



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 do not profess to be an expert, I am merely expressing an opinion on the whiskies I am tasting.

I now look at the Glenburgie (pronounced glen-burg-ee) 10-year-old, which I tried at the Corbie in Bo'ness, Scotland. I had a birthday dinner with family here and noticed that there was to be a whisky tasting the next night, so my brother-in-law and I came back the next night and enjoyed a range of different whiskies. Unfortunately for this whisky, the one enduring whisky memory from that night's tasting was of the new "Ailsa Bay" whisky by William Grant and sons (Glenfiddich etc). It's not that this is a bad whisky, it's not, for the price it's eminently drinkable. It just suffered by being presented to my taste buds the same evening as the "Ailsa Bay" (more on that whisky in a later edition).

The Glenburgie distillery is situated in the Speyside whisky region, and stands at the side of the main road between Aberdeen and Inverness, just outside the town of Forres. The current owners are Chivas Brothers, part of the larger Pernod Ricard group, who took over of Glenburgie in 2005.

An interesting side note; The Irish author Maurice Walsh having trained as a Customs and Excise officer, was posted to Scotland, where He spent some time at the Glenburgie whisky distillery. One of his works, "The Quiet Man", would later be reproduced in a film starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara.

You can buy Glenburgie 10-year-old for around \$40.00 a bottle.

Tasting Notes

Nose - Christmas fruit cake

Palate - Sweet cooked fruits

Finish - Fruits & malt

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





Glenburgie Distillery, near Forres

From the website "Whisky story" (Well worth a visit)

<http://whiskystory.blogspot.com/2011/07/glenburgie-distillery-near-forres.html>

After my visit to the two slightly later distilleries at Forres it is now back to the Barnard trail with a look at Glenburgie Distillery. Barnard records it as being four miles from Forres but also two miles from Kinloss Station so it is not clear which stop he made on the railway after his time at Nairn and Royal Brackla. He arrived in Elgin the following morning, whether from near here or from Nairn is unclear, and his visit to Glenburgie appears to have been quite brief.

Barnard mentions the view from a range of hills not far from the distillery with Sutherland, Caithness and Ben Wyvis (a ubiquitous view in these parts) all visible from the top. Intrepid as ever, and for once glad that I was not in an open carriage like Barnard often was, I drove up a bumpy track through a fir plantation (Burgie Wood) until I reached the Califer Viewpoint above Forres from where that view was, well, only just viewable. Rain clouds were sweeping across from the northeast, their precious cargo being deployed onto the fields below to aid what Barnard described as "the finest barley growing district of the north".

