



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 Auchroisk (OH-thrusk) 10-year-old, from the distillery of the same name, built in 1974 by Justerini & Brooks (J&B) to provide whisky for their J&B blend and currently owned by Diagio.

Matured in Bourbon casks and finished in sherry casks, up to 2001 it was sold under the Singleton of Auchroisk name, as the company deemed the name Auchroisk (I don't see how adding 'Singleton of' to the name helps?) to difficult to read and pronounce. So, this Speyside whisky is not easy to read or pronounce and also not that easy to find, unless you look for it under an independent bottlers label, such as Douglas Laing, James Eadie or Kingsbury etc. Did I like it, yes it's a pleasant, lightly flavored whisky, not overly complex at this age, I would be interested to taste some of their older whiskies as they release them.

So, would I buy the Auchroisk 10-year-old? Probably not, I find it to be a bit expensive for a 10-year-old, hell you can get a Glenfiddich 12, for Around \$30.00 and it has more complexity and depth of flavor.

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

Tasting Notes

Nose - Floral, grassy & vanilla

Palate - Cereal & sweet malt

Finish - Malt & vanilla

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





What is the Angel's Share?

By Distillery Trail

The Angel's take their cut from every barrel of distilled spirits. It may be a little or it may be a lot but they will not be ignored. In the simplest of terms, the Angel's Share is the amount of distilled spirits lost to evaporation from the barrel or cask into the air as the whiskey ages.

This is often thought of when talking about whiskey or bourbon but the same is true for Scotch, Brandy, Cognac, Wine and Whisky without the e (the Angel's don't care how you spell it, they'll get their share either way.) Wood is a porous material that expands and contracts with the seasons. Think about the house or apartment you live in. Do you have a door that occasionally sticks? When you stop to think about it, it doesn't stick all the time, it only sticks in the summer when the humidity tends to be higher.

In the winter that same door works just fine. Or maybe you have a wood floor that swells so much in the summer it sometimes buckles, however in the winter you can see small gaps between the boards. This same expansion and contraction happens with wooden barrels as their precious cargo magically matures inside.

The amount the Angel's take each year varies widely based on barrel size, time, environmental conditions and even the location in the warehouse. Size: Do the Angel's Prefer 5, 10, 15 or 53 Gallon Barrels? As a matter of fact, size does matter.

At first thought, you might assume the larger the barrel the faster the evaporation rate. In fact, it's the opposite, the smaller the barrel the faster the evaporation rate because there's more liquid by volume in touch with the wood which is in touch with the air which draws the Angel's Share out of the barrel. Climate:

Are the Angel's as Greedy in Kentucky as they are in Scotland? One year maturity in a warm and humid climate like Kentucky is completely different than one year in a milder climate like the Isle of Islay. Scottish distillers are allowed to write off 2% of their production volume each year to the Angel's Share.

When it comes to Kentucky Bourbon or Rye or Tennessee whiskey their Angel's Share may average closer to 4% and could be as high as 10% in the first year.

