



The Drink

Highland Park 24-year-old Single-Cask Scotch

The Price

\$185

The Score



The Taste

For better or worse, just knowing that a bottle of scotch costs \$185 can make all the difference. First, it's a safe bet that the whisky is rare. Second, we can assume that the stuff has been aged for some time -- likely more than 20 years. And finally, it's clear that someone somewhere thought it tasted great. The one thing that's never guaranteed is that we'll like it.

Highland Park's new single-cask scotch is indeed an old, limited-edition work of art. The whisky was distilled back in 1980, in the northernmost scotch distillery in the world (founded in 1798). It sat in a warehouse in the remote Orkney Islands for 24 years before the owner of New York's most respected spirit store, Park Avenue Liquor Shop, sampled it, loved it and bottled it. It is the brand's first single cask release, meaning that it comes from one specific barrel -- and it is available only at Park Avenue Liquor Shop (212-685-2442 / www.parkaveliquor.com).

Scotch can absorb a lot of flavor and color when it sits in a cask for long periods of time. This liquid is flat-out brown, has a deep nose of sherry, honey, caramel and cedar and packs a wallop going down. Like other island malts, it is heavily peated, which means you taste the hot smokiness before other more complex flavors like sherry, butter, mint and nuts. It finishes dry and spicy, which is not surprising for a 116 percent proof scotch. Not everyone can afford it, but that doesn't mean we can't recommend it.

-- James Oliver Cury