

High society

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society has slowly but surely been evolving and growing. We look at its progress

What does the Scotch Malt Whisky Society mean to you? If you think of the impressive Vaults, a bastion of style and tradition in the heart of Edinburgh's revamped and gentrified port of Leith, or of the modern and stylish members' club rooms in the city's Queen Street, chances are you live in Scotland's capital or visit it regularly.

If it means high quality, exciting and challenging cask strength malts, then as likely as not you're a whisky drinker that has been fortunate enough to run across a Society bottling or two.

And if it means a quarterly mailing, the occasional indulgence purchase of a special bottle based on extravagant but entertaining tasting notes, or the once in a blue moon Society tasting in your home town then you're one of the scores of members that now live across the world.

The Society is a broad church, but its toughest task has been maintaining a balance between its many diverse and conflicting components.

Getting that balance right hasn't come easily to an organisation that sells premium malt at a premium price and occupies two of the most exclusive sites Edinburgh can offer, a whisky world that is more Alexander McCall Smith than Wilbur.

So how do you evolve and grow without sacrificing everything you stand for? When Paul Miles joined the Society as managing director two and a half years ago, that was the task that faced him. So he sat down with his team to look at what the Society had originally stood for and what it stood for in 2007.

"We identified it had originally stood for two things," he says. "It was committed to being a members' club as a way of getting

very rare or unique single cask, single malt whisky to its members. Membership, because if you've only got 250 bottles of a malt, how do you share this out?

"And it was committed to being the world's biggest and best supplier of single cask, single malt whisky. It wasn't about vatted whisky, or blended whisky.

"So we have reaffirmed our commitment to doing that over the last two years. We are about membership so we had to look at how we could provide value to members.

"We want to evolve the membership," says Miles. "We have continued to recruit the sort of person you'd expect us too – the older, more experienced and predominantly male whisky lover wanting to experience something new and different and to extend their tastes. But we now get an increasing number of younger members who do not come from a traditional whisky background but are intrigued by what they have seen.

"Female membership has shot up in the last two years. 20 per cent of all new members are women."

The Society's approach has been to keep sight of its two fundamental commitments but to revamp what it offers its membership. Everything from the whisky bottles to the way the Society communicates with its members has come under the spotlight.

"We have moved from an indistinguishable bottle to a unique one. We can put tasting notes on the front of the bottle for each of between 50 and 200 bottles. That was just not possible in the past.

"We have an up to date website and changed the membership pack so now when you join you get four 10cl bottles to encourage people to try different styles. Our quarterly

newsletter is now a proper magazine."

At the heart of everything is the whisky. There were concerns that the purchase of the Society by Glenmorangie a few years ago would compromise the Society's independence and might seriously restrict its ability to source a diverse range of quality casks, Miles says the opposite has happened.

"We have not only been able to keep standards high but we have been able to raise them," he says. "We have been able to source far more casks than we did before, and we have bottled more whiskies this year than any other year."

The new bottlings are released monthly on what has become something of an event, known as First Friday. Preview tastings are held in the days leading up to the release date, creating an excitement and expectation about the new bottles, before they finally go on sale at the start of each month.

Casks are selected by a tasting panel made up of a broad selection of whisky experts from various backgrounds. It meets weekly to taste six or seven cask samples. They are under no pressure to accept any of them, and could in theory turn away every sample, though that doesn't happen.

"If it did then we wouldn't force the panel to put something through. If the panel puts through six then we would consider that a success because it indicates we have selected well for the panel. The most important thing about all of this, though, is that the quality remains high."

It would seem there's plenty more to come from the Society, too. It's quite happy to consider malt whisky from across the world, for instance, is not above using humour and irreverence to promote its whiskies, and is quite prepared to strip away all conformity and promote its whisky in an explosion of colour and verbal extravagance.

These are all signs that Miles and his team are having fun. 





BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO LTD

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

SECOND EDITION OF ART SUMMIT TAKES AN UPTURN

CULTURE CAULDRON: PAGE 16

ROB PETER TO PAY PAUL

INVESTOR'S GUIDE

MACRO REBALANCING AND ITS SIDE-EFFECTS

VIEWPOINT: PAGE 11

AHMEDABAD | BANGALORE | CHANDIGARH | CHENNAI | HYDERABAD | KOCHI | KOLKATA | LUCKNOW | MUMBAI | PUNE

WWW.ECONOMICTIMES.COM

MONDAY 24 AUGUST 2009 | NEW DELHI | 20 PAGES | RS 3.50 OR RS 5.00 ALONG WITH THE TIMES OF INDIA

Getting risky after whisky

A rare bottle is like the celebrity you see but don't recognise

FROM THE GRAPEVINE LIVING IT UP

BY RESHMI R DASGUPTA

WOULD all the girls who swoon over Rahul Gandhi be all that ecstatic if they didn't know who he was? If his face didn't give him away, would people get to know the real RG, and discover facets about him that are usually subsumed by the larger Gandhi brand? Or is his pedigree very important, as it reiterates that he comes from a distinguished and classy lineage and therefore guarantees qualities like good breeding, a cosmopolitan outlook and more?

I couldn't help but think of the Rahul Gandhi analogy this week as I attended the India launch of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society in New Delhi, a fortnight after I was present at the global launch of the 50 year old Glenfiddich, at the iconic brand's distillery in remote Dufftown in Scotland. In effect, I was witness to two ends of the premium whisky story, both of them equally valid. And it raised the fundamental question of the whether brands enhance an experience or overwhelm it.

That last thought crossed my mind when, as per the SMWS rules I perused the bottles on display. The concept of the SMWS is unique: its members

worldwide taste and approve whiskies for their inherent qualities, sans labels. On the advice of the society's MD, Paul Miles, settled for one simply marked '1.143' with a line in lieu of the brand name saying 'just green apples'. The first number on the bottle signified the distillery's place in the SMWS list (in chronological not qualitative order) while the numbers after the decimal meant the cask.

So I chose whisky from the 143rd cask bought by the SMWS from the distillery which had also provided them the first cask, and thus carried themselves the first place on the list. I won't be revealing any secrets if I tell you that it turned out to be Glenfiddich (as the numbers are pretty widely available on the internet) but I didn't know that at the time, and my taste buds and nose were therefore willfully directed to the tagline. I could actually discern surprising green apple accents in the whisky.

Not having tasted Glenfiddich before — though it has been highly recommended by my guru of luxe, the Calcutta Connoisseur — I cannot really say if I would have identified the tart freshness of that fruit had I been guided only by its illustrious label. But the fact that following my prefer-

ences had led me to pick a blue ribbon brand, had its own satisfaction. It's like an out-of-town girl going to a party with friends and later realising that the guy she thought was shy but cute and interest-

ing was none other than RG!

On the other hand, the experiences at Glenfiddich was equally amazing. Having tasted all their usual ones — 12 year old 15YO, 18YO and 21YO,

the latter perfect as a dessert accompaniment or an after dinner liqueur — we also tried their 50 YO, which at cask strength was too much for me. But the star of the event — the 50YO — was truly amazing. It was delicate, light, almost floral in its mellow appeal, rather like a fine white wine from Burgundy. Everyone was astounded that age had, literally, not withered its infinite variety.

Only 50 will be sold each year for the next 10 years at £16,000 a bottle and three have already expressed interest from India. But it's custom-made bottle and case — and other gimmicks surrounding its launch — are merely icing on the cake. It is, ultimately, a top-end product from a great distillery that is still a family-run operation. The label, in this case, raises the bar of expectation. "If it is Glenfiddich's best, it must be very, very good." When it turns out to be just that, it's like the girl who meets RG amid all his security bandobast but is still impressed by his good breeding and class!





the pioneer

145th Year

Published From

www.dailypioneer.com

Rs 2

Delhi Lucknow Bhopal Shubaneswar Chandigarh Dehradun Ranchi

New Delhi | Thursday | September 10 | 2009

*Late City | Vol. 19 | Issue 253 | Pages 16 | *Air Surcharges Extra if Applicable

RNI No. 53466/91, REGD. No. DL (C)-05/1219/2009-2011

Nation > 5

Bar council-Sibal
turf war worsens

World > 12

Pakistan helped Iran's nuclear
programme, admits Khan

Vivacity > 13

Dharma in
modern context

Sport > 15

Rafa revels,
Murray mourns



We are on a high, literary. We've had the privilege of tasting the most unique single malt, single cask whisky in the world. One that will give sleepless nights to players like Glenfiddich and Johnny Walker and force them to rediscover themselves. Thanks to the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS), whisky enthusiasts in the Capital, can now sip on rare flavours of their choice.

SMWS is a private membership club dedicated to the discerning appreciation and consumption of the most rare and unique single malt whiskies — unfiltered, single cask, single malt Scotch whisky. This 25-year-old society was set-up in Scotland by a group of friends and now brews 300 different kinds of whiskies a year. They bought a cask without the processes of dilution or chill-filtration but with a regular process of filtration. On tasting the contents they discovered that it had more flavour than other single malts. That is when they

made others taste the whisky and everyone had the same opinion — that it was great. Thus was born the SMWS. Later, Glenmorangie bought it and the society became a more organised set-up catering to 14 countries, says Raghuraj Kanadia, SMWS India partner.

The society's whiskies are not available commercially but only to exclusive members by invitation. For this, they will have to shell out Rs 25,000 per year. "We give our members a kit that has a sample set of four miniature bottles of rare whiskies, one complimentary limited edition bottle, subscription of our in-house magazine, various discounts and of course, access to experience the best of whiskies. The members receive updated

bottling lists every six weeks, which include complete descriptions of the whiskies offered," says he. If you are wondering what is the difference between a single malt and a single malt, single cask whisky, Kanadia explains. "The single malts that we get in the market are blends of var-



ious casks from one particular distillery whereas, our single malts are from one cask only. Therefore, the taste is far superior. These whiskies come under the label of SMWS. Each bottle has a number, the first digit of which signifies the

distillery it was brewed in, then there is a number that follows a dot which signifies the number of bottles that have been brewed from that particular cask. The society's tasting committee selects individual casks of the finest malt whiskies from virtually every distillery in every region of Scotland.

"We then take the contents of a particularly fine cask and bottle it at full cask strength, without the processes of dilution or chill-filtration. Each cask produces about 275 bottles (750 ml size) at an average strength of 120 proof," he says.

The society has set-up base in the Capital and aim to move to Mumbai by November. "We opted for Delhi first because it is the only city in India that starts

the trends of exclusive experiences. The people of Delhi like to experiment with good things and we hope to bank on that," he elaborates. Kanadia feels that India is a very promising market for such endeavours as it is a country where whisky dominates most other alcohols. "Black Label and Chivas sell around 30 to 40 thousand cases a year. This is not a small number considering the cost that they come at. Likewise, we now want to tap the market and sell the people a holistic experience. Apart from consuming five to 45-year-old whiskies they can just have a good time. I will not say that only whisky drinkers should join the society, even non-drinkers should be a part as we are selling a lifestyle."

