



## 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 Glen Moray "Classic", which my brother-in-law Ivor gave me.

First of all, it is a Speyside whisky, made in, or at least close by to the town of Elgin, the capital of the Speyside region.

Secondly, at least to my taste buds it tastes like a lowland whisky, with it's citrus, grass notes and light texture.

Thirdly, would I buy it? I would indeed, I've tasted better single malts, but not at this price, it's not a bad wee dram, and the price can't be beat. You may not be familiar with Glen Moray whiskies, but I believe you soon will be, the distillery was expanded in 2012, and expanded again in 2016, so it may be a few years down the road, but there is going to be a lot more and possibly a greater variety of Glen Moray single malts hitting the shops.

By the way, for those of you that don't know what "Millionaire's shortbread" is, it was one of my favorite treats as a child. Scottish shortbread with a layer of caramel on top and then a layer of chocolate on top of that.

You can buy the Glen Moray "Classic" for around \$30.00 a bottle.

### Tasting Notes

**Nose** - Millionaire's shortbread & grass

**Palate** - Blackcurrant & lemon

**Finish** - Shortbread & orange

*"Slainte Mhath"*

*Paul Bissett*





## Glen Moray

Glen Moray was built on the site of the West Brewery to the west of Elgin on the banks of the River Lossie. Following reconstruction, Glen Moray Distillery was founded in 1897. It was not long before the distillery closed in 1910, though it reopened a couple of years later, shortly before closing once more. In 1920, Macdonald and Muir acquired the distillery and once more spirit flowed from the stills. The distillery operated its own floor maltings, converting to a Saladin Box in 1957, which remained in use until 1978. During the 1970s, the two original stills were replaced and two further stills were added, giving the distillery a total yearly capacity of two million litres.

In 1996 Macdonald and Muir Ltd renamed itself Glenmorangie Plc and in 2004 the group was acquired by Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, for the princely sum of £300 million. The Glenmorangie distillery pioneered exotic wood finishes and Glen Moray championed white wine finishes, releasing a Chardonnay finish and two Chenin Blanc finishes in 1999.

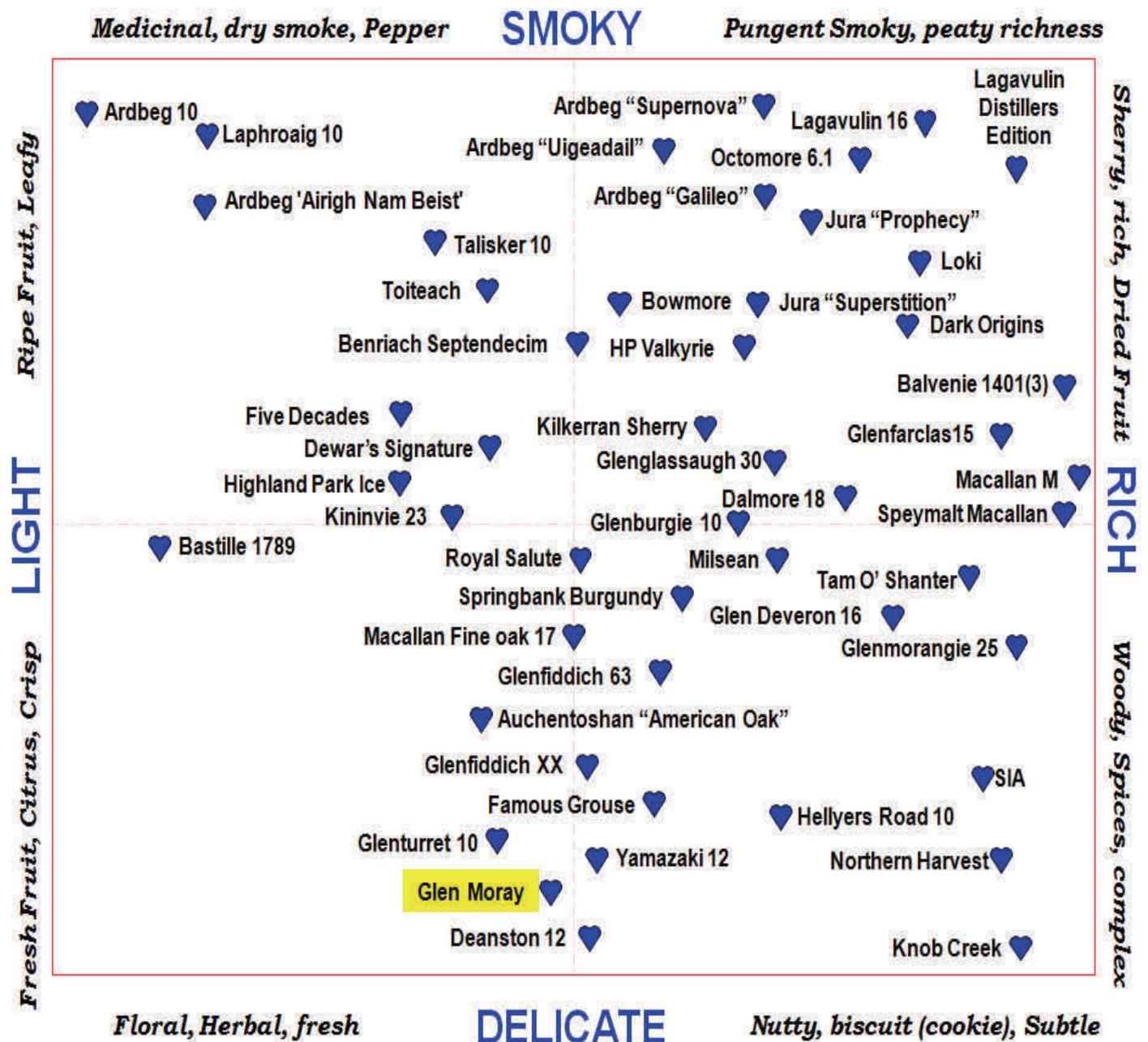
Most of the whisky from Glen Moray has long since been used in blended Scotch. More recently, the Glenmorangie Co decided to cease producing whisky for blending and subsequently, in 2008, the distillery was put up for sale. There are several official house bottlings, but independent bottlings are rather rare.

