



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."

First of all I'd like to thank Jeff at Liquor Bank for giving me this whisky to try, Jeff is my go to guy when I want to get my hands on any new or unusual whiskies.

My first thought on tasting this highland whisky was that it reminded me of Penderyn (Welsh whisky), both are light and sweet. Like Penderyn, the Balblair's sweetness is less prominent on the second taste.

Would I recommend it? Yes I would, if you like a light fruity Whisky then you'll like this one.

Balblair is bottled in four vintages - 2000, 1997, 1989 and 1979 - with the bottle design inspired by the Nearby Pictish stone (Clach Biorach), which is thought to be 4000 years old.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Lemon, banana, apple

Palate - Sweet, Ripe fruit, vanilla, sherry, spice

Finish - Long smooth and complex

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





A wee bit of History

Balblair Distillery is located in Edderton, Ross-shire, Scotland and was founded in 1790. The distillery was rebuilt in 1895 to be closer to the Edderton Railway Station on the Inverness and Ross-shire Railway line. However, so good was the original water source that the rebuilt distillery chose to ignore a nearby burn in favor of the original Ault Dearg burn. To this day, the Balblair Distillery continues to use this original water source.

John Ross, the founder, ran Balblair as a thriving business and in 1824 he was joined by his son, Andrew. The distillery stayed in the Ross family until 1894 when the tenancy was taken over by Alexander Cowan. In 1948 the freehold was bought by Robert Cumming, who promptly expanded the distillery and increased production. Cumming ran the distillery until he retired in 1970 when he sold it to Hiram Walker. In 1996 Balblair Distillery was purchased by Inver House Distillers Limited whose other distilleries include the Speyburn-Glenlivet, Knockdhu, Old Pulteney and Balmenach.

Balblair has one of the oldest archives in distilling, with the first ledger entry dated 25 January 1800. John Ross himself penned that first entry, which read: "Sale to David Kirkcaldy at Ardmore, one gallon of whisky at £1.8.0d".

