

'Looking down the barrel of the GDC'

by Shameek Popat

When it comes to drinking whisky, one of the greatest pleasures is sharing a dram or two. While there is joy in solitary sipping, enjoying the flavours with good conversation with friends adds another enjoyment to sipping liquid sunshine.

I spent my childhood in India where whisky is one of the main alcoholic drink of choice and where Johnnie Walker is the brand leader and makes up 56% of the market share, though local brand Paul John Whisky is starting to make a name for itself. The spirit is so common there that it is often referred to as "Uncle Johnnie".

It is also my father's and his friends' favourite tipple. Johnnie Walker with its striding man did a great job of advertising in India and branded itself as an aspirational brand. So much that Johnnie Walker Blue Label is still one of my favourite tipples.

I read that Frank Coleman, the senior vice president of Distilled Spirits Council of US told Time Magazine "Indians are preordained whisky drinkers. They've developed a taste for whisky". So, I guess I had no chance to escape my destiny- my love for a good dram!

When our esteemed editor Mike Gow formed the Dentistry Whisky Appreciation Society on Facebook and invited me to be an admin to the group- I leapt at the chance to be involved in this fine enterprise.

So, when I heard that the old Glasgow Distillery Company was being revived and they were starting to distil malt whisky once again since 1903, I thought it would be great to belong to the 1770 Club and have our own cask of whisky.

To give you a little background about the Glasgow Distillery Company whose initials appropriately are 'GDC' which does resonate with us dentists!

In 2013 drinks veteran Liam Hughes, and a group of business associates revived the old Glasgow Distillery Company which had owned and operated the Dundashill Distillery before its closure in 1903. Their original intention was to distil only gin but Liam Hughes and his colleagues thought it would be interesting to restore malt whisky production to Glasgow. Former Macallan Master Distiller and Whisky Investment Specialist David Robertson was called upon for advice and help set up the distillery. The stills and associated whisky-making plant were sourced from the Stuttgart family firm of Carl and whisky production was started.

In charge of day to day distillation is head distiller Jack Mayo who has an unorthodox background - Prior to becoming a distiller he did a PhD in Astrophysics! But he has a passion for cooking and a new-found

passion for all things distilled, so the combination of cooking and science seemed like a perfect match.

They aim to make 2 types of Spirit-

Their unpeated spirit is a robust and heavy bodied new make with tropical fruits and a sweet malty body with an extraordinary creamy mouthful and the second type is peated spirit production (up to 50ppm) which is characteristically heavy bodied, fruity and malty but with an earthy tobacco smoke nose due to mainland peat being used.

However, the first legal batch will be available in March 2018 and our own casks will be ready in 2019 as Scotch needs to be in casks for at least 3 years and 1 day before it can legally be classified as Scotch.

All of this got me quite excited and thought it would be a great idea to purchase our own cask with a few friends and when I joined forces with Mike Gow the whole idea snowballed and we ended up with 3 casks with 650Litres of whisky and 58 members with equal shares joining the club.

We were very keen on an Oloroso (Sherry) Cask and got one specially ordered from the Cooperage and we ended up with 3 casks as follows-

Cask 1) This Cask is a 250L Oloroso Cask and

will be filled with Unpeated Spirit. This cask and whisky has been named "Serendipity"

Cask 2) This Cask is a 200L Bourbon Cask and will be filled with Peated Spirit. This cask and whisky has been named "Cuid an Fhiaclair" which is Scots Gaelic for "The Dentists' Share".

Cask 3) This Cask is a 200L Bourbon Cask and will be filled with Unpeated Spirit. This cask and whisky has been named "Fiaclan Geala" which is Scots Gaelic for "White Teeth".

The last share was bought for charity and raised £1000 in auction for Teens Unite, a cancer charity for Teenagers.

We are all looking forward to opening the casks and sampling the whisky in 2019

Please join our Facebook Page - Dentistry Whisky Appreciation Society and let us know if you are interested in any future cask buys. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/282256165474024/?ref=bookmarks>

My Friend Luca Sina at The Whisky Shop in Piccadilly, London will be happy to give a 10% discount to members of our group.

All that remains for me to say is 'Slainte' ■

