

WhiskyLive 2009 - The Celebration Comes to New York

To quote our favorite Celtic band, [MacTalla Mór Celtic Roots Band](#), "The pipes are calling resistance is futile," although this could easily have been the refrain for aficionados who attended [WhiskyLive 2009 in New York](#) to taste a wee dram or two of the good stuff.

As part of the [Tartan Week](#) celebrations, on March 30, 2009, **Pier Sixty at the Chelsea Piers in New York** was transformed into a little bit of Scotland with bagpipers piping, informative seminars, great food, mood setting music by **MacTalla Mór Celtic Roots Band**, and plenty of products to sample and whet your whistle whether your interest was **Scotch Whisky, Japanese Whisky, Canadian Whisky, Irish Whiskey, or Bourbon**, with a few interesting beers and even a rum to round out the evening of tasting.



The Pipers Warming Up

WhiskyLive offered attendees the opportunity to attend six different seminars, and always looking to increase our spirits knowledge, the **Spirited Travelers**, aka **Debra C. Argen** and **Edward F. Nesta**, attended two very interesting seminars - "**Glenmorangie's Brave New World - A Journey in Pursuit of Perfection**," and **Maker's Mark Bourbon 101**.

Since the two seminars that we wanted to attend were at the same time, we had to divide and conquer with (Debra) attending the "**Glenmorangie's Brave New World- A Journey in Pursuit of Perfection**" seminar, and (Edward) attending the **Maker's Mark Bourbon 101** seminar.



Glenmorangie's Brave New World Seminar

With his charmingly thick Scottish brogue, I felt like I was transported to Scotland as I listened to **Dr. Bill Lumsden, Head of Distilling and Whiskey Creation** at [The Glenmorangie Company](#) as he presented

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his informative and very tasty seminar I must add, "**Glenmorangie's Brave New World- A Journey in Pursuit of Perfection.**"

The seminar looked at the history of The Glenmorangie Company and what makes Glenmorangie different, from the hard, mineral rich spring water, to using the tallest stills in Scotland, to the American White Oak ex-Bourbon barrels that are only used twice and then discarded as they do not interfere with the Glenmorangie soft, delicate, range of flavors, to the science behind the new range of Glenmorangie products.



Dr. Bill Lumsden, Head of Distilling and Whiskey Creation

Of course, the best part of any spirits education, is the accompanying tasting, which included a flight tasting of six Glenmorangie Single Malt Scotch Whiskies that began with the **Original**, and progressed to the **Lasanta**, the **Quinta Ruban**, the **Nector D'or**, the **Astar**, and ended with the **Signet**.



With each progression, Glenmorangie added a few new fans of each product, and like everything else in life, there are always some things that just stand out, and although each of the offerings from Glenmorangie were delicious, my favorite tasting was that of the Astar, which is Gaelic for journey, with its aromatic nose, and with a wee drop of water added, which Bill referred to as "releasing the serpent" the spirit really opened up and revealed mint, vanilla, crème brulee, and toasted oats on the nose and on the palate, a rich and spicy mouth feel, and a delightful lingering warmth; available in limited quantities I savored every drop.



I (Edward) attended the **Maker's Mark Bourbon 101** seminar led by **Maker's Mark Master Distiller Kevin Smith**. The seminar was much more than just a chance to sample Marker's Mark. Kevin discussed that Bourbon can be made any where in the continental United States, but that the majority of Bourbon comes from Kentucky where the climate, grains, aging, water, the unique characteristics of each brand, and the watchful eye and palate of the Master Distiller, combine to produce the best Bourbons. There is only one common thread that all Kentucky Bourbons share and that is the climate, as the other elements vary by

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product thus producing a wide and varied range of color, taste, and finish. With respect to grain, Bourbon must be at least 51% corn, but most vary the percentage of corn, as well as the other types of grain that they use from wheat, malt barley, and rye, and the percentage of each. Combine aging, type of yeast, fermentation, how they char their seasoned wood for the one and only time that a barrel may be used to make bourbon, and where they receive their water supply from, and you have a set of permutations that can make your head spin, but alas we had some excellent Bourbon to sample to calm the nerves.



So, taste we did. In front of each attendee were 4 different samples of Maker's Mark that included "White Dog" that is clear and fresh out of the barrel, a sample that was aged for 2 years, an over mature sample, and the Fully Mature version. The "White Dog," as it is so aptly named, was young with heavy alcohol on the nose and palate, and a bit wild; this is what the Master Distiller and his team sample to size up the potential and future of that specific barrel. As we sampled the different aged products that ranged from 2-years to the over mature, you could see how the combination of type of grain, and the effect of the barrel, had on the product. The 2-year bourbon still had a heavy hand of alcohol notes on the nose and palate causing a burn on the finish, while the over mature was smooth but a bit sweet and lacking balance. The Fully Matured had the consistency that you come to expect from Maker's Mark, smooth on the palate, no burn on the finish, and a balanced nose. Kevin closed the seminar with a salute as we lifted our glasses and toasted all Bourbon and its unique United States identity.



We continued our "spirits education" on the tasting floor visiting the individual vendors and sampling many of the products, and it was interesting to taste different styles of whisky side by side where you could experience the nuances of the whiskies that varied from heavy peat to little or no peat, and how the different water as well as aging, affects each of the products. WhiskyLive also provided us with the opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with some old favorites like [Yamazaki Single Malt Whisky from Japan](#), as well as introduced us to some new finds that we might otherwise have never known.

Taking time from tasting, we enjoyed dinner while listening to the talented **MacTalla MórCeltic Roots Band** comprised of **Jesse MO Ofgang** (pipes, whistles, drums, guitar, percussion, vocals), his sister **Ilana** (piano, bass pedals, organ, lead vocals), brother **Levon** (pipes, whistles, percussion), brother "**MageErik**" (vocals, bass), and mother, **Patty Devlin** (bodhran, vocals) who had the enthusiastic audience clapping in time with the music as the band played many cuts off their latest CD, [The New Colossus](#).



**MacTalla M
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Celtic Roots Band**



Day had slowly made its transition to evening with the New York skyline dramatically silhouetted against the Hudson River as we made our way back into the reality of Manhattan. All in all, it was a perfect night.

WhiskyLive North America is held in **New York, Toronto, Los Angeles,** and **Fort Lauderdale**, please visit the website: www.WhiskyLive.com or call +44 (0) 1603.633.808 for information on upcoming events.

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