



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 am merely expressing my opinion on the whiskies I am tasting, as you know, everybody has one.

I now look at Ailsa Bay single malt scotch Whisky. Master Blender Brian Kinsman has the Ailsa Bay go through a 'micro maturation', where the new make spirit is first aged in small bourbon casks for six to nine months, for a rapid, intense maturation, prior to being matured in standard sized casks.

As well as showing the Phenols (smoke) PPM (Parts Per Million) on the bottle Ailsa Bay, also shows the SPPM: Sweet Parts Per Million, this is the first whisky to do so.

I tasted this whisky in the Corbie Inn, in Boness, Scotland at a whisky tasting evening, and I was impressed.

If you get your hands on a bottle, you may be surprised as to how heavy the cork is, the top is made from stone from the island of Ailsa Craig, using the same stone, that is used to make Curling stones.

Would I buy it? If I could, it is not currently available in the USA.

[You can buy Ailsa Bay for around \\$75.00 a bottle.](#)

Tasting Notes

Nose - Sweet smoke & caramel apple

Palate - Fruit, peat & vanilla caramel

Finish - Sweet peat

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





10 Ways to Live Your Best Whisky Life

BY MATT BEAN

The world of whisky is ever-expanding, extending into your medicine cabinet and onto the baseball field. That means there are more options and opportunities to educate and enjoy and if you are serious about either, a proper plan is best. Pursue your best whisky life with these 10 tips.

1. START A TASTING CLUB

Starting a regularly scheduled tasting club is a great way to form friendships and advance your whisky knowledge. It can be as formal or casual as you like, says Jim Holdsworth, who runs the Passen Cotty Scotch Club in western Massachusetts. "We'll have a theme, as many as 10 to 20 whiskies," says Holdsworth. "Scotch, rye, a wood-finished theme, wounded soldiers—we'll take pictures of the empty bottles. It's an event." Use these 5 tips to start your own vibrant whisky club.

Scout for members: Start with your favorite specialty whisky retailer. "They already know the heavy hitters in the area, and are probably in touch with [them]," says Jim. They might post a flyer or put the word out on their email list.

Find a venue: Scour your area for meeting spaces. Private clubs and public venues often offer well-appointed spaces for a courtesy fee; some retailers might also have space to host. For a smaller group, start at your dining room table.

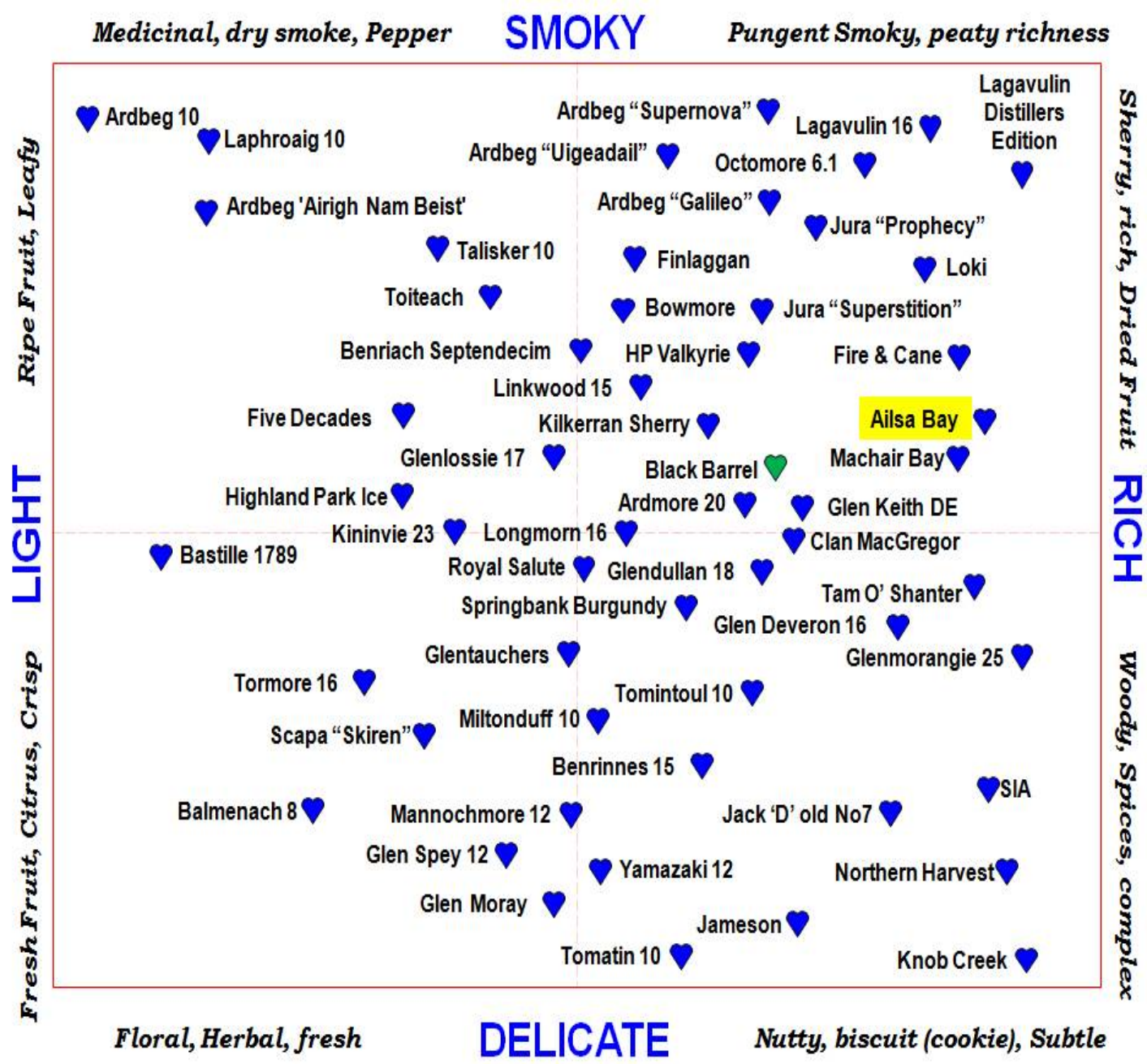
Pool your resources: Depending on the size of your group, your buying power could put you within reach of some whisky whales. What's important is that you set a dollar amount, and everyone pays in. Consider using the PayPal or Venmo apps to streamline this process. "This month's buy-in is 30 bucks," you'll text. Next thing you know, you're bagging big game.