The exclusive sip

As the Scotch Malt Whisky Society comes to the Capital, it is time to toast with the best in the business, says Siddharth Tewari

quality wine") level.
 e a little sweet and extremely
 quality that allows them to go
 hes. Pastas, salad, meats, and
 Riesling will complement it.
 ot even go wrong with spicy
 for a fashionable Pinot Noir
 much lighter and zesty than
 ons or Merlot. Good for fish
 e these names as accurately

star hotels at a price range of
 e.

redictable, if the guests or the
 opposed to slightly sweet
 avignon Blanc (anything but
 lian Chianti Classico (kee-
 ich, like Pinot Noir, is amaz-
 eats, only even better in the
 ve and truffle oils, balsamic
 mushroom.

erving ritual: Read the label,
 your mouth as an approval
 the guest first and host last.
 ithusiast and F&B Manager, Taj
 Fisherman's Cove, Chennai

Beverage watch



A club for single malt lovers

Launched in India last month was the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS), the world's leading specialist in single cask, single malt whiskies. Set up 25 years ago, the society is a private membership club that 'preserves the intricate experience' of Single Malt tasting worldwide and is 'dedicated to the discerning appreciation and consumption of the most rare and unique single malt whiskies'.

This sure spells good news to single malt enthusiasts

in India as they get to savour SMWS's limited edition malt whiskies bottled from a single cask that are made exclusively available to members. Membership to the SMWS is By Invitation Only for an initial entry fee of Rs 25,000 for a year.

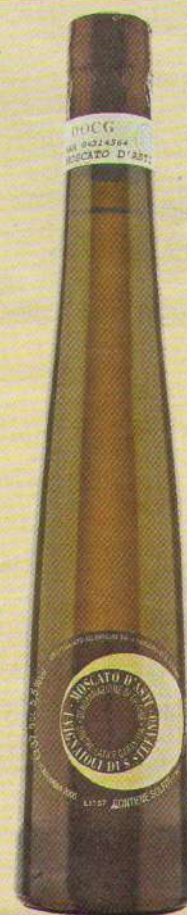
While the membership kit has some miniatures of rare and divine malts along with other goodies, one can also look forward to SMWS bars that will be set up across India.



Ceretto makes a grand entry

Aspri Spirits has brought to India some of Ceretto's premium wines from Piedmont, Italy like Barolo, Barbaresco, Moscato D'Asti and Langhe wines. From the Barolo range the labels that one can savour in India, include the silky-smooth Ceretto Bracco Rocche Brunate Barolo and red, smooth and round Barolo Zonchera that pairs best with red meats and from the Barbaresco range, the beautifully red Bracco Asili Bernardot Barbaresco which goes best with pasta and game cheese and Barbaresco Asij, again a wine that pairs deliciously with meats. The premium range also has the spicy and vanilla-hinted Langhe Rosso Monsordo to team with pasta and rice dishes, the fruity Langhe Arneis Blange, ideally sipped with fish and Moscato d'Asti, a dessert wine. Available in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune, Haryana and Chandigarh.

Rs 3,755 to Rs 14,063



Pocket-sized

Yet power-packed

Page 6





AS SINGULAR AS IT GETS

Paul Miles (left), the head honcho of The Scotch Malt Whisky Society, introduced the super exclusive club to India with the opening of its first chapter in New Delhi recently. What's special about this club is that the whiskies are 'single cask, single malt', drawn from single casks from as many as 120 whisky distilleries across the globe and meant only for club members and never for the mass market.

Runway to High Life

jade

1ST

ANNIVERSARY

Gifts from the
SOUTH

- ▶ MULTI-CUISINE DROOL
- ▶ POETRY IN WEAVES
- ▶ SPORT DEMI GODS
- ▶ AMAZING AYURVEDA
- ▶ DIVINE DANCES
- ▶ AWARD WINNING MOVIES
- ▶ GLOBAL MUSIC
- ▶ ARTY TALENT

50 SOUTHERN BEAUTIES

SCOTCH MALT WHISKY SOCIETY, NEW DELHI

People who have a penchant for rare single malts, here's good news.

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS) the world's leading specialist in single cask, single malt whiskies, have opened their doors to India. 'The Society' as it likes to call itself, is a private membership club dedicated to the appreciation and consumption of rare and unique single malt whiskies. The 25 years old club is avowed to preserving the intricate experience of single malt tasting worldwide. So what does that mean? For instance, at the opening night in Delhi last month, invitees were introduced to about over a dozen numbered bottles of special Single Malts. The Society's Tasting Panel selects individual casks of the finest malt whiskies from virtually every distillery in every region of Scotland. Each cask produces on an average

275 bottles. As no two casks taste alike, each bottle bears a specific code, which indicates to the member not only the distillery from which the whisky originates but also the specific number of casks, which have bottled by the Society, from that particular distillery. Some avid and very knowledgeable drinkers of single malts were seen systematically tasting a swig from each bottle!

With India entry, this is exactly what SMWS hopes to create: an exclusive society that reflects their core values: Taste, Exclusiveness, Knowledge and Experience.. Bottled from a single cask, (the difference between this and other single malts) selected from a range of over 120 distilleries, every Society whisky bottling is exceptional. Their Limited Edition malt whiskies are then made exclusively available to the



members of the society.

These whiskies will not be commercially available to the general public, they are only through exclusive memberships, which is By Invitation Only. In India, this membership will be priced at Rs. 25,000 for an initial entry fee for a year. Members will get Membership Kit with a sample set of four miniatures

of the Societies Rare Whiskies, 1 Limited Edition bottle complimentary, Complimentary Subscription to our Exclusive Unfiltered magazine, access to Exclusive RSVP Events, and host of other privileges and discounts, at our Member Establishments. Members will also have access to Members Room facilitates around the world. The SMWS will attempt to garner its members across the main urban centres of the country and if Raghuraj Kanudra, the India partner swings it, the society will also mount a series of exclusive tasting events. SMWS bars will also be set up in smart locations across the country. He is confident of doing so. "Our initial research indicates that our product and service will be much appreciated in this country. The sheer quality and rarity of the single malts that we will offer will make this a compelling proposition."

• AMY FERNANDES

CANDY VILLAGE, MUMBAI

Candy Village is located in the quiet Walkeshwar area. The ideology behind the store is to bring hip, urban, cutting edge styles from across the globe to south Mumbai.

Conceptualised and started by Gunmala Roy, the store's primary objective is to provide high-end clothing at affordable prices. Young and fresh - the quirky store name was actually inspired

by a candy store - imagine yourself surrounded by delicious treats that are tempting and hard to resist!

In sync with styles fresh off the ramps, the clothes are sourced from London, Paris, Spain and exotic Asia. The store also has select apparel from upcoming designers, showcasing a variety of styles and contemporary lines. In addition to the clothes, Candy Village has

a wide range of shoes: stilettos, flats, ballerinas, gladiators; accessories from funky beads and necklaces to show-stopping clutch bags.

Candy Village also has personal stylists available to assist in all types of wardrobe dilemmas. **CANDY VILLAGE,** Adarsh Building, 94, Walkeshwar Road, Opp. White House, Mumbai



YOUR SPACE YOUR STYLE

VOL 1 ISSUE 1 OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2009

RS 70

enhance

interiors

Celebrate Diwali with

Priyanka Chopra

JJ Valaya

Amrita Rao

Perizaad Zorabian

Follow our

VIP List for Diwali

very important presents

Exclusive

enjoy celebrity designer

Kara Mann's home

Capturing the

heart of Delhi



8 903275 024561



Brand mania hits the Diwali gifting season,
writes **Jaydeep Ghosh**.

Photographs courtesy brand images.



mega fest mega gifts

Who doesn't love gifts? Whoever says 'no' is lying. And what better time than Diwali to indulge in gifting? Diwali gifting however has seen a major transition. If the companies doled out cheap gifts to employees blaming it on the recession, they made no compromise while doling out lavish gifts to bureaucrats, tax officials and our netas.

Then we have the Richie-riches who have to gift things suiting their status. Come on,

if you are burning rubber on Delhi's roads in your Lamborghini, you have to be better than sending a pack of laddoos or dry-fruits as Diwali gifts. The gifting season is used to play one-upmanship over peers to prove who's got more moolah and a bigger heart. And making good moolah out of all this are some luxury brands like Lladro, Swarovski, Rosenthal and Moët Hennessey. The famous porcelain figurine makers from Spain, Lladro time the

launch of their limited edition Ganeshas and Lakshmis to bag the Diwali gifting orders. They recently introduced a Ganesha figurine that costs Rs one lakh and the buzz is that the first batch is already sold out.

Swarovski too laughs all the way to the bank by introducing special figurines, tea-light holders and candle-stands. Last Diwali, when Zayed Khan gambled and won nine-lakh rupees and gifted it all to his wife Mallika, it



hit the headlines. But frankly, the extravagant gifting Delhi's fixers, property dealers, traders, wheeler-dealers and some business moguls indulge in would make Zayed's nine lakhs look petty. Dinner sets of Rosenthal by Versace, crystal chandeliers from Belgium, 50 year old Single-Malts, Patek-Phillipe watches, Chrome Heart sunglasses, Vertu phones, limited-edition Karl-Lagerfeld autographed Dom Perignon champagne are wrapped in equally expensive crystal encrusted gift boxes to be given away as Diwali gifts. However the most extravagant gifting option I saw this time was the Hennessy 100th anniversary limited edition birthday blend that has samples from 1907 to 1960 and costs around \$ 150,000. My favourite though is the aromatic gift 'Rethinking Scent' that costs approximately \$ 600 and the prize package includes: Prada L'Eau Ambrée, Jo Malone Vanilla & Anise Cologne; Tom Ford Jasmine Musk, Issey Miyake A Scent; Nanette Lepore Nanette; Banana Republic of Women.

Ganeshas made of solid gold, gold guineas, silver idols of Lakshmi and Ganesh are precious gifts too but in the times of brand-o-mania, they seem passé. But the way the prices of gold are shooting, I wouldn't mind a solid gold idol as a gift. The Vuittons, Mont Blancs and Bvlgaris too rake in the moolah during Diwali as many gift wallets, pens and even handbags.

A friend of mine who does a lot of business with the Japanese was bowled over when his principles picked him up from the Narita International Airport and flew him down to central Tokyo in a Hermes helicopter, a \$800 one-way ride. And you thought Hermes is just into bags the Birkin and the Kelly and silk scarves?

