



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 am merely expressing my opinion on the whiskies I am tasting, as you know, everybody has one.

I now look at the Glengoyne 10-year-old single malt Scotch Whisky. I first tasted this whisky while hiking the West Highland way in Scotland, when we stopped for lunch at the Beech Tree in about half a mile from the distillery. It seemed the right thing to do.....When in Rome etc. I can't say that I was that impressed. I have subsequently tried it at the distillery and at whiskyFest San Francisco along with it's older brothers. I have to say my initial opinion hasn't changed, it just doesn't float my boat.

As well as the flavor, not doing it for me is the price, you can get a number of whiskies, such as the Glenmorangie 10-year-old, or the Glenfiddich 12-year-old for less money and both offer a lot more flavor.

This is not meant to disrespect Glengoyne as their 18 and 21-year-olds are superb. But, this is not one I would buy.

[You can buy Glengoyne 10-year-old for around \\$50.00 a bottle.](#)

Tasting Notes

Nose - Light fruit & vanilla.

Palate - Cereal, vanilla & a hint of citrus.

Finish - Butterscotch, cereal & vanilla.



"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

by Zach Johnston



Asking someone to pay over \$200 for a bottle of booze — whether it be whisk(e)y, brandy, rum, or even Cognac — is no joke. The liquid in that bottle had better be something truly special. Not quite “once-in-a-lifetime” special but definitely well beyond the “let’s open this bottle just because” range.

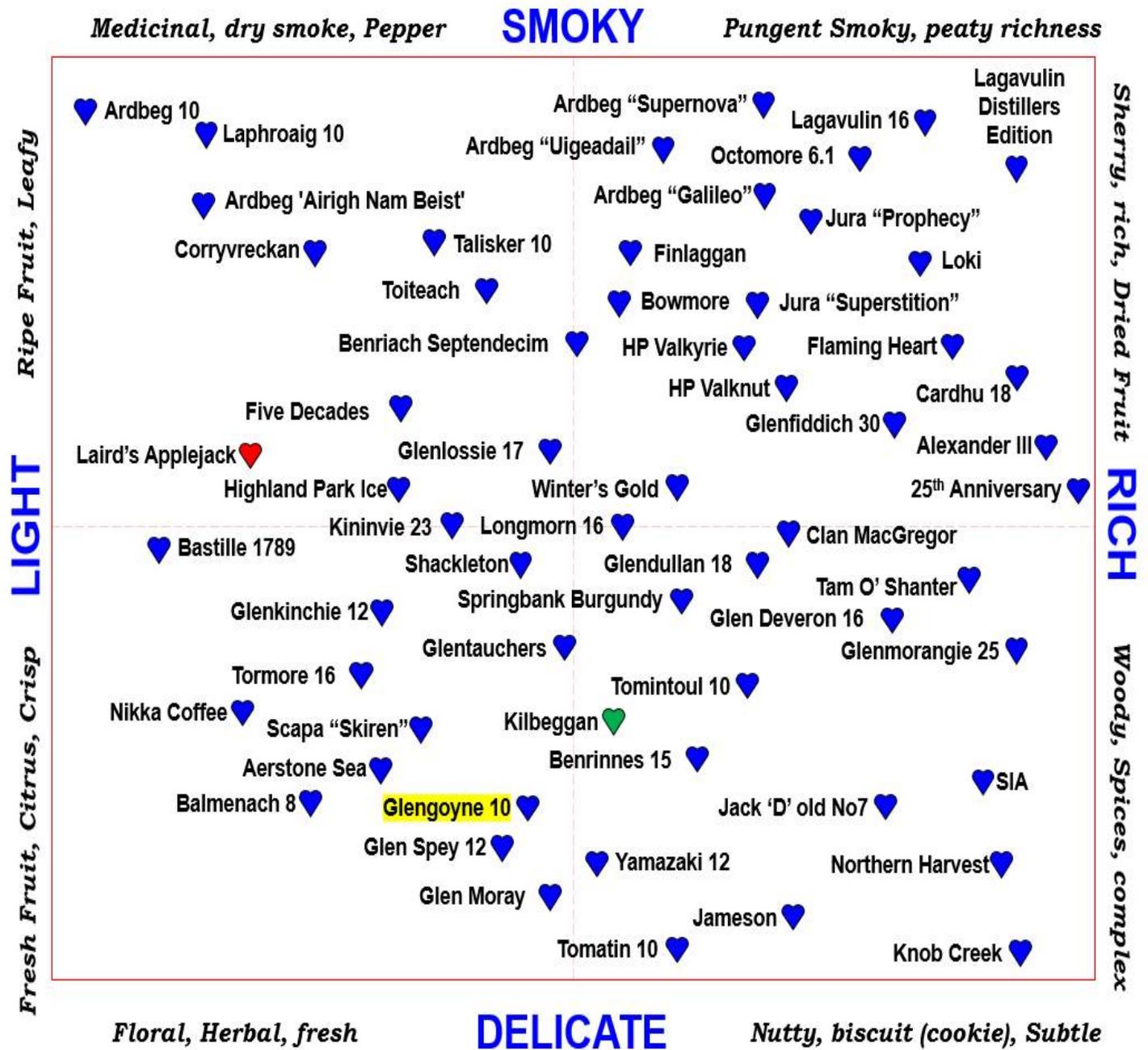
Meaning that any Scotch whisky in the \$200-\$250 price range has to bring something unique to the table. It’s got to make a big promise and deliver.

