



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 Royal Lochnagar 12-year-old, which I tasted for the first time onboard the Royal yacht Britannia, which is moored in Leith, Edinburgh. Lochnagar distillery was once visited by Queen Victoria while she was staying at nearby Balmoral. She liked the whisky (and rumor has it that she had a nip of it in her tea with breakfast each morning) so much that she granted a "Royal warrant" to the distillery, so that henceforth it became known as Royal Lochnagar.

All well and good, but what did I think about it? There's nothing there to dislike about this whisky, it's mellow and easy to drink, but, that said there isn't any WOW!! Factor either.

So, it's drinkable and at its price point, it's not a bad deal, and yes, I could see myself drinking it, but not something I'd be adding to my tea at breakfast each morning.

It's what you should expect and get, for the price, no disappointment, and nothing to write home about.

I will say that I'm intrigued enough to want to try some of their older Whiskies, if I do I'll let you know.

You can buy Royal Lochnagar 12-year-old for around \$45.00 a bottle.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Honey & herbs

Palate - Honey, heather & raisins

Finish - Sweet malt & vanilla spice

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





Royal Lochnagar Distillery

Neighboring Balmoral Castle, Royal Lochnagar is the perfect place to discover how Scotch Whisky is made. Watch as our team of operators tend to our traditional mashtun, gleaming copper stills and fill casks at our traditional distillery, which retains much of its original charm. The tour ends with a dram of the award-winning Royal Lochnagar 12 Year Old Single Highland Malt Royal Lochnagar Distillery one of the jewels in the Royal Deeside crown is situated beside her Majesty the Queen's Scottish Home, Balmoral Castle at Crathie half way between the villages of Ballater and Braemar, which is home to the world famous Highland Gathering and Games

The distillery takes its name from the mountain, Lochnagar, which is a Munro, a mountain over 3000ft high. The Royal name was bestowed upon the distillery following a visit by Queen Victoria on the 12th September 1848. At the end of this, the first ever, Distillery tour Queen Victoria enjoyed a dram of mature Lochnagar highland single malt scotch whisky.

Royal Lochnagar draws its pure water from the Scarnock Springs and use this water with local barley which has been malted, then ground into grist. This grist and the spring water meet in the open mashtun and a hot sugary liquid is drained off. Yeast is added and fermentation will take place, giving us a liquid called wash with a alcohol strength of 9% by volume. We then distill this wash in our small gleaming copper pot stills giving us the spirit we are now going to fill on site into our oak casks and allow to mature for at least 12 full years giving us our lovely golden delicious Highland Single Malt Whisky.

Royal Deeside runs the length of the River Dee from its pools in the heart of the Cairngorm Mountains, one of Scotland's National Parks, to the Worlds Oil Capital, the granite city of Aberdeen. The River is famed for its spring salmon run with excellent fishing beats many by its towns of Banchory, Aboyne Ballater and Braemar

Royal Deeside also has excellent golf courses, great stalking and shooting in season and historic castles such as Crathes , Craigievar and Braemar . With a variety of accommodation choices from cosy Bed and Breakfasts to Guest Houses and 4 star hotels there is something to suit everyone here in Royal Deeside.

For more information go to;

<http://www.discovering-distilleries.com/royallochnagar>

“Whisky is my spirit animal”



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; “Royal Lochnagar 12-year-old.” For more information go to <http://www.discovering-distilleries.com/royallochnagar>





Clan history still matters in modern Scotland

With thanks to the Scotsman newspaper

What's in a name? If the name happens to be affiliated to a Scottish clan, the answer is an unparalleled connection to history, geography, literature and romance.

The origins of the clan system may be lost in the mists of the political turmoil and social opportunism of medieval Scotland. They may have been fictionalized in the 19th century and exploited in the 20th. But the clans - with their individual characteristics, traditions and legends - have survived the Jacobite rebellion, the Act of Union, two world wars, membership of the European Union, the breakdown of the nuclear family and the increasing homogeneity of a global Society.

