

Glendullan Distillery



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Name:	Glendullan (Pronounced: glen-DUL-lan)
Region:	Speyside (Dufftown)
Neighbors:	Balvenie, Glenfiddich, Mortlach
Founded:	1898
Status:	Active
Water source:	Sources in the Convall hills
Equipment:	3 Wash stills, 3 Spirit stills
Production capacity:	3,700,000 liters of pure alcohol per year
Ownership:	Diageo > UDV (since 1926)

It's a strange thing that Glendullan is relatively unknown as a single malt whisky; measured in production capacity (almost 4 million liters of alcohol per year in 2008) it's actually Diageo's second-largest distillery, right after Dufftown and before Caol Ila that has the number 3 spot.

Glendullan distillery is located in what's probably the busiest 'whisky town' in the Speyside area: Dufftown. It was built there (relatively late) in 1897-1898 by William Williams & Sons Ltd., blenders from Aberdeen. In 1919 William Williams & Sons Ltd. changed their name to Macdonald, Greenlees & Williams (Distillers) Ltd. In 1926 they were taken over by the DCL, which later evolved into whisky industry giant Diageo.

The old Glendullan distillery was completely refurbished in 1962, at which point two brand new stills were constructed. However, in 1972 a new distillery was built next to the old one. The new Glendullan distillery had six stills (three times as many as the old one) and both operated side by side until 1985, when the old distillery was finally closed. The whiskies produced at these two distilleries were different from each other, but nevertheless they were simply vatted together before bottling or blending. That's particularly funny because Diageo (together with Glenfiddich) claims to have educated the world about single malts a few years later and kept pointing out how every pot still was unique and irreplaceable.

If we paint the history of the single malt whisky category in very broad strokes, one could say that it really was a 'niche' market until the end of the 1980's. There were a few notable exceptions (the brand Glenfiddich & the Italian market in the 1970's) but by and large single malts were little more than flavor components for blends. This started to change in the second half of the 1980's - possibly due to the massive crisis of the early eighties which caused the closure of dozens of whisky distilleries. This may have prompted many distilleries to focus more on single malt whiskies.

The old Glendullan distillery was closed in 1985, although buildings remained in use as a workshop. Meanwhile, Diageo and its predecessors (United Distillers) developed their portfolio of single malt whiskies. While some 'brands' were pushed (notably the original 'Classic Malts' series; Dalwhinnie, Cragganmore, Glenkinchie, Lagavulin, Oban and Talisker), other distilleries stayed focused on blends. After all, during the late 1980's and early half of the 1990's blends still accounted for circa 97% of whisky sales. It was only in the second half of the 1990's that the single malts category really took off. Distilleries like Glendullan and Dufftown remained mostly focused on blends for a few more years, but around the year 2007 Diageo finally reintroduced them to the market as single malts - together with Glen Ord.

Trivia about Glendullan

- 1) A large part of the Glendullan malt whisky ends up in the 'Old Parr' blended whisky.
- 2) Just like the name suggests, the Glendullan distillery itself is fairly dull.
- 3) Glendullan is one of almost two dozen malt whisky distilleries that were founded over a century ago during the 'whisky boom' of the late 19th century and which have managed to survive until this day.