The company now belongs to La Martiniquaise which uses part of its production in their blended Whisky Label 5. The distillery was expanded in 2012 to produce 3,300,000 litres annually from 3 wash stills and 3 spirit stills. 2016 has seen further expansion and development of the site with a growth in production to around 5,500,000 litres annually predicted. [www.masterofmalt.com](http://www.masterofmalt.com)





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; [Glen Moray classic](#). For more information on Glen Moray go to <http://www.glenmoray.com>





## Whisky is for everyone

By M.D. Slutsky

Edinburgh's Scotch Malt Whisky Society is particularly impressive. It's a members' club that purchases casks of the stuff from distilleries and then bottles them with labels bearing only a number designation and a short, sometimes hilarious description of the liquid's flavor ("Jar Jar Binks in trouble again" and "A big eye-watering slap" were two of my favorites). The whimsical designations of the bottles and, indeed, the spirit of the entire evening, spoke to something about Scottish culture, and its whisky culture in particular. What I found incredibly appealing was that it was all just so amazingly unpretentious. Though I'd always had a taste for Scotch whisky, and single malt in particular, I'd never really thought very long and hard about what the language around it meant. The fancy boxes, the Scottish names and the high prices had all given me the feeling that true whisky appreciation was snobby and out of reach. But on this recent trip to whisky country, I learned that I was mistaken. Whisky didn't have to be intimidating or difficult. It could actually be a lot of fun. And the more I learned about it, the more I realized I had even more to glean from the Scots.

That night, the Scotch Malt Whisky Society was hosted by Sam Simmons, the global brand ambassador for the Balvenie distillery, who was charmingly straightforward about the subject of whisky. "It's a farmer's drink," he told us. It was all so much simpler than I had expected. And after spending some time in Scotland, I realized how much this delicious farmer's drink had steeped into the culture. Billboards everywhere advertised Ken Loach's new film *The Angels' Share*, about a Glasgow good-for-nothing who, after discovering whisky, ends up planning an elaborate heist of a valuable cask ("the angels' share" is a term that refers to the 2% of booze that evaporates every year from an aging barrel). Later, a cab driver told me offhand during a conversation about liquor prices, "We're a nation of drinkers."

### Whisky is just distilled beer

My whisky education really began during my trip to the Balvenie distillery in Speyside, a beautiful area in northeast Scotland that's also home to Glenfiddich, Aberlour and many other distilleries (there's actually 103 in total around the country).

Balvenie prides itself on being one of the last five family-owned whisky brands and the last to use all traditional practices during distillation. The making of whisky begins in the Balvenie fields, where they grow their own barley. It is then moved to a big old warehouse, where it's mashed, and then moved into giant wooden containers, where it is fermented. The result is something very much like... beer. In fact, it pretty much *is* beer, just without the hops. (If you get a chance to taste it, be warned -- it's really strong stuff.) That liquid is then distilled in huge, steampunk-like copper stills, where it becomes the clear, strong stuff that, after a dozen or so years of aging, makes up the Scotch we know and love.



## Whisky is for everyone cont.

### **Whisky comes in three basic varieties with hundreds of variations**

There's basically three kinds of Scotch: blended, single malt and single cask. Blended whisky is basically what people thought of as Scotch whisky up until the '60s, and it still represents 90% of today's market. Basically, it consists of about one-third malt whisky (distilled from malted barley), usually from various different distilleries, and two-thirds grain whisky. Blended spirits were the standard because every cask of whisky tastes different (more on this later), due to the blending of different varieties in different proportions, and bottlers could create a consistent product that always tasted the same. Grant's is a good example.

