

Protected spirit name

Product Specification for 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky'/'Wisgi Cymreig Brag Sengl'

Date of application 12 August 2021

File number S0006

Competent Authority

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Applicant

Name: Welsh Whisky Association

Nationality: Welsh

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Penderyn Distillery, Pontpren, RCT CF44 0SX

Legal status, size and composition (in the case of legal persons):

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The Welsh Whisky Association currently comprises of the five Welsh distilleries listed below: -

- Penderyn Distillery, Pontpren, RCT CF44 0SX
- Aberfalls Distillery, Abergwyngregyn, Llanfairfechan Gwynedd, LL330LB
- Dà Mhile Distillery, Glynhynod Farm, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA445JY
- Coles Distillery, White Hart Inn, Llanddarog, Carmarthen, SA328NT
- In the Welsh Wind Distillery, Gorgeddan Arms, Tan-yr-groes, Cardigan, SA432HP

Intermediary (if applicable)

Third-country authority:

Name(s) of intermediary(ies):

Full address(es):

Telephone:

Email:

1. Name to be registered

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky'/'Wisgi Cymreig Brag Sengl'

(In Welsh Wisgi can also be spelt Wysgi and Chwisgi)

2. Category or categories of the spirit drink

'Whisky' - Category 2 as defined in the Spirits Regulation 110/2008

3. Description of the characteristics of the spirit drink

3.1 Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is classified as a 'Whisky' as defined by Spirits Drink; Regulation Annex II Categories of Spirit Drink – Category 2.

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' - is a whisky distilled exclusively at a single Welsh distillery and is made from the natural raw materials, 100% malted barley, Welsh water and yeast.

Chemical characteristics

All 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' has a minimum alcoholic strength of 40% ABV

Organoleptic characteristics

The organoleptic characteristics of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky', highlights contemporary and interesting flavour profiles, compared to more traditional whiskies and is described as a 'New World' style whisky which is recognised for 'lightness of character". The innovative differences in complexity of aromas and flavours profiles, are championed by individual Welsh distilleries. Although, there are a diversity of aromas and flavours there are still common characteristics, as shown below: -

Category of Welsh Whisky		Independent organoleptic evaluation
Single Malt Welsh Whisky	Appearance	Varies from light gold to dark amber. The colour is

		influenced by the type of maturation casks chosen.
	Flavour and aroma	Light and delicate style with a complex but balanced character. Smooth, clean sweet, fruity and less oily with a 'lack of grittiness and earthiness' associated with more traditional whiskies

* The flavour characteristics of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky', below, are independently provided by Dominic Roskrow (DR)- globally recognised whisky critic, judge and author.

3.2 Specific characteristics (compared to spirit drinks of the same category)

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is classified as a 'Whisky' as defined by Spirits Drink; Regulation Annex II Categories of Spirit Drink – Category 2

Key differences compared to spirit drinks of the same category

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is a whisky made exclusively from malted barley from a single Welsh distillery, compared to other types of whisky such as grain whisky and blended whisky:

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is a product that epitomises a strong sense of place and provenance with all production processes undertaken exclusively in Wales.

The climate, geography, and geology of Wales influences both Welsh raw ingredients used in the production of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky', and in product maturation.

Raw ingredients: -

Water – Welsh water enjoys a global reputation for both its abundance and its high quality and is a key factor when considering the location of Welsh distilleries. The availability of a plentiful supply of water is essential in whisky production for all stages All water used in 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' must be sourced from "Welsh origin". The definition of "Welsh origin" is that "the source of the water is located in Wales". The water will vary in character because of the local climate and geology which will contribute to the characteristics of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky'.

Barley – All "'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' must contain barley, with many of the smaller Welsh distilleries sourcing Welsh barley to increase the provenance of their product.

