



WHISKY

In the cooler parts of the world, where fruit can be hard to grow, people learnt how to distil grain. The earliest recorded whiskies come from Ireland in the 15th century. The name “whisky” comes from the Gaelic uisge beathe – “water of life”, which is thought to refer to fact that the drink was once valued for its supposed medicinal properties.

Whisky can generally be divided into two categories. Blended and single malt. Single malt whisky is made only from malted barley (no other grains) and at a single distillery. The majority of the world’s malt distilleries (about 100) are in Scotland. Single malt whiskies typically display all the personality and traits of their geographic origins. Blended whiskies by contrast, are created by mixing together a range of malt and grain whiskies to give a uniform spirit with a desired colour, flavour and character. Approximately only 4% of the world’s whisky production is devoted to single malt whisky.

Most of the whisky stocked at the Dispensary is single malt whisky.

Malt whisky is created by steeping grain in spring water, which can impart distinct characteristics to the spirit; for example, water from Islay (southwestern Scotland) gives peaty flavours, and water from the Highlands (central-eastern Scotland) gives notes of heather. The moistened grains are then left to germinate, traditionally on a “malting floor”, although many whisky makers are now using mechanised systems. During germination, starch in the grain is converted to sugar – the raw material for fermentation. Once the grains have sprouted, they are dried in a kiln – a process that also adds flavour to the final product. The dried grain, or malt, is then ground, and infused in hot water. The infused liquid is run off and the whisky-maker adds yeast to begin the fermentation process. It is this liquid, called “the wash”, which is distilled to make malt whisky.

Each country has its own rules and regulations regarding the processes that are needed to be able to label the final spirit a certain way.

There are many countries now producing world class single malt whisky. Scotland may always be the historical home of great malt whisky and it certainly provides the lions share of distilleries, but there are many other great whisky producing countries contributing to the amazing world of whisky. Ireland, Canada, USA, Australia, Wales, New Zealand and Japan are just some of the countries now producing world class whisky.

*“Too much of anything is bad, but too much good whiskey is barely enough.”
-Mark Twain*

SPEYSIDE

This is "THE" malt whisky making region of Scotland. Speyside is an intensely populated malt distillery heaven. Over half of Scotland's distillers are located within its boundaries. It has sweeping valleys, fresh sea air and some of the biggest names in the world of whisky. Named after the river Spey which runs through the region. The granite mountains give rise to soft water, which often flows over heathery moorlands.

The Speyside single malts are noted in general for their elegance; flowery, heather-honey notes; and sometimes a restrained fragrant peatiness. Beyond that, they have two extremes: the big sherryish type, as typified by Macallan, Glenfarclas & Aberlour; and the more subtle style, as shown by Knockando & Glenlivet.

The diversity of Speyside whiskies is what makes them so great. make sure you try a few from different distilleries.

AN CNOC 12 Year old

40%

\$10

Brand new, sweet, gingery and peppery malt from the Knockdhu distillery. The nose is lush and full of barley sugar, cereal, toffee fudge, espresso, creamy malt extract and herbal notes with a touch of something feinty. The palate is buttery and rich. Notes of apple crumble and Madeira, toffee fudge, malt extract and bourbon. There are hints of honeyed cereals.

LONGMORN - 16yr Old

48%

\$14

Green fruit with a floral note. Lime, grapefruit, green tea, banana and shoe polish. On the palate it's light floral vanilla from the oak, and a touch of caramel but not that sweet. Rose petals, and grapefruit round out. Long and lemony drying finish. A very interesting whisky with a dry characterful flavour.

MACALLAN - 12 Year old double cask

40%

\$13

Mac is back! At least Macallan age statement whisky that is. Matured in a combination of American and European Sherry oak almost 50:50, though slightly weighted towards American oak ex-Sherry casks. New oak is shipped from America across to Spain, where expert Coopers craft casks. These casks are then sherry seasoned before traveling to the Speyside distillery to mature for twelve years.

