



APOLOGY

It has been a long time between newsletters. Since the previous one (October 2019) we have had – and still have – the world-wide Covid 19 pandemic. MyWhiskyJourneys has – like everyone else – been diverted but busy in other respects as we bring [MyWhiskyJourneys](#) to an ever-wider audience.

Whisky is certainly on the move and we do apologise for having let so much time pass since last communicating with you but in those 18 months of silence from us an awful lot has happened – bad at the global geopolitical level but generally good at the more mundane level of our favourite drink. (As an aside, I am working on a slim volume about “Whisky in War” and I fear it may reveal that an increase in consumption of the former has usually been a harbinger of the latter!).



www.whiskyjourneys.com

Recently, a long-term customer and investor approached us to sell part of his private collection of rare Tasmanian whisky. We have valued the 12 bottles on offer at \$7,580. **However, we have received instructions to sell the collection for \$6,000** (freight free within Australia), a discount of over \$1,500. The collection includes exceptional expressions from the original Lark distillery, Sullivans Cove, Trapper's Hut, Heartwood and more. These delicious whiskies are no longer in general circulation, making this a rare opportunity to invest or experience the utmost Tasmanian whisky pleasure. **Click [Whisky Investment](#) to view details of this interesting opportunity.**

Meantime, one constant has been the cosy little world of whisky where a dram may not ward off Covid but will certainly lift your spirits. What really grabs us is the very positive outlook for the whisky industry globally, increased interest in the whisky bottle (unopened of course) as a collectable art form and the growing role of whisky as an investment vehicle, whether it be as shares in the production companies, in barrels of the stuff or in the bottled end-product. The image on the front page is an example of whisky and art combined - a [Mortlach 75 Years Old Generations by Gordon & MacPhail](#). We have one of the only two bottles ever made available to the Australian market and are pricing it at only \$1000 per year of maturation! (According to [Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2020](#), rare whisky was the best performing collectable of the decade, experiencing a meteoric rise in value of 586% up to 2019. In the proceeding 12 months, rare whisky also topped the leader board with an annual 23% rise – almost double the 12 months performance of its closest rival. And while past performance is no guarantee of future performance, it looks as if that trend is continuing and so do review some of the wonderful investment opportunities on our website).

Anyway, as compensation for our long silence, here you have a bumper issue of the MWJ Newsletter and a very special offer to those of you who may be interested in investment grade early Tasmanian whiskies, as outlined in the display box above.

FEEDBACK

We enjoy getting feedback from readers – positive or otherwise – but particularly if it is adding to our store of whisky knowledge. And so please feel free to comment or ask questions at info@mywhiskyjouneys.com, which we shall gladly share with the rest of the readership.

WHISKY IN MOVIES

There are many examples of whisky featuring in movies – good and bad – whether it simply be as a prop or product placement. Sometimes it is not entirely clear whether the appearance is deliberate, significant or merely inconsequential. It is fun to see which it is and where possible to identify the brand.

Recent examples I have noticed in replays of old movies include **Strong's** in “The Two Faces of Janus”, an American thriller released in 2014 but set in Greece and Istanbul of 1962. What is interesting in this instance is that **Strong's Dundee Whisky** was a little-known blend in the UK but one that appeared quite prominently in secondary European markets, such as Greece, and so in this instance some serious research was done, ostensibly to satisfy the thirst for Scotch of the villain in the film, Chester MacFarland (Viggo Mortensen). Incidentally, that brand is no longer around and is one of the once well-known blends which have been withdrawn from the market. There is a growing interest in these “historical” whiskies and you can find some of them at our [Lost Causes](#) pages.

In “Don't Look Now”, the 1973 ghost/thriller classic featuring Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland, the latter displays a fondness for **Macallan 1958**, but of which age it was, is not evident. However, it is interesting that Macallan was getting recognition that long ago.

One of my favourite wartime movies is “Battle of the River Plate” which features quite prominently **Johnnie Walker Red Label** and **White Horse**, both from the old DCL stable but competing quite fiercely against each other around the world, including South America

where the first naval battle of World War II took place between the German pocket-battleship Graf Spee and a Royal Navy squadron of three cruisers.

Over the years there has been some blatant product placement in Hollywood movies featuring the obvious brands such as **Ballantine's**, **J & B**, **Johnnie Walker** and **Macallan** (favoured by Daniel Craig as James Bond although it is **J & B** that appears in "Quantum of Solace"). And, of course, **Jack Daniels**. Keep an eye open for others, such as a blatant plug for the old – established once popular blend of **Queen Anne** in the Hercule Poirot episode entitled "Yellow Iris" set in the mid-1930's when it would have been at its height.

Similarly, in television series – for example, in "Prime Suspect", which made Helen Mirren famous - a number of brands appear including **Glenfiddich** and **The Famous Grouse**.

However, exposure in feature films is not always a positive. For instance, "Hotel Rwanda" which is about genocide in this woeful central African republic, reflects the role of **Glenfiddich** as an item of barter amongst the various players in this tragic story.

One of the most blatant placements of product, even featuring children, is that of **Buchanan's Black and White** in the delightful movie "Father Goose" starring Carry Grant, Leslie Caron and Trevor Howard. Set in the Pacific in World War II and made in 1954 it features multiple bottles of Black and White with the spring cap. What is intriguing is whether the bottles are of the 1941 vintage or from the mid 1950s when the film was made. Nowhere have I seen a brand of Scotch so prominently featured in a Hollywood movie except perhaps for **Dewar's** which appeared in similar quantities in another wartime movie. Can anyone identify which it is? And there you have the link, mentioned above, between whisky – and in particular Scotch – and war at its most colourful.

