSE STYLE

In keeping with Ballantine's distinguished pedigree, there is a specific Ballantine's family signature style flowing through the range. All Ballantine's aged, blended whiskies are elegant and balanced, with a distinctive soft and sweet flavor.

However, care is also taken to ensure that each product throughout the range has its own individual personality. All are characterized by some degree of complexity, but the younger versions are fresher, with more immediate appeal.

■ BALLANTINE'S

17-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

In this expression, a deep, balanced, and elegant whisky announces itself, with a hint of wood and vanilla. The body is full and creamy, and has a vibrant, honeyed sweetness, with hints of oak and peat smoke on the palate. Some tasters have detected a hint of salt in this whisky, and in the 12-year-old expression too.

■ BALLANTINE'S 21-YEAR-OLD &

BALLANTINE'S 30-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

Such older expressions are characterized by a deeper color and traces of heather, smoke, liquorice, and aromatic spice on the nose and body. The medium to heavy palate is complex yet harmoniously balanced, with rich, mellow sherry, honey, and floral notes.



Bell's
8-Year-Old

BELL'S

Owner: Diageo

Brand leadership in the emotionally charged Scottish market was conceded to The Famous Grouse (see p132) in 1980, but Diageo has taken a number of steps to consolidate the position of Bell's as the UK's overall best-selling Scotch. Visitor facilities at the Blair Athol Distillery in Pitlochry (see p79)—the spiritual home of Bell's and the source of the single malt at the heart of the blend—have been enhanced, and, in 1994, the blend itself was upgraded. Bell's Extra Special is now an 8-year-old, the only major blend to be matured for that length of time.

Besides Blair Athol, the two original Bell's distilleries, Dufftown and Inchgower, are key components of the blend, along with Caol Ila, from Islay, and the Lowlander, Glenkinchie.

Bell's also produces exclusively for the UK a premium blended malt called Special Reserve, in which a touch more Islay may be detected in the blend.

Even rarer are the collectable Bell's decanters. They were first produced in the 1930s, and since 1988 a



Blair Athol Distillery provides the malt at the heart of Bell's, and is home to the Bell's visitor center.

BAXTER'S BARLEY BREE

The wonderfully named Baxter's Barley Bree is today owned by Diageo, but, despite efforts to revive the brand in the 1990s, it appears to be currently moribund. For traditionalists, this is a matter of some regret, as Baxter's Barley Bree was once an important brand of the large Dundee-based distiller James Watson & Co., which was eventually absorbed into the Distillers Company in the 1920s. The name carries enormous resonance for those who care to look below the surface. "Barley" is, of course, the raw material of whisky and "bree" is the old Scots word for broth or liquor and, by extension, a synonym for whisky.

decanter has been produced each Christmas. The most sought-after is the Charles and Diana decanter that commemorated their 1981 marriage. It fetches up to \$5,000 (when full, naturally).

■ BELL'S 8-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

A medium-bodied blend, with a nutty aroma and a lightly spiced flavor.

BENMORE

Owner: Diageo

In response to the growing market for blended Scotch in Thailand, Diageo launched Benmore in 2005. Meaning "the big hill" in Gaelic, Benmore is a revival of an old name that was acquired by the Distillers Company (DCL) in 1929, when they bought Benmore Distillers.

Benmore operated Dallas Dhu, Lochindaal, and Lochhead distilleries, all of which have now been silent for many years.

This latest incarnation of Benmore contains 18 malts and grain whiskies and is offered as a 5-year-old.

THE BALLANTINE'S STORY

In 1827, at the age of 19, George Ballantine opened his first grocery and whisky business in Edinburgh. Proving to be an exceptional entrepreneur, he had a growing reputation by 1837 and moved to a prestigious address at the very heart of this prosperous city.

Edinburgh was one of the richest cities in the world at the time, and Ballantine's new address on South Bridge, near Princes Street, showed that he was a man with ambition and confidence.

He began innovative experimentation, blending different whiskies from different distilleries to produce something lighter and more sophisticated. This led him to create a consistent house style for his customers, and so Ballantine's became one of the very first whisky brands.

By 1869, Ballantine had expanded his business into Glasgow, and from these premises he and his two sons gained international status as purveyors of the finest-quality blended whisky. He continued to experiment—the effects of maturation on whisky, and the importance of first-fill cask selection were typical of Ballantine's innovation and imagination, which were key to



**Ballantine's
12-Year-Old**

establishing blended Scotch as the leading international drink.

By 1881, Ballantine's was already exporting blended whisky to a worldwide market.

A royal warrant to Queen Victoria and subsequently to King Edward followed, but in 1936 Ballantine's was bought by the Canadian firm Hiram Walker, as one of their first moves into the Scotch whisky market. Hiram Walker merged with Allied Vintners

in 1987, and Allied Distillers was created the following year. Eventually, Pernod Ricard acquired Allied Domecq (as Allied Distillers was by then known) in July 2005, acting with Fortune Brands, who took the Teacher's whisky business as their share of the break-up.

Pernod's whisky division, Chivas Brothers, has effectively relaunched the brand, and sales are now growing rapidly, after a period of stagnation under the previous ownership.

Ballantine's Distillery, by the Leven River in Dumbarton, is soon to be turned into modern apartments.



THE BELL FAMILY

“Several fine whiskies blended together please the palates of a greater number of people than one whisky unmixed,” wrote Perth blender Arthur Bell, and the total confidence he had in his products led him to appoint a London agent as early as 1863.

Despite this, Bell’s remained a little-known brand for another 50 years or so, and didn’t really hit its stride until as recently as the 1970s. This was in great part due to the religious beliefs that shaped Arthur Bell, and to his innate modesty.

He refused to allow the family name to appear on a bottle, explaining that he preferred “the qualities of my goods to speak for themselves.” His sons, Arthur Kinmond (A.K.) and Robert, were considerably less idealistic and self-effacing, and, soon after their father’s death in 1900, set about making up for lost time.

The prohibition on the use of the Bell name was abandoned by 1904 and a healthy export business in Australia and New Zealand was quickly established. Agents were appointed in India, Ceylon, Italy, and France. A.K.

made a lengthy trip to North America, especially Canada, and the brand became the most popular in South Africa. The slogan “Afore Ye Go,” which has served the company so well, dates from around this period, though it was not registered as a trademark until 1925. After a period in abeyance, it made a welcome return to the brand’s revamped packaging, launched in 2006.

Bell’s acquired the Blair Athol and Dufftown Distilleries in 1933 and, three years later, added Inchgower. The family connection was severed in 1942 with the death of both Bell brothers, and William Farquharson took over as chairman—a post he held until his demise in 1973.

This portrait of the Bell’s staff was taken in the early 1900s, in the period when Arthur Bell’s sons had taken over and were not averse to branding the family name.



Arthur Bell





THE CRITICS SAY...

IN a game where virtually every stroke affords an opportunity for critical judgement, it is not surprising that opinions are almost as numerous and varied as the strokes themselves.

Connoisseurs of Scotch Whisky, on the other hand, are unanimous in their appreciation of "Black & White"—as fine a whisky as ever came out of Scotland.

"BLACK & WHITE" SCOTCH WHISKY

James Buchanan & Co. Ltd., Glasgow and London



Advertising for Black & White whisky always made use of two dogs: a black Scottish terrier and a white West Highland terrier.

BLACK & WHITE

Owner: Diageo

A long-lived and much-loved brand from the Buchanan's stable (see p124), Black & White is today marketed by Diageo in France, Brazil, and Venezuela, where it continues to enjoy a popularity that it has long since lost in its homeland.

There are two accounts of how the brand came to have its name and carry the distinctive symbol of two terrier dogs, one black and the other white.

One version has it that James Buchanan, the brand's owner, was an ardent animal lover and conceived the idea for one of the world's most famous trademarks in the 1890s, when he was

returning home from a dog show. Soon after, the black Scottish terrier and the white West Highland terrier were adopted as the brand's motif.

The alternative and equally plausible version is that James Buchanan supplied his whisky to the UK's House of Commons, where, in a very dark bottle with a white label, it was sold under the name "Buchanan's Special." Supposedly incapable of memorizing the whisky's real name, British parliamentarians would call instead for "Black and White." The name eventually stuck and, instinctive marketer that he was, Buchanan adopted the name and subsequently adorned the label with the two dogs.

Perhaps both accounts are true. Either way, it is a pleasant memory of a gentler age, far removed from the focus groups and brand strategies of today.

BLACK BOTTLE

Owner: Burn Stewart Distillers

Another well-loved blend with a long history, Black Bottle was first created by C D & G Grahams, an Aberdeen firm of tea blenders, in 1879. After surviving various vicissitudes, the company was sold to Long John International in 1964. Allied Lyons acquired the brand in 1990 and started to invest in it, but in turn sold it on to Highland Distillers in 1995.