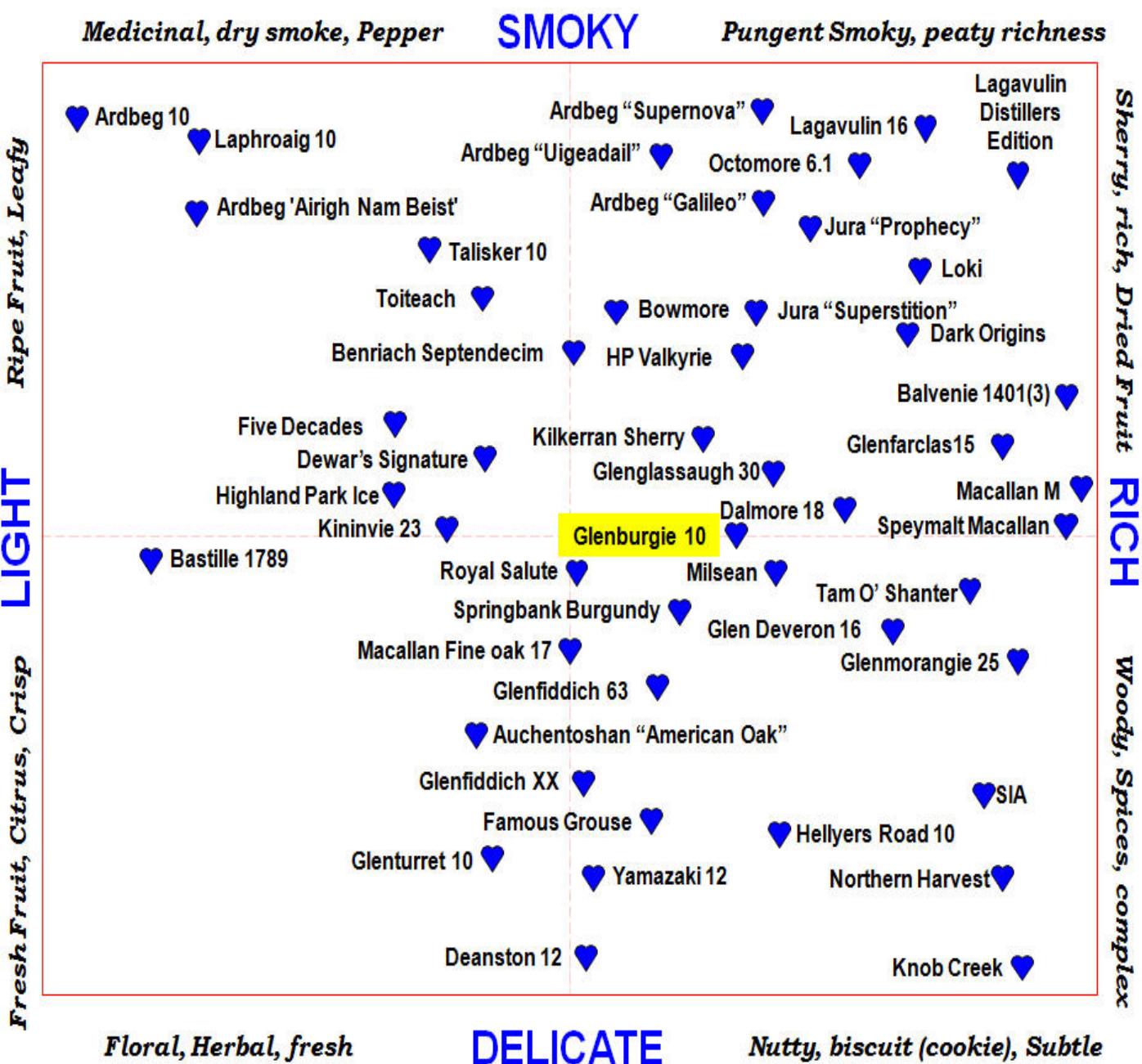


Findhorn Bay

Looking north in this photograph we see Findhorn Bay and across the Moray Firth to a low spit of land that separates it from the Dornoch Firth. This stretch of coastline is where Cadboll and Glenmorangie House are and beyond in the far distance are the hills above Brora, just visible through the murk. The panorama here does stretch away northeast to Helmsdale and on to Caithness, Ben Wyvis to the west and not visible at all on a day like this.

"Slange"

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; [Glenburgie 10-year-old](#).





Glenburgie Distillery cont.

Just to the right of Findhorn Bay is RAF Kinloss airfield which is to close at the end of this month. Cancellation of the iconic Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft has led to the closure and the squadrons based here are currently being disbanded. The future of RAF Lossiemouth just 10 miles east of here is also under review and an announcement on its future is expected this month. These are uncertain times in Moray as the two bases have been the lifeblood of local communities for over 70 years with many local jobs dependent on them.



Glenburgie distillery was one of the smallest in Scotland when Barnard visited producing just 109,000 litres p.a. It is now in the middle tier producing around 4m litres p.a. and is one of the main contributors to Ballantine's blended whisky which has the second highest market share in the world after Johnnie Walker, although less widely sold in the UK.

Barnard describes the distillery as very ancient having been founded in 1810 and "about as old fashioned as it is possible to conceive". He also records it as working steadily for over seventy years but other records show it as being silent for most of the 1870s and it is marked as disused on a map from 1874. It was originally founded as Kilnflat Distillery, but perhaps due to the Excise Act of 1823 an alternative date of 1829 is also recorded as the official start of licensed production, by then known as Glenburgie-Glenlivet according to some sources, others have the Kilnflat name continuing until 1870 and re-opening as Glenburgie in 1878. A plaque outside the original Customs House records a build date of 1810, but was this based on Barnard's record or from some other documentation of its origins?

He also relates the founder of the distillery as "the grandfather of the celebrated surgeon, Dr. Liston Paul, of London" but this seems to be a misunderstanding. The celebrated surgeon he is referring to is almost certainly Dr. Robert Liston who was born in West Lothian in 1794 but became Chair of Clinical Surgery at University College London and a well known character in the medical world.



Glenburgie Distillery cont.

However, there was a Dr. John Liston Paul who was born in nearby Elgin in 1827 but spent most of his career in Madras. His middle name came from being a Godson of Dr. Robert Liston, perhaps where Barnard's confusion arises from. The distillery was founded by a local man named William Paul.

