



THE SCOTCH MALT  
WHISKY SOCIETY

# OUTTURN

Explore: April 2025 Issue 162



WHISKY WITH  
**THE WOW FACTOR**

ADVENTURES IN FLAVOUR AWAIT AT [SMWS.CA](https://www.smws.ca)

## SWEET, FRUITY & MELLOW

### WALTZING WITH A MOSCOW MULE\*

CASK NO. 39.265

**\$143.99**



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>10 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>5 December 2011</i>
OUTTURN	<i>200 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>62.2%</i>

Waltzing through flower meadows and hay fields, our rapturous rustic noses eventually discovered orchard fruits, tinned peaches and fruit pastilles. The palate was tingling and refreshing, with impressions of sherbet lemons, orange marmalade, Buck's Fizz, pear and apple chutney, lychees and jelly sweets, before a finish of ginger and lime.

The reduced nose gave us Turkish Delight, custard tarts, white grapes and oranges and lemons in a woven basket. The palate now seemed softer, still floral and fennel-ish, but the fruit sang the loudest, with rhubarb, raspberry, peaches, pears and bubble gum; finishing with white pepper, anise and citrus. \*Giving Spirit bottle; see next page

## APRIL - 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.

Now in the 5th year of our program, to date we’ve donated over \$21,000.00 to various charities thanks to the bottles you’ve purchased! This past January we chose First Book Canada to help supply books to educators and kids who need them most, and we have donated \$905 from the sales of Distillery 55 Rare Release “Rhubarb and fig crumble.”

**This quarter our Giving Spirit bottle is Cask No. 39.265 “Waltzing with a Moscow Mule” and we’re returning our attention, for the third time, to the plight of Ukrainians by donating to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation, specifically their Humanitarian Appeal branch which provides “humanitarian assistance to civilians impacted by Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.”**

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

## SPICY & DRY

### THE STORM BEFORE THE CALM

CASK NO. 55.82

\$211.99



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>21 September 2007</i>
OUTTURN	<i>251 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>55%</i>

We made a red wine gløgg with almonds, raisins and pumpkin seeds while we watched, in the distance, a thunderstorm approaching. On the palate it felt like a mythological battle between the Roman gods of Jupiter and Venus – it was big and bold with a hint of funk, and we thoroughly enjoyed it.

Diluted, the thunderstorm passed, and a calmness set in with sweet frankincense, polished wood and clean leather saddles. To taste, a creamy texture, freshly brewed Assam black tea and a fruit tray bake. Following 12 years in an ex-bourbon hogshead, we transferred this whisky into a 1st fill Spanish oak oloroso hogshead.

## SPICY & SWEET

### HEATHERY AND LEATHERY

CASK NO. 78.83

**\$164.99**



REGION	<i>Highland</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogshead</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>1st Fill HTMC Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>11 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>22 November 2012</i>
OUTTURN	<i>265 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>57.6%</i>

One Panellist was immediately transported to the stables and tack room of the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art. The smell of perfectly groomed horses mingling with the aroma of prestigious leather saddles and bridles left, even for a non-hippophile, a lasting impression.

On the palate we all dipped gingerbread chai biscotti into an espresso. Reduction added raw organic heather honey with those typical aromas of treacle, fudge and caramel almost like molasses yet with a very distinct, malty, earthy flavour with a hint of salt in the finish. Following 8 years in an ex-bourbon hogshead, we transferred this whisky into a 1st fill heavy toast medium char hogshead.