1. Pens from Mont Blanc
2. Fragrance by Tom Ford
3. Liquor by Moët Hennessey
4. Special edition Ganesha from Lladro
5. Eye wear from Chrome Hearts
6. Crystal studded pen from Swarovski



LUXURY STYLE SPORT CARS GADGETS GIRLS

INDIAN EDITION

THE WORLD'S LEADING MEN'S MAGAZINE
NOVEMBER 2009 RS 100

HOW TO LOOK
GOOD THIS
WEDDING
SEASON

INTRODUCING
BRAZIL'S
HOTTEST
SUPERMODEL

INSIDE
INDIA'S MOST
EXCLUSIVE
WHISKY CLUB

THE NEW
RULES FOR
THE DIGITAL
GENTLEMAN BY

BRAD PITT

● HOW TO AVOID EMAIL
ERRORS, FACEBOOK FAUX PAS,
TWITTER TRIBULATIONS AND MORE

RULE NO. 1
Ditch the head-
set. He can barely
pull it off - and
you are not him



BRAD PITT
PHOTOGRAPHED
BY DAN WINTERS

PLUS: • ICON: FN SOUZA • CLASSY CUFFLINKS • NBA PREVIEW • DEEP SEA WATCHES

Singularly high spirits

A secret international cabal of single cask, single malt whisky enthusiasts has just inaugurated its exclusive India chapter. (Good luck getting them to let you join)

SOPHIA LOREN IN A MINK coat. Angels on horseback. Black magic in a lady's drawer.

It reads like an art gallery catalogue, except they're the names of... whiskies? "It's not whisky," says Paul Miles, managing director of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, at its first meeting in Delhi. "It's not malt whisky and it's not single malt whisky. It's *single cask, single malt* whisky – so it's an extreme version of luxury."

By definition, there's just one cask's worth of single cask, single malt whisky to go around, making each bottle a limited edition. But the SMWS prizes variety over quantity, bottling about 300 different whiskies a year. The Society's tasting panel, "a mix of writers, artists, scientists and some Society employees", meet weekly to try samples

from 126 distilleries worldwide, and bottle only the best. "You buy a bottle from us and you know that it will be different," says Miles. "And the next bottle you buy will be just as exotic, but it will be different."

For now, SMWS India is invitation-only, for those who value "taste-driven drinking". Miles gives an example, saying he can find me the perfect whisky with just three simple questions: What food do you like? How would you describe your lifestyle? What mood are you in? It's palm-reading for whisky drinkers. But unless he's bottled Angelina Jolie in the Sudan, I tell him, it won't work on me. Minutes later, amid aromas of crème brûlée, French toast and vanilla from a glass of Rascally and Sensuous, I have to admit defeat. ☺

● Check out www.smws.com

LIGHT SHINING FROM A CROFT WINDOW

Region: Islay
Alcohol: 51.5%
Colour: Cheerful amber
From the SMWS panel's tasting notes: "Comforting on the nose, honey-roast ham, crisp bacon, sticky toffee, chimney soot, lavender and Christmas spices. A dram to come home to. The palate had smoke from burning scented wood, meatiness, dry ash and caramel."

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS IN A BAKERY

Region: Fife
Alcohol: 55.8%
Colour: Shimmering, sexy, stolen gold
From the SMWS panel's tasting notes: "The nose was deep and heady, pineapple and other exotic fruits balanced by oak, aniseed and menthol. The natural strength flavour was full, lively and warm, waxy... with maple syrup and butterscotch."

INTRIGUING & APPEALING

Region: Speyside
Alcohol: 57.3%
Colour: Pale Chardonnay
From the SMWS panel's tasting notes: "Gently sweet, smoked meat and dry burning heather – a good noseful. With water it was slightly smoky. There was a full, powerful, sweet palate with cream soda, smoke and vanilla, and a spicy cinnamon lasting finish."



THE SCOTCH MALT WHISKY SOCIETY

Birth: It began in the late Seventies as a gathering of like-minded friends in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Perks: Membership costs Rs 25,000 a year (by invitation only), giving you access to members' rooms worldwide, invites to SMWS events, a subscription to *Unfiltered* magazine and the right to purchase SMWS whiskies.



1 2 3 4 5

Five-Point Plan for November
Sip in style
Blade Runner whisky glasses



These aren't your ordinary crystal whisky glasses. They're replicas of the glass used by Rick Deckard (played by Harrison Ford) in Ridley Scott's dystopian sci-fi cult classic, *Blade Runner*. Tracking down and eliminating evil superhuman androids is thirsty work, and Deckard had to regularly

fortify himself with a stiff drink. Phil Steinschneider found the exact glass Harrison Ford sipped from to numb the pain (while looking cool), then located the manufacturer in Europe. They're now available online to movie geeks everywhere.

● Rs 6,800 for a pair; available from props.steinschneider.com



THE AGE

DELHI

SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2009

Miley dislikes being idolised



Cover story of mobiles

et cetera 24

talk shop 19

METRONAMA 18 >> REVIEW 25 >> TAROT POWER 28 & 29 >> PARTY WHIRL 30



RUSTIC FANTASTIC

A romp-in-the-hay, eco-friendly Chanel collection against the backdrop of a barn.....>> 22



Raghuraj Kanudia and guests at the event



A guest at the do

Spirit of life

It is not everyday that one gets to spend an evening amidst world-class Scotch whiskies and connoisseurs, together under one roof and talking about, as most of them put it, "The water of life". Organised by the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, the evening saw single malt lovers in the capital flocking at the Taj Mahal hotel to have a taste of world's one of the finest single cast, single malts whiskies.

Said Rohit Thakral, Indian born US-based industrialist, "I am usually a wine lover but considering the poor wine storage facilities in India, drinking scotch is a

better option in this part of the world."

Craig Johnstone, the whisky mentor for the society enlightened the gathering about how to get the best taste out of single malt, and also gave tips on different scotches' finish, and aroma.

He said, "The best part about single malt whiskies is that its taste or rather finish can last for half an hour to ten miles."



(Above) Vivek and Deepa Sama; (below) Chris Johnstone with Meenu

SATVA

essence of life

Heel
the
World

Greatest
Degree of
Excellence
Dr. Jamuna Pai

CREATE
AN OASIS
IN YOUR
BACKYARD

A Spanish Cheers
T. SANGRIA

BRIDGING
The East-West DIVIDE

DOES STRESS
LEAD TO DELAYED
MOTHERHOOD?

Launch Pad

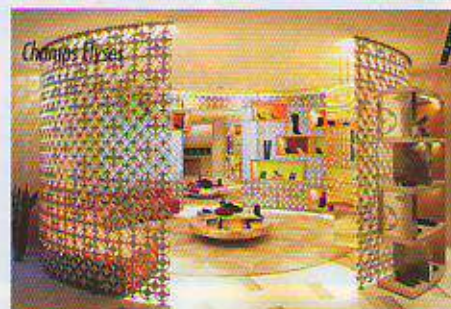


Nothing could be better congenial surrounding The world leading whiskies – The scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS), a private membership club, has opened its door for exclusive membership By invitation Only in India. Capturing the essence of rarity, taste, exclusivity, knowledge and experience it helps to create a society that reflects their core values, Initiation fee Rs 25,000.

For more info. Contact Roopak Sharma, roopak@tccggd.com. Tel 011 – 41556791/93. Mob no 9910338626



Barbie: To commemorate 50th Anniversary celebration of Barbie, Mattel Toys introduced innovative Barbie consumer electronics, designed to fascinate girls having penchant for technology style.



Their dedication towards the creative pursuit in the world of fashion and merchandise has led the French Fashion Brand Louis Vuitton to present an illustrated compilation of their couture collection, celebrating the success of its collaboration with other global brands including the artistic senseibilities of Architects, Designers and Artists in the form of coffee table Dome "Art Fashion and Architecture"

Available on Amazon.com
Priced at \$ 53.55.

Seminal Tome



Chhaya Momaya Bhagyashree

Leading packaged Tea Maker Lipton Today announced the launch of Lipton clear Green in four flavors- Jasmine, Mint, Citrus and pure which combines flavonoid antioxidants with purifying effect of water.



Shibani Bhojwani

Niti Desai Bhagyashree, Chhaya Momaya, Bijal Meswani and Aarti Surendranath.



www.femina.in

NOVEMBER 18, 2009 RS 75

FEMINA

anniversary special

Believe

THE
BIG
WIN

YOUR CHANCE
TO GET MORE,
BE MORE



MW04091118

**KAREENA
KAPOOR**
ON MEMORIES,
MOVIES AND MEN





A QUESTION FROM THE EPICS

The Difficulty of Being Good-on the Subtle Art of Dharma by Gurcharan Das was launched by Penguin Books India at the American Centre. The book was discussed on a panel that consisted of Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor, politician Arun Shourie and author William Dalrymple. Seen in the picture (left to right) are Arun Shourie, Shashi Tharoor, Gurcharan Das and William Dalrymple.



SCOTCH LOVERS AHOY

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS), the world's leading specialist in single cask, single malt whiskies, was launched in Delhi at the Villa Medici, Taj Mahal Hotel. The Society, set up 25 years ago, is a private membership club dedicated to the discerning appreciation and consumption of the most rare and unique single malt whiskies.



SHOWSTOPPERS GALORE

Whyte & Mackay sponsored the Manoviraj Khosla show with Anil Kumble as the showstopper, accompanied by Dino Morea, at the Men's Fashion Week held at The Grand Hotel, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi. Model-actor Rahul Dev, Cinestar Nisha Singh, FDCI President Sunil Sethi, designers Manoviraj Khosla, JJ Vallaya, Rohit Bal, Malini Ramani, Suneet Varma, Ritu Kumar, Varun Bahl, Rocky S, Rina Dhaka, Bobby Grover, Bharat Shah, socialite Shivani Wazir and Restaurateur AD Singh were among those present. Seen in the picture are Ridhima Kapoor Sahni and husband Bharat Sahni.

A BEAUTIFUL ERA

Suneet Varma showcased his La Belle Epoque collection at a glittering evening that was attended by the crème de la crème of Delhi at DLF Emporio Mall. The designer fraternity came in full swing and was represented by Sunil Sethi, President, FDCI, designers JJ Vallaya, Ravi Bajaj, Varun Bahl, Puja Nayyar and Siddharth Tytler. Seen in the picture are (left to right) Sunil Sethi, Suneet Varma, Sangeeta Assomull and Leena Singh.



WEDLOCKED

Reynu Taandon and Jewellery Designer Payal Gupta showcased their Bridal Asia collections at Aangan, Hyatt Regency, New Delhi. Present at the event were Punam Kalra, Nikita Taandon, Liza Verma, Payal Gupta, Latika Khaneja, Tanisha Mohan, Bubble Sabharwal, Meenu Bakshi, Rashmi Kapoor, Pooja Gogia and Maheep Singh, among others. The sets were designed by Swati Pandya Sood. Seen in the picture are models in the Wedlock Collection.





