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The CASK *No.1*

BY THE GLENLIVET

FIRST LOOK: FOUNDER'S RESERVE

Nearly two centuries in the making, The Glenlivet's newest expression is a salute to its originator and the standard setter for single malt whisky, George Smith.

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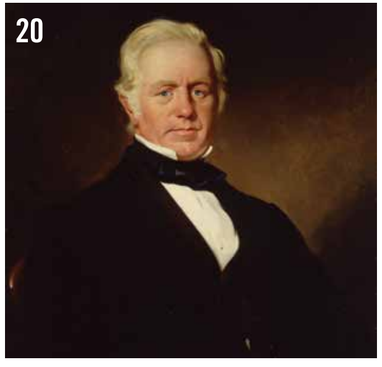

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LIQUID GOLD

Skyrocketing demand has turned flavor aficionados into collectors and collectors into investors. Navigate the single malt boom to start your collection or expand your investment portfolio.

Written by ALEX PASQUARELLO

After you open it and share a dram with a toast to old friends, that bottle of The Glenlivet Winchester Collection 1964 is priceless. Until then, it's valued north of $25,000.

The market for single malt has skyrocketed in recent years, as demand for cask strength and rare Scotch has gone global. A record number of collectible bottles of Scotch whisky were sold at auction during 2014 (more than 68 percent over 2013), according to the first collectors' and investors' annual review produced by consultancy Rare Whisky 101.

When it comes to this whisky boom, there are different objectives for every collector, explains Ian Logan, brand ambassador for The Glenlivet. "Some want the most expensive bottles, while others focus on closed distilleries or a specific whisky. For example, there are a few people out there whose sole objective is to have at least one bottle from every batch of Aberlour A'bunadh."

The appreciation in value of old and rare single malts is simple supply-and-demand economics. Take that 1964: War hero Captain Bill Smith-Grant, the last remaining descendent of The Glenlivet's founder, laid down a specially selected oak cask for that dram. It was tended to for 50 years, and it produced just 100 bottles.

Quite simply, distilleries didn't produce enough whisky for long-term aging to meet the demand we have in the world today, explains Rickesh Kishnani, CEO of the world's first private equity fund for Scotch whisky. The Platinum Whisky Fund has raised $7 million and expects to hit a $10 million cap by the end of summer.

"Based on our study of demand factors globally, we expect there will be a gap in the market between supply and demand for at least the next decade," Kishnani says. Expectations are a 15 to 20 percent net return per year for a seven-year term, and when the fund posts its one-year valuation report, it expects a 35 percent gain. Best of all, you can be paid out in whisky by receiving 10 percent of an annual dividend in Scotch!

The appreciation in value can be accounted for in the spirit's raison d'état, says whisky collector and whiskyauction.com founder Thomas Kruger. The inspiration for his collection of close to 10,000 bottles was his first sip of cask strength Scotch in 1994. "It was a special feeling of something very big and unknown."

The demand for whisky goes beyond simple economics, Logan says. "Regardless of where you position yourself in the marketplace, there is a wonderful shared passion for Scotch whisky."

