

Yamazaki Mizunara

48%

Mizunara—or Japanese oak—was considered inferior for many years.

Only recently have its extraordinary aromatic qualities been appreciated. These are immediately apparent on the nose: aloes, wood incense, sandalwood, cinnamon balls, sour cherry, and apple, becoming more gingery with water. Intense and acidic in the mouth, there are tart, stewed red fruits, pomegranate, and citrus. Lightly bitter tannins add to the complexity, as does the smoke rising from the smoldering incense stick. The most significant Japanese whisky of the year? £250

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