BACK BEAT
Ameesha's *bhai*
bonding
Pg 12

DelhiTimes

THE TIMES OF INDIA | FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009
LUTYENS

OF INDIA

DELHI IS TALKING ABOUT
Promoting film on floods,
Soha gets stuck in the rain!
Pg 3



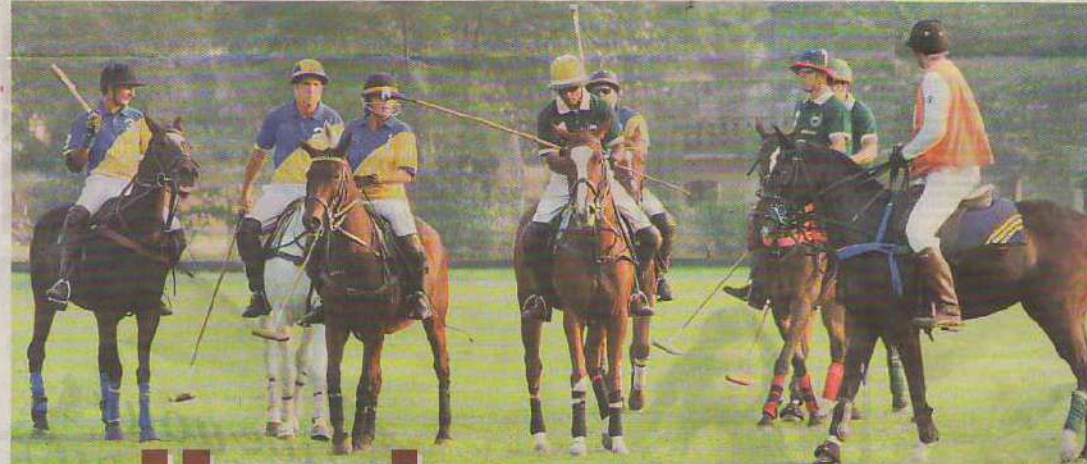
DELHI IS TALKING ABOUT
Maneka and Tharoor met
art *ke bahane*
Pg 4



**\$100m FOR
RAHMAN FILM**



Photo: Dinesh Bhat



Ambassador of Mongolia Vorolishov Enkhbold (centre) with guests



Sunita Garware giving away the trophy to Haryana polo team

Horsing and prancing around



Polo visited Mongolia, he learnt the game there and popularised it in Europe when he returned back. It spread across the world from there. Today Mongolia has approximately three million pony horses and every citizen knows how to ride a horse." Industrialist Ragnuraj Kamdia, was present for the match and said that he is a great admirer of game. He interacted with participants from both the team, exchanging notes about the nuances of the game. Angad Kalsan, a polo player, said, "Even though the appeal of game of polo is limited in the country, there is no denying the thrill and excitement which this game affords. Efforts should be made to popularise the game."

The match got everybody excited as the guests could be seen encouraging their favourites loudly. Haryana defeated Barbados and claimed the trophy. Also spotted at the event were Craig Johnstone, Maria Thapar, Peter Sunny Kalsan, Vikram Sodhi, Avantiika and many other notables from the world of fashion and industry.

PRANAB SAKIA
Times News Network

The who's who from the corporate world was present for this one. The occasion was the polo match between Haryana

and Barbados, the settings of which were at Kalaan Farm in Pataudi, near Manesar, a sleepy town with green surroundings.

The participants were raring to go, clad in the traditional polo outfits. Polo aficionados from Delhi, besides the industrial honchos, were also present for the match. The match was a four *chokkar* game, each game comprising about seven minutes. Bala Malviya, Karan Thapar, Jai Shergil and Preet Singh participated from the home team of Haryana while Jeff Evelyn, Vicki Gonzalez, Uday Kalan and Stephen Williams represented the team of Barbados. Polo enthusiast Sunita Garware gave away the winner's trophy later in the day.

The chief guest was the ambassador of Mongolia, Vorolishov Enkhbold and Badarch Dagva. The Mongolian ambassador looked quite upbeat about the match and said in between conversations with the guests present, "The origin of polo can be traced to Mongolia. When European traveller Marco



PYTs having a good time at the event

A well-contested polo match, excited guests and enthusiastic polo aficionados made this an affair to remember

TRAVEL CLASSIFIEDS



PASSPORT ASSISTANCE

PASSPORT / Visa services for New urgent lost/damaged EC/EU/PCO/MEA/Embassy etc. Tel: FRRO, UK, USA Shreegan. Call: 9998106112, 9011230376

Business Standard

NOVEMBER 21 2009

III LIVING

Jaideep Sahni on writing movies

IV BOOKS

Three new books look at the dark side

V SPACES

When art and wood combine

VI MOTORING

Vintage stuff from Germany

WEEKEND

SLAINTE MHOR!

What better way to end one year and ring in the next than with the choicest single malts, asks **Anand Sankar**

It's that time of the year again, when the alcohol just doesn't stop flowing. If you are planning on stocking up for the year's biggest party, then what's better than a selection of single-malt whiskys? Not only is a single malt something that you nurse alone, contemplating the year gone by and the new year ahead, it is also an experience that you must cherish with those dear to you.

An exhaustive list can be confusing, if you are not familiar with single-malt whiskys. So, here is a quick heads-up on what you need to know when you reach the store shelf.

Laphroaig

You are going to never get anywhere trying to find the best single malt. Each one is special, but you will be hard put to find someone who has nothing good to say about a Laphroaig. A Laphroaig is famous for its peaty flavour. What makes the whisky even more special is that, even though it is exquisitely made, it is quite affordable. Take your pick from any one of the whiskys the label offers and each will be a learning experience. But do look out for their festival bottling, as they are something to savour.

Pick @ Maltmadness.com:
Laphroaig NAS Cairdeas

Glenfiddich

Though makers of fantastic whisky, the mention of Glenfiddich often gets a response that it is an "industrial" single malt. Yes, their fantastic production volume makes them a giant, but takes nothing away from the quality of the whisky. But you need to be careful, though, as it often happens that large numbers means a few bad ones may slip through. The *crème* of Glenfiddich is the limited edition 50-year-old, which is released periodically. But that is going set you back by quite a bit.



Laphroaig NAS Cairdeas, about Rs 8,500 (at airports)

Glenfiddich 21yo Rum Finish, about Rs 6,000 (at airports)

Whiskys in the Scotch Malt Whisky Society catalogue, Rs 4,000 to Rs 40,000

Loch Dhu, about Rs 15,000

Pick @ Maltmadness.com:
Glenfiddich 21yo Rum Finish

Scotch Malt Whisky Society

The name might sound like an association or a club, but it is actually a brand that operates in exactly the same fashion. SMWS is the latest development in single-malt whiskys in India. It is a brand that features only "single cask, single malt" whiskys.

Where does it get the whisky from? SMWS says it buys single casks from distillers all over the world and sells each with a numbered label which denotes the cask's origin and bottle number. The casks can come from famous distillers such as Macallan or even Glenfiddich for that matter, but the original distillers have no claim on the SMWS bottle. Thus, it is said, you get a true collectors item, as a cask will never be repeated.

To buy the whiskys, you need to become a member of SMWS, which costs Rs 25,000 per annum. As a sweetener you get one bottle complimentary annually and can participate in SMWS member events around the world. A bottle of whisky from the SMWS catalogue can range from Rs 4,000 to Rs 40,000.

Loch Dhu

Meaning "Black Lake" in Gaelic, this is a rather different single-malt scotch. It was crafted for only a few years in the 1990s and is black in colour. The colour comes from ageing in double-charred oak casks and the whisky has a smoky nose with clean layered aromas of sweet malts and notes of ripe fruit and honey. Be warned, though, Loch Dhu comes with a mixed reputation — purists and tasters lampoon it as the worst single malt ever made, but some love it like Marmite. Loch Dhu has acquired a crazy cult status and, for its age, its price is appreciating fast. It is prized as an unusual gifting option. Distillers still sell bottles from stock, pricing each currently at Rs 15,000, with a warning that prices are continuously revised upwards.

Connoisseur's choice

Sandeep Arora of *Whisky Magazine*—South Asia, says the end of a year is the best time to romance the single malt. He says every day of the last week of 2009, and the first day of 2010, must be cherished with a glass of whisky. These are his recommendations.

Dec 23, 2009 — Start the festivities by opening a Glenfiddich 30 years old. "You do deserve this at the end of a good year, and its soft, lush mellowness will start the beginning of the end of the year."

Dec 24, 2009 — Christmas Eve is marked with a Talisker 18 years old or Distillery. "The pepper will romance the tastebuds

and will pair well with the barbecues and fine cuisine you are anticipating."

Dec 25, 2009 — Merry Christmas. It's Glenmorangie Mergaux 15 years old for the day. "Its elegant and gentle, not to forget classy."

Dec 26, 2009 — The festivities continue with an Ardbeg Uigeadail. "Time to reflect on the year gone by, and time for solitude."

Dec 27, 2009 — It's a Monday morning but not the same one that comes every week. Crack open something special: Glenlivet 21 years old. "Time to catch up with close friends over a polite, nice dinner."

Dec 28, 2009 — The New Year madness begins. Go for a Laphroaig Quarter Cask. "Time to spoil yourself."

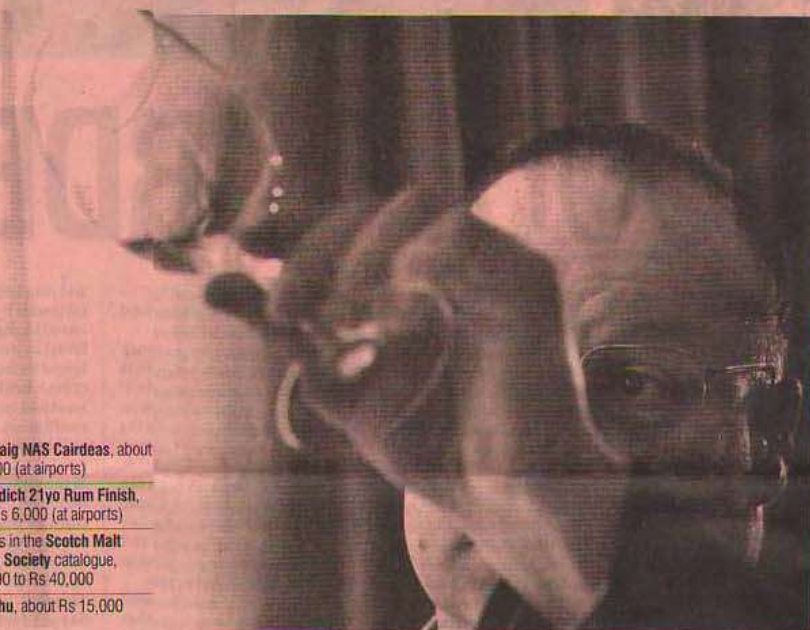
Dec 29, 2009 — Nothing suits you better today than Lagavulin Distillery Edition. "You need a moment by yourself, looking out at the nature."

Dec 30, 2009 — It's the night before the big night. This calls for a Bruichladdich 18 years old.

Dec 31, 2009 — It's party time with a Dalmore 21 years old. "The taste buds are maturing and you need a mighty dram to soak in the happiness and excitement of a New Year's Eve."

Jan 01, 2010 — Happy New Year. Just one drink to start the year on a spirited note. Crack open a "lush and luscious, lovely" Balvenie Vintage Cask 1972.

