

THE OLIVE TREE'S (growing) whisky collection

Take a moment to read the following and begin your journey into the fascinating and rewarding world of whisky.



Ardmore legacy 40%

Highlands

Bottling note: Released in 2014 to take the place of the Ardmore Traditional. The Legacy brings a lightly peated, wood spice led profile to the table. At it's core, the Ardmore Legacy is made with 80% peated and 20% unpeated malt.

Nose: It leans more on the savoury than the sweet side of life, with light barbecue char and earthy notes upfront. Sweet cinnamon, fresh honey and vanilla toffee waft up at points.

Palate: More charred, smoky notes, joined by drying oak, pear drops and subtle grassy touches. Give it a minute and citrus zest and expressive heather to appear.

Finish: A lasting peat smoke finish, with a little bit of honeyed barley for good measure.

Robert Burns Single Malt 43%

Island

Bottling note: A single malt from the Isle of Arran distillery, celebrating the famed Scottish poet, Robert Burns. This tasty bottling is officially endorsed by the World Burns Federation, making it perfect for Burns Night as well as any other time of year!

Nose: Apple peels, a little pear juice, hints of coconut and apple blossom. Develops with custard and cinnamon.

Palate: Fruity and rich, vanilla, panna cotta, apple and lime peel.

Finish: Apple strudel and cinnamon on the finish.

Bowmore 12 year old 40%

Islay

Bottling note: The heart of the Bowmore range, the 12 year old exhibits some beautiful coastal notes with a gentle peat. It is the balance that the floral element presents that makes this a great entry bottling for Bowmore.

Nose: Coastal smoke and ash soon make way for bergamot, orange zest, lemon slices and some hay before becoming rather floral, heather smoke now competing with the ash.

Palate: Lovely and rounded, honeyed even, initially. Vanilla, perfumed smoke and coastal elements develop. Dark Peat. Blossom, oily sweetness.

Finish: Smoky and long. Sea spray, dry grass, a touch of ash and citrus.

Glenfiddich 12 year old 40%

Speyside

Bottling note: This classic Speyside single malt and more often than not the first malt whisky a person will try, it certainly was for me. Although mine was mixed with stones ginger wine to make the wonderful whisky mack.

Nose: Distinctively fresh and fruity.

Palate: Sweet, fruity notes. Develops into butterscotch, cream, malt and subtle oak flavours. Very smooth

Finish: Smooth and mellow finish.

Overall: A great benchmark from which to explore the world of whisky

The Glenlivet (Founders reserve) 40%

Speyside

Bottling note: Founded in 1824, very little needs saying about The Glenlivet Distillery. First revealed at the end of 2014, the Founder's Reserve replaced The Glenlivet 12 year old. Named in tribute to distillery founder George Smith.

Nose: Some dates, then what at first appears to be a touch of salinity but is better described as a slightly sharp plum and apricot wine note. There's orange zest, toffee, hints of struck match and chocolate raisins, but before this starts to sound 'Sherried' there's also pear drops, a dusting of sweet cinnamon, honeysuckle and sweet pea.

Palate: Fruity, then sweet, more toffee, a touch of anise, then into milk chocolate Flakes, banoffee pie and apple turnovers.

Finish: Creamy toffee to the fore now, a little oak and sweet barley sugar warmth too. Milk chocolate raisins linger.

Overall: Perhaps a little sweet, but it would work well with ice where the sweetness would be slightly suppressed. Before you shudder with disgust, Alan Winchester said that he liked his with a little ice sometimes too. And if it's good enough for the Master Distiller...

Glenkinchie 12 year old 43%

Lowlands

Bottling note: One of the stalwarts of the Lowlands. A fantastic introduction to the region. It shows off the characteristic lightness and grassy elements that Lowland whiskies are known for, with nods to cooked fruit and Sauternes wine along the way.

For me a single malt to enjoy as an aperitif on a warm summer evening

Nose: A light, aromatic nose with hints of barley malt, almonds, hazelnuts and manuka honey/beeswax.

Palate: Very fruity palate with a mix of stewed fruits, dessert wine, apple peels and honey. Becomes quite oaky late palate.

