

IN SCOTLAND, OLD IS NEW AGAIN

AIMING TO STAY FRESH & COMPETITIVE,
SCOTCH IS AWASH IN INNOVATION

BY W. R. TISH

Scotch is looking and feeling more like the granddaddy of brown spirits these days. Naturally, those who craft the whisky—whether they be of the Highlands, Lowlands, Islay or Speyside—are not too keen on reinventing their spirit; but they are proving more than capable of reframing Scotch for whisky enthusiasts.

By tapping their existing reserves and putting on their creative caps, Scotland's distillers and marketers continue to create “new” malts that they hope will sell at premium prices and solidify Scotch's claim to reigning as King of Brown Spirits. Here is a look at some recent special releases from the magical land of Scotland:

Developed by bartenders, for bartenders, **Auchentoshan** “The Bartender's Malt” is the very first single malt of its kind.

Every element, from cask selection through branding, was executed by the New Malt Order—a team of 12 skilled, innovative bartenders gathered from around the world. **94 proof; SRP \$46.99.**



Each year, Laphroaig crafts a new version of Cairdeas, which means “friendship” in Gaelic. For 2017, **Laphroaig Cairdeas Quarter Cask** features different ages of Laphroaig (all five+ years in bourbon barrels) rested for six more months in smaller quarter casks then bottled at cask strength—no color added, no chilling. **114.4 proof; \$79.99.**



In 2008, **Glenmorangie** created “Astar” (Gaelic for “journey”), a single malt whisky entirely matured in custom oak casks from the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. This year, Astar returns with a limited-edition release (overseen by Dr. Bill Lumsden) that renews the Highland Distillery's homage to the power of wood. **105 proof; SRP \$99.99.**



From the deep reserves of John Dewar & Sons come two new age-statement malts. **Aberfeldy 16 Year Old**, known as the “Golden Dram,” draws its water



from the Pitilie Burn, a stream that runs through the distillery and is said to have deposits of alluvial gold **80 proof; \$99.** **Craigellachie 17 Year Old**, nicknamed “The Bad Boy of Speyside,” is produced in copper “worm tubs” to cool the whisky, creating a distinctive sulphuric and meaty character. **92 proof; \$186.**

Islay's most untamed spot inspires **Ardbeg's** latest, **An Oa** (pronounced “an oh”), the first addition to the core range for almost a decade. Another creation by Dr. Bill Lumsden, Ardbeg's point of distinction is **The Gathering Room**, where parcels married together in a huge vat merge over time, gaining complexity. **93.2 proof; \$59.99.**



Another age-statement, with a twist: **Glencadam** recently added a 13 Year Old single malt. The distillery was shut down from 2000-2003. In 2003, it was purchased by independent Scottish company Angus Dundee Distillers. This limited edition, aged from the re-start of distillation, commemorates the “Re-Awakening” of the brand. **92 proof; \$65.**





The Dalmore is extending distribution of The Dalmore 25. Previously primarily in luxury bars and restaurants, 1,000 bottles were earmarked for retail starting in August 2017. Its complex barrel regimen includes American ex-bourbon casks, Palomino Fino Sherry butts and Tawny Port pipes. **84 proof; \$1,300.**



HEAVY MEDAL

Whiskies don't need to be brand new in order to have fresh selling points. The International Beverage Holdings portfolio is celebrating a copious medal haul in leading industry competitions this year. Spirits from the company's five distilleries in Scotland—**Pulteney, Balblair, Balmenach, Knockdhu** and **Speyburn**—took home over 50 Gold and Silver medals at five of the world's most highly rated spirits competitions.



Glen Moray is celebrating 120 years of distilling. In a salute those who came before him, current Master Distiller Graham Coull has created "Glen Moray Mastery," a blend of five vintage offerings, each selected to express the character that defines one of Speyside's most legendary single malt distilleries. Only 1,000 bottles produced; **\$1,000.**

Johnnie Walker has just introduced Wine Cask Blend, the latest U.S. release in the experimental Blenders' Batch series. Featuring malt whiskies from the Highland such as Clynelish and some from Speyside such as Roseilse, the blend also includes creamy grain whiskies, such as those from Cameronbridge. Like other whiskies in the Blenders' Batch series, such as Triple Grain American Oak blend, Wine Cask Blend is designed with both bartenders and whisky enthusiasts in mind. The end result with Wine Cask Blend is light and vibrant—and remarkably accessible. **80 proof; \$29.99**



In the much-anticipated sequel *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*, the film's famous spies pose as distillers. Of bourbon. But never mind that American angle. And never mind that an Old Forester has a commemorative bourbon out in honor of the film. **The GlenDronach** is director Matthew Vaughn's favorite single malt and this limited edition, GlenDronach Kingsman Edition 1991, is a nod to the birth year of Kingsman Gary "Eggsy"

NEW VIKING IN TOWN

Highland Park, self-dubbed as "the Orkney single malt with Viking soul," recently added "**Magnus**" to their core range. Exclusive to the U.S. and Canada, this expression celebrates distillery founder Magnus Eunson, a butcher and church officer by day, and bootlegger by night. Brave, irreverent and enterprising, Magnus was a direct descendant of the Vikings who settled on Orkney hundreds of years ago. Designed in the decorative Viking art style called Urnes and attractively priced at **SRP \$39.99**, Magnus exhibits lightly-peated characteristics familiar to the Highland Park family; a high proportion of Sherry-seasoned American oak casks imparts a citrus, vanilla and lightly smoky character.



Unwin. Described as a "whisky fit for a Kingsman," it comprises single malts aged exclusively in Sherry casks for a quarter of a century. **96.4 proof; SRP \$900.** ■