Arora adds a footnote to say that you must always remember to "Drink a lot of water, and drink responsibly." ■



business today

MORE

BECAUSE THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN WORK

JANUARY 2010

ESHA GUPTA ON MEN

MUST-HAVES



ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT THIS YEAR

INCLUDING

Drive: The Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder | Drink: 10 Great Wines
Visit: The Rambagh Palace | Tech: The Amazon Kindle

MUSIC
OF THE DECADE

STAR TREK
REDUX

+

IMRAN KHAN'S BIO
NISSAN X-TRAIL

<<The list>>

Fiddle You Must

The near-lightspeed change in existing technologies means that you have quite a few nifty gadgets to look forward to this year. ANUMEHA CHATURVEDI



Apple's iMac

The all-new iMac boasts brilliant LED-backlit 21.5 and 27-inch widescreen displays in a new edge-to-edge glass design and seamless all-aluminium enclosure. It comes with a wireless keyboard and the all-new wireless Magic Mouse, the world's first mouse with multi-touch technology pioneered by Apple on the iPhone, iPod touch and Mac notebook trackpad.

PRICE: Rs 64,900

AVAILABILITY: Authorised Apple resellers across the country.

Life in India from Microsoft

Microsoft Hardware has come out with a new range of ergonomic computer peripherals specifically designed for "life on the go." It includes the wired keyboard and optical mouse 200, and life chat LX 1000. The keyboard comes with adjustable feet, quiet and responsive keys, and the optical sensors on the mouse track movement.

PRICE: Rs 430-850

AVAILABILITY: Microsoft stores and leading electronics stores across the country.



My Dior from Dior

The world's first miniature mobile phone, My Dior weighs a mere five grams, and is lighter than a tube of Dior lipstick, and just as easy to use. The cutting edge design put aside, its functions are fairly simple. It places and receives calls, stores your 10 most recent numbers, displays the time and opens the address book.

PRICE: Rs 2,60,000

AVAILABILITY: The Emporio, New Delhi and Watches of Switzerland, Mumbai



HP Thinspiration

Thinspiration, the exquisitely thin and ultra portable notebook range from HP, includes the limited edition HP Mini by Studio Tord Boontje, the HP Pavilion dm1 and dm3. The slim and stylish notebooks pack quite a punch!

PRICE: Rs 23,500-58,990

AVAILABILITY: Leading electronics stores across the country.



6.5-HTC Touch Diamond 2

The touchscreen battle continues into the new year with the HTC Touch Diamond 2 getting a Windows Mobile upgrade, including a five megapixel colour camera; the cool TouchFLO technology which makes the user interface a lot of fun; the 3.2 inch touch sensitive screen; and a 16 GB memory card expansion slot for better information storage.

PRICE: Rs 29,990

AVAILABILITY: Leading mobile phone outlets across the country.



Technics SL1200 Panasonic

Why should we include this turn-table player, which has been around in different versions, forever in this list? Precisely because it is now an endangered species. One of the best turntables in business for DJs and vinyl-obsessives alike, Panasonic is rumoured to be phasing out these iconic bits of electronics. So grab hold of one while they're still in production. You won't regret it.

PRICE: Rs 30,000 approx.

AVAILABILITY: www.panasonic.com



LG Chocolate

Glossy and incredibly thin, LG BL40 has an ultra-wide capacitive display and the navigation's a breeze. Features include a five mega pixel camera with Schneider-Kreuznach lens and flash and a cinematic 29:12 ratio to maximise visual experience.

PRICE: Rs 30,000

AVAILABILITY: LG outlets and leading electronics stores across the country.

HTC Tattoo

HTC Tattoo is an Android-based phone that brings broad personalisation to the masses, and can be customised inside out. With its 2.8-inch QVGA display, the HTC Tattoo is optimised for Web, multimedia and other applications, and is the second phone to embody HTC Sense, a mobile application that puts people at the centre with simplicity, and user-friendly features.

PRICE: Rs 16,990

AVAILABILITY: Authorised HTC resellers across the country



Portege from Toshiba

Toshiba makes great laptops and Notebooks. That's no secret. Of the lot, the Portege M900-D3212 looks fabulous with its leather texture finish. You'll find the usual Toshiba features like 13.3 inch HD screen, inbuilt 3D motion-sensor, Finger Print and Face Recognition features as well as 3 GB RAM and a 320 GB Hard Disk.

PRICE: Rs 54,990

AVAILABILITY: Leading PC stores and authorised sellers across the country.



Design Kitchen Porsche

Born out of a collaboration between Poggenpohl and Porsche, this modular, super-spacious, highly versatile kitchen is strictly meant for men. In addition to multi-functional lighting systems and granite worktops, the kitchen also boasts a high-tech audio-video system and features a Motion Drive, a new "handle-less" design technology that enables ultimate ease of opening and closing of drawers.

PRICE: Rs 1 crore upwards

AVAILABILITY: Poggenpohl Studio, Koramangala, Bangalore. M

Food and Nightlife

Volume 1, Issue 4
January, 2010
New Delhi
Rs. 30

**Sweet
Temptations**
Indulge & Enjoy!

**Delhi's most
happening
party dungeons**

**Fashion, Art
& Mixology**
at The Chivas Studio

Chasing the Passion

Amit Burman

**Inside
Luxury
& Fashion
Redefined**





Chef Sanjeev Kapoor's spicy treat to Delhiites

What- Celebrated Chef Sanjeev Kapoor has added one more feather to his cap with opening of 'The Yellow Chilli' at DLF City Mall, Shalimar Bagh. Followed by the launch was the unveiling of Chef's Kapoor book on 'Marwari Vegetarian Cooking'. The book introduces readers to the joys of recreating Marwar's simple earthy flavours in their own kitchens. Commenting on the occasion, Chef Sanjeev Kapoor said, "Cooked with passion and served with warm hospitality – The Yellow Chilli promise you a dining experience that you will cherish." The highlights of the menu are Chef Sanjeev Kapoor's popular delicacies including the famous Lulla Mussa Dal, the inimitable Sham Savera and the fiery Lal Murgh and the delightful Raan Buzkazi.

Wine, Women, Wit

Introducing an innovation in the wine-drinking, Dharti Desai and Chandni Dhall have launched W3 - wine women wit, a lifestyle company aimed to set up an inner circle of women wine



lovers, who crave more than just fine wines. W3 has two categories of membership – 'Sparkling' and 'Rosé'. Sparkling members are entitled to invitations for themed wine parties and dinners, exclusive wine solutions within 24 hours, member cellar evaluation and a free tour of wine-tasting at the Reveilo wine estate in Nashik. Rosé members enjoy all the



Launch of Scotch Malt Whisky Society In India

What- The world's leading specialist in single cask, single malt whiskies, Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS) which is a private membership club has now entered in the Indian market. The Society is dedicated to preserving the intricate experience of Single Malt Tasting worldwide. Society whiskies are available only through 'By Invitation' only memberships. In India, this membership will be priced at Rs. 25,000 for an initial entry fee for a year. Members will get Membership Kit with a sample set of four miniatures of the Societies Rare Whiskies, 1 Limited Edition bottle complimentary, complimentary subscription to Unfiltered magazine and access to exclusive R.S.V.P. events.



<<The list>>

SAY CHEERS!

Here's our lowdown on some of the most desirable single malts, champagnes and vodkas that you'd want to acquire this year. Oh, and some nifty furniture as well!

ANUMEHA CHATURVEDI

Moët and Chandon Celebration Case

This exclusive, limited edition champagne tote from Moët and Chandon includes a generous magnum bottle of Moët Impérial and eight champagne flutes. Each flute is topped with a gilded Moët "bubble", and each flute medallion is bejewelled with one of eight uniquely coloured Swarovski crystals to personalise every glass and every toast. With only 500 cases available, the Moët Celebration Case is a jetsetter's must-have to generously spread cheer and joy.

PRICE: Rs 40,000

AVAILABILITY: Moët Hennessy India, 301-D & E Poonam Chambers, Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai.

Belvedere IX

A vodka created specifically to get a party going, Belvedere IX is a mix of ginger, ginseng, jasmine and eucalyptus. As opposed to traditional vodkas, Belvedere

IX uses 50 per cent alcohol by volume that enhances the aromatic nature of the vodka.

PRICE: On Request

AVAILABILITY: The Lodhi at The Aman, New Delhi and Wink, Taj President, Mumbai.

Roberto Cavalli Vodka

In keeping with the Italian tradition and the style icon's other couture creations, Roberto Cavalli Vodka is sophisticated and elegant, and is strictly meant for more discerning palates. Made with the purest water off the slopes of Monte Rosa, the vodka is produced using the finest quality grain grown in the south-western Alps.

PRICE: Rs 8,335

AVAILABILITY: Leading hotels and liquor outlets across the country.

Scotch Malt Whiskey Society

A global society uniting members across the world to savour the taste of their exceptional single cask, single malt

whisky. The Scotch Malt Whiskey Society finally comes to India. A private membership club dedicated to the appreciation and consumption of the most rare and unique single malt whiskies, their exclusive single malts are known to attract curious and discerning whisky lovers internationally. Society whiskies are only available through exclusive memberships, which is by invitation only.

FEES: Rs 25,000

CONTACT: Badsha Banerjee-09810118067

The Black Grouse

The Black Grouse is a perfect blend of The Famous Grouse with fine peated malt whiskies to create a rich, smooth, smoky whisky. The Black Grouse brings forth three distinct notes with the top note being rich and smoky influenced by the peated malt whiskey.

PRICE: On Request

AVAILABILITY: In select outlets.

VODKA DISTILLED WITH GUARANA, GINGER, GINSENG AND OTHER NATURAL INGREDIENTS

BELVEDERE
VODKA

Not for sale. To be circulated free with Business Today
in Mumbai, Delhi, & NCR, Chennai, Bangalore and Kolkata.
Supercent to Business Today issue dated January 10, 2010
RNI No.: DELENG / 2007 / 21544

business today

MORE

BECAUSE THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN WORK

JANUARY 2010



MUST-HAVES



ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT THIS YEAR

INCLUDING

Drive: The Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder | Drink: 10 Great Wines
Visit: The Rambagh Palace | Tech: The Amazon Kindle

MUSIC
OF THE DECADE

STAR TREK
REDUX



IMRAN KHAN'S BIO
NISSAN X-TRAIL

<<The list>>

SAY CHEERS!

Here's our lowdown on some of the most desirable single malts, champagnes and vodkas that you'd want to acquire this year. Oh, and some nifty furniture as well!

ANUMEHA CHATURVEDI

Moët and Chandon Celebration Case

This exclusive, limited edition champagne tote from Moët and Chandon includes a generous magnum bottle of Moët Impérial and eight champagne flutes. Each flute is topped with a gilded Moët "bubble", and each flute medallion is bejewelled with one of eight uniquely coloured Swarovski crystals to personalise every glass and every toast. With only 500 cases available, the Moët Celebration Case is a jetsetter's must-have to generously spread cheer and joy.

PRICE: Rs 40,000

AVAILABILITY: Moët Hennessy India, 301-D & E Poonam Chambers, Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai.

Belvedere IX

A vodka created specifically to get a party going, Belvedere IX is a mix of ginger, ginseng, jasmine and eucalyptus. As opposed to traditional vodkas, Belvedere

IX uses 50 per cent alcohol by volume that enhances the aromatic nature of the vodka.

