



KELSEY MCKECHNIE, MALT MASTER FOR THE BALVENIE

Kelsey McKechnie was first appointed Apprentice Malt Master at The Balvenie in 2018 when she was aged just 26, a role she cites as ‘a once in a lifetime opportunity’. Now, after nearly six years of honing her craft, apprenticed under industry icon David Stewart before working alongside as joint Malt Master, Kelsey takes on the sole responsibility for all future innovation releases at The Balvenie.

Born and raised in Scotland, just 10 miles from William Grant & Sons’ Girvan Distillery, Kelsey’s background in science and passion for whisky-making and distilling make her the ideal Malt Master for The Balvenie.

A graduate of The University of West Scotland with a BSc in Biology and Biological Sciences, Kelsey is passionate about the creativity and complex layers behind distilling. It was this passion that led her to complete an MSc in Brewing and Distilling at Heriot-Watt University.

Kelsey started her journey with The Balvenie in 2014 as a Technical Graduate in William Grant & Sons' Girvan Distillery laboratory, routinely analysing fermentations and distillation profiles. Her talent for nosing, creative flair and passion for whisky-making was quickly spotted and she began her apprenticeship, developing her craft under the careful stewardship of David Stewart MBE, one of the longest-serving Malt Masters in the world. She also worked closely with William Grant's Master Blender Brian Kinsman on other brands including Glenfiddich, Monkey Shoulder and Tullamore D.E.W.

Particular highlights for Kelsey during her time at The Balvenie to date include individually selecting casks for The Balvenie DoubleWood 25th Anniversary with David Stewart MBE and hosting whisky media at the launch event of The Balvenie Peat Week Aged 14 Years in 2017.

Kelsey also worked on the creation of The Sweet Toast of American Oak, a process that saw Kelsey's creative flair and passion for innovation shine through. Having a self-confessed sweet tooth, Kelsey wondered how she could push the boundaries and make a sweeter Single Malt using different casks. Working with the dedicated, highly-skilled coopers at The Balvenie, she had the idea of importing Virgin Oak barrels from 3,792 miles away in Kentucky and toasting them at the Balvenie Cooperage. As well as producing an exquisite sweet whisky, the experience demonstrated that spectacular things can happen when an ancient technique meets fresh new ideas.

In 2022, it was announced that Kelsey would become Joint Malt Master alongside David C. Stewart as he marked his 60th year in the industry, working collaboratively to ensure quality, innovation and craft lies at the heart of every release.

With the announcement in 2023 that David C. Stewart is moving into an active role with The Balvenie as Honorary Ambassador and Former Malt Master, Kelsey McKechnie now takes on sole responsibility for all future liquid innovation and releases.

When not at work, Kelsey can be found staying active through running and wakeboarding. She also loves nothing more than to catch up with her closest friends over a dram or two. And, if time allows, you can often find her with a paintbrush in hand capturing the beautiful seascapes of the west of Scotland.

About The Balvenie:

THE BALVENIE®

SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY



Nestled in the picturesque surroundings of Dufftown, Speyside, The Balvenie distillery has been making whisky for more than 125 years. Nowhere else can you find a distillery that grows its own barley, malts in its own traditional floor maltings, and still employs a team of coopers to tend to the casks alongside a coppersmith to maintain the stills.

With a team committed to ultimate craftsmanship, their dedicated characters pour their soul and obsession into every single bottle, whilst Malt Master Kelsey McKechnie presides over the all-important maturation process. This demonstrates that while it takes skill to make something great, it takes true heart to make it extraordinary.

Founded in 1892 by William Grant, The Balvenie Single Malt Scotch Whisky is produced by William Grant & Sons Ltd, an award-winning independent family-owned distiller and today run by his direct descendants. Each expression has a very individual taste, rich, luxuriously smooth, and underpinned by the distinctively honeyed character of The Balvenie.

For more information visit:
www.thebalvenie.com

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