



THE 
Committee

Rules

AND

Regulations

NOTES FROM THE
CHAIRMAN



MISSION STATEMENT

It's a quirky fact that Islay, with a population of just 3,000, has more than 140 Committees. So in keeping with the whisky-celebrating spirit of the island, we have established our own Ardbeg Committee here at the Distillery. No matter how near or far, our members share a common purpose: to celebrate the re-awakening of Ardbeg and dispense drams to those deprived of knowledge about The Ultimate Islay Malt Whisky.



THIS LITTLE BOOK IS MOST RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO MEMBERS OF THE ARDBEG COMMITTEE AND IS DEDICATED TO THE ORIGINAL FOUNDERS OF THE DISTILLERY.

IT IS INTENDED THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN SHALL FACILITATE THE ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WITH REGARD TO ARDBEG SINGLE ISLAY MALT WHISKY IN THE EXPECTANT HOPE THAT THE DISTILLERY SHALL REMAIN OPEN AND PROSPEROUS FROM THIS DAY ON (i.e. please drink Ardbeg).

Distillery Manager and Committee Chairman
Founded on The First Day of the First Month in the Year Two Thousand AD.

Note: Words importing the singular number only shall include the plural number, and vice versa.

Words importing the masculine gender only shall include the feminine gender.

Usage of the word Ardbeg shall always include Single Islay Malt Whisky: The Ultimate Islay Malt.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Section 1

1. The name of the Committee is “The Ardbeg Committee”.
2. The Committee is the umpteenth Committee to be established on the Isle of Islay, Inner Hebrides, Scotland.
3. The registered office of the Committee will be situated at Ardbeg Distillery, Islay. Members are welcome to visit the Distillery in person or at www.ardbeg.com.

Section 2

4. The Committee is established for the object of promoting the advancement of general knowledge and enjoyment of Ardbeg.
5. Responsibilities of membership are primarily to enhance the member’s own quality of life through greater understanding and consumption of The Ultimate Islay Malt Whisky.
6. Moreover, members are expected to actively pursue a serious and altruistic duty: to bring others into the Ardbeg fold. The result of the collective effect of this is to increase worldwide consumption, thereby ensuring that the doors of Ardbeg Distillery shall never close again.

Section 3

Tactics to help achieve the aim set out in Section 2 Paragraph 6 above:

7. Join any society, association, club (sports or otherwise), charitable organisation, body, amalgamate, institution, establishment or committee, formed for the purposes of alcoholic enjoyment or otherwise and form new friendships throughout the community.
8. Do all lawful things deemed as necessary to gain the attention of the person within your company identified as someone unaware of the delights of Ardbeg.

9. Once attention is gained, prepare the individual to have a dram of Ardbeg placed in their hand. Select from the vicinity either Ardbeg 10 Years Old, 17 Years Old or another Ardbeg Vintage, depending on your available budget and personal inclination.
10. You will find it advantageous to refer to the Notes of the Chief Noser contained on pp12-16, to fully inform the individual concerned of the experience they are about to enjoy. After this, silence may be best observed, so that every one of their senses may be focused upon the malt. After all, tasting is more properly termed ‘sensory evaluation’.

Sub-section a:

11. If possible, prepare the area so that there are no strong odours in the room by opening windows to rid the room of smells from cooking, fresh paint and smoke. Bear in mind that wearing perfume, aftershave and even using scented hand-soap can have a detrimental effect on the aroma of a dram.

Sub-section b:

12. Select a glass: a tulip-shaped glass is preferable as it will collect and concentrate the aromas. Pour the dram. Encourage the recipient to observe the colour of the malt before they swirl it around within the glass and nose it: first over the top for the bouquet then deeply into it for the aroma. Depending on their personal preference, encourage them to try the malt without water initially. Adding a splash of water will help to unlock the aromas and awaken the spirit. Enjoy.

Sub-section c:

13. Seduction is an important part of falling for Ardbeg. Drop little sayings into the conversation that will help the individual to understand what makes Ardbeg so special, and generally create an atmosphere conducive to the relaxed enjoyment of their dram. Something especially vital if the tasting is taking place a long way from Scotland. Refer to Appendix A pp7-9 for inspiration.

Sub-section d:

- Note that in the eighteenth century whisky-lovers were fond of ‘tongue scraping’ to keep their taste buds fresh. This involved drawing a little whalebone strip often mounted with a silver handle, across the surface of the tongue. The practice of this today is uncommon, but not unknown.

