

MURRAY MCDAVID ARCHIVES

Murray McDavid Archives



The Mission II Selection released:

Following the outstanding reviews of the inaugural selection of the Mission, the Mission II Selection has been released. Once again the search for seriously appealing single malts (and from somewhat unusual distilleries) has been Jim's successful mission. Again limited to 600 bottles of each, these bottlings are carefully assembled from four or so casks for greater complexity and harmony. I would reserve a bottle now with your local retailer if I was you - or click here and we will do it for you:

Mission Accomplished!

An astounding series of awards for Murray McDavid's Mission Range reviewed by Paul Pacult for The Wine Enthusiast Magazine: Limited to 600 bottles worldwide, grab them while you can. The Series 2 releases of the Mission coming your way next month - this time 500 bottles only I am afraid!

CLASSIC (96-100)/Highest Recommendation

Murray McDavid Mission Range Highland Park 1979 Orkney Single Malt Whisky 46% abv,

SUPERB (90-95)/Highly Recommended

Murray McDavid Mission Range Clynelish 1972 Northern Highlands Single Malt Whisky 46% abv,

Murray McDavid Mission Range Dallas Dhu 1979 Speyside Single Malt Whisky

Murray McDavid Mission Range Lagavulin 1979 Islay Single Malt Whisky 46% abv,

Murray McDavid Mission Range Glenlivet 1974 Speyside Single Malt Whisky 46% abv,

VERY GOOD (85-89)/Recommended

Murray McDavid Mission Range Royal Brackla 1975 Speyside Single Malt Whisky 46% abv

Murray McDavid No 1

A global group of whisky aficionados, The Malt Maniacs, have classified their tasting notes in order of appreciation. And guess what? Out of 3000 tasting notes, Murray McDavid came top - even ahead of the Official Bottlings. This highlights the strength of the Murray McDavid 'The Sum of The Parts....' policy: by assembling five casks (selected already for their quality) a more harmonious, balanced and profound whisky is obtained - better than the individual 'single cask' components.

The results:

86,80 Murray McDavid
86,24 Douglas Laing
86,20 Adelphi
84,86 United Distillers Rare Malts
84,75 Mckillop's Choice
83,33 Milroys
81,79 Coopers Choice
81,04 Cadenhead
80,67 John McArthur
80,50 Official Bottling
80,15 Flora & Fauna
80,09 Signatory Vintage
79,24 Gordon & Macphail
78,75 Dieter Kirsch
77,53 Chieften's Choice
76,80 Hart Brothers
76,39 Ultimate Collection

With all the work at Bruichladdich going on, we thought you might like to hear about a development at Murray McDavid too. A new range of rare bottlings are in the process of being prepared for launch later in the Spring. Jim McEwan has been on a pilgrimage to unearth some exceptional casks of Scotland's finest distilleries, to be the basis of a very small range of rare, old and superlative malts. These will be bottled in a separate bottle from the normal bottlings, under the new Murray McDavid Rare label. More news to follow.

Mission Range



Murray McDavid's Rosebank 1989 has been awarded the Classic Highest Recommendation (96/100 points) in the Wine Enthusiast Magazine's list of The Best of the Year 2001, in the High Spirits - Best Bottlings of 2001 section.

"Single Malt Scotch
Classic (96–100)/Highest Recommendation

Murray McDavid Rosebank 1989 10 Year Old Lowland Single Malt Scotch Whisky Cask Reference: MM523 (Scotland, Murray McDavid Imports, American Canyon, CA); 46% abv. Scents of bread dough, distant spice and sweet malt; a definitive Rosebank bouquet—simple, softly sweet and directness. The palate brings ripe melon, succulent tropical fruit, sweet malt and light honey flavors. Finishes brief, but concentrated on the malt. A Lowland single malt at its zenith."

Still available through specialist retail outlets in the UK.

For US stockists please contact Peter Wilkins of:-

Vin Divino Limited
1811 West Bryn Mawr Avenue
Chicago, IL 60660
+1 773 334 6700.

<http://www.vindivino.com>

Stockholm Whisky & Beer Festival Competition 2001

We are extremely delighted to report that the new Bruichladdich First Edition bottlings won both Gold and Silver in Sweden's premier tasting of over 80 whiskies on 20th September.

Entered for the Best Whisky – '13 Years to 21 Years' category - the Bruichladdich Fifteen was awarded the Gold medal, with the Bruichladdich Twenty winning the silver medal.

Two tastings entered for the new First Edition bottlings: two gold winners!

This First Edition Bruichladdich Fifteen is made from 80% ex Bourbon casks and 20% fresh sherry casks, while the Twenty is made from 100% ex Bourbon casks.

The other categories in the tasting were: Best Whisky under 12 years (Blair Atholl 12); Best Whisky over 22 years (Highland Park 25 @ 53.5%); Best Blend (Isle of Skye 8); Best Irish (Connemara Peated); Best 'Other' Whisky (Aberlour A'Bunadh) – and Best Islay.

And guess who won Best Islay? Murray McDavid's infamous "Leapfrog"! The 1987 vintage @ 46% of course - ahead of Caol Ila 15, and Ardbeg 10 @ 46%. And what a good bottling it is too!

As you know, if you have followed the story (and our now past little 'disagreement' with Allied), we have not bottled any more whisky under the Leapfrog label. If you still see any bottles, buy them, they will become quite collectable.

Instead, the new Murray McDavid bottling will indicate the real name of the distillery - as we originally did when it won its first tasting – Laphroaig Distillery.

Bruichladdich: Licensed to Thrill

I am please to report that at 1 o'clock today, 4th May 2001, following a thorough examination of the distillery and it's machinery and installations by officers of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, that we have received our Distilling License. This is truly excellent news. Jim and his team of excellent craftsmen have done a fantastic, first-rate job, and I am very, very pleased indeed. Let's rock. First distillation: 29th May 2001 at 10am.

To celebrate the reopening of the distillery, a certain number of casks from this inaugural distillation will be distilled to order for members of the public. For details, check out: contact the distillery directly: lorna@bruichladdich.com

Indiana Jim and the Temple of Drams - [Click here to view what Andrew Jefford had to say.](#)

Article originally seen in Evening Standard and Evening Standard's Website www.thislondon.com

MMCD buys Bruichladdich distillery!

Yes! We are very pleased to be able to finally confirm, what many people may have had an inkling about, the acquisition of Islay's Bruichladdich distillery and all it's maturing stocks. We have spent five years trying to buy our own distillery, three years on this one, and if this had failed we probably would not have bothered again as we feel very strongly that Islay is the place to be. Not for us the Heart of Blandness that is Speyside, or Glen Innocuous. It all started when we originally persuaded Allied to sell the closed down Ardbeg distillery - but sadly not to us, but to Glenmorangie, the industry closing around itself as usual. At the time Bruichladdich had just reopened, but when it closed again, we started negotiations with the American owners, JBB. The advantage of this plant is that it has a much more extensive and well balanced stock portfolio than Ardbeg. In our desired sites, Bruichladdich was our sole target.

Being independent, and a small bottler on the fringes of the cartel that is the whisky industry, we had to persuade JBB that we were serious and could raise the money. Establishing our credibility took some time - 11 months in all - but perseverance has enabled us to win the day.

James McEwan - twice Distiller of the Year - joins MMCD.

We are absolutely delighted that James is joining us. I first met James in 1989 at Bowmore and was amazed that someone could be more passionate about whisky than me! Having worked all his life for Bowmore, we have been able to lure him away to work with us on this fantastic new project not because we are offering him the earth, or because Suntory have let him down, but because he really wants to get to grips with distilling the way we want to do it: like they did in the old days. No nonsense, straight up, no messing.

- 1 **New Capsules.** If you have got it, flaunt it. With our presentation being so deliberately understated, we have decided to use new capsules on the latest bottlings which are bright orange. We hope they will catch your eye from twenty paces -

whether on a bar or shop shelf - alerting you to a superior Murray McDavid Bottling.

- 2 **Wine & Spirit International 2000 Competition** MMCD will be presented with their two trophies (and gold medals) on 29th October at the City of London's Guildhall by Baroness Philippine de Rothschild and Viscount Thurso.
- 3 The trophies were awarded for Best Malt 12 years and Older, and Best Single Edition Malt, beating Laphroaig 30 year old among others.

We are particularly proud that of the three trophies awarded to Single malt whisky, we won three of them.

1 **The Infant Terrible of Scotch**

Murray McDavid? Surely some mistake? August's edition of Whisky magazine has a three page profile on Murray McDavid, well Gordon actually, that gives a good idea about what we are trying to do.

For the article from volume 11 courtesy of Whisky Magazine PDF (350k) [Open here](#)
[Download Here](#)



- 2 **Trade enquiries:** For UK restaurants and off sales please contact Peter McKinley of McKinley Vintners on **+44 (0)20 7928 7300** For Export and Duty Free sales please contact Gordon Wright **+44(0)20 7823 7717** or [click here](#) for trade section.

3 **New Capsules**

New colourful capsules are being produced for the next range of bottlings due for the end of the year, along with a rather eye-catching single bottle carton to match. You'll be able to spot a MMCD bottling from a 100 paces!

4 **The International Wine & Spirit Competition 2000**

The International Wine & Spirit Competition 2000 results have just been announced at a presentation by Viscount Thurso: we are very pleased to say that Murray McDavid has done rather well. In general we are not in favour of this sort of event for the very nature of these competitions means that whoever enters is going to win some degree of recognition. It is heavily biased in favour of the Big Boys who can afford to 'flood' the number of products tasted baring in mind the entry fee per product is £250. For our own amusement we entered just two of our malts Leapfrog and Springbank - and were rather pleased with the result.

To the consternation of the Whisky Establishment, of the 12 trophies awarded for exceptional products over and above the standard Gold, Silver & Bronze awards, three trophies are for malt whisky - and we are proud to say we won two of them!

- 5 **The Morrison Bowmore Distillers Trophy for The Best Single Malt Scotch Whisky of 12 years and older**
- 6 **The Ian Mitchell Trophy for The Best Special Edition Single Malt Scotch Whisky**

We are not quite sure what the last award refers to as all of our malts are special editions!

1 **Wine & Spirit**

Rumour has it that MMCD's 'Leapfrog', distilled at the Laphroaig Distillery, has been awarded a Silver medal; watch this space....See Above!!

- 1 **Murray McDavid Distillery Video Clips** [click here](#) to see them.

- 1 MMCD has produced a special bottling of Springbank to commemorate the launch of a new Lifeboat for Campbeltown. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution - RNLI- is a charity funded entirely by public donation. The cost of each bottle is £30.00 plus postage and packing. A £10.00 donation to the RNLI is included in the price of each bottle. This is a limited edition which up till now has only been available in Campbeltown. The whisky in the bottle is a 1989 Springbank - as usual at 46% without chill filtering or colouring. To order a bottle please contact us directly.



Click picture to enlarge

The picture shows Vanessa Wright (lovely wife of Gordon) handing over a cheque to the Coxswain, John Stewart and the commemorative bottle labels. Hopefully many more cheques will follow.

- 1 Keepers of the Quaich - Murray McDavid accepted into Whisky Establishment



Click picture to enlarge

In October this year Gordon Wright and Mark Reynier were accepted in to the Keepers of the Quaich at Blair Atholl Castle in an impressively Celtic and Heraldic ceremony conducted by the Chairman of United Distillers, Antony Greener.

The Keepers of the Quaich is a society owned and run by the whisky industry establishment to enhance and promote the image whisky has throughout the world.

The Chairman of Glenfarclas, John Grant, read out Murray McDavid's role and contribution to the Independent Bottling industry.

The Quaichs (a replica of an ancient tasting chalice) were presented by none other than the Chairman of (our friend and yours) Allied Distiller's Andrew Dewar-Durie.

Now you may be thinking "but isn't this the guy who stopped you using the name Laphroaig as the origin of production of your whisky distilled at the very same distillery - and took you to court over it?" And you would be right. On the one hand the industry tries to stop everything we do, and yet on the other they accept us into the heart of the whisky establishment. Odd..or are they trying to tame us.....?!

During the subsequent banquet whisky was served each course and this only goes to prove, that in my book, this just does not work. While *technically* it may be possible to match certain whiskies to certain dishes, during the course of a meal there is no substitute for wine. In my opinion malts should be reserved for the pre and after dinner stages of the meal where they can be savored to their full degree.

- 1 Best Malt Whisky in the World?

In the 7th issue of Whisky magazine, the results of their Millennium competition to find the best malt of all was won by Springbank. The results were as follows:

- 1st Springbank
- 2nd Lagavulin
- 3rd Ardbeg and Laphroaig
- 5th Macallan and Highland Park

7th Glenmorangie and Talisker
9th Bowmore
10th Balvenie
12th Glenlivet and Port Ellen

Interestingly, 9 of the top 12 malts are from the area we at Murray McDavid recognise as "Coastal", with merely three coming from the Speyside Region. Bearing in mind that over half of Scotland's distilleries are in the Speyside region, and the subsequent enormous volume they produce, it shows how poorly they are rated by the whisky connoisseur.

With a handful of notable exceptions, how well they earn the title given to them by Tom Morton: "The Heart of Blandness".

Further, Port Ellen has been closed by United Distillers since the early 80's and Ardbeg has only been resurrected since 1997!

Of the top twelve Malts of the Millennium, Murray McDavid are proud to offer their own specially selected cask bottlings of 75% of the best, Including all of the top six malts. But then we knew all along that these were the best.



1 **Da Mhile**
for Details

[Organic Springbank single malt Scotch whisky Click](#)



2 **LAST BUT NOT LEAST!**

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, an enthusiastic organic farmer in his own right, takes possession of the last bottle -bottle no. 1000- of the limited edition of 1000 bottles of DA MHILE, the world's first and only organic single malt whisky. [Click here for details.](#)

Mark Reynier



BY ANDREW JEFFORD

Indiana Jim and the Temple of Drams

JIM McEwan wants to write a book one day. He's already got a title: The Journeyman's Journey. As whisky stories go, it should be a cracker. Here's an outline. It begins on the small Scottish island of Islay. If you want your fate to be intertwined with the wild warmth of Scotch, then this is the island to get yourself born on. Other islands (Jura, Mull, Orkney, Skye and now Arran) have one or two distilleries; Islay has seven. Moreover four of those (Lagavulin, Laphroaig, Ardbeg and Bowmore) constitute malt whisky's Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. They gallop out of the bottle, thunder up your nose and across your tongue, and

leave you changed utterly, possibly terrified and probably prostrate. Every whisky-drinking biography ends with Islay. You might, then (as Jim did), manage to be born in an impoverished household in Main Street, Bowmore. You might dawdle to school past Bowmore distillery, peeping through the window and revelling in the scent of the peat kilns. "Never mind going to school today," the maltmen would say. "Come in and give us a hand." And you'd sweep the malt barns while the maltmen would sit and watch, slicing their tobacco off juicy blocks, and smoking their pipes. They'd pay you for your industrious truancy with four empty lemonade bottles, worth three pence each. Nine pence would get you into the village-hall cinema on Thursday night, and the remaining cash would buy you "three penny dainties. What more could a boy ask for?" Thus inspired by this neighbourhood paradise, Jim nourished no other ambition than to become a cooper there. Against the odds, and with legal intervention to circumvent union restrictions which stipulated only one apprentice for every six journeyman coopers, he succeeded. He became a cooper at Bowmore in 1963, training under Davie Bell, whose craftsman's motto he still cherishes. "Dae it right, Jimmy; there's nae bugger coming behind you." Of course, the story could have ended there. Jim could still be a cooper. His school classmate Eddie MacAffer, just one week older than Jim, is head maltman at Bowmore today; Jim might have aspired to that prized job (there are only six in the world). But he was bright, ambitious and well endowed with what we now call "people skills". He was made warehouse manager by 1969; got the call to train as a blender in Glasgow in 1977; and was back to Bowmore as distillery manager in 1984. The lad from 7 Main Street had done well. I've met lots of distillery managers, but in truth I've never met one quite like Jim McEwan. Mostly they are thoughtful and effective, doing a good job to make their beautiful factories run with quiet efficiency and deliver maximum whisky yield per ton of barley for their masters. Jim the Evangelist is different. There's a driven quality about him. The sense of broader perspectives, of the way whisky fits into Islay culture like a backbone into a skeleton, is never far. You feel he's fighting for his people to be better understood, their work to be appreciated, and the craft traditions to be maintained (computer-run distilleries are a pet hate). You might detect something romantic in this, and you wouldn't be wrong. When I called distilleries "factories", Jim will have bristled. Mostly they are, in truth, but Jim McEwan's Bowmore was a community centre, a whisky atelier, a sensory workshop, a collapsed forest, a palace of the spirit world. All credit to Suntory (which bought Morrison Bowmore in 1994) for letting it be. Not only did it let it be, but it turned Jim into "international brand ambassador" in 1995, and sent him off on an orgy of air miles to evangelise wherever Bowmore was sold. Its trust was rewarded when Bowmore won "Distiller of the Year" in both the UK and the USA last year. You might have thought, after 40 years in the business and with that sort of success, the journeyman's journey was almost over. But you'd be wrong: Christmas brought a sensational development, which I describe in the postscript. If you're planning a Burns' night celebration on Thursday, what can Bowmore offer as a haggis-chaser? Like the other Horsemen of the Apocalypse, it is peaty - but not wildly so. Its peat levels are between 20 and 25 parts per million phenols, which is about half the peating levels of Laphroaig, Lagavulin and (especially) Ardbeg. Enough, in other words, to give you some of the rugged autumnal character unique to burnt bog; but not too much to swamp the cask notes, the resilient fruit of the new-make whisky, and (most pleasing of all) the salt vapour which blows straight off neighbouring Loch Indaal and smothers the casks for years on end. Balance and succulence are the two words I'd choose to distinguish Bowmore from its peers. As with many malts, the range has grown rather unwieldy in recent years, while the packaging is a little too similar for clarity. Legend is the cornerstone, aged in 70 per cent bourbon casks and 30 per cent sherry, and to be honest it's almost my favourite: I love its salty energy, its sprightly zing, its sappy tang, its blithe smoke (widely available, eg Sainsbury's £19.49). The 12 Year Old (Oddbins £22.69) is a fatter beast, rich and toffeed, oily as winching gear, with the squelch of moist peat as a backdrop. The 17 Year Old (Oddbins £35.99), strangely enough, seems more aerial, graceful and candied, though complex and creamy too, with hints of salt-pickled lemon and moist black vanilla. The 21 Year Old (Oddbins £53.99), finally, is caskier, alive with the hessian and brine scent of the Bowmore warehouses, freighted down with raisins and chocolate. In common with other distilleries, Bowmore has also released a series of finishes including Darkest (sherry), Dusk (claret) and Voyage (port). As you'd expect, these trowel in the sweetness and the fruit to symphonic effect, subduing the peat notes. Great whiskies - but I prefer my Bowmore pure and smoky, which is why I'm so happy with Legend.