Finish: A medium-length finish with barley and freshly mown grass

Glenmorangie Original 10 year old 40%

Highlands

Bottling note: The Original is the flagship single malt from the Glenmorangie Distillery. Matured in a combination of first and second fill American white oak casks for 10 years. It's the benchmark for creamy, approachable single malt. A long running 'go to' dram for many whisky enthusiasts.

Nose: Very fruity and thick. Rich notes of lemon, nectarine, apple and spices.

Palate: Fresh and balanced, vanilla. Boiled sweets, very creamy, tiramisu, toffee.

Finish: Quite long, gentle, malty and very fruity.

Laphroaig 10 year old 40%

Islay

Bottling note: Really smoky and iodine rich. This has to be one of Scotland's most characterful drams. Laphroaig are known for their medicinal malts, and the classic 10 year old is no exception.

Nose: This opens on big, smoky muscular peat notes. There are spices, and liquorice, as well as a big dose of salt. This whisky has become slightly sweeter in recent years, and it appears beautifully on the nose, amidst the classic iodine/sticking plasters and cool wood smoke we love.

Palate: Seaweed led, with a hint of vanilla ice cream and more than a whiff of notes from the first aid box (TCP, plasters etc). The oak is big and muscles its way into the fore as you hold this whisky over your tongue. An upsurge of spices develop – cardamom, black pepper, chilli.

Finish: Big and drying, as the savoury, tarry notes build up with an iodine complexity.

Overall: The only malt from Laphroaig's range that John Campbell recommends with water; try it! It opens up the palate massively, providing a dazzling array of additional flavours...

Talisker 10 year old 45.8%

Island

Bottling note: A classic from the Isle of Skye. Aged for a minimum of 10 years in American oak casks. Immensely satisfying, with whiffs of warm peat blending with coastal air, balanced by orchard fruit & juicy barley. A spectacular after dinner dram.

A gold medal winner at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition 2017 and awarded 'Best Islands Single Malt' at the 2017 World Whiskies Awards.

Nose: A fresh and fragrant nose. Through thick, pungent smoke comes sweet pear and apple peels, with pinches of maritime salt from kippers, seaweed.

Palate: It's a bonfire of peat crackling with black pepper, with a touch of brine and dry barley. A welcome delivery of orchard fruit provides a delicate and beautiful balance.

Finish: In a long finish, bonfire embers toast malt and crystallise a sugary underlay.

Aberlour 12 year old (double cask matured) 40%

Speyside

Bottling note: Fantastic & always popular Aberlour 12 Year Old, is matured in both traditional oak and sherry casks.

Nose: Big aromatics on this one with cloves, cardamom and camphor, and then comes a wave of sweeter notes like toffee, milk chocolate and orange rind.

Palate: Full texture, round and creamy, with sweet dark cherries, fudge, and mocha coffee with a refreshing minty breeze.

Finish: Quite long with lingering honey and wood spice.

Dalwhinnie 15 year old 43%

Highland

Bottling note: The flavours are simple, but flawless, a clean, crisp 15 year old from the Dalwhinnie Distillery

Nose: Aromatic, toffee, fruit salad, lush nectarine, custard. Floral, apple blossom, honeysuckle. Apple peels, pear, touch of smoke.

Palate: Malty. Walnuts steeped in manuka honey with vanilla sponge. Gentle smoke weaves its way through the cereal with a touch of spice.

Finish: Long, malty, walnut, almond.

Balvenie Double wood 12 year old 40%

Speyside

Bottling note: Not unsurprisingly aged in two kinds of oak casks! It is firstly matured in refill American oak casks before it's treated to a finish in first fill European oak Oloroso sherry butts for an additional nine months. At 12 years old, this rich and complex dram is an excellent example of what the Balvenie distillery can craft.

Nose: Supple nuttiness intertwined with spices. Honeyed sultanas and grapes. Hugely inviting.

Palate: Sweet with good body. The bourbon characters develop; gentle spice with a little vanilla, a hint of balancing peat lurking quietly in the substrata. Dried fruit too, combining with nuts, nutmeg, cinnamon, back into the bourbon notes - so well integrated.