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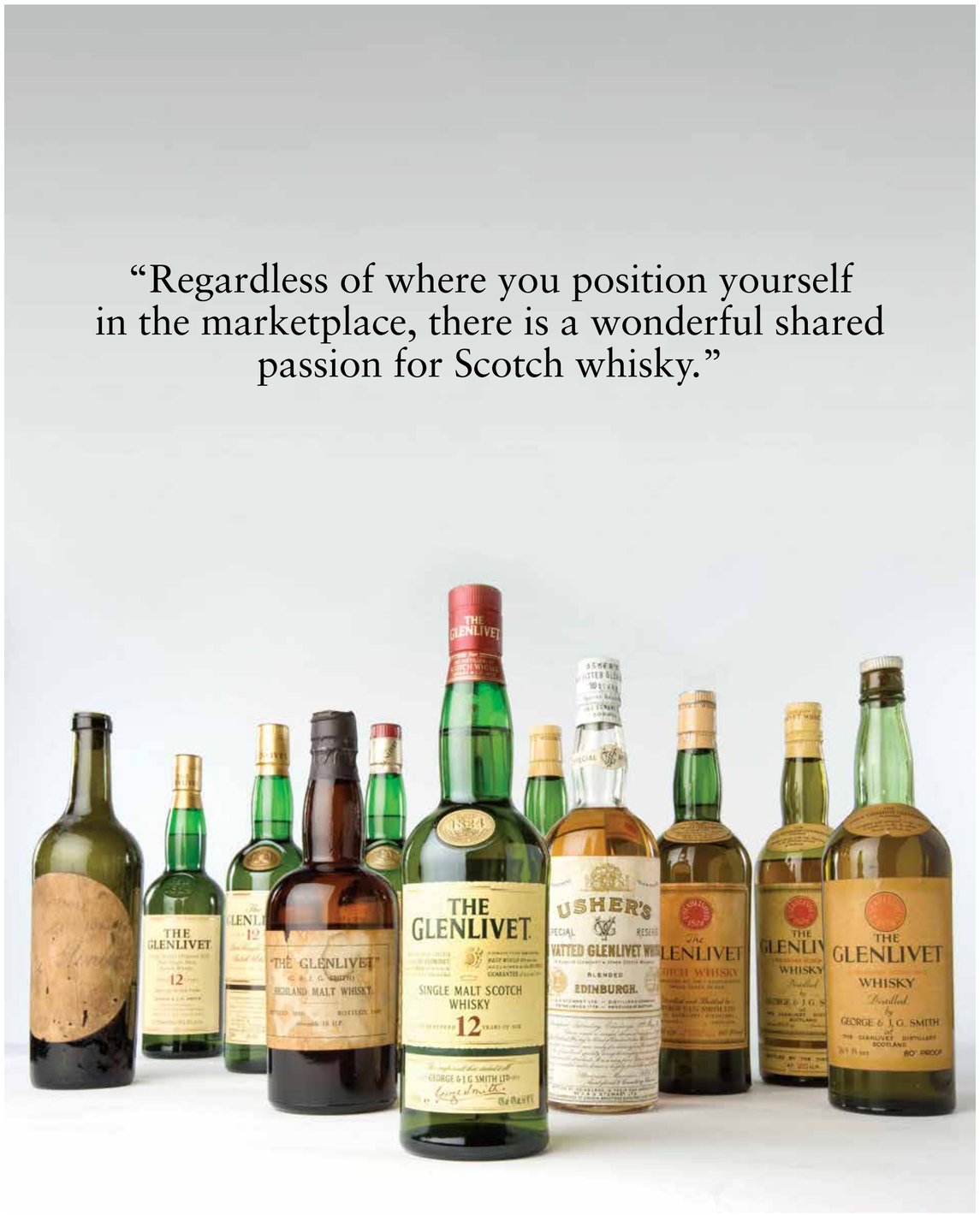
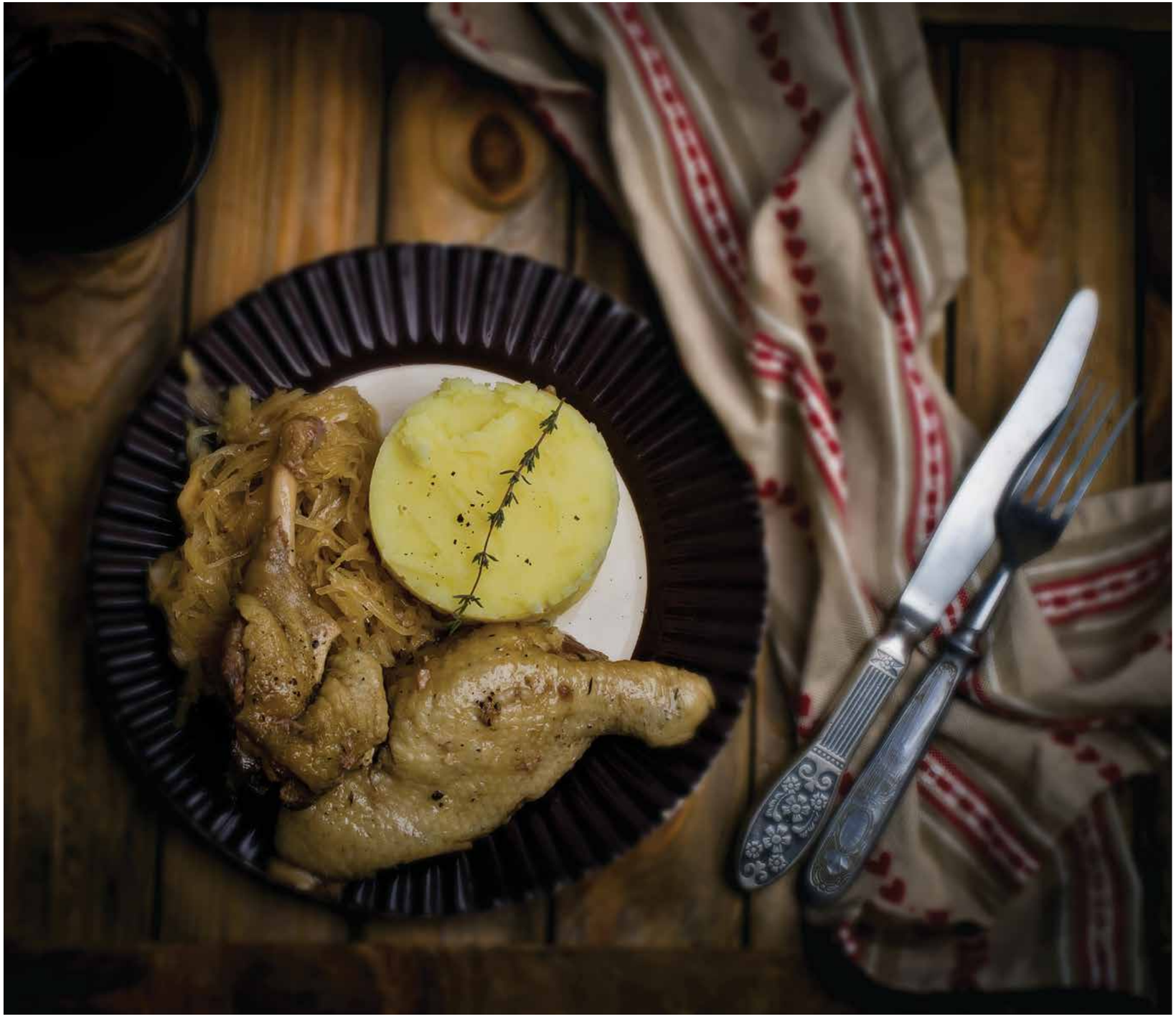




