

MMA 2014

Unplugged



11 Great years
of Malt Maniacs Awards

MMA – A little history

The Maniacs first discussed holding an independent, amateur whisky competition back in 2003 which was an era of very few other competitions and certainly no 100% amateur ones of any great scale.

The fundamental rules were to be:

- No entry fee
- 100% Amateur
- 100% blind

Of course, back in 2003 The Maniacs collective was much smaller than it is today with just twelve members and none were from whisky's professional ranks but MMA was born and that first year saw 61 entries being submitted with nine judges taking part.

For the record three gold medals were awarded that year to Talisker 21y 1981-2002 OB, Brora 30y OB bottled 2002 and Ardbeg 21y 'committee bottling' with the overall Supreme Champion being the Talisker.

Since then our Supreme Champions have been:

- **2003 Talisker** (21y, 1981-2002, OB)
- **2004 Brora** (30y, bottled 2003, 55.7%, OB)
- **2005 Laphroaig** (31y, 1974-2005, 49.7%, OB for LMDW)
- **2006 Yamazaki** (1984-2005, 56%, OB)
- **2007 Laphroaig** (27y, 1980-2007, 57.4%, OB)
- **2008 Lagavulin** (21y, 1985-2007, 56.5%, OB)
- **2009 Karuizawa** (1972-2008, 65%, No.1 Drinks)
- **2010 Glendronach** (38y, 1972-2010, Cask 700, 49.5%, OB for Taiwan)
- **2011 Glendronach** (39y, 1972-2011, Cask 712, Oloroso Sherry Butt, 49.9%, OB)
- **2012 Glendronach** (40y, 1972-2012, Cask 713, Oloroso Sherry Butt, 50.2%, OB for LMDW)
- **2013 Karuizawa** (1973-2013, No.1 Drinks, cask No.1607, 67.7%)

Today, 11 years on from our first MMA in 2013 our fundamental rules haven't changed and even though our collective has grown to 30 members including five professionals, we still uphold our traditional values as entrants pay no entry fee other than having to send us one bottle of each whisky they choose to submit. Our judges are chosen only from our amateur members who each have to pay for their own sample bottles (we use only new glass bottles to prevent any contamination) and their own postage to receive the samples.

The competition also remains 100% blind as judges only receive a series of numbered samples and have to rely purely on their noses, palates and eyes without knowing anything about the whiskies, not even abv. We even impose what we call a 'radio silence' upon judges as they aren't allowed to discuss any aspects of MMA or judging during the competition. The benefits of this are that each judge has the ability to work at their own speed, in their own environment and typically spend much more time with each sample than they would in a 'professional' competition held centrally at a single location over just a few days.

So what about MMA 2014?

As usual the main focus and 'raison d'être' of our competition is our Awards process where our entries are split into three categories based upon retail price. We have the Daily Drams category for whiskies which typically retail for a price up to €50. Premium category is for whiskies priced from @€51 to €150 and Ultra-Premium category for whiskies over €150.

Within each category we offer just five 'Awards' comprising Supreme Winner (the entry with the highest average points total across all judges' scorecards, then Best Sherried Whisky, Best Peated Whisky, Best Natural Cask and a Thumbs Up award for an entry which we believe deserves a special mention.

At this point I'd like to point out that 2014 has been a little different to previous years in that for the first time, the overall highest-scoring entry was not the winner of the Ultra-Premium category but the winner of the Premium category. For this reason we have clarified things a little by changing our Awards structure and announcing a Supreme Champion which is the 'Winner' with the overall highest score. So, without further ado I'd like to confirm our results for 2014:

Supreme Champion of MMA 2014

Kavalan Solist (OB) Sherry Cask No. S060904031



Ultra-Premium; Supreme Winner



Yoichi (OB)

Heavily Peated

28.2.1991 – 8.7.2014 cask 129459 62%



Ultra-Premium; Best Sherried Whisky



Glen Grant 59y

G&M "Book of Kells" for LMDW

19.2.1955 – 28.5.2014 cask 845 60.8%

(first fill sherry hogshead)



Ultra-Premium; Best Natural Cask Whisky



Karuizawa 34y
3.1980 – 7.2014
No.1 Drinks for LMDW
Ex-bourbon cask 6476, 63%



Ultra-Premium; Best Peated Whisky



BenRiach 29y, (OB)
Tawny Port finish
1984 – 7.2014
Cask 4051, 50.3%



Ultra-Premium; Thumbs-Up Award



Glengoyne 25y, (OB) 48%
“From time & sherry casks alone”



Awarded for being the only standard
distillery bottling in the top ranks

Premium Category

Supreme Winner (& MMA Supreme Champion)



Kavalan Solist (OB)
Sherry cask No. S060904031, 57.8%



Premium; Best Sherried Whisky



Kavalan Solist (OB for LMDW)
Sherry cask No. S060821047, 57.8%



Premium; Best Natural Cask Whisky



Bowmore 13y
Blackadder Raw Cask
13.3.2001 – 4.2014 57.2%
Oak Hogshead No. 20066



Premium; Best Peated Whisky



Kavalan (OB)
Distillery Reserve "Peaty Cask"
2007 – 21.1.2014 55%



Premium; Thumbs-Up Award



Glenrothes 7y - Adelphi
2007 – 2014 66.7%
First fill sherry hogshead No.3529



Awarded for being “so young but already so good”

Daily Drams category

Supreme Winner



Smoking Islay
Blackadder Raw Cask
Btld 10.2013 BA2013/451 58.2%



Daily Drams; Best Sherried Whisky



Nantou (TTL)
5.2009 – 8.2014, 5y
Sherry cask No.852 58%



Daily Drams; Best Natural Cask Whisky



Inchmurrin
Boutique-y Whisky Company
543 bottles 54.7%



Daily Drams; Best Peated Whisky



Smoking Islay
Blackadder Raw Cask
Btld 10.2013 BA2013/452 60.5%



Daily Drams; Thumbs-Up Award



Lagavulin 16y



Awarded for being "A classic in excellent shape for 2014"

MMA should be considered to be two competitions rolled into one; firstly and primarily we have the actual Awards which I have just detailed above. All except the Thumbs-Up Awards are decided upon highest average scores across all judges within each category. The Supreme Winners are the outright highest scoring whiskies, then Best Sherried, Natural and Peated are the highest scoring entries by cask and whisky type. The scores do play a part in our Thumbs-Up Awards, but perhaps more importantly we consider other parameters like value for money and consistency of quality.

