

# The Single Malts of Scotland

## Tasting Notes

### Ardmore 1994 / 12yo / 58.6% / 70cl / Bot. 2006

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- Nose: Polish at first, with cereal and brioche notes. Then smoked fish, wet peat, black pepper, some waxy hints. Sweet ginger. Oily and woody notes.
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- Palate: Big peat attack. Medium-full weight. Coal, roasted cereal, some sweet gristiness. Malt and peat battling it out. Good concentration and integration.
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- Finish: Fading smoke and malty notes, occasional flashes of sweetness.
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### Arran 1996 / 12yo / 57.4% / 70cl

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- Nose: A torrent of natural caramel and butterscotch, initially, subsiding when the expected alcoholic prickle evaporates to reveal tweed, apples, ginger cake and malt loaf. Faint vanilla wood notes lurk in the background.
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- Palate: At full strength, this is powerful, spicy stuff, quite oaky and assertive. Water brings out tweed, wood varnish and vanilla alongside the pepperiness, and allows some of the caramel notes from the nose more room.
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- Finish: Neat, this is woody and spicy. Noticeably tamer and sweeter when water is added, with a previously un-noticed saltiness at the death.
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### Bowmore 1990 / 16yo / 58.5% / 70cl

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- Nose: Slightly volatile. Honey, iodine, medicinal peaty notes. Faint hints of fresh mint, sea spray and cough mixture.
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- Palate: Warming peat, soot, medicine cabinet surge. Medium-bodied, with the honey, some sappy wood, apricot, white pepper, woodsmoke, and smoked fish developing.
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- Finish: Warm, long, honeyed, spiced and slightly drying as the oak makes a comeback.
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### Benrinnes 1991 / 17yo / 55.8% / 70cl

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- Nose: Clean, toasty malt, barley sugar. Some syrup / brown sugar in the background, with pepper, English mustard, watercress and a hint of smoke. Hint of crispy bacon after fifteen minutes or so in the glass. A savoury nose.
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- Palate: Slightly sweeter than expected, but otherwise remains true to the nose with some lovely clean, honeyed malt balanced well by the savoury notes. Becomes more earthy on nose and sweeter on the palate with water.
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- Finish: Lovely spicy kick gradually fades. The malt remains intact.
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### Clynelish 1996 / 10yo / 59.6% / 70cl

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- Nose: Toffee at first, then blackcurrant and lovely floral notes. Apricot, peach, exotic fruit. Strawberry?! Honey, vanilla, coffee. Toasty oak.
- Palate: Smooth malt, blackberry. Very fruity. Strong pepper and spice, christmas cake and vanilla sweetness. Some great developing smokiness alongside powerful malt flavours. Clearly from an excellent sherry cask. With water, the fruit is more evident and floral notes come through.
- Finish: Long and powerful, fruit gradually fading with the smoke, malt and toasty oak lingering longest.
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### Cragganmore 1985 / 22yo / 56.7% / 70cl / Cask #2461

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- Nose: Mellow, with aromas of apricot, dried fruit, varnish, sponge cake and cigar box / cedarwood. Develops melted butter and a bourbony spice note.
- Palate: Powerful, quite woody, with the bourbony note again, spices and hot buttered corn-on-the-cob. Raisins and clove in the background.
- Finish: Long, oaky, drying.
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### Glen Grant 1973 / 34yo / 54.7% / 70cl / Cask #1856

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- Nose: Ginger cake, brambles, dark chocolate, mixed peel, golden syrup, apples, cinnamon & cocoa. Mild alcohol prickle that enhances the nose. Evolves into classic rich sherried fruitcake with a delicious nuttiness. For lovers of sherry-driven drams (like myself), this is an enthralling nose. Not a trace of sulphur, either.
- Palate: Richly-flavoured with great, but not overbearing, weight. All the elements from the nose are present, with the fruitcake and hazelnut dominating initially and the spices remaining gentle but firm. The fruit / spice / oak balance is spot-on: this is a real charmer.
- Finish: A long slow fade of the above, with the ginger and clove becoming more prominent as the fruit gradually diminishes.
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### Highland Park 1990 / 16yo / 53.2% / 70cl

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- Nose: Baked apple, cinnamon, clove, spiced pear. Some grass and floral notes, develops to brown sugar. Some slightly dusty oak shows itself eventually.
- Palate: Sweet honey bursts across the tongue, then apple, some oak spice, gingernuts, clove, pepper, grass and smoky heather notes develop along with a sweet malt flavour. Medium to full-bodied.
- Finish: Spices and smoke still going strong, malt and fruit gain ground towards the end.
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### Linlithgow 1982 / 26yo / 63.7% / 70cl

