



BIG & BEEFY



Tops Shelf Tasters

February 17, 2012



Balvenie Tun 1401 Batch 3

96 points

Country: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Strength: 50.3%

Bottle Size: 70cl

Notes from the Whiskey Exchange

Tun 1401 - not the final bottle...named for Balvenie Malt Master David Stewart's favourite marrying vat. It's a combination of 10 casks - 7 bourbon and 3 sherry - with the vintages bookended by a 1967 and a 1989, the other eight casks coming from the 70s with a lean towards the earlier part of the decade. It's a continuation of the idea started with the incredibly popular and long sold out distillery-only first edition, and the plan this time is to get it out to the wider world, wheretofore there are two new versions - batch 2 for Europe and batch 3 for the USA. They're similar in character and make-up, but 20 casks worth of whisky goes a bit further than 10...

Billy

Nose: Vanilla sponge cake with a spot of ginger to start, with some old polished wood and milk chocolate slowly building as it sits in the glass. Touches of red fruit, orange blossom and orange muscat dessert wine, Fry's Turkish Delight, honey and lemon, sweet marmalade and soft spices. Water adds some coconut.

Palate: Soft honey with caramel edges, sandalwood, spiced apple, a burst of orange peel on the swallow and a hint of woody pot pourri at the end. Water amplifies the wood and rolls off a bit of the fruit.

Finish: Candied mixed peel, fresh lemon zest, lingering spice, polished light wood and fruit leaves.

Tim

Nose: Lovely apple pie and vanilla flavours, honey, syrup, honeyed oatcakes / flapjacks and top class polished oak. Develops more melony fruit with a trace of cakespice (nutmeg / cinnamon / dried clove). Extremely deft, flawlessly integrated and very appealing.

Palate: More upfront and assertive than expected (I'd forgotten it was at 50.6%). Big palate dominated by oak and spongecake (damson jam, for anyone who's interested). Remains fresh & sappy nonetheless. Develops fresh citrus notes, applesauce, aged calvados, brown sugar and fruit loaf.

Finish: Long, warm & tingly, with a dry nuttiness creeping in.

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:

Additional notes from the Jewish Single Malt Society

Tun 1401 was an experiment by Master Blender David Stewart to mix multiple casks or in a large, 2000 liter tun (or, mega-cask), marry the whiskies over the period of a few months in the Tun and see what happens. David Stewart being who he is knew exactly what would happen (being 50 years in the business (all of those years with The Balvenie & Glenfiddich) there's no doubt he knew what he was doing).

My guess is mixing these casks allowed him to use older stocks that might have been too woody to bottle by themselves; tempering with younger whiskies and getting a good mix of sherry & bourbon matured whiskies for a nice, balanced yet complex, cask strength whisky.

Well, the "experiment" worked and all of the Tun 1401 bottles sold out right quick! Now what do to? Capitalize on the success of the whisky and make it more widely available, that's what!

David got to work quickly on batches #2 & #3. The second batch is for the UK/EU market while batch #3 is for the US.

I asked what whiskies were in the batch (batch #3) and here's what was returned:

Tun 1401, batch 3 is a vatting of 10 casks (7 Bourbon Cask, 3 Sherry butts), which were laid down during David Stewart's time at the distillery. Each was hand picked by David for this special vatting. The oldest cask is from 1967, the youngest from 1989. The whiskies were married together in a traditional marrying tun, which has a capacity of roughly 2000 liters. The marrying process took place in Warehouse 24 and lasted roughly 3 months

On the nose – Hey now! Those classic honied notes you get from The Balvenie are very pronounced in this whisky.

On top of it, you can smell the age in this whisky – dank oaky notes, fresh rain on a woody walk in the springtime and crushed sassafras leaves.

Wonderful autumnal notes in here too – warm cinnamon apple sauce, fresh cardamom, and the smell from a warm Maine cottage (like the one from On Golden Pond, just drying the summer humid air out of the wood).

I'm also getting some blueberry sauce and wood framed model airplanes (model glue and all). Ah, memories of building model airplanes with my dad in north western Connecticut in the late 70's. Love it.

On the mouth – Thick, vicious, oily mouth feel with a warming sensation that starts from the tip of the tongue down to the belly.

This is what to drink in cold weather for sure!!

Flavorwise, I'm getting much of the same on the palate as I got on the nose. There's no evolution here from smell to taste but in this case, I'm happy about that.

Finish – Long drying finish that's got both a nice oaky quality to it but now there's a strong introduction of date bars.

In sum – A big thanks goes to The Balvenie for giving the US the entire batch of this stuff. I love The Balvenie (that's no secret) but The Balvenie at cask strength and of this quality is something to be very thankful for. I hope to buy a bottle of this stuff (and/or hope that I find it next to the family Chanukiah (Chanukah menorah) this winter. Fingers crossed!!