DUCK: THE OTHER RED MEAT

Discover the difference between the Pekin and the Moulard waterfowls and the savoriest parts of these birds (the fat!) that pair perfectly with The Glenlivet.

Written by JONATHAN CHASE

For most of us, duck has the ring of something exotic and complicated, and encounters tend to involve the oft-skipped special of the day or a glimpse of a finely lacquered taxidermied creature hanging forlornly in a Chinese-restaurant window. There's some truth to that reputation: Duck is peculiar. Unlike the mild taste of turkey and chicken, it's flavorful and rich—like a single malt whisky. Duck meat isn't cooked to death like poultry, either; it has more in common with a nice steak.

TYPES OF DUCK

Two primary breeds of duck are available to consumers, not counting wild game. The most common are the White Pekin (yes, of Peking fame) and the Moulard, from which magret de canard is made.

BREASTS

Forget everything you've learned about cooking birds, especially the fanatical obsession with banishing all signs of pinkness. A perfectly cooked breast is seared on the outside and bloody red on the inside, ideally with a layer of perfectly crisped and browned skin on top.

DUCK FAT

One of the elemental ingredients of fine cooking in many cuisines, duck fat is prized for its flavor as well as its high smoke point, able to withstand extremely high temperatures without scorching or catching fire. It's also low in saturated fats, and so from a health standpoint it's better for you than most other common animal fats.

THIGHS

Duck meat is rich with fat, and the dark meat of the thighs is a flavor bonanza. It's far tougher than the steak-like breast meat, though, and so benefits from slow and low cooking.

LIVER

The marquee meat preparation of duck is of course foie gras, which is harvested from Moulard ducks. Whether you cotton to cruel foods or not, regular duck liver is a delicacy in its own right, whether simply sautéed or mixed with a complementary fruity or acid-based sauce.

WINGS

Unfortunately ducks offer no parallel to the sublimity that is the Buffalo chicken wing—though people do try—in that cooking them requires a laborious slowand-low approach to soften the otherwise leather-tough meat. Still, the wings shouldn't be discarded; instead, roast them with the bones at high heat for an hour and then boil them for half a day to make an uncommonly rich stock.

PAIRINGS

A dram of non chill-filtered whisky—such as Nàdurra Oloroso Matured, for example—is the perfect foil for the fatty, gamey flavors of duck, no matter what part of the bird you choose to cook. Even some of the more traditional sauces complement the rich, full-bodied taste of a single malt whisky.

SCOTCH VS. BOURBON

If you think of the spirits that come from down South and Scotland's Speyside region as being "cousins," then you're well on your way to understanding the nuanced differences between the two.

Written by CHANTAL MARTINEAU

Single malt drinkers tend to think of Scotch and Bourbon as two entirely different animals. The truth is one might not exist without the other. At first glance, they're little more than cross-Atlantic cousins. A closer look reveals that the two spirits are inextricably linked, connected not only through their histories but through traditions still practiced today.

ORIGINS

Whisky was first distilled in Scotland more than 600 years ago. By the mid-1500s, Scottish farmers often had their own still. When Irish and Scottish settlers were first making themselves at home in the New World, they sought to re-create the spirits they enjoyed back home. Taking a page out of the book of their forefathers, American farmers began distilling some of the extra grain from bumper crops. By the late 18th century, a number of them had made distillation their focus and gained a following for it. Their spirit was made largely from corn, as native to America as barley is to Scotland.

INGREDIENTS

In 1965, Congress declared Bourbon a "distinctive product of the United States." To be called Bourbon, a whisky must be made here from at least 51 percent corn. The rest can be a combination of wheat, rye and malted barley. For straight Bourbon, the whisky must be aged at least two years with no coloring or flavoring added. Single malt Scotch, for its part, must be 100 percent malted barley, distilled and aged in Scotland for at least three years.