MACALLAN - Edition 2.

48%

\$23

Edition No.2 is a collaboration between master blender Bob Delgarno and legendary Spanish chefs Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca. This is a deliciously floral and fruity whisky with notes of tropical fruit, black pepper, liquorice and brandy snaps. Makes an old fashioned.

MACALLAN - Edition 3.

48%

\$23

Aroma is an integral part of the whisky tasting experience, which is why Macallan Edition No. 3 so seems like a good idea to create it in conjunction with Roja Dove, one of the most respected 'noses' in the perfume industry. A blend of six cask types, this whisky has the complex aromas of a fine fragrance, with notes of flowers, vanilla ice cream and orange oil leading into chocolate and oak. Another ripper. .

GLEN GRANT - 10 Year Old,

46%

\$10

The nose is quite clean and crisp. There are some gristy cereal notes with rubbed petals and a pastry note. A milky note emerges with a little marmalade. The palate is quite smooth and of medium-body. Notes of oily nuts and barley with some bourbon notes. There are hints malt extract and caramel sweetness. The finish is of medium length with chewy oak Bourbon wood, malty, spicy with very orangey fruit. A delight.



THE HIGHLANDS

Geographically, this is the largest whisky making region. Malts vary widely in taste – from the “salty” coasts of the north to the “spicy” lands of the east. Because of the vastness of the region and the minimal scattered distilleries, it is difficult to generalise about their character. Some have very exposed locations.

If Highland whiskies have anything in common, it is a firm, dry character, with some peatiness and saltiness. Glenmorangie is probably the most well known of the Highland distilleries.

A veritable feast of malt just waiting to be explored.

AUCHNAGIE - The Lost Distillery Series

46%

\$21

See below. Very sweet to taste at bottled strength, with considerable spice across the tongue and a warming, medium-length finish. Fruity boiled sweets in the aftertaste. At reduced strength it is less sweet and less spicy, but remains fruity with a trace of vanilla sponge.

GERSTON - The Lost Distillery Series

46%

\$21

In the last century, almost one hundred (nearly half) of Scotland’s malt whisky distilleries have been closed or destroyed. The LOST DISTILLERY Archive Team studies key components that would have influenced the character of some of these long lost whiskies. They then use current day malts (average age 15 years) to reconstruct how the whiskies would taste if they were still made today. This is wonderfully sweet with a strong salty peat lash. Some vanilla and tropical fruits in the second breath and then a long lasting rosemary, five spice and thyme combination that stays on for hours and hours. A lovely beam act between sweet and spice. The robust spirit is confident in it’s maturity. There are spirits older than 20 years in this bottling. The chocolate honey is smooth and silky with a smear of spicy plum jam. Really quite well balanced and lovely.

OBAN - 14 Year Old ~

43%

\$17

A bustling seaside resort has grown up around the distillery in the two centuries since it was first built in the fishing town of Oban. The West Highland malt is still produced in the same unhurried, traditional fashion and this 14 year old is a classic dram from the distillery. The nose is rich and smokey. The medicinal notes are quite evident with notes of seaweed and rope. There are notes of cut hay and wood smoke rising with a gentle estery sweetness. The palate is thick and full. The oak is quite rich with grist, cereal and light smoke . The finish is of good length with fruit and dry oak.

GLENMORANGIE - 18 Year Old

46%

\$22

A wonderfully creamy and thick 18 year old dram, matured for 15 years in ex bourbon casks before being finished in Oloroso sherry casks. Pale gold colour. Moderate aromatics offer seamlessly integrated scents of sweet, delicately peated cereals, subtle citrus notes (mandarine, grape fruit) followed by a touch of spearmint. Long biscuity, orange cake-like aftertaste. A wonderfully fresh Glenmorangie expression.