Southern Tier "2X Milk Stout" 7.5% NY

Double Milk Stout brewed with lactose sugars, 2 varieties of hops and 3 types of malts.

ratebeer™

94

Southern Tier 2X Stout



Southern Tier Brewing
Company
Lakewood, New York
Beer style: Sweet Stout
Ref: ratebeer.com Jan2012

Common descriptors are

dark brown coffee **chocolate**
roasted malts **sweet** black tan milk

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



Ardbeg Alligator Untamed Release

92 points

Country: Scotland

Region: Islay

Strength: 51.2%

Bottle Size: 70cl

Ardbeg Alligator is named for the high level of char on the inside of some of the casks used for maturation, which makes the wood look like alligator skin. The Alligator is a unique expression for Ardbeg, and indeed for Scotland in general. This young whisky is aged for an undisclosed amount of time in heavily charred new oak barrels, like a bourbon. The resulting whisky is mingled with the standard 10 year old expression and allowed to age further for one more season in refill casks.

The folks at Ardbeg describe Alligator as “a spicy, dark dram of hidden depths, within which lurks deep tarry coffee, barbecue sizzle and sooty aromas. For it is an expression that may prove a challenge to the unwary and test the palate of even the most hardened Ardbeg adventurer.”

ARBEG ALLIGATOR 2011 RELEASE TASTING NOTES – Courtesy of CaskStrength

Nose: Immediate spicy, fruity notes, with rolled oak shavings, BBQ charcoal, stewed apples, white pepper and hints of strong tea and fresh bourbon. With a dash of water the whisky really comes alive with wonderful rich vanilla tones, chocolate orange notes and hints of copper. Sterling stuff.

Palate: Big, resonant and dry, leading into more of the chocolate orange notes, sweet vanilla, hints of Five Spice and more stewed apple. Then the smoke arrives, soft, aromatic and gentle at first, giving this a superb complexity.

Finish: The sweet vanilla develops alongside the soft smoke for a very lengthy and pleasing finish.

Overall: What a mega whisky. We were critical of the last committee bottling (Rollercoaster) and its apparent lack of consistency and overly youthful tones, but Alligator is just brilliant. Rich, complex and spicy, it puts Ardbeg right back up there in terms of how to construct a highly drinkable and complex smoky whisky. Miss this one at your peril.

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



McNeill's "Dark Angel" Stout 10% VT

no notes available.

ratebeer™

97

McNeills Dark Angel
Imperial Stout



McNeills Brewery
Brattleboro, Vermont
Beer style: Imperial Stout
Ref: ratebeer.com Jan2012

Common descriptors are

black brown sweet
chocolate malts coffee hops
bitter fruit tan **roasted**

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



Springbank Portwood 14yr

89 points

Country: Scotland

Region: Campletown

Vintage: 1989

Strength: 52.8%

Bottle Size: 70cl

Nose: Very light and fruity, the port pipes have delicately influenced the nose.

Left to breath, sherbet notes, mixed with malt, cream and dried fruits are all present, without overpowering the whisky.

Palate: Sweet and creamy on the palate. Dried apricots, caramelised sugar and vanilla compliment each other in equal measures.

Finish: The creamy finish leaves a lingering sweetness.

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



The Lost Abbey "Serpents Stout" 11% CA

The history of the bible and religion is indeed the struggle of good vs. evil. Our Serpent's Stout recognizes the evil of the dark side that we all struggle with. This is a massively thick and opaque beer that begs the saints to join the sinners in their path to a black existence.

ratebeer™

100

Lost Abbey Serpents
Stout



Port Brewing/Lost Abbey
San Marcos, California
Beer style: Imperial Stout
Ref: ratebeer.com Jan2012

Common descriptors are

black coffee

chocolate malts dark brown bitter
roasted fruit

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



Glenfarclas Movember

87 points

Country: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Strength: 53%

Bottle Size: 70cl

This limited edition Glenfarclas has been bottled in partnership with online retailers, Mo-Bro's, and poor-quality dresser-uppers Master of Malt in support of Movember. Movember is a men's health charity which raises awareness and funds for men's health, specifically prostate and testicular cancer. £10 from the sale of every bottle will be donated to Movember. For more information on Movember visit www.movember.com.

Distilled in September 2002 and bottled in September 2011, this most unusual 9 year old Glenfarclas has been taken from two Oloroso sherry hogshead casks, and can be perfectly described as an 'aperitif whisky' - nutty and intensely savoury.

Nose: A whiff of salted almonds is overtaken by sherry – somewhere between Manzanilla and Fino – surprising, since this was matured solely in Oloroso. With warmth applied, the caramel-rich Oloroso starts to come through, with a hint of Brazil nut shell.

Palate: Starts off big with just a smidge of sweetness before the savoury Fino takes over. An almost saline note creeps through before moving into blue agave tequila, with a hint of lime zest bitterness.

