



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. "Slainte."

In this issue I look at Laphroaig 10 Year Old from the island of Islay (Isla) in the Western Isles of Scotland. Laphroaig, pronounced "La-froyg", is a Gaelic word meaning "the beautiful hollow by the broad bay." I have tasted this whisky on a number of occasions, but the memory that sticks with me is the time my wife and I were in the "Great Basin Brewing company" in Reno Nevada. I asked for a Laphroaig 10 Year Old and the barmaid went to the far end of the bar (about 25 feet away) and poured a shot, our noses were immediately engulfed by smoke and peat. My wife said it reminded her of my firefighting clothes from my time with CDF, fighting forest fires. This whisky has some heavy medicinal notes, which might explain why it was acceptable for doctors to prescribe it during Prohibition.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Smoke, peat, iodine

Palate - Seaweed, iodine, vanilla, spices

Finish - Big and savory (almost tarry)

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





Laphroaig History and Distillery Information

For more information on Laphroaig go to www.Laphroaig.com.

The Laphroaig distillery (the name means "the beautiful hollow by the broad bay") was established in 1815, by Alex and Donald Johnston. The 'Johnston' brothers were actually McCabes, of the Clan Donald, who changed their names following the failed Jacobite uprising, and settled on the Isle of Islay.

Their descendants ran the distillery until 1887, when it passed to the Hunter family. They in turn ran the distillery until 1954, when Ian Hunter (who had no children) died and left the distillery to one of his managers, Bessie Williamson, who earlier came to Islay to stay for three months but remained on Islay for more than forty years.

The distillery was sold to Long John International in the 1960's, and subsequently became part of Allied Domecq. Allied Domecq was in turn acquired by Fortune Brands in 2005.

Since 1994 Laphroaig has been the only whisky to carry the Royal Warrant of HRH, Prince Charles of Wales (the 15-year-old is reportedly his favourite scotch whisky), which was awarded in person during a visit to the distillery. As of 2005, the standard 10 year old bottling was reduced in percentage from 43% to the worldwide standard of 40%.

Friends of Laphroaig

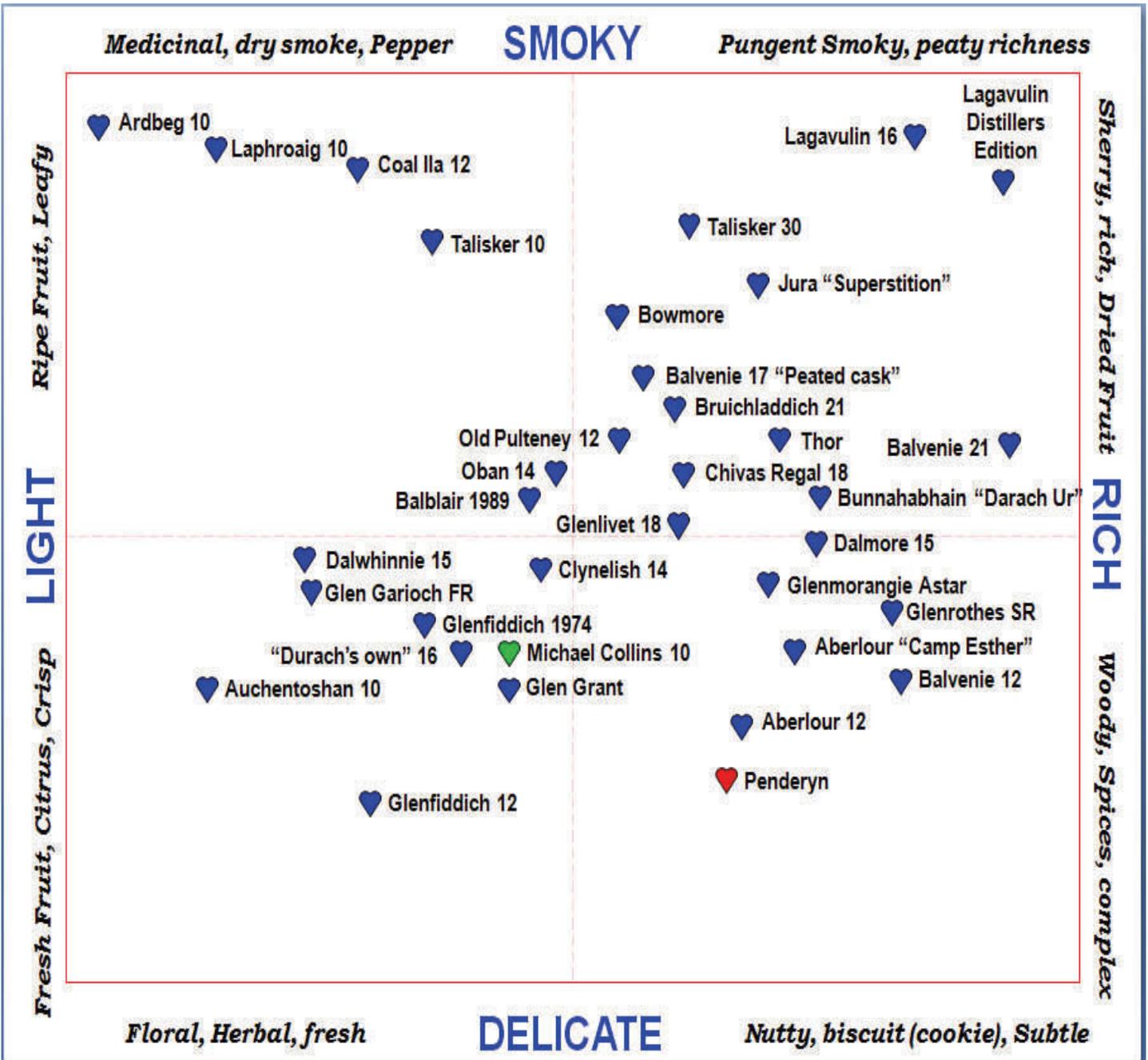
In 1994 the Friends of Laphroaig Club was established, members of which are granted a lifetime lease of one square foot of land on the island of Islay. The annual rent is a dram of Laphroaig which can be obtained upon visiting the distillery.