Product maturation

The moderate Welsh climate affects temperature and humidity which influences the rate of maturation and enables the development of particular flavour attributes. The cool moist Welsh climate can result in less overall evaporation losses. In contrast to other 'New World' whiskies from countries where higher humidity and temperature during maturation can result in excessive evaporation losses referred to as the 'angel share'

The mild maritime Welsh climate produces an even maturation creating a smooth tasting and mellow product which varies in colour from light gold to dark amber. This colour development is also influenced by the 'wood strategy' and type of maturation casks chosen by the Welsh distiller.

Distillation process

The Welsh distillers' choice of the shape and type of still used in the distillation process, influences the organoleptic characteristic of the final product, producing a spirit with diverse flavours, championed by individual Welsh distilleries, whilst still retaining common characteristics.

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is produced as a batch process, in contrast to some other whiskies which are produced solely from continuous column stills, it can be distilled in single pots (with or without a column) or in pairs of pot stills. This process typically produces a 'new world' style spirit that is lighter than more traditional, heavier styles of whiskies, typically made from double and triple distillations.

Compared to more traditional whiskies, the distilling process used in Wales, (such as the use of the Faraday still at Penderyn) is relatively 'modern'. This relatively 'modern' distilling process enables Welsh distillers to experiment with distillation cuts and lengths of the spirit to produce a whisky with "which is less oily, and with a lack of grittiness and earthiness, associated with more traditional whiskies" (DR)

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky's' "lightness of character" is a key point of difference which has been recognised in global whisky markets and has won multiple awards and much critical acclaim over the last 15 years.

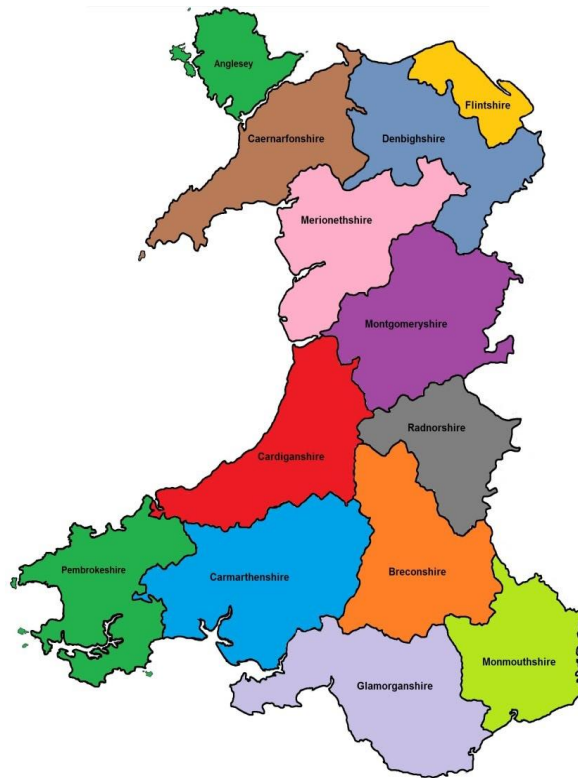
Maturation- 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' has a 'lightness of character' which is not overpowered by excessive wood extracts and tannins and is observed to 'very easily' take on the character of the various kinds of wooden barrels that are used in its maturation, producing a "contemporary, delicate single malt of complex character and flavour" (DR)

Welsh distillers have the flexibility to experiment with their 'wood strategies' to produce innovative whiskies and "to use their skill and creativity to produce whiskies markedly different to other nations" (DR)

By using their skill in both their choice of type of cask and freedom in utilising new, used or rejuvenated casks, Welsh distillers are free to mature the product in a combination of casks and to 'finish' them by transferring them into different casks for accelerated flavour enhancement. 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' may be bottled from as many casks as the Welsh distiller sees fit, or alternatively from a single cask "This flexible approach to cask management makes 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' distinctly different from its UK neighbours" (DR). In contrast for example, Scottish distillers are restricted to only using casks made from oak

4. Definition of the geographical area

The production of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' must take place in the geographical area of the country of Wales.



5. Production method

There are four stages in the production process for 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky':

- Mashing/Brewing
- Fermentation
- Distillation
- Maturation

All these 4 production stages must take place within Wales.