Secondly, we award a series of medals to recognise the overall quality of entries; any entry managing an average score of 90 points or more across all judges will receive a gold medal which means that, in our opinion, these are exceptionally outstanding whiskies. 85-89 Points will receive silver medals which confirm that, again in our opinion, these are excellent and highly recommendable whiskies. Any which gain 80-84 points receive bronze medals and are acknowledged as good everyday drams.

Once again this year we have awarded just four of our coveted Gold Medals which, along with our Silver and Bronze Medals are detailed in our official MMA 2013 Judges' Scorecard:



Our official scorecard showing all MMA Gold Medal final scores and also individual scores from each judge:

Pts	Gold Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
92	Kavalan 'Solist' (57.8%, OB, NAS, Sherry Cask C#S060904031, 516 Bts., 2014*)	90	94	91	89	94	90	94	90	95
91	Kavalan 'Solist' (57.8%, OB for LMDW, NAS, Sherry Cask C#S060821047, 497 Bts., 2014*)	86	96	90	90	94	89	86	94	93
91	Yoichi 1991/2014 (62%, Heavily peated, C#129459)	92	95	92	89	91	89	92	86	X
90	Glen Grant 59yo 1955/2014 (60.8%, Gordon & MacPhail Book of Kells for LMDW, 1st Fill Sherry Hogshead C#845)	89	94	88	88	92	89	90	86	97

Silver Medals:

Pts	Silver Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
88	Karuizawa 34yo 1980/2014 (63%, No.1 Drinks for LMDW, ex-Bourbon Cask C#6476)	89	88	91	94	92	89	90	77	90
88	Benriach 29yo 1984/2014 (50.3%, OB, Peated, Tawny Port Finish, C#4051, 267 Bts.)	88	90	91	89	90	91	84	82	90
88	Karuizawa 35yo 1978/2014 (63%, No.1 Drinks for LMDW, ex-Bourbon Cask C#8383)	91	87	92	90	93	93	90	70	87
88	Miyagikyo 18yo 1996/2014 (62%, OB, Light Peat Casks C#66535)	91	90	94	85	89	86	88	79	91
88	Caol Ila 30yo 1983/2014 (53.9%, LMDW Artist #4, Hogshead C#5287, 214 Bts.)	86	87	92	88	91	91	85	87	85
87	Karuizawa 33yo 1981/2014 (55.3%, No.1 Drinks for LMDW, ex-Sherry Cask C#136)	86	90	89	85	91	88	87	82	89
87	Kavalan 'Solist' (59%, OB, NAS, Sherry Single Cask C#S081217038, 2014*)	85	91	70	92	87	90	90	89	93
87	Smoking Islay (58.2%, Blackadder Raw Cask, NAS, Sherry Finish C#BA2013/451, 370 Bts., 2013)	86	88	81	86	88	87	89	94	87
87	Laphroaig 15yo 1997/2014 (54.3%, LMDW Artist #4, Sherry Hogshead C#3350, 291 Bts.)	82	89	89	87	90	91	87	84	86
87	Kavalan 2007/2014 'Peaty Cask' (55%, OB, Distillery Reserve No. 04459)	89	89	92	91	81	84	88	86	84
87	Glenrothes 7yo 2007/2014 (66.7%, Adelphi, 1st Fill Sherry Hogshead C#3529, 320 Bts.)	88	90	79	86	82	90	91	85	92
87	Glenogoyne 25yo (48%, OB, Sherry Casks, 2014*)	88	91	88	83	86	89	82	90	86