That was not the end of its travels, however, because in April 2003 Highland then sold Black Bottle—along with the Bunnahabhain Distillery on Islay—to the current owners, Burn Stewart Distillers, who are themselves part of CL WorldBrands Ltd., a multinational drinks group based in Trinidad.

There are two excellent variants, Black Bottle and Black Bottle 10-Year-Old. Great efforts have been made by Burn Stewart to

invest in the packaging and, more importantly, the blend quality. Many commentators agree that the blend profile now resembles, as nearly as can be determined, that of the original 19th-century whisky.

BLACK BOTTLE 40% ABV

The blend contains malts from seven Islay distilleries, along with hefty helpings of the company's Deanston malt. The nose is fresh and fruity, with hints of peat, while the palate is full, with a slightly honeyed sweetness, followed



Black & White

by a distinctive smoky flavor. The finish is long, warming, with a smoky, Islay character.

BLACK BOTTLE

10-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV

This expression again contains malt from seven Islay distilleries. Accordingly, “peat freaks” will find this very much to their taste. But steer away if you are not a fan of the traditional peaty and phenolic Islay character. Black Bottle 10-Year-Old is a big, no-nonsense whisky that takes no prisoners.

THE BLACK DOUGLAS

Owner: Chivas Brothers

The first Black Douglas was a 14th-century Scottish soldier and knight who fought with King Robert the Bruce in the Scottish Wars of Independence.

The Black Douglas Scotch was created by Seagram’s, and thus eventually acquired by Pernod Ricard, who in 2002 signed a long-term bulk spirit supply arrangement with Carlton United Breweries, of Australia, to support their local bottling of The Black Douglas.

The Black Douglas is described as “a well-balanced grain and malt blend Scotch whisky, a soft, well-aged product with a smooth finish that appeals to Australians.”

As well as a standard non-age bottling, 8-year-old and 12-year-old versions are offered.

BUCHANAN’S

Owner: Diageo

Buchanan’s is an excellent example of a brand that has survived the ups and downs foisted upon them by changes of ownership and consolidation within the whisky industry. Indeed, Buchanan’s today



Buchanan’s
12-Year-Old

is once again showing signs that it is prospering.

The original James Buchanan was one of the most notable “whisky barons” and a larger-than-life character. Starting in London in 1879 as an agent for Mackinlay’s, he soon began trading on his own account, with capital loaned from a friend. A born salesman, he repaid the loan within a year and rapidly saw his whisky, then called Buchanan’s Special (see p124), adopted in the House of Commons. His genius for publicity also led him to be an early pioneer of newspaper advertising.

His main rival at the time was Tommy Dewar (see p131). This extended beyond the world of whisky, and in direct competition with Dewar, Buchanan’s horses won the Derby twice.

However, Buchanan’s later merged with Dewar’s in 1915, before they both joined the Distillers Company (DCL) in 1925. Wrapped up with the fortunes of DCL, Buchanan’s is now a Diageo brand.

Today, the name is mainly seen in Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, and—to a lesser extent—the United States, where, fittingly, it is positioned as a premium style that reflects the prestige

and tradition that suits the taste and values of the Latin community. One feels that Buchanan himself would have approved.

Two variants are produced: a 12-year-old and Buchanan’s Special Reserve, an 18-year-old expression.

CATTO’S

Owner: Inver House Distillers

Aberdeen-based whisky blender James Catto set up in business in 1861 and his whiskies soon achieved international distribution on the shipping lines White Star and P&O, both of which were

founded by former schoolfriends.

Ownership passed to Gilbey’s after the death of James’s son Robert during World War I. More recently, it was acquired by Inver House Distillers, who are themselves owned by the



Chivas
Regal 25

Thai Beverage Public Company (ThaBev).

Catto’s is a deluxe, fully matured, and complex blend, fresh and clean with a lingering, warm finish. Two versions are available: a non-age standard and a 12-year-old style.

CATTO’S 40% ABV

The standard Catto blend is aromatic and well-rounded in character with a smooth, mellow finish.

CHIVAS REGAL

Owner: Chivas Brothers

Said to be a favorite of the late author and gonzo journalist Hunter S

Thompson, Chivas Regal is among the top five best-selling Scotch blends in the world, and is one of the few truly global brands in terms of distribution.

Speyside’s microclimate is perfect for producing the single malts that are major components of the Chivas Regal blends, and special mention should go to Strathisla, whose rich and full malt whisky has long been at the heart of them.



Hunter S. Thompson, the writer and journalist, was reputed to be a huge fan of Chivas Regal.

Chivas Regal 18 was launched in 1997 and is a super-premium blend with Strathisla 18-Year-Old (an expression that's not available as a single malt) contributing to its memorable warm finish.

For many years, Chivas Regal was positioned as a luxury good, and consistent and heavy advertising ensured its leading position. Today, under the ownership of Pernod Ricard, innovative marketing, such as an online broadband TV channel in partnership with Microsoft, has brought success in new markets.

CHIVAS REGAL 12

40% ABV • An aromatic infusion of wild herbs, heather, honey, and orchard fruits, with a radiant warm amber color. Round and creamy on the palate, with a full, rich taste of honey and ripe apples, and notes of vanilla, butterscotch, and hazelnut. Rich and lingering.

CHIVAS REGAL 18 40% ABV

An intense dark amber color, with multilayered aromas of dried fruits, spice, and buttery toffee. Exceptionally rich and smooth, with a velvety, dark chocolate palate, elegant floral notes and a wisp of sweet mellow smokiness.

CLAN CAMPBELL

Owner: Chivas Brothers

Another million-case-selling brand from Pernod Ricard's Chivas Brothers, Clan Campbell is a leading standard brand in the dynamic French market. In fact, it is something of a phenomenon, having only been launched as recently as 1984. The brand is not available in the UK, but may be found in Italy, Spain, and some East Asian markets, as well as in France.

Prior to this, the House of Campbell can trace its history to 1879, when it was based in Glasgow. In 1945, the company acquired Aberlour Distillery, later adding Perthshire's tiny Edradour, which it subsequently sold.

In 1988, a series of mergers and acquisitions brought Clan Campbell into the ownership of Pernod Ricard, and substantial growth followed.

Despite its relative youth, its origins are now inextricably entwined with Scottish heritage, thanks to clever marketing and a link to the Duke of Argyll, head of the clan.

CLAN CAMPBELL 40% ABV

The blend largely comprises Speyside malts (Aberlour and Glenallachie in particular) and selected grain whiskies. It is a smooth, light whisky with a fruity finish.

CLAN MACGREGOR

Owner: William Grant & Sons

It is unlikely that you will come across a bottle of Clan MacGregor in the UK, because this "secondary" (low-priced) blend is sold largely in North America and in more than 60 countries around the world, from

Venezuela to the Middle East and Thailand, but not—to any noticeable extent at least—in Scotland.

For all its anonymity in its homeland, however, Clan MacGregor's sales approach a very respectable 1.5 million cases annually, and it is claimed by its owners, William Grant & Sons, to be one of the world's fastest-growing major Scotch whisky brands.

The bottle label proudly carries the Clan MacGregor badge and motto, and, with his kind permission, the personal crest of the 24th Clan Chief, Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor.

Given its parentage and price point, the blend would seem likely to contain Grant's own malts (Glenfiddich, Balvenie, and Kininvie) and grain whisky from Grant's substantial Girvan operation.



Clan MacGregor

THE CLAYMORE

Owner: Whyte & Mackay

Derived from *claidheamh mòr*, a Gaelic term meaning "great sword," a claymore is a Highland broadsword. The name was deemed an appropriate one to use by the Distillers Company (DCL) when, in 1977, they attempted to recover market share lost by the withdrawal from the UK of their Johnnie Walker Red Label. Driven largely by price, this was an immediate success, and The Claymore was for a while one of the best-selling whiskies in the country.

In 1985, during the battle for ownership of the Distillers Company, the brand was sold to Glasgow-

THE CHIVAS BROTHERS

Though a link can be traced to wine merchant William Edward's grocery store in Castle Street, Aberdeen, and the owner's partnership with a young farmer called James Chivas, in 1837, the story of the Chivas Brothers really starts some 20 years later.

In 1857, James Chivas dissolved his partnership with William Edward and joined his brother John to form Chivas Brothers. They planned to develop an already successful trade, which had begun to prosper with an order to supply nearby Balmoral Castle, Queen Victoria's Highland home. In 1843, James Chivas had been granted a royal warrant as grocers.

With the advantage of this regal connection, the business expanded dramatically. In imitation of Queen Victoria, many members of the British gentry came to Scotland to hunt, shoot stags, fish for salmon, and, of course, drink Scotch. Order books from the 1880s proudly list emperors, princes and peers, admirals and generals, bishops and professors among the company's customers.

