

Title:

Grants Scotch Whisky

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410

Summary:

As the whisky industry continues to consolidate, the days of family-owned distiller/blenders is fast becoming a memory. William Grant & Sons is one of the few noble exceptions, proving that a family firm compete with the UDV's of this world by being as self-sufficient as possible.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Every firm uses its own malts as the core of its blends: Grant's can draw on the Dufftown triumvirate of Glenfiddich, Balvenie and Kininvie, although it still buys or exchanges over 40 other malts for its blends. Grant's also uses its own grain whisky from its distillery in Girvan, which it bottles as Black Barrel.

The need to keep as many of the fillings in-house was the rationale behind building Kininvie in 1990. Constructing a new distillery is always a slightly nervy experience, as you can never be 100 per cent certain how the malt will turn out, how it will mature or how it will behave in a blend. Thankfully, Grant's ever-modest master blender David Stewart is happy with Kininvie's performance so far. 'We built it to give us a fruity note for the blends,' he explains. 'I've been using it in Family Reserve for the past four years and eventually it may end up in the 12-year-old, though we still don't know what a 12-year-old Kininvie will be like'.

Kininvie's arrival doesn't mean the malts it replaces are immediately taken out of the blend, as the process is a gradual one involving constant balancing and rebalancing of flavours and components in the blends. What is certain is that Kininvie won't disturb the graceful, sweet and complex Grant's style; wherein David uses the clean, quick-maturing Girvan grain as a platform for some

powerful interplay between the malts.

While the Dufftown core remains the same in the Grant's range, he uses lighter malts in Clan McGregor and Family Reserve, and meatier players such as Cragganmore, Highland Park and The Macallan in older blends. 'There may be more malt in the older blends,' he says, 'but don't underestimate the grain. It does provide flavour as well'.

G R A N T' S One of the most famous families in whisky, the Grants had already built their Glenfiddich distillery three years prior to the launch of their blend - originally Standfast, now Family Reserve.

TASTING NOTES

Grant's Family Reserve

A fragrant nose, mixing honey/lime blossom, pear and light smoke. Very soft toffee/vanilla start before a good, subtle interplay between malt and grain, and a crisp and deliciously nutty finish.