

Title:

Whisky UDV

Word Count:

507

Summary:

One of the Scotch whisky industry's greatest secrets sits at the foot of the Ochil Hills. You may notice some warehouses close to the road as you drive past,

Keywords:

food, drink, alcohol, recipe

Article Body:

One of the Scotch whisky industry's greatest secrets sits at the foot of the Ochil Hills. You may notice some warehouses close to the road as you drive past, but it's more likely that your eyes will be drawn to Dumyat's crags or the phallic thrust of the Wallace Monument on the near horizon. UDV's Blackgrange site does not draw attention to itself, there's nothing to indicate that there's close to 3 million casks of whisky quietly maturing in 49 blocks of warehouses.

The scale is awesome. You are dwarfed by the massive black warehouses, your imagination struggles to picture what a billion bottles of whisky looks like.

Whisky is big, we know that but you only realise how big when you drive down the avenues of Blackgrange. In the disgorging plant they are emptying up to 10,000 casks a week, at times the components for five different blends may be going out the same day.

Now imagine being in charge not just of all this maturing stock, but also in charge of the new make coming out of UDV's 27 malt and 2 grain distilleries. That's Turnbidi Hutton's job. If you want to understand how a major blend is put together, ask Turnbull (UDV's operations director) and UDV's inventory and supply director, Christine Wright.

For Turnbull, putting together a blend doesn't start with assembling components in the lab or the disgorging hall, it begins when he gets the sales projections from UDV's sales force. Every salesman expects brand to grow, he's staking his career prospects on it.

Thankfully, the production side have seen it before and temper their

enthusiasm, 'fuelled by many years of cynicism' as Turnbull puts it. No wonder he has a reputation for irascibility.

His job is to balance the sales forecasts, set production levels to supply the fillings fa all the blends and work out the demand in terms of stock requirements. The whisky trade is always flying blind to a certain extent. The whisky you make today can't be used until it's three years old, you may be storing some to be used in 18 to 25 years time, as blends contain whiskies from a large range of ages. The aim is to get as close to a balance between supply and demand as possible. Get it too short and you have to  
Johnnie Walker Red Label

The nose mixes light toffee peat smoke and fresh wood notes. Fresh and vivacious, it packs a crunchy, lightly peaty punch on the palate. \*\*\*(\*)

Black Label 12-year-old

Gorgeously complex: perfume, peat and peaches in honey, soft grain and leather all in harmony. Silky and multi-layered on the palate, it balances a huge range of seductive flavours beautifully. \* \* \* \* \*

Gold Label 18-year-old 43%ABV Another stunner: richer than Black, with a hint of sea air and honey/beeswax. A complex palate of iced biscuits, ozone and rich malt. \* \* \* \* \*

Blue Label

Peat fires smoulder in the glass and lead to a slowly unfolding palate, with all manner of dark truffle flavours: smoke, orange and bitter chocolate. Deep and profound - but is it worth the money? \* \* \* \*