



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.

I now look at the Ardbeg Supernova, which I tried recently in Edinburgh, Scotland. The third release under the Supernova name, this whisky (Supernova 2014) celebrates the return to earth of The Ardbeg/Nasa Space experiment in September of last year. Where vials of Ardbeg new make spirit were kept on the International Space Station for a couple of years, to see how wood/spirit interaction changes in a microgravity environment. The first edition of Supernova appeared in 2009, the second in 2010 and though not readily available can still be found. The original Supernova was part of a peat war, when the Islay distilleries were competing to produce the peatiest whisky. While Ardbeg might not have won the war (that accolade goes to Bruichladdich's **Octomore** whiskies) they certainly came out of it with some credit:

Jim Murray crowned Supernova 2009 the Scotch Whisky of the Year and Second Finest Whisky in the World in 2010.

You can buy Ardbeg "Supernova" for around \$195.00 a bottle.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Peat, smoke & dark chocolate

Palate - Peat, smoke, dark chocolate, coffee & spice

Finish - Sweet smoke, peat & dark chocolate

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





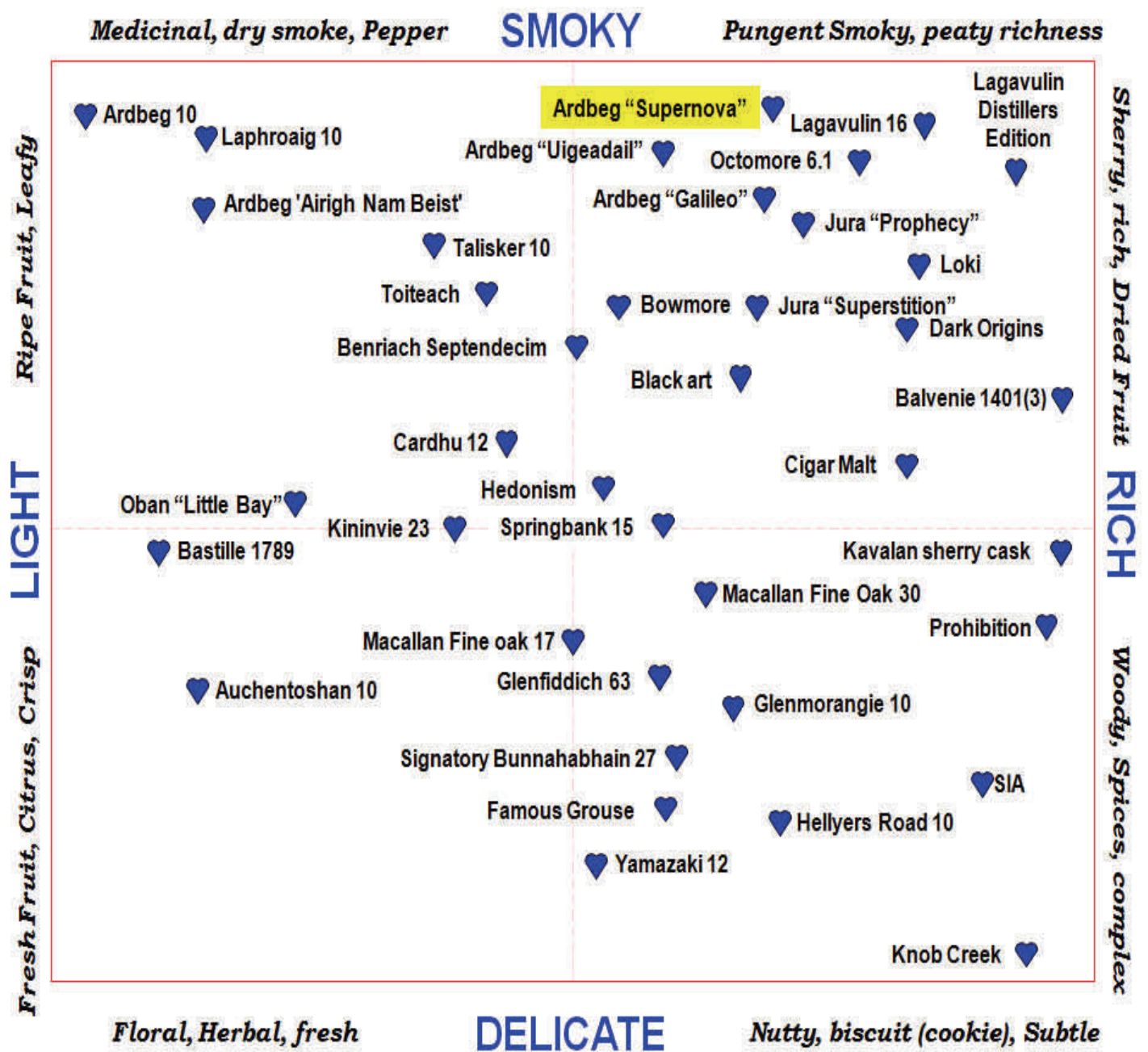
Aromas arising during Whisky production

- 1) **Cereal**: these aromas come from the malted barley, and are usually modified by the later stages of production (fermentation and distillation).
- 2) **Fruity** (the scientific term is 'estery'): the sweet, fragrant, fruity, solvent-like scents which characterize Speyside malts in particular, arise during fermentation and distillation.
- 3) **Floral** (or 'aldehydic'): leafy, grassy or hay-like scents, sometimes like Parma violets or gorse bushes, and often found in Lowland malts.
- 4) **Peaty** (also called phenolic) – these scents are abundant in Islay malts and range from wood-smoke to tar, iodine to carbolic. Almost all phenols are imparted to the malt during kilning.
- 5) **Feinty**: this group is the most difficult to describe, yet feints give whisky its essential character. They start coming in halfway through the spirit run, beginning as pleasant biscuity (cookie), toasted scents, then build through tobacco-like and honeyed to sweaty. The wise still-man stops collecting spirit at the honeyed stage, for the deterioration can be dramatic thereafter. Feints are mellowed and transformed by maturation in good casks.
- 6) **Sulphury** (from organosulphur compounds): these arise during both distillation and maturation. Copper plays a crucial role in removing such aromas, which are generally unpleasant. Maturation introduces the last two key aromatic groups:
- 7) **Woody**: the vanilla-related aromas in this group derive from American white oak. Some woody aromas are directly related to age: malts can become woody when they have been in cask for too long. Oak increases complexity, enhances fragrance and delicacy, creates astringency, lends color and develops roundness.
- 8) **Winey** (also called extractives): if the cask has previously been filled with wine (mainly sherry, but sometimes port or others), the wood absorbs wine residues, which are extracted by the spirit and become part of its flavor.

“Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.”



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; Ardbeg “Supernova.” For more information go to <http://www.ardbeg.com>





5 Reasons why you should go to whisky tastings

By Gregor Hannah

You don't have to be an expert to enjoy a whisky.

More and more people are beginning to enjoy the wonders of whisky and we want more people to realize there's no need to be an expert to enjoy our national drink. With that in mind, we spoke to Gregor Hannah, creator and owner of Lady of the Glen whisky and asked him why he loves attending - and hosting - whisky tastings.

Meeting new people

Whisky tastings are usually set-up so that you are seated a table with a few other participants. Some will carry an air of confidence only associated with the Whisky connoisseur, who has attended more whisky Tastings than you have enjoyed Simpsons' episodes. While others will have the more virginal coy demeanor of someone who has not attended a tasting before and is terrified they will be challenged into submission by their host, demanding to know the specific PPM of the AnCnoc they just tried.