BARRELING

When Bourbon and Scotch were first made, neither was aged. Distillers soon discovered that whisky stored in barrels changed over time, becoming mellower and richer. In Scotland, sherry casks were commonly used. American distillers, however, found that whisky aged in new, charred barrels came out dark and sweet. The practice became law. After Prohibition, when ex-Bourbon barrels began flooding the market, Scotch makers came to favor them thanks to the sweet vanilla and caramel notes they impart to the whisky.

TASTE

This sweetness is what we associate with the spirit itself. Bourbons made with more corn or wheat tend to be sweeter, while adding rye to the mix can spice things up. Scotch distillers, on the other hand, rely on customized oak treatments to shape a whisky's flavor profile. They might use ex-Bourbon barrels exclusively or opt to finish their Scotch in sherry or port casks, which can impart aromas like chocolate, spice, and dried fruit. For this reason, single malts are considered more complex. But without Bourbon, Scotch would not be the spirit it is today.

THE AGE OF FLAVOR

Like a complex, perfectly aged whisky, a tender, more flavorful steak is truly worth the wait. Discover why the art of dry-aging meats is taking up real estate in the finest restaurants and butcher's shops.

Written by ALEX PASQUARELLO

It's time to start thinking about your steak the way you think about the whisky in your glass. Actually, a better analogy might be to think of it like your cheese: tastier after a little climate-controlled decomposition and a touch of fungus. Dry aging—storing primal cuts in near-freezing conditions for 14 to 31 days—affords natural enzymes precious time to break down muscle proteins, yielding more tender, tastier steaks. But lately chefs are pushing the limits of dry aging to two, four, and even eight months, allowing moisture to evaporate while muscle and fat ferment into rich, buttery beef flavors within a fungus bark.

When it comes to dry aging, what's old is new again, explains meat scientist Jeff W. Savell, Ph.D., distinguished professor of animal sciences at Texas A&M University. "Dry aging was the dominant form of aging until the advent of vacuum-packaging technology in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which allowed wet cuts rather than carcasses to be shipped to grocery stores across the country," he says. "Because dry aging works best with primal and subprimal cuts weighing 15 to 20 pounds initially, the so-called 'boxed-beef revolution' left dry aging to a small niche of high-end steakhouses and butchers."

"Those vacuum-sealed steaks in your big-box store are up to 70 percent water, and dry-aged cuts can lose up to one third of their weight to evaporation," Savell says. Meanwhile, new flavor compounds are created as enzymes—aided by fungus bark crusting over exposed edges—break down proteins into amino acids and carbohydrates into sugars. After the fungus bark is cut away, the remaining steak isn't just exploding with concentrated beef flavors; it also hits notes resembling truffles or fine blue cheeses.

Among the best cuts to enjoy the nuances of dry-aged are beef rib, bone-in; beef shortloin; beef strip loin, bone-in; and top sirloin butt, according to Savell. Restaurants and butcher's shops are also installing custom dry-aging rooms with windows so customers can look in on the process, he says, with one unexpected result: "Now dry-aging is also adding a certain sex appeal to your steak."

FIRST LOOK: FOUNDER'S RESERVE

Nearly two centuries in the making, The Glenlivet's newest expression is a salute to its originator and the standard setter for single malt whisky, George Smith.

Written by CHANTAL MARTINEAU

When George Smith obtained a license to distill legally back in 1824, he set out to make the best whisky in the region. Since then, The Glenlivet has come to represent the quintessential Speyside style: a slightly sweet, smooth and endlessly sippable single malt. What better way to celebrate Smith's spirit than with Founder's Reserve, a consummate expression of this fine whisky inspired by and named in honor of the man himself.

The valley of Glenlivet, which translates as "valley of the smooth, flowing one," was famous for its bucolic beauty. But George Smith soon made the region even more famous as his illustrious spirit became known

as the standard by which other drams should be judged. Because of its exceptional popularity, many of Smith's neighboring distillers began attaching the word "Glenlivet" to their casks, too, to trade off its good name. But Smith's product was unique, and those who knew better sought it out. In time, his son, John Gordon Smith, inherited the distillery and waged a hard fought legal battle to protect his father's legacy and was awarded the sole legal right to call his whisky The Glenlivet – the definitive article.

Founder's Reserve was crafted to pay homage to this history and to Smith's vision of what a Speyside malt should taste like. It may be the newest expression in The Glenlivet line, but it's a whisky that was nearly 200 years in the making. Pale gold in color, it's bursting with sweet and zingy citrus aromas, which give way to plenty of fruity and candied flavors on the palate. Think zesty orange, ripe pear, and toffee apple, followed by a long and creamy finish. Master Distiller Alan Winchester looked back to the earliest days of The Glenlivet for guidance when crafting Founder's Reserve. While certain practices have evolved since then, many of the techniques used today are unchanged.