James and John Chivas were pioneers of the art of blending,

Chivas Brothers bought Strathisla Distillery in 1950 to safeguard supplies of the malt whisky that was at the heart of their blend.



Created in 1909, Chivas Regal was a top seller around the world by 1949.

producing consistently smooth, high-quality blended whiskies.

Their standards were carried forward by James Chivas's assistants, Alexander Smith and Charles Howard, and, in 1909, the company went on to create the Chivas Regal premium blend.

In 1949, the firm was acquired by Seagram's, of Canada, by which time Chivas Regal 12-Year-Old was one of the best-selling premium brands of whisky in the world. In 1950, Seagram bought Strathisla Distillery and, seven years later, to keep up with demand, constructed new facilities at Glen Keith (*see p61*). The redoubtable Sam Bronfman, of the owning family, took personal responsibility for guiding the re-blending of Chivas Regal.

In the latter years of Seagram's ownership, the brand faded somewhat, but has been successfully reinvigorated under Pernod Ricard's energetic management, and is once again a major and dynamic force in whisky.



based Whyte & Mackay (now owned by the UB Group). The Claymore continued to sell well for some time, but the sales volume has declined in recent years and it is now principally seen as a “secondary” (low-priced) brand.

Dalmore is believed to be the principal malt whisky in the blend.



Claymore figurine

CLUNY

Owner: Whyte & Mackay

Cluny is produced by Whyte & Mackay and supplied in bulk to Heaven Hill Distilleries of the US, who have imported it since 1988. It is one of the United States’ top-selling, domestically bottled, blended Scotch whiskies, and is sold primarily on its competitive price. It does, however, contain more than 30 malt whiskies from all regions of Scotland, along with grain whisky, presumably sourced largely from Whyte & Mackay’s Invergordon plant.

CRAWFORD’S

Owner: Whyte & Mackay/Diageo

The old-established Leith firm of A & A Crawford had developed their Crawford’s 3 Star brand into a Scottish

favorite by the time they joined the Distillers Company (DCL) in 1944.

The brand continued to sell well, but was not of strategic significance to its owners, hence the decision to license the brand to Whyte & Mackay in 1986, though Diageo, successors to the Distillers Company, retain the rights to the name Crawford’s 3 Star Special Reserve outside the UK.

Berminnes single malt was a long-time component in the blend. A 5 Star version was also produced but later discontinued.

CUTTY SARK

Owner: Berry Brothers & Rudd Ltd.

Blended and bottled in Glasgow by The Edrington Group (proprietors of The Famous Grouse), who supply much of the whisky for the blend, Cutty Sark is owned by London wine merchants Berry Bros & Rudd.

It was created in 1923 by Charles Julian, of London blenders Porter, Dingwall & Norris, for the partners of Berry Bros & Rudd, who were looking to produce an innovative whisky. Cutty Sark was just that—the first naturally pale-colored whisky

in the world, and one of great character and quality. The name was inspired by the fastest and most famous of all the Scottish-built clipper ships, itself named after the young witch dressed in a “cutty sark” (a sort of short shirt) in Robert Burns’s celebrated poem “Tam O’Shanter.”

The nautical reference also echoes the brand’s early days, when Captain William McCoy, a famous American bootlegger, supplied Cutty Sark to customers in the United States during Prohibition (hence the phrase “the real McCoy”).

Cutty Sark remains an important brand in the United States and is also enjoyed in Southern Europe and the Far East.

One of the acclaimed blended whiskies of the world, Cutty Sark uses some 20 single malts for the blend, many from the renowned distilleries of Speyside, such as Macallan and Glenrothes.

Maturation and marrying the blend contribute to the distinguishing qualities, and wood for the casks in which the blend is matured is carefully selected to bring out the flavor and aroma, as well as to impart color gently during the lengthy ageing period. As well as the non-age expression, there is a deluxe range, aged at 12, 15, 18, and 25 years.

■ **CUTTY SARK** 40% ABV • Golden, clear, and bright, Cutty Sark is notably pale. The aroma is light and fragrant with hints of vanilla and oak. The taste is of medium intensity, with a sweet, creamy, vanilla note evident. Cutty Sark has a crisp and clean finish.



Cutty Sark

THE CUTTY SARK LABEL

The label was designed by James McBay, a Scottish artist friend of the owners. McBay named the brand and designed the distinctive label over lunch in the parlour at the back of Berry Brothers’ shop in fashionable St James Street, London. Presumably, it was a jolly lunch, as for many years the label carried the idiosyncratic descriptor “Scots Whisky”, though sadly this has reverted to the standard “Scotch” in recent years.

Cutty Sark’s original “Scots” whisky label







Blended whiskies are about mass appeal, and for big players like J&B, that means finding ever new ways to promote the brand.



This Dewar's advertising poster of 1935 allies its whisky with the silver jubilee of King George V.

DEWAR'S

Owner: John Dewar & Sons (Bacardi)

Following Bacardi's purchase of Dewar's in 1988, the brand was repackaged, with considerable investment being made throughout the business, from the distilling process to the warehousing and bottling.

To augment the standard White Label, new products were developed. The first of these was a 12-year-old version, Special Reserve.

Then came the 18-year-old Founder's Reserve, and finally an ultra-premium non-age style known as Signature.

The main single malt in the Dewar's blends is Aberfeldy, though the group's other malts—Aultmore, Royal Brackla, Craigellachie, and, to a lesser extent, MacDuff—

are also used. Given the history of the company and the brand (*see opposite*), it is reasonable to assume that a contribution from the Diageo stable of malts is also still present in the blend.

Dewar's is seldom seen in the UK, but is a dominant presence in the US. It is also important in some European markets and of growing significance in Asia.

Bacardi has increased global distribution for Dewar's, greatly expanded the marketing budget, and raised the brand's profile while maintaining the quality standards. In fact, some would say the blend quality has been enhanced, especially in the new products, which have won many awards and medals.

BLUE BLAZER

Often made with bourbon, but perfectly at home with good Scotch, the Blue Blazer was created by Jerry Thomas, a San Francisco bartender. Watching Thomas making the drink, President Ulysses S. Grant was reportedly so impressed that he presented him with a cigar. Thomas's bartending skills are an acquired art, so you may want to practice making the drink in the backyard first.

Ingredients

1 measure (25 ml) blended Scotch whisky
1 measure (25 ml) boiling water
1 tsp powdered sugar
lemon peel

Method

Use two large metal mugs with handles. Warm the whisky and put it in one mug. Put the water in the other. Set the whisky alight and, as it burns, combine with the water, pouring the mixture from one mug to the other. Your audience (and you should have one) should see a stream of liquid fire. Sweeten and serve in a stemmed glass with a piece of lemon peel.

Dewar's future seems quite secure under the ownership of Bacardi, who, in August 2007, announced a further \$240 million investment in their Scottish production facilities.

A state-of-the-art visitor center, which celebrates the life of the Dewar family and the firm's long history of whisky making, was opened at Aberfeldy (*see p77*), one of the four distilleries acquired by Bacardi when they bought the Dewar's brand nine years ago.



Dewar's
12-Year-Old

DEWAR'S—PIONEERS OF BLENDING

The firm of Dewar's was established in Perth in 1846 by John Dewar. Like so many other founders of a great whisky dynasty, he was working as a wine and spirit merchant when he decided to start out on his own. He then proceeded to develop the business in slow and careful steps.

John Dewar was experimenting with blending in the early 1860s, making him something of a pioneer. The whisky he produced was sold in stoneware crocks known as “pigs,” and later he was among the first distillers to sell branded whisky by the bottle instead of by the cask.

By the time of his death in 1880, his business had really taken off. His sons, John and Thomas, rode the Victorian whisky boom with conspicuous success. John was a shrewd businessman, while Tommy, a born salesman, was responsible for the world's first whisky commercial in 1896, when he projected a film on to a New York skyscraper.

Together, the brothers transformed the firm from a local concern into a global business, hiring the renowned Elgin-based architect Charles Doig (*see p59*) to build Aberfeldy Distillery in the

1890s, thus turning themselves from whisky blenders into distillers.

The flagship White Label blend was launched around 1899, after experiments by Dewar's master blender, Alexander Cameron, to perfect the practice of marrying, which was still in use for premium whisky blends. Dewar's was also an early proponent of the benefits of ageing whisky.

By the 1920s, however, the whisky boom had passed and Dewar's entered into a merger, first with Buchanan's and subsequently with the Distillers Company (DCL). The business was managed as a separate concern until rationalization in the 1980s, after which it was reduced to the status of just one brand among many. With the formation of Diageo in 1998, regulatory concerns forced the sale of Dewar's to Bacardi.



Dewar's plate

Dewar's was a prosperous independent company, enjoying great success right up until the 1920s.