Here’s the good news: unlike bourbon, where the best bottles are inflated by the aftermarket, the prices of scotch are rarely affected by the hype machine (though they can be affected by tariffs). The price of an expensive scotch is mostly due to its refinement and its scarcity. Even awards don’t typically send prices into the stratosphere. Most of the bottles we’re featuring today are priced this high for one simple reason: they’ve spent two-plus decades resting in a warehouse. That requires a lot of rent, a lot of failed barrels, and a lot of human interaction (read: work) along the way.

Scotch whisky with that sort of age (and price) behind it is an investment in your personal whisk(e)y journey that’ll expand your knowledge and your palate. A worthwhile investment, if you ask us; but obviously not a cheap one. If any of these picks entices you, click on its price to grab a bottle of your own.



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; [Glengoyne 10-year-old](#). For more information on [Glengoyne whiskies](#) go to [www.glengoyne.com](#)





The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Ardbeg Supernova

ABV: 53.8%

Average Price: \$200

The Whisky:

This 2019 release was for hardcore fans of Ardbeg. The juice is a heavily peated whisky that's aged in ex-bourbon barrels for an undisclosed amount of time. The whisky is then bottled to represent the peatiest essence of an Islay whisky.

Tasting Notes:

You get a nose full of dark and wet ash next to fennel and black licorice with a slightly candy-sweet edge. The taste leans into the peat with a dry bark chewiness with hints of peppery spice and dry menthol cigarettes all leading back to a sooty coal smokiness.

The end is very long but mellows out massively as the semi-sweet licorice kicks back in, supporting whispers of orange oils, anise, and corn syrup on the very final note.

Bottom Line:

This is exclusively for whisky drinkers who already love peat but want to take it to the next level. And by "next level" we don't mean going from casually dating to moving in together. It's more like going from casually dating to eloping in Vegas and having five kids together.

This whisky is a commitment to expanding your peaty palate that'll either leave you more in love with the style or content to return to the less pungent whiskies you've tried before.

[My thoughts;](#)

[I like this whisky a lot and would buy it.](#)



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Johnnie Walker Blue Label Year of The Ox

ABV: 46%

Average Price: \$209

The Whisky:

This is the mountaintop of Johnnie Walker's whiskies. The blend is a marriage of ultra-rare stock from extinct Diageo distilleries around Scotland.

That's just ... cool. This expression is all about barrel selection and the mastery of a great noser and blender working together to create something special.

Tasting Notes:

Dried fruit with a plummy sweetness mingles with a very soft and almost dry pall of smoke. The palate then veers in a completely different direction — folding in orange oils, marzipan, rose water, honeycombs, and a dusting of bitter cacao once water is added.

The end is slow, smoky, and full of dry fruits, nuts, and a malty nature.

Bottom Line:

This is one of the most refined blends in the whisky world. It's a delight to sip (neat or with a rock). In fact, if this bottle was a bit more affordable, we'd always have one open on the shelf.

It's just that delicious and accessible.

My thoughts;

I haven't tried this one yet, so no comment.



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Cragganmore 21

ABV: 56%

Average Price: \$210

The Whisky:

This 2010 special release from Diageo highlighted a whisky laid down in the warehouse back in 1989. The whisky is very pale — thanks to aging in second and third-fill ex-bourbon barrels (meaning a lot of the coloring components of the inner-barrel were already sapped). Just over 5,000 bottles were made and, well, it's been eleven long years since then. So, they're getting rarer and rarer.

