



## Object of the Newsletter

*To promote the appreciation of fine Scotch Whisky, the area from which it comes, the people that inhabit the land and it's history. By the way, I do not profess to be an expert, I am merely expressing an opinion on the whiskies I am tasting.*

I now look at the Glen Scotia “Victoriana, which I happened to taste when I was in Campbeltown in June. As part of the whisky school at Springbank distillery, they take you around the Glen Scotia distillery (a short walk across town), after the tour around the distillery. We all went into the gift shop and had a dram of the “Victoriana” .

Glen Scotia sources its malt from Greencore maltings, located in southwest Scotland. The malt is lightly peated and this tends to give their whiskies a touch of smoke, not dissimilar to their neighbor, Springbank. That's a comparison that stands them in good stead, at least to my taste buds, you can't beat a nice Springbank.

So if you haven't guessed it already, yes, I'm recommending this whisky, just look at the tasting notes below what's not to like!

Those that live close to Paradise California, the liquor bank has some in stock. Of which I will avail myself, I suggest you do the same.

You can buy Glen Scotia “Victoriana” for around \$85.00 a bottle.

### Tasting Notes;

**Nose** - Berries, citrus & Crème brûlée

**Palate** - Toffee, hints of chocolate & smoke

**Finish** - Floral, fruity, with honey

*“Slainte Mhath”*

*Paul Bissett*





## Glen Scotia Distillery

Glen Scotia distillery was founded in 1832 by the Galbraith family and it remained in their possession until 1919 when it was sold to West Highland Malt Distillers. Unfortunately 1919 was also the start of Prohibition in the United States, and as most of the whisky being produced was going over to the USA, this had a disastrous outcome West Highland Malt Distillers went bankrupt five years later.

The ownership of the distillery passed to Duncan McCallum, who had previously been one of the directors of West Highland Malt Distillers.

Unfortunately Mr. McCallum himself went bankrupt in 1928, ruined by an illegitimate business deal that forced Glen Scotia to close. He tragically drowned himself in Campbell Loch, which ironically had been created specifically for the purpose of providing water to the distilleries of the town.

Glen Scotia was taken over by the Bloch Brothers and managed to survive Prohibition, resuming production in 1933, just after Prohibition was repealed.

In 1954, it was acquired by Hiram Walker, but was sold on to A. Gilies & Company in less than a year. In 1970, A. Gilies & Co became part of Amalgated Distillers Products, who completely reconstructed the distillery between 1970 and 1982. The harsh economic climate of Britain in the 1980s forced the distillery to shut its doors again in 1984.

It remained closed until 1989, when Gibson International acquired ADP. In 1994, the distillery ceased production yet again during the acquisition period in which it swapped hands from Gibson to Glen Catrine Bonded Warehouse Ltd, in whose possession it operates today.



**Glen Scotia distillery**



Below is a simple guide to help you choose your single malt Whisky, and the flavor notes you should expect from it. Being Scottish I recommend you find a likely candidate and try it in a bar before buying the whole bottle. This Issue; Glen Scotia "Victoriana". For more information go to <http://www.glenscotia.com>



Floral, Herbal, fresh

**DELICATE**

Nutty, biscuit (cookie), Subtle



## Where's all the beer-finished whisky?

01 September 2016 by Becky Paskin

I recently discovered there are around 10 breweries in Brighton and the surrounding area. For a city that's penned in by the sea and the South Downs, it's remarkable they managed to fit so many in. Then again, at least one is situated in a restaurant's basement and another is operated out of a garage, its beers home delivered to the local community by bicycle.

That's resourcefulness for you.

Brighton is a city big on drinking – we have one of the highest number of pubs per capita in the UK, which coupled with our Green-voting, sustainability-loving culture, means we lap up local beers like tap water. It's no wonder our breweries seem to be thriving, but their success is driven by a more widespread love affair with beer taking hold of the entire drinking population of the UK, and that of the rest of the world too.

In his book, *The Ale Trail*, beer writer Roger Protz noted that in 1994 there were 'fewer than a dozen draught beers called IPA' in the UK, and fewer than 400 craft breweries in the US. In 2015 – some 20 years later -- America now has 4,269 breweries, 99% of which are small and independent operations, such as microbreweries, brewpubs and regional craft breweries. Here in the UK, as in the US, pubs are featuring new guest IPAs and ales every week.

Our choice now has never been greater. Experimentation with various hop varieties (there are over 80), kilning temperatures, yeast strains and fermentation times is yielding a rainbow of flavors that's continuing to swell as interest grows. It really is an exciting time for beer drinkers, but craft beer's renaissance should also be sparking a fire of intrigue among whisky lovers as well.

Beer's characteristic flavors – which range from light citrus and tropical fruits through to malt and sweet oak – are also inherent to Scotch whisky, which started life as a beer after all.

The two beverages are a match made in heaven, yet when most people talk about pairing beer and whisky they think of the half and half, or boilermaker – a dram of whisky accompanied by a beer chaser. Sadly, despite sharing so many complementary qualities, there seems to have been little thought given to beer's potential use in the maturation process.

*Cask finishing* may be a relatively new practice in Scotch whisky's timeline, but it has been dominated thus far by wine, particularly the fortified variety. Such is its popularity that just 30 years after its inception, talk is already surfacing of innovation in cask finishing running dry, but beer has barely been given the chance to gift itself to whisky. Many distillers renowned for exploring finishes are still to even experiment with beer casks. I can't be the only one to think this is a shame.



## Where's all the beer-finished whisky? Cont.

So far there have been a measly two releases of Scotch finished in beer casks, and both from the same company: *Grant's Ale Cask* in 2001, and now *Glenfiddich IPA Experiment*, released just this month (edit: thanks to Chris Cussiter for bringing a third occurrence, the independently bottled *Polly's Casks*, to my attention). Earlier this week I had the opportunity to taste the latter, which forms part of *Glenfiddich's* new Experimental Collection.

The IPA, a bespoke beer created by *Speyside Craft Brewery* (SCB), was barely distinguishable from Glenfiddich's signature pear, vanilla and citrus character, such was the seamlessness of its pairing. If it weren't for a slight hoppy note and acidic edge you wouldn't have known a beer was involved at all, though according to malt master Brian Kinsman that's the idea. 'It's my view that a cask finish shouldn't dominate,' he said. 'If all you're smelling is IPA, that's a failure'.

As with any cask finish, the imparted flavors must complement the whisky rather than dominate it, and above all else be subtle enough to ensure the liquid is still recognizable as Scotch. Kinsman and SCB trialed three different brews of varying strengths and hop intensities in American oak casks of different char levels for varying lengths of time, before emptying them and refilling with Glenfiddich.

In the end, Target and Challenger hops were used – US hops that have made American IPAs so popular were deemed too sharp to complement the whisky – while the IPA was best left in cask for four weeks, and the whisky finished for three months. A lot of trial and error, as with any good experiment, is key, but is that long process why so few distillers today are interested in beer?

Surprisingly, considering the lengthy relationship between beer and whisky, this is new territory for modern distillers. While publicans would have historically stored their whisky in whatever casks they could get hold of – beer included – distillers today are more concerned with the quality of cask, and the flavor it imparts.

To pair an already established cask-conditioned beer with a whisky in the first place, let alone succeed at marrying the two together through the complex process of secondary maturation, is not a simple feat. If distillers must invest in collaborating with a brewery on a bespoke beer to ensure a perfect finish, then so be it. They certainly won't be short of a brewer or two to work with.