

Title:

Talisker Scotch Whisky

Word Count:

277

Summary:

Sometimes when you are thanking a long-dead distiller for building his still in such a stunning location, you wonder at the insanity that led him to settle on such a remote spot.

Keywords:

food, drink, alcohol, recipe, whisky

Article Body:

Sometimes when you are thanking a long-dead distiller for building his still in such a stunning location, you wonder at the insanity that led him to settle on such a remote spot. Talisker is one of those places: situated high on the northwest coast of Skye in Scotland, it looks back to the jagged ridge of the Black Cuillin, out into the stormy Atlantic Ocean. Even taking into account the reviled Skye road bridge, this isn't an easy place to get to by road, but it was the sea that proved Talisker's saviour, perhaps its *raison d'être*.

'Everything would have been brought in by sea, by puffer,' says the distillery's new managing director Alastair Robertson. 'And everything went out in exactly the same way. The sea was critical to its survival - there had to be a sea link to get the place started.' It might explain why Skye, the largest of the Hebrides and a place famed for its thirsty population, has only ever had one distillery; although iron in the rock, the brutality of the Clearances and the subsequent anti-establishment stance of the

Skye people could also have played a part. Still, Talisker remains a frontline malt: UDV, thanks in part to the tireless enthusiasm of its former manager Mike Copland, and is a major player in Johnnie Walker. The workforce may have shrunk since the days when it malted all its own barley, but it remains a mighty dram. Peat water, heavily-peated malt and long ferments provide the foundations, but Talisker's secret lies in the still house and, specifically, in the strange wash stills. 'Every distillery, thankfully, has something unique about it,' says Alastair.