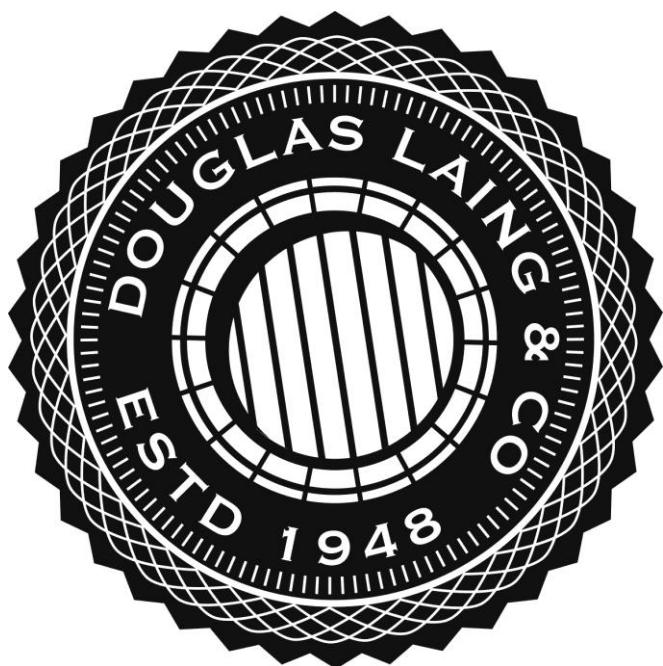


Fred Douglas Laing's Whiskies Tasting



Date : Monday, 17th March 2014
Time : 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Venue : 12/F Hong Kong Wine Vault (Wong Chuk Hang)
No. of Attendees : 25
Wines Tasted : Scallywag 10 Years
Glenlivet Provenance 11 Years (Sherry)
Highland Park Provenance 14 Years (Sherry)
Glen Scotia Old Particular 21 Years (Sherry)
Big Peat 10 Years
Laphroaig Director's Cut 21 Years



When you start naming your whisky after the name of your dog, that doesn't mean the nose nor does the palate have any resentment from the puppy, but rather the feeling of the producer had when he is producing the whisky can correlate, to owning their dog Scallywag. Having met Fred Laing – Managing Director of Douglas Laing & Co. who produce all those wonderful whiskies, one can really feel the passion he has on his work.

Although the tasting is on St Patrick day, it is not every day in Hong Kong that you can see a man dressed in traditional highland dress. This shows Fred is totally committed in bringing the Scottish culture to Hong Kong, setting the theme for his whiskies tasting event.

In Hong Kong, to be honest the whisky culture doesn't seem to pick up in the same way as wine industry. Maybe due to the high level of tax on sprits, maybe it is considered a party mixer with green tea, soda and so on, or maybe it's just considered "unhealthy". For all sort of reasons those people are missing out on what seem to be the perfect drink to finish the night when you just want a sip of alcohol to relax and you just can't finish a full bottle of wine by yourself.



For those who doesn't drink whisky, you will be missing out on the richly spiced character, woven, vanilla nose from the carefully selected Bourbon Hogshead you get from the **10 Years Scallywag**, as well as the layer on layer of sweet stewed fruit, Christmas pudding & dark chocolate, which can be attributed to years of slumbering in those Sherry Butts you can taste on your palate, and leaving a burst of zesty orange with sweet tobacco, cocoa & rich fruit cake to finish.



After that you will be missing out on **Provenance Glenlivet 11 years**, you'll be fooled by the colour, this is a real sherry bomb, single cask, small batch production, no artificial colour, and no chill filtered. Though it's labeled 11 years but it has the weight and the favor which some other whisky needing 18 years to produce.

Recently it is a fashion to drink Japanese whiskies, the **Highland**

Park 14 years, has little similarity with that too. Again its single malt generally made on an annual basis after the crops came in and drank, matured in small casks to gain flavor quickly. With this high level of concentration it is often recommended to add a drop of spring water to dilute some of the alcohol to bring out aromas from the whisky.



When we are talking about food and wine pairing, we usually pair food with wine, who would have thought we can do that with whisky too. Moving on to **Old Particular Glen Scotia 21 years**, after talking to Fred and Cara (Fred's Daughter – Head of Marketing), surprisingly this whisky can pair with some scallops, perhaps with cider vinegar dressing and beetroot shoots? While the Glen Scotia is not really smoky, the maritime character and sweetness is balanced with the natural sweetness

of the scallop.

Big Peat is certainly one of the finest gems Fred had brought with him to this tasting. It has won “The best Blended Malt Scotch Whisky” in 2010 from World Whisky Award, “The Best Peated Malt Daily Drams” from Malt Maniac Award 2009.

