



OUTTURN

Don't fight it, feel it: October 2024

Issue 156



POURING 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



JUICY, OAK & VANILLA

FRESH, BRIGHT AND CHARMING

CASK NO. 73.162

\$148.99



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>11 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>30 May 2012</i>
OUTTURN	<i>212 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>59.9%</i>

A very fragrant and fruity aroma on the nose neat delivered freshly squeezed orange juice, vanilla wafers, caramel toffee, honeyed flapjacks and freshly sawn wood. The initial taste was like an explosion of creamy mascarpone followed by big vanilla notes, honey and lemon, with a sweet oaky flavour in the finish.

Following reduction, we imagined strolling through a meadow in springtime with daisies in full bloom enjoying a scoop of lemon sorbet in a sweet ice cream cone. On the palate, soft fruity flavours such as peaches, apricots and mangoes mingled with a menthol freshness. This was truly a fresh, bright and charming dram.

SWEET, FRUITY & MELLOW

MUSCAT GRAVY

CASK NO. 128.22

\$177.99



REGION	<i>Wales</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Barrel</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>1st Fill Muscat of Setubal Barrique</i>
AGE	<i>6 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>14 May 2015</i>
OUTTURN	<i>292 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>59.9%</i>

The neat nose quivered with big, juicy dark things like Christmas pudding, mincemeat stewing in Cognac, orange oils, hardwood varnish, rosewater and Turkish Delight. Beyond that we also found peach schnapps, orange cocktail bitters and aged Cointreau. With water we found pear chutney with winter spices, chocolate spread on brown bread, mineral oils, shoe leather and crystallised orange peels.

The neat palate opened with cinnamon swirl pastries, pink grapefruit, Australian muscat wine and blood orange segments drizzled with pomegranate molasses. Reduction brought out notes of cinder toffee, dried thyme, fuzzy peaches and stem ginger in syrup. Matured for 3 years in a bourbon barrel before transfer to a 1st fill Muscat of Setubal barrique.

DEEP, RICH & DRIED FRUITS

A FORAGE INTO ORANGE

CASK NO. 44.180

\$297.99



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogshead</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>New Oak Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>18 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>31 May 2005</i>
OUTTURN	<i>252 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>60.1%</i>

Sophisticated and complex, the nose suggested maple candies, barley sugars and golden syrup, with hints of duck à l'orange (with a cherry on top). We found more orange on the palate – Jaffa cakes, orange jelly babies and bitter orange cognac liqueur – with vanilla pod and espresso, while sugar-coated fennel seeds and crystallised ginger spiced up the finish. Wood notes strengthened on the nose with water – wooden hay barns, charcoal, sauna wood and clove.

The palate combined candied orange slices and mandarin cheesecake with spiced rum, black pepper, tobacco and San Daniele ham. After 15 years in ex-bourbon wood, this enjoyed further maturation in a new oak heavy char #4 hogshead.

SCOTCH AND SHERRY

Inside the solera

The age-old solera system is fundamental to the world of sherry production, with an intricate process designed to ensure a consistent and complex final product, while also capturing the essence of an individual bodega's history in every bottle. It's also found its fans in the world of whisky maturation.

Step inside any historic bodega in Andalucía's 'sherry triangle' and you'll find rows and rows of ageing casks – at first sight, not much different from a typical dunnage set up in a Scotch whisky distillery warehouse. But there's a key difference – and that's the reliance of the bodegas on their solera systems.

The process is fundamental to producing high-quality and consistent sherry, and its brilliance lies in a meticulous design and straightforward operation to manage a never-ending form of 'fractional blending' between old and new casks.



HOW IT WORKS

Within a solera system, the casks are organised in tiers or rows. The bottom row is known as the solera – meaning 'on the floor' in Spanish – and contains the oldest liquid. Above this, progressively younger liquids are stored in the criadera (meaning 'nursery') levels, which are designated by age.

Periodically, a portion of up to a third of the liquid is drawn from the solera on the bottom row for bottling, in a process known as 'saca'. This volume is then replaced with liquid from the criadera above it, which is in turn replenished by the level above. Finally, new wine is added to the top criadera to fill those casks again.

As the liquid moves down through the levels over time, it blends with the older liquid, creating a consistent and balanced flavour profile. This continuous mixing, or fractional blending, ensures the final product maintains a high quality and complex character, with the older wine's characteristics always influencing the younger additions.

As Antonio Flores, master blender at González Byass, explained it to me: "This is a key part of the sherry story. Unlike the rest of the wine world, which uses the vintage system to preserve the singularity of each year's bottlings, the solera system preserves the homogeneity of the style."

