

Female distiller wins blind taste test

BY GRANIA LITWIN, TIMES COLONIST JANUARY 23, 2010 10:02 PM



Festival organizer Iain Hooey with Jonathan Adams at the bar at the Hotel Grand Pacific.

Photograph by: Bruce Stotesbury, Times Colonist

Maybe women really do have the best “noses” — especially when it comes to whisky.

At a blind tasting of 18 varieties from around the globe at this weekend’s Victoria Whisky Festival, the winner was a bottle of Penderyn single malt from the Welsh Whisky Company. It was created by Gillian MacDonald, the only female distiller in Britain.

At the tasting, hosted by The Whisky Bible author Jim Murray, the runner-up was Amrut Fusion, a brand from Bangladesh, India.

Festival organizer Iain Hooey was surprised the Scottish whiskies did not make the cut, although they won last year in a non-blind test. He noted this year’s 40-odd testers included aficionados from as far away as Chicago and Toronto and members of the Malt Maniacs, “an elite club of upper echelon” experts.

In an interview last week, MacDonald suggested women often have better “noses” than men, which makes them excellent distillers. “I’m absolutely thrilled,” she said. “It doesn’t get much better than winning a blind tasting.”

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