

Created by: Edward F. Nesta

WhiskyFest 2008 New York

As a whisky (as well as whiskey) aficionado, [Malt Advocate's WhiskyFest 2008](#), held in New York City, was a night to remember with over 120 brands representing more than 200 products, and 11 educational seminars.



Armed with my whiskey tasting glass and my VIP pass, which provided me with an extra hour of one-on-one with the vendors before the general admission attendees entered, I ventured up and down the aisles to meet old friends, and to acquaint myself with some new ones. I especially enjoy sampling products to see what new innovation and ideas are taking shape in the industry.

I visited the CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery booth where they were pouring their [Charbay Whiskey Release II](#), which is not just another American whiskey. Thinking innovation, Marko Karakasevic, Charbay's 13th generation distiller, thought that if whiskey is made from distilled beer, which it is, then it was time to make whiskey from beer that he liked to drink. The resultant product was all the rage during the evening, and wherever I went I mentioned the Charbay Whiskey Release II to friends only to hear a response of "yeah, I stopped by their booth and had a sample, wow what a great and innovative whiskey." Marko was very proud to show off his **2008 Malt Advocate Whisky Award as Pioneer of the Year (The United States Microdistillers)**.



Marko Karakasevic of CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery

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I did find some time to attend a couple of the seminars starting with "The Great Whisk(e)y Debate" that discussed and debated the merits of American Bourbon, Canadian Whisky, and Scotch. Representatives from Knob Creek (American Bourbon), Canadian Club Classic 12, and Ardmore Traditional Cask (Scotch) each had 10 minutes to discuss the merits of their respective product, provide a bit of background, and walk the attendees through a tasting. With Bourbon it is all about the corn with 51% required; with Scotch it is all about the peat to get that distinct smoky nose; and with Canadian Club, it is about the casks they use to provide that smooth style. At the end of the seminar the attendees voted on their favorite whisk(e)y, but factoring in that the seminar was held in the USA, the seminar's version of the Electoral College, the Moderator, called the voting a draw.



Salute to Scotch, Bourbon, and Canadian Whisky

Another great seminar I attended was "Highlands to Islays." This was a journey through the history and art of Islay's most richly flavored whisky, and it featured tastings of Laphroaig and Ardmore. The discussion covered topics such as, how Scotch is originally 150 proof (75% alcohol) off the copper pot stills before being cut to bottle strength, that the age on the bottle is the youngest whiskies used, that Scotch is over 700 years old, how ageing is performed in either American or Spanish oak barrels, and that Ardmore has been around since 1898 while Laphroaig is the #1 Islay malt Whisky. One of more enlightening points learned was regarding the word 'proof,' and how it came from a period of time when the only way to test the validity of whisky was to pour it over gun powder and light it, if there was a flash than that was 'proof' that it was okay. In addition, when we use the saying, "the full 9 yards" we are referring to the length of the material in a kilt, and when we refer to liquor as 'spirits', this comes from the period when the monks drank their fermented mixture to get closer to their supreme being.



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Toast to the Highlands & Islays of Scotland

The evening would not have been complete without the presentation of awards:

The Top Ten New Whiskies for 2008 (listed alphabetically)

The Antiquary Blended Scotch, 21 Year Old

The Balvenie Vintage Cast, 1976 Vintage

Black Bowmore, 1964 Vintage, 42 Year Old

White Bowmore, 1964 Vintage, 43 Year Old

Brora, 30 year old

High West Rendezvous Rye, Batch No. 10

Jameson Rarest Vintage Reserve Irish Whiskey

The Last Drop Blended Scotch

Parker's Heritage Collection Bourbon, 27 Year Old

Willett Family Reserve Bourbon, 25 Year Old

Best Buy of the Year

Ancient Ancient Age Ten Year Old

American Whiskey of the Year

Parker's Heritage Collection 27 Year Old Bourbon

Canadian Whisky of the Year

Canadian Club 150th Anniversary 30 Year Old

Irish Whiskey of the Year

Jameson Rarest Vintage Reserve, 2007 Release

Scotch Blended Whisky of the Year

The Antiquary 21 Year Old

Scotch Malt Whisky of the Year

Black Bowmore, 1964 Vintage, 42 Year Old

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Microdistillery Whisky of the Year

Penderyn Welsh Whisky

Pioneer of the Year

The United States Microdistillers

Distillery of the Year

Four Roses

To learn about other **Malt Advocate WhiskyFest** events please visit www.MaltAdvocate.com.

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