PRICE: On Request

AVAILABILITY: The Lodhi at The Aman, New Delhi and Wink, Taj President, Mumbai.

Roberto Cavalli Vodka

In keeping with the Italian tradition and the style icon's other couture creations, Roberto Cavalli Vodka is sophisticated and elegant, and is strictly meant for more discerning palates. Made with the purest water off the slopes of Monte Rosa, the vodka is produced using the finest quality grain grown in the south-western Alps.

PRICE: Rs 8,335

AVAILABILITY: Leading hotels and liquor outlets across the country.

Scotch Malt Whiskey Society

A global society uniting members across the world to savour the taste of their exceptional single cask, single malt

whisky. The Scotch Malt Whiskey Society finally comes to India. A private membership club dedicated to the appreciation and consumption of the most rare and unique single malt whiskies, their exclusive single malts are known to attract curious and discerning whisky lovers internationally. Society whiskies are only available through exclusive memberships, which is by invitation only.

FEES: Rs 25,000

CONTACT: Badsha Banerjee-09810118067

The Black Grouse

The Black Grouse is a perfect blend of The Famous Grouse with fine peated malt whiskies to create a rich, smooth, smoky whisky. The Black Grouse brings forth three distinct notes with the top note being rich and smoky influenced by the peated malt whiskey.

PRICE: On Request

AVAILABILITY: In select outlets.

VODKA DISTILLED WITH GUARANA, GINGER,
GINSENG AND OTHER NATURAL INGREDIENTS

BELVEDERE
VODKA
IX

MacAllan Lalique

The Finest Cut Decanter of the iconic 57 YO Single Malt has just been launched. It is not surprising to note that this whisky, with its dried fruit, black cherry, sandalwood and peat smoke aroma, with a long and full yet soft finish, is priced at \$15,000. This is the third decanter in the Lalique Six Pillars Collection.

PRICE: \$15,000

AVAILABILITY: In select outlets.

Wardrobe Bar from Portside Café

Great drinks call for some great service too. Skip the stated and obvious with this wardrobe bar from Portside Café. A nostalgic throwback to the attic and luxury liner era, the heavily stenciled and antique leather of this bar gives it a well travelled and weather-beaten look. It comes with a foldable table which makes for a neat service counter, and wheels attached to it make it easily accessible. A perfect buy for those champagne soirees.

PRICE: Rs 1,13,500

AVAILABILITY: F 301, Lado Sarai, New Delhi.

Bubble Bar Cabinet, House of Raro

The sparkling bubbles of champagne synonymous to a mood of celebration, happiness and joy, are the inspiration for this bubble bar cabinet from the House of Raro. Crafted in sterling silver, and inlaid

with ebony and plush waxed leather, it also boasts a pullout tray for mixing drinks and a drawer for storing bar accessories.

PRICE: On Request

AVAILABILITY: House of Raro boutiques at Cariappa Marg, Sainik Farms, New Delhi, and Pheroze Building, Stevens Street, Mumbai.

Signet by Glenmorangie

Created from a secret combination of the oldest and rarest Glenmorangie whiskies, Signet is the latest rich single malt from Glenmorangie. The ingredients used include roasted "chocolate" malted barley, which delivers depth and intensity to the spirit, and the whiskey boasts an ABV of 46 per cent. The result: a sublime flavour and an all-encompassing velvety texture.

PRICE: On Request

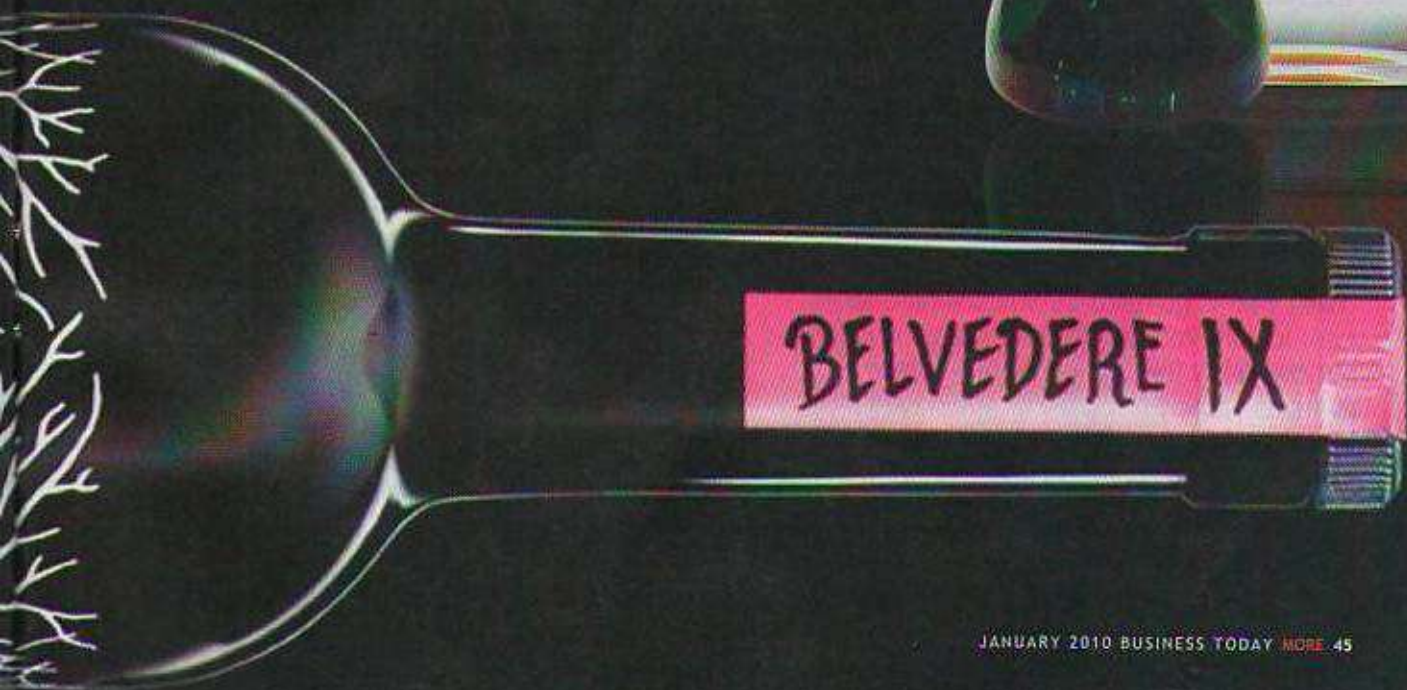
AVAILABILITY: Leading hotels and liquor outlets across the country.

Champagnes from Lombard and Cie

Aspri Spirits has launched Lombard Brut and Brut Rose, two exclusive top-end champagnes from Lombard and Cie. While Brut has a straw yellow colour, with touches of vanilla, Brut Rose is a pale salmon pink and is cherry flavoured.

PRICE: Rs 8,930 (Brut) and Rs 10,630 (Brut Rose)

CONTACT: Leading hotels and restaurants across the country.



ANNUAL VOLUME

INDIA
TODAY

Rs 100

2009-2010

spice trove

**BYGONE
TALES**
SAGA OF 2009

HUE AND CRY
ROCKS IN TECHNICOLOUR

WATCH HOUR
DIAL C FOR COMPLICATIONS

HOUSING ART
WALLS AS CANVAS

SPICE
TROVE
WHISKY

Connoisseur's Choice

MAHESH MISRA EXPLORES THE WORLD OF INDEPENDENT BOTTLERS AND THEIR FANTASTIC RANGE OF SCOTCH WHISKIES

On a trip to Edinburgh earlier this year, I paid a visit to Royal Mile Whiskies, one of the better known whisky stores the world over. I was accorded preferential treatment the moment I asked for their list of Independent Bottlings. While, in the end, I was a tad disappointed by the limited range on offer, my status as a serious consumer stood confirmed in their minds. For the uninitiated, Independent Bottlings (IBs), little known outside the fraternity of single malt fanatics, are releases from specialised bottlers who select casks from distilleries and bottle them at appropriate points of maturation. In other words, one could get a whisky that was distilled at the Glenlivet distillery, but subsequently housed and bottled by a specialised bottler elsewhere. For many years, distilleries typically sold their entire production to blenders like Dewars or Ballantine. Some distilleries, however, sold their spirit to wealthy merchants who in turn developed house blends but occasionally sold the whisky as a single malt too. Independent bottlings owe their genesis to this practice.

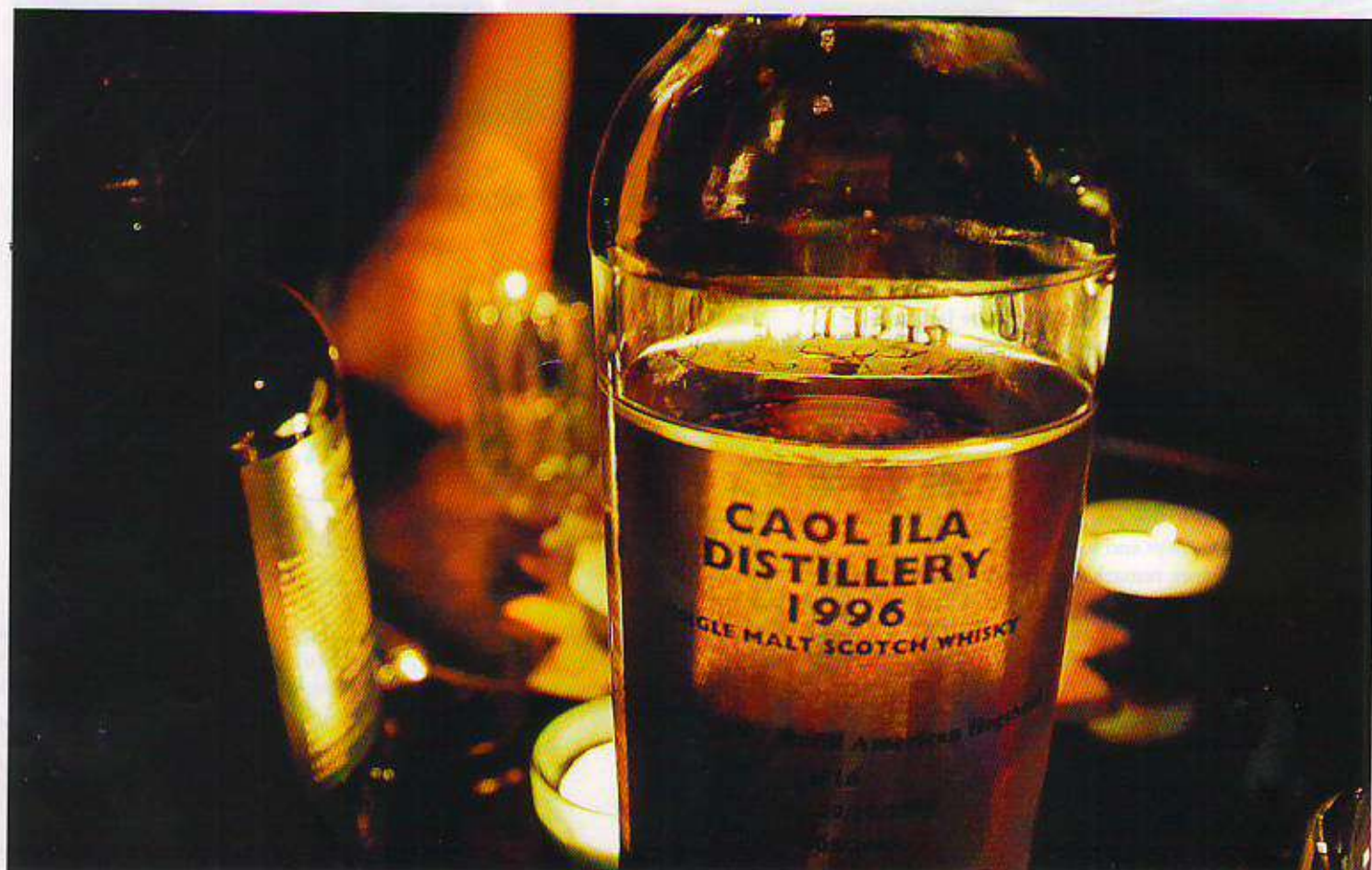
typically selects fully mature casks. It is also known to buy odd barrels in lots from blenders. Once tasted, this is bottled if it passes muster, or else it's sold back to the system.