*“The water was not fit to drink. To make it palatable, we had to add whisky.
By diligent effort, I learned to like it.”*

- Winston Churchill

ISLAY (PRONOUNCED EYE-LUH)

Islay is a truly special place for malt whisky lovers. Only 40 km's long with eight distilleries (one of which went out of production in 1983 - Port Ellen), its whisky is known for smokiness & phenolic traits. These are the heavyweights of the whisky world.

ARDBEG We've Arrived Renaissance - 10 Year Old 55.9% **\$58**

Final bottling in the Ardbeg lead up series. Big and medicinal nose, with an iodine-like quality and a full richness with gentle citric notes. On the palate it's sharp and smoky, there is a lanolin coating and a big, potent peat exuding exceptional balance. It finishes long with good character, a bitter edge creeps in with a nuttiness and moist cocoa. A monster of complex smoke, minerals & peat. Bottled 2008. Now extremely rare.

BRUICHLADDICH - Organic Edition 2.10 Mid Coul 46% **\$17**

A new addition of Bruichladdich Organic. This follows on from the 2003 edition, and there are only a couple of current production single malts that are certified organic. It is made with organic Scottish barley which is certified by the biodynamic association. It is a lightly peated Bruichladdich, matured in American oak casks which contained bourbon The second organic release is a creamy sweet citrus dram of golden syrup. Now sold out.

PORT ELLEN 1983 - 22 Year Old, by Douglas Laing & Co 50% **\$67**

660 bottles made. Distilled March 1983, bottled February 2006. Nice arrival on sweet fruit, creamy on vanilla with a hint of pepper. Loads of salt and liquorice, ginger and lemon. The peat is sweet and delivers a nice smokiness, bigger than on the nose. The oak finds its voice. Something floral, which is quite unexpected, but works wonders. Nice long and warm finish on salt and sugared lemon peel. Like drinking liquid history.

LAPHROAIG - Quarter Cask 48.0% **\$19**

The Quarter Cask is a strong, double cask matured, non-chill filtered malt from the iconic Islay distillery, Laphroaig. With a nose of burning peat embers and hints of coconut and bananas that is then followed by a palate that is deep and complex with smoky flavours. Still quite gentle with a hint of sweetness, this 48% Single Malt has a long, spicy and smoky finish that seems to last an eternity.

LAGAVULIN 16 Year Old 43% **\$17**

More like Lapsang Souchong tea than Lapsang Souchong! One of the smokiest noses from Islay. It's big, very, very concentrated, and redolent of iodine, sweet spices, good, mature sherry and creamy vanilla. Stunning. Very thick and rich. A massive mouthful of malt and sherry with good fruity sweetness, but also a wonderful sweetness. Big, powerful peat and oak. Finishes long, spicy finish, figs, dates, peat smoke, vanilla. Considered by many as one of the finest drams on earth. Who am I to argue? A veritable peat monster.

BRUICHLADDICH - 2010 Islay barley, 50% **\$15**

From Bruichladdich comes an unpeated single malt Scotch whisky distilled from barely by eight family farms local to Islay. Aged in a combination of bourbon and French-wine casks, the Bruichladdich Islay Barley 2010 uses 100% Scottish barely and is un-chill filtered and of natural colour. The final product, bottled at 50% ABV at the distillery with Islay spring water, marks a really interesting release at a very reasonable per lick.

PORT ELLEN 1982 - 24 Year Old, by Douglas Laing & Co 50% **\$75**

Closed in 1983, Port Ellen has since become one of the most sought-after whiskies in the world. Increasingly rare, spirit produced at the distillery demonstrates some of the finest character found on the island of Islay. Distilled in November 1982 and Bottled in September 2007 this is one of only 476 bottles ever to grace this earth. Maritime and tar on the nose with butterscotch and still peat on the tongue with a damp leather to finish. The Holy grail of Islay.

