

Tonight we sample the Ledaig (pronounced “Le-chick”) 1990 Gordon & MacPhail Connisseurs Choice Single Malt whisky. Ledaig means '**safe haven**' in Gaelic

Ledaig is made by the Tobermory distillery, Situated on Scotland’s picturesque west coast lies on the Hebridean island of Mull, it is the only distillery on the island of Mull, directly North of Islay and the isle of Jura. The Tobermory Distillery is quite unique to other distilleries as it produces two very distinct single malt Scotch Whiskies, Tobermory single malt, which has an extremely smooth taste profile and the robustly peated Ledaig single malt.



Founded in 1798 by John Sinclair under the name 'Ledaig' , Tobermory was one of a small number of distilleries that was established before the Excise Act of 1823 that legalised the production of whisky, but has suffered several periods of closure during its history, most recently reopening in 1989.

The Life of the **Tobermory distillery**

1798 – John Sinclair

1890 – John Hopkins & Co.

1916 – Distillers Company Ltd.

1930 – 1972 closed (buildings used as a Power Station)

1972 – Ledaig distillers Ltd.

1975 – closed

1978 – Kirkleavington Property Co.

1989/90 – Revived

2002 – Burn Stewart Distillers (a subsidiary of CL Financial, a privately owned Trinidadian based industrial conglomerate. Hmm! Can you say RUM). It is the same company that owns Bunnahabhain, Deanston, Scottish Leader and Black Bottle, (latter 2 being blends).

The Ledaig name is used for peated expressions of Tobermory, and under Burn Stewart's stewardship, the peating level has risen progressively, currently standing at around 35ppm.

In comparison Lagavulin, Ardbeg, Laphroaig would usually contain between 25 up to 40 or 50 PPM of peat phenols. The new Ardbeg Supernova weighs in at "in excess of" 100 PPM and the Bruichladdich Octomore has a crushing 131 PPM. Suffice it to say that this is lightly peated.

According to the Malt Whisky Yearbook, **50% of the total production** of 1,000,000 litres is Tobermory (unpeated) and 50% is Ledaig.

The Future:

Like all the Burn Stewart line Ledaig is an unchill-filtered Whisky. Burn Stewart Distillers' Master Blender, Ian MacMillan. Ian comments: 'Whisky spends all those years maturing in the casks, developing the aroma and flavour. By un-chillfiltering, nothing is taken away or added so whisky lovers can enjoy the whisky at its very best, giving them a better whisky experience. Each dram retains a depth of flavour, allowing the gentle, subtle notes of the malt to come through, providing a purer taste, nose and appearance.'

About Chill filtering:

Whisky has some natural fats and oils, which can cause the product to become cloudy when mixed with cold water or ice. To prevent cloudiness, larger distilleries tend to chill and filter their whisky before bottling it to remove the fats and oils. Since these components add to the complexity of a whisky's aroma and flavour, an "un-chillfiltering" process preserves the natural body, flavour and texture in the Scotch whisky.

TASTING NOTES

This 1990 independent expression has been matured in refill Sherry casks.

Colour

Bright lemony gold.

Nose

Sweet briny smokiness with a distinctly island character that hints at mild antiseptic, creosote, wax polish, mint chocolate and floral seaside aromas. Quite floral and fragrant on the nose, especially with the addition of water, with a hint of olive oil and brine

Palate

Tantalisingly sweet yet medicinal flavours release sparks of spicy pepper with peaty smoke and vanilla malty creaminess.

Light-bodied and medium-dry on the palate, with salt, cereal and spices, roasted nuts, a suggestion of liquorice and a delicate tang of peat.

Finish

Spicy white pepper and sweet vibrant liquorice and cloves with a lingering saltiness Un-chillfiltered @ 46.3%.

Compared with the current 'bargain basement' house bottling of relatively young Ledaig, this teenager, distilled three years before Burn Stewart purchased the distillery, has far less overt peatiness in its character, confirming the increased levels of peating in more recent distillations. Proof that if Ledaig is allowed to mature for a reasonable length of time, the result is a very good island whisky. 43.0% ABV, 70cl.

Slainte.