In addition, in order to provide strict control of traceability and authenticity of product, 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is required to be bottled within Wales

Malting of the barley does not have to take place in the designated geographical area, although some of the smaller Welsh distilleries are looking to introduce traditional floor malting facilities.

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' must contain water from 'Welsh origin'.

Mashing/Brewing - preparation of a mash from malted barley

During the mashing process the malted barley is firstly milled and then mixed with hot water and/or recycled brewing liquor which is used to maximize yield and enhances flavour formation. 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is brewed in a batch system. Batches are processed in a conversion vessel and/or a 'mash tun' The resulting liquid is called the

‘wort’ which is collected and prepared for fermentation. To produce ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’, the wort must remain in Wales.

Fermentation - of the brewing liquor (wort) by the action of yeast, to produce an alcoholic wash

The resulting liquid from the mashing /brewing processes is cooled and pumped to tanks known as wash-backs or fermenters where yeast is added and the sugars in the wort are converted to alcohols and other congeners. This fermented liquid is called the “wash”. Various strains of yeast may be used in fermentation. The time of fermentation is decided by individual Welsh distillers depending on the desired characteristics required for their product.

Distillation– to obtain the spirit

Distillation enables the separation and refinement of spirits from the incoming wash and the shape and size of the stills can produce differences in flavour and style. Modification of flavour depends upon distillation time, fractions collected, volumes of fractions recycled and the range of distillate cutting strengths. All of these variables influence the character of the heart of the distillate producing a spirit, individual to each particular Welsh distillery.

‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ is produced as a batch process and can be distilled either in single pots (with or without columns) and/or in pairs of pot stills.

Maturation – to achieve the final product

‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ must be matured in warehouses located in Wales in wooden casks, for a minimum of three years. The whisky must not be exported for further maturation outside of the country of Wales.

The whisky can be matured in a combination of both new, used or rejuvenated wooden casks which may have been previously used to store other alcoholic beverages, e.g., Madeira, Sherry, Port, or Bourbon to accelerate flavour enhancement. ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’s “light and delicate style” has a quicker maturation, (compared to heavier style whiskies) picking up wine and wood flavours to produce a whisky which is “complex but well-balanced”.

Bottling

‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ is required to be bottled within Wales ‘

6. Description of the link between the spirit drink and its geographical origin

6.1 Details of the geographical area or origin relevant to the link

This UK GI application is based on reputation that ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ is a distinct product which is directly linked to its geographical origin.

The link between ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ specificity to Wales, is a combination of both natural factors and human factors.

Natural factors – ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ is influenced by the Wales’s climate, its soils and geology.

Wales has a mild, moderate, maritime climate which is heavily influenced by the Gulf Stream. Sea temperatures influence the air temperatures in Wales and are supplied by the prevailing South Westerly winds off the Atlantic. Extremes of hot or cold are rare and on-shore winds warmed from coastal tides results in a very low occurrence of either frost or snow except at extremes of altitude such as on the Snowdonia Mountain range. Average temperatures range from 20 degrees C in the summer to 6 degrees C in the winter. Wales tends to experience warmer temperatures in general compared to Scotland and is normally cooler and wetter than Ireland.

During maturation, the spirit permeates the casks, and the mild and moderate Welsh climate produces a favourable even maturation. The cool moist climate can result in less overall evaporation losses during the maturation process.

The availability of a plentiful supply of Welsh water is an essential ingredient of ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ and is required throughout the whole whisky production process. All water used in ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ must be from Welsh origin, i.e., the source of the water is located in Wales.

Wales inherently has a high rainfall as a result of topography and its mountainous areas and the arrival of Atlantic low-pressure systems. Total annual rainfalls can exceed 3000mm (118ins) on areas of greatest elevations to 1000mm (39ins) in coastal regions and the Welsh border. This high rainfall in Wales is naturally filtered by the nature and structure of mineral rich local bedrock and layers of rock strata which has been laid down over many millions of years. The varied and complex geology of Wales with rocks outcropping from the Precambrian to the Jurassic periods contributes to the naturally occurring mineral composition (hard or soft water) of Welsh water. The quality of Welsh water is widely recognised as being particularly low in heavy metals due to the relatively lack of pollution in the area, compared to more industrial regions. This is evidenced by the number of large commercial natural water bottling plants having developed in Wales satisfying a growing demand for both natural Welsh mineral and spring water.