GAME BIRD

Created for The Famous Grouse, this is a refreshing summer cocktail.

Ingredients

2 measures (50 ml) of The Famous Grouse
1 measure (25 ml) of Sourz apple schnapps
½ measure (about 10 ml) of elderflower cordial
½ measure (about 10 ml) of freshly squeezed lemon juice
½ measure (about 10 ml) of sugar syrup
Ginger ale to taste

Method

Shake all the ingredients apart from the ginger ale with ice. Strain into a flute glass. Top up with ginger ale.

DEWAR'S HOUSE STYLE

The signature note in all Dewar's blends is a heather-honey sweetness derived from the Aberfeldy single malt. Dewar's has always been renowned for the smoothness of its blends, which are easy to drink without being bland. Older versions and the ultra-premium, non-aged blend, Signature, are especially highly regarded for their complexity and finesse.

DIMPLE

See Haig

THE FAMOUS GROUSE

Owner: Edrington Group

The Famous Grouse has been the number one whisky in Scotland since 1980 and is also the best-selling Scotch in Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and Mozambique. It is the fastest-growing Scotch whisky in the Greek market, where it outsells *ouzo*, while the US, France, Portugal, and worldwide duty-free sales are also important markets.

Remarkably, in an industry characterized by consolidation

and the creation of global drinks companies with wide-ranging portfolios, The Famous Grouse comes from an independent Scottish company that focuses exclusively on one product: Scotch whisky.

The Edrington Group, owners of Highland Distillers (proprietors of Famous Grouse), also owns some of the finest malt distilleries, such as Macallan, Highland Park, and the less well-known but no less excellent Glenrothes. They are also co-owners of the North British grain distillery in Edinburgh.

It is the high proportion of these excellent whiskies contained in the blend to which The Famous Grouse owes its reputation among connoisseurs. Today, there are a number of variations of aged blended malts available as 10, 12, 15, 18, 21, and 30-year-old expressions, depending on the individual market.

The standard blend, The Famous Grouse Finest Scotch Whisky, is the dominant seller. In its production, the company attaches a great deal of significance to the marrying process, whereby, after blending, the whisky is reduced to around 45 percent ABV and returned to the cask to allow the malt, grain, and water interactions to reach an equilibrium. This creates a consistent product, which is then filtered at a very gentle temperature of 40°F (4°C), using a wide filter, to retain as much as possible of the original flavor and texture of the whisky. Early in 2007, the company launched The Black Grouse in Sweden—a blend of The Famous Grouse with the



The stills at Glenturret Distillery produce one of the key malts for the Famous Grouse blend.

addition of some more strongly flavored Islay malt whiskies to create a smooth, blended whisky with a peated note. This is said to be an addition to the core range, the implication being that if The Black Grouse is

successful, it will be seen much more widely. In 2002, The Famous Grouse Experience was opened at the company's tiny Glenturret Distillery (see p88) near Crieff. This highly interactive visitor center also has a restaurant and a large shop.

THE FAMOUS GROUSE FINEST SCOTCH WHISKY

40% ABV • Highly regarded as a fine example of a standard blend that punches above its weight. With a healthy measure of The Macallan and Highland Park, there is oak and sherry on the nose, with a citrus note.



The Famous Grouse Finest Scotch Whisky

Nothing dominates or offends, and this is a well-balanced and appealing whisky. On the palate, it is mature, easy-going, and full of bright Speyside fruit, with a clean, medium-dry finish.

SCOTLAND'S FAVORITE BLENDED WHISKY

“Goback, goback, goback,” the distinctive call of the red grouse is heard across much of upland Britain, but the bird is particularly associated with Scotland and the sporting traditions of its great Victorian estates, where gun smoke filled the cold morning air.

Like so many other celebrated names in whisky, The Famous Grouse has its roots in a Victorian grocer's shop—in Perth in this case, where Matthew Gloag set up in business. His nephew, also called Matthew, shrewdly recognized the opportunities for a local product to supply to the growing numbers of upper-class gentlemen being lured to the Highlands by the choice of sporting activities available there. In 1896 he decided upon “The Grouse Brand,” and set his daughter the task of sketching the label. Before long, it was known as “The Famous Grouse.”

By 1970, sales had developed, but death duties obliged the Gloags to sell the company to Highland Distillers. Over the next 20 years, sales were well ahead of the market, and The Famous

Glenturret Distillery is the spiritual home of The Famous Grouse, not only supplying malt for the blend but also housing its visitor center.



A red grouse has adorned the label of The Famous Grouse since 1896.

Grouse increased its visibility, becoming first the best-selling blend in Scotland and then an increasingly important brand in world markets. A much-loved advertising campaign featuring an animated grouse began in 1996 and continues to prove popular.

While clever marketing has played its part, the company's strict adherence to the highest standards of quality has also been key to building Grouse's reputation. The company asserts that they perform a remarkable 8,735 quality checks from distillation to bottling. If that seems excessive, the result can be easily ascertained.

Today, with sales approaching three million cases annually, The Famous Grouse is firmly established in the top 10 of global brands and seems set for further growth.





"When you are cold and wet, what else can warm you?" wrote Ernest Hemingway about whisky. Grand Macnish was his favorite.

FINDLATER

Owner: Whyte & Mackay

The firm of Findlater Mackie Todd & Co. began with Alexander Findlater, who set up business in 1823 to bring Findlater's whiskies to the world. Things unwound in the 1960s, and the firm was bought by Bulmers in 1966. It was later sold to Beechams, who tried to use it to launch a whisky brand using the Findlater name. Beechams sold out to a management buy-out team, who in turn were bought by John Lewis in 1993, since when the firm has been the mail-order arm of Waitrose's Wine Department.

Rights to the Findlater whisky brand, however, were sold to Invergordon Distillers (today Whyte & Mackay), with whom they still rest. Boisset America import the brand into the US, which appears to be the remaining significant market for this long-serving whisky.

Invergordon Distillery acquired the rights to the Findlater name, and supply whisky for its blend.

GRAND MACNISH

Owner: Macduff International

Recommended by Ernest Hemingway, a man who knew his drinks, the Grand Macnish has a long and distinguished history. Robert McNish (an "a" was added to the brand name at some point later on) was a licensed grocer in Glasgow who took up

whisky blending in 1863. His early success was built upon by his two energetic sons, John and George, who joined the family firm in 1887 and greatly expanded the business's turnover.

Like many other firms, however, the McNishes found trading conditions very difficult after World War I, and in 1927 they sold the company to Canadian Industrial Alcohol (later Corby Distilleries). Further transfers of ownership eventually brought Grand Macnish to Macduff International in 1991, where it appears to be having a modest revival.

There are two blended expressions: Grand Macnish Finest, which still uses up to 40 whiskies in the blend, as was the practice of Robert McNish; and a 12-year-old, which is described by the

company as "more mature, fruity, and malty" than its younger sibling.

The distinctive bottle gives Grand Macnish splendid "on shelf" presence, and the label is graced by the motto of the McNish clan: "*Forti Nihil Difficile*" (to the strong, nothing is difficult).

GRANT'S

Owner: William Grant & Sons

William Grant & Sons are famously family owned and resolutely independent. As such, is not too surprising to discover that the base for their range of blended whiskies is their own Glenfiddich single malt, together with The Balvenie, and the little-known Kininvie, the third distillery on their sprawling Speyside complex.

What may not be so widely appreciated is that Grant's also produce their own grain whisky, and have done since 1963, when a difference of opinion with the Distillers Company led Charles Gordon, great-grandson of the founder, to believe that supplies of grain whisky might be vulnerable.

Determined not to be held to ransom, he resolved to build a grain distillery of his own at Girvan, close to the championship golf course at Turnberry.

Historically, this was not a major center for distilling. Gordon chose the site for the ease of access it afforded to the nearby port,



Grant's Ale Cask Reserve



so that shipments of North American corn could be easily and reliably delivered. Ironically, such has been the success of the Grant's blends that a new distillery is currently under construction at Girvan, to provide additional malt whisky.

David Stewart, master blender at William Grant & Sons since 1974, is the longest-serving master blender in the Scotch whisky industry. He has created a varied and interesting range of whiskies. The fact that the company is privately owned, and thus not subject to pressures from the City, has enabled him to work with a remarkable depth of mature stock, some dating back 40 or more years.

The best-selling blend in the stable is Grant's Family Reserve, which enjoys virtually global distribution.

GRANT'S FAMILY RESERVE 40% ABV An unmistakable Speyside nose, with fluting malty notes. It has a firm mouth feel, with banana-vanilla sweetness balancing sharper;



Grant's Rare Old 18-Year-Old

malty notes. Clean, but very complex. A long, smooth lingering finish.