CAOL ILA (pronounced cull-eela) 12 Year Old 46% **\$14**

Caol Ila is Gaelic for "the Sound of Islay" (the strait separating that island from the Isle of Jura). This Caol Ila is sweet on the nose, with slight mango and vanilla notes. The palate is smooth, and chewy with the return of vanilla and oak. Citrus and peat to take you in to a beautiful finish which is warm, summery and long. This dram is young, fresh, briny and laden with kelp. Awesome.



CAMPBELTOWN

With only a few operational distilleries on the peninsula, at one time Campbelltown was "the" major whisky producing region, with 34 distilleries. The spirit is still held in high regard today and rightly deserves a heading of its own.

HAZELBURN - 8 Year Old

46%

\$21

Part of a limited outturn of 5,100 bottles. This eight year-old is much sought. Hazelburn is distilled at the Springbank distillery and named for a nearby silent distillery. It is unpeated and triple distilled. The nose is sweet and fresh. There are notes of orchard fruits and cut hay, a little chocolate and something floral. The palate is sweet and crisp with notes of fresh barley and a floral character. Slightly nutty. The finish is gentle and quite long with a fresh character. Highly fragrant, aperitif style.

SPRINGBANK 1997 Batch 1

55.2%

\$45

Clean with some cut hay notes, herbal tones and notes of damp moss and earthen roots, hints of tropical fruit and dried leaves. Some notes of dried cereals and a hint of Eastern spice. Pungent and full. Notes of tangerine juice and sugar, hints of lime, buttery barley and malt extract. There are some hints of smoked toffee with cream and sea weed. Winter spice develops with juicy sultana. Long and quite fresh with a little vanilla spice on the end.

SPRINGBANK 1997 Batch 2

54.9%

\$28

After the runaway success of 2007's first bottling, hopes were high for version 2.0 – so we were delighted to find another stunner. This is less sweet and more sooty and savoury than the first batch. A triumph, again.

LONGROW 10 Year Old 100 proof

57%

\$21

Clean and highly peated style. Often confused for Islay in blind tastings. A little unruly with a true fire in it's belly. Coconut, pine cone and charred embers.

LONGROW 7 Year Old, Gaja Barolo Cask

55.8%

\$23

The nose is quite citrusy, there are notes of zest and marmalade and hints of Parfait Amour. There are some tangerine notes with limes and dried fruits. Some sugared peels and crystallized stem ginger creep in. There is a gentle building peat, its quite thick but with a freshness. The palate is quite thick and full and, at first, slightly austere. There are notes of the cask, mostly in the mouthfeel, as is so often the case, but there is an exuberance of winter spice and pepper from the rich oak. Notes of peat rise with peppered heat. The finish is long and big-bodied with a hint of zest. Now discontinued

LONGROW CV

46%

\$17

On the nose there is smoke, cut fennel, spearmint and grass, followed by peat and touches of the coast. The palate is spicy, peaty, with hints of lemon zest, cutting lime, toffee, and lots of oily smoke. It finishes long, peaty, spicy and is clearly oak driven. Now discontinued.

"Well, show me the way. To the next whisky bar "

- Alabama Song - The Doors

ISLANDS

The islands of Scotland are renowned for their exposure to the natural elements. The character of these malts lies somewhere between the Highland and Islay regions.

Grouping the following whiskies under their own "Island" category is a little contentious, as many believe that most of these whiskies should be grouped with The Highlands. But very few have any real regional differences. The peppery heat of Talisker has little in common with the natural balance and sophistication of Highland Park.

HIGHLAND PARK - 18 Year Old 43% **\$23**
Scotland's most northerly distillery. Existing on the tiny island of Orkney. Lightly salty, leafy, pine nuts, cinnamon, ginger and of course heather honey and spicy smoky peat. Just a mighty awesome dram of the good stuff.

HIGHLAND PARK Vintage 1990 - 16 Year Old, Single Malts of Scotland 53.2% **\$19**
Quite a mouthful. A little crisper and drier than normal bottlings, due to the ex-bourbon wood maturation. Still a teasing peaty classic though.