Finish: Spicy, slightly drying, still sweet.

The English – Original 43%

Norfolk

Bottling note: Before you say anything, no it's not a Scotch whisky, but it so very easily could be! Launched in 2016, The English Whisky Company's The English range features a pair of English single malt whiskies - this is the Original expression, showing off a creamy, vanilla-rich flavour profile.

Nose: Zesty orange, vanilla custard, grassy malt.

Palate: Nuttier than the nose, with notes of almond and hazelnut. Milk chocolate, more orange.

Finish: Rich barley and a handful of spices.

Edradour 10 year old 40%

Highland

Bottling note: One of Scotland's smallest distilleries, this 10 year old is at the heart of it's offering. An unusual, if not unique single malt, a decidedly rum-like dram with a thick mouthfeel. The distillery's production methods remain unchanged in 150 years and it's easy to see why. "If it ain't broke..." The decade of ageing was spent in a combination of Oloroso sherry and bourbon casks.

Nose: Medium, great complexity. Thoroughly fruity, sherry, sweetness, alluring vanilla.

Palate: Cloying, seductive murkiness. Rum, barley, toasted almonds. Some may find themselves lost in the mêlée, not quite enough method to the madness.

Finish: Any confusion is arrested: spiced fruitcake with crème anglaise.

Tobermory 12 year old 46.3%

Island

Bottling note: Released in early 2019, this 12 year old single malt from Tobermory was launched in celebration of the distillery returning to life after a two year break! Slumbered peacefully in American oak casks for a dozen years before being bottled at 46.3% ABV. What a great way to start again!

Nose: Pear, peach and apple, with a dusting of brown sugar. Greek yogurt, barley and a hint of cinnamon pastries.

Palate: Rounded malt notes once again, now a touch oily. Still packs a hearty helping of stone fruit sweetness.

Finish: A flash of orange peel, soft sawdust, toffee and dates.

Caol Ila 12 year old 43%

Islay

Bottling note: Although the 12 year old is the entry level bottling from the Caol Ila distillery, it maybe the perfect entry point into the world of peaty malts. Launched in June of 2002 it is fresh, sweetly fruity and smooth bodied.

Nose: Fresh, herbal. Rubbed peppermint leaves, stemmy, damp grass, smoky. Oily, cigar leaves, smoked ham, hickory.

Palate: Good body, oily, tar, elegant smoke. Hints of boiled sweets.

Finish: Long, peppery, spicy warmth, smoke.

Aran, The Bothy, quarter cask 56.2% Island

Bottling note: Matured initially in first-fill ex-bourbon barrels, then finished for two years in quarter casks. Finally, it's bottled at a generous 56.2% ABV.

Nose: Honeyed malt balanced by oaky spice and a whiff of bright citrus.

Palate: Coconut and almond, followed by apricot and pineapple. Black pepper and menthol.

Finish: Lingering cherry and cinnamon on the finish.

Glenfarclas 105 60% Speyside

Bottling note: A simply superb cask strength whisky. When originally released in 1968, Glenfarclas became the first distillery to release a barrel proof single malt whisky. Eventually re-named to 105, referring to its alcohol content in British Proof, (equating now to 60% ABV). Although it carries no age marking, it is suggested that it is matured for 8-10 years in a combination of both ex-sherry and ex-bourbon barrels.

Nose: Great depth, Sherry. Creamy and nutty. Honey on toast, touch of smoky coffee.

Palate: Silken, spicy and peppery oak. Almond, praline, hazelnut, dried peels, fruity. Touch of Armagnac, hint of rancio perhaps?

Finish: Long, peppery and nutty.

Overall: Drying, assertive and richly spiced. Don't be put off by the ABV, there's plenty of flavour here to enjoy.

Oban 14 year old 43% Highland

Bottling note: Renowned the world over! Remarkable when you consider Oban is one of the smallest distilleries in Scotland. Built right on the edge of the ocean expansion is impossible, therefore every drop distilled passes through one of only two small stills.

Nose: Smoky, maritime nose with hints of sticking plasters and toffee brittle.