Distilled in the same lantern-shaped copper pot stills designed by Smith himself, Founder's Reserve is meant

"We've tried to stay true to his original vision to create the definitive smooth Speyside malt…. Quality is paramount."

to evoke the delicate character The Glenlivet was known for centuries ago. The water is sourced from Josie's Well, a natural spring fed by winter snows and rain. This pure mountain water is imbued with minerals as it travels through underground layers of limestone and granite, lending the whisky a subtle yet distinctly savory minerality.

The aging of the spirit is key to the final flavor profile. Back when Smith was distilling his whisky, there were no age statements on the bottle. He selected whiskies from a range of casks containing spirits of various ages based purely on flavor and the overall effect he wanted to achieve. Winchester wanted to re-create this approach by selecting from a variety of casks. He also used a combination of traditional oak casks and first-fill American oak barrels. The addition of the latter—barrels that have never before been used to age Scotch—imparts distinct characteristics such as caramelized notes and a rich, creamy mouthfeel.

"[We] pick the casks that taste the best," says Winchester. "I'm sure George would have been impressed by the choice we have today and would have enjoyed selecting from so many casks. I know we do. We've tried to stay true to his original vision to create the definitive smooth Speyside malt…. Quality is paramount."

A GUARDIAN'S COFFEE TOUR OF OSLO

Whether powering through the six-hour days of winter or the 17-plus-hour days of summer, Norwegians run on coffee, and their capital city features some of the world's finest.

Written by MATTHEW SCHNEIDERMAN

Norwegians are second only to their neighbors in Finland in per capita consumption of coffee, and the capital city of Oslo accommodates connoisseurs and the masses alike. The locals prefer a light roast and take their coffee black. So do like them and order a *sort kaffe* to experience the full range of flavor at these fine java establishments.

KAFFA

Inspired by San Francisco's coffee culture, Robert Thoresen opened his first shop, Java, in 1997 with the goal of controlling all aspects of a coffee's lifetime. Once Java proved a success, he opened a second café, Mocca, in 2000—also the year he won the World Barista

Championship. In 2005 he spun off the roaster business, and Kaffa was born. The roasting room features a Rube Goldberg–esque assortment of equipment to service the coffee needs of Norway and the world. Kaffa also supplies beans to its sibling cafés, Java and Mocca, and offers courses to coffee lovers and aspiring professionals.

SUPREME ROASTWORKS
Originally a roasting plant founded by two Kaffa alumni, this hip Grünerløkka-area café opened in 2013 to cater to caffeine-heads as interested in discussing bean history as getting an afternoon "no-fuss" fix. Supreme Roastworks offers a wide range of coffees that are roasted on site to exacting specifications. Find a spot at the concrete-poured counter and chat up your server. It may just be co-owner Odd-Steinar Tøllefsen, who most recently took fourth place in the World Barista Championships in 2014.

TIM WENDELBOE
Named for the owner and world-renowned 2004 World Barista Champion, Tim Wendelboe is a microroaster, a coffee training center, and an espresso bar all packed into one tiny brick-walled space. Roasting small coffee lots—as opposed to blending several coffees together—means that varying flavors are showcased as transparently as the light roasting allows, a process that has earned the roaster the distinction of Nordic Roaster champion several times since opening in 2007. Be warned, however: This is not a traditional café, as seating is basically nonexistent and selections are limited to what's on the menu.

LIEBLING
The eclectic, relaxed Berlin-inspired café/restaurant/gift shop Liebling (German for "darling") has a bit of everything for everyone, including stellar coffee supplied by Supreme Roastworks that is batch-brewed every hour. If the night before was rough, order the Harry Klein combo: unlimited black coffee, one pain reliever, and four songs on the jukebox.

STOCKFLETHS
Founded in 1895, Stockfleths transformed into a small chain of modern-day coffee shops in the '90s. Now the chain of seven bright, welcoming stores is partly owned by Solberg & Hansen, Norway's largest specialty coffee roaster, and benefits from access to their massive selection of some of the best coffees in the world, many of which are only produced in season. Champion baristas have also been known to train here too; Tim Wendelboe, in fact, is an alumnus. The chain is also particular as to the packing of espresso grounds in a portafilter, a procedure known locally in the business as the "Stockfleths Move."

A TRUE ORIGINAL

Without George Smith, the flavor of The Glenlivet would not exist today. The man risked his life, land, and family's safety to set the standards for the whisky industry—which are alive and well in 2015.

Written by MATTHEW HALL

So you're passionate about an idea. You work hard to develop it and then perfect it. You take risks. You fight naysayers and skeptics. You stay true to your dream. You're a populist but a little bit maverick, with a dash of rogue. You set and maintain high standards. A small window of opportunity opens, and you climb on through.