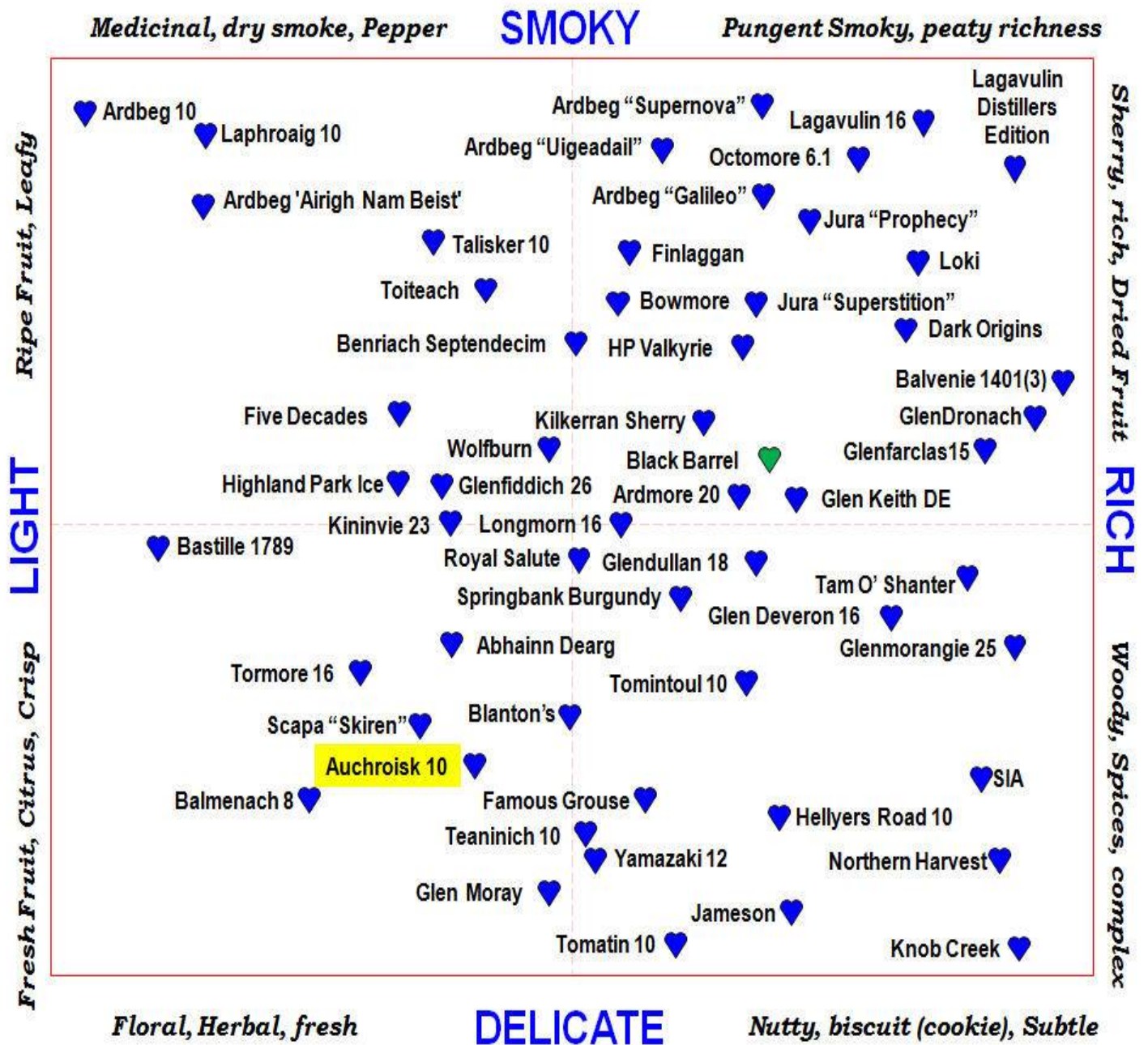
A good portion of that 10% number is actually absorbed into the staves of the barrel in year one. With Kentucky recording average summer highs of around 89°F compared to 66°F in Scotland, both the level of evaporation and rate of maturation are greatly accelerated.

It's believed that if two exact barrels of liquid were placed in Scotland and Kentucky at the same time, the barrel in Scotland would have to remain there for around three years to equal just one year in Kentucky.

This is a good example of not judging a whiskey merely by the age on its label. Maturity does not necessarily equal age.



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; Auchroisk 10-year-old. For more information go to [No distillery website](#).





What is the Angel's Share? Cont.

Location: Does the Floor in the Warehouse Make a Difference? The style of warehouse and the location in the warehouse also greatly affects the Angel's Share and many other characteristics of the final product. The heritage bourbon distillers in Kentucky tend to use the 9 story, 27 barrels high warehouses.

The atmosphere at the top of a rackhouse is very hot and dry, allowing the water molecules to escape much faster than the alcohol molecules thus driving the proof up in those barrels and concentrating the flavors inside the barrel. The atmosphere at the bottom of the rackhouse is moist and cool.

Since a water molecule is very small, water can penetrate the barrel from the surrounding moisture and that drives the proof down to around 110 in those barrels.

A whiskey barrel could lose 30% to 40% of its volume between the original barreling and the time the liquid is ready for bottling. Some distilleries will provide the details of how much of their precious cargo is lost to the Angel's while others choose to keep it a secret just like their yeast recipe.

Check out this detailed report from a recent release of the Antique Collection from Buffalo Trace Distillery. It's the kind of details that whiskey aficionados can't get enough of.

There is no single answer to how much is lost each year. Other variables include the entry proof of your spirits into the barrel. Spirits barreled at 125 proof have a higher alcohol vs. water ratio than spirits barreled at say 103 proof.

Low humidity and higher temperatures will draw more water through the staves resulting in higher alcohol content. And, higher humidity will result in more alcohol evaporating than water.