Get digital: Gone are the days when you could post a 3×5 card and jot down numbers for a phone tree. Create a club on Meetup or use Facebook groups to pull together your team and keep them updated. You'll find the conversation will flow naturally as each member updates the forum on their evening pour.

Make up bylaws: Sure, there's the practical stuff—last chance to buy-in is 24 hours before, no discussing politics at the tasting, that kind of thing. But any real club has absurd and arbitrary rules that must be followed, and followed to the letter. For instance, on your birthday you're required to bring a box of cigars for the group. Whoever hosts at their house gets to choose the dinner, and so on. Above all, be creative and have fun!



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; [Ailsa Bay](#). For more information go to <https://www.ailsabay.com/>





10 Ways to Live Your Best Whisky Life *Cont.*

2. DRINK LOCALLY

Is the next great whiskey-making region in your own backyard? With more than 1,700 craft distilleries in the United States, it's time you found out. "Ten years ago there were maybe three dozen," says Alexandra Clough, who represents the American Craft Spirits Association. What's more, "Right now we're getting to the point where some of these craft distilleries are having whiskeys of age," says Clough. "Most of the original craft distilleries and most of the second wave finally have whiskey that's come of age and that they're proud to produce and represent." Plus, you'll be helping out the local economy. Craft distillers depend on direct sales to local buyers: more than a third of all bottles are sold at the distillery, according to the American Craft Spirits Association.

3. ATTEND WHISKYFEST

There's more than just the dram of a lifetime waiting for you at WhiskyFest. Take it from David Lubel, who has been attending since 2004. "You're able to meet and spend time talking to the guys who actually distill the whisky—a lot of times the master distillers are there, the people who actually make the decision on what the whiskey tastes like," says Lubel. "They're all very down to earth people. They're very approachable and they're the kind of people you'd want to sit down and have a whisky with—and that's exactly what you can do." Follow these tips from the WhiskyFest vet:

Map It Out: Using the **WhiskyFest app**, determine how you intend to navigate a room brimming with over 300 great whiskies. You'll never hit everything you want, says Lubel, but having a plan and a focus—like drilling down on bottled in bond bourbon—means you'll have a clear mission.

Pace Yourself: Asking for a small pour is a badge of honor, not a mark of retreat—you'll be able to taste more. Sip water between your whiskies, and consider Lubel's approach: eat before, during, and after, taking full advantage of the unlimited dining.

Question Authorities: "I spend more time schmoozing than drinking," says Lubel. "You're surrounded by people who make decisions about the stuff you love. If there's something you're into, ask them where to find it—they'll always get back to you."

