



OUTTURN

Celebrating flavour discovery: May 2024

Issue 151



ENDLESS DISCOVERIES AT SMWS.CA

GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE SMWS FLAVOUR PROFILES

Exploration is the greatest joy of Society membership, roaming the broad vistas of flavour and aroma represented in our vast selection of whiskies. But exploration without a map can be frustrating.

So we have 12 distinct flavour categories, each represented by its own colour, from Young & Spritely to Old & Dignified; Light & Delicate to Heavily Peated. These 12 categories offer an alternative to the more traditional method of categorizing whiskies by their region of origin (Islay, Speyside, etc).

Our flavour map gives whisky lovers a far better way to navigate our endless and ever-changing selection of bottlings, many of which are not typical of their region.

YOUNG & SPRITELY

SWEET, FRUITY & MELLOW

SPICY & SWEET

SPICY & DRY

DEEP, RICH & DRIED FRUITS

OLD & DIGNIFIED

LIGHT & DELICATE

JUICY, OAK & VANILLA

OILY & COASTAL

LIGHTLY PEATED

PEATED

HEAVILY PEATED



SPICY & SWEET

FIRM AND FRUITY

CASK NO. 112.115

\$146.99



REGION	Highland
CASK TYPE	1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrel
AGE	8 Years
DISTILLED ON	28 May 2014
OUTTURN	111 Bottles
ABV	59.9%

A typically expressive and exotic profile, as we've come to expect from this terrific and underappreciated make. Freshly laundered fabrics and linens were noted first, before a big detonation of citrus curds, tropical fruit jams and bubble-gum, alongside lychee, apricot jam and dried papaya. Lovely stuff! With water we found some slightly more aromatic elements such as sandalwood, heather flowers, delicate sooty touches and flower pollens.

The palate opened with pure exotic fruit pulp, fruit salad goo and hints of limoncello, crushed nettles and New Zealand sauvignon blanc. Reduction brought some spicy tangs of cinnamon and pink peppercorn, but also fir wood resins, lemon jelly, burlap and wintergreen.

JUICY, OAK & VANILLA

FREE AS A BEE

CASK NO. G9.8

\$257.99



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>2nd Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>22 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>25 July 2000</i>
OUTTURN	<i>175 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>61.5%</i>

We prepared a refreshing cocktail using semi-sweet white wine, lemonade, pineapple juice and freshly chopped pineapple chunks. This was initially sharp and citric on the palate but soon moved into the sweet and juicy fruit category of pears, grapes and green apples, before finishing with a tonka bean panna cotta.

Water brought out oodles of vanilla in the form of custard, chantilly cream and madagascar beans, as well as luscious spring green grass covered with small white flowers. To taste, this was lush and wonderfully easygoing – like a fresh cup of bee pollen tea.

BOURBON

DO YOU FEEL LUCKY, PUNK?

CASK NO. B5.19

\$199.99

LIMIT ONE BOTTLE PER MEMBER



FIRST APPEARANCE FROM THIS DISTILLERY FOR SMWS CANADA

REGION	<i>Tennessee</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>New Oak Charred Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>7 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>22 March 2016</i>
OUTTURN	<i>202 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>63.3%</i>

The defiant aromas of cinnamon potpourri and intense incense gave chase to dried slices of apple and banana sweets, leading us into an alleyway lined with lychee-scented gewürztraminer wine and hibiscus tea. Backed into a corner, a tussle began between vivid vanilla, red chillies and sponge cake cooked in a V8 engine.

Backup arrived with a dash of water, as elderflowers, tutti frutti ice cream and gooseberries came to the rescue. Then it was straight behind bars for pineapple, passion fruit and soft, juicy mango, before being judged by a jury of glacé cherries, popcorn and cream cheese frosting.

SCOTCH AND SHERRY

Best of both worlds

This month sees the launch of the Society's first-ever documentary, telling the story of sherry casks from the forests of Galicia to the cooperages and bodegas of the 'sherry triangle' in Andalucía. Unfiltered editor Richard Goslan produced "Scotch & Sherry: A Flavour Odyssey" and explains here what to expect, and how it all came together

If you've been entrusted to undertake a dream job, you'd better start by assembling a dream team. So when I received the green light to pull together a plan to shoot The Scotch Malt Whisky Society's first ever full-length documentary feature, I had to make sure I had the right crew.

First on the list – the Society's head of whisky creation, Euan Campbell. He's the one who already knows the Spanish cooperages and bodegas best, he's already immersed in the world of sherry casks, and when I twist his arm enough, he's even willing to appear on camera.