Pts	Silver Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
87	Glenfarclas 2001/2014 'Family Casks' (60.2%, OB for TSMC, C#3922, 574 Bts.)	92	89	78	85	90	87	X	84	91
86	Karuizawa 35yo 1979/2014 (58.8%, No.1 Drinks for LMDW, ex-Bourbon Cask C#8187)	90	87	89	87	82	84	89	87	87
86	Speyside' 1993/2014 (54%, Chieftains Ltd. Ed. Coll., 1st Fill Sherry Butt C#3611, 628 Bts.)	88	90	81	84	89	85	91	84	89
86	Ledaig 2005/2013 (61.3%, L'Esprit, C#BH900120, 100 Bts.)	80	84	88	88	89	89	87	89	87
86	Littlemill 25yo 1988/2013 (52.7%, The Whisky Agency for Taiwan, ex-Sherry Hogshead, 95 Bts.)	88	91	88	86	87	88	87	82	84
86	Bunnahabhain 2005/2014 (46%, Signatory UnChill Filtered for LMDW, 1st Fill Oloroso Butt C#573, 836 Bts.)	88	89	89	86	83	88	85	90	83
86	Laphroaig 15yo 1998/2014 (61.6%, Signatory CS Coll. for LMDW, Refill Sherry Butt C#700356, 554 Bts.)	77	91	82	92	90	89	88	85	86
86	Bowmore 13yo 2001/2014 (57.2%, Blackadder Raw Cask, Hogshead C#20066, 292 Bts.)	86	89	90	81	87	90	85	86	86
86	Glendronach 21yo 1993/2014 (56.4%, OB for LMDW, Oloroso Butt C#475, 627 Bts.)	87	90	76	81	89	89	90	85	93
86	Smoking Islay (60.5%, Blackadder Raw Cask, NAS, Sherry Finish C#BA2013/452, 325 Bts., 2013)	90	89	88	85	89	85	87	86	81
86	Glendronach 19yo 1995/2014 (54.2%, OB for LMDW, Oloroso Butt C#1563, 640 Bts.)	82	92	80	82	93	89	85	88	88
86	Glenlivet 35yo 1979/2014 (51.6%, McKillops Choice, C#6102, 235 Bts.)	89	89	88	88	88	89	84	80	84
86	Bowmore 12yo 2001/2014 (57.9%, Signatory CS Coll. For LMDW, Refill Sherry Butt C#1368, 595 Bts.)	89	81	87	87	88	89	87	90	80
86	Clynelish 'Darkness' 16yo (54.9%, Boutique-y Whisky Co., Oloroso Casks, 2014*)	86	83	86	84	87	90	85	89	87
86	Convalmore 36yo 1977/2013 (58%, OB, Special Release, 2680 Bts.)	83	90	86	86	90	88	86	87	81
86	Big Peat (55.7%, Douglas Laing, NAS, Blended Malt, 2014)	89	90	79	82	89	88	89	85	85
86	Bunnahabhain 11yo 2003/2014 (58.8%, Signatory CS Coll. for Bonding Dram, C#1152, 627 Bts.)	87	86	84	90	83	89	88	84	85
86	Smoking Islay (60.5%, Blackadder Raw Cask, NAS, Rum Finish C#BA2013/453, 266 Bts., 2013)	84	88	87	84	88	90	86	85	84
86	Balblair 2000/2014 (53%, OB for The Whisky Exchange, C#1343)	84	91	81	85	86	90	85	86	88
86	Speyside-Glenlivet 18yo 1995/2014 (62.8%, Cadenhead Small Batch, 1 ex-Sherry Butt & 1 ex-Hogshead, 738 Bts.)	87	85	90	82	84	89	92	84	82
86	Caol Ila 10yo 2003/2014 (58.5%, Cadenhead Small Batch for Taiwan, Bourbon Hoghead, 282 Bts.)	83	87	89	91	75	84	87	92	86
86	Hazelburn 12yo 2002/2014 (54.1%, Cadenhead Authentic Collection, Bourbon Hogshead, 294 Bts.)	84	80	89	87	91	87	87	85	84
85	Nikka 21yo 'Taketsuru' (46%, OB, Madeira Finish, 2014*)	89	87	80	87	88	90	86	79	87
85	Laphroaig 14yo 2000/2014 (50%, Hunter Laing OMC, Refill Hogshead C# HL10741, 357 Bts.)	88	87	89	82	85	87	87	84	84
85	House Malt 1990/2014 (48%, Wilson & Morgan Barrel Selection, Sherry Butt C#17, 753 Bts.)	86	85	78	86	85	89	91	84	89
85	Bunnahabhain 26yo 1987 (54.2%, Berry Bros. for Whisky.com.TW, Hogshead C#2450, 180 Bts., 2014*)	88	84	89	83	83	90	88	85	82
85	Blair Athol 25yo 1988/2014 (59.5%, LMDW Artist #4, 1st Fill Sherry C#7494, 567 Bts.)	91	90	76	86	86	90	90	78	85
85	Glenturret 35yo 1977/2013 (49.2%, The Whisky Agency Private Stock, Refill Hogshead, 227 Bts.)	82	88	89	87	87	85	85	84	85
85	Longrow 11yo 'Red' (51.8%, OB, Fresh Port Casks, 9000 Bts., 2014*)	84	90	80	86	89	91	85	83	84
85	Port Askaig 15yo (45.8%, The Whisky Exchange, 2014*)	85	85	90	87	88	88	78	87	84
85	Glenburgie 1984/2014 (54.5%, Gordon & MacPhail Exclusive for LMDW, Refill Bourbon Barrel C#8510, 70 Bts.)	84	86	87	84	90	91	88	80	82
85	Lagavulin 12yo (55.1%, OB, 2013)	84	87	78	87	90	85	88	92	81
85	Glen Grant 21yo 1992 (51.5%, Exclusive Malts for Whisky.com.TW, 204 Bts., 2014*)	82	88	88	85	84	90	87	81	86
85	Lagavulin 16yo (43%, OB, 2014*)	78	89	86	89	84	88	85	90	80
85	Inchmurrin (54.7%, Boutique-y Whisky Co., NAS, 543 Bts., 2014*)	87	89	90	84	88	87	80	81	83
85	Littlemill 24yo 1989/2014 (51.7%, Whisky Doris, Bourbon Hogshead C#32, 357 Bts.)	85	80	92	86	85	91	88	79	83
85	Lark (58%, OB, NAS, Small Cask Aged Cask Strength, Port Cask C#473, 2014)	85	79	81	85	83	90	92	85	89
85	Chichibu 2009/2014 'In the Mood for Love' (61.7%, OB for LMDW, 1st Fill Bourbon Barrel, C#641)	87	87	86	83	81	90	83	82	90
85	Bunnahabhain 6yo 2007/2014 (57.7%, Berry Bros., C#800089)	84	86	81	83	85	84	84	94	86
85	Ledaig 8yo 2005/2013 (54.5%, Whisky Doris, Bourbon Hogshead C#800015, 149 Bts.)	80	90	89	85	77	89	85	87	83

Bronze Medals:

Pts	Bronze Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
84	Nantou 5yo 2009/2014 (57.5%, OB, Bourbon Cask C#151, 179 Bts.)	87	88	80	84	89	88	82	82	84
84	Glen Garioch 21yo 1993/2014 (59%, Adelphi, 1st Fill Sherry Butt C#774, 501 Bts.)	88	88	74	73	84	89	85	92	90
84	Balblair 1990/2013 (46%, OB)	82	87	81	82	87	88	86	95	75
84	Lark (46%, OB, NAS, Distillers Selection, Sherry Cask C#475, 2014)	86	88	88	83	89	85	84	72	88
84	Blair Athol 20yo 1993/2013 (59.1%, First Editions, C#ES9990, 541 Bts.)	83	90	86	78	85	89	89	82	80
84	Nantou 5yo 2009/2014 (58%, OB, Sherry Cask C#852, 246 Bts.)	86	89	71	86	83	89	91	82	85
84	Bunnahabhain 26yo 1987/2014 (61.7%, Blackadder Raw Cask, Hogshead C#2488, 192 Bts.)	84	84	81	84	83	89	88	85	84
84	Craigellachie 18yo 1995/2014 (48.4%, Douglas Laing Old Particular, Sherry Butt C#DL 10419, 252 Bts.)	84	86	89	83	83	88	84	80	84
84	Mortlach 15yo 1990/2014 (56.6%, Wilson & Morgan Barrel Selection, Oloroso Sherry Butt C#2)	84	79	92	83	83	89	84	83	84
84	Caol Ila 12yo (43%, OB, 2014*)	83	87	78	88	86	86	82	86	85
84	Westport 1997/2014 (48%, Wilson & Morgan Barrel Selection, Sherry Wood C#3358-9)	85	86	80	87	83	87	82	85	86
84	Lagavulin 1995/2011 'Distillers Edition' (43%, OB, Double Matured, Lgv 4/499)	86	85	81	86	87	92	80	82	82
84	Glenlivet 30yo 1983/2013 (58.8%, Berry Bros. for A. Light, C#2877)	76	87	72	85	88	90	91	82	89
84	Kornog 'Sant Ivy' (58.9%, OB, NAS, Bourbon Single Cask, 2014)	85	74	88	87	85	88	88	82	83
84	Springbank 15yo (46%, OB, 2014*)	83	87	80	85	88	89	84	84	80
84	Irish Single Malt Whiskey 26yo (51.6%, Nectar of Daily Drams & LMDW joint, 2014*)	84	86	90	91	84	90	85	74	76
84	Aberlour 'A'bunadh' Batch 48' (59.7%, OB, NAS, Sherry Butts, 2014*)	89	87	79	86	88	90	88	60	92