THE GRANT'S PREMIUM RANGE 40% ABV • A unique combination of aged premium whiskies and distinctive wood finishes. It is said to be the first range of blended whisky

to be finished in specially selected virgin bourbon barrels and sherry and port casks. This time spent in the wood finishes acts exactly like a marrying period.

THE GROWTH OF GRANT'S

The history of Grant's goes back to 1866, when William Grant became a bookkeeper at Mortlach, the local distillery. He showed great talent for the whisky production process and soon became the manager there.

Twenty years later, William and his family created the iconic Glenfiddich Distillery, which is still the heart of the company. They undertook much of the building work themselves, and the first spirit ran from the stills on Christmas Day 1887.

In 1979, Grant's sold more than one million cases of whisky in the UK, firmly establishing themselves as one of the nation's favorite brands. Since then they have continued to grow at an exceptional rate, keeping up with demand from the world's Scotch whisky drinkers. Grant's now sell around four million cases of whisky a year and are one of the world's top five Scotch whisky brands, enjoyed in over 180 countries.

GRANT'S PREMIUM 12-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV • Only the finest single malt and grain whiskies, which have matured for at least 12 years in oak casks, are used. They are blended and finished in bourbon barrels. This ensures a warm and full-bodied Scotch whisky of great richness.

GRANT'S RARE OLD 18-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV • In 2001, Grant's Cask Reserves were created. Before bottling, these whiskies are "finished" in either ale or sherry casks, where the aged spirit absorbs some of the key notes and flavors of the barrels. In the Rare Old 18-Year-Old, some of the whisky is finished in port casks, and the end result is an appealing Scotch, perfectly balanced, with considerable depth of taste.

GRANT'S ALE CASK RESERVE 40% ABV • This is the only Scotch whisky to be finished in casks that have previously been used to contain beer. The ale casks give the whisky a distinctively creamy, malty, and honeyed taste.

GRANT'S SHERRY CASK RESERVE 40% ABV • Prepared in exactly the same way as the ale cask finish, but Spanish oloroso sherry casks are used instead, giving a distinctively warm, rich, and fruity palate.

Grant's pays a great deal of attention to casks, for marrying blends and giving special finishes.





Haig dominated the UK market for decades through a combination of distinctive packaging and strong advertising campaigns.

HAIG

Owner: Diageo

A whisky of distinguished pedigree owned by Diageo, Haig is a memory of the oldest distilling family in Scotland and the winner of numerous awards throughout the years. In its glory days, Haig was the best-selling whisky in the UK, but is now mainly found in Greece, Germany, the Canary Islands, Korea, the United States, and Mexico.

The Haig company can trace its history back to one John Haig, who is believed to have started distilling the produce of his farm at Throsk, in Stirlingshire, in 1627. His descendants married into the Stein family, notable distillers in their own right, and later built a grain distillery at Cameronbridge, in Fife. Eventually, in 1877, they were one of the founders of the Distillers Company, but continued their own independent blending operations until 1919.

The company's best known brand, Dimple (or Pinch in the US), was launched in 1890. The blend consists of more than 30 whiskies, including a number of rare whiskies from Diageo's treasured reserves of the most matured Highland malts. The distinctive bottle for this

deluxe brand was introduced by G O Haig and was noted for the hand-applied wire net over the bottle, introduced to keep the cork from popping out in warm climates or during sea transport.

The unique three-sided pinched decanter was the first three-sided bottle to be registered as a trademark in the US, though it took the company until 1958 to make the application.

There are three variants: a 12-Year-Old, a 15-Year-Old, and an 18-Year-Old.

HANKEY BANNISTER

Owner: Inver House Distillers

The unusually named Hankey Bannister takes its name from a partnership formed in 1757 by Messrs Hankey and Bannister, who became established as suppliers of some of the finest wines and spirits in the UK. Their customers included royalty such as the Prince Regent, William IV, the Duke of Norfolk, and the Duke of Queensberry. In the 1940s and 50s, Hankey Bannister also enjoyed a privileged position



Hankey Bannister

at No. 10 Downing Street as a favorite drink of the UK prime minister Sir Winston Churchill.

Now owned by Inver House Distillers (a Thai Beverage Company business), Hankey Bannister is exported to over 40 countries worldwide. It has a presence in all major European markets and in other key markets, too, including Australia, Latin America, and South Africa. Hankey Bannister also now performs well in the worldwide duty-free sector.

There are three expressions: the standard carries no age declaration, but there are two aged versions—a 12-Year-Old and a 21-Year-Old. The style is best described as light and subtle. A clean, sweet, slightly

spicy whisky, giving a full flavor with honeyed tones and a pleasant, lasting finish.

HIGHLAND QUEEN

Owner: Glenmorangie

Originally created by the Leith blenders MacDonald & Muir in 1893 and named in homage to Mary Queen of Scots, Highland Queen Blended Scotch Whisky honors Leith's connection with the ill-fated monarch, who arrived here from France in August 1561, aged 18, to take the crown of Scotland. The brand's logo includes a vignette of Mary on a white stallion.

Produced today by The Glenmorangie Company, this standard blend's key markets are Australia, Venezuela, India, Africa, the Middle East, and Japan.

■ **HIGHLAND QUEEN** 40% ABV Heather-honey, plum, and apple notes provide a fresh, clean taste. The blend has a gentle, warming finish.



Haig's Glenleven



Whiskies from more than 20 distilleries are selected to make Inver House Green Plaid.

INVER HOUSE GREEN PLAID

Owner: Inver House Distillers

With its tartan-clad label, Inver House's Green Plaid has long been a familiar sight on American shelves and bars. The brand was first launched in the United States in 1956, since when it has enjoyed consistent success, remaining among the top 10 sellers in this important market. It is also sold in Europe and Latin America.

Green plaid itself is even more ancient than the distilling of Scotch whisky. Plaid is the traditional Scottish heavy woollen tartan material used to make kilts. It is thought that a green plaid was worn by the first Lord of the Isles, a 12th-century Viking warrior by the name of Somerled. The Lord of the Isles tartan pattern is incorporated into the label of the whisky bottle that carries its name.

Inver House uses more than 20 malts and grains to blend Green Plaid, which is available as a competitively



Inver House Green Plaid

priced non-aged version, and as 12 and 21-year-old expressions as well.

J&B

Owner: Diageo

Along with Johnnie Walker, the J&B brand gives Diageo the enviable responsibility of owning the two best-selling blended Scotch whiskies in the world (third-placed Ballantine's is number two in terms of value, however).

J&B Rare is the number one Scotch whisky in Europe, with its major markets being Spain, France, Portugal, and Turkey. Important markets outside Europe include South Africa and the United States. In all of these combined, around two bottles of J&B are sold every second.

The original owners of the company started by buying up stocks of old whisky in Scotland in the mid and late 1800s, but it was not until the 1930s that they developed J&B Rare. Its light color was designed specifically with the United States in mind, where it flourished after the end of Prohibition. For the next 40 years, success continued unabated, with sales reaching three million cases a year during the 1970s.

Ownership passed by way of United Wine Traders to IDV, then to Grand Metropolitan, United Distillers, and ultimately to today's largest whisky corporation, Diageo. Like so many brands, the family connections have long since been severed, but the distant memory of their now-faded drinks dynasty still lingers on.

Current expressions of J&B include J&B Rare, Jet (the leading brand in South Korean bars), and the 15-year-old Reserve, which is only sold in Spain and Portugal. A blend aimed at the younger market called J&B -6°C, which seeks to make a virtue of its chill-filtering, was recently withdrawn.

J&B RARE 40% ABV

A highly distinctive blend, using some 42 individual malt and grain Scotch whiskies. Top-class Speyside single malts such as Knockando, Glen Spey, and Auchroisk are at the heart of J&B, but the delicate smokiness suggests an Islay influence. An apple and pear fruitiness, with vanilla notes and

a honeyed sweetness, is set off by a background of restrained peat.



J&B Jet

JUSTERINI & BROOKS

In 1749 Giacomo Justerini travelled from his native Italy to London in pursuit of an opera singer with whom he'd fallen in love. His journey was unsuccessful romantically, but Giacomo, who was from a family of liqueur distillers, stayed on in London and paired up with George Johnson to form Justerini and Johnson Wine Merchants. In 1779 they placed the earliest recorded advert for Scotch whisky in the *London Morning Post*.

Giacomo later returned to Italy and George Johnson was killed by a runaway horse. The firm passed through Johnson's family until 1831, when Alfred Brooks, an entrepreneur who had spotted the potential of blended whisky, bought the business and renamed it Justerini & Brooks.

THE BEST-SELLING SCOTCH WHISKY IN THE WORLD

The firm of John Walker & Sons can be traced back to a Kilmarnock grocery store in 1820, but it did not enter the whisky industry in a serious way until the 1860s. Indeed, it was not John Walker but his son and grandson who developed the whisky business.

