



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. By the way, I do not profess to be an expert, I am merely expressing an opinion on the whiskies I am tasting. “Slange”

This issue I look at Talisker 10 year old, which I first sampled on the Isle of Skye many years ago, while still serving in the Royal Navy. Myself and a few friends had gone to the Cuillin Mountains on Skye to try climbing the “inaccessible pinnacle,” however the weather was so bad, we did the ridge walk on Blaven instead (photo below, along the top from left to right). Afterward one of the team took us to his aunt’s hotel, where we had a few drinks to celebrate a great day in the mountains. A few of months ago, I sat with my wife in Comme Ca Restaurant in the Cosmopolitan hotel, Las Vegas and remembered that day over another glass of Talisker 10.

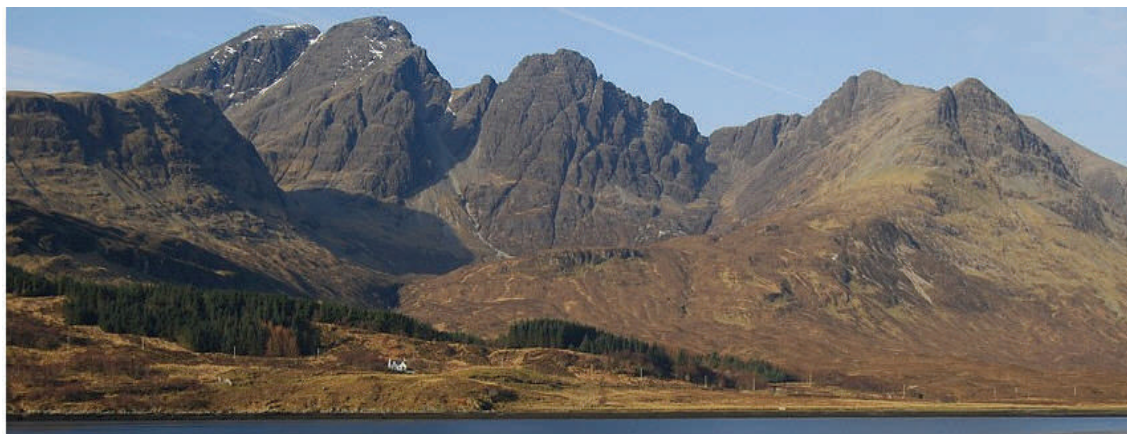
Tasting Notes;

Color - Gold

Nose - Peat, Smoke & Sea Saltiness

Palate - Sweet Malt and Peat

Finish - Long, peppery and sweet



*“Slainte Mhath”
Paul Bissett*





A wee bit of History <http://www.discovering-distilleries.com/talisker/history.php>

The Talisker Distillery is located on the remote island of Skye on the North West coast of Scotland. The distant location of Talisker was not chosen because that made the distillery hard to find for excise men that roamed the land in the illustrious illegal days of Scotch whisky. When the distillery was built in 1831 by brothers Kenneth and Hugh MacAskill the whisky business had just turned legitimate - less than a decade earlier George Smith had just obtained the first proper license to distill whisky at Glenlivet distillery. Everything proceeded smoothly for two decades, but in 1848 they passed the lease of Talisker on to North of Scotland Bank. The bank didn't hold on to the distillery for more than a decade; they sold it on to Donald McLellan in 1857 for a mere 500 GBP. Despite the relatively modest investment Donald had problems making Talisker turn a profit, so in the 1860's John Anderson became involved. After he was imprisoned for selling casks of whisky that never really existed it was time for new owners for the Talisker distillery; Roderick Kemp and Alexander Grigor Allen.

Roderick Kemp sold his share of Talisker in 1892 and used the proceeds to buy the Macallan distillery. Ownership of Talisker kept changing in the decades after that, until DCL took control in 1916. The method of triple distillation that was traditionally employed at Talisker was abandoned in 1928. After administration of the distillery was transferred to Scottish Malt Distillers (SMD, predecessors of Diageo) in 1930, things quieted down for a while at Talisker for a few decades. However, in 1960 there was a large fire at the distillery. Talisker was closed for two years, during which time they commissioned the construction of identical copies of the five stills that were damaged or destroyed in the fire.

