



## 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.*

As this issue is somewhat of a landmark, being number 150, I thought I'd do a rather special whisky from Highland Park called "Ice edition". My friends Joanna and Parrish were kind enough to give me a bottle when I officiated their marriage in the Redwoods of Northern California last year.

As usual, Highland Park know how to market their whiskies and the oak frame package is top notch. This is a limited release of only 30,000 bottles and is named/based on Norse mythology, Niflheim (or Niflheimr) is one of the Nine *Worlds* and was primarily a realm of primordial *ice* and cold. The bottle is made of blue colored glass (the whisky makes it look green) to look like glittering ice, the bottle shape has been designed especially to evoke the distinctive sharpness and coolness of the Ice Realm.

Next up for Highland park is a release called "Fire" based again on Norse mythology from the world of Muspelheim and the home of the *fire* giants.

After all that lore, what does it taste like? A little bit of Heaven (or Asgard), this is a truly wonderful whisky, the Pineapple with the peat smoke makes for an unusual, but Tasty combination.

Thank you Parrish and Joanna, very Much appreciated.

You can buy Highland Park "Ice edition" for around \$350.00 a bottle.

### Tasting Notes;

**Nose** - Pineapple, mango hint of smoke

**Palate** - Peat smoke, pineapple and citrus

**Finish** - Long with a little heat

*"Slainte Mhath"*

*Paul Bissett*





## Does ice ruin or improve single malt scotch?

by Tom Bruce-Gardyne

How do you prefer your Scotch whisky: neat, mixed or over ice? For decades, the latter ingredient has been the subject of rampant debate – particularly when it comes to single malts. Two leading, moustachioed whisky warriors engage in a duel of words...

An icy debate: Opinions are divided over the addition of ice to single malts

The fiery, un-aged hooch that evolved into modern day Scotch whisky was blended with berries, honey, heather, herbs... anything to numb the pain. And the same goes for ice, according to Richard Paterson, who believes it may have helped certain rough whiskies slip down in the past but is no longer required for a well-aged blend, and least of all a good single malt.

While accepting that it's a matter of personal taste, he makes an impassioned plea to ditch the ice bucket. For something so carefully put together, he argues, why would you do anything to blunt or diminish those complex flavours and aromas?

But there's a big counter-argument to all this, namely that Scotch needs to ditch all that prescriptive crap of 'dos and don'ts' once and for all. It needs to get with it and embrace the modern world of drinks where anything goes, be it neat, tall, long over ice, or mixed with whatever you damn well please.

Fred Laing may not be in his first flush of youth, but he's definitely younger than his hero, Sir Mick Jagger. And he clearly takes the same rock 'n' roll attitude to Scotch.



So without further ado, let battle commence: does ice ruin single malt Scotch?



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; Highland Park "Ice edition". For more information go to <https://shop.highlandpark.co.uk>





CONT.



**YES: RICHARD PATERSON, MASTER BLENDER, WHYTE & MACKAY**

‘When it comes to ice and whisky, it’s like adding cream, sugar and milk to great coffee when you don’t really need it. Of course it’s down to personal taste but as far I’m concerned, when I take so many years to create a whisky – particularly a great single malt – adding ice really does numb it, and it takes away that quality that opens up in the mouth. You don’t need to chill it.

‘Let the warmth of your tongue do the talking not the bloody ice.

‘When I was in Singapore recently, this guy came up to me with a glass of whisky rammed with ice, and I said: “Gee, you seem to like whisky and ice.” He replied: “The barman told me this is how you should drink it.”

‘When I discovered it was a Dalmore Aurora, I cried: “That’s 45 years old! You’ve just absolutely chilled it, ruined it, and it’s taken 45 years to put together.” He seemed quite happy, so it does come down to ignorance and educating people to make full use of their mouths and nothing else.

‘Sometimes in the olden days when whiskies were a bit questionable ice could help numb that bite of alcohol, but today very few whiskies are bitter or sharp. Maybe Fred is not taking as much care as I am and maybe his whiskies do need it; but if a whisky’s great then you really don’t need ice to take away that sharpness or aggression.

‘The only time I might like it chilled is with an Islay whisky when I want to capture that sense of wind and rain in my face, as though I was out there facing the North Sea or mighty Atlantic. But it’s very seldom, and with ice you have to be careful.

‘I was in a bar in America and asked for a Dalmore, which the barman covered in ice. “What’re you doing?” I said. “Givin’ you ice like everyone else does,” he replied. I picked out an ice cube, smelt it and asked where it was from.