Section 4

Rights of Members

- Subject as hereinafter provided, every ordinary member shall have one vote, when his vote is requested to be cast on extraordinary occasions.
- Save as herein expressly provided, every ordinary member is entitled to claim one free dram upon his visit to the home of The Ardbeg Committee.

Section 5

Activities deemed to contravene the spirit of the Committee.

- The office of a member shall be vacated if:

He becomes of unsound mind to the extent that he develops a preference for a different spirit; or

He is directly or indirectly connected with the dilution of any dram of Ardbeg Single Islay Malt Whisky with any substance other than water.

Section 6

Defensive procedure for the Ardbeg drinker disinclined to share.

- If you feel inclined to hide your bottles of Ardbeg away from scavengers, then the following information may be of use to you. (Taken from historical records of the ways in which illicitly distilled bottles of Ardbeg were hidden: the methods employed when an excise man was seen approaching).

Hide bottles under the skirts of pregnant ladies.

Hide bottles under the blankets of newborn babies.

Hide bottles in coffins.

Send out a decoy: a drunken man who will lead the pursuant the wrong way.

APPENDIX A:

Contextual narrative support for use when dispensing or consuming your drams:

- A.1 *“It’s heaven’s own nectar, you know. Different to anything else. If you knew exactly the amount to take each day, you could live forever.”*
Alistair Cunningham, former Distillery Manager
- A.2 *“This is smart stuff”*
Uttered by John Keats as he tasted his first ever dram

Old Scottish sayings and verse:

- A.3 *Pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower; its bloom is shed,
Or like the snowflake in the river,
Are moment there, then gone forever.
Unknown*
- A.4 *From the lone sheiling of the misty island
Mountains divide us, and a waste of seas –
Yet still the blood is true, and the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.
Unknown*
- A.5 *Scotland is bounded on the South by England,
On the East by the rising sun, on the North by
The arory-bory Alice, and on the West by eternity.
Unknown*
- A.6 *“Freedom and whisky gang thegither”*
Unknown

A.7 “Two things a Highlander likes naked, and one of them is a malt whisky”!
Unknown

A.8 “This great, potent and princely drink”
Aenas MacDonald

A.9 “Whisky to breakfast, whisky to dinner, whisky to supper, whisky when you meet a friend, whisky over all business meetings whatsoever, whisky before you go into the Kirk, whisky when you come out, whisky when you are about to take a journey, whisky all along the road, whisky at the journey’s end, whisky when you are well, whisky if you be sick; whisky almost as soon as you are born; whisky when you are joined in matrimony, whisky the last thing before you die – that is Scotland.”
TWH Crosland – *The Unspeakable Scot*

A.10 “Heaths administer it in colds, fevers and fainting, and it is a frequent prayer of theirs that “God may keep them from the disorder that whisky will not cure.”
An C18 traveller

Drinking songs

A.11 We’re a dry
We’re a dry wi’ the drinkin’ o’ it,
The minister kissed the fiddler’s wife
And he couldna preach for thinkin’ o’ it.

A.12 Bring the bowl from which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim,
Here’s to him we love most,
And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up,
And advance ye, base carls,
Were there death in the cup,
Here’s a health to King Charles
Sir Walter Scott

On the road to Ardbeg

A.13 “The next morning we were astir early exploring the town and sea-shore, after which we partook of a substantial breakfast and started on our way to Ardbeg, distant four miles. The road mostly followed the coast line, but frequently a turn led us almost to the water’s edge. The shore is mostly rocky and dangerous, in many places huge masses of rock rise from the surface of the sea, forming tiny islets round and over which the swell rises and falls in impressive grandeur. Every now and then as we drove along, the scene assumed a new aspect; now we would come suddenly upon some little picturesque bay fringed with fantastic and peculiar shaped rocks, or ascending a gentle hill some inland view of green slopes and heather covered hills would reveal itself, which lent a happy contrast to the wild sea-grit shore. Nearly all the way we had in sight the opposite coast of Kintyre, and almost fancied we could distinguish the long coach road to Tarbet, which we had traversed the day before. Journeying along we were continually reminded by the ruins of castles and churches that we were on one of the most historic islands of Scotland, in the land of romance and the home of the ‘Lord of the Isles’, rendered classic by one of Sir Walter Scott’s finest poems. As we reached the top of a hill, a sudden view of beautiful Ardbeg... presented itself to view and recalled our minds from romantic wanderings.”
Extract from *The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom* by Alfred Barnard, 1886.