Single malt whisky emerged in the early '60s and quickly became the connoisseur's choice, for a couple of reasons. Single malts are made entirely of malt whisky, blended together from different casks, and the "single" in the name refers to the fact that all of the spirits in the blend are from a single distillery. This allows the distilleries to create Scotches with unique flavors and characters. Not all make their own single malts, but there are enough distilleries that do, providing hundreds of brands to choose from. Balvenie alone sells a variety: DoubleWood, Signature, Thirty (aged 30 years) and PortWood, just to name a few.

Finally, there's single-cask whisky, the only kind that's not blended. Basically, a bottler will tap a cask, and if the flavor is good enough, bottle it without mixing, making for some very unique bottles. If you buy a single-cask, you know that only about 300 other bottles in the world will taste exactly the same. These are rarer, though not necessarily more expensive or better. You might also hear them referred to as "cask strength," so named because the booze is straight out of the barrel, not mixed with any water (as most single-malts and blendeds are), making the alcohol levels higher. This can, of course, necessitate a slightly different method of drinking the stuff.

### **There's lots of ways to drink it, but one we particularly recommend**

You can do whatever you want with your Scotch. You can drink it with soda, with crushed ice. Heck, you can even pour Coke into it (if that's what floats your boat). Don't let anyone tell you there's a "right" way to drink Scotch, especially if they're acting all purist about drinking it neat.

However, there is one way we recommend, and it comes straight from David Stewart, Balvenie's Malt Master. He's the guy who's spent over 50 years sniffing, tasting and mixing together Balvenie's casks in order to produce its signature bottles. He's basically the Obi-Wan Kenobi of whisky, and so when he says he drinks it a certain way, we listen.



## Whisky is for everyone cont.

What Stewart does is add a little water to the whisky, which is pretty much the way everyone drinks it over there. There are often pitchers or even little taps on the bars for that very reason. But he adds more than the standard few drops; the preferred Stewart whisky to water ratio is 2:1. It's worth trying, as it really opens up the flavor of the drink. You see, particularly with a strong hooch like cask-strength Scotch (which we mentioned in the first part of this series), the taste of the alcohol itself -- ethanol specifically -- can overwhelm the subtler oaky and smoky flavors of the whisky. Diluting it a bit allows you to experience the whisky in its full woody glory.

### **Booze comes from booze**

We've already learned that whisky is basically distilled beer, but only about 30% of a given Scotch's taste comes from the malting and distillation process. The remaining 70% comes from the aging process. The clear spirit is poured into barrels and then aged for years -- usually at least 12, but sometimes for decades more.

It's the barrels themselves that give the liquid its color, ranging from golden to dark amber, and of course, its flavor.

Different barrels give different results, and what often gives a Scotch its distinctive flavor is what the barrels were used for before they stored whisky. Distillers use casks that had previously aged bourbon, sherry, port and even rum (in the case of Balvenie's Carribbean Cask line). In many cases, the spirits will be aged for 12 years in whisky oak casks and finished for about another six months in another "flavor," like sherry (as is the case with Balvenie's Double Wood), giving the drink a subtle new flavoring.

### **Whisky drinkers are promiscuous (though not necessarily the way you think)**

On a tour of Duncan Taylor, an independent bottler in Speyside, we heard a funny term applied to whisky drinkers. That word was "promiscuous," and it didn't refer to Scotch enthusiasts's sexual proclivities after a few too many drinks (although that may also be the cause). No, it referred to the fact that while many Scotch enthusiasts may have favorite drinks, they're not bound to the same kind of brand loyalty as, say, smokers or cola drinkers. With hundreds of varieties to choose from, there's no reason to commit to any particular brand or bottle for life. In fact, that's one of the fun parts of whisky enthusiasm. There's almost a Pokemon-like "gotta catch 'em all" aspect to drinking Scotch. And while prices can sometimes be steep, there are plenty of affordable options, and a bottle of the brown stuff will most likely last you much longer than a similarly priced bottle of wine, which you can kill over a meal.



## Whisky is for everyone cont.

If you're in the mood for something sweet and honey-tasting, try the Balvenie Double Wood. Want something subtle and smooth with hints of vanilla? The Glenfiddich 15 Year is a particularly nice choice (and in our opinion, a huge leap over the 12 Year). Want something smoky, peaty and rugged? Try a bottle from the isle of Islay, like Bowmore or Laphroaig, which can taste like drinking liquid oak (in a good way). Recently, we sampled a bottle of Ardbeg, also from Islay, that was so dark and smoky it stopped us in our tracks. It was almost bitter. The point is, whisky flavors and experiences vary widely with region, distillery, even by the kinds of wood used. There's plenty to explore and no real "wrong" whisky to try. Figuring out which kind suits your tastes is really just part of the fun.

Read more: [http://www.askmen.com/fine\\_living/wine\\_dine\\_archive/whisky-part-2.html#ixzz1zCwUfSoo](http://www.askmen.com/fine_living/wine_dine_archive/whisky-part-2.html#ixzz1zCwUfSoo)