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- Nose:** A very accessible nose despite the massive strength. Almost immediately, fresh grass, apple blossom, honeyed porridge, oatmeal cookies - remarkably fresh for its age. After a while the oak appears but always remains polite and balanced. Delightful.
- Palate:** At full strength (careful!) the oak is more noticeable, but the lighter honeyed, fruity touches fight their way through the big, mouth-watering alcohol. Pleasant, but clearly water is advised. After a glass of water for me and a few drops for the dram, I've taken it down to (guesstimate) high 40s abv: the oats are more assertive on the nose now. Palate is much more tempered and sweeter, with some lovely natural caramel and barley sugar.
- Finish:** The oak is getting slightly dusty, as these older malts frequently will. Somehow it really suits the other flavours of this dram.
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### Macduff 1991 / 17yo / 46% / 70cl / Cask #3741

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- Nose:** A lot going on here, with orange peel, varnish and some furniture polish notes, then eucalyptus and suncream. Settles down to some seriously biscuity aromas of digestives and ginger snaps.
- Palate:** Sweet and very biscuity again, with butter, mocha and fruit cake also appearing. Then some woody notes: cocoa and cappuccino. Quite dry and austere at first, but the addition of water opens up some caramel and butterscotch notes rounded with clove oil.
- Finish:** Medium-long, with the spices slowly fading.
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### Rosebank 1991 / 17yo / 55.1% / 70cl

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- Nose:** Distilled on the same day as the superb 16yo that we bottled 6 months ago, this is slightly darker in colour than its sister, and the nose reflects this, being slightly richer but still along the same lines of rich marmalade and sweet ginger aromas, with hay and pot-pourri also in evidence again, particularly with water. A delight.
- Palate:** Medium-full, again very similar to the 16yo, but earthier and heavier, with a bigger emphasis on the oaky, peppery spices. The dried orange peel and heather honey flavours are very evident again, though there is perhaps more citrus here. Water brings forward the honey and oak.
- Finish:** Long and warming when neat, with very impressive length and concentration. The pepper and spices linger longest, with a faint saltiness revealing itself at the death.
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### Springbank 1992 / 15yo / 46% / 70cl

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- Nose:** Begins with honey, ginger, restrained oak, black liquorice, leather and boot polish - then a hint of coal smoke, hayloft, dusty cereals and faint cracked black peppercorns. The malt comes through as barley sugar character. Develops very nicely with dried cut grass and sugared almonds.
- Palate:** Lovely clean barley hit, then a coal-smoke character, which rapidly grows, tingling on the palate with faintly dusty oak, turf, toasty barley and some clove oil, pepper & chilli spice.
- Finish:** Dusty polished wood, turf, pepper, smoke and spices.
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## Anniversary Selection

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### Balblair 40yo / 47.7% / 70cl

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- Nose:** Wood spice, vanilla, polished wood, natural caramel, old soft leather - almost like a rancio. Some sweet orange notes developing, with toffee, brown rock sugar, spice (clove) and a lovely raisin / fruitcake aroma.
- Palate:** Big oak hit, then the polish, sweet orange and a big surge of spice & pepper. The rest of the flavours from the nose appear in walk-on roles. Eventually the gentlest of silky barley malt notes arrives to caress the tastebuds.
- Finish:** Fine-grained oak tannins with the spice persisting for a long while. Great depth and balance.
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### Glen Spey 30yo / 54.5% / 70cl

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- Nose:** An initial burst of clean, fresh malt, then the oak makes its presence felt in a reassuringly refined way - without becoming too dusty or dominant. Dried bark, old books, polished bookcases - there's a distinct sense of the library in a gentleman's club here, all sophistication and gravitas. Develops some faint notes of blackcurrant flower, tweed, shredded marmalade, cocoa powder, cinnamon and clove.  
Time and aeration are required for this reserved, yet supremely elegant, nose to fully reveal itself. Water reveals sugared almonds and a linseed oil aroma.
- Palate:** Medium-full weight. Apple, sugar, and then a big surge of warm oak spices, teetering on the edge of dustiness. A lot of clove, with some cinnamon bark and white pepper. The cocoa from the nose emerges mid-palate, with some shortbread and pie pastry notes. The oak is the star here, though. Water lifts the tweediness and highlights the spices.
- Finish:** Decent length, and great balance of the oak, which is restrained from astringency by delicious sweet malt flitting between the gaps. Water reveals a more lemony citrus character
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### Tamnavulin 40yo / 40.4% / 70cl

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- Nose:** Really intense honeysuckle alongside some grassy, meadowy aromas, varnished wood, gingerbread syrup, smoked vanilla, some dried fruit, dried flowers. The oak becomes more evident, with hints of church pews and old newspapers, but the honey and meadowy notes keep it afloat. Eventually some stewed apple notes appear.
- Palate:** Medium-bodied. Honeyed fruit, richer than the nose suggests, with a big mid-palate of walnuts and wood on a bed of rich brown sugar and melted vanilla ice cream, dusted with cocoa powder, chocolate chips and a hint of cake spices and smoke.
- Finish:** Medium-length, fading very gracefully away leaving a pleasant sweetness and tingling spice.
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