That's a pattern all game-changing entrepreneurs will recognize—athletes, artists, and even today's rock-star chefs who have influenced our culture and history. Without too much argument, add to that box a certain Scottish entrepreneur named George Smith, who in 1824 established the first legitimate distillery in Glenlivet.

“If you believe you have the product or the idea, then don’t walk away. You can’t give up halfway, and you can’t do it half-arsed. You have got to finish the job.”

“The classic modern-day comparison to George Smith, as someone who defined an industry, is Steve Jobs,” explains Ian Logan, global brand ambassador for The Glenlivet. There’s a catch with that link, though: “That comparison with Steve Jobs is quite clichéd,” says Logan.

But clichés often exist for a reason. Jobs, famously, was an obsessive electronic engineer ousted from his own company. He eventually returned to revolutionize not just personal computers but also telephones, photography, and the music and film industries.

Another pioneer with whom Smith shares a bond is Karl Benz, today immortalized as the man behind the high engineering standards of automobiles. Born in Germany in 1844 and raised by his single mother after the death of his father, Benz overcame childhood poverty and excelled academically. He failed to settle into a series of traditional engineering jobs, and his early inventions failed to get traction. Yet Benz’s passion for, ironically, bicycles pushed him to develop a motorized three-wheel vehicle. The first automobile to generate its own power was born.

George Smith, meanwhile, was born in 1792 in the remote Scottish valley of Glenlivet into a family of tenant farmers. The youngest of six sons, Smith had to find his own way from an early age. He became a “square right,” a joiner in modern terms, building barns, fixing fences, and working odd jobs.

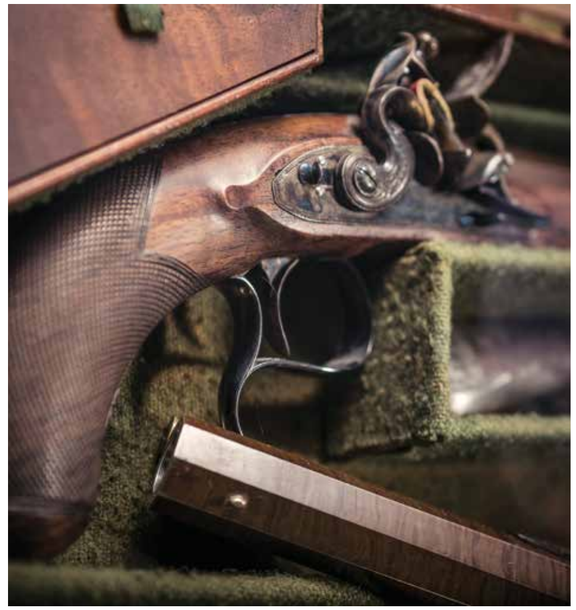
Yet family history played a big role in Smith’s life. Fearing persecution from the English, Smith’s family changed its name in 1747. The Gows became the Smiths, but the change of name was not the only family secret. Like many clans in the area, the Smiths were illegal distillers. A recipe for whisky was passed down over generations. An added factor: Smith’s Glenlivet whisky was popular on the black market, well known for its quality. It was so widely praised that King George IV demanded to try it on a trip to Scotland in 1822, a plaudit that Logan compares to Prince William giving a high five to a coffee shop in Amsterdam.

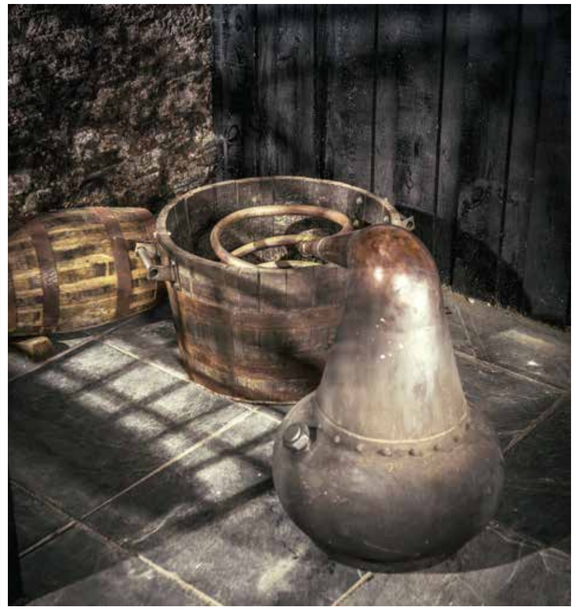
When the Duke of Gordon, whose land the Smiths farmed, proposed in London’s Houses of Parliament that distilleries should become licensed and legal, Smith saw an opportunity to legitimize his back-door business. The window of opportunity swung wide open—even if Smith’s neighbors and fellow illicit distillers did not support the move to go legit.

The challenges Smith faced in switching his distillery to a legal business are well documented—if often romanticized. Fearing that soldiers, tax collectors, and customs agents would descend on the isolated highlands and upset the way things had always been, rivals threatened to destroy Smith’s Glenlivet distillery. To borrow a term from 21st-century Silicon Valley, by electing to become a legitimate operator, Smith became an 18th-century disruptor—and not everyone was happy about that.

