

# The Balmoral opens dedicated whisky bar



The Balmoral has opened another bar. But not just any bar; this is a dedicated whisky bar with barmen who have been professionally coached in their knowledge of the amber nectar, and who can engage with you about the whisky of your choice. They are elegantly attired in kilts from Kinloch Anderson and they know how to mix a cocktail or two, if a straightforward nip is too much for you.

The hotel responded to a guest who asked for help in finding a good whisky bar by sending him out of the hotel, and it occurred to them that what they believe is the most iconic building in Edinburgh should be able to offer Scotland's iconic product in house. Thus, Scotch was born.

At the opening last night, The Edinburgh Reporter (not normally a whisky drinker) was introduced to a whisky cocktail called a Mashtun, which had journalist Roddy Martine and whisky expert Charles MacLean, both oohing and aaahing over it. It was a delicate mix of a 10 year-old Benromach along with cranberry juice, apple juice, gomme and grapefruit bitters served over ice and garnished with a twist of lemon. Very delicious!

Whisky expert, Charlie MacLean, has given support and advice to Rocco Forte Hotels on the set up of their new whisky bar. (You will remember him from the film, The Angel's Share)

He said:-“This week the Scotch Whisky Association announced figures for Scotch whisky sales which are up 19% on the same period last year. Diageo and Pernod Ricard have committed over £1bn on the production of Scotch in Scotland and all of this shows that the whisky industry is important.

“Wherever we go in the world as ambassadors for Scotch we always find exceptional bars to drink whisky in – with knowledgeable bar staff and a huge range of whiskies. Sadly there are none of these in Scotland and this has been an embarrassment. The establishment of Scotch will now give us somewhere to entertain whisky connoisseurs or whisky journalists from abroad of the same standard as those whisky bars I have visited elsewhere.

“Drink whisky with Coca Cola if you wish, but there are two basic elements in the **appreciation** of whisky:- one is glassware and the second is water. In the trade we always use water to taste whisky. We never use ice as that closes down the aroma. I was sceptical of the Uisge Source waters which are being provided here at Scotch, but I have now had my eyes opened during our tasting here today, and I think that the decision to partner with these waters is a unique selling point for this new bar.”

The Uisge Source waters are from exclusive private springs in three main regions of Scotland, Speyside, Islay and the Highlands, close to the leading distilleries. They are designed to complement the whisky’s original character.

The bar has been formed in what was a little used room to the right of the front door and furnished with comfortable golden and chocolate velvet armchairs, neutral tweed sofas and amber coloured walls all designed by Rocco Forte Hotels Deputy Chairman, Olga Polizzi, to create a Highland feel.

A wall with over 400 whiskies on display from Scotland’s traditional whisky regions including Speyside, Islay, Campbeltown, the Islands, the Highlands and the Lowlands in a variety of blends, malts and vintages dating back to 1940 completes the interior of what might well become a favoured venue for a wee dram after a long day. Food will also be on offer from a menu of contemporary Scottish dishes, designed by the The Balmoral’s Executive Chef Jeff Bland, also

offers guests a taste of the finest local produce in SCOTCH including home cured whisky and honey salmon, seared west coast scallops, traditional haggis neeps and tatties and Blairgowrie fillet.

A glass of whisky in SCOTCH ranges from £4 to £85 a dram and is served with a selection of bar snacks including smoked almonds, wild boar salami and dark Swiss chocolate, selected to compliment the wide variety of whisky flavours on offer.

SCOTCH is open Monday to Sunday from 10am to 1am. For further information or to make a reservation call 0131 524 7142 or email [scotch@roccofortehotels.com](mailto:scotch@roccofortehotels.com)

