

Ardbeg Supernova

58.9%

Identifiably richer, fuller, and smokier on the nose when compared to other young Ardbegs. While still prominent, there's slightly less brine and seaweed, more earthiness, tar, soot, espresso, tobacco, grass, and chocolate fudge. The same goes for the palate. It starts out like a "slightly more gutsy than normal" cask strength, young Ardbeg (e.g., Renaissance) and, if you go into this experience expecting to be totally blown away by peat, tar, and smoke, you might feel a bit under-challenged initially. But the peat eventually builds to a powerful, lava-like crescendo and you realize that this is no ordinary Ardbeg. The length of the finish is seemingly endless; bold and warming. Through all this, there's a soft underbelly of ripe barley and a vanilla sweetness to balance at least some of the tar, heat, and smoke -- something I admire in many Ardbegs. Bottom line: It's an interesting, entertaining, and eye-opening experience. I like how mature it tastes for a relatively young whisky. But, like a whisky that shows just a bit too much sherry or oak, I think the extra peat, to a degree, masks the subtle complexities I admire in some other, lesser-peated Ardbegs, which is the only thing keeping me from scoring this whisky in the 90s. All smoky whisky enthusiasts should endeavor to try this at least once.

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