Talking of camera – for the video side of things, the job went to Gareth Goodlad, a long-time contributor to the Society and always a safe and inventive pair of hands – dab hand with a drone as well. I needed someone to take care of audio, and Gareth lined up the perfect candidate in Julia Rodriguez Caro – Barcelona-based but with family ties to a sherry bodega in Andalucía, a fluent English speaker as well to help me out when my Spanish language skills reached their limits.



We weren't just shooting video though – for our planned *Scotch & Sherry* print publication [more on that soon], I needed a stills photographer who would relish the chance to get in amongst every aspect of the sherry story, so I signed up regular *Unfiltered* photographer Peter Sandground and the team was complete.

The logistics were also a challenge, getting from Scotland to the remote area of Galicia first in the far northwest of Spain and then down to the 'sherry triangle' of Andalucía in the south. I was helped out hugely by the team at the Forestal Peninsular sawmill in the north and Tevasa cooperage in the south, under the charismatic leadership of Narciso Fernández – a fountain of knowledge not only about Spanish oak and sherry, but about Spanish culture, history, the arts, the food...you name it.

Seeing a majestic oak tree that could easily be 100-years old being felled in a few minutes with a burst of chainsaw activity is strangely humbling – especially when you discover that a single tree could end up providing the wood to create no more than three casks. We learn about the sustainability of production, the preservation of the oak forests and Narciso's vision for leaving the industry in better shape for the next generation than the one he inherited.



At the sawmill, we witness the process where these tree trunks start to take shape into the staves that will make up the casks. There's technology at play – but a lot of hard graft as the machine operators manhandle logs through a series of deadly saws and James Bond villain-type slicing apparatus. It's a great opportunity to get up close to this part of the process – just not too close.



We're soon in the south, in Jerez de la Frontera, a town that never fails to charm. It can seem deserted in mid-to-late afternoon, with the shops mostly shut and hardly any life on the streets. But once the sun sets it suddenly bursts into life. We head to Camachuelo, one of our favourite tabancos, or sherry bars, where the host Salvador remembers Euan and me from a previous visit. He provides a seemingly endless offering of local dishes, accompanied by a fantastic range of sherries – the perfect introduction to the 'sherry triangle' and sherry as an amazingly varied wine that pairs with a wide range of foods – a glass of fino with some prawns, oloroso with the local Payoyo goat's cheese and Pedro Ximenez as a sweet nightcap.

I know better than to visit a cooperage with anything that might even be approaching a hangover – the combination of relentless noise, heat, flames and the need to be alert to all the activity around you is best experienced with a clear head. It's a privilege to see the team at Tevasa cooperage at work – starting with a pile of staves at one end of the process and then loading beautifully crafted casks onto lorries at the other. Throughout the cooperage, the craftsmen take time to demonstrate what they're doing, tolerating both video and stills cameras being pointed at them and politely edging us out of the way when we get too close.



By comparison, the bodegas are beautifully peaceful, and even feel relatively cool in the shade out of the Andalucian sun. This is also where the scale of the sherry-seasoned cask industry starts to reveal itself – some of these bodegas are monumental in scale, with thousands of casks sitting seasoning specifically for the Scotch whisky industry. There are familiar names all around us from some of Scotland’s biggest distilleries, but it’s also lovely to see so many casks with SMWS stencilling on the ends – and to get a taste of some of the fantastic sherry that’s being used to season them. Gareth’s ability to fly his drone inside the bodega helps to capture the scale of the endless rows of seasoning casks.



A trip to the sherry triangle isn’t complete without a proper tasting of the different varieties of wine, and for that we’re fortunate to meet up with Manuel Torres Zarzana, the head oenologist at Bodegas Barón. He’s also wearing a Dead Kennedys T-shirt, which is somehow very pleasing – there’s no undue formality or stiffness here, just a passionate sherry winemaker who’s keen to share his love and knowledge of the wine.

One of our final stops is to the Ximénez-Spínola bodega, where Euan and I have visited before, and we’re greeted like old friends by husband-and-wife team José Antonio Zarzana and Laura Murphy. This is a special place in every sense – for the hospitality we receive, for the way that the bodega works exclusively with the Pedro Ximenez grape variety and for the quality of the casks that the Society is able to secure from the bodega’s solera system.

Our last night brings everything full circle, meeting Narciso Fernández in Jerez again for a walking tour of the entrancing old city. The final stop is at one of Narciso’s favourite haunts, where Euan pulls out a bottle of Society’s Cask No. 68.95: A negroni riff, which has been additionally matured for two years in an oloroso hogshead. “Cheers my friends – this is a fantastic whisky,” he declares. “We started with the forest, continued with the cooperage, then experienced fantastic sherry wines. This is the final step, to finish with this wonderful product.”