HIGHLAND PARK - Vintage 2001 40% **\$12**
Naturally rich, golden, clear and bright. With a nose featuring delicate aromas of heather honey, dried grass with ginger spicy notes and a light touch of coconut. The palate shows vanilla and honey sweetness and is balanced by the emergence of the aromatic heather peat smoke. It finishes sweet with subtle traces of spice and smoke.

ISLE OF JURA Heavily Peated 1999, 5 Year Old, by Matthew Forrest 61.3% **\$23**
A no-holds-barred bruiser. Definitely not out to caress and soothe a wounded and tired palate. Simple, direct and straight to the point. You have been warned.

LOWLAND

The first stage of the malt whisky "journey of discovery". The lowlands represents a great introduction to whisky. Light and sweet in flavour, they make excellent aperitifs. Soft and grassy in flavour, the best have suggestions of lemon grass and maltiness, untempered by Highland heatheriness or coastal seaweed and brine.

AUCHENTOSHAN 12 Year Old 40% **\$11**
Triple distilled and matured for over 12 years. The signature nose of crème brûlée, a burst of citrus and the nuttiness and green leafiness of Auchentoshan. Of nuttiness with a smooth palate that is sweet, with hints of tangerine and lime. It finishes gingery and slightly drying, with a pleasant lingering nuttiness.

BLADNOCH - Berry's 1992 19 Year Old 46% **\$19**
Bladnoch was mothballed throughout the 1990s until the distillery was bought from United Distillers (now Diageo) and production recommenced in the year 2000. This bottling from Berry Brothers and Rudd was distilled in 1992 before United Distillers mothballed the distillery and is a great opportunity to try this Lowland single malt like it used to be. The nose is floral with a herbaceous undercurrent that becomes more lemony with time in the glass. The palate is citrus-focused with zesty lemon and lime peel and a little fresh-cut grass. Finally, the finish is long and rewarding with notes of sherbet lemon.

STRATHEDEN - The Lost Distillery Series 46% **\$21**
In the last century, almost one hundred (nearly half) of Scotland's malt whisky distilleries have been closed or destroyed. The LOST DISTILLERY Archive Team studies key components that would have influenced the character of some of these long-lost whiskies. They then use current day malts (average age 15 years) to reconstruct how the whiskies would taste if they were still made today. This distillery closed in 1926. This is a faithful reproduction of the way their whisky would have tasted. This one is made with a Lowland malt base and uses peat from Orkney. Toffee sweet with a dominant crème brûlée and butterscotch attack. Some dates, some almonds and a hint of something musky and floral. Quite generous in its approach. Creamy smooth and is like stuffing your face with a fruit basket of apples, pears, oranges and bananas. All at the same time. Quite a colorful fruity pounding. One which puts a smile on your face.

AMERICAN

All bourbon is whiskey, but not all whiskey is bourbon. Or so goes the mantra sung loudly by parochial Americans. Corn, rye and sour mash whiskeys are made across the U.S., but the heart of American whiskey lies in Bourbon County, Kentucky. The county and the drink are named after the French royal family in recognition of their support for American independence. In order for a spirit to be called a straight bourbon whiskey, it must be made from fermented mash of no less than 51% corn & aged for at least two years in new charred white oak barrels.

BOOKERS 62.5% **\$16**
Inspired by a 200 year old tradition, Booker's is a world class whiskey. It tastes of big oak tannin, chocolate, mocha, coffee and smoky vanilla bean. It is full on the palate with a big round caramel texture. Relatively easy to drink for such an intense drink. First ever bourbon bottled straight from the barrel - completely uncut and unfiltered.

MAKERS MARK 40.4% **\$10**
Soft corn and firm rye combine to make this a unique style. Some walnut, honey and treacle. A great everyday quaffer, without too much depth of flavour or complexity.