Gordon & Macphail are probably the oldest independent bottlers around. The family-owned firm commenced operations way back in 1895 with a grocery and spirits store, but over time the focus shifted entirely to the latter. The Urquhart family, which founded G&M, now has fourth-generation representation in its management structure. Given its rich lineage, this bottler boasts of the widest range of whiskies (over 500) and stocks whiskies for each year from as far back as 1936. It is also known to cask very young distillations which gives them near complete control from start to finish, a practice that has often put the bottler in a spot (Macallan once obtained an injunction preventing G & M from bottling its products without specific authorisation).

Best known for its Connoisseur's Choice range, G&M also markets whisky under the Macphail range and is responsible for numerous semi-official bottlings from Glenlivet and Longmorn. For a serious collector, G&M is possibly the only option to sample extremely rare malts such as Teaninich or Millburn. In what is perhaps its only deviation from the single cask rule, G&M also releases a Pride of the Regions collection which is a collection of vatted malts showcasing the distinctive styles of the major whisky producing regions. Where distillers have refused permission for using their names on the bottlings, G&M has released them as part of its Secret Stills Collection. The giveaway clues on the bottles ensure that one does not need to be Poirot to figure out what one is sampling. The range includes a 1955 Talisker, a bunch of Cragganmores from the '60s, two Auchentoshans from '89 and three variants of '89 Bowmore.



GORDON & MACPHAIL, ONE OF THE OLDEST INDEPENDENT BOTTLERS, IS BEST KNOWN FOR ITS CONNOISSEUR'S CHOICE RANGE (ABOVE); A BOTTLE FROM THE CAOL ILA DISTILLERY OF ISLAY





BRUICHLADDICH'S DISTILLERY MANAGER DUNCAN MCGILLIVRAY OPERATES THE SPIRIT SAMPLE SAFE; A BOTTLE OF GLENUGIE FROM SIGNATORY



G&M has led the way in what's described as 'poachers turning gamekeepers' by buying the Benromach distillery in 1993. This is a trend that has gained ground with Signatory lapping up Edradour and Bruichladdich firm on the path of resurrection in the hands of Murray McDavid, another prominent bottler. On the flip side, however, with single malts becoming increasingly popular and official distilleries having marketshare pressures of their own, the limited edition space is likely to get vitiated and independent bottlers are likely to find the going increasingly tough. Allied Domecq, for instance, has already initiated legal action to prevent Murray McDavid from using "Distilled at Laphroaig Distillery" on the bottlings. The bottler used the name 'Leapfrog' for some time before truce was reached.

Within the whisky fraternity, the jury is still out on the Official v/s Independent debate. The one flank where OBs score is consistency since they are typically from multiple casks and hence allow the tasters to display their wares. For sheer variety of flavours and completeness of experience, my vote goes to the IBs. 🍷

Almost all independent bottlings are from a single cask which typically leads to a distinct, unblended taste experience. Most independent bottlings are not chill-filtered either. While this could cause inferior aesthetics, it helps bring out a lot more character and a more intense flavour profile. Given that independent bottlers specialise in oddities unavailable in distillery bottlings, they offer a shot at unusual vintages and a wider view at a whisky's lifespan. For instance, Laphroaig is typically sold as a 10, 15 or 30 year old. I recently acquired a Laphroaig 12 YO bottled by Signatory which is rare, if not impossible to acquire as an assembly-line official bottling. By definition, any single cask bottling is a limited edition. To that extent, most independent bottlings are eminently collectable without always burning a hole in your pocket.

In the mid-70s, a group of friends from Edinburgh met to sample the contents of a cask of whisky that had been brought back from Speyside in the boot of a sports car—to be bottled by hand in the kitchen. All those present were instantly taken by the stark difference between the whisky from a cask and what was commonly available in bottles. One cask led to another, the group of friends expanded, and in 1983 membership was formally opened to the public to what came to be known as The Single Malt Whisky Society (SMWS).

The most venerable of all IBs, the SMWS, a members-only society has now expanded to over 13 countries and membership comes at a 100 pound (varies by country) price. SMWS whiskies are not sold in the open market but only at tasting events or "member rooms" in the UK. The whisky is chosen from distilleries by a highly-respected tasting panel and then bottled with mere code numbers and Lewis Carroll-esque descriptions of the dram but no mention of the distillery. With names like 'Reformed Sinner's Dram', 'Hay Fever in a Church's Hall' or even 'Ooh! Ouch! Aah!', sampling these unnamed beauties becomes an exciting guessing game. As per the society, one of the reasons they plump for code names is because "the curious nature of single cask, single whisky means the tastes are often not characteristic of the region it comes from. We



Almost all independent bottlings are from a single cask which typically leads to a distinct, unblended taste experience. Most independent bottlings are not chill-filtered either. While this could cause inferior aesthetics, it helps bring out a lot more character and a more intense flavour profile. Given that independent bottlers specialise in oddities unavailable in distillery bottlings, they offer a shot at unusual vintages and a wider view at a whisky's lifespan. For instance, Laphroaig is typically sold as a 10, 15 or 30 year old. I recently acquired a Laphroaig 12 YO bottled by Signatory which is rare, if not impossible to acquire as an assembly-line official bottling. By definition, any single cask bottling is a limited edition. To that extent, most independent bottlings are eminently collectable without always burning a hole in your pocket.

In the mid-70s, a group of friends from Edinburgh met to sample the contents of a cask of whisky that had been brought back from Speyside in the boot of a sports car—to be bottled by hand in the kitchen. All those present were instantly taken by the stark difference between the whisky from a cask and what was commonly available in bottles. One cask led to another, the group of friends expanded, and in 1983 membership was formally opened to the public to what came to be known as The Single Malt Whisky Society (SMWS).

The most venerable of all IBs, the SMWS, a members-only society has now expanded to over 13 countries and membership comes at a 100 pound (varies by country) price. SMWS whiskies are not sold in the open market but only at tasting events or "member rooms" in the UK. The whisky is chosen from distilleries by a highly-respected tasting panel and then bottled with mere code numbers and Lewis Carroll-esque descriptions of the dram but no mention of the distillery. With names like 'Reformed Sinner's Dram', 'Hay Fever in a Church's Hall' or even 'Ooh! Ouch! Aah!', sampling these unnamed beauties becomes an exciting guessing game. As per the society, one of the reasons they plump for code names is because "the curious nature of single cask, single whisky means the tastes are often not characteristic of the region it comes from. We





prefer to describe each individual whisky with its own unique whisky tasting note". Not surprisingly, the mystery around the distillery names has spawned many a website with claims of having decoded the society numbering. From what people in the SMWS tell us, some of these websites are pretty much spot on! At last count, the society had bottled from over 126 distilleries, of which seven are Japanese.

Signatory is another Independent Bottler one can seldom go wrong with. Founded in 1988, the bottler was thus named because of its original intent of finding a famous signatory for each of the single cask it bottled. However, the very first cask (a 1968 Glenlivet) was sold long before the group could lay its hands on anyone remotely famous! Packaged in trademark metal tubes, Signatory uses different font colours on the label to describe origin. Red for The Highlands, Green for Speyside, Blue for Islays and so on.

Some of the more remarkable Signatory bottlings are actually collectibles because of 'youth' as opposed to 'vintage'. For instance, a Signatory Port Ellen 13 YO is a highly sought after bottling largely because it is near impossible to find a Port Ellen (a distillery mothballed for ages) so young. Signatory even bottles a Laphroaig 6 YO that evokes strong opinions. But yes, this bottler rarely matures anything itself and



(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) OFFERINGS FROM THE SCOTCH MALT WHISKY SOCIETY, A PREMIER DESTINATION FOR THE MALT LOVER; SMWS GLASSES FOR A WHISKY TASTING EVENT; THE ROYAL MILE WHISKIES STORE IN EDINBURGH

Going *over* the top

Raghuraj Kanudia, COO of The Scotch Malt Whisky Society (India chapter), believes that only a truly selfish person will have a long term perspective, will be honest and honour commitments.

Text: Reshma Jain

Raghuraj Kanudia makes it sound all so simple but what he describes of changing his family's business area and focus could not have been simple or easy. His ability to think differently and think big came to his aid.

His family was into running flour mills for almost 105 years, having set up their first one in 1895. By the time he took over, he faced having to deal with a family dispute, heavy losses and thus brought to it an outsider's perspective. "Our business was government controlled and we had to think out of the box. From being a revenue focused individual, I decided it was time to be a profit-focused one.

"I shut down all the commodity shops one by one," he says.

A different road

Obviously, this generated a lot of insecurity in the family but his father who has always been extremely supportive, once again stood by him. Kanudia says, "I sat there thinking: what now? We had little liquidity but what we did have or got as part of our share after the family feud was 33,000 sq. yard of space in the heart of Kanpur." They decided to enter the real estate business and sold their first piece of plot for Rs. 1 lakh.

Since there was not much money but there was a lot of land, he started building and selling. From 500 sq. ft. which was the first piece of land he sold, they built shops of 3000 sq. ft. and then 8000 sq. ft. After a year they realised that shops costing between Rs. 1 to 2.5 lakhs were greatly in demand in Kanpur. Kanudia says that their greatest strength was that they owned land right in the centre of Kanpur.

"I thought why don't we create the first wholesale mall in India. Most of the trading families find that the present generation wants to go into service, it wants all the frills—office cabin, air conditioners etc. We decided on a small shop concept to facilitate interaction and conduct business. We kept challenging ourselves and soon we were selling real estate in the range of Rs. 12,000-15,000 per sq. ft.," he recalls.