Palate: Smoky, creamy palate with notes of marmalade, toffee apples and pear cider. A development of cloves comes late palate.

Finish: A long, malty finish with toasty oak and spice.

Glenfarclas 15 year old 46% Speyside

Bottling note: A wonderfully sherried 15 year old dram boasting oodles of dried fruit notes. It's bottled at 46% ABV simply because this was the strength that George Grant's grandfather preferred it at. A fabulously complex Scotch while also being easily drinkable.

Nose: Intense, powerful sherry. Cream sherry, maybe a touch of peppermint? Smells older than 15.

Palate: Raisins, more sherry, orange peel, walnuts, dates.

Finish: Incredibly long, complex, more of the Walnuts again.

Lagavulin 16 year old 43% (My ultimate whisky) Islay

Bottling note: A much sought after single malt Scotch whisky with massive peat smoke that's typical of southern Islay, but also offering richness and a dryness that turns it into a truly interesting tippie. The 16 year old has truly become a benchmark Islay dram from the Lagavulin distillery.

Nose: 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.

Palate: 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.

Finish: Long, spicy finish, figs, dates, peat smoke, vanilla.

Jura 18 year old 44%

Island

Bottling note: More often seen in its 10 year old version in supermarkets, I consider the 18 the pinnacle of Jura's core range. Aged in American white oak ex-bourbon barrels before enjoying a finishing period in Premier Grand Cru Classé Bordeaux barrels. Top notch stuff for late evening dramming!

Nose: Cinnamon, dried berries, wine gums, maybe!

Palate: Cherries, Turkish delight, milky coffee and blackcurrant jam.

Finish: Chocolate chip cookies, a touch of orange.

Macallan 12 year old sherry oak cask 40%

Speyside

Bottling note: This ever so wonderful Sherry Oak 12 Year Old has spent its entire maturation in sherry seasoned oak casks from Jerez, and is bottled at 40% ABV after its 12 years of ageing.

Nose: Crisp and sweet. There are notes of sultanas and fresh apple blossom. There is a defined floral note followed by Sherry hints. Calvados emerges with a tropical fruit note and golden syrup.

Palate: Medium-body and quite firm. There are notes of hot pastries and marmalade, sultanas and peels with a developing sweetness from the barley sugar.

Finish: Good length with a solid oaked note

Dalmore Valour 40%

Sadly all gone and no longer available!

Bottling note: A limited release of **Dalmore** single malt whisky, which is matured in a mix of two types of first fill ex-bourbon casks & Oloroso Sherry butts, then finished in port pipes from the Douro region in Portugal. Sadly no longer produced, enjoy while you can

Nose: Crumbly shortbread drizzled with toffee and dotted with plump raisins. Deeper notes of candied orange peels.

Palate: Chocolatey and rich, with treacle and malt loaf. Despite all this decadence, it still shows off some lightly qualities with golden barley and a touch of nutmeg.

Finish: Long and warm with plenty of orange aromas with a hint of cinnamon.

Lagavulin Special reserves

Islay

2020 12 year old 56.4%

Aged in refill American oak casks, and packs plenty of smoky notes, though there's also a good helping of boiled sweets and sweet spices in there too. It's wafts of smoke become more prominent with time in the glass and the addition of a drop of water!

A medium weight dram, Lagavulin with a detectible twist, I would highly recommend.

2021 12 year old 56.5%

Again aged in refill American oak casks. Here the smoke is quiet faint, maybe a distant bonfire on a still summer evening.

Palate: Ground black pepper and wood smoke with some sweeter toffee notes.

Finish: Black pepper, smoke, a little salt maybe, with a citrus note coming back in.

2022 12 year old 57.3%

The label is of a Phoenix rising from the flames and once tasted you will understand why. A truly peaty customer, with lots of spice and power amplified by the virgin oak casks this heavily peated Lagavulin was aged in, alongside American oak refill casks once again.

Nose: Bonfire, bacon, and popcorn with some seaweed coastal notes, really strong saline influence.

There is a lot going on here and the comments below may be refined the closer to the bottom of the bottle I get! Have a dram and see what you think.

Palate: Positively crackles with black pepper, sweet toffee, and smoky wood.