WOODFORD RESERVE 43.2% **\$12**
The mashbill for Woodford Reserve features a high percentage of rye: 72% corn, 18% rye and 10% malt. Unusual also for being triple distilled and having the lowest proof upon entering the barrel where it matures for at least six years. The nose is quite thick and creamy. There are notes of honey and spice, leather, a touch of cocoa, a little smoke, toasty oak and vanilla cream with a hint of butterscotch. The palate is thick and full. There are notes of espresso beans, winter spice, cereal sweetness, plenty of rye, ground ginger, almond oil, toasty oak and a little rum. The finish is long and mature with notes of cereals and toasty oaken spice A must have Kentucky bourbon. Makes a wonderful Old-Fashioned cocktail Truly magnificent whiskey. Affordable and luxurious. "The Desert Island" whiskey.

JACK DANIELS 40.0% **\$10**
Produced in Lynchburg Tennessee, Jack daniels is the highest selling American Whiskey in the world. Its distinct taste comes from refining the distilled whiskey through 10 feet of sugar maple charcoal. The distilled whiskey is then matured in American Oak before being blended to achieve the iconic taste. Affectionally referred to a "bourboiz'.

EAGLE RARE 45.0% **\$13**
Made by Buffalo trace in Kentucky, the same folks that produce the Pappy Van Range, expect a well rounded sweet spice, orange peel and rich Corinthian leather. Well maybe not Corinthian leather but at least you granddads old wallet.

SAZERAC - Rye 45.0% **\$15**
Sazerac Rye dates back to the 1800's and symbolizes the tradition and history of New Orleans saloons. It was at the Sazerac Coffee House on Royal Street where local patrons were served toddies made with Rye whiskey and Peychaud's Bitters. The libation became know as the "Sazerac" and America's first branded cocktail was born.

CANADIAN

Although it shares certain characteristics with Scotch whisky and bourbon, Canadian whisky has a style all its own, thanks to a unique means of production and the influence – sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious – of rye. And if Prohibition nearly killed American whiskey, it helped Canadian distillers to thrive.

SCHENLEY – 1954 Order of Merit, 15 year old 40% **\$17**
Aged for 15 years in charred white oak casks. Casked in 1954 and bottled in 1969. 40 years later we have unearthed this rare Canadian gem. A mellow and placid as a faithful golden retriever.

CALVERT Canadian Masterpiece 1964 40% **\$15**
A super blend from all 6 of Calvert's distilleries. Another unique and rare whisky from the 60's. Honeyed with restrained malt. Like drinking liquid history.

CANADIAN CLUB 37% **\$10**
The nose is of medium-body with notes of barley sugar and aniseed, notes of cut grass and fennel, a hint of straw and a vegetal freshness. The palate is quite sweet and gentle. There are notes of winter spice and dark sugars, a touch of rum. The finish is of medium-sweetness and of medium-length. A delicate and soft whisky, with smoky rye, oak and a creamy toffee finish.

IRISH

Made slightly differently from Scottish whisky, the Irish use a high proportion of raw, unmalted barley, and it is usually distilled three times to Scotch's two. This usually results in a smoother taste and lighter coloration. Along with the Americans, the Irish spell whiskey with an "e", unlike all other countries.

JAMESON - Triple Distilled 40% **\$10**

The nose is full and floral with a smooth sweetness. Marmalade and fudge, Madeira and a little cut grass note. The palate is thick and of good body with notes of orchard fruits, both fresh and cooked with a little vanilla cream. The finish is of medium-length with spice and honey Unique grain texture and palate. More spice than most and a great lengthy finish.

JAMESON - Deconstructed Series - Bold 40% **\$14**

Jameson Bold is pot still perfection. With a heavy emphasis of pot still distillate; this blend lets you know it's a chip off the old block. Bold has an undoubted spiciness which and gives fruit and spice notes centre stage. For a whiskey that lives up to its name, Jameson Bold makes a Bold entrance.