As your variables change, so will your results. The key is to keep good records and you'll continue to produce consistent distilled spirits.

The same applies to your experiments, always keep good records so those results can be repeated. You are never really going to know the Angel's Share vs. your share until that glorious day you pop the bung out of the barrel and start filling your bottles!

www.distillerytrail.com



How to Pair Whisky and Chocolate

by Stephen Beaumont

Consider a single piece of chocolate. Like the generic “glass of whisky” you are sometimes offered at a party, it can take several forms and flavors, from intense and complex to simple and sweet. It can cause your eyes to close in rapture or send you searching for a polite way to dispose of it. And that’s not all chocolate has in common with whisky, since one can also be an ideal gastronomic partner for the other.

The key resides in picking the right combinations from among the myriad possibilities, beginning with a few of the things that make one chocolate much different from another. First, the chocolate that purists will tell you isn’t really chocolate at all: white chocolate is made with cocoa butter and typically contains none of the cocoa solids that make chocolate taste so chocolaty, instead being juiced up with sugar and vanilla.

Its spiritual cousin is milk chocolate, with still quite modest cocoa content (sometimes expressed as “cacao content”), typically in the high single digits but sometimes as high as 30 or 40%, buttressed by milk or cream, and sugar. After white and milk chocolate, we start to get into what many consider more serious chocolate, ones of progressively greater darkness and cocoa content, occasionally with a designation of origin attached.

These tend to start at about 60% cocoa content and can get as high as 90%, with higher percentages indicating greater concentration of pure cocoa flavor and increased bitterness. Beyond these basics, of course, chocolate artisans incorporate countless fillings, flavors, and combinations of ingredients. Understand that high-cocoa content tends to offer lower levels of sweetness and vanilla impact. Also, keep in mind that milk and white chocolates are generally softer and more unctuous on the palate due to their cocoa butter content, however, and flavorings become more accents to be played with when pairing. On the spirituous side, the oak effect is the most important attribute to consider when partnering your whisky with chocolate.

Bourbon has prolonged contact with new, charred oak barrels, which yield a vanillaesque compound called vanillin. Given that most chocolate has added vanilla, even the gourmet, high-cocoa content kind, this is a handy commonality to use when partnering the two. Balance the rounded character of a particularly rich whiskey, like Elijah Craig or Knob Creek, with the more pronounced vanilla of a chocolate with lower cocoa content, such as a quality milk chocolate with a relatively robust cocoa content—around 40%—rather than checkout-aisle candy bars.



How to Pair Whisky and Chocolate Cont.

The smooth richness of white chocolate, on the other hand, provides a contrast that can temper the sharpness of a punchier bourbon such as Jim Beam Black.

Where less charred wood influence is felt, as with second or third-use barrels, vanilla notes in chocolate can be disruptive rather than complementary.

So for sweet and lean Irish whiskeys like Tullamore D.E.W., look for a medium-cocoa content in the 60-70% range that will yield a still sweetish but less vanilla-forward flavor, and if a little salted caramel works its way into the mix, so much the better.

With their broad array of expressions, Scotch whiskies offer great breadth where pairings are concerned. Here the fruitiness of many chocolates—single origin chocolates from Venezuela and Madagascar tend toward notable fruitiness—can be a handy guide.

Match lighter, fruity chocolates with minimally peated whiskies, especially ones that have spent time in sherry barrels, such as Glenrothes. Less fruity, high-cocoa content chocolate—Dominican Republic chocolate—works well with bolder, smokier spirits such as Ardbeg and Caol Ila.

In general, given all the permutations and combinations that exist in both worlds, the true joy of whisky and chocolate matching lies in the playground it presents, and its greatest pleasures reside in assembling a proverbial sampler box of each from which to mix and match.

Unwrap a Perfect Pairing

Ardbeg 10 year old & Lindt Excellence 90% Cacao Dried leaf and espresso notes from the chocolate line up beautifully alongside the famed Islay peatiness.

Four Roses Single Barrel & Valrhona Jivara with Split Pecans This 40% cocoa content milk chocolate with moderate vanilla matches well with the body of this spicy, not too rich bourbon, while pecans bring a taste of the South.

Writer's Tears Pot Still Irish Whiskey & Ghirardelli Dark Chocolate Caramel Bar The extra body provided by pot distillation welcomes the decadent partnership of 60% cocoa chocolate and buttery caramel.