## ADVENTURES IN WHISKY - BEYOND THE COMFORT ZONE

*Some whiskies hold your hand and lead you gently through an orchard of soft fruits and honeyed delights. Others might shove you into a bog, slap you round the face with a kipper, and set fire to your boots for good measure. If the latter sounds more intriguing than terrifying, then you're in good company.*

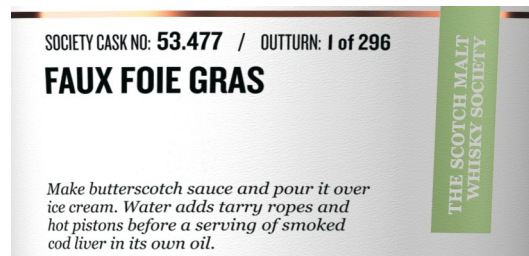
It cannot be denied that whisky has a well-founded claim to being 'The Most Exciting Sensory Adventure in the World'. Within this realm of discovery, single cask whiskies vigorously wave the flag for obscure, unusual and enigmatic flavours. Hence, at The Scotch Malt Whisky Society, celebrating such peculiarities is at the very heart of what we do.

But it doesn't necessarily make sense. The excitement of sampling sweaty socks, tasting tar or even sipping silage would certainly seem to fly in the face of evolution. After all, natural selection has gifted us with reflexes that spontaneously reject such corrupted odours with the universal expression of disgust. So why the love?



One of the more unique challenges for the SMWS Tasting Panel is how to present such filthy nuances as welly boots, rotting vegetables and parmesan cheese in a positive light.

Reeking cheese, fermenting cabbage or how about the alluring waft of cat urine in your sauvignon blanc? Scotch whisky may not be standing alone in this leftfield, but it undeniably leads the charge by some margin. Before we delve into why we love to sniff the farmyard whiff, let's address how such malodorous marvels end up in the glass in the first place.



What are often regarded as 'off-notes' in whisky stem from a complex interplay of raw materials, fermentation, distillation and maturation. Many of these characteristics originate at the earliest stages of production, including peat smoke. For instance, microbial activity during fermentation can lead to the formation of funky and sulphury compounds, which can contribute to aromas reminiscent of farmyards, cheese or even sweaty socks.

Sulphur compounds themselves, which are frequently associated with off-notes like burnt rubber, struck matches and cooked cabbage, can be reduced during the distillation process as they react with copper. But taking the 'spirit cut' too late into the distillation run can result in higher concentrations of 'feinty' characters – those earthy, leathery and sometimes meaty notes that appear.



Maturation further shapes the pong through oxidation, esterification and interaction with the wood. The breakdown of fatty acids and aldehydes can lead to rancid or musty notes. Even metallic flavours can result from the toasting of oak. It's in the cask that many off-note changes occur, as the spirit develops into mature whisky.

Many of these 'off-notes' shouldn't be pleasant but somehow are. Petrol, marker pens, antiseptic wipes – notes that, in theory, should send you recoiling rather than revelling. How about thick engine grease, chimney soot or creosote? Venturing into the world of industrial machinery may not embrace the idea of 'scrumptiousness' quite like a hot apple pie, but they are nonetheless flavoursome. Why?



Familiarity seems to play a significant role. Familiarity with an unpleasant odour can enhance the perceived enjoyment of it. In addition, more familiar aromas are easier to identify than unfamiliar ones, and unpleasant food odours are detected faster and more accurately than pleasant ones. In simple terms, stinky odours are easier to detect and describe, plus in time, we can learn to enjoy them – hence we often have 'acquired tastes'.

If all this talk of industrial grease, maritime funk and cheesy delights has you intrigued rather than horrified, then you're exactly the kind of whisky drinker the Society was made for. There's a world beyond the smooth and easy, beyond the honey and vanilla. A world where challenging flavours aren't mistakes but marvels. Where every dram tells a story that isn't just pleasant – it's exhilarating.

Whatever your proclivities, single cask Scotch whisky is an adventure that offers the most fascinating journeys into flavour and sparks conversation. So next time you pour yourself a funky Society dram and find your nose recoiling at an initial whiff of rubber or manure, don't back away. Lean in. Because that, dear whisky adventurer, is where the journey begins.