Are they still relevant in 21st-century Scotland? Absolutely. They may have been appropriated by the souvenir shops of the Royal Mile and used to hawk no end of tartan memorabilia, but those lucky enough to be linked with a clan have access to a rich and ready-made history and an instant kinship which stretches around the globe

It is this sense of family, of shared affiliations underpinned by Scots law, which has given the clan system such a solid and enduring base, and it is this that distinguishes the clans from other tribal groups

In other countries, tribes and traditions have disappeared or are under threat; ties of kinship and custom have been diluted. The clan system, by contrast, has adapted and survived. It remains uniquely Scottish and has given Scotland a distinct identity and the ability to punch above its weight overseas.

As Scots travelled the world in the 18th and 19th centuries, they could have been expected to abandon their clan loyalties. Instead, the diaspora maintained a strong pride in their clan identities and passed this on to their children. Today, some of the most thriving clan associations are to be found overseas and the number of Scottish gatherings outside of Scotland grows every year.

There is a great deal of snobbery in Scotland about overseas enthusiasm for the clan, but one of the most appealing aspects of clanship is the way in which the clans have managed to retain distinct and separate identities without succumbing to exclusivity or elitism.

Membership is usually defined through surname, and most Scots can lay claim, however tenuous, to some sept or branch.

In the modern world, where affiliations and affinities - be they to company, educational establishment or birthplace - are often short-lived, clans represent a sense of belonging and of continuity with the past. It doesn't matter how transient you are, your association with clan lasts from cradle to grave.

A MacGregor can feel a frisson of kinship with Ewan, the actor, or even Jimmy, the folk singer. He may share the cussedness of Rob Roy, whose tombstone at Balquhider Church reads "MacGregor Despite Them".

He can't help but thrill to the knowledge that he is descended from the ancient Celtic royal family through the hereditary Abbots of Glendochart and that his family motto is "Royal is my race".



And therein lies one of the keys to the enduring appeal of Scottish clans. Whatever wrongs were done in the past in the name of kinship and feudalism - and they are legion - the clans give every member a link to nobility.

The distinctive quality of the clan is that its members share a common descent, however remote. Perhaps this is where the Scots' egalitarianism, so eloquently praised by Burns, comes from. We may not all be lairds or chiefs but we all have clan blood coursing through our veins. For generations, the peasantry and the aristocracy have been united by clan and neither has forgotten it.

Today the clans provide a very personal link to almost a thousand years of Scottish history. I am a Crawford on my mother's side and through my marriage.

My ancestors were impoverished miners, but the Crawfords can trace their name back to the Normans.

They settled in Lanarkshire and they feature in the legendary incident which led to the foundation of the Abbey of Holyrood, when Gregan Crawford, with a bit of divine intervention, was instrumental in saving the king's life from a stag in 1127.

The stag appears on the Crawford coat of arms. Margaret Crawford was the mother of Sir William Wallace.

Sadly it all went wrong in the 19th century when Hugh Crawford, the 21st laird of Auchinames, hot-footed it to Canada having flogged off the family lands.

The fortunes of clans may rise and fall - lands may be mortgaged, lost through supporting the wrong side in war or gambled away - but clanship gives every Scot a stake in their geography. We still refer to "Macdonald country" or "Gunn territory".

This strong association with place remains an important feature of the Scottish psyche but perhaps more than anything else, it is the clan sense of extended kinship that is the defining Scottish characteristic.

Scots are travellers and adventurers.

We tend not to be isolationist but are well-connected with the wider world. Ask visitors to Scotland for their impression of its people and they will nearly always cite friendliness as an attractive trait.

Scots are good at kinship.

We are good at reaching out to strangers without overwhelming them.

We are adept at making people feel welcome without making them feel smothered.

This easy ability to accommodate strangers has its roots in the clan system.

The tartan, the crests and castles are all very well but it is this sense of kinship which is the most appealing element of the clanship.

With more people than ever taking an interest in family history, this is a real asset.

If you go searching for your roots in any other country, you will find pieces of your past.

If you search for your roots in Scotland, you will find an extended family, rich in history, tradition and myth.

Whether you choose to embrace them or ignore them is up to you, but they will always be there.