Finish: Chilli peppers balanced with caramel.

Overall: Somehow it becomes a beautifully balanced classic Lagavulin. I think the American oak sweetness really suits this.

Caledonian 32 year old 52%

Bottling note: A rare bottling of whisky from the Caledonian Distillery. This single grain Scotch whisky was distilled in 1987 (the distillery closed a year later) and left to matured in a single hogshead cask for 32 years. Eventually, Signatory came along and bottled it up in March 2020 for the Cask Strength Collection. This is bottle 144 of only 204 bottles produced!

Before I reveal the complex tasting notes, the overall opinion of the few who have tasted this in The Olive Tree is and I quote “Wow, Caramel, amazing”!!

To be a bit more formal,

Nose: Bounty bars, liquorice, hazelnut cream, papaya and mint.

Palate: Dried banana, orange zest, roasted coffee richness and a soft prickle of cinnamon.

Finish: Toffee, praline and buttered toast. (Which we think means, “wow, Caramel, Amazing”)



And for those that must, our non-Scottish and blended whisk(e)y offering

Traditional Blends

Famous Grouse 40%

Bottling note: Known by many for their Christmas adverts. Famous Grouse features malt whisky from Glenrothes, Highland Park and The Macallan. The blend has had Scotland's number one spot since 1980.

Nose: Light, crisp. Cut flowers. Barley. Toffee sweetness.

Palate: Light and balanced. Spice, barley. Caramel, touch of smoke.

Finish: Touch of sweetness, caramel.

Johnny Walker Black label 40%

Bottling note: A much loved and respected blended Scotch. Johnnie Walker Black Label is one of the world's most famous blends. Born in 1909, Black Label is a blend of around 40 whiskies, with a distinctive mellow slightly moky note.

Nose: Winter spice and treacle, hints of white pepper and a little citrus.

Palate: Rich & full with notes of wood smoke and dry spice, hints of barley and cereal with creamy toffee and a distinct herbal note.

Finish: Quite fruity and long with a note of sultanas and mixed peels.

Monkey Shoulder 40%

Bottling note: Monkey Shoulder Scotch is a superb, blended malt whisky from William Grant who have been making whisky since 1887. Made with single malts from three famous Speyside distilleries. The result is a smooth, creamy, supple, and very malty Scotch which works superbly well neat, over ice, or as their website suggests in whisky cocktails (where it really excels).

Nose: An elegant, stylish nose of marmalade, Crema Catalana, cocoa and malt. Plenty of vanilla and a sprinkling of winter spice (nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon) alongside a mouth-watering hint of aniseed.

Palate: Very malty, creamy delivery with a suggestion of berry fruit. Juicy toasted barley, cloves and butterscotch. Manuka honey, hot-buttered-toast and dried apricot develop.

Finish: Medium length, spicy oak and a hint of peppermint on the tail.

Johnny Walker Blue label 40%

Blue Label is the rarest whisky from this world famous brand – only one in ten thousand casks makes the grade. Rich and slightly smoky, it's made up of some very old malt and grain Scotch whiskies.

Nose: Fragrant with good body. Notes of oak, crisp spice, dried fruit, pastries. Berry fruits, aniseed, hints of cedar, a touch of spice and citrus.

Palate: Supple and balanced. Good toffee and hints of very wistful smoke. Chocolate, hints of grass and a good hit of malt.

Finish: Floral, oaky, good length, urged on by a plume of very well-kept, highland style smoke. Dried fruit, spice, honey.

Overall: One of the ultimate premium blends, Blue Label is a legend in its own right and will continue to be.

Oversees offerings

Irish

Jameson's original 40%

Bottling note: Jameson is Ireland's quintessential Irish blend, a classic whiskey.

Nose: A full and floral nose leads with the smooth sweetness of marmalade and fudge before a hint of Madeira and a little cut grass note emerge.

Palate: Thick and of good body with notes of orchard fruits, both fresh and cooked with a little vanilla cream.

Finish: Medium-length with spice and honey.