However true these stereotypes may be after a few whiskies everyone is sharing feedback in a mutually enjoyable experience. The whisky connoisseur is sharing and imparting their whisky wisdom while the whisky newbie springs up with unique tastes, for instance at a tasting I was at recently one person pointed out that a particular 'tasted like the inside of a leather shoe, but in a good way', which was a great way of describing the aged whisky we had just tried.

A tasting also affords a wonderful opportunity for people to be social, to meet new people with interesting backgrounds or personalities (because only interesting people go to whisky tastings), whatever happens you will have something to talk about whether it be the Whisky on show or your new found friend's collection of original Star War's memorabilia...like that 'Chewbacca film ready head' you promised yourself one day.

It's an opportunity to try whisky that you would not ordinarily have access to

At the whisky tasting I hosted recently, I was able to provide whisky which was sold out on our website. At Lady of the Glen we only release rare high quality bottlings, so the whisky we had for the tasting wasn't widely available.

Some of them, the 24 year old bourbon cask Invergordon single grain, 14 year old single Malt sherry cask Benrinnes, the 21 year old single malt sherry Cask Bowmore and the 21 year old single malt bourbon cask Littlemill were only available during this tasting, as they were completely sold out in the UK and practically impossible to source, the Littlemill itself was even from a destroyed distillery. It just goes to remind you that tastings can be the only way to try some truly wonderful – and rare – malts and if you're very lucky, you might even come across a once in a life-time dram.



whisky tastings cont.

Learn something new

Whisky Tastings are not only about tasting whisky, a good host will tell you about the distillery that produced each whisky or reveal a bit of information about them, that you might not have previously known. It's not all about tasting notes either, which are in many ways open to interpretation.

Mark Davidson who hosts The Jolly Topper tastings in Edinburgh is fantastic at this, for example at the Benrinnes tasting I was at, we learned all about the stills, the history of the distillery (destroyed twice) and its unique use of 'worm tubs'. These little pieces of information really help you to understand the whisky you are sipping, in a similar way to watching a film, where that climatic end scene becomes more enjoyable when you learn how the character develops and why they are the way they are.

It's the perfect start to an evening

Whisky tastings tend to start around 7pm and last an hour or so, you will likely not be sampling at a rate of 25cl but slightly less and in many instances some food is provided. It's not the case that people are getting blind drunk, it's more likely by the end of the tasting that there will be a few rosy cheeks of merriment on show. Tastings normally have 5 to 7 drams, any more than that and the room starts to boil over into anarchy which is a host's nightmare! At the last Lady of the Glen tasting I added the 21 year old Sherry cask Bowmore as a special surprise dram to try after we had finished tasting the other malts, and some guests even volunteered some of their own whisky after for those who were still socializing to try.

At one tasting I attended recently, the host held a wee Whisky miniature raffle and I managed to win a Littlemill.

Essentially after the tasting you should be in merry frame of mind with a whole night still ahead of you to look forward to.

It's not all the same whisky

Whisky tastings are not just 5 or 6 whiskies from different distilleries – they are 5 or 6 very unique liquids. For example at the Benrinnes Whisky tasting, I tried 6 whiskies from the same distillery but they were all very different – the cask, the bottler, the distillation date and other factors all combine to create a unique spirit. So when you are at a tasting and you see that it includes a Whisky from a distillery you have tried before don't assume that it's the same old whisky, as it will likely taste very different from what you have previously tried. This lends itself to the idea that every tasting is different and that's why once you've been to one whisky tasting you will find yourself going to more on a regular basis.