JAMESON - Deconstructed Series - Round 40% **\$14**

Jameson Round gives the barrel the final say. With whiskey matured in a combination of virgin American oak barrels, bourbon barrels and sherry butts, this whiskey is like walking into one of our maturation warehouses. The result is a mellow, balanced mix of leather, dried fruits, ripe fruits and toasted oak emerging from the barrels. For a whiskey that lives up to its name, Jameson Round smoothes the edges.

JAMESON - Deconstructed Series - Livley 40% **\$14**

Jameson Lively is a whiskey that goes with the grain. While pot still whiskey is still part of the blend, this whiskey unlocks the grain whiskey element resulting in a light touch and fresher, greener notes. With zesty vanilla, citrus and floral notes floating above all others, the delicate side of Jameson is placed front and centre. For a whiskey that lives up to its name, Jameson Lively leaps to life.

AUSTRALIAN

Tasmania has just about everything you need to make good whisky: water, barley, even peat (although it's different to that found in Scotland).

No wonder then that the Australian single malt renaissance was kick-started here by the pioneering Bill Lark, then expanded by a number of other producers, including Overeem's distinctive small-cask operation, Hellyers Road, Sullivans Cove and more recently Starward in Melbourne.

STARWARD – Malt Whisky 43% **\$14**

Rich amber in colour. Aroma of ripe orchard fruits, pears, bananas and apples with raisins and dried figs. Caramel and vanilla balance the bright fruit. The palate is filled with rich, toasty caramel, crème brulee, more fruit, pepper and sandalwood, A full, sweet, juicy mouthfeel, with a youthful, spicy, dry finish. A really wonderful way to finish a meal.

STARWARD – Wine Cask 41% **\$14**

Recent winner of Australia's Best Single Malt Whisky, the Wine Cask is an impeccable reflection of what whisky can be. This unique expression, which draws influence from the vibrancy of South Australian Shiraz, is red ochre in colour and a great balance of sweet and savoury on the palate.

"There is no bad whiskey. There are only some whiskeys that aren't as good as others."

-Raymond Chandler

JAPANESE

If the finer points of Japanese culture can prove elusive to the Western psyche, much the same could be said for the country's whisky. While there may be echoes of Scotland in the distilleries of Honshu and Hokkaido, the huge variety of production techniques produces multifaceted whiskies with an identity all their own.