A.14 “...where the peat is burned, which is dug from a hill two miles distant. The chief characteristic of the splendid peat used in Ardbeg is the absence of sulphur or other offensive mineral, the composition of peat being purely vegetable deposit, not highly decomposed, some of the organisms being still traceable in the prepared peat.”
Extract from *The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom* by Alfred Barnard, 1886.

And from a visitor to our website:

A.15 “First, let me express our admiration for this unique product, the world’s best whisky ever made...we are constantly working on the ‘Ardbegisation’ of colleagues and friends, still wasting their money on toxic waste. But we will take the glory of Ardbeg to people...so we are from a mission from God.”
Bernhard Säiler, Switzerland-Austria-France-Germany

APPENDIX B

Points of Note with regard to the distillation process at Ardbeg Distillery.

- B.1** The malting of the barley takes place at Port Ellen maltings, which supplies malt to every distillery on Islay. The barley is malted to Ardbeg's precise specifications – near to 50 parts of peat per million, which is and always has been the most heavily peated malt on Islay. However, as is often stated, the beauty of Ardbeg is that it does not flaunt the peat. In all there are over 150 flavour congeners that create the special taste of Ardbeg Single Islay Malt. Many factors contribute to this, but chiefly it is the inexplicable chemistry that takes place during distillation.
- B.2** Water supply
At Ardbeg we use the soft, pure water that flows naturally down into Ardbeg bay (the very reason for the Distillery's location) from Loch Uigeadail, over rocks and peat masses.
- B.3** Fermentation:
Fermented wash has an alcohol content of around 8% alcohol; therefore the other 92% is water. Thankfully when we boil it in the Wash Still, the alcohol vapours evaporate quicker than water. So the whole theory of distillation is to try and leave as much water behind as we possibly can, thereby increasing the strength of the spirit.
- The process of fermentation is much the same in one distillery, indeed brewery, as another. The only unique aspect for Ardbeg is that, due to the higher phenol content of the malt, a longer time is taken in fermentation to enable all the sugars to convert to alcohol.
- B.4** Distillation process:
We distill twice and a bit in order to reach the required strength of the spirit. The first distillation happens in the Wash Still. It is filled with fermented wash and boiled until the alcohol vapours start rising up the neck of the Wash Still. The vapours then reach the

Lyne Arm where they are condensed back into liquid form by the cold water that is continually flowing through the condenser.

On the Lyne Arm is a Purifier: something that is unique to Islay but not to the industry. As the boiling continues in the spirit still, the heavier, impure alcohols reach the top of the still (whereas the initial light alcohols are sweet and fruity). As they are heavier, the impure alcohols are captured in the Purifier and fed back down to the base of the Still. As the boiling process continues these heavier alcohols are broken down into lighter, sweeter alcohols. This acts as nearly an extra distillation. The more you distill, the sweeter the whisky. So the result of the Purifier helps to explain the balance and complexity of Ardbeg, because we are using very heavily peated malt.

After this, the liquid spirit then flows through the spirit safe (which is really a monitoring box) and into a vessel called a Low Wines & Feints Receiver. Any spirit being produced through the Wash Stills is called Low Wines. At Ardbeg we run Low Wines for about 5 hours. At this stage the alcohol content of the spirit is about 25% alcohol which is much too weak and impure to be classed as desired spirit, so we have to distill again. The next distillation is carried out in the Spirit Still. The same boiling and condensing process applies but the major difference is that the strength of the spirit has increased to 74% alcohol, and the quality of the spirit has improved dramatically. However, because there is still an element of impurity in the spirit plus the very impure spirit in the pipelines from the previous distillation, we run the initial 15 minutes of the spirit back to where it came from – the Low Wines & Feints Receiver. This 15 minutes of spirits is called Foreshots.

After 15 minutes the spirit is of the highest quality: pure, sweet and around 75% alcohol. At this stage the stillman will divert the spirit into a vessel called the Intermediate Spirit Receiver. This is the start of the Spirit Cut i.e. the spirit that will eventually be filled into casks. We run on spirit for around 4.5 hours, until the strength is about 61% alcohol. At this strength the alcohol is beginning to show off notes i.e. impurities so we divert it back to the Low Wines & Feints Receiver for further distillation.

Tasting Notes

Revered by connoisseurs as a truly extraordinary whisky, Ardbeg Single Islay Malt Whisky stands alone as the most delicate and complex of all the Islay malts. Its strength is that it does not flaunt the peat; rather it gives way to the malt, the natural sweetness of which subtly intrudes and produces the perfect balance.

