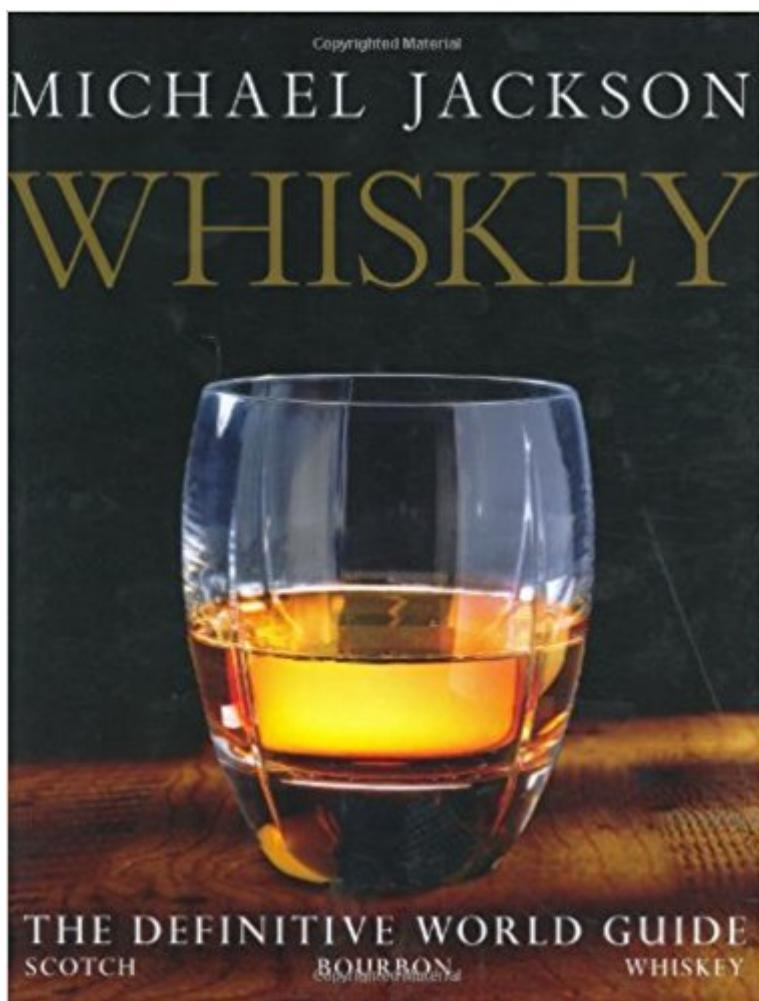


The book was found

Whiskey: The Definitive World Guide



Synopsis

From grain to glass, "Whiskey tells you everything and anything you'll ever want to know about whiskey, from storing and serving whiskey, whiskey cocktails, to pairing whiskey with food. Whether interested in the story behind aromas and flavors, what makes certain distilleries unique or how weather and environment influence taste--this is the most fascinating illustrated examination of whiskey on the market.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I would imagine that the very best to learn about whiskey is from a close friend who has for the past thirty years been fully immersed in all the arcane knowledge of whiskey drinking. Unfortunately, I think most people are like me, we get our whiskey education from the half educated clerk sitting behind the liquor store counter. Into this void comes Michael Jackson's "Whiskey". First and foremost, this book is published by DK. This means that it will be rich in beautiful photographs and illustrations and weaker in text. I love well produced books and that is why I give this book five stars. The carefully shot pictures of Scottish whiskey distilleries are enough to make one plan a golfing/whiskey drinking vacation. However, the downside of DK books is that the writing is usually on the "lite" side. If you are looking for a guidebook to help you pick your next bottle of Scotch, this is not your book. Michael Jackson has produced other books that better describe and rate single malt Scotches. Purchase this book for the beautiful photographs and basic introduction to Scotch. Deeper knowledge will require more study and tasting.

While this book is certainly an eye catcher it falls short of an exhaustive reference book. Perhaps it's

a good introduction for the beginner, but I was hoping it would do for Whiskey what Clive Coates' The Wines of Bordeaux: Vintages and Tasting Notes 1952-2003 did for Bordeaux. Specific information with regard to process, grain choice, barrel selection and aging at each distillery was spotty. In some cases there was no discussion of various products from a producer. I am sure meaningful tasting notes for whiskey can be tricky, but I didn't find these particularly useful either. From time to time I noticed an insightful tasting comment and frequently obvious dominating characteristics were noted but many of the tasting notes seemed rather generic. While preference is particularly subjective I think more critical evaluation would be helpful in terms of conveying tasting information.

This book describes the whiskey making process very thoroughly and has many beautiful pictures of the process from barley fields, to coopers, to the stills. Also, the pictures of the various countries (and distilleries) in which whiskey is made are beautiful and evocative. Although this book is not intended to be a buyer's guide, I do wish that he were a bit more opinionated in his tastings (he describes the aromas and flavors, but doesn't often make a judgement about the overall quality of the whiskey) and that he included some indication of price range of the whiskies that he describes. All in all, a beautiful book that will likely delight anyone (even relative newbies like this reviewer) interested in the whiskies of the world.

This book is filled with information about distilleries from around the world. After a brief introduction to whiskey, Jackson and his contributing authors explain the aromas flavors found in whiskey as well as their sources from the distilling process. For example, different strains of barley can add different flavors, floral notes often come from the heather that grew in the peat that was burned to heat the stills, the different oaks used for maturation can add different characteristics to the drink, and so on. The distillation process and equipment are also briefly explained. After that, the book moves to a trek around the world, spending about 100 pages on Scotland, about 10 pages on Ireland, about 10 pages on Canada, about 30 pages on the United States, about 15 pages on Japan, and a brief look at "everything else". This section of the book covers (I think) all of the active distilleries with a brief history, geography, and info about the production line. Each distinct geographic region includes a section of tasting notes about one or some of the typical/popular whiskies from the region. The more popular brands, like Bushmills and Jack Daniels, seem to get a bit more coverage than the others. The book ends with a short section on cocktails and food pairing. The book is full of large, beautiful photographs of the distilleries- I would say most pages are 50%

photographs. This is not an all-encompassing tome of whiskeys, nor a buying guide, nor a tasting guide; there are plenty of other books out there for that. I enjoyed the book thoroughly. I think it would be better with a section on the relevant history of the region- for example, the Highland Clearances were mentioned many times, and eventually I had to go look it up. Also, the book would be better if they dropped the snob factor in the text- the condescension is so thick you could cut it with a knife. This is still a wonderful book, and if you are interested in whiskey at all it is definitely worth your time.

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