



Object of the Newsletter

To promote the appreciation of fine Scotch Whisky, the area from which it comes, the people that inhabit the land and it's history. By the way, I do not profess to be an expert, I am merely expressing an opinion on the whiskies I am tasting.

I now look at the Springbank "Longrow Peated", I stumbled across a bottle in Nugget Market in Vacaville, California a week before I was due to leave for the whisky school at Springbank in Campbeltown in Scotland. This is a No Age Statement (NAS) whisky, it is also non-chill Filtered and comes in at 46% which is a touch higher than the standard 43% we normally have here in America.

This; like every other Springbank I have tasted, is worth the money and I will replace the bottle when it's finished (that will be soon). It does have a little heat on the first taste, possibly a younger whisky? Or just the fact that it is a little stronger than normal, either way it does not detract from a nice tasting dram. If you haven't already guessed, yes I like it and yes I recommend it.

If I had a complaint that I would lay at the feet of the makers of Springbank whiskies, it's that they don't produce enough whisky, and Therefore, you tend not to see them in your local bar that often. However, having just done the whisky school there I now know why that is, they still do everything the old way, apart from the bottling, which is semi automatic. It's all about people making whisky, not machines and computers.

You can buy Springbank "Longrow Peated" for around \$40.00 a bottle.

Tasting Notes;

Nose - Vanilla custard, smoke, fruit & toasted marshmallows

Palate - Rich, creamy, smokey & slightly medicinal

Finish - Lingering smoke

"Slainte Mhath"

Paul Bissett





Springbank Whisky School

David McDonald and myself (from Northern California, although I was born and raised in Scotland) had decided to indulge our predilection for all things whisky and do a whisky school. This took place over five days at the Springbank distillery in Campbeltown, on the Kintyre peninsula in Scotland. My wife Tracey, had decided to humor us and amused herself looking around town, while we play at whisky making. David, Tracey and I stayed at the Ardshiel hotel, about a five minute walk from the distillery, which by chance has around 750 whiskies in its bar. It's true, if you are good, karma pays you back!

Day one

We arrive at the distillery and meet our fellow class members who are (in no particular order) Roger from Switzerland, Kent from Sweden, Paul from England, Gaetan from Belgium. All of whom were staying at the recommended B & B "Feorlin", on Longrow, two minutes from the distillery. We also meet our headmaster for the course Frank McHardy and the distillery manager Gavin McLachlan. We are given our course book and a very nice Springbank distillery jacket, which under normal circumstances I would have expected to wear during the course, but no, the weather was fantastic for the whole course.

We are each allocated a job in the distillery, David and I are sent to the bottling hall, which is semi-automated. Our first job was to fill the bottles with whisky; David placed 4 bottles and pressed two buttons, pipes came down and filled the exact amount of whisky.



Filling and corking the whisky bottles



Below is a simple guide to help you choose your single malt Whisky, and the flavor notes you should expect from it. Being Scottish I recommend you find a likely candidate and try it in a bar before buying the whole bottle. This Issue; [Springbank "Longrow Peated"](http://www.springbankwhisky.com). For more information go to <http://www.springbankwhisky.com>





Springbank Whisky School cont.

He then passed the bottles to me and I put corks in them, before passing them onto a young lady who held the bottles against a light source to check there were no foreign bodies in the bottle. She then passed them on to the next stage where a cap was put on the cork. The bottle is now placed on a conveyor which takes it to the first label stop, where the bottle is placed (by hand) into the labeler and a foot pedal is pressed causing a label to be pasted onto the back of the bottle. When I took my turn at this station, I forgot to take my foot of the pedal and the labels kept on coming, I must have had about a dozen labels stuck on before I realized what I was doing. The bottle is put back on the conveyor to the next labeling position before being sent along to label quality control and packaging. This was the most fun station as, six of us stood checking the labels and putting the bottles in the boxes, which allowed for many humorous jibes at David and myself (the rookies). As an unexpected bonus, after work Julie Brown, the Bottling Hall Supervisor gave us each a glass of 18-year-old Springbank to toast my birthday, Karma and timing strike again.

Day two

We start the day Stenciling the whisky's details on the lid of the barrel. Filling barrels (250 liter Hogsheads) with new make spirit, it's not called whisky until it's spent at least three years in an oak barrel. Then rolling the barrels through the distillery to the warehouse, where they are racked to mature.