Jameson's stout edition 40% (Don't knock it until you've tried it)

An intriguing release and some may say a gimmick! Perhaps it is but it works. Having sent some of their casks to the local craft stout brewers, the casks were returned where they were subsequently used to give a stout finish to Jameson! A worthwhile experiment that's produced a unique and interesting Irish whiskey.

Nose: There's still cut grass and some fruit alongside a delicious oil character, but things are different here too. Is it sweeter? A different sweetness perhaps, more wood spice plus chocolate liqueur.

Palate: Orchard fruits, great mouthfeel but the vanilla cream is less prominent, it's more fragrant (hoppy?) and floral on the palate with a touch of bitterness.

Finish: Again familiar, but different, that different complexion of spice with chocolate from the nose lingers briefly.

Jameson's IPA edition 40%

The Jameson Caskmates series continues with the IPA Edition! As with the Stout Edition, Jameson sent its used whiskey casks over the Franciscan Well brewery, where they were used to aged some IPA beer. After that, the casks made their way back to the distillery, and used to finish this enjoyable Irish whiskey. My personal opinion, intriguing, but not a patch on the stout edition!

Nose: Fresh grapefruit and lime, vanilla pod, sugared almonds

Palate: Oily walnut and hops, caramelised dates.

Finish: Malt, white pepper, caraway and green apple

Jameson's Crested 40%

The first Crested release came in 1963, and it's known to have a healthy proportion of pot still whiskey as well as a high proportion of Sherry casks used for maturation (I have read bourbon barrels are also used).

Nose: A luscious, sweet aroma of maple butter with plenty of chalky vanilla and caramelised sugars. Complex Irish pot still fruitiness is present too, with bitter citrus, apple skins and marmalade. Ginger and clove add spice and warmth underneath with a touch of roasted nuts.

Palate: Through creamy vanilla and a malty element, there are helpings of gentle sherried fruit, coconut, and honey-toffee sweetness. Apricot and peach melba emerge with a touch of milk chocolate among spiced nuts, peppery mint and prickles of pot still spices.

Finish: In a long finish, there's warming honeyed sweetness, mild drying oak spice and a hint of sherry-scorched wood.

Overall: This is an ideal introductory dram. It is outstanding value for money and utterly delicious in a complex, interesting way.

The Irishman 40%

The Irishman is a Single Malt Whiskey which unsurprisingly comes, from, you guessed it, Ireland! It's triple distilled which is aged in both sherry and bourbon casks for over 10 years before bottling.

Nose: Light and fruity. A little hint of liquorice pops up, as does crumbly vanilla fudge.

Palate: Classic peaches and cream with a sprinkling of crushed up biscuits and almonds.

Finish: Fairly long, with oak cropping up near the end.

Overall: Right up there, a cracking Irish whiskey.

The Sexton 40%

The Sexton Single Malt is made from 100% Irish malted barley, triple distilled in copper pot stills. It is then aged in Spanish Oloroso sherry casks imparting a rich and fruity character. Sadly the high light for me is the rather eye-catching hexagonal bottle!

Bushmills 10 year old 40%

Arguably as famous a brand as Jameson. A superb 10 year old single malt whiskey and winner of Best Irish Single Malt Whiskey at the 2007 World Whiskies Awards.

Nose: Cooked banana and tropical fruit.

Palate: Guava, cantaloupe melon, over-ripe white peach, vanilla and peels.

Finish: Floral, spicy finish.

Overall: A contentious point amongst many, personally I prefer to add a drop of water.

Jameson's Black Barrel 40%

Yes another Jameson and you thought they only had one! This is produced in a small batch - and I say a superb release from Jameson, with a high proportion of Irish pot still whiskey as well as small batch grain. The result is an increased body and level of richness when compared to their core product. It's aged in double charred first fill bourbon casks (black barrels). It's well worth a dram.

Nose: Rich and fruity with notes of tropical fruits, coconut, nectarines in yoghurt, guava and a thick core of sweet cereals.

Palate: Thick and full on the palate, with an intense, unctuous creaminess, alongside dates, walnuts and peels.

Finish: Long finish, and very fruity with notes of cinnamon and nutmeg and hints of potpourri

Tullamore DEW 14 year old

A bit of a price jump here, but worth it once you are ready. If for no other reason, that you won't see it in the UK very often. Finished in bourbon, Port, Madeira and Oloroso Sherry casks.