The origin of the name Burgie is unclear although it may be from older words such as Burg or Borg meaning castle or fort. There are a number of ruins of old castles on the slopes below Burgie Hill but of particular note is Burgie Castle itself and a possible source for the name being so predominant on this side of the hill. If the origins of Burgie are as above then Burgie Castle is one of those tautological names that often appear when translating place names and landscape features from other languages.



The Burgie burn

Springs of great purity provided water for distilling and there were a number of wells marked in the grounds around the distillery on old maps, the springs still used for mashing water today. The Burgie Burn rises in Burgie Hill to the south, running through Burgie Wood and then down past the distillery, feeding a dam to provide cooling water and which also powered a water wheel in Barnard's time. The 1874 map shows the distillery as the relatively small buildings that Barnard witnessed a decade later, sitting beside larger buildings named as Kilnflat. Any changes between the uses of the various buildings in the mid 19th century are now unclear. Barnard notes 3 new warehouses on the site "and in proportion to the size of the works the Warehouse accommodation is extensive". By 1905 a map shows the Glenburgie Distillery as a much larger operation that extended westward and which dwarfs the Kilnflat buildings which were by then partly demolished. Perhaps they were gearing up for expansion when Barnard observed those new warehouses?



Glenburgie Distillery cont.



Glenburgie Warehouses

The rest of the operation is described briefly by Barnard and appears fairly standard. The peats for the kiln were sourced from both Dava and Dallas Moors; the mash tun was fairly small at just 10 feet by 3 1/2 deep; there were 5 washbacks averaging 11,000 litres and two Pot stills at 6,816 and 3,635 litres.

The owners were a local company Alexander Fraser & Co who oversaw that later expansion but went into receivership in the 1920s and the distillery was then closed from 1927-35. Canadian Company Hiram Walker took over and restarted production in 1936, continuing until they were bought by Allied Lyons in 1987 and eventually into current owners Chivas Brothers/Pernod Ricard in 2005. Two major changes during this time are worth noting.

The first was the installation of two Lomond Stills in 1958. This type of still had been developed by Hiram Walker and first installed at their Inverleven plant in Dumbarton in 1956. We have seen them before at Bruichladdich and Scapa but Glenburgie was the first distillery to receive a pair of Lomond stills, wash and spirit working in tandem. These sat alongside two existing traditional pot stills and the whisky produced from the new stills was known as Glencraig to distinguish it, named after Willie Craig who was one of their Production Directors.

original one was moved to Scapa where it was installed in 1959. Some of the dates and details about the movement of these stills are a bit sketchy though and sources vary.



Glenburgie Distillery cont.



Glenburgie distillery

Glencraig spirit was so different that it ran through an entirely separate spirit safe and receivers before being casked. It also seems that the original experimental still from Inverleven was transferred to Glenburgie at first, but when the new pair of full size stills followed in 1958 the original one was moved to Scapa where it was installed in 1959. Some of the dates and details about the movement of these stills are a bit sketchy though and sources vary.

The Lomond Stills were used until 1981 when they were converted to a more traditional still shape by replacing the tubular necks with swan neck sections. The next big change came in 2004 when after a couple of silent years the original distillery was demolished to make way for a new complex. The modern distillery now houses all the mashing to distilling operations in one large shed, built on the spot where the original Kilnflat buildings had been. The floor maltings had closed in 1958 and malt is now delivered in from industrial maltings.

The four stills from the previous building were maintained and Chivas have invested further in the distillery with two further stills installed in 2006 as demand for Ballantine's increased. There are now 12 stainless steel washbacks at 23,500 litres each and a large full lauter tun taking an 8 tonne mash and running four waters through. Production is now at 7 days a week.



Glenburgie Distillery cont.



Glenburgie customs house

The only part of the original distillery buildings that remains is the Customs House which had a small warehouse below. The house is now used as a tasting room and some of the old tools of trade for the Excise Officers are kept here on display. There is extensive warehousing on the site with a mixture of storage styles and most of the whisky is matured in ex-bourbon casks. Chivas release a 15yo OB at cask strength and there are a few independent bottles of both Glenburgie and Glencraig available.

The distillery is not open to the public and the recent details included here are from the Malt Whisky Yearbook and Udo. Additional details about the Lomond stills are from Malt Madness and the SMWS website.