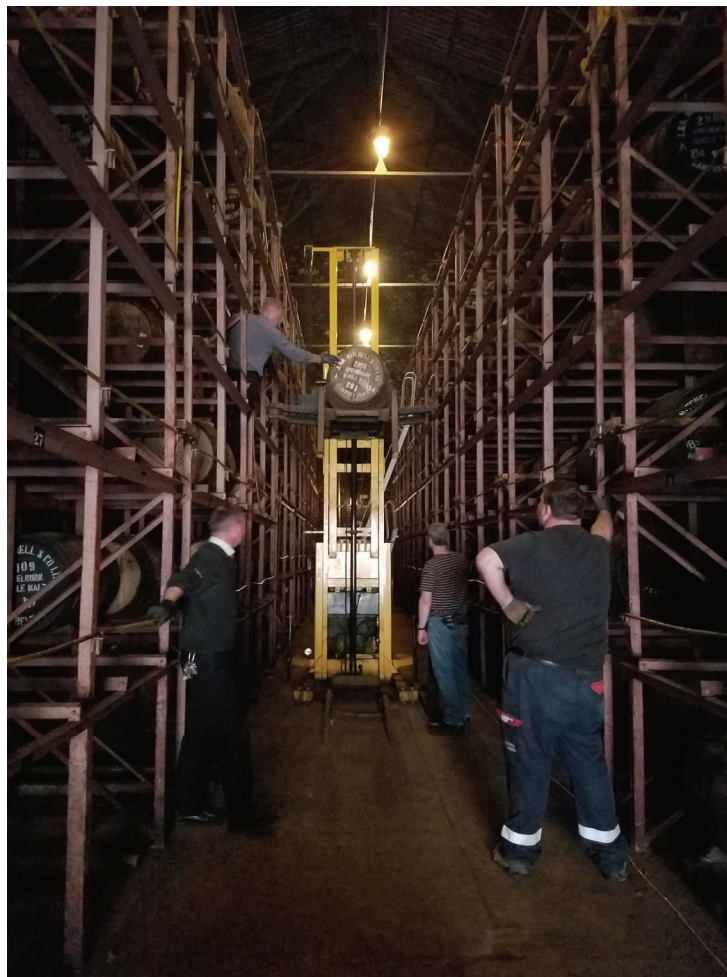


Roll out the barrel



Springbank Whisky School cont.

The process of racking the barrels is well worth watching, one person climbs up to the relevant shelf and calls down how he wants the barrel to start rolling off the lift onto the rack. The object is to have the bung at the top of the barrel as it sits in the rack, so there is no spillage, this is achieved by thinking of the barrel as a clock face, with the bung at "noon". The person on the rack calls down "noon", 12:15, 11:45, 11:30, etc. Whatever starting position, will make the bung finish on the top after it has rolled along the rack, clever stuff.



Racking the barrels



Springbank Whisky School cont.

In the afternoon we observe the grinding of the barley and watch the Mash Tun fill up with the Mash (ground barley and hot water). The mash looks like a huge pot of porridge (oatmeal), and much to my surprise is almost unbearably sweet.



Mash Tun

Day three

We start the day on the Malting floor where the barley is drying, The barley has to be turned three times a day to stop the shoots from binding with each other.



Barley shoots bound together



Springbank Whisky School cont.

The old school way of doing this is to use flat wooden paddles and toss the barley over your shoulder. We get to turn the barley over, which was hard work in itself, but the next day was a lot harder.



Barley paddle

In the afternoon we observed the three part distillation process.



Stills



Springbank Whisky School cont.

Day four

There is six tons of wet barley in the "steep" that needs to be taken out and laid evenly on the maltings floor. This is what hard work feels like. The barley is shoveled through two manholes in the bottom of the "steep" to the floor below. We go downstairs and fill wheelbarrows then spread the barley around.



Day five

In the morning we are taken for a walking tour around Campbeltown, our guides Frank and Gavin point out the sites of some of the major distilleries, now gone. We pay a visit to Glen Scotia and Glen Gyle distilleries and make our way to the Cadenhead tasting rooms on Longrow for a buffet lunch. In the afternoon we take our exam to see if we've been paying attention. As we are all whisky geeks the exam is a formality and we are all presented with our certificates and our own individual bottle of Springbank whisky, with our own label on it.