And balance is the key. All Islay malts are special, but only Ardbeg has achieved such effortless harmony which sets it apart from the rest.

A Vintage is declared when we discover casks from a particular year, which, during maturation, have developed extra special characteristics.

ARDBEG 10 YEARS OLD

“Whisky as it used to be”

46% ALC/VOL (Non chill-filtered)

Colour Light gold

Aroma Exceptional balance and depth. At full strength, the aroma is a beguiling mix of toffee and chocolate sweetness, cinnamon spice and medicinal phenols. Fresh citrus and floral notes of white wine are evident, as are melon, pear drops and a gentle creaminess. There is also the fresh phenolic aroma of seaspray and smoked fish. Hickory and coffee emerge later as the most volatile top notes fade.

With water, the depth of the peat opens up, at once revealing layers of phenols with gristy peat and leather followed by medicinal phenols (carbolic soap) and a whiff of wood smoke. However, the sweetness of vanilla and the fragrance of citrus fruits are never far behind, maintaining the balance and intrigue.

Taste An initial moderate and clean sweetness is rapidly followed by a mouthful of deep peat notes, with tobacco smoke and strong espresso coffee, which then gives way to treacle sweetness and liquorice.

The mouthfeel is firstly lightly spiced, then chewing, and mouthwatering and full, finally drying.

Finish Long and smoky. A smoky sweetness is left on the palate, with a crushed peat and sweet-malted cereal character.

ARDBEG 17 YEARS OLD

“Lord of the Islays”

40% ALC/VOL

Nose The gentlest of peats, yet deep and confident with an enticing sweetness – a heady mixture of malts and vanillins. Vaguely salty and very complex with the oak present, but very much in harness. Just a hint of bourbon with an even fainter hint of tangy orange to widen the spectrum.

Taste There is a much greater presence of peat in the taste than the nose suggests. The smokiness quickly hits the palate and then tapers off. That said, the middle shows an excellent chewy malt alongside a touch of cocoa.

Finish The peat returns and guarantees an enormously long finale. The taste of the malt clings and hints of liquorice and dry toast are detected. This form of oakiness continues, but never becomes sappy or too dry as the peat balances this out beautifully.

ARDBEG 1975 VINTAGE

“Fabulous, absolutely divine”

43% ALC/VOL

Nose Sweet and floral. Not only is there some heather in there, but also a hint of lavender. The smoke is gentle and unassuming, more happy to interplay with the oak to create these delicate floral tones. The great age can be detected by the faintest waft of pine, but the malt hangs together with effortless poise. The nose is as beguiling as it is complex.

Taste The peatiness makes quite a staggering entry. On the nose it has been slightly shy and retiring. As it hits the palate you see an altogether different character; immediately huge and mouth-filling, it seems to take a special fancy to the roof of the mouth where an almost sensual oiliness allows it to cling for ages. Attached to this peatiness is quite a delicious and teasingly slow build up of cocoa as the oak again superbly interacts with the phenols.

Finish This is again what you pray for from an Ardbeg: a long, almost never-ending finish with the peat refusing to leave the stage. There is an almost lingering sweetness, which lasts right through from the very first taste. The oak does add its usual vanilla character and the malt also makes its presence felt as a constant within the sweetness, but everything is very low key and supremely weighted.

ARDBEG PROVENANCE

“As close to perfection as
makes no difference”
55.6% ALC/VOL

Notes

Cask strength and non chill-filtered. A limited edition to commemorate the rebirth of the Ardbeg Distillery. Each bottle is individually numbered, with the bottle seal dipped in wax and then encased in an oak wooden box. A signed certificate accompanies the presentation.

Nose Simmering peat, almost oily in its composition, and a rich bourbon character unaccustomedly weighed down under the heavy smoke. The malt is pretty intense also, but it is the peat and the oak, which are supreme.

Taste Soft malt makes an early start, but then the smokiness begins to intensify. Cocoa/chocolate also comes through and it is this cocoa which constitutes the centre stage of this whisky’s taste which is chewy and enormously deep and powerful.

Finish Incredible complexity. The intensity of the malt, peat and cocoa has made for a deep, rich complex start. Now things settle down a little with the oak having the first say before the malt kicks in with just a hint of fruity ripeness. At last comes the smoke, perked up with a sprinkle of peppers, and these form a gentle partnership with late bourbon-style oakiness. The finish is long, even by Ardbeg standards.

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