

Title:

Laphroaig Scotch Whisky

Word Count:

553

Summary:

Laphroaig

There's little doubt that you've arrived in peat country when you drive into the courtyard at Laphroaig and the kilns are on. Ardbeg may be more heavily peated, Lagavulin more smoky

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Article Body:

Laphroaig

There's little doubt that you've arrived in peat country when you drive into the courtyard at Laphroaig and the kilns are on. Ardbeg may be more heavily peated, Lagavulin more smoky, but if it is an uncompromising belt of pitch, peat oil, tarry ropes and iodine you want, this is the place to come - and that's the way manager Iain Henderson likes it. Iain is another old school graduate, a man with an in-depth knowledge of the industry and who isn't afraid to share

'The reason why whisky is made here is because the water is right,' he says. 'It has minerals and flows [like Ardbeg and Lagavulin] over peat, picking up some phenolics from the start.' Like Bowmore, Laphroaig has retained its floor makings, and not for the sake of tourists. 'There's something magic about them,' says Iain. "You're an accountant you'd get rid of the but there are certain phenols which you < only get from maltings.'

He stands in the middle of the kiln, the sooty, fragrant reek hanging in the air around him. 'This is our heritage,' he purrs. 'That's what is missing a lot of distilleries today. It's difficult for a non-whisky man to understand that, but it isn't just a process, it's a living, breathing thing. You can see it happening, see the smoke going through the barley, working its magic.

Unusually, Laphroaig ages its malt for a month after kilning to get a better yield. But it isn't an exact science,' admits Iain. 'It's a craft, it's seat-of-the-pants stuff at times. "So we may be more scientific and know a lot about ethanol, but ultimately it's the hand of the person that matters - particularly

in the maltings and the still house.'

It's impossible to pinpoint what gives Laphroaig its personality, but the floor-malted barley, the peating level, the small stills and the long spirit cut are all key factors. Iain is another believer in the importance of the wash still on spirit character. 'It characterizes the spirit. you create the flavour in the first and clean in the second.

'The shape, the size, the angle of the lie pipe all give us that flavour.' As does the wood, which is all ex-Bourbon casks. want a bottle of sherry, I'll buy one. states Iain, killing that topic, though the magnificent 30-year-old shows the potential combination of this exceptional dram and exceptional sherry butts.
TASTING NOTES

Laphroaig 10-year-old Cask Strength

57.3 %ABV Ultra-crisp malt fresh from the kiln with layers of tar, lap sang souchong, orange, germoline, and peat fires on the beach. Crashes into the mouth with a mix of bonfires, iodine and crisp malt. Long, smoke-filled finish. Savour and tremble at its power. * * * »(*)

Laphroaig 15-year-old

43%ABV The peat has dried down, leaving behind a smooth, oily/creamy nose with hint of tar. Sweet and surprisingly mellow to start, with a slow-burning peat smoke flavour building up towards the finish. * * *

Laphroaig 30-year-old

43%ABV A complex, nose of dried peel, tar and sweet perfume. It's Laphroaig mellowed into old age - all leather armchairs and peat fires. Starts smoky, then fruit, then the tarry ropes/iodine, all building relentlessly before finishing with a burst of rich smoky fruit. Great balance. * * » * *

his opinions. This is his kingdom and a to_r round his distillery quickly becomes a tour_ round the industry.