## DEEP, RICH & DRIED FRUITS

### RAISIN TOFFEE JAM

CASK NO. 2.138

**\$247.99**



REGION	<i>Speyside</i>
CASK TYPE	<i>1st Fill Oloroso Butt</i>
AGE	<i>16 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>15 March 2007</i>
OUTTURN	<i>527 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>55%</i>

Forget tea and biscuits, we were dunking madeira cake in red wine and tearing open a waxed paper bag full of raisins. To the palate, our wee afternoon repast was ultimately jammy, with black cherries and sticky brown sugar melting together with mulling spices, dark chocolate and spiced orange segments.

Adding water, toffee popcorn burst forward, joining fudge and a volcano of orange fondant and grape must. The palate was now reminiscent of sherry flor, cherry wood, Chanterais melon and churros dipped in caramel.



## PEATED

### SEASHELLS IN A BOX OF BURNT PENCILS

CASK NO. 4-344

**\$169.99**



REGION	<i>Highland Island</i>
INITIAL CASKS	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogsheads</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>1st Fill Ex-Bourbon Barrel</i>
AGE	<i>12 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>18 February 2010</i>
OUTTURN	<i>246 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>62.9%</i>

Sweet and floral aromas of dried lavender, honeysuckle and burning heather danced alongside runny honey on scorched toast, dried seaweed and seashells in a pencil box. The palate carried a weight and heft like dark beer with red liquorice, smoky bacon crisps and kippers before lavender honey and cherry jam coated burnt marshmallows.

As we added water more maritime aromas of oily fish skins, rock pools and cured salmon bellowed forth alongside crab and lobster served on a bed of flowers. Now cloves and pickled ginger complemented haggis, smoked salmon and sticky cough mixture flavoured with blackberries and honey. At 7 years of age, we combined selected casks from the same distillery. We then returned the single malt into a variety of different casks to develop further. This is one of those casks.

## PEATED

### COAL SHARDS ON CLOTTED CREAM

CASK NO. 53-457

**\$184.99**



REGION	<i>Islay</i>
INITIAL CASK	<i>Ex-Bourbon Hogshead</i>
FINAL CASK	<i>1st Fill Oloroso Hogshead</i>
AGE	<i>9 Years</i>
DISTILLED ON	<i>3 April 2013</i>
OUTTURN	<i>317 Bottles</i>
ABV	<i>57.2%</i>

A sticky blend of milk chocolate and toffee was dunked in treacle, encrusted with coal shards and placed under our noses. On the palate, the dram was smoked peanuts in caramel, hoisin sauce and root beer. The introduction of water wrapped this whisky's aroma in smoked bacon, glazed it with raspberry jam and placed itself firmly on the barbecue.

The palate was now chocolatey, with burgundy wine and that same smoky, nutty character, albeit now joined by ointments and clotted cream, and served on rye bread. After 6 years in an ex-bourbon hogshead, we transferred this to a 1st fill American oak oloroso hogshead for the remainder of its maturation.



# 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](mailto:scotchguy@kensingtonwinemarket.com)

[www.kensingtonwinemarket.com](http://www.kensingtonwinemarket.com)

## **KEG N CORK LIQUOR COMPANY**

3845 - 99th Street, Edmonton, AB

Phone: 780-461-0191

Email: [ordering@kegncork.com](mailto:ordering@kegncork.com)

[www.kegncork.com](http://www.kegncork.com)

## **THE STRATH ALE, WINE & SPIRIT MERCHANTS**

919 Douglas Street, Victoria, BC

Phone: 250-370-9463

Email: [whisky@strathliquor.com](mailto:whisky@strathliquor.com)

[www.strathliquor.com](http://www.strathliquor.com)

## **LEGACY LIQUOR STORE**

1633 Manitoba Street, Vancouver, BC

Phone: 604-331-7900

Email: [Darryl@legacyliquorstore.com](mailto:Darryl@legacyliquorstore.com)

[www.legacyliquorstore.com](http://www.legacyliquorstore.com)

## **ARC LIQUOR**

1973 Harvey Ave, Kelowna, BC

Phone: 236-420-4060

Email: [kls@armstrong.coop](mailto:kls@armstrong.coop)

[www.armstrong.coop/arc-liquor/](http://www.armstrong.coop/arc-liquor/)