Take Note: "It took a lot of years for me to understand this, but when you really find something that you like and it's new, you're going to forget about it," says Lubel. "You really will—there's so much variety and choices. You have to write it down, more than just taking a business card."



10 Ways to Live Your Best Whisky Life cont.

4. HEAD FOR THE HILLS

Fresh air and rugged trails pair well with flasks, and nothing matches a swig better than a long hike to a vista all your own. "Distilled spirits offer a better alcohol-to-weight ratio than beer or wine, so it's the logical choice for backpacking" says Wes Siler, founder of the website Indefinitely Wild and a longtime trail maven. "Whiskey just feels right next to a campfire, and it's made for sharing." If you're worried about breaking a glass bottle, pack your whisky into a flask, a flexible and refillable bottle like the Platypus Platy Preserve, or even a rinsed-and-reused bag from a box of wine.

5. TASTE BLIND, TASTE BETTER

Blind tasting simply means evaluating whisky without knowledge of its identity. And, it isn't just a party trick—it's the way the [Whisky Advocate editorial staff](#) rates whiskies. "Flavor is in the brain. Your expectations before you taste the whisky or the wine will shape the way you see the product," says Janice Wang, assistant professor in the Department of Food Science at Aarhus University. "If I see there's Islay, I'm already expecting peat. And if I have [Johnnie Walker] Blue Label vs. Red Label, I might already have expectations. The point of blind tasting is to get yourself away from these biases and preconceptions." Not only will you become a better taster, but we guarantee you'll be surprised. These blind-tasting themes are surefire fun at a whisky gathering.

Name That Whisky: Decant a selection of whiskies and press your panel to identify each—as best they can. One point for country of origin, one point for style of whisky, one point for distillery, and so on.

Good/Better/Best: Pour three similar whiskies (all Islay single malts, all bourbons, etc.) with different prices and discover if price relates to quality.

Prime of its Life: A flight of the same whisky at three different ages. What are their similarities? Then, identify your favorite. (Older isn't always better.)

6. DEVELOP A SIGNATURE COCKTAIL

Being a mixologist doesn't start with a vest and a mustache. "I think one way for mixologists at home to start their own cocktail-making adventure is by using classic cocktail recipes as a reference point," says Shawn Chen, beverage director at RedFarm in New York City. "Change out the spirit or an ingredient in the recipe and voila, you're reliving some of the greatest moments in cocktail history." These are always fair game for experimentation:

A Manhattan Project: Try swapping in different **amari for the vermouth**. Then play with the whiskey itself: rye for a spicy kick, bourbon for a smoother finish. Finally, play with your condiments: Luxardo maraschino cherries (with a half-spoon of syrup from the container) for a rich body and velvet stone fruit notes; a fresh peel of citrus for a more refreshing taste.



10 Ways to Live Your Best Whisky Life cont.

Get Fizzy With It: The Highball is a refreshing session cocktail that consists of simply whisky and soda, offering a blank canvas for citrus and herbal companions. Jazz it up with grapefruit slices or **fresh herbs**, like a small sprig of thyme. Must-have ingredient: well chilled, high-quality bottled soda water. (We like Q Soda or Fever Tree).

Search and Replace: Swap whiskey into a recipe that traditionally uses a different spirit. That's how the Negroni becomes the Boulevardier, with the bourbon bringing warmth and complexity to the mix. How about a spicy rye in a Moscow Mule or a Whiskey Sidecar, or smoky Islay single malt with your favorite Bloody Mary mix?

7. TRAVEL THE WHISKY WORLD

Leaving your comfort zone can yield some killer international drams. Take it from Stacey Klass, who as a division manager handles imports for Hotaling & Co., which, in addition to Scotland, brings in whiskies from Taiwan, New Zealand, and Japan. "Scotland remains the motherland, but other countries are not bound by the same production laws," says Klass. "They can experiment with different aging techniques and barrel finishes, resulting in unique flavor profiles." Shop these countries:

Australia: Boasts over 150 distilleries. Look for Sullivans Cove Double Cask, Starward Solera single malt

Scandinavia: Great for single malt and rye fans. Look for Spirit of Hven Tycho's **Star** single malt.

France: Making big inroads in the U.S. Look for Brenne single malt, Armorik Double Maturation.

India: A truly hot spot for whisky! Look for Amrut single malt, Paul John Brilliance single malt

8. GO ON TOUR

There's no better way to learn your way around whisky than by visiting the source. We asked tour guide Freddie Johnson, a third-generation Buffalo Trace employee and member of the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame, how to plan the perfect visit. "For me the ideal time to tour is before noon," says Johnson. "Usually all production steps are in full swing." Be warned of summer visits: "Plant maintenance occurs during July, and the still, cookers, and dryers are down for any preventive maintenance adjustments."