Nose: Zesty, grilled pineapple and slowly building bourbon(y) vanilla.

Palate: Big, creamy malt with loads of vanilla tannins. Ripe, sweet red grapes and a hint of poached apple.

Finish: Sherried sweetness just carries on and on.

American

Jack Daniel's Tennessee 40%

Bottling note: I am going to take a wild stab in the dark and assume you have heard of Jack Daniel's! It is the most sold whiskey in the world after all. Made up of 80% corn, 12% rye and 8% malt. The spirit is filtered through 10 feet of sugar & maple charcoal to produce a mellow, slightly smoky character, thus making it Tennessee whiskey. Mostly drank with coke or another mixer.

Nose: Light with plenty of sweetness. There are hints of dry spice and oily nuts, a touch of smoke.

Palate: Quite smooth and soft with notes of banana milkshake, a mixed nut note, a touch of caramel with crème anglaise.

Finish: Sweet with a little cereal sweetness and toasty oak.

Makers Mark Bourbon 45%

Bottling note: Often the first Bourbon people buy, purely due to uniqueness of the sealing of the cap! By replacing rye with red winter wheat they reduced the burning sensation from the whiskey. The rest as they say is history.

Nose: Fruity and rich. There are lovely notes of spiced honey and mixed peels, a little malmsey, hazelnut and a touch of cut fruit with toasty oak providing a backbone.

Palate: Rich and full. There are notes of rye and spice, barley malt, a little nut oil with butterscotch and vanilla.

Finish: Quite sweet with butterscotch and dry oak spice.

Jack Daniel's Single Barrel Rye 45%

Bottling note: This is so far removed from JD and coke! In fact this is their first new grain recipe in 150 years. Made with 70% rye, 18% corn and 12% malted barley. What's more, this rye is drawn from single barrels.

Nose: Hazelnut and almond, spicy grain and an underlying hint of corn.

Palate: Light oak spices develop first, alongside another helping of corn sweetness. Ripe apricot and orange.

Finish: Lingering peppery warmth.

Overall: Honestly? You'd be a fool not to.

Japan

Toki 43%

A blended whisky from Suntory's three distilleries: Yamazaki, Hakushu and Chita. Its main components are Hakashu single malt and Chita grain whisky. 'Toki' means 'time' in Japanese.

Nose: Soft orchard fruits and thyme honey are joined by a helping of peppermint in the backdrop.

Palate: More green apple on the palate leads along bright citrus notes from pink grapefruit. Bitter herbs, toasted almonds and vanilla oak linger underneath.

Finish: White pepper and ginger add spice to the finish.

South Africa

Bain's Cape Mountain single grain 40%

Bottling note: Released in 2009, this is South Africa's first ever single grain whisky, coming from The James Sedgwick Distillery in Wellington. Bain's Cape Mountain whisky is matured in first fill bourbon casks for an initial three years before spending a further two years in fresh first fill bourbon casks! It's named after the chap who built the first roads in Wellington.

Nose: Grapefruit peels, custard creams and icing sugar. Soon followed by nutmeg and vanilla sugar. Lightness throughout.

Palate: Soft and well-rounded with continued vanilla cream. Fresh pear, banana and hints of cardamom and oak.

Finish: The sweet citrus peels return, along with a little bit of meadowsweet.

"And finally Cyril"

Glavya 35%

Although a whisky liquor, it is simply too good not to mention. Flavoured with honey, almonds, tangerines and spices. The name is the phonetic pronunciation of the Gaelic 'gle mhath' meaning "very good". The liqueur is of such merit that it has won the International Wine and Spirit Competition a record breaking 5 times, making it the best liqueur in the world.

Although personally not a fan of ice with whisky, I suggest you take the lead of an Olive Tree regular and great friend. Pack a glass full of ice, pour a double over the top, sit back, enjoy, refill. Great stories will unfold, some you may even remember in the morning!

*source – much is my own work & personal opinion, pulling additional information, where needed, from Masters of Malt website.