Finish: Dries out, with freshly-shaved oak, Christmas spices, and a touch of pine. Very moreish.

Overall: A seriously grown-up whisky, miles away from a standard Glenfarclas - further even than the refill Bourbon matured Family Casks. Glenfarclas, usually an after-dinner treat, is firmly in the aperitif camp here. Superb with smoked almonds or sharp cheeses.

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



North Coast
"Bourbon Barrel Aged Old Rasputin"
11.5% CA

A special small batch that's been aged for 9 months in some 12 year-old bourbon barrels. It's bottled in 500 ml bottles with a cork and wired finish and a special commemorative label ---- and it's amazing. The depth, intensity and complexity of the flavor profile make it a worthy tribute to this fine beer

ratebeer™

100

North Coast Old
Rasputin Anniversary
Bourbon Barrel Aged
Stout



North Coast Brewing Company
Fort Bragg, California
Beer style: Imperial Stout
Ref: ratebeer.com Jan2012

Common descriptors are

black tan vanilla

chocolate coffee bitter smooth
roasted dark brown sweet malts oak

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



Port Charlotte PC9

87 points

Country: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Bottler: Distillery Bottling

Strength: 59.2%

Bottle Size: 70cl

An incredibly limited release from Bruichladdich, this edition of the ferociously peaty Port Charlotte was aged for 9 years in American oak. The final bottling of the PC Series.

Official Tasting Notes

Nose: No hanging around. It erupts from the glass in an olfactory fusion of black boot polish. Pure peat smoke, spicy black peppercorns, treacle toffee, dark succulent dates, crushed sea shells, ozone menthol - It's a vortex of aromas. On the second wave, I find Christmas pudding, burnt orange and cinnamon sticks all contained within this cocoon of phenol. Absolute interfusion of Islay character. It's a life support system - Brilliant!

Palate: No respite. This is the quick and the dead. Now you can taste the rich sweet flavours from the Spanish casks. The crème brulee from the bourbon, the biscuity shortbread of the barley, and always, that magical zesty lemon peel that is so unique to Bruichladdich. Those flavours give the spirit complexity and balance so that you are not suffocated in a peat bog. Your senses are alive and awake. PC9 is still young and gaining in sophistication. It gives you that heart-warming feeling that comes from passion distilled with pride. Well done my son, we are proud of your progress.

Finish: The finish is as glorious as an Islay sunset and it's here on the ending that you experience some of the most pleasurable moments you will ever experience in the company of an Islay malt.

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



The Lost Abbey "Deliverance Ale" 12.5% CA

Our first release of the embodiment of good versus evil in a barrel-aged blend. Part bourbon barreled The Serpent's Stout, and part brandy barreled The Angel's Share, this is our most anticipated release of the summer.

ratebeer™

100

Lost Abbey
Deliverance



Port Brewing/Lost Abbey
San Marcos, California
Beer style: American Strong
Ale
Ref: ratebeer.com Jan2012

Common descriptors are

bourbon brandy dark brown
black barrel caramel **chocolate** fruit
vanilla sweet carbonation oak roasted
malts

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



Kilchoman 100% Islay Barley CS

91 points

Country: Scotland

Region: Speyside

Strength: 61.8%

Bottle Size: 70c

The first ever 100% Islay release from Kilchoman, this is the incredibly rare natural cask strength edition. It was bottled from casks 100 thru' 103/08, and there are 1,060 numbered bottles, each coming in a very handsome wooden box.

Nose: Linseed oil, cold wood ash, whiffs of the coast and hints of banana and Ovaltine! It develops and becomes more woody, but not necessarily oak. Instead, we get cedar and hints of pine and just a dab of TCP.

Palate: Big and very oily. Sweet spices, and the most fantastically emotive blast of wood smoke, peppermint oil, sticking plasters and sweet, creamy vanilla and apple strudel. Maybe even a dash of ground walnut.

Finish: Long and spicy, it ends on beautifully warm peat, fresh morning dew on a meadow, the distant aromas of a smoker, and just a touch of cinnamon.

Overall: Dare we say one of the most provocative whiskies we've had in a good long while! This transports us instantly to Autumnal English countryside

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:



Mikkeller "Black" 17.5% Belgium

The strongest beer in Scandinavia. This imperial stout is the craziest, wildest, strongest beer from Mikkeller to this date. Not for sissies.....! Sample it fresh or store it for many many years to come!

Ingredients : Water, malt, roasted barley, dark cassonade, ale yeast and champagne yeast.

ratebeer™

97

Mikkeller 黒 / Black

Mikkeller
Copenhagen, Denmark
Beer style: Imperial Stout
Ref: ratebeer.com Jan2012

Common descriptors are

brown coffee sweet dark full thick
bitter chocolate roasted malts
burnt molasses fruit huge carbonation

Nose:

Palate:

Finish:

