

SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

AD	Allied Distillers
ADP	Amalgamated Distilled Products
Age	The age of a single malt whisky is the age of the youngest whisky in the bottle. Whisky is aged by storing in oak wood. By law, scotch whisky must be aged at least three years.
Angel's Share	This is the amount of whisky that evaporates from the casks while in storage (duty is paid on the amount of whisky stored when it is initially warehoused so the angel's share has effectively already had the tax paid on it). It usually amounts to about 2 percent annually and is also referred to as ullage. (The angels are reputed to be very happy in Scotland.)
ASD	Associated Scottish Distillers
Barley	The grain germinated to produce malt, the raw material from which whisky is produced.
Barrel	A small cask that contains about 40 gallons or 180 litres.
Blended Malt	A whisky made from a mixture of grain and malt whiskys. Better blends contain higher amounts of malt whisky. Blended whiskys are made to appeal to a wider range of tastes and are usually less expensive than single malts. Most blended whiskys contain anywhere between 15 to 40 single malts at levels of 15 to 60 percent volume. Blenders are the highest paid position in Scotland's whisky industry.
Butt	Largest sized cask generally in use at distilleries. Contains 108 gallons or 491 litres.
Caramel	Used to color most blended whiskys (grain whisky is clear) and sometimes also used in commercial single malts.
Cask Strength	New whisky is filled into casks at about 64 percent alcohol by volume. This also refers to whiskys that have been bottled straight of the casks without dilution. Given the evaporation known as the angel's share, the resulting strength of cask strength bottlings drops as the whisky ages.
Chill-filtration	Filtration of the whisky at a low temperature to remove clouding which occurs when unfiltered whiskys get too cold. Chill filtering also removes other

constituents that change the character of the whisky. Nearly all blended whiskys are chill filtered since they are generally served over ice.

Cling	The trails left on the inside surface of the glass when it is swirled around. This is caused by fusel oils in the malt and is usually used to determine the amount of malt in blended whiskys. You'll sometimes see folks doing this with single malts, but they always produce excellent cling since fusel oils are quite high in most single malts. Also known as "legs".
Condenser	A system of copper pipes used to cool the vapors from the still to produce distillate.
Cooperage	Workshop where casks are made and maintained by coopers.
Culm	The dried rootlets still attached to the malt grains after kilning.
Cutting	The practice of diluting cask strength whisky with water to reduce it to a lower strength for bottling. Most whiskys are diluted to 80 proof before bottling.
Dark Grains	Cattle food produced by combining the distillery by-products of draff and pot ale.
DCL	Distillers Company Limited. Founded in 1877 and taken over by Guinness in 1987.
Draff	Waste material left in the mash tun after draining off the extraction waters. Primarily malt husks.
DSWG	Distilling Sector Working Group
Feints	Feints are the third fraction of the distillation process from the spirit still. These are returned to the spirit still for redistillation in the next batch fed to the spirit still.
First Fill	This refers to casks which are being filled with whisky for the first time, even though they may have been previously used for Bourbon or Sherry
Foreshots	This is the first fraction produced by the spirit still. The first distillate that comes off the spirit still is pure, raw alcohol, which slowly drops in proof as the pot still run continues. The stillman watches the proof as it drops and determines when to begin collecting the potable spirits, or "heart of the run". The foreshots are returned to the spirit still for use in the next distillation run. The foreshots are not collected because they contain all the extremely volatile components which are toxic and sometimes poisonous. (ask me about bootleggers...)
Fusel Oil	One of the heavier alcohols contained in the feints, some of which are kept along with the heart or middle cut to add character to the whisky.
Glen	A deep valley

Grain Whisky	Whisky made primarily from cereals, usually wheat. Distillation usually occurs in a patent or coffee still (continuous still used to produce the bulk of alcohol in the world today. (as an aside, malt whisky is made in a batch process.)
Grist	The fine powder which results from milling malted barley. Grist is passed into the Mash Tun to be mashed with hot water.
Heads and Tails	Foreshots and feints, respectively
Heart	The heart is the second fraction of the distillation process from the spirit still and produce the final potable spirits that is then stored in casks and aged for varying lengths of time.
Hogshead	Most common size of casks used in distilleries (about 55 gallons or 250 litres)
IDV	International Distillers and Vinters
J&B	Justerini & Brooks
JD/JB	John Dewar and James Buchanan
Kiln	A huge, building-sized oven used to dry the malted barley after it's sprouted to fix the sugar in the grain.
Lees	Also known as spent lees – this is the material left in the spirit still and is usually run to waste.
Low Wines	These are the product of the first distillation that is then run into the spirit still for further distillation. Low wines are usually about 25 percent alcohol by volume.
Lyne Arm	The vapor delivery pipe that connects the top of the still to the condenser.
Malting	Barley that has been allowed to germinate, and then dried in the kiln to fix the sugars in the barley.
Malt Whisky	Whisky distilled from a fermented solution derived entirely from malted barley.
Mashing	The process of soaking the grist in hot water to dissolve all the fermentable sugars from the malted barley.
Mash-tun	A large circular tank where the malted barley is mashed with hot water in order to dissolve the soluble sugars.
Milling	The process of grinding the malted barley into grist for mashing.
Mothballed	Distilleries that are temporarily closed – usually due to downturns in the industry or from overstock in the warehouses.
NB	North British Distillery
New Spirit	The middle cut from the spirit still before maturing.

