



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 its 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 the Dalwhinnie 'Winter's Gold' only distilled between October and March and recommended to be drunk straight from the freezer.

On first reading the above it struck me as a marketing ploy and after tasting it I'm disinclined to change my mind. I love the Dalwhinnie 15 and the Distiller's edition, but this one does not quite hit the mark of those two, at least in my opinion.

If you do drink it straight from the freezer it does change the flavor profile slightly and not in a bad way, which makes for a nice sipping whisky on a hot day.

Would I buy it? At around the same price as the Dalwhinnie 15-year-old, then my answer is no, the 15 is a much nicer dram. If you can pick it up for \$15 to \$20 cheaper then give it a go.

[You can buy Dalwhinnie 'Winter's Gold' for around \\$60.00 a bottle.](#)

Tasting Notes

Nose - Oak, pear & toffee

Palate - Honey, apple & spice

Finish - Honey, nutmeg, spice & a hint of smoke

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





The 11 Best Blended Scotches to Drink in 2021

by Vicki Denig

The finest bottles from a variety of age statements and finishes.

Single malt vs. blended, that is the question. When it comes to sipping [scotch](#), knowing what you're drinking is key—and understanding this major difference is generally the first step. Believe it or not, the contrast is actually pretty simple.

In short, [single malt scotch](#) is produced entirely from barley and is the product of one distillery, whereas blended scotch is made from a combination of malt whisky (barley) and other grains. Blended scotch is also made from a variety of whiskies, meaning that it is not the product of one specific distillery. This makes the job of the master blender super important. Because of its ability to be consistent and use a variety of grains, blended scotch is generally more affordable than single malt, as well as much easier to find on the market.

However, don't go thinking that blended scotch is inferior to single malt! Blended scotch can be equally complex, delicious, and thought-provoking as their single malt counterparts. With regards to taste differences, the differences go far beyond the simple question of single malt vs. blended. Aging time, vessel, peat, and other factors have just as much—if not more—to do with the final flavor profile of a given scotch, whether blended or single malt.

Curious to dive deeper into this vast world? Below, check out our top picks of the best blended scotches to drink right now.

Best Overall: Monkey Shoulder Blended Scotch Whisky

Minimum Age: 3 Years | **ABV:** 43% | **Tasting Notes:** Malt, Vanilla, Dried Apricots

Considering all factors (taste, price, availability), we find Monkey Shoulder to be the best blended scotch whisky on the market. Produced at the hands of William Grant, Monkey Shoulder is a blend of three single malts from well-known Speyside distilleries. Notes of toasty malt, vanilla, nutmeg, dried apricots, cinnamon, and buttered toast dominate the spirit's lengthy, oak-tinged palate. Smooth, silky, and undeniably creamy, this delicious Blended Scotch is perfect for sipping neat or mixing into cocktails.

"Here's the thing. If you're one of those people who shuns blended scotch as inferior, you're doing yourself a great disservice," says beer and spirits consultant Brad Japhe, explaining that a proper blended scotch is round, eminently approachable, and hardly ever lacks in complexity.

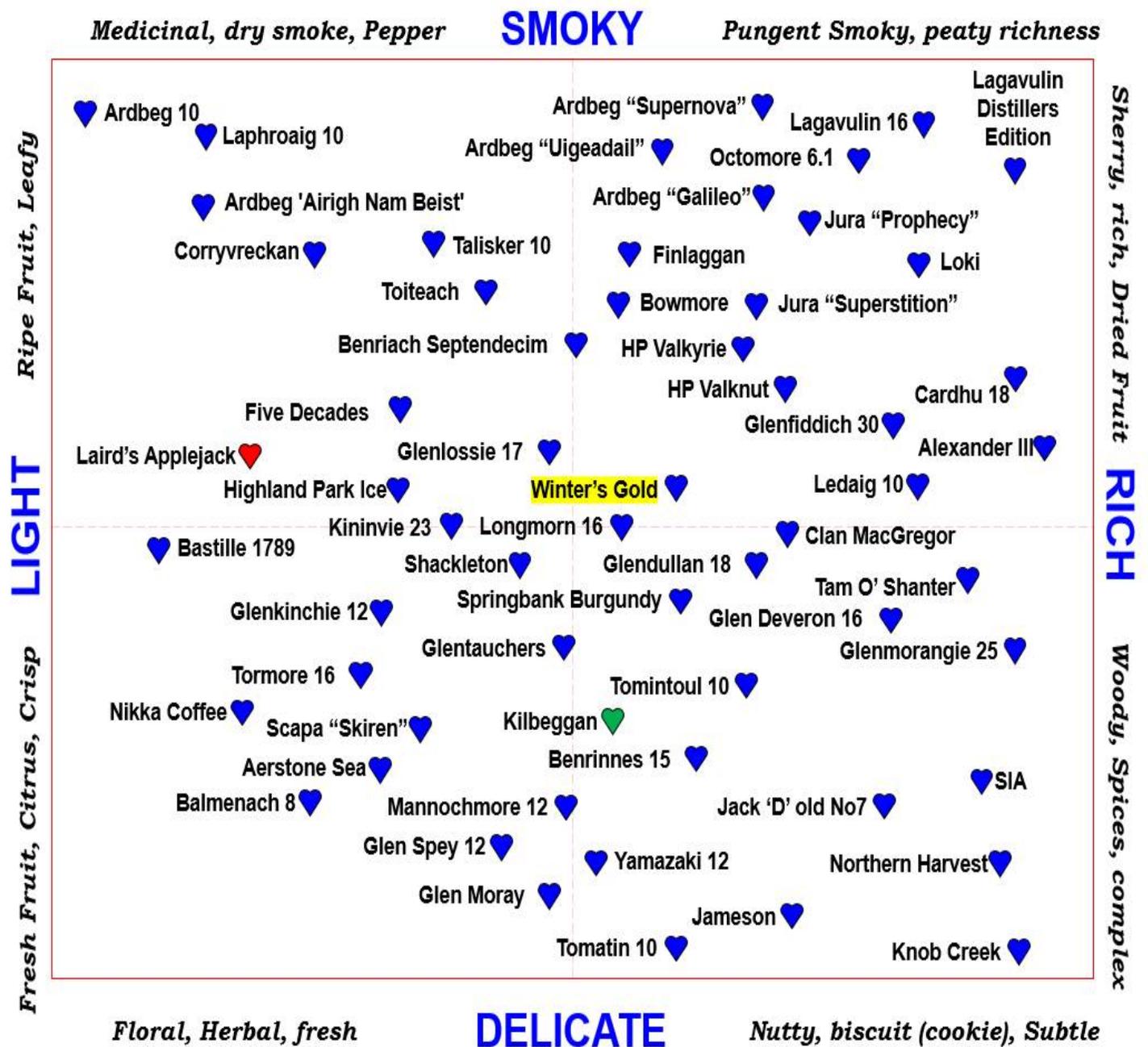
Best Budget: Sheep Dip Malt Whisky

Minimum Age: 8-21 Years | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Honey, Toffee, Salt Water

Looking for something affordable, delicious, and easy to find? Check out Sheep Dip Malt Whisky. This unique blended scotch is produced from 16 different whiskies aged between 8 and 21 years. Rich notes of honey, salt water, toffee, and spicy fruits lead to a strong, mouthcoating finish. For a powerhouse blend perfect for mixing into cocktail creations at home, this bottle's just the ticket.



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; Dalwhinnie 'Winter's Gold'. For more information on Dalwhinnie whiskies go to www.whisky.com/whisky-database/distilleries/details/dalwhinnie.html





The 11 Best Blended Scotches to Drink in 2021 Cont.

Best 12-Year: Johnnie Walker Black

Minimum Age: 12 Years | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Vanilla, Glazed Nuts, Dried Raisins

A household name in any whisky lover's house, Johnnie Walker Black still remains one of our go-to staples for 12-Year Blended Scotch. Founded in 1820 (under the name 'Old Special Highland Whisky'), this quintessential blended scotch is made from whiskies sourced from 36+ distilleries across Scotland, including peat-heavy brands like Lagavulin. Expect vanilla-heavy flavors of charred oak, dried raisins, glazed nuts, and butterscotch.

"In a good blended scotch, I like to look for something a little smoother and silkier than a single malt," says Koorosh Bakhtiar, owner of [JaJaJa Group](#) in New York City.

Best Peated: Duncan Taylor 'The Big Smoke 46'

Minimum Age: 3 Years | **ABV:** 46% | **Tasting Notes:** Campfire, Sea Salt, Wood

This pale-hued, heavily peated blended scotch is produced from a combination of various Islay malts and is perfect for smoke lovers everywhere. Notes of sea salt, campfire, raisins, leather, and wet wood lead to a layered, vanilla-driven finish. For peat fans, this one's for you.

Best 18-Year: Chivas Regal 18-Year Old Scotch Whisky

Minimum Age: 18 Years | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Caramel, Burnt Citrus, Sweet Spice

Nestled between the brand's signature 12-Year and stunning 25-Year lies Chivas' 'Gold signature' 18-Year blended scotch. The brand first released this label in 1997, nearly 90 years after its founding in the Scottish Highlands. Made from 20 grain and malt whiskys, this textured spirit shows flavors of burnt citrus, caramel, peat smoke, and sweet spice. Perfect for sipping solo or mixing into cocktail creations.

"Growing up, the standard was Chivas at my home with my parents," says Bakhtiar. "I feel like it's lost some luster because it's considered 'old timer,' but it's on the sweeter and fruitier side, which is why I like it."