Pts	Bronze Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
84	Glen Keith 21yo 1992/2014 (51.5%, Archives, Bourbon C#120599, 218 Bts.)	84	84	89	85	84	83	86	88	76
84	Balblair 1999/2014 (46%, OB)	87	88	80	78	89	85	83	94	75
84	Glendronach 18yo 'Allardice' (46%, OB, Oloroso, 2014*)	85	90	74	84	85	88	87	85	81
84	Bushmills 21yo (40%, OB, Oloroso, Bourbon, Madeira, 2014*)	89	81	90	86	82	91	79	80	80
84	Glendronach 22yo 1991/2014 (52.1%, OB, PX Puncheon C#1346, 701 Bts.)	87	89	79	83	79	88	83	84	86
84	Kilchoman 2007/2013 'Loch Gorm' (46%, OB, Sherry Cask Matured)	83	89	73	89	90	89	86	80	79
84	Tamdhu 10yo (46%, OB, Limited Edition, 100% 1st Fill Sherry, 2014*)	87	88	84	80	84	88	83	80	83
84	Nikka 'Coffey Malt' (45%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	84	82	89	84	84	87	80	81	86
84	Bunnahabhain 33yo 1980/2013 (45.6%, Whisky Doris, Sherry Butt C#92, 460 Bts.)	84	85	86	83	84	84	80	90	80
84	Benriach 15yo (46%, OB, PX Finish, 2014*)	85	82	89	87	84	91	84	72	82
83	Talisker 10yo (45.8%, OB, 2014*)	79	89	84	84	88	85	80	83	83
83	Littlemill 25yo 1988 (51.2%, Exclusive Malts for Whisky.com.TW, ex-Sherry Hogshead C#432, 204 Bts., 2014*)	85	88	78	82	89	88	86	80	79
83	Nantou 5yo 2009/2014 (55.5%, OB, Bourbon Cask C#99, 191 Bts.)	87	87	81	87	87	85	85	70	86
83	Caol Ila 1993/2011 'Distillers Edition' (43%, OB, Moscatel Wood Finish)	86	85	81	84	87	88	83	79	82
83	Teeling 21yo 'Vintage Reserve' (46%, Teeling Whisky Co., Silver Bottling, 5000 Bts. 2014*)	80	79	90	88	90	93	79	75	80
83	Clynelish 1997/2013 (46%, Gordon & MacPhail Connoisseurs Choice)	87	87	86	77	85	83	81	84	83
83	Bunnahabhain 26yo 1987/2014 (46%, Berry Bros., C#2787)	82	86	79	83	84	89	81	90	78
83	Glenesk 30yo 1983/2014 'Hillside' (54.4%, Blackadder Statement/Raw Cask Refill Sherry Butt C#4929, 328 Bts.)	82	86	89	84	84	87	86	70	84
83	Speyside 30yo (43.7%, Master of Malt Secret Bottlings Series, 6th Ed., 238 Bts., 2014*)	79	84	86	86	82	91	85	79	79
83	Deanston 19yo 1994/2014 (58%, Master of Malt Single Cask Series, Refill Bourbon, 100 Bts.)	85	76	80	84	84	85	88	86	82
83	Glenglassaugh 'Torfa' (50%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	82	87	76	82	86	84	85	85	83
83	Armorik 'Maitre de Chai' (47.3%, OB, NAS, 1000 Bts., 2014*)	87	80	83	82	84	89	84	80	80
83	Glen Albyn 1976/2012 (43%, Gordon & MacPhail Rare Vintage)	82	82	75	85	88	90	82	84	81
83	Talisker 'Dark Storm' (45.8%, OB, NAS, Heavily Charred Casks, 2014*)	84	82	83	83	85	84	85	80	83
83	Kornog 'Taouarch Chweched BC14' (58.2%, OB, NAS, Bourbon Single Cask, 2014*)	87	74	81	81	90	88	87	84	77
83	Benriach 17yo 'Solstice' (50%, OB, Port Finish, 2nd Ed., 2014*)	83	88	74	91	90	89	83	62	89
83	The Glenlivet 18yo 'Guardians' (55.7%, OB, Single Cask C#2911, 2011)	82	85	79	84	82	84	82	84	86
83	Benromach 10yo (43%, OB, 2014*)	84	80	89	87	84	89	80	80	75
83	Amrut (46%, OB, NAS, Barrels, 2014*)	82	88	86	80	85	82	80	82	82
83	Highland Park 'Dark Origins' (46.8%, OB, NAS, "Double" 1st Fill Sherry Casks, 2014*)	79	88	70	86	81	85	90	88	79
82	The Glenlivet NAS 'Nadurra' (48%, OB, First Fill US White Oak, Batch No. FF0714, 2014)	84	80	78	85	85	84	78	84	87
82	Chieftains Limited Edition Collection 1995/2013 (52.8%, Chieftains Ltd. Ed. Coll., 1st Fill Sherry Butt C#1357, 614 Bts.)	80	86	70	81	82	84	91	87	84
82	Benromach 1976 (46%, OB, Sherry Casks, 2012)	83	87	79	85	87	87	82	78	77
82	Talisker 'Storm' (45.8%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	82	81	82	82	84	89	79	84	81
82	Glendronach 18yo (46%, OB, Tawny Port Finish, 2014*)	85	88	72	79	82	89	85	83	80
82	Bushmills 16yo (40%, OB, Bourbon & Oloroso, Port Finish, 2014*)	86	79	82	81	84	92	78	79	82
82	Armorik 12yo 2002/2014 'Millesime' (55.7%, OB, Oloroso C#3298, 723 Bts.)	84	87	81	78	88	86	79	76	84
82	Cardhu 21yo 1991/2013 (54.2%, OB, Special Release)	83	76	82	83	84	84	83	82	86
82	Kilkerran (46%, OB, NAS, Bourbon Wood, 2014*)	78	85	81	81	83	87	83	83	82
82	Great King St. (43%, Compass Box, NAS, Blend, 2014)	X	85	85	82	83	83	81	84	77
Pts	Bronze Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
82	Hazelburn 10yo (46%, OB, 2014*)	80	76	88	79	88	84	82	82	83
82	Glengoyne 13yo 2000/2014 (46%, Berry Bros., C#1073)	84	87	79	74	77	88	89	86	78
82	Glenglassaugh 45yo 1968/2014 'Rare Cask' (44.3%, OB, Sherry Hogshead C#1601, 349 Bts.)	82	75	88	84	86	91	78	77	80
82	Longmorn 22yo 1992/2014 (54%, Adelphi, Refill Sherry Hogshead C#48509, 250 Bts.)	84	89	79	81	84	86	89	72	77
82	Lark (43%, OB, NAS, Small Cask Aged, Port Cask C#516, 2014)	86	86	79	76	84	89	79	82	80
82	Kilkerran (46%, OB, NAS, Sherry Wood, 2014*)	79	84	74	84	86	80	83	83	87
82	Black Snake (57.5%, Blackadder, NAS, Vat 5, PX Butt Finish, 464 Bts., 2014)	85	80	75	85	75	85	86	87	82
82	Amrut 2009/2014 (56.5%, OB for Taiwan, PX Sherry Butt C#2702, 360 Bts.)	84	84	82	82	71	80	89	79	88
81	The Glenlivet 'Nadurra' (48%, OB, , NAS, First Fill Oloroso, Batch No. OLO314, 2014)	81	88	75	76	80	84	83	84	86
81	Glen Garioch 23yo 1990/2014 (56.1%, Berry Bros., C#7939)	84	79	91	88	78	84	85	62	86
81	Glenmorangie 12yo 'Lasanta' (43%, OB, Sherry Finish, 2014*)	80	88	76	83	86	86	77	80	81
81	Amrut 'Peated' (58.1%, Blackadder Single Cask, NAS, Hogshead, Sherry Finish, 138 Bts., 2014)	88	86	67	75	83	85	84	79	89
81	Cardhu 'Amber Rock' (40%, OB, NAS, Toasted Bourbon Cask Finish, 2014*)	83	85	77	80	83	89	82	84	73
81	Slyrs (46%, OB, NAS, Sauternes Finish, 2014*)	79	75	82	84	81	86	82	85	82
81	Nantou 4yo (46%, OB, Bourbon Wood, 2014)	83	86	79	74	87	87	80	82	77
81	Clynelish 18yo 1996/2014 (46%, Berry Bros., C#6424)	83	83	78	80	83	80	82	84	82
81	Mortlach 25yo 1988/2014 (56.8%, Cadenhead, Sherry Cask, 276 Bts.)	76	86	75	81	76	86	88	85	X
81	Dalwhinnie 15yo (43%, OB, 2014*)	82	87	75	73	83	83	82	83	86
81	Singleton of Dufftown 28yo 1985/2013 (52.3%, OB, Special Release, 3816 Bts.)	81	77	72	82	85	89	85	80	83
81	Craigellachie 23yo (46%, OB, Batch 67.KA23, 2014*)	79	82	72	83	90	86	83	77	81
81	Glenurret 26yo 1986 (46.8%, Hunter Laing, Bourbon Casks, 2014*)	81	80	83	74	89	90	84	77	75
81	Glenglassaugh 'Evolution' (50%, OB, NAS, Ex-Tennessee Bourbon Cask, 2014*)	80	83	74	76	85	88	84	79	84
81	Craigellachie 17yo (46%, OB, Batch 98-ZC21, 2014*)	83	84	74	74	85	84	79	83	86
81	Chivas 18yo 'Gold Signature' (40%, OB, Blend, 2014*)	82	79	86	77	81	78	79	84	86
81	Aberlour 12yo (48%, OB, 2014*)	78	90	79	78	78	85	79	81	83
81	Singleton of Dufftown 'Tailfire' (40%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	81	88	75	81	81	86	83	83	73
81	Tomatin 'Cu Bocan' (46%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	81	84	73	84	87	87	78	82	74

