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Whisky Tasting

Tartan Week in New York City - Whisky Live tasting!

There are few things more important to a Scotsman than his Scottish pride, his music and his whisky, and **Tartan Week** in New York in April 2005, combined all of these ingredients. **Whisky Live**, as part of the Tartan Week celebrations celebrating all things Scottish, was held at the **Tavern on the Green** in Central Park, which provided the perfect setting for an evening embracing Scottish culture, and of course, Luxury Experience Magazine was on hand for the celebrations. The **Peatbog Faeries**, **Shooglenifty** and **Clan an Drumma** provided diverse musical entertainment from Scottish rock music to the haunting and exhilarating tribal music of the highlands. The tables overflowed with Scotch salmon, a carvery table, many desserts, and there was even a haggis-eating contest, that curious Scottish delicacy that most people shy away from, and of course, there was whisky, lots of whisky!

The word “whisky” comes from the abbreviation of “usige beatha” which means “Water of Life” in Scots Gaelic. This term began to be used in the 18th century, and prior to that time it was known as usquebaugh or aqua vitae, which is Latin for “Water of Life”. It plays an important role in Scottish culture to welcoming in a birth, to saying farewell at death, and figures prominently at social events throughout their lifetime.

Distillers, Producers, and brand Ambassadors from all over Scotland came to New York to showcase their products and educate consumers with product tastings, masterclasses and comparative tastings of individual brands. Guests received a Whisky Live specially designed tasting glass to sample from a selection of some of the best whiskies, and there were whisky related products available for purchase. Guests had the opportunity to learn by meeting with the Master blenders, Distillers and representatives, as well as by sampling from the many whiskies to learn the differences between single malt whiskies, (made with water and barley, and often are malted with a bit of peat), and blends (where the Master Blender combines a mixture of malt and grain whiskies). Guests had the opportunity to experience the nuances of what a few years aging can make when sampling a product from an individual brand at 10, 12, 15, 21, 25 and at 30 years old, as well as the difference of cask strength and fine and rare whiskies.

For those seeking one-on-one instruction, masterclasses offered smaller groups more in-depth knowledge, as well as several of the brands invited selected guests to their private spaces to sample more exclusive products in an intimate setting.

A partial list of the whisky brands included Chivas Regal, Dewar's, The Glenlivet, Glenfiddich, Highland Park, The Macallan, The Glenrothes, The Dalmore Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky, The Classic Malts Selection, Bowmore, Talisker/Johnny Walker, Compass Box Whisky, Drambuie, The Duncan Taylor Collection, Glenmorangie, and Springbank. From single malts to blends, from smooth to peaty, there seemed to be a whisky for every taste.

The expanding whisky market continues to grow in the premium level, where brands such as Chivas Regal, Dewar's, Johnny Walker and others compete for the upper end of the market with prices ranging from US \$150 - \$250 per bottle. The premium products do illicit the subtleties of the brand such as a distinct honey nose and palate on Dewar's Signature, so if you have a favorite brand you will be rewarded, across the products, with a very distinct and refined nose, the subtle nuances of the brand, and a smooth finish. We, being lovers of scotch whisky, found all of the premium products very nice, and worthy of their distinction at the upper level, though our favorite is the Chivas Regal Salute.

Please read our articles on **Tartan Week** celebrations in **Awards**, and **Music Scene** sections.

For those that missed **Whisky Live** in New York, there is still time to attend Whisky Live in Glasgow, Scotland, which takes place in September. For more information, please contact **Whisky Live**.

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