

Created by: Edward F. Nesta

WhiskyFest 2005

How would you like to spend an evening with more than 250 of the world's finest, rarest, and most expensive international whiskies to taste?

In addition, there were Master Blenders discussing the nuances of their product, as well as great food, a great venue, and gorgeous women pouring a wee dram or two for you. There was that and more at WhiskyFest.

I attended the 8th annual [WhiskyFest New York](#) in November 2005, and had the opportunity to not only nose, cut and taste some great whisky, but I also attended some outstanding seminars from industry leaders.

WhiskyFest New York was created by [Malt Advocate magazine](#), and is held yearly in New York and Chicago. Each year WhiskyFest New York has grown in popularity, with this year's event, like the previous seven years, being a sell-out. More and more "aficionados" attend for the chance to learn about whisky, which has truly become a global product, and is now produced in more than 19 countries.

Besides doing some sampling so I could keep my palate honed, I attended a few of the seminars. The first seminar I attended was conducted by Michael Heads, Distillery Manager - Isle of Jura, on "Creating the new malts: Isle of Jura Superstition and the new breed of Single Malts." This was a fascinating walk through the folklore and fact behind the unique marriage of traditional Jura "highland" malt and a peated Jura malt to make Superstition. The group nosed and sampled their way through 9 glasses of whisky, which denoted various stages or components that make-up Isle of Jura Superstition.

Another seminar I attended was conducted by Chris Morris, Master Distiller & Woodford Reserve, on "American Whiskey European Style." Chris started off with a brief discussion of bourbon versus Irish or Scotch whisky; walked the audience through a look at how Woodford Reserve is produced, and finally we learned about four grain bourbon, the only bourbon triple-distilled in copper-pot stills, and the first bourbon released from Woodford Reserve Master's Collection. Chris explained the 5 sources of flavor that makes up every whiskey and bourbon: grain, water, fermentation, distillation and maturation. The seminar concluded with a tasting of three different types of bourbon featuring Woodford Reserve, Old Forester Birthday Bourbon and Jack Daniel's Single Barrel.

The last seminar that I attended was conducted by Dr. Bill Lumsden, of Glenmorangie and Ardbeg, on "Malt Whisky Flavor & Craft, Science, or Alchemy?" The diverse aromas and tastes found in single malt Scotch whisky remains clouded in mystery, and the session tried to unravel some of the complex biochemistry of distilled spirits. This enlightening and educational seminar included an array of samples to complement different points in the presentation, and to aid in understanding and appreciating the components of a single malt Scotch whisky.

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WhiskyFest New York has become a must-attend event if you pride yourself as a whisky aficionado. I look forward to attending their 2006 event.

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