

# Striking single malts

Spare no expense when sampling these kingpins from Scotland

Whether tasting a wee dram from the peaty Lowlands, the wind-swept Islands, or the fertile country of the Speyside region, the diversity of flavors, aromas, and colors reflect Scotland and its landscapes. Methods of making single malt scotch have changed little in the last century, while in the last decade, the “Water of Life” has enjoyed a surge in popularity and distilleries are offering a staggering range of vintages to meet demand.

By definition, all single malts are pure, unblended products of individual distilleries. We’ve rated these 750mL bottles on a 10-point scale. From the subtle essences to the powerful cask-strength selections, to the sherry and port wood finishes, the tastes of whisky are now as diverse as scotch connoisseurs. Slàinte!

SELECTIONS BY **BRANDON WARNKE & HARRIS SIEGEL** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **THOMAS P. COSTELLO**



**Springbank**  
15-year-old  
This sherry-cask offering from Campbeltown begins with a flashy nose. Medium-bodied with strong notes of chocolate and figs. Excellent balance and a complexity that few can match for the price. Great finesse for less than \$100.  
Price: \$80  
Rating: 8.5

**Lagavulin**  
12-year-old cask strength  
Smoky and rich, intensely peaty on the palate, full-bodied with a terrific finish. If you’ve been happy with one of Islay’s most famous distilleries, then the cask strength is worth seeking out.  
Price: \$126  
Rating: 8.8

**The Macallan Fine Oak**  
21-year-old  
Distilled in Speyside and matured in bourbon and sherry oak casks, this is lighter than its famous brother. Hints of vanilla on the nose and orange on the palate. In a word – smooth.  
Price: \$180  
Rating: 9.2

**The Macallan 1946**  
A rich lemon citrus nose gives way to a strong peat smoke taste that lingers at the finish. The hard part of owning this 56-year-old whisky is finding the occasion to open the bottle.  
Price: \$2,242  
Rating: 9.8

**The Dalmore 1973**  
Sherry cask finish  
A complex, full-bodied Highland malt with a long finish. This 30-year-old  
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liquid gold is a collaboration with sherry powerhouse Gonzalez Byass.  
Price: \$172  
Rating: 9.5

**Oban 32-year-old**  
cask strength  
Only 6,000 bottles of this potent West Highland were produced. This full-bodied offering from the “Little Bay of Caves” has a fruity nose and is creamy on the palate.  
Price: \$303  
Rating: 9.3

**Glen Garioch**  
21-year-old  
Full-bodied with plenty of sweet oak and tropical notes and hints of vanilla. This Highland malt has a rich, lengthy smoky finish. For the price, this is a must-have for any enthusiast.  
Price: \$94  
Rating: 8.8

**Scott’s Selection Port Ellen**  
1979  
This independent bottling from the closed Port Ellen distillery has an amazing finish. The whisky is filtered – but not chill-filtered – to preserve the original taste of this beauty from Islay’s South shore.  
Price: \$193  
Rating: 9.0

**Highland Park**  
25-year-old  
A chocolate nose turns honey on the palate before finishing surprisingly sweet. Critics rave about this reddish gold Orkney Island’s malt and it’s easy to see why. A perfect desert accompaniment from Scotland’s northernmost distillery.  
Price: \$200  
Rating: 9.0