

19 May 2017

ONE OF THE WORLD'S RAREST WHISKIES SELLS AT AUCTION Oldest official bottling of 1972 Brora sold for £14,500

The oldest official bottle of Brora whisky, distilled in 1972, has been sold at auction by Bonhams in Hong Kong today (19 May 2017).

The exceptionally rare single bottle, which has spent 44 years ageing in an ex-sherry butt in Scotland, was purchased by an unnamed buyer for £14,500.

As the only bottle to have been drawn from the cask, it offers its new owner a taste of true rarity.

Richard Walker, Global Head of Malts at Diageo, said: "The 1972 Brora is an exquisite single malt with unparalleled history and heritage. It represents the pinnacle of Diageo's single malt Scotch whisky reserves and appeals to epicureans, collectors and investors alike.

"Over the last few years we've seen a rapid growth of interest in rare and collectable whiskies. High-end whisky collection is undoubtedly a growing trend and as such we've seen an increase in the auction market for this kind of rare bottling.

"With connoisseurs all over the world aspiring to have a 1972 Brora on their shelves, we decided to give whisky lovers a rare opportunity to bid for this one-off bottle. The fact that it has been sold for over the estimated price speaks volumes about its allure."

Filled at very high strength, the 44-year-old Brora expression is a rare survivor from a golden age after the Brora Distillery closed in 1983, never to reopen. It is described as "a massive, brooding and drying old Brora that is seemingly made of smoke, oak, pepper, dark fruit all encrusted in sea-salt then wrapped in seaweed and oilskins".

Martin Green, Bonhams Whisky Specialist in Edinburgh, added: "This was a very special bottle of whisky – a true one off - and I am not surprised that it was contested so fiercely nor that it sold for such an impressive price."

The 1972 Brora bottle was taken from a single cask that is a part of Diageo's 'Casks of Distinction'. As part of this programme, Diageo gives selected private clients the chance to purchase single casks that have extraordinary quality and character. As each cask is entirely unique, patrons become the sole owners of some of the rarest whiskies ever to be released from Diageo's extensive collection.

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Media enquiries

3x1 Public Relations

Tel: +44 (0)141 221 0707 / +44(0)7824 817 977

avallance@3x1.com / gmckendry@3x1.com

Diageo Press Office

Tel: +44(0)20 8978 2749 (24 hour)

press@diageo.com

Notes for editors

The sale of the 1972 Brora bottle took place on Friday 19 May 2017 at 12.00 GMT (19.00 HKT) as part of Bonham's 'Fine & Rare Wine, Cognac and Whisky' auction. To find out more please visit: www.bonhams.com/auctions/. The estimate selling price range of the 1972 Brora bottle was £6,000 - £8,000.

Bottle size: 70cl

ABV: 58.6%

Drawn from cask: #4817

Brora 1972 tasting notes

A massive, brooding and drying old Brora, seemingly made of smoke, oak, pepper, dark fruit and fire. Still astonishingly powerful, it takes water well. In colour a burnished honey-gold, it shows smoke, oilskins and rich, dark bittersweet notes on the nose, with hints of the beach and a big, woody bonfire. It has a savoury, earthy, very peppery centre.

With a good splash of water, it is quickly smoky, spicy, peppery and (always) nose-drying. The taste starts bitter-sweet and smooth with sea-salt, pepper and spicy oak-wood. Water (a good splash) brings up the spicy, smoky sweetness and smooth texture, with the pepper now more cooling. Drying on the palate throughout, and in the finish.

About Brora Distillery

Originally known as the Clynelish Distillery, production began in Brora Distillery on the north-east coast of Scotland in 1819 with the backing of the Marquess of Stafford. In the late 1960s it was decided to expand production by building a new distillery, with the old distillery eventually being used to supply a need for heavily peated whisky for blending. Between 1972-74 production of 'Brora' was in batches, becoming regular in 1975 when the distillery itself was officially renamed Brora. It was however only produced until 1983, when the distillery was closed, never to reopen.

About Diageo

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands across spirits, beer and wine categories. These brands include Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B, Buchanan's, and Windsor whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness.

Diageo is a global company, and our products are sold in more than 180 countries around the world. The company is listed on both the London Stock Exchange (DGE) and the New York Stock Exchange (DEO). For more information about Diageo, our people, our brands, and performance, visit us at www.diageo.com. Visit Diageo's global responsible drinking resource, www.DRINKiQ.com, for information, initiatives, and ways to share best practice.

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About Casks of Distinction

The Casks of Distinction programme represents the pinnacle of exclusivity and rarity in Diageo's single malt Scotch whiskies offered to selected private clients.

Diageo possesses an unparalleled depth and breadth of single malt Scotch whisky reserves, around eight million casks from 28 operating and 11 closed malt distilleries. Single casks that have an extraordinary quality and character are set aside as "Casks of Distinction" and made available for purchase by invited private clients, before bottling and while the cask continues to mature in Scotland. Once the cask has been bottled, each bottle is serialised and hallmarked with the patron's signature, including maturation and date of bottling details.

About Bonhams

Bonhams, founded in 1793, is one of the world's largest and most renowned auctioneers of fine art and antiques, motor cars and jewellery. The main salerooms are in London, New York, Los Angeles and Hong Kong, with sales also held in Knightsbridge, Edinburgh, Paris, San Francisco and Sydney.

With a worldwide network of offices and regional representatives in 22 countries, Bonhams offers sales advice and valuation services in 60 specialist areas. For a full listing of forthcoming sales, plus details of Bonhams specialist departments, please visit www.bonhams.com.

For further information on Bonhams or the 'Fine & rare wine, cognac and whisky' auction on 19 May 2017, contact Andrew Currie on +44 (0)20 7468 5871 / andrew.currie@bonhams.com / press@bonhams.com.