Casks & Maturation Science Quiz

Team Name: _____ **Table No:** _____ **Score:** ____ / 10

Q1. What does the cooperage acronym 'STR' stand for, and who pioneered this rejuvenation technique?

[ ] A) Steamed, Torched, Refilled (Richard Paterson)

[ ] B) Shaved, Toasted, Re-charred (Dr. Jim Swan)

[ ] C) Stripped, Treated, Rebuilt (Miguel Martin)

[ ] D) Smoked, Tapered, Rolled (Aeneas Coffey)

Q2. What is 'Char Level #4' (the heaviest barrel burn, lasting roughly 55 seconds) commonly called in the cooperage industry?

[ ] A) Dragon Breath

[ ] B) Alligator Char

[ ] C) Volcano Crust

[ ] D) Black Diamond

Q3. What microscopic feature in American White Oak (Quercus alba) makes it naturally watertight and leakproof for whisky maturation?

[ ] A) Resin pockets

[ ] B) Tyloses (balloon-like cell outgrowths that block the wood pores)

[ ] C) Double bark barriers

[ ] D) High silica crystal deposits

Q4. Why does whisky maturing in Scotland generally LOSE alcohol strength over time, while whisky in Kentucky or India often INCREASES in ABV?

[ ] A) Distillers add water directly into barrels each summer.

[ ] B) Scotland's high ambient humidity causes ethanol to evaporate faster than water; dry, hot climates cause water to evaporate faster than ethanol.

[ ] C) Peat particles in Scottish air absorb alcohol vapors.

[ ] D) American oak staves are porous to water but impermeable to alcohol.

Q5. What is Baudoinia compniacensis, commonly found clinging to distillery roofs and walls?

[ ] A) A toxic mold that spoils barrel wood.

[ ] B) A soot-like black fungus that feeds on airborne ethanol vapors (the Angels' Share).

[ ] C) A rare Scottish lichen used to flavor botanical gin.

[ ] D) An airborne bacterium responsible for sour mash fermentation.

Q6. What was 'Paxarette', and why was its use banned in Scotch whisky maturation around 1989/1990?

[ ] A) A synthetic artificial oak extract made from coal tar.

[ ] B) A boiled, highly concentrated sweet grape must injected under pressure into tired casks, outlawed by stricter purity regulations.

[ ] C) An industrial detergent used to strip sulfur from copper pot stills.

[ ] D) A French brandy finishing spirit banned during trade negotiations.

Q7. Roughly what percentage of Scotch whisky today matures in traditional earthen-floor 'Dunnage' warehouses?

[ ] A) Over 75%

[ ] B) Roughly 50%

[ ] C) Only about 4%

[ ] D) 0% (they are illegal under UK fire codes)

Q8. What is the 'Devil's Cut' in warehouse terminology?

[ ] A) The toxic heads and foreshots cut discarded during distillation.

[ ] B) The portion of liquid spirit that is permanently absorbed into the wood pores of the cask.

[ ] C) The excise tax collected by HMRC upon bottle release.

[ ] D) Whisky lost during a warehouse fire.

Q9. What is a 'Hogshead' cask in the Scotch whisky industry?

[ ] A) A 500-litre European oak butt used exclusively for Port wine.

[ ] B) A roughly 250-litre cask constructed in Scotland by rebuilding dismantled 200L ex-bourbon barrels with extra staves and new heads.

[ ] C) A small 50-litre octave cask designed for rapid micro-aging.

[ ] D) A metal-jacketed barrel used to transport spirit between islands.

Q10. What role does the activated charcoal layer inside a charred barrel play during maturation?

[ ] A) It acts as a chemical filter, adsorbing undesirable sulfur compounds and harsh aldehydes from the maturing spirit.

[ ] B) It prevents the spirit from extracting tannins from the wood.

[ ] C) It cools the liquid during warm summer months.

[ ] D) It releases live yeast cells into the spirit.