

# It's All Good!

SCOTCH WHISKY IS ENTERING A NEW GOLDEN AGE

by Ian Buxton



reported last issue on an industry in good heart. Just how positive the news coming from Scotland really is was emphasized recently by a special report from the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), which, like DISCUS, exists to represent the distillers.

The report, commissioned to mark the SWA's 100th anniversary, showed how inward investment and the development of international markets have helped deliver spectacular performance leading to suggestions of a new "golden age" for Scotch whisky.

The total impact of Scotch whisky on Scotland's economy is said to be £4.2 billion (\$6.76 bn). It supports around 36,000 jobs in the industry and across the supply chain, with employees adding 57% more value per head than workers in the City of London.

Scotch whisky continues to be the main contributor to the Scottish government's drive for export growth. Exports are worth more than £4 billion (\$6.44b n) annually, ahead of refined petroleum at £3 billion and business services worth £2.5 billion. The research found that Scotch whisky underpins the expansion of Scotland's total international export markets, accounting for 55% of the growth since 2002.

And the U.S. continues to be the main focus for many brands. Take Whyte & Mackay, for example, who have made America the priority market for the Journey Edition of their **Mackinlay's** blended malt. This captures the taste of the century-old whisky found under renowned explorer Ernest Shackleton's hut on the Antarctic and replicated by W&M's Master Blender, Richard Paterson.

Think you've read this story before? Well, this is the second edition of this whisky. The first was known as the Discovery

Edition and sold out so quickly that a further 100,000 bottles have been produced. Once again, a substantial donation from every bottle will be made to the Antarctic Heritage Trust, which expects to receive over \$800,000 to support its work. Collectors will be glad to hear that the packaging is different, thus protecting the value of their original purchases.

In other news, **Old Pulteney** has released its oldest ever bottling, a venerable 40 Year Old single malt that will be available from International Beverage Holdings USA with a suggested \$2,400 retail price ticket. The whisky itself is surprisingly vibrant, speaking to great cask selection, with notes of spice, citrus, toffee and pears with a sherry wine finish. Naturally, it's bottled at cask strength and is non-chill filtered.

Also at cask strength and showing a sherry influence—but a great deal more affordable—is

## Isle of Arran's Cask Strength 12 Years Old.

This little distillery is now really punching above its weight and, like many of Scotland's smaller operations, benefiting from the favorable market conditions. At \$70 from Impex Beverages Inc. this may just be the best thing we've seen from Arran.

Finally, U.S. consumers can soon expect supplies of **Sia**, a new blended Scotch whisky created by Californian web designer Carin Castillo. Pursuing her love of great whisky Carin determined to create her own blend and raised the cash on a crowd-funding site. The first cases will ship shortly from Spirit Imports, Inc. at a suggested retail price of \$39.99.

Consumers creating their own blends? This must be a golden age! ■■