Nosing	The method of sampling whisky by smelling only. Blenders determine how to combine whiskys by nosing only, since the nose is much more sensitive than the palate.
Oak	The wood used for whisky casks. Bourbon casks are made of American oak while sherry casks are made of european oak.
Octave	A small cask with a capacity of about ¼ hogshead.
Pagoda	The characteristic style of roof found on distillery buildings used for venting smoke and moisture from the kiln.
Peat	Organic fuel created by plants left in a waterlogged condition for thousands of years. Used to impart the smoky flavor of many whiskys.
PLC	Public Limited Company
Pot Ale	The liquid left in the wash still after the first distillation. Also known as burnt ale. Usually mixed with draff to produce cattle food.
Quarter	A small cask with a capacity of about ½ hogshead.
Single Malt	The malt whisky produced by a single distillery. It can be of mixed ages.
SMD	Scottish Malt Distillers
Sparging	Pouring hot water on the grist in the mash tun
Spirit Safe	Locked glass case through which the raw spirit passes on its way to the spirit receiver. It contains equipment for measuring the specific gravity and is locked so no whisky can be taken from the process without taxation
Spirit Still	The low wines from the wash still are redistilled in the spirit still (the second still used in the process) which is similar in appearance to the wash still but generally smaller because the amount of liquid to be handled at this stage is less than that fed to the wash still. Three different fractions are produced and handled differently from the spirit still – the foreshots, the potable spirit and the feints. The foreshots and feints are returned to the spirit still and redistilled with the next charge from the wash still. The residue in the spirit still is referred to as the lees and is run to waste (usually for cattle feed). The potable spirit is collected from about 80 percent to 55 percent to produce a whisky for maturing of about 68 percent.
SWA	Scotch Whisky Association
UD	United Distillers
UM&GD	United Malt & Grain Distillers (distilling arm of United Distillers)
Vatted Malt	Mixture of 2 or more single malt whiskys.

Vatting	The process of mixing together of whiskys. If they are all single malts the resulting product is a vatted malt. If grain whiskys are added the resulting product is a blended whisky.
Wash	The wort technically becomes wash when yeast is added to it to start fermentation. Generally though, was refers to the liquid that is drawn off at the end of fermentation. The wash is then added to the wash still for the first distillation. The wash contains yeast, crude alcohol, unfermentable matter and the by-products of fermentation. The wash is generally about 6 – 7 percent alcohol.
Wash Still	The still that receives the wash from the fermenting process for the first distillation. The spirit is boiled off, run through water-cooled condensers and the liquid from the stills is collected is referred to as the Low Wines which is collected for redistilling in the spirit still. Low wines come off the still at about 25 percent alcohol. The wash stills are critical for determining the flavor and character of the whisky. The liquid left in the wash still at the end of the process is known as pot ale – which is also run to waste.
WG&S	William Grant & Sons
Whisky vs Whiskey	Whisky is the traditional spelling of distilled spirit produced in Scotland while whiskey has traditionally referred to Irish spirit and most other distilled spirits across the world.
Worm	The worm is contained in a surrounding bath of cold running water to form the condensers used traditionally. The worm is actually a copper coil of decreasing diameter that is attached to the arm leading from the head of the pot still. The vapors from the pot still condense to form the distillate collected from both the wash and spirit stills. Worm condensers have been replaced at most distilleries by modern tubular condensers (Edradour still uses a worm condenser cooled by river water – this distillery must close whenever river flows decrease and the river temperatures increase.)
Wort	The liquid drawn off the mash-tun where the malted barley has been mashed in warm water. This liquid contains the sugars from the cereal and a range of secondary components. It is cooled and then passed to the fermentation vessels