



## 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"*

This issue I look at the Ben Nevis 10 year old, which was recommended by another friend (also an old Navy man) who goes by the Nickname of Teuchter (a Lowland Scots word used to describe a Scottish Highlander). Teuchter is from Portmahomack, and if you look it up on the map you will see you can't go much further up into Scotland than that. In September 09 my wife Tracey and I along with our friends David McDonald, Jim and Dianne McKasson, my son Paul also joined us to hike from Fort William to Inverness. As we were starting in Fort William, and that is where Ben Nevis whisky is made, I bought a bottle of the 10 year old to fill my hip flask each day of the hike.

The men wore their kilts for the whole hike and Jim had brought his pipes with him, so we were serenaded as we drank our whisky and hiked through the highlands. Could it get any better than that..... yes it could, sorry Teuchter I didn't really like this one. I think this whiskey would have benefitted with a few more years in the cask, which would have made it smoother.

### Tasting Notes;

**Color** - Golden Amber

**Nose** - Toffee, Caramel, Fruit

**Palate** - Sherry, Cooked Apple, Hint of Liquorice.

**Finish** - Long with a touch of heat

*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](http://www.scot-talks.com).*

*"Slainte Mhath"*

*Paul Bissett*





## A wee bit of History

The Ben Nevis Distillery was established in 1825 by “Long John” McDonald. When Long John died in 1856, his son Donald MacDonald took over the business, and was so successful that he had to build another distillery he called Glen Nevis. This was closed in 1908, and has since been used as warehouse for Ben Nevis. In 1955, the distillery became the property of Joseph W Hobbs, also owner of Bruichladdich, Glenesk, Glenkinchie, Glenury Royal and Lochside.

Hobbs installed a Coffey Still and Ben Nevis was the first distillery to produce malt and grain whisky. The distillery was acquired by the Long John group, itself part of the Whitbread group in 1981. The distillery was extended, but closed 2 years later, in 1984. During this alteration work, the Coffey still was suppressed.

The distillery closed again in 1986 until it was purchased by the Japanese group The Nikka Whisky Distilling Company Ltd in 1989 and reopened in 1990.

A large proportion of the production is used in blends, such as Glencoe and Dew of Ben Nevis.

The distillery is nestled at the foot of Britain's highest mountain, this imposing mountain provides an impressive background to the distillery. Watch out for Ben and Nevis (Highland cattle), the distillery mascots as you enter the visitor centre.



## Lachlan's Laws;

"A closed mouth gathers no feet."





## So, how is whisky made and what should you look for when tasting?

### *Barley & Water*

Whisky starts with barley grains spread out on the floor of the malting house, steeped in water. The sprouting grains are turned with paddles as starch turns to sugar in the barley. At just the right moment the barley is placed into a hot, peat fired kiln to stop germination.

### *Grist, Mash & Wort*

The dry barley is milled to produce grist and then mixed with hot water to produce the mash. The mash, is stirred in a mash tun and the wort drawn off and placed in huge wooden pails made of Oregon pine or cypress. Fermentation starts in the wooden washbacks and the wort becomes alcoholic, turning into the wash.

### *Wash & Distillate*

The wash is distilled twice in copper pot stills, first to produce low wines and then again in the spirit stills to produce the final product. Only the middle of the distillate produced is taken to make whisky. The foreshot or first part is too strong and the last part, the feints, is too weak. After testing, the spirit is matured in casks previously used for bourbon, sherry, rum or port.

### *Cask & Bottle*

The casks are stored in a bonded warehouse often being held for many years. Each year 2% of the whisky will evaporate in the angel's share, one reason why a whisky which has matured for longer is more valuable. Whisky only matures in the cask and not in the bottle, unlike wine, so once the whisky is bottled it can safely be kept for many years and won't change in character.

### *The art of tasting (this is one way, there are others)*

When tasting a whisky there are some key things to try. First of all swirl the whisky in your glass, take a look at the color and note how the whisky flows down from the rim of the glass from the tears that form. How slowly the tears form and flow into the legs and how far apart the legs, are indicates the age of the whisky. Mouthfeel also indicates age with a mellow feeling in the mouth indicating a more mature whisky. Like wine, the aroma from a whisky can take a while to open up and much of the pleasure is in the nose so take your time and see what you can smell. You should first nose the whisky neat then add water, if liked, as this can open the whisky and release more complex flavors and aromas. Swirling the whisky over your palate when you take a sip will enhance the flavors you can pick out in the whisky. And finally, the finish. Swallowing the whisky is approved of fully and will give you the finale to your tasting experience.

The above information, and a great deal more can be found at <http://www.scotland.org> The official gateway to Scotland.