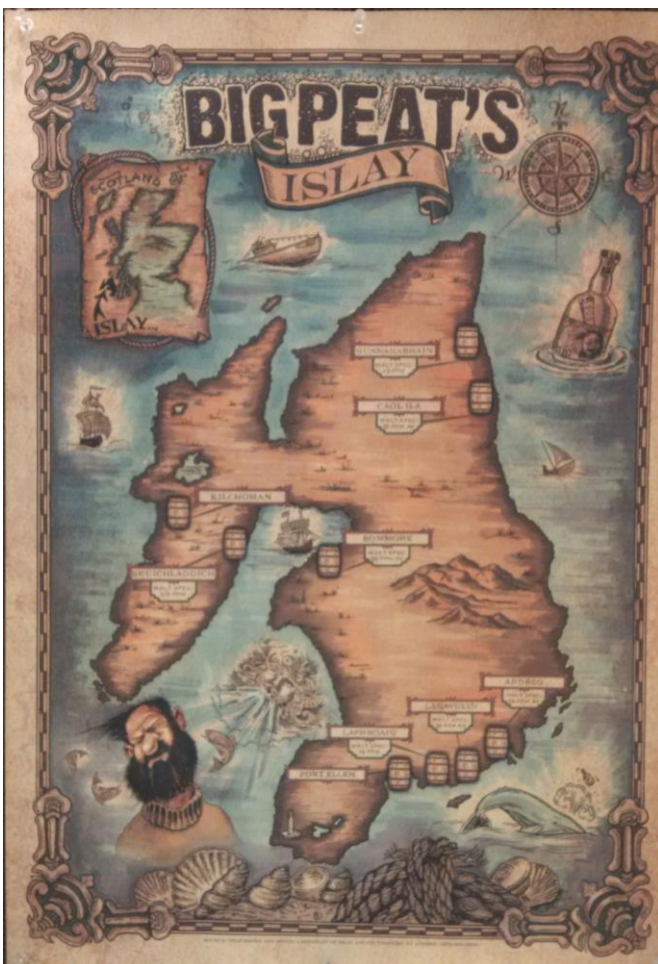


As the name suggests the heavy peat flavour dominates the whole experience. On the nose, it is clean fresh and salty, after a while the malted barley dried over peat leaving a damp earthy note. On the palate you can expect some ashes, warm tar, sweet Japanese style seaweed, bandages, beaches, and lot and lot of smoking chimneys. These kinds of smoky damp, bonfire ashes taste lingers for hours. (The after taste is really that long)

As Cara suggested, the Big Peat can be served alongside with some fresh oysters and seafood in general. The sweet Islay peat smoke can enhance the salty fresh seafood taste.



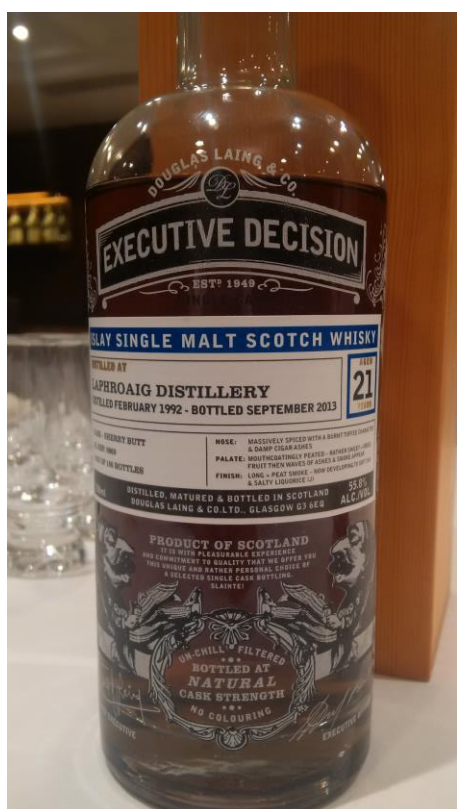
One of the distilleries Fred uses.



Big Peat were made from these 9 distilleries around the island of Islay.



It is good to mention at this point that all of Fred's whiskies were made using the traditional pot still method. As you can see in the above picture, the malt get boiled at the bottom part of the pot and the pipe on top traps all the alcohol vapor, collecting them in another tank. This process is repeated 2-3 times to get the right amount of concentration Fred desires, before putting them in casks. The key is on the casks used, where the whisky will sleep and soak up the flavours from the cask for the next 10 to 20+ years.



Director's cut Executive decision Laphroaig 21 years is the crown jewel of Fred's whisky range. Only the best of the best casks get bottled this way, and we are lucky enough to taste one tonight. Laphroaig is one of the most famous distilleries in Islay, and this bottle is definitely rounder and smoother than other bottles we've tasted. While the Big Peat and Highland Park can pair nicely with dark chocolates and blue cheeses, this mature Laphroaig with extra layers of complexity and a more subtle peaty backbone can go rather well with smoked meats, simply addicting!

A thousand dollars can get you a reasonably good bottle of wine, that you are going to enjoy and finish in few hours, whereas for similar kind of money you can have a bottle of top whisky to enjoy bit by bit, night after night over the month. When you do the maths it makes whole lot of sense to keep some Laing's whisky in your cabinet.

