



Object of the Newsletter

To promote the appreciation of fine Scotch Whisky (and the drinking of it) amongst my friends and to spread the word on the joys of single malt. I do not expect this to be "an easy row to hoe" as my friends have very definite ideas as to what constitutes a good Scotch. Hopefully, I will gain more friends than I lose while getting my message out there. By the way, I do not profess to be an expert, I am merely expressing an opinion on whiskies I am tasting. "Slange"

This newsletter is dedicated to my friend, Doug Clark. Thank you for your generosity.

My original plan was to put this newsletter out once a month, but surprise, surprise, I found that I liked tasting different Whiskies and writing about them. So, the Newsletter will now be every two weeks.

This issue I look at a Whisky I thought was extinct; the St. Magdalene 19-year-old. The St. Magdalene Distillery (also known as Linlithgow from the town where it is situated) was established around 1765 and closed in 1983. This is now a very rare single malt (and cost me \$38 for a dram).

I chose this after discovering it in the "Whisky Attic" of the "Freakin Frog" bar in Las Vegas, which boasts the largest selection of whiskies in America. The reason I chose this particular whisky is that I toured the St. Magdalene distillery when I was 12 years old on a school tour.

The distillery is built on the site of a 12th century leper colony. During a number of reconstructions, it was converted to a convent and later to a hospital before it was turned in to a distillery.

I would recommend a dash of water with this one as it comes in at 63.8%. The water also releases more of the flavors.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Citrus/fruity, Vanilla, Peppery

Palate - Dry, Toffee, Acidic

Finish - Long, warm and slightly Acidic

If you have a personal favorite and you would like it to feature in future "Slange" newsletters, please let me know.

I can be contacted at my website www.scot-talks.com.

*"Slainte Mhath"
Paul Bissett*





A wee bit of History

The first recorded indication of distilling in Scotland is an entry in the Exchequer Records of 1494 showing that eight *bolles* (from bowls) of malt were purchased by one Friar John Cor "to make aquavita."

Eight bolles, the equivalent of three bushels of grain, can be distilled to produce about 1,500 bottles of whisky. So it may be deduced either that the monks had a great thirst or that Father Cor had developed an extensive market for his whisky. Which conclusion is true remains an historical mystery.

What is known, however, is that small "cottage" distilleries were the norm in Scotland until 1644 when, noting the large quantities of whisky (and profits) being made up north, the Scottish Parliament decreed an excise tax of approximately two shillings per gallon on all whisky made in Scotland.

Over the next few hundred years, the excise tax was regularly adjusted up or down depending on the price of the grain used to make the whisky.

With the government unwilling or unable to make up its mind on how high or low the whisky tax should be, the Scots took things into their own hands and hid their distilleries from the tax collectors.

Thus, the finest of the Scottish whisky distilleries came to be located in secluded hidden valleys (glens), primarily in the Highlands.

The local farmers tucked their distilling equipment away, out of sight of the revenue agents. These agents were known as *gaugers* because their job was to check the gauges on the stills to make sure that the government knew exactly how much alcohol was being distilled and could tax it appropriately.

But as the business grew, distillers became creatively adept at hiding their whisky-making apparatus. For example, one popular legend tells of a smuggler (which is what the gaugers called the distillers) who disguised his still as a bagpipe. (But maybe that's just a legend.)

That may (in my opinion) explain why people take up the bagpipes!!



"Always carry a large flagon of whisky in case of snakebite and furthermore always carry a small snake." (W.C. Fields, 1880-1946)



Below is a simple guide to help you choose your single malt Whisky, and the flavor notes I get from it, and hopefully you will get something similar. Being Scottish I recommend you find a likely candidate and try it in a bar before buying the whole bottle. With each issue of the newsletter I will add in another Whisky to the flavor map. **This issue; Linlithgow 19 years old.** For more information go to <http://www.whiskyfun.com/St-Magdalene.html>