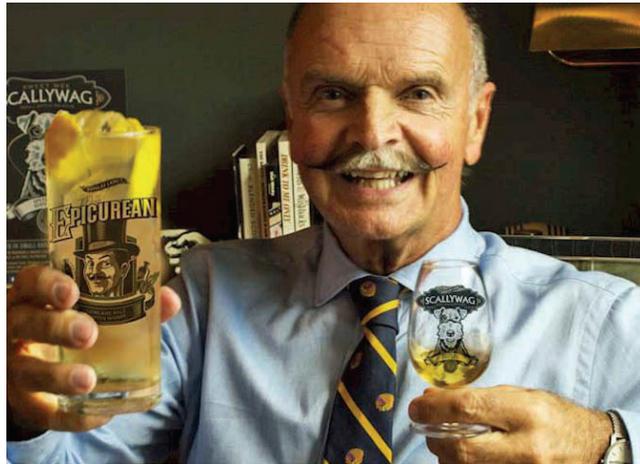
“Obviously our refrigerator, what’s the problem?” And I told him: “This ice actually smells of garlic, cheese and pasta. Apart from chilling it, it’s absolutely ruined my whisky.”

‘So it does come down to education to make sure that whoever’s serving you a malt or well-aged blend does it the correct way.

‘Finally, you’ll notice Fred’s moustache is not as neatly trimmed as mine. If you look closely you’ll see the end bits are stuck together. And I wouldn’t be surprised if they’ve been stuck together with ice.’

# “Slange”

Cont.



**NO: FRED LAING, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND MASTER BLENDER, DOUGLAS LAING & CO**

‘As a rule, I would never draw swords with my old chum Dickie, aka Richard Paterson. While I can be a malt whisky purist, I can also be thrawn enough to head down the ice road with it – even knowing how theatrically (as always) he would deal with that at one of his tastings. I tell you he’s a real health and safety hazard.

‘Our oh-so-modestly named Remarkable Regional Malt (RRM) selection that ranges from Big Peat from Islay to Rock Oyster from the Islands, and the Epicurean from the Lowlands highlights the naturally-coloured and non-chill-filtered qualities of what we still contentiously call vatted malts.

‘And of course we love them to be consumed straight up, believing that we’ve already added enough water at their bottling strength of 46% abv.

‘They have all been promoted with their own branded copitas to be consumed this way, or with just the slightest drop of water. But apart from myself, it’s a young team we have here at Douglas Laing and, unlike some I know, they take a modern and refreshingly open view of life. They like to experiment, try new things and live on the edge.

‘That takes us into the realm of the mixologists and long serves, most of which are iced or at least chilled. We can take Rock Oyster into a nicely spiced and smoky Bloody Mary or the Epicurean into a herbal and refreshing Horse’s Neck – both with ice.

‘And we can be similarly “promiscuous drinkers” with these other brands. Clearly, being a year younger than Dickie gives me a far more open perspective on things.

‘Anyway, one last axe to grind with you my old mucker is: why do you insist on holding your copita by the stem? As well as being somewhat fay, in my view, it just seems totally at odds with your aversion to chilling your malt.

‘Surely you want warmth to release all those aromas, and yet for some reason you will not countenance “cupping” the glass in your hands.

‘But on this burning issue of ice, who should we believe? My wife tells me you can never trust a man with a moustache... where does that leave us?’



## Cont.

IN CONCLUSION...

So there you have it – not so much a drawing of swords as a jousting of moustaches between two veterans of the trade.

Some may see Paterson as a Scotch whisky dinosaur – a King Canute trying to stem the tide of ice. But the truth is people do want to learn how to appreciate their whiskies and get the most from them.

Someone has to tell them – and someone better than that hapless bartender in America who tried to poison Paterson with some cheesy, garlic-encrusted ice cubes (oh, to have been a fly on the wall). Such an experience would probably drive anyone to neat Scotch for life.

With thanks to <https://scotchwhisky.com>

## My thoughts?

I never put ice in high quality whisky, I think it closes down the flavors, numbs your taste buds and on a hot California day (if outside) waters your whisky down very quickly.

For your reference, below is how whisky is generally drunk in the following countries;

**Drinkers in the UK tend to drink Scotch with a dash of water.**

**Drinkers in Spain mix their Scotch with Cola.**

**Japanese drinkers like a lot of ice and water with their Scotch.**

**In China the locals like their Scotch with Green Tea!!!!**

**In France the preference is for ginger ale.**

**In Brazil it's with sugar cane water.**

It's your whisky, so it's your choice how you drink it. But, just remember it was ice that sunk the Titanic!