A LEGACY OF FLAVOURS

The diversity and historical depth of the solera system become apparent when visiting bodegas such as Ximénez-Spínola. Here, owner José Antonio Zarzana draws samples from the bodega's solera systems that date back to 1918 and 1964. These soleras have been in continual use during these periods, although the casks have been replaced over time, reflecting a rich legacy of flavours that have been meticulously preserved.

“The solera is typical of a sherry bodega and supplies casks that have been used for years – possibly even decades – ageing sherry,” explains José Antonio. These are the ex-bodega casks that have been purchased by The Scotch Malt Whisky Society, and which have already produced several outstanding whiskies for our members. They've certainly hit the spot from SMWS head of whisky creation Euan Campbell's point of view.

“The casks that we source from Ximénez-Spínola are very high quality,” says Euan. “An enduring memory for me was being able to taste the wine directly from our casks at the bodega, just weeks before the wine was bottled, and the casks shipped to Scotland. They offer a more subtle impact than sherry-seasoned casks, and match particularly well with unpeated, fruity distillate styles of whisky.”



SOLERA-INSPIRED SCOTCH

It's not only ex-bodega casks that have been used in sherry's solera systems that are in demand. The whole concept has been adopted by some distilleries, notably Glenfiddich's Solera 15 and Speyburn's Solera 25, while in Australia Starward and Sweden's High Coast are also producing bottlings using their own versions of the solera system.

Now the SMWS Whisky Team are taking inspiration from their time spent in the bodegas of Jerez to set up the Society's own solera system. It's early days, but members can look forward to the release of SMWS solera bottlings in the future – watch this space...

Dive into the Society's documentary [Scotch & Sherry: A Flavour Odyssey](#) to discover more about how we source casks and work with different varieties of sherry to season new casks, and also how we source casks from Andalusia's bodegas at the [SMWS YouTube channel](#), [SMWSSilverScreen](#).

DEEP, RICH & DRIED FRUITS

MUSTY MULCHY

CASK NO. 68.105

\$218.99



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogshead</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>1st Fill Oloroso Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>15 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>5 October 2007</i>
OUTTURN	<i>239 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>57.4%</i>

At first nosing we got brown bread spread with treacle, chocolate sauce, macadamia nuts, maple syrup and Madeira cake, plus shoe leather, putty, youthful calvados and singed raisins. Some water brought out intriguing suggestions of caramelised apricots, walnut oil, chewy Highland toffee, thick mulchy earthiness and plum wine with a kiss of rancio. The palate was initially sweet, with runny honey, sultanas and fig paste, with subtler notes of hazelnut liqueur, rum fudge and linseed oil in the background.

Reduction brought further notes of fresh figs, orange cocktail bitters, mine must, leaf mulch, cellar earth and black coffee. After being matured in a bourbon hogshead for 12 years, this was transferred to a 1st fill Spanish oak Oloroso hogshead.

OILY & COASTAL

VIKING TOOTHPASTE

DISTILLERY 93
RARE RELEASE

\$157.99



REGION	<i>Campbeltown</i>
CASK TYPES	<i>1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrels</i>
AGE	<i>9 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>23 September 2014</i>
OUTTURN	<i>869 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>60%</i>

Pork chops, smothered in olive oil, rosemary and smoked paprika, sizzled on the hot charcoal of a Viking burial ship alongside lemons and limes rolled in coal-dust muscle rub. The strong scent of thymol wafted from the Viking bathroom, mixing with minty toothpaste, oily cured meats and smoked duck.

Adding a dash of water, the bonfire crackled as we steamed prawns and crabs with seaweed and a few rose petals. Our taste buds were now enlivened by the sweetness of marmalade-glazed ham, honey on toasted crumpets, and smoked pineapple dipped in rock salt. Fresh mussels bubbled in a pot, balancing the sweetness with the maritime herbal tones of oregano and Thai basil. Bottled for the 2024 Campbeltown Whisky Festival.

PEATED

ALICE THROUGH THE TASTING GLASS

CASK NO. 138.8

\$214.99



REGION	<i>Taiwan</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>6 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>15 January 2016</i>
OUTTURN	<i>208 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>55.8%</i>

We were surprised by the subtlety of this one. An initial nose with ethereal wafts of herbal smoke, then precise, sharp salinity and eventually sour cherries and balsamic vinegar. This evolved towards tarry rope, smoked sea salt and squid ink. Reduction brought more umami savoury vibes of black miso, soy sauce, cured game meats and pork scratchings flavour with five-spice.