Tasting Notes:

There's a sense of a cobweb-heavy cellar more than old oak on the nose, with a nice dose of stewed peaches swimming in vanilla pudding. That pudding creaminess leaves the vanilla behind and a lemon cream pie vibe takes over with wisps of savory herbs popping in as a counterpoint. The short end really embraces the stone and orchard fruits with notes of honey and cream smoothing everything out.

Bottom Line:

This is shockingly smooth, fruity, and silky. Cragganmore has a reputation for being one of the easiest and most inviting whiskies in the game, and this bottle only proves that more so. You'll forget you ever needed ice when drinking whisky thanks to this velvet dram.

My thoughts:

I haven't tried this one yet, so no comment.



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Mortlach 20

ABV: 43.4%

Average Price: \$225

The Whisky:

Dufftown's Mortlach is one of those distilleries that may just make you fall in love with scotch. The mash is distilled 2.81 times, according to Mortlach's unique distilling methods.

That juice is then loaded in sherry casks and left to do its thing for 20 long years. The results are vatted, brought down to proof with that soft Speyside water, and bottled.

Tasting Notes:

There's an apple pie feel that pulls you in with stewed and spicy apples, black raisins, and walnuts next to a hint of caramelized pineapple and a whisper of sea salt. That apple pie filling kicks up a notch as a savory and buttery pie crust comes into play, while hints of mint, figs, vanilla, oak, and dark cacao mingle on the tongue.

The end comes along very slowly with more walnuts and raisins leading towards a final savory note that's almost ... extra virgin olive oil?

Bottom Line:

That note of olive oil really threw us. Yet, it makes complete sense when sipping the dram. Brilliance? Luck? All that we know is that it works so well with everything going on in this very rare and exceptional sip of whisky.

My thoughts;

I haven't tried this one yet, so no comment.



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Glenmorangie Signet

ABV: 46%

Average Price: \$230

The Whisky:

This Glenmorangie expression is a prime example of something truly special. The juice is a mix of single malts with estate-grown malts and "chocolate malts" (meaning they were roasted until dark and chocolate-y). The hot juice then went into new American oak (not ex-bourbon) for varying amounts of time.

While there's no age statement, there are barrels up to 40 years old in this mix.

Tasting Notes:

You're greeted with a note of dried apricots with a hint of clove, leading towards a very light dark orange chocolate. The chocolate amps up the bitterness, reaching espresso bean levels as some eggnog spice kicks in with a silky mouthfeel and a touch of wet tobacco.

The end brings about a flourish of bright citrus zest that dries everything out, leaving you with a lingering end and a final note of earthy dried mushrooms.

Bottom Line:

This is as interesting as it is engaging. The taste is so subtly built and takes you places you didn't expect to go. It's complex, sure. But the dram never overpowers and stays very easy to sip.

My thoughts;

I love this whisky, absolutely superb.



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

The Dalmore 18

ABV: 43%

Average Price: \$240

The Whisky:

This is more than just an 18-year-old whisky. The juice in this case spent 14 years maturing in ex-bourbon casks. Then the whisky was filled into Matusalem sherry casks that held sherry for 30 (!) years for four more years of maturation.

The casks, from Bodega González-Byass, are exceedingly rare and impart something truly unique into this whisky.

Tasting Notes:

Dried roses meet your nose as orange-zest bespeckled dark chocolate dances with hints of old book leather, vanilla husks, and sultanas. The taste holds onto the orange and chocolate tightly as a nutty, peppery, syrupy vibe takes over with a light touch of oakiness.

The chocolate zeroes in its bitter qualities on the end, with a little bit more vanilla sweetness and a savory counterpoint that's kind of like saline (or wet salt).

Bottom Line:

There's a lot going on in this sip. For the uninitiated, it can feel like a lot to take in. For those looking to really dial in their palates, it's a great stepping stone to the higher reaches of whisky tasting.

My thoughts;

Great whisky, but is it worth the money, seems a bit expensive to me?



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Talisker 18

ABV: 45.8%

Average Price: \$248

The Whisky:

This is a classic single malt that also happens to hold the title of “Best Single Malt Whisky in the World” from the World Whiskies Awards. The iconic juice is rendered in Talisker’s bespoke stills and then spends nearly two decades resting in both ex-bourbon and ex-sherry barrels, like most of the true classic single malts.

