

Caol Ila

25 Year Old, 43%

This is to be a permanent addition to the core Caol Ila range, but it will raise a few eyebrows, completely ignoring the current peat battle between Ardbeg and Bruichladdich and heading off into an altogether more refined and delicate direction. This is a dignified and complex malt, which doesn't give everything up immediately. There's soft pear and guava on the nose, and the trademark oiliness and distinctive peat are there, but there's a buttery quality, too, as well as some brine and spice, apple pip, and traces of aniseed. You get a sense of its age late on, with some oaky tannins and sharper spice, but overall this is an unhurried, complex, and sweet whisky with just enough peat to keep it honest. Very impressive. (Limited general releases, excluding the U.S.)

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