Explains Logan: “At that time illicit distillers would have been seen in the same way as taking a stag off the hill. It was almost an ancestral right to do that. Someone who was going to make that difficult to continue to happen was always going to be unpopular.”

And if there’s one thing about Smith that entrepreneurs today can learn from? “Don’t give up,” says Logan. “If you believe you have the product or the idea, then don’t walk away. You can’t give up halfway, and you can’t do it half-arsed. You have got to finish the job.”





Q&A: MASSIMO BOTTURA

Deified by international gourmands yet viewed with suspicion by locals, award-winning chef Massimo Bottura challenges diners to contemplate Italian regional cuisine as a living, evolving phenomenon.

Written by KATIE PARLA

In the deeply traditional Northern Italian town of Modena, Massimo Bottura's 12-table restaurant, Osteria Francescana, embodies a distinct spirit of innovation— one that has earned the eatery the number two ranking on the 2015 World's 50 Best Restaurants list. Raised on local classics like tortellini in brodo and tagliatelle al ragù, Bottura defies conventions and deconstructs old traditions by rethinking the dishes of his youth, creating a cuisine that mirrors his intellectual approach to dining. We caught up with this culinary visionary to find out about his inspiration, the future of his craft, and his vision of success.

HAS OSTERIA FRANCESCANA CHANGED THE WAY MODENESI EAT AND PERCEIVE THEIR LOCAL TRADITIONS?

Osteria Francescana is celebrating its 20th anniversary this spring. Have we changed the way Modenesi eat and perceive their local traditions? Have you ever heard the expression 'You can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy'? Modenesi have and will most likely continue to believe that their grandmother's or mother's tortellini are better than anyone else's. This is because Modenesi are very nostalgic and like to comfort themselves with food they are familiar with. For locals, dinning at Osteria Francescana is still, after all these years, seen with suspicion and doubt. And funny enough, this is true of Italians in general and not only Modenesi. The husband of a very good journalist just across the Apennines had never dined at Osteria Francescana because he feared blasphemy. I don't blame him because the flavors of the Italian kitchen are so rich and satisfying. So why change anything?

Unfortunately my personal experiences and the way my mind is wired do not allow me to repeat my grandmother's recipe over and over again. I'm not saying mine is better; it is just a reflection of who I am as a person, an Italian, a Modenese, a dreamer, a joker, an agitator, and a chef. I embrace tradition by questioning it. Some people would say this is deconstruction, but I see it as reconstruction. Putting pieces back together again to form a kitchen that not only celebrates the past but brings the best of that past into the future in a contemporary, fresh, and exhilarating way.

HOW HAS THE RESTAURANT SPECIFICALLY IMPACTED CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN CUISINE IN THE TIME THAT IT HAS BEEN OPEN?

During the past 20 years, the impact has been gradual, slow, and steady. First of all, when I entered the restaurant business there was very little camaraderie. Every man and restaurant was an island. Recipes were coveted, locked behind closed doors, and there was very little sharing and communication between chefs. Then the Internet arrived, and the walls began to crumble. The online platform meant that we were more informed about each other and less afraid of one another. Then the gourmet conferences began popping up, with the Identità Golose series in Milan, Festa a Vico on the coast of Sorrento, and Slow Food in Turin, among others. Cooking demonstrations and lectures provided a means of sharing and expanding the knowledge, ideas, and visions of individual chefs.

Through these platforms—and naturally the restaurant—we began to send out a new message, that of tradition in evolution. Although seemingly contradictory, the terms "tradition" and "evolution" go hand in hand. If you think about it, culinary traditions are formed by trial and error, experimentation, and plain old good luck. The evolution of our ideas and our civilization can be seen through the history of our kitchens. Why stop now?

We then shifted our dialogue and our thoughts to praise the heroic farmer and his heritage vegetables, the butcher and his ethically raised animals, the cheesemaker and the small miracles that occurred against all odds. The protagonists were no longer the chefs but the community. The discussion left the dining table, and the food critic was forced to leave the waiter alone and enter other more challenging realms, such as philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, art, and storytelling.

We returned to our roots by looking at them from a critical point of view, not a nostalgic one. Slowly but surely, as we talked and created recipes and braved the concept of the tasting menu—at one time considered for tourists only—the restaurants around us began to shift their language, tone, and dialogue.

I certainly am not one to take credit because Gualitero Marchesi was the first Italian chef of the 20th century to even imagine the Italian kitchen leaving behind Artusian principles for higher aspirations of fine dining and Michelin stars, but I do feel that our determination to not let Italian traditions weigh us down but actually let us soar did add a new voice to the chorus.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER SUCCESS AND FAILURE?

