

Caol Ila

58.4%

Without water, this is an aggressive malt, sharp and acerbic. With water, it's still more in your face than any official bottling. Where you tend to associate Caol Ila with oily, peaty, and maritime characteristics, this is altogether more feisty and ballsier, with a glance to the big three peaty distilleries in the south of Islay, and even a nod to its peppery cousin on Skye. On the nose there is peat, but it is tempered by dark chocolate; some citrus there, too. The taste is quite sharp, with bitter lemon, licorice, and sooty peat to the fore.

Certainly an interesting take on this intriguing distillery, and far removed from last year's relatively gentle 25 year old release, but there are questions over the balance, and whether it's a better whisky is a moot point.

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