When you're on the tour, look beyond the guide. Generally, employees are eager to chat. Seek to understand why their piece of the process is important. Look at the stills, pot or column? What about the fermenter, wood or metal? And those white oak barrels. What is their char level? Finally, there is the barrel warehouse. Details like the number of windows and orientation of the building can impact the whiskey's maturation.



10 Ways to Live Your Best Whisky Life cont.

"Ultimately, it will be left up to Mother Nature and Father Time to see if all our efforts bear the fruits that the consumer desires," says Johnson. "By helping our visitors understand the importance of long-term relationships, such as grain providers, coopers, and the vendors who provide our bottling materials, a greater appreciation of how it all comes together is achieved." Make one of these 5 unforgettable visits:

Dip In: Visitors to Jim Beam can purchase a bottle of Knob Creek right off the bottling line, hand dip it in wax, and seal it with a thumbprint that screams, "hands off my whiskey!"

Take It Outside: The new Castle and Key Distillery is an amazing restoration of the original 1887 E. H. Taylor Distillery, steeped in architectural splendor and botanical gardens. The birthplace of bourbon tourism still holds up.

Get Your Hands Dirty: The Water to Whisky Experience (£100) at Laphroaig on Scotland's Islay includes a visit to the water source and a chance to try your hand at peat cutting before selecting a whisky to bottle.

Sleep It Off: Some whisky distilleries allow you to stay the night! Nova Scotia's Glenora Distillery offers luxe accommodations, including log chalets, where you can relax after a tasting at this North American single malt pioneer.

Now Dig This: History buffs and amateur archeologists will enjoy peering into the past at Buffalo Trace's Bourbon Pompeii, the excavated remains of an on-site distillery, dating back more than 130 years.

9. PAIR A CIGAR WITH YOUR WHISKEY

"There's something about the flavorful smoke of a cigar that seeks out the complex flavors of a great whisky," says David Savona, executive editor of Cigar Aficionado magazine. "The greatest pairings make each component better." Take a leaf from Savona's playbook and you're ready to pair dram and draw. Use these tips to puff with pride:

There's a Cigar for Everyone: Just as there are myriad types of whisky, the wide world of cigars offers smokes of various flavor profiles and intensity. If you're new to the game, seek out a milder smoke. And while you need not spend a fortune on a cigar to get a good one, by all means avoid convenience store smokes and buy a handmade cigar from a good tobacconist, advises Savona.



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Aim High: Savona says sweet bourbons or Highland scotches finished in madeira or sherry casks are naturals for most cigars. Cigars with a strong, leathery, woody backbone tempered by just a touch of sweetness pair beautifully.

Beware of Peat: "While I love heavily peated and smoky malts, their distinction makes them tougher to match with a cigar. Instead, the more balanced whiskies work best."

Find the Perfect Perch: "A puff of your cigar, a sip of your whisky, a long pause. Repeat," says Savona. "Those problems that once loomed large may now look like anthills."

10. ANTE UP AT AUCTION

"It's a hot time for whiskey and scotch auctions," says Joseph Hyman, fine spirits specialist at Skinner Auctions in Marlborough, Massachusetts. "They've come back with a vengeance now." Best of all you no longer have to stand in the room and wave a paddle. Pre-prohibition bourbon? Closed scotch distilleries? Hyman says it's easy to get in the game and score your first win online. Walk away happy with these tips:

Enlist: Sign up for the e-mail newsletters at the major auction houses, "You have at least two weeks to comb the lots," says Hyman.

Always Be Bidding: Don't focus on just the end-of-year auctions with long lists of whisky. Auctions can be loaded year-round these days, says Hyman. If you're looking to build a collection you should be looking at auctions year-round anyway.

Be Patient: Success at auctions isn't always immediate. "It's not going to be an easy 'Snap your fingers and here's the bottle I'm looking for,'" says Hyman. "Sometimes you just luck out. And sometimes you lose out. That's the fun of it. Sometimes you get a bargain and sometimes you don't."

Mind the Details: "You need to be vigilant if you're on the hunt for odd bottles and interesting things," says Hyman. Check group lots for hidden gems. "We had one where if you blew up the photos you could see a Lagavulin bottle had been distilled at the White Horse Distillery—that meant it was prior to the 1990s."

Follow Your Taste: "Go with what you love. If you're new to the game and new to whisky, figure out what you like and go toward those types of things, and look for similar styles if you can't find the exact bottle." As long as you only purchase stuff you'd be happy to drink, it's hard to make a bad buy.