We’ll drink to that, whether it’s a glass of Society sherry cask-matured whisky or a rich oloroso. Here’s to Spain, Scotland and the journey that takes you to a plaza in Jerez de la Frontera celebrating the synergy between our two worlds. **To watch the film, visit the SMWS Silverscreen YouTube channel.**



DEEP, RICH & DRIED FRUITS

TRULY A BRAW DRAM

CASK NO. 95-93

\$180.99



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogshead</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>2nd Fill Oloroso Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>10 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>18 October 2012</i>
OUTTURN	<i>271 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>61.1%</i>

This reminded us of cranachan, a Scottish traditional dessert but this time with a twist. Instead of raspberries we used blackberries, along with double cream, honey and, of course, whisky. Silky smooth on the palate, we found caramel wafers, ripe plums and baked marsala figs with pine nuts and mascarpone. Water added a sweet floral aroma typical of a muscat wine beside stewed apricots, sultana cake and a rhubarb trifle.

To taste, we sampled chocolate and walnut brownies, toffee apples and blackcurrant-flavoured wine gums. In the finish came a sweet Italian millefoglio with basil chocolate ganache. Following 5 years in an ex-bourbon hogshead, we transferred this whisky into a 2nd fill oloroso hogshead.

LIGHTLY PEATED

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING FUNNELS

**DISTILLERY 93
RARE RELEASE**

\$184.99



REGION	<i>Campbeltown</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrels</i>
AGE	<i>8 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>16 September 2014</i>
OUTTURN	<i>1276 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>60.2%</i>

There was something fishy about these characters, as they arrived with heavy-hitting heather and honey, leaving a collision of teriyaki, peanuts and lapsang souchong tea in their wake. The rev of powerful engines blasted thick engine oil over prawns in butter while they made a quick getaway in the sweet medicinal aromas of a stolen tugboat ambulance.

With a few drops of water the mobster lobster arrived, chewing on salted toffee and flexing his *mussels* with shallots in a cream sauce. A loaded banana went off, scattering oranges, melons and lemons. As clouds of smoke from smouldering thyme cleared, the lobster found himself trapped in trifle, facing a stretch of time in brine behind chocolate bars. *Bottled for the 2023 Campbeltown Malts Festival.*

PEATED

SALTED MARZIPAN SANDWICH

CASK NO. 155-5

\$199.99



**FIRST APPEARANCE FROM THIS
DISTILLERY FOR SMWS CANADA**

REGION	<i>Israel</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st Fill Ex-bourbon Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>4 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>25 July 2018</i>
OUTTURN	<i>187 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>65.2%</i>

A heavy slab of marzipan found itself wedged tightly in a madeira cake soaked in calvados and Jamaican rum while crispy seaweed was fried in tempura batter. On the palate a wave of drying spice wove a smog of smoked paprika and cinnamon around singed porridge with salt and a life-affirming dash of sweet marsala wine.

Adding water encouraged us to clean a barbecue with half a lemon before serving green peppercorn salami and oysters with a bouquet garni and bay leaves. Now sweeter flavours combined almond oil, hazelnuts and salted peanuts with subdued smoke wafting over spearmint and chamomile tea.

PEATED

RETRO WALNUT ASHTRAY

CASK NO. 16.89

\$149.99



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>Refill Re-charred Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>9 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>1 October 2013</i>
OUTTURN	<i>298 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>63.3%</i>

The aroma recalled, for some, the cigar smoker of old watching black and white television while chomping on long stogies, and next to them a retro walnut wood ashtray. The taste neat was deep, dark and dominating, like a flaming torch, before flavours of singed smoked pigeon breast, chicken liver parfait on burnt toast and hickory-smoked almonds appeared.

Following reduction, we found burnt Cumberland sausages, smoked eel and dark chocolate, with liquorice and smoked salt on the nose. The taste was that of Spanish-style oxtail braised with chorizo, a sandwich with habanero sausage-smoked beef strips and, in the finish, a raspberry treacle tart.



IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP COMING UP FOR RENEWAL?

Here's how to save money on that!

There's nothing like sharing the discovery of a good whisky with a good friend, so with this in mind we have our **Recommend-a-Friend program.**

For every new member who signs up on your recommendation, or for every gift membership you buy for that like-minded friend, **you'll receive \$20.00 off the cost of your next renewal fee** (up to a maximum of six referrals/gift memberships per membership year).

Visit www.smws.ca for more information.





WHERE TO BUY

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