81	Speyburn 10yo (40%, OB, 2014*)	82	86	74	82	84	82	78	80	82
81	Clynelish 19yo 1995/2014 (55%, Blackadder Raw Cask, Sherry Cask C#1471, 244 Bts.)	85	84	83	79	85	87	90	63	74
81	Sântis 9yo 'Edition Formosa' (53%, OB for ArenTrading Taiwan, Old Beer Cask, Sherry Finish, 432 Bts., 2014)	89	83	78	87	60	84	84	78	87
81	Auchentoshan 22yo 1991/2014 (56.3%, Blackadder Raw Cask, Hogshead C#2871, 178 Bts.)	79	85	88	72	83	80	86	75	82
81	Glentauchers 18yo 1996/2014 (46%, Berry Bros., C#1161)	80	88	79	84	84	78	78	86	72
81	Oban 18yo (43%, OB, Limited Edition, 2014*)	81	76	83	85	82	86	83	77	76
80	Clynelish 16yo 1997/2013 (56.7%, Master of Malt Single Cask Series, 276 Bts.)	82	79	72	78	90	86	90	73	78
80	Tomatin 12yo 'French Oak' (46%, OB, 2014*)	81	87	74	75	77	83	81	84	86
80	Singleton of Glen Ord 'Signature' (40%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	80	81	76	79	87	89	80	84	71
80	Singleton of Dufftown 'Sunray' (40%, OB, NAS, 2014*)	78	85	79	75	85	87	81	83	74
80	Dalmore 1996/2013 (46%, L'Esprit, C#BH9092/RB58, 103 Bts.)	79	77	86	73	78	83	82	83	84
80	Sântis 9yo 'Edition Formosa' (53%, OB for ArenTrading Taiwan, Old Beer Cask, Sherry Finish, 432 Bts., 2014)	84	74	76	84	79	75	92	80	81
80	Chivas 12yo 'Regal' (40%, OB, Blend, 2014*)	85	77	79	82	83	81	82	84	71

Pts	Bronze Medals	BC	HC	PdJ	OK	RK	PK	TP	PS	DW
80	Singleton of Glen Ord 15yo (40%, OB, 2014*)	79	76	79	82	82	84	84	77	80
80	Kornog 'Taouarch Pempved 14BC' (46%, OB, NAS, Bourbon Barrels, 2014*)	80	77	71	76	82	88	84	82	83
80	Nantou 4yo (46%, OB, Sherry Wood, 2014)	84	86	79	77	84	78	83	70	80

Key Award winners are shown in bold text

Ultra Premium Category

Premium Category

Daily Dram Category

Gold Medal – 90 points and over

Silver Medal – 84 to 89 points

Bronze Medal – 80 to 84 points

X – Broken sample

This year's judges; BC Benjamin Chen, **HC** Ho-Cheng Yao, **PDJ** Paul Dejong, **OK** Oliver Klimek, **RK** Rob Karlsson, **PK** Peter Krause, **TP** Tim Puett, **PS** Peter Silver, **DW** David Wankel.



Inside MMA 2014; Scoring & judging

Each year we assign a scorecard team whose responsibility it is to collate all our judges' scores into one spreadsheet and then work out which entries receive which awards (& medals). Although this may appear to be an easy task it requires lots of time as every entry has to be analysed by cask type and whisky characteristic(s) in order to be considered for the correct award(s). This year's team required two full days for this task.

Following the announcement of our results this year, we obviously enjoyed much discussion about them on our Malt Maniacs & Friends facebook page and one commentator asked if we impose any specific judging method or criteria on our MMA judges, perhaps like the repartition system of, for example a 25/25/25/25 split of scores between attributes like appearance, nose, palate & finish ... etc.

We prefer not to impose such criteria, or for that matter any specific judging criteria other than keeping everything totally blind. Each of our judges, although amateur, is highly experienced in whisky tasting and already has their own tried and tested methods of scoring and most have already scored hundreds, if not thousands of whiskies in our online database; The Malt Monitor. Of course this means there is an emphasis on personal preference, but judging and scoring is always subjective and will vary a little between individuals, so this is exactly why we utilise a panel of 9-12 judges for MMA and take an average score across the board from all those submitted. Also, in some previous years the scorecard team decided to ignore lower or 'rogue' scores where one judge maybe scored a whisky much lower than all the others, perhaps suggesting a contaminated sample. Once again this year, like last year, our scorecard team decided not to do this and to trust and accept all our judges' scores.

Here's what a couple of our members replied when asked about their own scoring criteria:

"I for one do never use 'repartitions' (such as 25/25/25/25) because I've never managed to find one that would work with all whiskies. I tend to think that 'proportions' between nose and palate, for example, change with styles and, above all, with the whiskies' ages." Serge Valentin.

"Regarding the scores to be allotted to appearance, nose, palate etc... I strongly feel that it will not work out. Scoring for appearance is definitely ruled out for me. Even if points were to be given to each parameter; how many points would you allocate to appearance, how many to nose, how many to palate, how many to finish and the last dimension which is most important for me; how many to overall feeling and impression?" Krishna Nukala.

