

Unique whisky sold at Edinburgh auction

The oldest single malt whisky ever bottled at one of Scotland's most famous reawakened distilleries, Brora, in Sutherland, fetched £400,000 at a charity auction at Hopetoun House.

The 50-year-old Brora Iris came in a 1.5 litre decanter suspended in a limestone sculpture to resemble the eye of a Scottish Wildcat, the animal emblem of Brora Distillery.

The only one of its kind, the whisky was donated by Diageo, the distillery's owner, to The Distillers' One of One Charity Auction at Hopetoun House near Edinburgh.

It was expected to attract bids in excess of £200,000, and was sold to an anonymous bidder for £400,000 – equivalent to around £10,000 per dram.

The Distillers' One of One was the second in a biennial series of auctions led by The Distillers' Charity, the philanthropic arm of The Worshipful Company of Distillers, in partnership with Sotheby's.

Proceeds from the sale will be donated to The Distillers' Charity, principally to the Youth Action Fund dedicated to transforming the lives of young people in Scotland.

The historic single malt was the first 50-year-old and oldest whisky ever released from Brora Distillery, which closed in

1983 and reopened in 2021.

Jonny Fowle, Head of Whisky at Sotheby's, said it was "a great pleasure" to be able to offer the "one off art piece and incredible whisky" for sale.

He added: "Having tasted it myself, I can say that this is a truly exceptional Brora."

Brora Distillery, founded in 1819, garnered early acclaim for the quality of its spirit and craftsmanship.

When the stills fell silent in 1983, Brora earned world renown as one of the "lost icons" of the whisky world. Historic bottlings sought out by collectors at auction regularly fetch record sums.

In 2021 distilling recommenced at Brora after the distillery was meticulously restored as part of a major investment by Diageo.

It now welcomes small groups of visitors by appointment only in limited numbers and releases highly sought whisky from its "ghost" stock.

Brora Iris was distilled in 1972 and bottled last year after maturing for five decades.

Brora Master Blender Dr Craig Wilson described it as "a style that has come to define the Brora iconic status".

The sculpture was hewn from the same limestone that was used to build Brora Distillery, by Scots-based sculptor and artist Michelle De Bruin. It is crowned by a bronze wildcat that doubles as a key to the decanter, cast by leading wildlife sculptor Jonathan Knight.

The winning bidder and new owner of the unique Brora Iris will be invited to explore the reawakened distillery with five guests, guided by distillery host Andrew Flatt through "an

exquisite tasting experience”.

Javier Ferrán, Diageo Chairman, said they were “delighted to be able to support The Distiller’s Charity with the donation of Brora Iris” to the auction.

He added: “We look forward to seeing the industry’s contribution benefit the young people and communities that the charity supports across the length and breadth of Scotland.”



