



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.

In this issue I look at the Balvenie Tun 1401 batch 3. This is a marriage of some of The Balvenie's rarest whiskies, an unrepeatable selection of spirits sourced from seven traditional whisky casks and three sherry butts, whose ages span a number of decades. The whisky was rested for several months in Tun 1401 (The Balvenie's traditional oak marrying vessel) to create this masterpiece.

The batch 3 has been exclusively created for the U.S., and marks the first time Tun 1401 has been available in this country. For those of you who watch the Food Network on television, you'll know that I'm stealing Guy Fieri's favorite lines when I say, "welcome to flavor town" and "this is the real deal."

This is a superb scotch and a contender for my favorite scotch of 2014. Locals, see page 6 on how to win a bottle.

You can buy Balvenie Tun 1401 batch 3 for around \$275.00 a bottle.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Rich dried fruits, lightly floral and oak

Palate - Very smooth, mouth coating, stewed fruit, oak

Finish - Long with sweet sherry fruits, and oak

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





‘Freedom and Whisky gang the gither’ – Don’t forget the Haggis!

<http://professorwhisky.wordpress.com/2012/01/27/freedom-and-whisky-gang-thegether-dont-forget-the-haggis>

If you’re planning on celebrating Burns Night this year then make sure you don’t forget to complement your haggis with some drams!



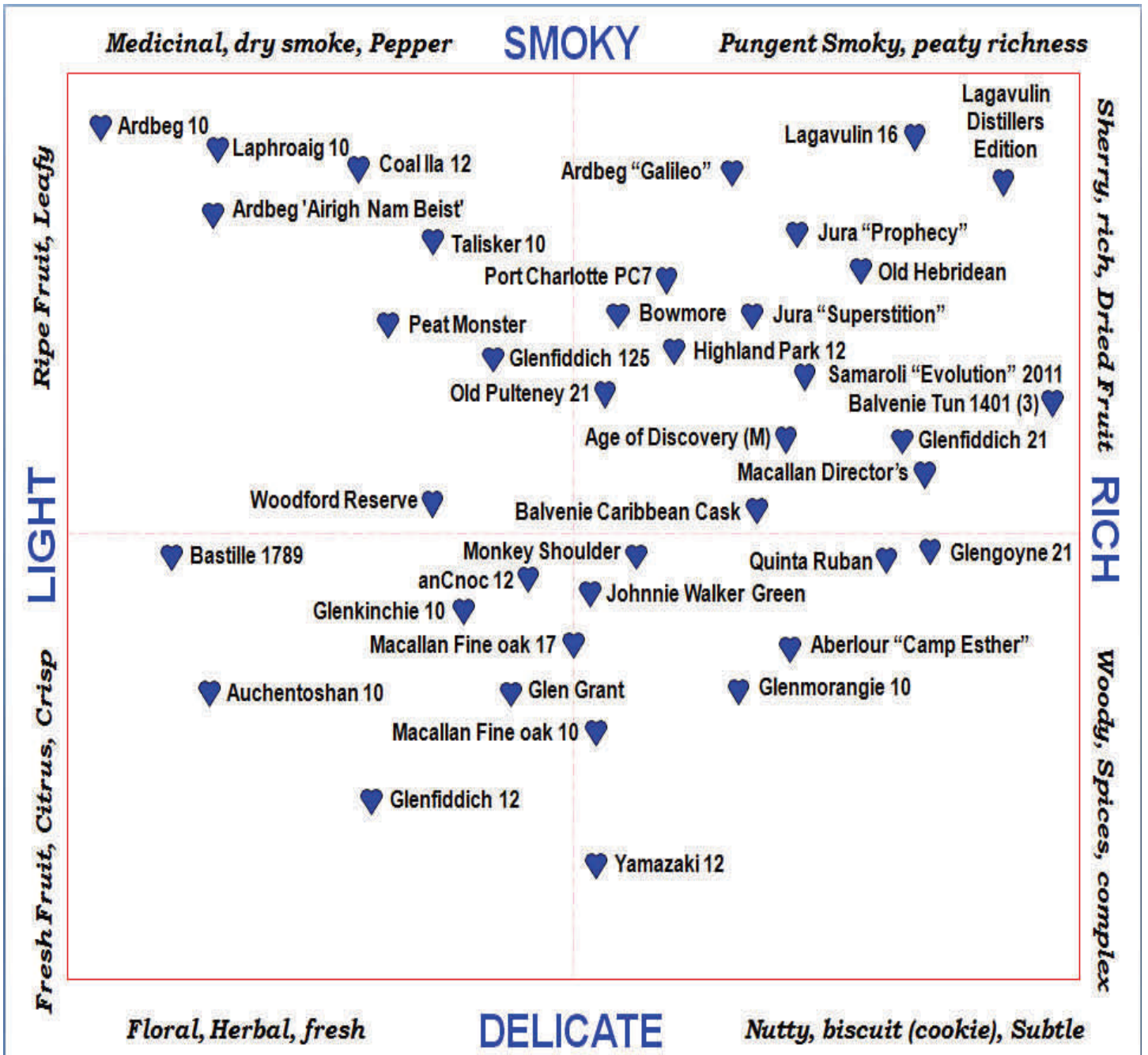
For those of you who don’t know, the Scottish festival celebrates the birthday of the famous poet Robert Burns, (his 254th this year), who, throughout the 18th century penned many verses like the one you see above. The evening orientates around a meal which is punctuated with extracts of Burns’ work, praising both the Haggis - the traditional Scottish dish of a stuffed sheep’s stomach - and toasting the ‘lassies’.