"I too disagree with the 25/25/25/25 scoring process as to me it so limits the range of scores for particular items. I usually have a first impression of score after the initial nose/taste.....and then I might adjust once I have had a few more noses/tastes. But I usually fall within a few points of my initial impression. If I am at all conflicted, I will mark it for a re-taste. But this is based upon what I recall from what I have liked and disliked before." David Wankel

Finally on this topic, I'm affording the last word to one of our professional members; *"Like you, my scores are founded on experience, and based on overall flavour (aroma, taste, mouth-feel, finish); but unlike you, I never publish my scores!" Charles Maclean.*

Inside MMA 2014; Logistics and timeline

MMA has two defining dates; firstly 1st December, or as near as possible to the 1st which is when we aim to release the results. Secondly what we call the *filling weekend* which is when we pour the entries into judges' sample bottles and, by definition this is also the deadline for receipt of entries.

This all sounds easy, right? Well, not quite because we have other considerations too; who will judge this year? Sample bottles need to be ordered, invitations to participate have to be sent out, entries have to be received, stored, catalogued and numbered And so on

MMA 2014 once again began for me in summer, early August to be exact as I put together our letter of invitation to prospective entrants and, as often happens things burst into life a wee bit earlier as I was contacted in July by various entrants wishing to enter this year, in fact I received entries from one just about the same time as my letter of invitation was being sent out.

The filling weekend date was set for the last weekend in September so we have our deadline which means by early August the first invitation was mailed out and, as often happens this created the first mini *whisky rush* with various entries arriving within a few days then, nothing. In those first ten days or so entries quickly reached double figures then everything went quiet. Of course, August is the main holiday season and everyone was enjoying sun, surf and sand rather than sitting at their desks thinking of whisky.

What about judges for 2014? There goes another plea; "Dear Maniacs, who'd like to subject their noses, palates and livers to sampling up to 200 whiskies in no more than six weeks?" Yes, that's what being a judge amounts to. By the time samples have been filled, packed, posted, delivered and received the typical time left for judging is 4-6 weeks depending upon postage times.

Amazingly I immediately received requests from 10 of our collective requesting to be considered for judging. This is an ideal number and even allowed me to stand back from judging this year, concentrating on organising the competition (and filling ... etc.) This also fit in with the fact that I have a new job requiring me to work even crazier hours than before which would severely restrict my ability to find the necessary time for doing justice to the marathon task that is scoring MMA.

Even the best laid plans of MMA and men can go awry

I know I say this every year, but after the initial rush of entries I arrived home from work each day and there, waiting for me was nothing. Unlike previous years when early September arrived to hail the start of the MMA whisky rush, the nothingness continued. In fact even a week into September the 'rush' was still more of a 'trickle'. Then suddenly things burst into life in an unexpected kind of way; my e-mail inbox received a plethora of messages along the lines of "is it too late to send entries for MMA 2014?" and "when's the deadline for sending entries for this year?" There were even more requests than normal for deadline extensions.

Then another setback as I received my working plans for late September and early October; No holidays allowed during the last week of September and the first week of October. But reality was even worse as I discovered my usual 5-day working week (which would have allowed me two days for filling) actually became 13 continuous working days without a single one free thanks to a certain annual beer-drinking event in Munich. Talk about making filling a challenge as with no free days I was unable to organise any Maniacal help for the task which meant; yes you guessed it I do the job alone in a few hours each day after work. Oh well, at least I could grant the requested extension(s) for a week to ten days. This would also mean that for the first time in MMA history no judge would be involved in filling!

So what about the *MMA whisky rush*?



Even by late September the rush was still more of a trickle although we had reached what I call the minimum number of entries at which I confirmed that MMA 2014 will definitely go ahead.

Then this happened; 13 boxes in one day. MMA 2014 was alive, healthy and kicking.



What a load of rubbish

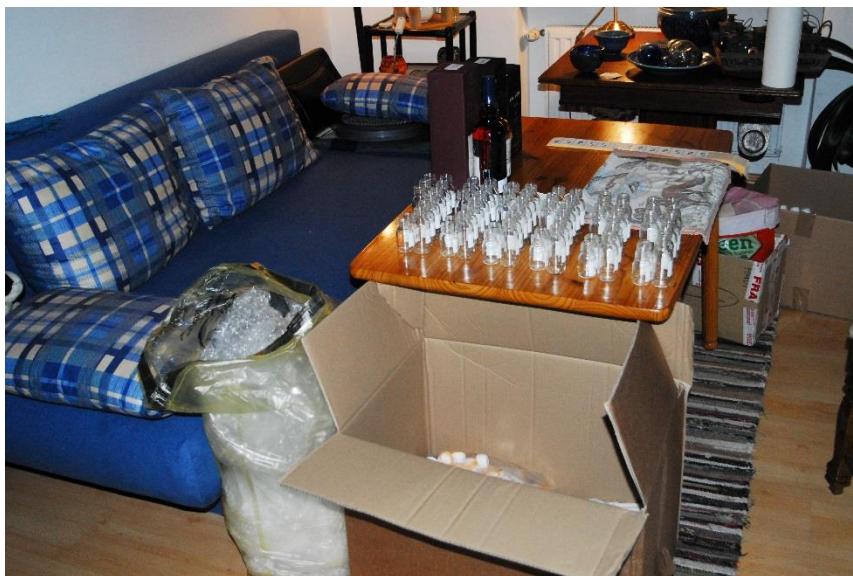


But at least it looks like most of these will now be used



MMA was now two weeks behind my original filling schedule, but as with all the best plans we had a fall-back Plan B to utilise the first week in October for filling. My work schedule once again didn't allow this but I did manage to complete much of the filling during the evenings across a couple of weeks which also allowed for the requested time extensions for more entries to arrive.