There are two theories on arguing with a woman; neither one works.



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. With each issue of the newsletter I will add in another Whisky to the flavor map. This Issue; Laphroaig 10 Year Old For more information go to www.Laphroaig.com.





Cheating the angels (extract)

To read the full article go to <http://www.popsci.com/scitech/article/2008-11/cheating-angels>

The Fest-goers I talked to were largely abuzz about one recent and highly controversial innovation. Diageo, the largest spirits company in the world, producer of Johnnie Walker, Bushmills, single malts like Lagavulin and Talisker, and many other beverages, recently announced an innovation that could save the company millions of dollars every year.

It's a simple plan; you've probably done something similar in your own kitchen. They plan to wrap the barrels they use to age their whiskies in giant sheets of plastic wrap.

The "angels' share" is the poetic industry term for the portion of whisky that evaporates from the barrels in which the spirit is aged. As whisky matures over years and even decades, it gains flavor and color from the wood in which it's stored.

The commonly cited figure is that 65 percent of a whisky's flavor comes from the wood, although I've never been sure what study produced that number.

In warmer weather, the volume of liquid expands, seeping into the surrounding wood, from which it leaches flavor compounds such as vanillin; when the weather cools, it contracts back out of the wood, bringing some of that flavor with it. To the dismay of the distillery accountants, some of the liquor that's soaked into the wood leaves the wrong way, winding up on the outside of the barrel, where it evaporates.

The typical loss is about 2 percent every year, which adds up: at the Fest I tasted from a barrel that, due to excessive aging in excessive heat, had lost all but a couple of bottles' worth of its precious whisky.

Sealing barrels in non-porous cling film will prevent this loss -- when a barrel is finally unwrapped, the scheme goes, it will be as full as it was 30 years before when it was filled. According to an article in the Glasgow Daily Record, the process "is not thought to affect the taste of the whisky," but it's not only the strictest traditionalists in the whisky world who express doubts about that.

Since so much of a whisky's flavor comes from the interaction between spirit and wood, any tinkering with that process is bound to affect the final product.

During normal evaporation, as the angels' share gradually disappears from the barrel, it is replaced by air. The effect of this progressive interaction between oxygen and liquor is not fully understood. Another unpredictable situation may arise as a quantity of liquor collects between the outside of the barrel and the inside of the plastic wrap, keeping the barrel surface unwontedly moist.

The proof, of course, will be in the tasting.

A Diageo spokesman said: "At this stage, the technologies under trial are not proven and we are continuing our research."

With thanks to *Popular Science*.