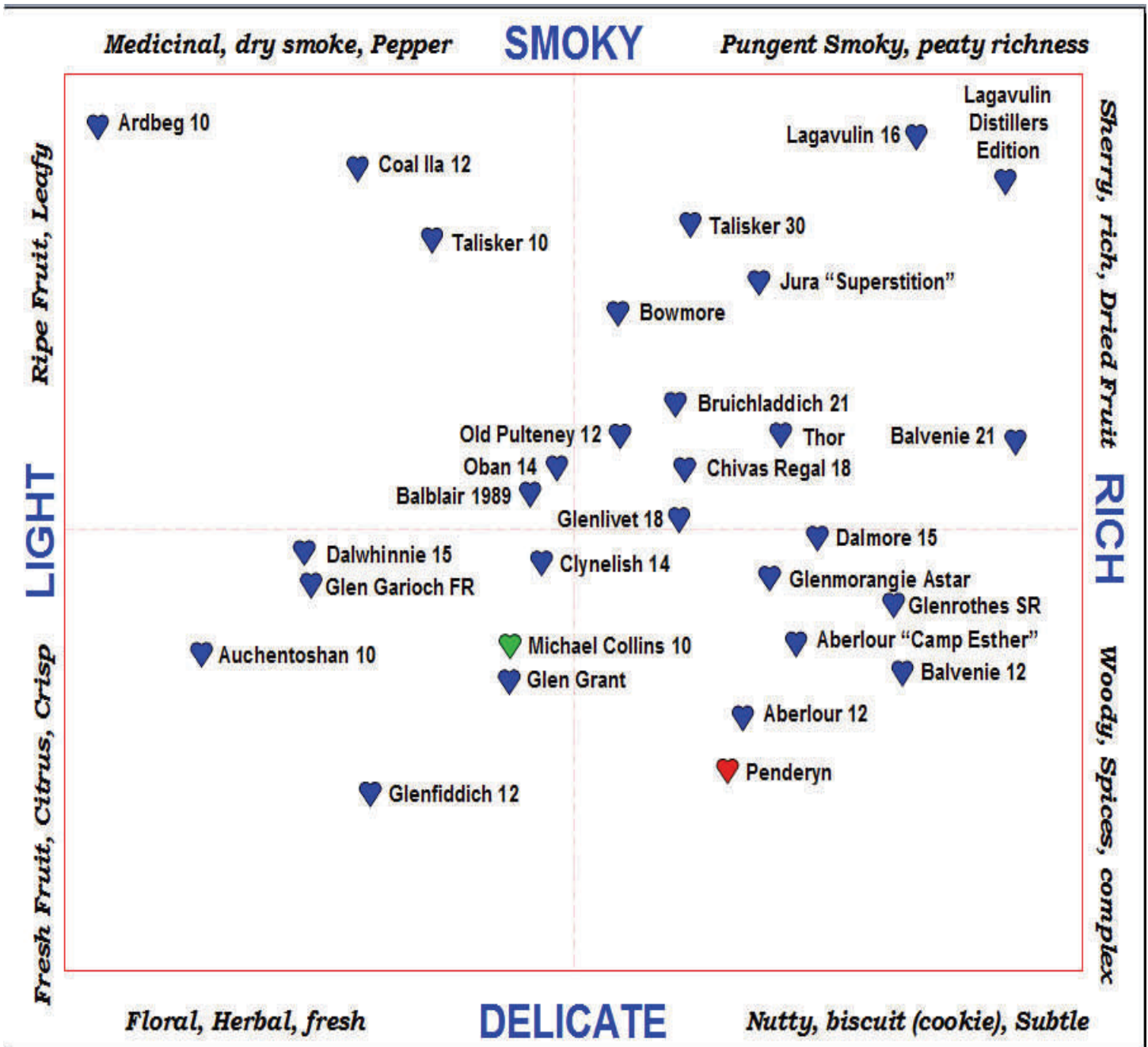


Balblair Distillery

"Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once."



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; **Balblair 1989** For more information go to <http://www.balblair.com/exclusive-vintages/1989>





Whisky Galore as bottles from SS Politician are lined up inside Merseyside Maritime Museum

It was one of the most picturesque incidents in wartime austerity Britain and led to a bestselling novel and an iconic Ealing film. Now the Whisky Galore incident is being revisited by Merseyside Maritime Museum.

The Museum has acquired two whisky bottles from the SS Politician, a merchant ship which ran aground with its valuable cargo of 28,000 cases of Scotch whisky off the west coast of Scotland in February 1941.

As news of the incident spread, thirsty islanders in small boats began descending on the stricken vessel to help themselves to the precious tippie, which was under strict wartime ration.

What followed was one of the most celebrated episodes of cat and mouse in modern memory as the men of Customs and Excise fought running battles with the islanders to recover the cargo.

Luckily no one was seriously hurt - although a customs and excise car was damaged - but it inspired Compton Mackenzie to write his best selling 1946 novel Whisky Galore - adapted into the 1949 film Whisky Galore!

Now as the 70th anniversary of SS Politician's last voyage approaches, the two bottles of Scotch are going on show. Amazingly one of them still contains whisky.

The bottles, acquired recently by curators the UK Border Agency Museum, will join other artefacts from the Harrison Line vessel including a wage book and deck log recording the stranding.

"SS Politician was a famous Liverpool ship. We are very excited to be telling her story because everyone remembers the film about her grounding," says Dawn Littler, curator of Archives at Merseyside Maritime Museum.

"Seventy years after the ship met her end, there is still so much mystery and debate about the exact purpose of the voyage and looting of the cargo. Islanders felt they were entitled to the salvage while customs officers tried to stop the looting."

Some of the residents who looted bottles from the wreck received prison sentences but, thanks in no small measure to the book and the film, history looks upon them benignly. Visitors to the museum will be able to judge for themselves.

To coincide with the artefacts going on display and Burns Night (January 25), the restaurant at the Maritime Museum is serving up a very special menu of Scottish themed dishes including Scottish oak smoked salmon, Haggis neeps and tatties and Raspberry Cranachan.

The display opened to the public on January 22 2011.