Having said that, I must say I found the one film devoted to whisky – "The Angels' Share" – rather disappointing. It reflected negatively on social conditions in present day Scotland and suggested skulduggery in the Scotch whisky industry. And there has certainly been plenty of

that in the past, but hopefully less so in the present. If you want to learn about the greatest scandal ever in the whisky industry do read [my review](#) of a book just released about the Pattison crash. Although it happened over 120 years ago the lessons learned then are as valid today as they were then.

TAKEN AT THE (WHISKY) FLOOD

As we have already remarked, whisky consumption – and production to keep up with it – is going from strength to strength and not just in the traditional producing countries although they are expanding capacity both through augmenting existing facilities, reopening the long-closed Scottish distilleries of Brora, Port Ellen and Rosebank (have a look at what we have to offer from the original of these [Ghost Distilleries](#)) but also opening new plant. But there are also many new players on the block in countries which have not traditionally had a whisky distilling industry. Now everyone is trying their hand and it is the single malt variety that is usually the preferred option. Where will all this whisky go and who is regulating this rash of new production? Whisky, like any high ABV product, can cause serious illness and even kill. It has to be consumed responsibly and those consuming it have to be confident that the product is sound and safe. No problem with Scotch because it is already highly regulated and is probably the most controlled substance of its kind anywhere in the world. The other traditional producers have similar strictures in place. But what about the new players? Even Japan, whose industry is now about 100 years old, only very recently got round to admitting to a definition of what Japanese whisky is, although it is not yet formulated in law.

Diageo and Pernod Ricard, the two leading whisky producers in Scotland, have distilling malt whisky in China as part of their respective grand strategies for meeting global demand. There are no doubt solid commercial reasons for doing so but I have yet to see them. And so, all that tradition, skill and expertise residing in their many lovely distilleries spread across the homeland of malt whisky have been surrendered on the whim of some consultants who have no doubt advised them, at great expense, that the way to nurture that market is to give them your crown jewels and hope for the best. In due course, there will be malt whisky distilleries springing up

everywhere in China and they won't be restricting themselves to the domestic market. They will be to the fore in satisfying the projected global demand for whisky, either through a plethora of local brands (no doubt with suitably confected Anglo-Celtic names) or by "knocking off" established labels, such as Johnnie Walker.

Are the Chinese about to do to whisky in Scotland what the Scots did to whiskey in Ireland 150 years ago?

WHITHER TASMANIAN WHISKY?

Nowhere is the whisky flood more evident than in Tasmania where the number of distilleries continues to multiply and some of the existing ones are in expansion mode. The pandemic made visiting from the mainland extremely restricted and for a period impossible. However, we did manage a tour in March 2021 and, for those interested, the notes of our visits are [here](#). I have split this review into two parts and the second half of the tour will appear in the next newsletter so as not to over burden readers with too much detail in one hit.

Probably the most significant development has been the transformation of Australian Whisky Holdings Limited into Lark Distilling Co. Ltd. A bold move which raises a number of interesting questions and which may impact not only Lark but other distilleries in Tasmania as well as the entire Tasmanian category, although what that is has still to be defined. What we have is a brand separating itself from its narrow origins and becoming a sort of umbrella identity for whisky being produced at a number of different locations in Tasmania, the provenance of which may not always be clear. An interesting commentary on the situation appeared in ["Whisky & Wisdom"](#) and is worth a careful read. As the author of the Whisky & Wisdom article makes clear, the Lark approach would not be allowed in Scotland – and I guess possibly in other producing countries. The highly respected **Malt Whisky Yearbook 2022** has also commented critically about misleading labelling which no doubt reflects a general trend towards increased focus on protection of consumers' interests.

Many, both in Tasmania and nationally, will be watching how the situation, plays out. Will Tasmania become another Islay or is it

destined to follow the fate of the Campbelltown distilleries of the 1920's?

From our own narrow commercial perspective, MyWhiskyJourneys will continue to offer only Tasmanian whiskies whose provenance is in no doubt and which are no longer in general retail circulation. We have one of the largest collections of these available for the enthusiast at [MWJ Tasmanian Whiskies](#).

“The Guide to the Whiskies of Tasmania”

And that brings us to the fate of this particular project which has long been close to our thoughts. The “Kickstarter” initiative through which we invited Tasmanian distilleries to support the project fell far short of expectations with only a small minority of distilleries making pledges. We used “Kickstarter” to try and gauge the degree of interest within the industry and it was clearly not there. This combined with various developments within the industry has led us to shelve, but not abandon, the Guide.

The industry in Tasmania is still too much at the evolution stage and is far from settled. There is already a book, [Tasmanian Whisky – The Devil's Share](#), now out of print, about Tasmanian whisky and although it was greeted to some degree with hostility and doubt, it does serve a purpose, but is already very much out of date. Our idea of having an e-book which could be readily updated to keep pace with a dynamic industry and provide an immediate on-line source of supply of Tasmanian whiskies world-wide was obviously too far ahead of its time. Nevertheless, we would like to thank the distillery owners and staff who gave us their time and advice when we were in the process of gathering information and digging into their history and tweaking out their hopes for the future.

We will return to the charge with something a bit more streamlined and suited to present day conditions and so watch this space.

MyWhiskyJourneys Newsletter

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