Success is getting up in the morning, working all day at what I do best, and going to bed with a smile on my face. Failure is when a person stops dreaming and begins making compromises, and business decisions instead of heartfelt choices.

FINALLY, IN WHAT DIRECTION DO YOU ENVISION OSTERIA FRANCESCANA AND YOUR CRAFT MOVING IN THE FUTURE?

In my future, I see more future! We continue to propel forward, pushing boundaries and still discovering the seemingly endless flavors of the Italian kitchen.

Dishes from the Tradition in Evolution tasting menu created by Massimo Bottura, clockwise from above: One of Osteria Francescana's signature dishes, 'An eel swimming up the Po River'; Tortellini in Parmigiano Reggiano Cream; Tagliatelle al ragu, a traditional pasta with hand-chopped Bolognese sauce; the classic 'Five ages of Parmigiano Reggiano in different temperatures and textures'; the ice-cream-like treat 'Croccantino of foie gras with almonds and hazelnuts and extra-old Traditional Balsamic Vinegar from Modena.

PEAT IT

Our primer on the importance of peat should depolarize any preconceived opinions about the significance (and flavor) of those smoky slabs of organic material used to create your favorite spirit.

Written by CHANTAL MARTINEAU

Whether you're a whisky novice or a longtime enthusiast, you probably have pretty strong feelings about peat, one way or the other. Peaty single malts are most commonly described as smoky but can also be characterized as medicinal, briny, even tasting of iodine. The very fact that the term "peat reek" exists suggests just how polarizing the stuff can be. Most people either love it or hate it. But with such a wide range of peat levels and styles, you may be surprised which camp you fall into.

Generations ago, all whisky in Scotland would have been peated. Peat was the fuel distillers used to dry out the malted barley and heat the still. Harvested from

lovingly preserved bogs, peat is made up of decayed organic material, including plants, insects and animals. (A human body was once found in a peat bog. The unfortunate soul came to be known as Lindow Man or, more affectionately, Pete Marsh.) The bogs in Scotland are thousands of years old. Traditionally, peat was cut into brick-sized slabs and left out to dry all summer so it could be burned in the winter. It doesn't burn with a bright flame; rather, it smolders. It's this smoke that influences the whisky.

A scant few of today's distilleries produce expressions with a traditional peated taste, instead employing other types of fuel, such as natural gas and coal. The islands, being removed from the mainland, were the slowest to adopt other fuel sources and are still associated with a peatier style of whisky. After all, why wait for a shipment of coal to arrive when peat is readily available on Islay?

Additionally, few distilleries malt their own barley. Most barley malted for whisky production comes from large malting houses that specialize in the process, which involves submerging the grains in water so that they start to sprout. Once the barley has partially germinated, it's dried out slowly in a kiln. The kilns are mostly heated using gas or coal, but for some malted barley, peat is still used. Peat smoke contains aromatic compounds called phenols that are absorbed into the malt. These are what impart that "peat reek" to a whisky.

According to experts, several variables can affect peat and, in turn, the whisky it produces. In the bog, it might be three feet deep or ten. Topsoil peat tends to burn faster, producing more smoke. The deeper the peat, the higher the levels of carbon and the slower it burns. Centuries ago, distillers went as deep as possible for their peat because it fueled the entire whisky-making operation. Today, peat is used almost as a seasoning. It's measured by phenol parts per million, or ppm. ("Phenolic" is another way to describe a peaty whisky.) A lightly peated whisky might have a phenol content of 2 ppm, while a heavily peated one can have up to 50 ppm.

The Scots aren't the only ones with access to fecund peatlands. There are bogs dotting northern Europe and even some in upstate New York. When it's not being used to make fine single malts, peat is used as a soil conditioner by gardeners, in freshwater aquariums, in water filtration systems, even as part of holistic spa treatments. In the U.S., certain distillers are experimenting with peated whisky, but few use local peat. Not all bogs produce the sort of peat that can be used to malt barley. Peat composition is important: For example, it may contain more moss, heather or seaweed. Each of these can affect what ends up in the bottle.

If all this has you intrigued, we have good news. Soon, for the first time in over a century, lovers of The Glenlivet will have the opportunity to enjoy a peated whisky from a distillery that has set the standard for fruity, floral whiskies for centuries. Nàdurra Peated Whisky Cask Finish is mature The Glenlivet whisky finished in casks that have previously held peated Scotch so the smokiness is introduced during maturation rather than malting. This exciting new expression has a delicate, aromatic smokiness that harkens back to whisky-making days of yore.

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LAST CALL

They say the more things change, the more they stay the same,
which is especially true when it comes to making your favorite whisky.

What you're seeing here is The Glenlivet Distillery circa 1924 and what it looks like today. The chimneys and roofs have changed, as have the resources that run the facility (first coal, then oil, and now gas). However, most importantly, the process of production—malting, milling, mashing, fermenting, distilling, and maturing—remains resolutely the same, preserving time honored traditions.

Sláinte!