The availability of an abundant supply of good quality water, is a key factor (both historically and currently) when deciding where to locate Welsh distilleries. The first Welsh distillery, ‘Frongoch distillery’ was established in Wales in 1887 and was sited where a continuous supply of high-quality water existed. Currently most Welsh distilleries have their own well, borehole and/or spring water supplies, the naturally occurring mineral composition (hard or soft water) of the local water imparts its own particular flavour to the barley particularly during the mashing process.

All “‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ must contain barley, with most of the smaller Welsh distilleries using Welsh barley which has been sourced locally, to increase the provenance of their product.

Wales’s inherent topography, climate and soils means Wales is more suited to livestock farming than arable farming. As a marginal area for growing arable crops, Welsh conditions are more suited to growing cereals such as barley, in contrast to wheat, which has a more demanding requirement for fertile and productive soils. Barley can also tolerate salt and so can be grown in coastal locations affected by salt spray in counties such as Pembrokeshire. Varieties of malting barley which thrive best in Welsh conditions are those

that are more resistant to disease pressure from Wales's wet, moist climate, such as net blotch, rusts and powdery mildew.

Historically in the 1990's, Wales bred its own Welsh malting barley variety – "Pipkin" at IBERS (former Welsh Plant Breeding Station) near Aberystwyth in Ceredigion. The variety was recognised as having:

"Good malting characteristics with the ability to grow well on less fertile heavier soils".

Human factors - 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' combines a respect of whisky production heritage with an innovative and "relatively modern" (DR) approach to distilling.

A knowledge and skill base to produce 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' has developed and has been associated with Wales for over 20 years, since the revival and relaunch of a 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' product by Penderyn distillery on 1 March 2004.

All stages of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' production requires specific skills and expertise, with each Welsh distillery having developed its own skill base and expertise. It is these skills which supplement the influence of Wales's natural factors on the product such as water and climate.

In larger distilleries, each stage of the production process would tend to be overseen by its own specialist, whereas in smaller scale Welsh distilleries, individuals have to be competent and acquire a range of specialisms to oversee the whole production process.

Skill and experience are required to decide the appropriate point to switch between spirit cuts as the distillation sequence proceeds. This is governed by both testing and by sight, nose and taste and requires great skill. Different parts of the sequence impact different flavourings to the whisky. If the cut is made too late, too high a proportion of the tails will result in an unbalanced whisky with unpleasant aromas. Conversely, if the cut is made too early, the spirit will be deprived from some of its components indispensable to achieve a whisky with satisfying character. A heavier whisky can be produced by capturing a greater portion from the later stages of the distillate whilst a lighter spirit such as 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' comes from the middle portion of the run. The essence of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' depends on the exact timings as to when the distiller decides to make these cuts producing a "smooth, clean, sweet and fruity" whisky with "balanced character" (DR)

Wood management - during maturation, the distiller noses and scores each individual cask over many years. At precisely the right time the whisky is disgorged and re-casked. Slowly, the spirit will leach the Madeira (and other finishes) from the oak casks, gaining increased subtlety and complexity. It is only when this process is complete that the distiller allows the spirit to be bottled.

History and reputation of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' being a quality product produced in Wales.

