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Phillip Hills

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Phillip Hills : Appreciating Whisky: The Connoisseur's Guide to Nosing, Tasting, and Enjoying Scotch before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Appreciating Whisky: The Connoisseur's Guide to Nosing, Tasting, and Enjoying Scotch:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Only Whisky Book You Ever NeedBy Brian McQueenieThe most concise book on Scotch whisky I have ever read. Glad to see it is back in print!4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Invaluable Guide to the How and Why of Tasting Whisky.By mirasreviews"Appreciating Whisky" is an excellent guide to doing just that, written for people who would like to understand how whisky is made, why it tastes as it does, and how to recognize and describe those flavors. Author Phillip Hills was a founding member of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society and writes extensively on Scotch, so the examples and tasting recommendations in this

book are for Scotch whisky, although the principles of taste and production apply to all whiskies. "Appreciating Whisky" has two parts: The first 8 chapters provide knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about whiskies, specifically what it tastes like and why. The last 2 chapters explain how to taste whisky and describe some distilleries and their products for your consideration. Phillip Hills' prose is precise and witty throughout. The book starts out with a lesson in the physiology of taste and goes on to describe the 15 flavors that you should be able to recognize in whisky and where they come from. Then we get a lesson in organic chemistry, as Hills explains the chemistry of whisky production, maturation, and the flavors discussed in the previous chapter. The properties, history, and origins of whisky's five materials -barley, water, yeast, peat, and wood- are described. The details of the five processes involved in whisky production -malting, mashing, brewing, distilling, maturing- are explained. Hills addresses the histories and characteristics of grain and blended whiskies as well as malts. And, finally, he explores how the social context - Scottish culture, corporate culture, and the drinker's culture- has influenced the taste, quality, and our perceptions of Scotch whisky, from its 15th century origins to the present. Advice relevant to choosing and drinking whiskies is found in those chapters that address the question of why whisky tastes as it does. But the chapter on "Tasting Whisky" is a practical guide to whisky tasting that gets into the nitty gritty of what items you will need and what to do with them. The book's last chapter, "Appreciations", talks about 6 Scotch malt distilleries and their whiskies, as well as a grain whisky distillery, a blender, and some private bottlers. I think anyone who loves whisky but is not an expert on the subject will find "Appreciating Whisky" invaluable. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The best introductory text to date, with a refreshing tell-it-like-it-is approach. By Joshua E. London The book does exactly what it sets out to do - introduce readers to the appreciation of whisky - and provides a real education in the process. The chemistry and whisky production aspects are elucidated in an engaging and clear style, with tidbits that leave the reader with the distinct impression, sometimes made quite explicit by the author, that they are being informed of something ignored by other whisky books and lightly suppressed by the industry. His approach is at times iconoclastic, perhaps even contentious, as when he blithely explains why whiskies are generally at their peak at around 10 to 15 years of age and that people who spend large sums on older whiskies likely don't have any idea what they are talking about. Throughout he is happy to reveal trade "secrets" (many of which were unknown to me, and I have read dozens of mainstream books on this subject over the years) and never flinches from unmasking some bit of mystique or marketing as mere hokum (I learned a thing or two from this material as well). His approach to the flavor profiles of whisky is, like many of the other books out there, a tad complicated on first glance - but hang in there for a couple of pages, because his is actually much clearer and more useful than most. Sadly, this book is currently hard to find at all, much less at a decent price. One to keep an eye out for in used book shops, as it is the best introductory text on whisky to date, with a wonderfully refreshing tell-it-like-it-is approach.

As with fine wines, there is a social cachet in being able to "appreciate" a good Scotch. But how exactly do you learn this skill? This illustrated book offers the reader detailed, structured tuition on how to develop his or her palate for whisky. Readers are taken on a detailed tour of how whisky is produced, what each of its constituents and each of the stages of its manufacture bring to the final product. With this grounding, they are then introduced to the various chemical processes at work during distillation and maturation that give each whisky its distinct characteristics. Using specific popular whiskies which readers are encouraged to have to hand as they work through the book, they are taught how to recognise what it is they are tasting and smelling, and how to describe this in the language of the experts. Armed with this knowledge, readers should ultimately be able to develop their own informed impressions of the whisky they drink, rather than receive them second-hand from books.

Appreciating Whisky covers ground never before addressed by the literature of whisky ... and does so lucidly, thoroughly, idiosyncratically and with good humour. This book will join that small shelf of 'key sources' in my whisky library. It is essential reading for anyone who, in Phillip Hills' words, wishes to "climb by your own efforts from the slough of incomprehension into the dim light of understanding". Charlie Maclean, Whisky Magazine Independent-minded, witty, erudite, and on occasion, iconoclastic and downright bawdy, Hills is clearly obsessed by whisky and this makes him the ideal guide to this complex and fascinating drink. This excellent book is likely to remain the most authoritative in its field for a long time. Robin Davidson, .co.uk This book is wonderfully written ... it educates in a very thorough and pleasing manner. Everything you need to know about appreciating whisky, technically and culturally, is here. Read it and you won't need another whisky book in your life. Gordon Haggarty, The List magazine In this swashbuckling book, Pip Hills lays bare all the secrets of whisky from its chemistry to its culture. He goes straight to the heart of the matter with admirable dispatch, revealing how the communion of barley, water, peat and oak creates a spirit of unique complexity. If there was ever a Master of Whisky course, this would be the primer to have at your elbow. Derek Cooper, Food writer and broadcaster From the Publisher As with fine wines, there is a skill to being able to appreciate a good Scotch. But how does one attain the skill? Appreciating Whisky offers a complete course in developing a palate for whisky. Using specific popular whiskies that you are encouraged to have at hand as you work through the book, you will learn how to recognize what it is you are tasting and smelling and how to

describe it in the language of the experts. How whisky is produced, and what each of its constituents and stages of manufacture brings to the final product are discussed in detail. You will then be introduced to the various chemical processes at work during distillation and maturation that give each whisky its distinct characteristics. Finally, you will be shown how to organize a formal tasting session. A definitive guide for the aspiring whisky buff.

About the Author Phillip Hills was a founder of the Scotch Malt Whisky Association and through this, played a significant role in persuading whisky companies to produce malt whisky for general consumption. He is the owner of The Malt Masterclass, a company specialising in private and corporate tasting classes. He is also the first (and only) holder since 1791 of a private licence to distill whisky which he does for demonstration purposes on his private still.