

## Caol Ila 12 year old

57.6%

Unusual, insofar as this is the one chance a year that drinkers get to try Caol Ila's other expression: the unpeated version, which — and here's a bit of history for you — helped save the distillery during the lean period of the whisky loch in the early 80s. Rather than this just being Caol Ila with the peat stripped out, the team made it in a different fashion — but there are still hints of commonality. For example, the grassy note that usually lies beneath the smoke is the lead aroma here, and it's not any old grass, but wet grass — like skidding on a football (soccer) field. The mind keeps looking for smoke, but apart from a hint of birch smoke (which could come from the (refill) cask), it's whistle-clean and fruity, and with a touch of water, fills with an aroma of toffee popcorn, custard, and pears. The palate continues in this light fashion with melon balls and fruit cocktail. This potentially bland fleshiness is given a perkiness thanks to the high alcohol and, again, a jag of acidity. Bizarrely, on the finish, I pick up slight saltiness. A fun dram.

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