The whisky industry in Wales is an industry which has undergone a revival and now has global reputation for producing innovative whiskies offering a "broad range of flavours and styles". (DR)

The first commercial whisky distillery in Wales was started by two friends Richard John Lloyd Price and Robert Willis in 1887. Two years later, 'The Welsh Whisky Distillery Company' was founded in Frongoch near Bala in Merionethshire North Wales. The location

of this distillery was chosen because of good transport links by rail and port but primarily due to the abundance of a good quality Welsh water from the Tai'r felin springs in Bala. Barley and peat were sourced locally. By the late 1800's Frongoch was the main centre for Whisky production in Wales. Queen Victoria was presented with a cask of Welsh Whisky in September 1889 and another cask was presented to the Prince of Wales in 1894. A bottle of 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' from the Welsh Whisky Distillery can be found in the National Museum of Wales and another bottle is located at the St Fagans Welsh National History Museum. The success of the Welsh Whisky Distillery company was, short-lived, primarily due to the rise of the strong temperance movement in Wales which was a social movement against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. In 1900 the company was sold to William Owen of Bala for £5000 and the company was finally liquidated in 1910.

After an absence of over 100 years, Penderyn distillery became a successor of Frongoch distillery with its first distillation in 2000. This resulted in the first whisky commercially produced in Wales for a century, going on sale on 1st March 2004 launched by His Royal Highness Prince Charles. It was called 'The Prince of Wales'. The late Dr Jim Swan (Master Blender at Penderyn) won the Whisky Advocates Pioneer Award in 2005.

Currently Wales has five distilleries located throughout Wales. These distilleries range in size from large distilleries such as Penderyn distillery to small bespoke distilleries crafting small batch 'grain to glass' single cask whiskies such as Coles and In the Welsh Wind. In 2008 HMRC issued Dà Mhile organic distillery with the first distiller's licence for a 350l still in the UK.

Wales's whisky industry has expanded rapidly in recent years and the demand for 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is increasing year on year. 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' makes a significant contribution to the food and drink economy of Wales and is now one of Wales's most influential exports, currently being exported to over 45 countries. 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' combines the long heritage of whisky production with an innovative approach to distilling, marketing and branding. Welsh whisky production is also important for tourism with all current Welsh distilleries open as tourist attractions.

When the Aberfalls distillery (which was the first Whisky distillery located in North Wales since the early 1900's) released its first 'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' called the "Spirit of North Wales" on the 17th May 2021 demand, was so great, that the whisky was sold out within 1 hour of its launch and the whisky was made "Whisky of the week" in GQ magazine.

'Single Malt Welsh Whisky' is recognised nationally and internationally as being a quality product with a distinct style, that epitomises a strong sense of place and provenance. Wales is one of the "country categories" that comprises of the "New World Whisky" category. This category includes less traditional whisky producing countries such as India, Taiwan, Sweden Israel and France. This status is supported by a considerable catalogue of critical acclaim and international awards. Welsh Whisky distilleries have celebrated numerous successes with their 'Single Malt Welsh Whiskies' at prestigious competitions including the World, International Wine and Spirit competition, Great British Food Awards,

and London Spirit Competition awards. The reputation ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ has for being a quality award winning product has increased sales both at home and globally.

The table below, shows an example of some of the awards won in the last 3 years (this list is not exhaustive); -

Date	Competition	Award	Single Malt Welsh Whisky
2021	Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible	18 liquid gold awards	various
2020	Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible	Winner of the European Whisky of the Year	Madeira Single Cask edition
	San Francisco World Spirits Awards	Gold	Peated, Portwood and Rich Oak
	Spirits Business World Whisky Masters	Gold	Madeira, Peated, Myth, Celt and Moscatel Small Batch
2019	San Francisco World Spirits Awards	Gold	Sherrywood
	IWSC Worldwide Whisky Awards	Gold	Portwood, Rich Oak, Portwood SC
	Whiskies of the World Award	Gold (best in class)	Barrel Finished Non age statement
	Ultimate Spirits Challenge World Whisky Award	Very Good	Madeira, Legend and Sherry wood

‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ is widely acclaimed by spirit critics, chefs and is regularly featured on gourmet social media: -

“As the glass opened up, so did those complex fruit and grain notes. I ended up really enjoying the balance of that lighter style with bourbon casks and the subtle overlay the

wine casks imparted”- ‘The Casks’ American Spirit Blogger Peter Lemon re ‘Myth’ Penderyn ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ 7.11.2019