During the 1990's Talisker was usually one of the first single malts that a relative malt whisky novice would get to try. As part of Diageo's series of six 'Classic Malts' (along with Cragganmore, Dalwhinnie, Glenkinchie, Oban and Lagavulin it was one of the few Scotch single malts that could be found on the shelves of almost every reasonably stocked bar.



Q. How do you get two bagpipers to play in perfect unison?

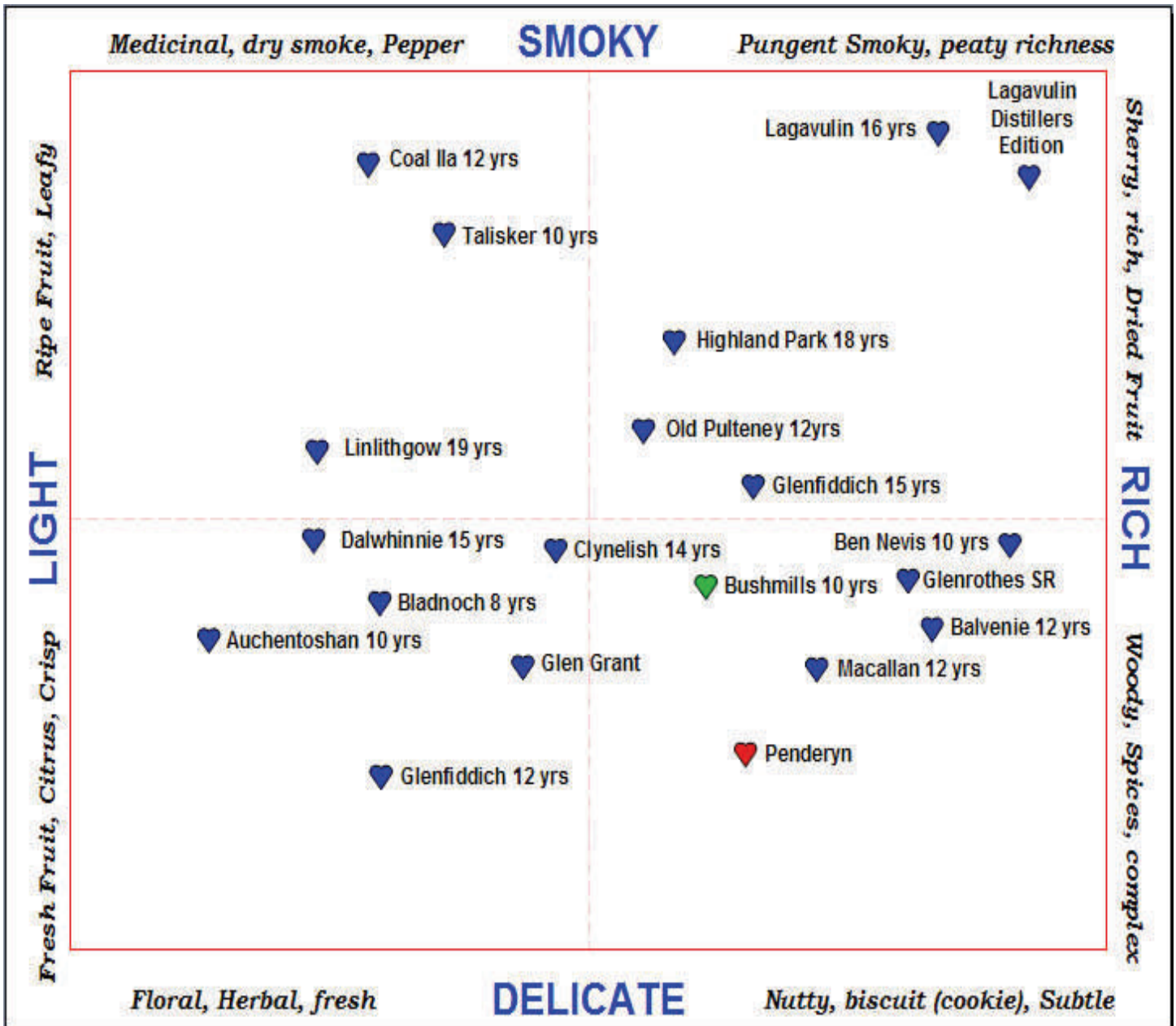
A. Shoot one.