With the legalization of blending “under bond” in the 1860s, John Walker’s son and grandson, both named Alexander, progressively launched and developed their range of whiskies. These were based around the original Walker’s Old Highland blend, which was launched in 1865 and is the ancestor of today’s Black Label. The distinctive square bottle followed in 1870.

Trade developed phenomenally in the late 19th century, for the Walkers and their rivals. The British Empire was expanding, Scotland was growing ever more fashionable, and Scotch whisky was displacing cognac as the preferred drink of the smart set.

Alexander passed on the business to his two sons, George and Alexander

Johnnie Walker has always promoted its brand prominently, as seen here on an office building in Bucharest, Romania.



Alexander Walker,
the elder

junior, in 1889. In 1893 the brothers acquired Cardhu Distillery on Speyside. Now, they were distillers—a proud distinction—and immediately proclaimed their confidence in “the precise nature and quality of the principal components of their blend.”

In 1908 their whiskies were first branded Johnnie Walker, as opposed to Kilmarnock Whisky. But, by 1925, the pressure of difficult trading forced a consolidation of the industry. Like many others, Johnnie Walker joined the Distillers Company, though the dynamic Sir Alexander Walker remained at the head of the firm.

By 1945 Johnnie Walker Red Label was the world’s best-selling Scotch whisky, a status it retains to this day. Under Diageo, the brand has continued to grow and prosper, with a number of new variants being introduced.



JOHNNIE WALKER

Owner: Diageo

The Johnnie Walker brand offers a range of whiskies from Diageo's ample larder, and comprise Johnnie Walker Red, Black, Gold, and Blue, as well as the Johnnie Walker Green Label, which is a blended malt. From time to time, the firm also releases a number of one-off, limited, or regional expressions, including Swing, Quest, Honour, Excelsior, Old Harmony, Cask Strength, and 1805. Swing was devised while Sir Alexander Walker (junior) was in charge of the company, and was created for the affluent passengers on the great Atlantic liners of the 1930s. It remains popular in the Asian markets.

Johnnie Walker Red Label is the most successful brand of Scotch whisky in the world, and the total sales of all Johnnie Walker expressions amount to close on 12 million cases annually, far outstripping their nearest Scotch rival, Ballantine's. Both have enjoyed significant growth in developing markets in China, Asia, and Russia.

Johnnie Walker has long been characterized by its strong packaging and brand identity, symbolized by the character of the striding man. Another factor in its early success was the square bottle, which enabled the firm to pack more bottles in a given volume and thus reduce the transport costs.

The company has always used distinctive advertising and kept a high promotional profile. Currently, it is a major golf sponsor (supporting the Johnnie Walker Classic and the Johnnie Walker Championship at Gleneagles)

and a high-profile backer of the Team McLaren Mercedes Formula One racing team.

As the world's biggest producer of Scotch whisky, Diageo has the largest number of distilleries and access to unrivalled stocks. In fact, the firm claims that at any point in time Johnnie Walker has at their disposal more than seven million casks of whisky in maturation—and that is worth more than all the gold in the vaults of the Bank of England.



Johnnie Walker
Black Label

JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL 40% ABV

The flagship Johnnie Walker blend, recognizable by its smoky kick, is acknowledged as a classic blended whisky. With a base of Cameron Brig grain whisky, it uses single malts that include Glendullan, Mortlach, and Talisker, from Skye. The hint of smoke, contributed by Talisker and Diageo's Islay malts (Caol Ila and Lagavulin), distinguishes the Walker blends and runs through all

the expressions, though less noticeably so in the smoother Gold and Blue styles.

JOHNNIE WALKER RED LABEL 40% ABV • Served as the basis of a mixed drink in many markets, Red is more



Johnnie Walker created this tasting room to launch their Green Label brand in Taipei.



A bottle of Johnny Walker 1805, an incredibly rare whisky, was auctioned at Bonham's in 2007.

“up-front” in taste. Direct, fresh, and fruity, with smoky and chilli spice notes.

JOHNNIE WALKER GOLD LABEL 40% ABV • In an older style such as Gold, look for honey, fresh fruits, and toffee notes, with smoke very much in the background. Perhaps controversially, Diageo recommends chilling this in the freezer before serving, maintaining that the flavors are intensified in this way.

JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL 40% ABV • Unusually, the super-premium Blue does not carry an age statement. This blend was created in tribute to the style of 19th-century blenders and so uses a relatively tight group of grain and malt whiskies, some of great age and rarity. The whisky is remarkably smooth and mellow, with traces of spice, honey, and the signature hint of smoke. These older styles are more complex and layered than Red, but a clear family resemblance can be detected throughout the range.

JOHNNIE WALKER 1805 40% ABV Available in a very few selected bars at \$2,000 a glass, the 200-bottle ultra-limited 1805 edition used whisky from a number of closed distilleries and cannot be repeated. It is a subtle, rich, and spicy blend, with an exceptionally long and consistent finish that lingers pleasantly on the palate.

JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL— KING GEORGE V EDITION

Owner: Diageo

As the ultimate Johnnie Walker expression, the King George V Edition deserves its own entry. An exemplary demonstration of the blender's art, King George V is handcrafted using the original techniques practiced during the 1930s, arguably a golden age for whisky. Only whiskies from distilleries operating during the reign of George V (many of which are now closed) have been selected, and oak casks dating back to the 19th century have been used to age these precious whiskies.

When these whiskies run out, it will not be possible ever again to achieve the taste of Johnnie Walker King George V Edition, and the blend will cease to exist. As such, it has been released only in Asian markets, where gift-giving and display have greater importance than in the West.

Owners Diageo plan that the edition will be available until around 2016, but this is obviously dependent on the volume of sales. Only between three and five outlets in any one country have been allocated stock.



The Queen Mother was able to grant a Royal Warrant to Langs whisky in the 1980s.

The blend, which retails at around three times the price of its super-premium brother Johnnie Walker Blue Label, is described as having “a rich, profound smoky taste, followed quickly by sweet fresh fruit flavors developing into deep fruit, spicy complexity, and a long, mouth-warming, and lingering peaty finish.”

LABEL 5

Owner: Jean-Pierre Cayard

The French blender and bottler La Martiniquaise was founded in 1934 by Jean-Pierre Cayard and moved its production facilities from France to Scotland in 2004. Label 5 is a big seller in the

French market, recording sales of well over one million cases annually in the “secondary” (that is, low price) market.

There are three expressions: a standard, un-aged version; a 12-year-old and an 18-year-old.

LANGS

Owner: Ian MacLeod

Alexander and Gavin Lang were whisky merchants and blenders in Glasgow from 1861. In 1876 they bought the attractive little distillery of Glengoyne (*see p84*), which has remained a principal component in the Langs blends ever since.

In 1965, the firm was purchased by the Glasgow blenders Robertson & Baxter, who attempted to develop the brands, with some success, in the UK, Europe, and the Far East, acquiring in 1984 a Royal Warrant from the Queen Mother in the process.

However, Robertson & Baxter's interests in The Famous Grouse and Cutty Sark took precedence, and the Langs brand and Glengoyne Distillery were sold to Ian MacLeod in 2003.

Today, the principal Langs products are Langs Supreme and Langs Select 12-Year-

WHISKY GALORE!

Martin's was one of the brands of whisky on board the *S.S. Politician*, which was lost off the coast of Eriskay in February 1941. The event formed the inspiration for Compton Mackenzie's novel *Whisky Galore*, in which a group of islanders spirit away the cases of whisky that wash up on the shore. The novel went on to inspire a 1949 film of the same name.

Whisky Galore was adapted into a British film with enduring appeal by Ealing Studios.



Old blended whiskies, both noted for their relatively high malt content. The Select 12-Year-Old recently won a Gold Medal in *Scottish Field* magazine's Whisky Merchants Challenge in the Deluxe Blended Scotch category.

LAUDER'S

Owner: MacDuff International

A famous Glasgow landmark, Lauder's Bar on Sauchiehall Street dates from 1836. It is named after Archibald Lauder, who took the licence in 1871 when it was the Royal Lochnagar Vaults. Lauder produced a blended whisky, Lauder's Royal Northern Cream, which was exported worldwide.

Today his name is recalled not only in the eponymous public house but also in Lauder's Scotch whisky, which, it is claimed, is one of the oldest brands of whisky still being made.

With perhaps just a touch of whimsy, the proprietors, MacDuff International, trace production back to 1834, and propose that Lauder himself was an early exponent of market research. Supposedly, development of the original blend took two years, during which time Lauder "invited many good friends of cheer to taste and remark upon each concoction"—a formula long established as finding favor with Glasgow drinkers.

Certainly Lauder's was a popular whisky and a prolific medal winner in the 19th century, since when it has largely slipped from public view in its homeland. However, it is imported by Barton Brands into the US, where it continues to be bought by value-conscious consumers to this day.



