

Whisky

ADVOCATE

FALL 2015 • WHISKYADVOCATE.COM

GREAT VALUES

92 WHISKIES RATED 90+
PRICED UNDER \$100

MEASURING
SCOTCH'S VALUE

CELEBRATING
EVERYDAY
BOURBON

SAILING
SCOTLAND'S
WESTERN
ISLANDS

PLUS

134 WHISKIES
RATED IN THE
BUYING GUIDE



BLENDED SCOTCH

Blended Scotch whiskies are brands we're all familiar with, like Chivas, Dewar's, Johnnie Walker, and Cutty Sark. They're blends of intensely-flavored malt whiskies and the gentler grain whiskies, and range from soft, gently spicy bottlings to the smoky side of scotch. What many people don't know is that there are also blended malt Scotch whiskies—like Big Peat and The Feathery you see below—which are all-malt whiskies, for an often more pronounced character.

The beauty of blends is that they can be made into whatever the blender aims for: mixer, straight sipper, smoky, sherried, light, bruiser, simple, complex, or any combination. As the prices of single malts go up, and drinkers look for more in their blend, whisky makers have responded with some great new blends. Almost every whisky you see in this category is one of these new generation blends. If you've written off blends, it might be time for an honest reappraisal.

95 \$70 Chivas 18 year old 40% Blended Scotch
Caramel, light toffee, citrus, peach, currant, and subtle, complex spice. Clean finish, hint of dark chocolate. Versatile, drinkable; a benchmark blend. *Spring 2008: JH*

93 \$59 Compass Box Oak Cross 46% Blended Malt
Virgin French oak contributes spices, melon, pineapple candy. Tastes of spearmint, toffee, citrus, shandy. Spices—cinnamon, chili, ginger—dominate the finish. *Winter 2012: DR*

92 £39 The Feathery 40% Blended Malt
Chocolate-covered raisins, leather, mixed nuts, dates, wood ash. Unctuous mouthfeel, with orange, dark toffee, and malt. A fruity, oaken finish. *Fall 2014: JM*

91 \$46 Compass Box Great King Street Artist's Blend
43% Blended Scotch
Vanilla ice cream, stewed pear tart, and peach melba, then spices and white pepper provide an unexpected but delightful twist. *Fall 2011: DR*

91 \$76 Dewar's Founder's Reserve 18 year old
40% Blended Scotch
Rich, creamy malt; crisp well-integrated grain. Butterscotch, vanilla wafer, strawberry-rhubarb pie, citrus drizzled with honey. Pleasing dried spice finish. *Fall 2009: JH*

90 \$60 Big Peat 46% Blended Malt
Ardbeg, Caol Ila, Bowmore are main components, with some Port Ellen in the mix. You know what to expect: big and peaty! *Winter 2013: DR*

90 £46 Big Peat Christmas Edition 2014
55.7% Blended Malt
Brace yourself. A punchy thwack of full-strength peat highlights salty fishboxes and buttery caramels. Deliberately singular character, utterly brilliant nonetheless. *Spring 2015: JM*

90 \$60 Compass Box The Peat Monster
46% Blended Malt
Earthy, peat fire, fudge, smoldering cigar stubs. Creamy: lemon curd, vanilla sponge, mint, prosciutto. Smoky, singeing heat on back of palate. *Fall 2015: JM*

90 \$33 Cutty Sark Prohibition 50% Blended Scotch
Bold, earthy, smoky blend with oily, industrial notes. Crabapple, smoke, bitter lemon, grapefruit, and even black currant. Great stuff. *Summer 2013: DR*

90 \$85 Duncan Taylor The Big Smoke 60
60% Blended Malt
More than just smoke: stewed apple and steam engine oil nose; palate of gooseberry, spearmint, and apple pip. But the peat lingers. *Winter 2012: DR*

90 \$42 Johnnie Walker Double Black
40% Blended Scotch
Picks up from Johnnie Walker Black's smoke and peat heart and adds to it. Cleverly ups the apple, orange, and fruit, too. *Winter 2011: DR*

90 \$50 SIA 43% Blended Scotch
Savvy and seamless blend: nose of dried apricot, honey, tangerine, salt. Repeats on the palate with oak and smoke to balance. *Spring 2015: GK*