

The Malt Whisky Cluster Vortex

Surfing The Flavour Spectrum



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18.00 Wednesday 15th June, 2011

Playfair Room, Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh

“Future computing in particle physics”

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Synopsis

In his illustrated talk and tutored tasting, David Wishart explores the universe of single malt whiskies by flavour. He recalls the history of Scotch whisky, from the pre-Reformation distillation of *aqua vitae* by monks, through the alchemists' quest for an elixir of eternal life, to its use by surgeon-barbers as medication, and thence for the hedonistic pleasure of royals and commoners alike.

Whisky is evoked in the poetry of Burns, the travelogues of Stevenson, and the art of Landseer and Wilkie. London toasted with brandy in the Regency period, but, when a tiny phylloxera beetle devastated Cognac in 1863, the upper classes turned to whisky and our famous “Scotch” brands were born.

But why should the flavours of single malt whiskies be so diverse? David reveals that modern production methods involving variable peating, precision distillation, cask selection, vating and finishing, together combine to create a multi-dimensional vortex of flavour explosion.

David Wishart uniquely defines a typology of single malt whiskies based on *flavour*. With sensory analysis and profiling he applies cluster analysis to categorize single malt Scotch whiskies on 12 cardinal flavours, and constructs a flavour chart using principal component analysis. A flavour "spectrum" is obtained by serialization, with the closest flavour matches for each brand identified by nearest neighbours.

David's talk will conclude with a tutored tasting of single malt whiskies that illustrates the complete flavour spectrum – sponsored by anCnoc, Ardmore, Benromach, Dalmore, Glenfarclas, Glenfiddich, Isle of Jura, Macallan, Smokehead and Tomatin (illustrated below).



Following his talk it will be possible to purchase signed copies of David Wishart's book

Whisky Classified: Choosing Single Malts by Flavour, price £14.99.