PROFILE



“**A**NYTHING
THAT IS OVER
THE TOP AND WE
ARE THE ONLY
ONES IN INDIA
OFFERING THAT.”

Ability to adapt

The Kanudia family hails from Mahendargarh Kanodi, which was earlier in Rajasthan. Raghu Raj says that he does not connect to customs and tradition for the sake of tradition. He prefers to believe in the concept of Oneness, the idea that everything is a manifestation of God and that nothing in this world happens as a coincidence. "Which is why I flow, I take life as it comes," he says happily.

In India, the safest form of investment is in property and Kanudia realised that if property had to give you high returns, it had to be a destination property. Thus was born the idea of creating a chain of luxury holiday homes based on fractional ownership. With this idea, he started researching and came across a magazine called *Robb Report*, an international luxury magazine published from America. While he was reading it, he asked himself, "What do I know about luxury? What is my credibility about luxury? Why would anyone invest in my luxury homes?" And so, he took a few steps back and began probing what the consumer needs from luxury.

The same magazine carried an article about the Scotch Malt Whisky Society. They are the world's largest independent bottlers of single cask and single malt whisky—they make 300 kinds of limited edition whiskies every year and sell it only through membership. "The idea initially was to just get this brand, but the more we understood the concept we realised that in India there is a dearth of real luxury service brands." Kanudia decided that is the void that must be filled by them.

"Soon, we tied up with this company and our vision is to create a brand in the luxury service space. Luxury according to us is 'your way of life', your comfort factor and it is something you learn from. It's something that exposes you to a different world, an experience that is personalised, customised, what you take away with you. And so we started this Scotch Society. We are all about the whisky experience. You have to be open to the development of your taste buds," Kanudia says.



Kanudia with father Prakash, mother: Indira, wife Nupur and children Ishaan and Isha.

Brand and Business

"We created a brand name called Inandi, which is a mix of Aanand and India. Our first vertical is the Scotch Malt Society. Then we want to offer luxury travel, lifestyle concierge service and luxury holiday homes. We also want to get into luxury trading of exclusive monopolistic food and

beverages products like reindeer cheese, aged vinegar. Anything that is over the top and we are the only ones in India offering that," he adds. The Kanudias have also formed Inandi Imagination—the thinking company which will create partnerships, alliances, service standards and examine possibilities of foreign collaborations.



Family and lessons

Kanudia said that he learnt from his grandfather that the most important aspect in business was to honour commitments—to agree to deliver only what one can. Then he says something that seems contradictory, but has its own logic. "I really believe that you have to be a hard and selfish person in the true sense because such a person will always have a long-term perspective. He will not lie, will be honest and honour commitments."

As far as marriage is concerned, and talking about it, he describes an attitude he has cultivated in life. One cannot control how the other person behaves but one's own reaction can

be controlled. His marriage to Nupur took place at a time when he was going through a most turbulent phase. "The way she has stood by me, gone through some crazy amount of stuff with me. I have been very aggressive, very brash, very blunt so yes—I cannot imagine my life without her," he says warmly.

That is Raghuraj Kanudia for you. Refreshingly frank, highly driven and blessed with beginners' luck. He is also in the process of writing a book which will contain his thoughts and experiences. All the luck to him! 🍀



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2010

www.marwar.com

VOLUME 16 • ISSUE 1 • PRICE RS. 150 • \$6

MARWAR

PORTRAIT OF A COMMUNITY

India

Matters of
the heart

Dr. Samin
Sharma

Luxury
trail

Palace-hopping
in Rajasthan

A higher
ground
Abhilasha
Singhvi

Neerja Birla

A PERSPECTIVE
OF HER OWN

By The Way

fine living!

February 2010 / Rs 20
www.btwmag.com

Circulated free with Chitralekha Gujarati issue dated February 8, 2010 in Mumbai and Ahmedabad

burp!
valentine recipes

fashion
short n sexy

trends
e-book reader

hearty
AFFAIR



touch of glass

Price on request

Having the best collection of wines in town is of no use if you have anything less than the finest glassware to drink it in. An absolute must for your bar is glassware from Schott Zwiesel, that is specially designed to match every nuance, every spirit that you choose to pour, both literally and figuratively.

fountain of youth

Rs 24,100 (30ml)

For the uninitiated, caviar conjures up visions of gourmet luxury. For those in the know, however, it denotes essential nutrition for the skin, an elixir of eternal youth. La Prairie's Skin Caviar concentrate contains caviar extracts and diamonds, promising anti-ageing benefits at a whopping price. But then, isn't youth priceless?



hit the high

Membership by invitation only

Membership to this elite clique is by invitation only. A part of the LVMH group, The Scotch Malt Whisky Society membership benefits include access to exclusive members' rooms and bars worldwide, as well as the opportunity to buy Limited Edition Single Cask Single Malt that have been bottled at full strength and are unavailable for commercial sale, except for club members. The very tempting membership kit includes a membership badge, card, subscription to the in-house magazine and 4 Single Malt miniatures. Also, invites to private tasting events are part of the package.



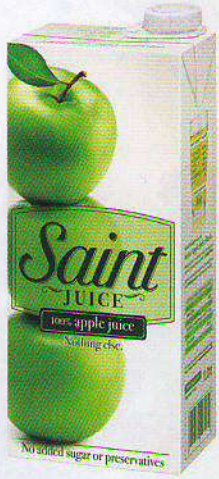
food & drink

Food for health, new dining experience, exclusive spirits and some sinful indulgence to go with it!

EDITED BY RUHI SINGH

IT'S 100% REAL

Parle Agro introduces India's first 100% juice made purely from Grammy Smith green apples with no added sugar, colour or preservatives. Saint Apple Juice comes with the natural benefits of green apples, is richer in Vitamin C and has high fibre content. Saint Juice has a shelf life of eight months as opposed to the regular six months of other juice brands. **Rs 80 for 1 litre and Rs 15 for 200 ml.**



Next time you have a few days extra in Paris, sign up for Le Cordon Bleu's short courses. This 'temple' of culinary arts runs modules as brief as 2-4 days. For details log on to lcbparis.com

The Comedy Store

For Mumbai-ites, the weekends just got a whole lot more exciting with The Comedy Store opening its doors at the Palladium. Pierre Hollins and Louis Ramey are performing in the first week of July. With other international stars slated for later weeks, TCS will also be scouting for local talent, so *hic hic ho* to The Comedy Store! Add to it the dining and bar options, why would anyone be looking elsewhere even if it is just for laughs! Tickets on Thursdays and Sundays are priced at Rs 500 while Fridays and Saturdays will cost you Rs 700. There is a 7:30 and a 10:00pm show on all days. To book tickets log on to bookmyshow.com or at The Comedy Store Box Office on the 3rd floor of the Palladium Mall (022 43485000) thecomedystore.in



FOR THE LOVE OF CHOCOLATES AND FOOTBALL

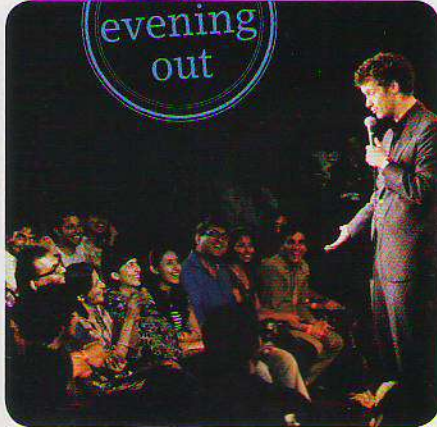
Patchi is selling its all new FIFA collection of chocolates for football fans. Shaped like miniature footballs, the sinful delicacies come wrapped in vibrant papers and yummy flavours like milk chocolates with crisped rice, wafer finger coated in milk chocolate, and milk chocolate with broken nuts amongst several others. The collection will be available throughout the FIFA season. **Rs 1,500 for a box.**



RAISE A TOAST!

India joins the global family of Scotch Malt Whisky Society(s). Membership to this private club, dedicated to appreciation of rare and finest single cask single malts is by invitation only. smws.com

Livingetc evening out



HEALING WITH FOOD

Renowned nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukherjee draws on years of personal and professional experience to bring us nutrition tips in her book *Healing With Food*. The book is a ready reckoner for healthful food and convinces that the real pharmacy lies in our kitchen. Read it to learn how to use food as medicine. **Rs 249.**

BRITAIN'S
BEST-SELLING
MODERN HOMES
MAGAZINE

Livingetc

FOR FASHIONABLE AND STYLISH HOMES

INDIA EDITION
JULY 2010 Rs 100

Cool & chic

*Rainproof
in style*

*Paints for
exterior walls*

Go get

- E-book readers
- Space dividers
- Denim furniture
- Bar tools

CREATE A HOME
That spells you beautifully



9 770975 062006 >



**BEST
CELLARS**

MAGANDEEP SINGH

Whisky from a wine cask

I know it is incorrect to change fields and jump wagons. I have heard a lot about how when the going gets tough, the tough get absconding. Or drinking. At least that's what happens in my case. The difference is that the more I drink, the tougher I think I am.

Back to this new wagon, let me define the perimeter first. I, ladies and gentleman, am pretty much the standard definition of an alcoholic. I enjoy my drink so I drink often. Also, I do not discriminate against the type of tippie, provided they are of high quality, I will make any glass my arm candy for the evening, or morning, or... you get the gist.

But I am a discerning alcoholic if there ever was one. I don't hold any bias against any particular drink, but I do seem to have set moods for each. Some days I feel like one and on others, like another. Recently, a certain Mr. Kanudia asked me to come and taste whisky with him (that too cask-strength single malts) at the exclusive reserved SMWS (scotch malt and whisky society) section of the Rubicon bar at the Leela NCR. Being summer, I wondered whether I was about to meet a fellow tippler.

For even I seem to imbibe more of the cool stuff and less of the heated spirited stuff in the summer months.

The Rubicon bar has some very rare casks from top distilleries and they bottle these every year. The trick lies in not releasing the name of the distillery. Instead, and this is where the wine link became apparent, they merely publish very visual and poetic tasting notes about each whisky along with a small hint about the distillery. All in all, it was very much like a blind tasting with wines. The notes were pretty accurate too, mind you.

The good thing was yet to come. This was the whisky itself. Five of them in total. Or so I think. When one is tasting cask-strength whiskies, it's hard to keep count after one.

But that was the wine-like beauty about them. So smooth and subtle were they that I was able to drink them without any need for dilution. Cask-strength is rarely lesser than 50% concentration of alcohol which means that it can pack the heat. But the fun part was that some of these whiskies had been aged in casks that had previously held wine. There was one which had been kept in Port casks and hence it was a tad pinkish in colour and also had the fruitiness of a ruby Port! Another, which traced origins to a Sherry cask was mineral-lined, salty, with subtle hints of caramel.

It was becoming hard to tell where the whisky and wine divide lay with these. I suggest that for all those who like wine try these. The catch is that it's a "members only" privilege. I don't know what the membership costs but I am sure it's worth it.