POSTSCRIPT

THE earthquake rocked Suntory's head office just before Christmas: Jim McEwan was

leaving. What on earth had persuaded the lad from Main Street to quit his beloved Bowmore? Since 1995, the saddest sight on Islay has been the forbidding bolted doors of Bruichladdich distillery - the large and graceful stills cold and quiet, the only ones thus muted on the island. On 19 December, this distillery was bought from Jim Beam Brands by independent bottler Murray McDavid, headed by London wine merchants Mark Reynier and Simon Coughlin of the La Reserve group, together with Gordon Wright, a member of the family which owns Spring-bank Distillery on Campbeltown. You've guessed: they've got Jim McEwan to run things on Islay. "Och, man," McEwan said when I rang him on the island last week, "it's Indiana Jim and the Temple of Drams." He was tired of travelling, he said. "I wanted to get back to distilling. My heart is here; this is a great adventure for me." The fact that this precious distillery has escaped the multinationals and will now be run by people passionate about both whisky and Islay is uncommonly good news. Much of the investment money has come from the large estate owners on the island. The aim is to produce at least three malts - the virtually unpeated Bruichladdich of tradition, as well as mildly and richly peated whiskies, too; with the first distillation scheduled for the end of May. We have much to look forward to - and the journeyman's journey continues.

Da Mhile – Organic Springbank



single malt Scotch whisky.

In 1992 John Savage-Onstwedder, a life long organic farmer, decided to commission the production of the World's first organic single malt Scotch whisky to celebrate the dawn of a new Millennium, Only Springbank distillery could meet the exacting criteria laid down by both John and the Soil Association. Our own Gordon Wright, who was ,at that time, Sales Director at Springbank, was instrumental in ensuring the project was successful.

A small batch was distilled in June 1992 and lay slumbering in Sherry casks for the next 7 years. 1000 bottles of Da Mhile will be made available from September 1999. It will be bottled at 46% - the optimum drinking strength – and sold exclusively by ourselves.

Da Mhile – meaning 2000 in Gaelic is the most unique single malt Scotch you are ever likely to come across. Being the World's first Organic single malt Scotch it fits very well into the Murray McDavid ethos of only offering the very best whiskies bottled in their most natural form. It goes without saying that it is not chill filtered or coloured giving you the opportunity to sample THE purest spirit you will ever find. Da Mhile will never again be available at this age or strength – so stake your claim to a bottle of this piece of Scotch whisky history.



LAST BUT NOT LEAST!

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, an enthusiastic organic farmer in his own right, takes possession of the last bottle -bottle no. 1000- of the limited edition of 1000 bottles of DA MHILE, the world's first and only organic single malt whisky. Bottle no. 1000 symbolises the beginning of a new millennium. The bottle was handed over by John Savage-Onstwedder who commissioned the revered Springbank distillery to produce this most natural whisky to celebrate the year 2000.

Price per bottle excluding P & P £ 90.00 [Click to Buy it Now](#)

Price per bottle excluding P & P \$ 150.00

For wholesale enquiries please contact Murray McDavid direct by phone or Email

The Latest news archive

- 1 Worms, Worts & Washbacks - Memoirs from the Stillhouse By John McDougall & Gavin Smith Neil Wilson Publishing**

- 2 We will be offering shortly a simply stunning malt from the now defunct Lochside Distillery, once located at Montrose on the east coast of Scotland. This malt is rarely seen and certainly deserved a much wider audience. Is it any good? I would say judging by the cask samples I have in front of me that his is an east coast version of Springbank!**