Best 25-Year: Dewar's 25-Year Scotch Whisky

Minimum Age: 25 Years | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Heather Honey, Grilled Nuts, Cream

Regarded as the oldest and rarest whisky within Dewar's range, this 25-year-aged (minimum) whisky promises a mind blowing sipping experience. The spirit is first aged in oak casks, then double aged and finished in Royal Brackla cask. Expect flavors of heather honey, grilled nuts, dried fruits, and cream to lead to a harmonious, insanely smooth finish.

"If you're not afraid to up the ante a little, Dewar's 25 is incredible," says Japhe, citing the bottle as one of the greater higher-end blended scotch options.



The 11 Best Blended Scotches to Drink in 2021 Cont.

Best for Hot Toddies: Black Bottle Blended Scotch

Minimum Age: NAS (No Age Statement) | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Honey, Canned Pears, Sweet Spice

Feeling under the weather? We believe there's nothing that a good ole' hot toddy can't fix. Mixing booze into cocktails shouldn't break the bank or sacrifice quality—enter Black Bottle. Double-aged in oak casks, this sweet yet balanced blended scotch is loaded with smoky flavors of honey, canned pears, and sweet spice.

"We carry Black Bottle at [Gelso & Grand](#) which is full-bodied and is high quality," says Bakhtiar, and although he generally tends to enjoy his blended scotch neat or with a rock, on chillier days Bakhtiar springs for the Hot Toddy. "I like to enjoy blended [scotch](#) in a Hot Toddy with lemon and honey and a dash of cinnamon," he says.

Best for Sipping: Compass Box Hedonism

Minimum Age: NAS (No Age Statement) | **ABV:** 43% | **Tasting Notes:** Tropical Fruits, Shortbread, Cinnamon

For an ideal blended scotch to sip, check out Compass Box Hedonism. Produced mostly from single grain whisky from Cameron Bridge Distillery (approx. 2/3) and rounded out with single grain whisky from Port Dundas, this ex-bourbon cask-aged blended whisky is loaded with flavors of shortbread, tropical fruits, graphite, vanilla frosting, cinnamon spice, and pepper. Blended scotch skeptics, this spirit promises to challenge your notions.

Best for Cocktails: The Famous Grouse Blended Scotch

Minimum Age: NAS (No Age Statement) | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Dried Fruit, Citrus Rind, Vanilla

Flavor-packed, accessible, and affordable—what more could you want from a delicious cocktail scotch? Produced by master blender Gordon Motion, this blended [scotch](#) is made from a combination of ex-bourbon cask and ex-sherry cask whiskies. Creamy notes of dried fruit, vanilla, citrus rind, and shortbread lead to a spicy, flavorful finish that promises to stand on its own against a variety of mixers.

For Japhe, the go-to blended scotch cocktail is a no-brainer. "If you're drinking a blended scotch cocktail, it's going to be a Penicillin," he says.



The 11 Best Blended Scotches to Drink in 2021 Cont.

Best for Gifting: Dewar's Double Double Aged Blended Scotch Whisky 21 Year

Minimum Age: 21 Years | **ABV:** 46% | **Tasting Notes:** Grilled Tropical Fruits, Honey, Cashews
Searching for something unique for the blended scotch aficionado in your life? Look no further than Dewar's Double Double. This unique, 21-Year-Old scotch undergoes a four-stage ageing process and is finished in Oloroso Sherry casks. Notes of honey, grilled tropical fruits, roasted cashews, and smoky wood jump from the spirit's golden-hued palate. This is smooth, silky, and seriously easy to drink. "I've been really digging this Double Double [from Dewar's] too," says Japhe. "There's just an incredible sophistication to the finish, as well as a prolonged nuttiness to the mouthfeel. Marzipan like whoa."

Best Top-Shelf: Ballantine's 30-Year Old Blended Scotch

Minimum Age: 30 Years | **ABV:** 40% | **Tasting Notes:** Toffee, Sweet Spice, Smoke
For a pour that promises to impress, dive into a bottle of this jaw-dropping 30-Year-Old blended scotch from Ballantine's. This award-winning spirit is crafted from a combination of hand-selected, top-quality malt and grain whiskies, aged for an impressive 30 years minimum. Deeply golden-hued, nuanced, and complex, this rare whisky is loaded with flavors of toffee, honey, sweet brown spices, and smoky peat. Creamy mid-palate notes lead to a balanced, spicy, and pepper-driven finish. This is cream of the crop blended scotch in one of its finest forms.

[Vicki Denig](#) is a wine and travel journalist based between New York and Paris. She is a Certified Specialist of Wine through the Society of Wine Educators. Her work regularly appears on Liquor.com, Wine-Searcher, VinePair and more.

**RIGHT NOW,
I'D RATHER
BE DRINKING
WHISKEY**