“An excellent example of how high-quality a whisky can be made outside of the traditional whisky-making countries” - The Scotch Noob Spirit Blogger re ‘Madeira’ Penderyn ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ 30.12.201

“This beautiful expression uses 100% Welsh barley and has been matured in a combination of Oloroso, Pedro Ximenez, Bourbon and Virgin Oak Casks. Safe to say there’s a lot going on but it works so well! Loads of rich fruit on the palate and lots of spice.” – London Whisky Guy Spirit Blogger re ‘Spirit of the North’ Aber Falls ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’

“Totally unique” scored 8.5/10 “extremely good” - Felipe Schrieberg Spirit Reviewer for Forbes re Da Mhile Tarisan Single Malt Welsh Whisky 30.4.20

6.2 Specific characteristics of the spirit drink attributable to the geographical area

This GI application is based on reputation that ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ with its specific characteristics, is a distinct quality product that epitomises a very strong sense of place and provenance.

The results from independent Whisky taste sampling from Dominic Roskrow (international Whisky critic and judge) highlighted “a clear difference in sensory profile” between ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ and other UK whiskies.

These differences are primarily due to; -

- Natural factors: - Welsh climate (and geology) influencing some of the raw ingredients used in production and the maturation process.
- The “relatively modern” distilling process used in Wales.
- Skill of Welsh distillers and the creation of a skill base which has developed from within Wales.

The climate and geology of Wales influences the ingredients used in ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ such as Welsh water. Water is required throughout the whole whisky production process and Wales has an inherent abundance of high-quality clean, water. Wales’s high rainfall is naturally filtered by Wales’s specific geology. All water used for the production of ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ must be sourced from “Welsh origin”. The water will vary slightly in character because of local climate and geology but its purity, adds a quality to ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’.

“Wales is blessed for having an abundance of high quality and clean water and Welsh Whisky should always be made with it. Welsh water may contribute to the clean, sweet and fruity style of whisky made in the country” (DR)

Temperature and humidity influence the rate of whisky maturation and the development of particular flavour attributes. The mild and moderate Welsh climate produces a favourable

even maturation creating a “smooth tasting product with balanced character”

Most of the flavour of ‘Single Malt Welsh whisky’ is created during the production process. Compared to more traditional whiskies, the distilling process used in Wales to produce ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ is relatively ‘modern’. Throughout the distillation process, science and art complement each other. Each step of the distilling process plays a vital role and is directed with skill and judgement to impart the common characteristics associated with ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ which is that of a “clean sweet, and fruity whisky with a ‘lack of grittiness and earthiness’ associated with more traditional whiskies” (DR)

The shape and type of still used also influences the organoleptic characteristic of the final product, producing a style of ‘new world’ spirit which has a “light style” with “balanced character.”

A favourable even maturation is produced from Wales’s mild and moderate climate and during maturation, this ‘light style’ whisky is observed to readily, take on the characteristics of the various kinds of wooden barrels used in its production, producing delicate single malts of complex character and flavour. In addition, Welsh distillers have the freedom and flexibility to experiment with their ‘wood strategies’ and in their choice and variety of new, used or rejuvenated casks to ‘finish’ whiskies into different casks for flavour enhancement. The Welsh distiller uses their skill and creativity to ensure that ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’ retains its ‘lightness of character’ and is not overpowered by excessive wood extracts and tannins.

Single Malt Welsh Whisky’s “lightness of character” has been recognised in global whisky markets and has accrued much critical acclaim. Over the last 15 year, this quality product has won an accolade of prestigious awards and is currently exported to over 45 countries.

Results from independent whisky taste sampling by globally recognised whisky critic, judge, and author Dominic Roskrow confirmed the difference in ‘Single Malt Welsh Whisky’s’ sensory profile compared to other whiskies and concluded that;

“Wales has an ‘impressive range of diverse malts which match anything in the world”

7. Labelling and packaging

8. Inspection Body

Name: HMRC

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