Below is a simple guide to help you choose your single malt Whisky, and where it fits in the flavor map. 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; **Talisker 10 year old**. For more information go to;

http://www.malts.com/index.php/en_us/Our-Whiskies/Talisker/Introduction





“Speed bonnie boat”

Talisker Distillery on the Isle of Skye is best approached by boat, so Charles MacLean sets sail on the Classic Malts Cruise

The best way to arrive in Venice is by sea, taking a vaporetto across the lagoon and watching in awe as Venus rises from the waves. So it is with Talisker on the Isle of Skye, and for the other whisky distilleries in the Western Isles of Scotland, which stand at the sea's edge on Mull, Jura and Islay. The reason for their coastal location is easily explained. Historically, raw materials such as barley and coal arrived by sea and casks of whisky left the same way. The carriers were small cargo vessels called 'puffers' – their shallow draft and flat bottoms allowing them to run right onto a beach and unload their cargo.

Approaching these island distilleries by boat is the best way to understand their often remote location and elemental character. Malt whisky is the quintessential 'spirit of place'. The liquid from each distillery is different, and the flavour of each seems in some way to reflect its surroundings.

This is romantic imagining, of course. There is no scientific reason for the salty tang found in many island malts being attributable to the distillery's proximity to the sea – even if the warehouses in which the spirit matures are lashed by salt spray during winter storms, as many are. But it would be a hard heart indeed that was not stirred by the sight of trim, white-washed distillery buildings clustered on the edge of a lonely bay – especially once that heart has been warmed by a drop of 'golden nectar' made in that distillery.

That's why I joined the Classic Malts Cruise this summer. The voyage starts and finishes in Oban – the Gateway to the Islands – on the West Coast and, over the course of two weeks, visits three Hebridean distilleries, Talisker, Lagavulin and Caol Ila. A special welcome is extended to crews of yachts sailing the West Coast during the last fortnight of July and participants rally on set evenings at each distillery for ceilidhs, barbeques, tours and tastings.

Wind in the sails

Having sailed among these islands as man and boy, I'm not surprised that yachtsmen rate this stretch of water as among the finest sailing grounds in the world. It's up there with the Aegean and the Caribbean – and it's more challenging than both. The area is relatively small, with the hundreds of islands within easy reach of each other by sea. This makes for great variety, and you can run for shelter if the weather changes – and it can turn in the twinkling of an eye in these northern latitudes.



Cont.

The prevailing wind is from the west, so if the weather is really foul all you can do is run before it towards the menacing exposed shore, praying you'll be able to manoeuvre into shelter. You are generally safe at sea 'so long as you have water under your keel' – so you can run cheerfully over the open deep, even if it's stormy. This is not possible on the West Coast: the Sea of the Hebrides is relatively shallow and littered with hazards. A Gaelic proverb sums it up neatly:

'The sea forgives, but the rocks are merciless.'

Rocky ride

There are rocks galore, often where you least expect them. Just as the Inuit have many words for snow, so the Gaels have different names for such rocks. A *sgeir* is a rock surrounded by sea but visible even at high tide and a *bogha* is a submerged rock, close to the surface at low tide. *Maol* (meaning 'bald') is a sea-washed rock and *carraig* is a rock jutting out into the sea. Admiralty charts of the West Coast are embellished with unpronounceable poetic gems.

The tides are huge, and surge north on the flood, south on the ebb, twice a day, in some places running faster than most sailing vessels can travel. Plunging along under full sail, and yet realizing from the passing shore that you are travelling backwards, is a strangely un-nerving experience.

Though not for the faint-hearted, the cruise is an unforgettable experience. The hospitality is immense, the company (both nautical and local) terrific, the yarns heroic and the whisky... simply sublime. Just as wine tastes best in the vineyard, malt whisky, that elemental liquor, reveals its true nature at its birthplace. You can experience the spirituality, history and craft that goes into making this fine spirit whenever and wherever you nose and taste a dram. From a hectic bar in Shoreditch to a classy restaurant in Mayfair, you can be instantly transported to the peace of Loch Harport and Talisker Distillery.



With thanks to *Charles MacLean* and <http://www.squaremeal.co.uk/feature/speed-bonnie-boat>