Loch Fyne

LOCH FYNE

Owner: Richard Joynson

The label depicts the Glendaroch Distillery sited on the Crinan Canal, which links Loch Fyne with the Sound of Jura. Also known as Glenfyne, the distillery was built in 1831 but, sadly, no trace remains.

The name has been continued by Richard Joynson, proprietor of Inverary's award-

winning Loch Fyne Whiskies and well-known piscatorial enthusiast, for his own-label whisky.

The blend was created by Professor Ronnie Martin, OBE, former production director with United Distillers (now Diageo). It is described as slightly sweet and smoky—an easy-drinking, well flavored blend, but one to simply drink and enjoy rather than concentrate on.

LONG JOHN

Owner: Chivas Brothers

With annual sales in excess of 500,000 cases, Long John remains a significant brand, yet one that is apparently



Long John is a competitively priced blend, but the brand is not marketed heavily by its owners.

FLYING SCOTSMAN

Named after the famous pre-war London North Eastern Railway train which ran non-stop between London and Edinburgh, offering the luxurious standards of a cruise liner.

Ingredients:

1 measure (25 ml) of blended Scotch Whisky
1 measure (25 ml) of sweet vermouth
Dose of Angostura bitters
Sugar syrup to taste

Method:

Mix all the ingredients over ice. Stir and strain into a chilled glass.



Tormore on Speyside is the brand distillery for Long John and provides the whisky's key filling.

very much in the shadow of its Chivas Brothers' stablemates, Chivas Regal and Ballantine's (all of which ultimately come under the Pernod Ricard umbrella).

Named in honor of Long John MacDonald of the original Fort William Distillery, Long John was for many years owned by the founder's family. However, it eventually passed to a London wine and spirit merchant and thus to Long John International, the distilling arm of brewers Whitbread.

Such is the way of these matters, however, that the brief reunion of brand and distillery under Whitbread was short-lived, the distillery passing in 1989 to its present owners Nikka of Japan and

PATTISONS

It may seem somewhat academic to include whiskies that have not been available for more than 100 years, but the influence of the firm of Pattisons of Leith was to shape the whole structure and development of the Scotch whisky industry as we know it today.

By 1890, the “whisky barons” of Victorian Scotland had never had it so good, and two brothers stood above all. Robert and Walter Pattison inherited partnerships in a small whisky blending business in Leith. In 1896 they floated it as a company. Just as in our own dotcom boom, the share offer was six times oversubscribed and the directors abilities seemed mercurial.

“The Doctor,” “Morning Gallop,” and “Morning Dew” brands were blends, but Pattisons also owned a distillery at Aultmore, a share in Glenfarclas, and office and blending premises in Leith and London.

One of their promotional schemes was a stroke of genius: Pattisons gave 500 African Gray parrots to publicans and licensed grocers, only for their proud owners to discover that they’d been trained to squawk, “Pattisons Whisky is best!” and “Buy Pattisons Whisky!” at customers!

When in 1898 the company went bankrupt, the collapse was initially greeted with incredulity. Slowly, the truth emerged: Pattisons had massively



Pattisons' marketing reflected the firm's dynamic approach.

over-valued their stock and inflated their profits, often by selling the same whisky (on paper) several times over.

Moreover, they had also been adulterating their whisky, mixing cheap grain spirit with a dash of malt and passing it off as good malt. Following a well-publicized trial, the brothers were jailed, Robert for

18 months, Walter for nine.

It wasn't only Pattisons and their creditors who suffered. Ten other firms were brought down in the collapse that followed. The reputation of blending, indeed of the whisky trade in general, was hard hit, and its recovery did not even begin for another 10 years.



Pattisons' downfall was described as the “the most discreditable chapter in the history of the whisky trade.”

THE RISE OF DCL

While Pattisons charged toward their ignominious end (see *opposite*), others benefitted from their collapse, most conspicuously DCL (the Distillers Company Ltd.). Their financial prudence in the late Victorian boom years stood them in good stead as trade tightened. They were able to purchase a number of Pattisons' assets at knock-down prices and steadily came to assume a pre-eminent position in the Scottish whisky industry.

the brand going to Allied Distillers. Allied Distillers was subsequently purchased by Pernod Ricard, whose spirits subsidiary Chivas Brothers control the brand today.

The Scottish Whisky Association's Directory of Member's Brands lists a non-age version of Long John and two older styles: a 12 and a 15-year-old. So far as can be established, the bulk of sales are to Scandinavian and various Spanish-speaking markets.

MACARTHUR'S

Owner: Inver House Distillers

The ancient MacArthur Clan of Argyllshire fought alongside Robert the Bruce in the struggle for Scottish independence. The blend, which can be traced back to 1877, takes its name from this clan. MacArthur's enjoyed a brief spell of fame in the 1970s, due to its aggressive pricing in UK supermarkets, which led to a price war. Today it is owned by Inver House Distillers, a subsidiary of ThaiBev, and they describe it as having a "light, smooth flavor with toffee and vanilla from cask ageing."



MacArthur's

MARTIN'S

Owner: Glenmorangie

The Martin's blends are today owned by Glenmorangie but derived from the old James Martin & Co. business, originally established in Leith in 1878. That firm formed part of MacDonald Martin Distillers.

In its heyday, Martin's VVO was a very significant brand in the US and is still prominent here today, especially in eastern states. The initials stand for "Very Very Old"

but this is stretching the point—in its standard expression, VVO is no more than a 5-year-old blend, albeit one with a significant contribution from Glenmorangie single malt.

Older 20 and 30-year-old versions sell very well in Portugal.

Martin's VVO is described as "smooth and sweet, with notes of orange peel and vanilla, followed by a subtle floral peatiness." So the Glenmorangie influence would seem to predominate.

OLD PARR

Owner: Diageo

"Old Parr" was Thomas Parr, who was born in 1483 and, according to folklore, lived for 152 years. A move to London to be presented to King Charles I proved his undoing, and he died in November 1635. The king ordered that he be buried in Westminster Abbey, where his tomb may be seen to this day.

Parr's recipe for a long life was a simple one:

"Keep your head cool by temperance and your feet warm by exercise. Rise early, go soon to bed, and if you want to grow fat [prosperous] keep your eyes open and your mouth shut."

He did, however, drink ale and even cider on special occasions, so we may presume that he would not have been upset when, in 1871, Samuel and James Greenlees appropriated his name for their deluxe whisky.

After several

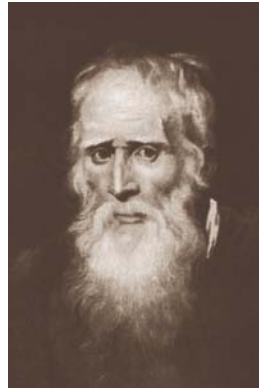
changes of ownership, the Old Parr brand was acquired by DCL (the Distillers Company Ltd.) in 1925 and is thus now controlled by Diageo.

It is distinguished by its unique bottle design and, as a premium blend, sells steadily in Japan, Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela.

There are three Old Parr expressions: Grand Old Parr (12-year-old), Old Parr (15-year-old), and Old Parr Superior (18-year-old). By tradition, Cragganmore is the mainstay of the blend.



Martin's 20-Year-Old



"Old Parr," who is said to have lived to the age of 152, abstained from whisky but did drink ale.





The Speyside region provides some of the most coveted malts for use in blends.

QUEEN OF QUEENS

Once a leading name from the distinguished Edinburgh blenders Hill, Thomson & Company, Queen Anne has suffered the kind of fate that calls to mind Shelley's sonnet *Ozymandias*, in which a traveler encounters the ruins of a once mighty empire:

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Like so many once-famous and proud brands, consolidation in the Scotch whisky industry has left Queen Anne bereft and isolated. As its new owners (Chivas Brothers, in turn owned by Pernod Ricard) concentrate on the "strategic" components of a "key brand portfolio," orphan brands like Queen Anne become casualties. Clinging on perhaps in one or more regions where once they were loved, they linger, offering their faint shreds of faded glory to the student of whisky's history, while awaiting the inevitable *coup de grâce*.



Queen
Anne

OLD SMUGGLER

Owner: Gruppo Campari

Old Smuggler was first developed by James and George Stodart in 1835 when they launched their whisky business, taking a name that acknowledged the superior quality of illicitly distilled whisky prior to the 1823 Excise Act (see p47). The Stodart name is also recorded in whisky history as being, reputedly, the first to marry their whisky in sherry butts.

Several changes of ownership later, Old Smuggler was acquired by Italy's Gruppo Campari in 2006, along with its sister blend Braemar and the Glen Grant Distillery (Glen Grant is the single malt market leader in Italy).

