Whisky Tasting Quiz: Flavour Profiles, Peat, Casks & Notes

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

Q1. What chemical compounds produce the medicinal, iodine, bandage, and TCP aromas famously found in coastal Islay single malts like Laphroaig?

[ ] A) Cresols and xylenols derived from maritime sphagnum moss and salt-spray peat

[ ] B) Chlorine added to the steeping water

[ ] C) Ferrous oxide from peat bogs

[ ] D) Acids produced by copper still corrosion

Q2. What primary oak-derived chemical compounds contribute the sweet aromas of creamy vanilla and toasted coconut in American White Oak ex-bourbon casks?

[ ] A) Lactic acid and methanol

[ ] B) Vanillin (from thermally degraded lignin) and cis- and trans-whisky lactones

[ ] C) Tartaric acid and glucose

[ ] D) Sulfur dioxide and esters

Q3. Whiskies matured in Spanish European oak casks previously seasoned with Oloroso or Pedro Ximenez sherry are famous for which classic flavour profile?

[ ] A) Bright green apples, crisp lemon peel, and freshly cut grass

[ ] B) Dark dried fruits (raisins, prunes, sultanas, figs), dark chocolate, and festive spices (nutmeg, clove)

[ ] C) Heavy industrial diesel oil, burning tires, and black pepper

[ ] D) Banana candy and bubblegum

Q4. According to molecular dynamics research (Karlsson & Friedman, 2017), why does adding a few drops of water to a dram improve its aroma?

[ ] A) It neutralizes alcohol vapours so they no longer irritate olfactory receptors.

[ ] B) Water increases the polarity of the liquid, forcing hydrophobic flavour molecules like guaiacol and fruity esters to concentrate at the surface of the glass where they can evaporate into the nose.

[ ] C) Water chemically transforms ethanol into sweet sugars.

[ ] D) It cools the liquid down to room temperature.

Q5. On the standard Scottish Whisky Flavour Map, which two perpendicular axes are used to plot and categorize single malt styles?

[ ] A) Light to Rich on one axis, and Delicate to Smoky on the other axis

[ ] B) Cheap to Expensive on one axis, and Young to Old on the other

[ ] C) Sweet to Dry on one axis, and Bitter to Sour on the other

[ ] D) Highland to Lowland on one axis, and Spring to Autumn on the other

Q6. What is the flavour profile difference when a distillery uses "Virgin Oak" casks (brand new oak barrels) compared to traditional refill Scotch casks?

[ ] A) Virgin oak releases no flavour because the wood is dormant.

[ ] B) Virgin oak rapidly infuses raw wood sugars, heavy oak tannins, fresh cedar, pencil shavings, and aggressive baking spice, requiring short maturation to prevent over-oaking.

[ ] C) Virgin oak only imparts salty maritime notes.

[ ] D) Virgin oak completely bleaches all colour from the whisky.

Q7. Why is a dark mahogany or amber colour NOT a guaranteed indicator that a whisky is exceptionally old, rich, or high in quality?

[ ] A) All single malt whisky is naturally clear like water when aged.

[ ] B) Dark colour can be produced in months via artificial E150a caramel colouring or an aggressive first-fill wet sherry cask, whereas a 25-year-old single malt matured in a gentle refill hogshead may remain pale golden.

[ ] C) Scottish distilleries are legally required to dye all whiskies dark.

[ ] D) Age statements are only based on bottle weight.

Q8. What flavour character does a "Port Pipe" or "Madeira Cask" finish typically contribute to a finished single malt?

[ ] A) Crisp peppermint and menthol

[ ] B) Stewed red plums, blackberry bramble, ruby red berries, walnut skins, and a subtle coppery or rose-tinted hue

[ ] C) Pineapple juice and coconut milk

[ ] D) Heavy coal smoke and charcoal

Q9. What happens to the flavour profile of a half-empty bottle of whisky left on a shelf for three to five years?

[ ] A) The alcohol percentage increases by 10%.

[ ] B) The large volume of trapped headspace air (oxygen) slowly oxidizes fragile esters and top notes, softening punchy peat smoke and muting crisp floral aromas.

[ ] C) The whisky turns into white wine vinegar.

[ ] D) The liquid coagulates into an undrinkable jelly.

Q10. In whisky tasting terminology, what does the "Finish" of a dram refer to?

[ ] A) The legal seal applied across the top of the bottle cap

[ ] B) The enduring taste, warmth, mouth-coating sensations, and evolving aromas that linger on your palate and throat after you swallow the spirit

[ ] C) The polish applied to the oak barrel hoops

[ ] D) The final bottle in a limited production run