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OCTOBER 28TH, 2011

More new releases, and my general thoughts on them

JOHN HANSELL

Again, this is from a U.S. perspective...



Starting with Ireland, it looks like Jameson is introducing a new whiskey in their "Reserve" line. I received an invitation to attend an event in New York this Sunday where they will be uncorking the first bottle of **Jameson Select Reserve Black Barrel**. Black must be the new cool these days, because we've recently seen the introduction of Crown Royal Black, Johnnie Walker Double Black, Canadian Mist Black Diamond, Bruichladdich Black Art, and now this whiskey. I guess Black Bush and Black Bottle were way ahead of their time...

Also, from Ireland, I got my hands on a review sample of the new **Redbreast 12 year old Cask Strength**, which is supposed to arrive here in the U.S. sometime early next year. Amazing stuff!

You recently saw my review of the new Bruichladdich 10 year old. Well, I also received a review sample of the new

Kilchoman 100% Islay release. It's bottled at 50% ABV (slightly higher than the standard releases), and priced higher too at \$100. It's called 100% Islay because, according to my press release, it's produced from barley grown, malted, distilled matured, and bottled at the distillery. Only 780 bottles are coming to the U.S.

I've tried it and must admit that—as cool as this bottling is with the "all Islay" theme—it's my least favorite of the Kilchoman releases here in the U.S. It just taste too young and immature to me, which is atypical for Kilchoman. Their 3-4 year old whiskeys usually taste a few years older than they really are. My advice: go and get a bottle of the Spring 2011 bottling if you can find one. That's my favorite of the releases so far.

Turning to the U.S., **Buffalo Trace** just announced the third release of their **Single Oak project**. I've tasted all the whiskeys from the first two releases. I must say that, as a whole, I liked the second release more than the first release, which had a lot of whiskeys in the 12 bottle lot with an aggressive amount of oak influence. Round two was tamer and more to my liking. (In fact, I actually thought a couple from the second round to be too tame...!)

The news on the **Woodford Reserve Master's Collection** release for 2011 is out. This time it's actually two releases: both 100% rye whiskeys. One is aged in new charred oak barrels, while the other is aged in first fill Woodford barrels. Details to follow.

The 2011 allocation of Van Winkle whiskeys are coming out. Again, they will be in very limited supply. The collection consists of **Old Rip Van Winkle** 10 years, available in 90 proof and 107 proof; **Van Winkle Special Reserve** Bourbon, aged 12 years; **Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve** Bourbons, aged 15 years, 20 years and 23 years; and **Van Winkle Family Reserve Rye** Whiskey, aged 13 years.

Feeling a bit overwhelmed and not sure which one to buy? I tasted my way through the 10, 15, 20, and 23 year olds recently at WhiskyFest San Francisco. My favorite was the 15 year old. That's the sweet spot in the range. Save yourself some money and get this one instead of the 20 or 23 year old.

Finally, I wanted to mention again that **Suntory's Hakushu** whisky is finally being distributed here in the U.S. Unlike Suntory's Yamazaki whisky, which has been available for quite some time here, the Hakushu is slightly smoky. (If you like whiskeys like Ardmore or Oban, then you might want to give this one a try.) I really enjoy the entire line of whiskeys from Hakushu and have been asking Suntory to bring this whisky to the U.S. ever since I toured the distillery several years ago. For now, we're only getting the 12 year old (43%, \$60). Hopefully, the 18 year old will follow shortly.

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1

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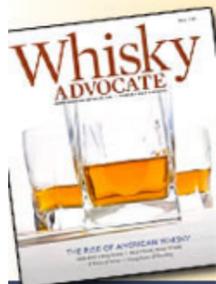
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Do you participate in whisky auctions? Malt Advocate magazine is now The Whisky Advocate magazine

Review: Balblair 1995

Review: Longmorn 16 year old

Review: Amrut Portonova

Review: Hazelburn 12 year old

lawschooldrunk SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 11:34 AM](#)

Thanks for the update, John!

I think Kilchoman is pulling a "netflix."

Would also like to see the Hakushu priced the same as the Yamazaki 12yo. Are you listening, Suntory?

Reply

mongo SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 5:39 PM](#)

though \$60 is cheaper than the price paid by a friend who picked me up a bottle in tokyo this summer.

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2 **Dutch** SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 11:44 AM](#)

Any more details on the Jameson Black? Or must I wait until Monday?

Reply

John Hansell SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 11:47 AM](#)

You might have to wait longer. I won't be at the event. Too busy getting ready for WhiskyFest New York which is this Tuesday.

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3 **Morgan Steele** SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 2:08 PM](#)

Disappointing news about the Kilchoman Islay. I enjoyed two bottles of the 2011 Spring Release but likely will pass on this one. But, I am excited about the Hakushu distribution news. My usual sources don't have it yet but I'll keep an eye out.

Reply

4 **Ryan** SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 4:45 PM](#)

John,

As Pappy Van Winkle 15 seems one of the scarcest products of Van Winkle allocations, may I ask which of the 2011 Van Winkle whiskies would be your runner-up?

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KD SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 10:21 PM](#)

The Rye is the next rarest, and a pretty unique product in the market (the High West 21 is the closest I've had), in my opinion. I believe the stuff in the bottle is considerably older than 13 years at this point... If you're only interested in Bourbon, I'd recommend the Old Rip 10 year at 107 proof next.

There've been rumors that this will be the last release of the 15 year. It's been hinted at before, but this time I'm inclined to believe them.

Reply

5 **B.J. Reed** SAYS:
[OCTOBER 28, 2011 AT 5:44 PM](#)

Red Breast Cask Strength sounds really really good -

Reply

Luke SAYS:
[OCTOBER 29, 2011 AT 7:26 AM](#)

B.J., Re Redbreast 12 CS, I've had this one – you are in for a treat!

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Red Arremer SAYS:
[OCTOBER 29, 2011 AT 10:42 AM](#)

I'm also looking forward to this one.

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