Filling for one



Coming on nicely



This only left the task of postage to be completed and just over €1100 paid cash in one trip to the Post Office for parcels to be sent world-wide to our judges in seven countries spanning Europe, Scandinavia, USA and Asia.

In Previous years I've used my most local Post Office but being a large central one it means waiting and queueing for an inordinate length of time. The staff are also quite stressed so in an attempt to improve matters for us all I drove to a more rural one a few kilometres away where I found no queue and no stressed staff, but two very helpful and friendly staff who gaped in awe as they calculated the final price and I duly handed over more than €1100 in cash. That was probably the equivalent of a few months normal turnover for them.

Even though they must be using the same regional infrastructure and delivery / collection centre, I was amazed to find that two of my parcels arrived with their respective judges in less than 48 hours.

Shortly afterwards one judge had to drop out of judging due to pressures of work with his business.

What about the left-overs?

This is a question which is asked annually and 2014 has been no exception. Our optimum number of MMA judges each year is 10-12 and each judge can choose between 3cl or 6cl samples. You may think choosing 6cl is a no-brainer but when it comes to far-away judges the difference in postage costs can be very significant at €200+. Also the attitude of their local Customs officers can vary and we've seen a clear example of this in 2014 as one judge who previously chose 3cl samples decided to opt for the larger 6cl this year. Not only did his postage cost increase but his parcel suddenly attracted unwanted attention from his local Customs Officers and for some time it looked as though they wouldn't allow it into the country. Somehow he persuaded them but it was expensive in Duty.

This usually means we do have a few drops, OK maybe a few cl, left over after filling. But what do we do with these drops?

I'm happy to say that none are wasted. Firstly, after judging is completed I refill my own set of sample bottles so I have a complete set of entries for future reference.

Last year I included the picture (below) on the left showing my MMA Archive of three years with somewhere around 550 samples. This has now been extended to four years with MMA 2014 and has grown correspondingly.



This came in useful earlier in 2013 when fellow Maniac Oliver Klimek and I decided to have an evening of no compromise as we put eight Glendronach expressions, including two MMA Supreme Champions and five Gold Medallists from 2011 & 2012 MMA's together in a head to head.

Mr. Grumpy & Mrs “G” or *Three deliveries, two notes and one box*

As a final comment I’d like to look at what MMA means to others around me, specifically some of my neighbours.

Just imagine a small cul-de-sac of no more than ten houses in a not so large town in Germany. One day a strange Englishman (and his German soon to be wife) move in to a house at the very end of the street. One neighbour in particular, let’s call her Mrs “G” (who, despite her surname is no known relation to another neighbour Mr Grumpy) has lived there for most of adult life which amounts to something like 70+ years. Anyway, being a quiet cul-de-sac not much happens until, suddenly, one year in autumn the peace and tranquillity is shattered by constant deliveries from various couriers and posties. What the hell is happening here? She obviously wonders but, being always at home she offers to accept parcels for the said strange Englishman.

One day whilst seeing my wife in the street she tells her of another parcel which just arrived but is obviously a little curious as to what’s suddenly happening in her quiet little street.

Without wanting to burden the dear old lady with too many stories of whisky she explains that her strange English husband is like most other strange Englishmen and has a weird hobby which he shares with various other maniacs around the globe.

“Ahh yes” she nods in agreement “they do like their hobbies”.

Since then she’s been an absolute treasure for all of my four years of MMA’ing and I thank her profusely for her help, without which MMA would be much more confusing, delivery-wise.

However, I was quite confused this year to find two notes from DHL in the letter box, one stating that a delivery was with the delightful Mrs “G” (my words not theirs) and another with a certain Mr Grumpy further down the street (again my words not DHL’s). When I reached the door I find another parcel on the doorstep which I duly take in and open before heading along so see Mrs “G” and collect the parcel from her. “Oh no” she says “Mr DHL left you a note because he expected me to be here, but I wasn’t and he left the parcel with Mr. Grumpy”. He apparently then left me the second note saying the parcel was with Mr. Grumpy who wasn’t in when I then tried to visit him.

A couple of days later my wife was passing-by again when Mr Grumpy was in the street clearing fallen leaves and complaining about nature’s untidiness when he asked her if I’d received the parcel he’d accepted from DHL and then left on our doorstep.

So, the suspected three parcels were just the one after all.

Missing in action

Did I say that last comment was my final one? Maybe it’s a good job that wasn’t one of my infamous predictions?

As I’ve been compiling this report over the last few days since the release of our official results last week, I was contacted by one of our usual entrants commenting that their entries weren’t to be found anywhere in our scorecard and as they usually performed quite well, surely they weren’t so bad this year that none of them attained a bronze medal.

“But I didn’t receive any entries from you. The last message I received was that you’re a little delayed in bottling one of the expressions but would hopefully make the deadline.”

To cut a long story short, the entrant is now trying to find out exactly where the person lives who signed for the parcel is it's not a name known to me and certainly not like any name anywhere in this neighbourhood. The mystery continues

So, as another year of MMA draws to a close I'm tempted to make just one last MMA prediction for 2015; as explained earlier in my report this year was more difficult than any other for me thanks to my new job. Perhaps this should be my last year of MMA and hand the reigns over to someone else?

No, sod that prediction. See you in 2015 everyone Even if it means I need to find another new job.



Keith Wood is a relic of the late 1950's and a self-proclaimed Old Luddite. He currently lives in Bavaria and is married to the delightful Sabine who doesn't quite share all his passion for whisky.

He has been one of the Malt Maniac collective since the beginning of 2011 and has organised the last four Malt Maniacs Awards and, although he threatens "second thoughts" each year at the end of MMA, he's looking forward to continuing to organise them for many more years to come.

Slàinte Mhath,
Keith Wood