- SUNTORY - Chita Single Grain** 43% **\$18**
Chita is the first new premium whisky brand that Suntory has launched in over a decade, and one which is usually only available in Japan's 'Nagoya' Prefecture as well as Suntory's Whisky Shops in Osaka and Tokyo. There's not a great deal of information available regarding Chita - Suntory themselves remain silent with regard to production details. What is known is that the primary grain here is corn (though I'm pretty sure some malt is also used). Being corn based, like bourbon, the whisky is on the sweeter side. Reports have it that this is aged for around 12 years. There's unanimous praise across the web for this 'secret' gem, so I'm pretty chuffed to have nabbed a bottle.
- SUNTORY - Hibiki Harmony Masters Select** 43% **\$22**
Launched in March 2015, this is yet another NAS addition to Suntory's sought after "Hibiki" series. A blend of more than ten malt and grain whiskies which are aged in five different types of casks from the Yamazaki, Hakushu and Chita distilleries, Suntory chief blender Shinji Fukuyo was involved in its creation, while production is overseen by the third generation master blender and great-grandson of Suntory founder, Shingo Torii. Bright brass colour shows impeccable purity. Initial pass finds resinous, woody aromas followed by attractive fragrances of dusty cocoa, dates, oak shavings, cinnamon and pepper. Medium bodied mid palate expands the flavour range with dried fruits, hazelnut, light cocoa and peppery warmth.
- SUNTORY - Kakubin** 40% **\$10**
A classic blended whisky from Suntory - the core ingredients in countless cocktails over the many, many years its been produced by the legendary Japanese producers. Suntory's Kakubin differs greatly compared to many other world wide. Light, sweet and crisp, it boasts both balance and versatility. Rich gold in colour, Kakubin offers a stimulating blend of biscuit, vanilla and spice. Its lingering finish gives off subtle hints of smoke and spice.
- SUNTORY - Hakushu 12yo** 43.5% **\$25**
At the 2010 World Whisky Awards, whiskies from Japan won prizes in two of the top three categories for Scottish-style whisky. No one was surprised; Japanese whiskies have been snapping up awards at international competitions for the last decade. The problem we now face is getting our mitts on the delicious stuff. Bright gold with aromas of toast and honey moving through to some light florals. Get in quick we've only got one bottle and I doubt there will be a second!
- NIKKA - Coffey Grain** 45% **\$19**
Produced using a their old patented "coffey still", named for the Irish raised Dublin Excise Officer Aeneas Coffey, which Nikka Imported from Scotland in '63. While the category is rarely marketed, there are several outstanding grain whiskies that are worth seeking out. Nikka's is one, and all the more unusual for being Japanese. usually a base of unmalted wheat or maize (corn) feature, together with a small amount of 'green' malt (barley which has germinated but not been kilned). I say usually because Nikka hasn't released it's composition so we have to speculate. I get a heap of vanilla an sweet fruits off this one think poached pear and dried banana with a silky short beadish flavour. Again get it while we got it!
- NIKKA - 12yo Blended** 43% **\$29**
What I love about this is it features elements of both the whiskies above it. A blend of whiskies from the Yoichi and Miyagikyo distilleries combined with Coffey-distilled grain whisky. Beautifully presented in heavy decanter-stye bottle. Ripe, round, and generous, there's cocoa and butterscotch, with plenty of persimmon and nutmeg. Lush, round, and balanced. Classically perfect Japanese blinded whisky.
- NIKKA - Miyagikyo** 45% **\$16**
Nikka's entry-level whisky from Miyagikyo distillery. Light in body, yet full of flavour, this is an excellent introduction to Japanese whisky. Elegantly fruity with sherry-cask character.

JAPANESE CONT...

NIKKA - Yamazaki 12yo

43%

\$27

This 12 year old from Yamazaki first came onto the market in 1984 and was the first seriously marketed Japanese single malt whisky. plenty of nut oils and zest, a pleasant floral character with a little tropical fruit finishing smooth with a little winter spice.

KURA - The whisky

40%

\$15

The Helios distillery in Okinawa Japan may be more well-known for producing rums and awamori (a type of rice-based drink only produced in Okinawa), but they been known to dip their toe in the world of whisky. Kura The Whisky is a blended malt (or as the a label says, a "pure malt") then aged in white oak barrels that have been previously used for Rum production.

KIRIN - Fuji Sanroku 18yo

42%

\$59

Almost unknown outside of Japan, Fuji Sanroku which means "at the foot of Mount Fuji", is produced in Fuji Gotemba distillery, opened in 1973 and owned by the Kirin Group. The water source at this picturesque location is rain and melted snow from the top of Mount Fuji. Maturation typically takes place in x-Bourbon barrels.

While the focus is on grain whisky, a quantity of malt whisky is also produced and marketed under various labels Gotemba & Sanroku. The less expensive "Fuji Gotemba" label contains only 18 year old malt, while "Sanroku" reputedly contains malt up to 24 years of age however as malts are aged by their youngest component it don't appear on the bootle. Something special.

NIKKA - Coffey Malt

45%

\$19

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ICHIRO'S - Malt & Grain

46%

\$22

A lovely blended whisky from Japan, created by Ichiro Akuto, the Japanese whisky extraordinaire. This particular gem is made with both malt and grain whisky from Japan as well as (possibly) some whisky from other countries too - the label describes it as "a worldwide blended whisky".

"Always carry a flagon of whiskey in case of snakebite and furthermore always carry a small snake."

- W.C. Fields