The palate neat was initially all-on sour red fruits, umami paste, fermenting soybeans, natural tar extracts, burlap and smoked olive oil. With water it became more delicate showing notes of smoked rosewater, peated Gewürztraminer, dried seaweed, charred fennel, marmite and dark chocolate with sea salt.

PEATED

HEBRIDEAN HAMPER*

CASK NO. 53.464

\$274.99



REGION	<i>Islay</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogshead</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>1st Fill PX Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>15 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>27 May 2008</i>
OUTTURN	<i>234 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>55.3%</i>

We were instantly transported to Scotland’s west coast. On the nose we found barbecues and seafood, wood fires, wet grass, quince, and toffee apples. The palate let us know of its peaty heritage, and added blue cheese and brine to the mix, alongside stone jetties, lobster pots, wellies, dried green herbs and chocolate.

With water our noses detected pulled pork, smoked pineapple, vanilla cheesecake, incense and woolly jumpers. The reduced palate added charred root vegetables and a whole charcuterie board to the table. This was matured in a bourbon hogshead for 11 years before being transferred to a 1st fill American oak Pedro Ximenez hogshead. Selected for bottling by an all-female tasting panel and bottled for International Women’s Day 2024. *Giving Spirit bottle—proceeds will go to OurWhisky Foundation; see page 12

OCTOBER - THE *GIVING SPIRIT* PROGRAM

In January 2021 we introduced our “Giving Spirit” program: each quarter, SMWS Canada donates to charity its profit from the sales of a designated bottle.

January 2024 marked the 4th year of our program, and to date we’ve donated over \$19,000.00 to various charities thanks to the bottles you’ve purchased! This past July we chose The War Amps and we have donated \$1115.64 from the sales of Cask No. GN6.3 “Yearning for bubbles.”

This quarter, with the release of Cask No. 53.464 “Hebridean hamper” - bottled in celebration of International Women’s Day 2024 - we’ve chosen to support “OurWhisky Foundation”: “a non-profit organisation recognising, supporting and empowering women working in whisky around the world, while advocating for a more inclusive and diverse industry.”



We hope you’ll continue to support the Giving Spirit program by buying a great bottle and supporting a great cause at the same time!



Curious about the bottles on the cover?

This is the Winter Series. Whisky is a pleasure year-round, but it has to be said that as the nights draw in, there's nothing better than cracking open a bottle for a dram or two. Whether you're going for a bit of cold weather walking, or you're a fan of an armchair dram by a roaring fire, we have something special for you this season with our new Winter Series collection.

We've picked four easy-drinking whiskies, selected for convivial settings – the what and the where is up to you. You'll be able to purchase each bottle individually as we head through the winter.

The first one, Supernaturally Sweet Smoke, will appear in November. Collect all four to spell "SMWS" on your shelf!



BLUE KIT BLOWOUT!

We've slashed the price on the Welcome Kits, from \$230 to \$180, which is a heck of a deal since they contain three 100ml bottles of SMWS whisky (that will never be bottled in the full-size format), two SMWS glasses, a hefty water jug, a pipette and a journal so you can record your thoughts on those three 100ml bottles!

AND, if you buy one, for yourself or as a gift (hey, Christmas is coming), then we'll knock a whopping \$40 off your next \$120 renewal cost. Supplies are limited and we'll be discontinuing them, so now's the time to grab one before they're out of the marketplace. Available exclusively at Kensington Wine Market in Calgary and Keg n Cork in Edmonton.





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

The exclusive retail stores of The Society in Canada:

KENSINGTON WINE MARKET

1257 Kensington Road NW, Calgary, AB

Phone: 403-283-8000 (1-888-283-9004)

Email: scotchguy@kensingtonwinemarket.com

www.kensingtonwinemarket.com

KEG N CORK LIQUOR COMPANY

3845 - 99th Street, Edmonton, AB

Phone: 780-461-0191

Email: ordering@kegncork.com

www.kegncork.com

THE STRATH ALE, WINE & SPIRIT MERCHANTS

919 Douglas Street, Victoria, BC

Phone: 250-370-9463

Email: whisky@strathliquor.com

www.strathliquor.com

LEGACY LIQUOR STORE

1633 Manitoba Street, Vancouver, BC

Phone: 604-331-7900

Email: Darryl@legacyliquorstore.com

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ARC LIQUOR

1973 Harvey Ave, Kelowna, BC

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