Today Old Smuggler is sold in more than 20 markets worldwide and continues to enjoy a significant presence in the US, historically its principal sales destination. It is the number two selling whisky in Argentina, and developing strong sales in Eastern Europe.

Its partner in the Campari stable, Braemar, is distributed throughout Eastern Europe, Greece, Turkey, Thailand and the Caribbean.

PASSPORT

Owner: Chivas Brothers

Although Pernod Ricard intended to sell off Passport as soon as it had acquired the Seagram whisky brands in 2002, the company evidently had second thoughts and decided to retain ownership, their ruminations no doubt influenced by annual sales of some 850,000 cases.

Despite being unavailable in the UK, Passport is one of Scotch's success stories, with sales climbing rapidly toward the elite "millionaire's club" (those with sales of one million or more cases per annum). Passport's main strongholds are the US, South Korea, Spain and Brazil, where its fruity taste lends itself to being served on the rocks.

The brand claims that it is "designed to appeal to younger, independently minded consumers," attracted by the distinctive rectangular green bottle. Passport's publicity suggests that it is "a unique Scotch whisky, inspired by the revolution of 1960s Britain, with a young and vibrant personality."

Certainly, no other Scotch is packaged like it today, and the bottle is evocative of the 1960s, when the brand was created.

While it initially benefited from aggressive pricing, Passport is today more of a standard brand, and its drinkers can enjoy such distinguished and famous malts as The Glenlivet and

others from the Chivas stable in the blend.

■ PASSPORT 40% ABV
An unusually fruity taste and a deliciously creamy finish.

The Old Smuggler brand still enjoys success abroad but is no longer seen in its homeland.



Passport
Scotch



It can be served straight or, more usually, over ice or mixed. Medium-bodied, with a soft and mellow finish.

PIG'S NOSE

Owner: Spencerfield Spirits

This unusually named blend is the partner to the Sheep Dip blended malt. The two brands were the brainchild of a West Country publican, M Dowdeswell, who first introduced Pig's Nose whisky in 1977.

For some years the brands enjoyed reasonable success, but, having passed through the hands of several owners, they ended up with Glasgow-based Whyte & Mackay and there languished (presumably at the back of a stable somewhere), receiving little attention or sales effort.

In 2005, a senior Whyte & Mackay executive, Alex Nicol, left the company to set up his own business, Spencerfield Spirits. He acquired both brands and set about relaunching them.

Pig's Nose has been reformulated under the watchful eye of Whyte & Mackay's master blender Richard Paterson, and has been repackaged in an attractive new livery. The result is a full-flavored



and very drinkable blend, which more than lives up to the claim that “our Scotch is as soft and smooth as a pig’s nose.”

PINWINNIE ROYALE

Owner: Inver House Distillers

In its handsome and distinctive patterned green bottle, Pinwinnie Royale cuts a dapper figure to accompany the blend's unusual name, the derivation of which is, alas, obscure.

The blend is the product of Inver House Distillers of Airdrie, who are themselves part of the Thai Beverage Public Company Limited (ThaiBev). From this, it would seem likely that Inver House's Old Pulteney, Speyburn, anCnoc, and Balblair single malts are to be found in the blend.

The standard expression is described as “aromatic and well rounded, with a smooth, dry finish,” whereas the 12-year-old version is initially dry and medium-

Pig's Nose was bought in 2005 by Spencerfield Spirits, who are very adept at marketing the brand.

bodied, but augmented by a gradual release of richer, oilier notes and a smooth, sweet finish.

PRÀBAN NA LINNE

Owner: Pràban Na Linne / The Gaelic Whisky Company



Pinwinnie
Royale

The redoubtable Sir Iain Noble, former financier and champion of all things Gaelic, established his Pràban na Linne business (supposedly Gaelic for “a smugglers den by the Sound of Sleat”) in 1976.

It was part of a project designed to create employment in the south of Skye, as so many young people were then leaving the island. The business has grown steadily over its 30 years, with its reputation being spread by word of mouth.

The company—which is also known as the Gaelic Whisky Company—markets a range of blended whiskies,



Pig's Nose



with sales concentrated in Scotland, France, Holland, Italy, and Canada.

TÉ BHEAG 40% ABV

Pronounced “chey vek,” Té Bheag means “the little lady” and is the name of the boat in the company’s logo. The name also means a “wee dram” in colloquial Gaelic. Smooth and slightly peated from its west coast origins, this is a connoisseurs’ whisky, with a high malt content. It is aged for between 5 and 11 years, and offers a hint of sherry from the casks in which it has been matured. Unusually for a blend, Té Bheag is not chill filtered.

MAC NA MARA 40% ABV

Literally meaning “son of the sea,” Mac Na Mara was introduced in 1992 and quickly became popular. Being competitively priced, it is now the company’s biggest seller, especially in the French market.

The company do not make whisky themselves, all Präbanna Linne’s output being blended for them by a well-established whisky broker in Scotland’s Central Belt. However, the company have plans to open their own distillery on Skye.

Isle of Arran Distillery is the home of the Robert Burns blend, and its visitor center (pictured) stocks a range of Burns whiskies.



THE REAL MACKENZIE

Owner: Diageo

Today a Diageo blend, The Real MacKenzie is named after Peter MacKenzie & Co., established in 1897 with the vision of producing high quality whisky. The “stag head”

embossment on every MacKenzie bottle symbolizes the MacKenzies’ consistent loyalty and courage.

The original company owned Blair Athol (quixotically located in Pitlochry) and Dufftown-Glenlivet distilleries on Speyside. Then in 1933, the whole lot was acquired by Arthur Bell & Sons (today part of Diageo).

At one time, various aged expressions were popular in Greece and South Africa, but in 2005 Diageo re-launched the brand with an emphasis on Taiwan,

a rapidly growing market for premium blends.

ROBERT BURNS

Owner: Isle of Arran Distillers

Given the industry’s deep love affair with traditional Scottish imagery, it is perhaps



Royal Salute 21-Year-Old

surprising that no-one had previously marketed a brand named after Scotland’s national bard.

Isle of Arran Distillers is one of the few remaining independent distilleries in Scotland. The company was set up in 1995 by Harold Currie, who was previously managing director of Chivas (then owned by Seagrams).

The Robert Burns blend contains a significant proportion of Isle of Arran single malt, and is claimed by the company to “capture the character of our beautiful island of clear mountain water and soft sea air.”

ROYAL SALUTE

Owner: Chivas Brothers

There are a number of brands with “Royal” in the title, but in a competitive field, Royal Salute is undoubtedly *ne plus ultra*. A “royal salute” is, in military terminology, a 21-gun tribute to royalty, fired on a special occasion, such as the Queen’s birthday.

Royal Salute, which was arguably the first whisky to launch in the super premium sector, was originally produced in 1953 by the Seagram Company. It was a 21-year-old whisky and its release was in celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Royal Salute is still the world’s leading super premium aged Scotch whisky.



Now controlled by Pernod Ricard's Chivas Brothers, the Royal Salute "family" includes a range of expressions, each one comprising a special blend of very rare whiskies.

ROYAL SALUTE 21-YEAR-OLD

40% ABV • Bottled and launched on Coronation Day in June 1953, the original Royal Salute 21-year-old was made using whiskies laid down in the 1920s and 30s. Planning for the sumptuous Royal Salute 21-year-old can begin up to 30 years before it is sealed in porcelain flacons, each one of which is embellished by craftsmen at the Wade pottery over four days.

■ A deep gold color; soft fruity aromas balanced with a delicate floral fragrance and mellow honeyed sweetness.

ROYAL SALUTE 50-YEAR-OLD 40% ABV
A very limited edition, launched in June 2003 in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Queen's



Royal Salute, The Hundred Cask Selection

coronation (and Royal Salute itself). It also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest. Royal Salute 50-year-old is a limited edition of just 255 bottles and, accordingly, is so

rare that very few have ever tasted it!

■ **ROYAL SALUTE, THE HUNDRED CASK SELECTION** 40% ABV

This is specially blended from a strict selection of 100 casks. First introduced to the market at the end of 2004, Royal Salute, The Hundred Cask Selection is elegant, creamy, and exceptionally smooth.

ROYAL SALUTE 38-YEAR-OLD STONE OF DESTINY 40% ABV

By tradition, the Stone of Destiny is supposed to be the pillow used by Jacob in the Bible. It is also the name given to the sandstone block used in the coronations of Scottish, and subsequently British, monarchs. Chivas used this name for their exclusive selection of powerful 38-year-old

The immaculate, modern Isle of Arran Distillery provides the heart of the Robert Burns blend.

whiskies first released on a permanent basis in February 2005.

■ Royal Salute 38-year-old Stone of Destiny offers rich notes of cedar wood and almond, with a sherried oakiness on the palate. Dried fruits linger with an assertive spiciness. An experience—even for the connoisseur!



The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 inspired the creation of Royal Salute.