So for the numerous toasting’s necessary for the evening, it would only be appropriate to choose Scotch, but the question is, which one? Whisky experts Neyah White and Taylor Boetticher agree that you should choose one which is lighter and sweeter. Boetticher advises against choosing a smokier whisky, suggesting ‘ a more malt-driven’ blend would go better with the oats and organ-meat Haggis recipe. Whiskies from the Speyside region such as **Glenfiddich**, **The Macallan**, **BenRiach**, **Glenrothes** and **the Balvenie** are recommended and if you would prefer a blend, try the **8-year old Sheep Dip**.



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. With each issue of the newsletter I will add in another Whisky to the flavor map. This Issue; **Balvenie Tun 1401 Batch 3**. For more information go to <http://us.thebalvenie.com/>





Ten Questions with Dennis McBain

Dennis McBain started his coppersmith apprenticeship at The Balvenie distillery in 1959, one year after he left school. Here he chats with US Balvenie Ambassador Lorne Cousin.



What were your favorite subjects at school?

I've always been good with my hands, so my favourite subjects were metalwork and woodwork.

Stills are always made from copper; I understand distilleries have experimented with different metals but always went back to copper, why is this?

There are a few reasons for that. The first is that you can heat it to easily soften the copper. That lets you beat it into the shapes required for making a still. The second is that it's a very good conductor of heat. This is important because it's good for fuel economy. But the most important reason for using copper is that it acts as a catalyst. It removes any sulphur which may be carried over from the fermentation process prior to distillation.

What is the average lifespan of a still?

Wash Stills last around 20 to 25 years, while Spirit Stills go for between 25 to 30 years.

The shape and height of the still are very important in the character of the final spirit produced, why is this?

It's because the shape and height of the still determines the character of the new make spirit. During boiling, there is a reflux action constantly going on in the head of the still, so the higher the still, the more the heavier vapors will condense and fall back to mix with the boiling liquid.



Cont;

Part of the Balvenie still is known as “The Balvenie Bowl,” and indeed the shape of the neck of our bottles represents this. What is particularly special about the Balvenie stills?

As I mentioned, the shape and size determine the reflux action. The size and shape of the boil ball allow for the vapors to mix before continuing up the head and over in to the condenser via the lye pipe/line arm. That helps make The Balvenie special.

What is meant by “sweetening the still?”

In the old days, the method of cleaning a newly made still prior to use was to boil water in the still and add a bunch of juniper. The vapors from the juniper would travel all the way to the wash and spirit safes when the process would stop. The reason for this is that during the construction of the still the copper becomes dirty, so the juniper vapors clean and sweeten the still and render it ready for use.

You are one of the most experienced coppersmiths that has ever been in the industry. What attributes are required to be a good coppersmith?

Having a good vision in your head of what the finished still should look like while you are making it, and being prepared to do heavy manual work. This is a very labor intensive job. It’s also important to have a good head for numbers, as you have to calculate sizes before cutting out the copper shapes required for the construction of the still. But most importantly, you have to have pride in your work and do the best that you can do.

Do you still use traditional tools in your work?

Yes. Modern technology has not changed the craft of the coppersmith much over the years.

What do you think the future holds for this craft?

It is becoming more difficult to recruit young people to the trade due to the heavy manual work involved, so there are fewer coppersmiths in the trade now. But I’m confident that this rarest of crafts will survive.

Finally, what is your favorite dram?

My favorite dram is of course the Balvenie 12 year Old DoubleWood!

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

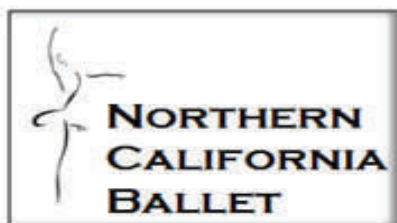


Charity Whisky tasting

\$20.00 a ticket

Saturday the 15th of February 6pm to 9pm
at the Masonic Lodge (5934 Clark Rd Paradise)

All proceeds go to the



This interactive evening will be hosted by Paul Bissett, editor of "Slange" Whisky Newsletter and David McDonald fresh from his tour of Scotland's Whisky distilleries.



Food, Wine & Beer also available

A bottle of **Balvenie Tun 1401** being raffled off

Tickets can be purchased at Wells Fargo Bank 6930 Skyway Rd
Paradise or by calling 530 872 1719 or 530 877 7028
(Credit cards accepted)