Tasting Notes:

This is subtle. The nose has a light yet clear sense of ripe plums, orange oils, buttery toffee, and an almost sour apple next to a distant whiff of briny campfire smoke from one beach over.

The orange oils remain on the palate as eggnog spices peek in gently, with hints of that butter toffee driving a rich silkiness.

The smoke remains in the distance as the spices warm your senses and the meaty fruit takes the edge off on the slow and satisfying fade.

Bottom Line:

This is a masterpiece. It’s not overly smoky or overly sweet. Instead, you get a perfect balance of everything Scotland has to offer, from both poles of the Scotch whisky experience.

My thoughts;

It’s good, but I’m not paying that much for it.



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Dewar's The Signature 25

ABV: 40%

Average Price: \$249

The Whisky:

Master Blender Stephanie MacLeod has taken blended scotch to the next level with this expression. Grain and single malt whiskies are aged for 25 very long years before they're married and placed in oak vats to get to know each other. Then the whisky is filled into single malt whisky casks from Royal Brackla Distillery for a final maturation. Think of it as a special finishing that's a single malt barrel instead of rum, port, stout, etc.

Tasting Notes:

There's a note of that iconic Aberfeldy honey at the core of the nose, leading your senses towards dried apple chips, a touch of cedar, and what feels like an English muffin covered in clotted cream and berry jam. The taste really leans into the muffin and berries as light notes of honey syrup, dried florals, and more of those dried apples (with a pinch of salt) mix on your tongue. The end is long and fruity with a nice spice counterpoint and a final note of minty tobacco in a cedar box.

Bottom Line:

We're big fans of Aberfeldy, Dewar's, and the work of Stephanie MacLeod, and this bottle is one of the reasons why. Sure, it's a "blended scotch." But, who cares? It's goddamn delicious and complex whisky that'll shatter any illusions you have about "blended" anything.

[My thoughts;](#)

[Nice whisky. I might splash the cash for one of these.](#)



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

The Balvenie 21 Portwood

ABV: 47.6%

Average Price: \$249

The Whisky:

This masterfully crafted expression from The Balvenie takes some serious time. The whisky is initially aged for 21 years in ex-bourbon casks. That whisky is then transferred to small port pipes, which held port in Portugal for 30 long years. That's a long, long time, creating some very rare and well-seasoned oak. The effect is singular and distinct.

Tasting Notes:

You're pulled in by a gentle sense of ripe yet soft peaches next to wet rose petals and a small billow of cherry tobacco smoke from a pipe. The palate, again, is gentle and carries notes of red, sweet, and tart berries, stewed plums, and tiny moments of velvety and buttery pain au chocolat.

The finish holds onto that chocolate as it slowly meanders through your senses, leaving you with dark fruits, a whisper more of that cherry tobacco, and a pure silk mouthfeel.

Bottom Line:

This is one of those sips that you can't help but say, "Holy shit, that's good!" about. It's like a reflex. It's so gentle and welcoming that you'll be hard-pressed not to make it your go-to special occasion whisky.

[My thoughts;](#)

[Yes, definitely worth it, great whisky.](#)



The Best Bottles of Scotch Whisky Between \$200-\$250

Bruichladdich Octomore 10.4 Virgin Oak

ABV: 63.5%

Average Price: \$249

The Whisky:

This heavily peated Islay scotch from Bruichladdich is an experimental whisky. The mash is made from Concerto malts grown on Islay at Octomore's own farm. Distilled in 2016, the juice spent three short years maturing in French Limousin oak before it was bottled as-is at cask strength and released early last year.

Tasting Notes:

The nose hits you with hot campfire smoke laced with dried pears, dried peaches, candied ginger, and a bit of straw — but it's more like you're sitting a bale of hay than chewing on the stalk. Eggnog spices arrive on the palate with hints of cedar, dried vanilla tobacco leaves, and tart red berries (think cranberry or red currants) while the smoke takes on an almost charred green chili pepper edge. That spicy smoke carries the sip to a medium-length end with hints of that fruit popping back in.

Bottom Line:

Octomore is pretty much the only "hyped" whisky on this list. People who love it, loooooove it and will stand in lines for hours to grab a bottle. For us, it's always an interesting and enlightening journey that expands knowledge and brings something new to the tasting glass. That's a winning combo as far as we're concerned — heavy peat or not.

[My thoughts;](#)

[Nope, not for a 3-year-old whisky.](#)