



MALT WHISKY

## *The Family Spirit*

The story of Glenfarclas is as rich and colourful as the whisky that bears its name. It is a story of one Scottish family, the Grants, who since 1865 have been united in creating the *Spirit of Independence*.

1836 was the year in which Glenfarclas Distillery, on the Recherlich Farm, Ballindalloch, was granted a Government licence to produce whisky. At this time, the licence was held by Robert Hay, who was the tenant farmer. However, after his death the farm and the distillery were left vacant and this attracted the attention of John Grant. The Grant family were prominent local cattle breeders, who were looking for an ideal halfway staging post between their farm in Glenlivet, and the market in nearby Elgin.

In 1865 a tenancy agreement was successfully negotiated for Recherlich and Derrylane Farm. However, as part of the agreement, the distillery was purchased for £511.19sd.

Since farming was the priority, the distillery was let out for five years to John Smith, who later went on to establish Cragganmore distillery. However, during this time, the cattle drovers and workmen certainly enjoyed the sustenance of a dram of Glenfarclas!

In 1889, John Grant died, leaving his son George to run both the farm and the distillery. Sadly, George passed away not long afterwards. Subsequently, the licence for the distillery, was passed on to George's widow Barbara. She then appointed her two eldest children, John and George, to take care of the business.

In the 1890's, they formed the Glenfarclas-Glenlivet distillery company, with Pattisons of Leith. They held a 50% interest, but it was to prove to be a troublesome partnership, one which eventually dissolved. This left John and George in a predicament, but they were not disheartened and formed their own company, J.& G. Grant.

After many years of hard work and shrewd accounting, the future of Glenfarclas had been secured, and the Family's reputation firmly established. A rival distiller, wrote to the Grant family in May, 1912: "of all the whiskies, malt is king, of all the kings, Glenfarclas reigns supreme", a sentiment the family still hold close to their hearts. The 1920's saw the retirement of John Grant, and George continued to run the distillery.

So on to 1948, which is remembered as the 'year of the party'; a social milestone for the Grant family that celebrated several anniversaries, even though the date did not coincide with any of them! At this time it was mistakenly believed that the distillery was first established in 1845, and once the war was over, George saw fit to hold a centenary celebration.

### **Glenfarclas, Established 1836**

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**THE SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE**

Both his sons, John and George, had missed their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations, due to their wartime service, and George himself, had not been able to celebrate his own silver wedding anniversary. To mark this historic event, a photograph signed by all those who attended, still hangs in the Glenfarclas board room.

Unfortunately, George Grant passed away a few months later, leaving his widow and his two sons to carry on the name of Glenfarclas. William Strathdee, the distillery manager, was appointed a director, and under the guidance of John and George, the distillery continued to thrive.

The late 1940s saw the reform of the 1880's Spirits Act, which had hindered the production of whisky for years, as it had prohibited simultaneous mashing and distilling. It also prohibited the staff from working on a Sunday, so production had always been limited. This repeal of the Spirit's Act, along with the eventual relaxation of wartime barley rationing, allowed production to increase significantly during the 1950s.

However, after all the success of the 1950's, the family suffered a great loss when John, at the age of thirty-five, suddenly died. This left his elder brother George S. Grant in charge, who served as Chairman of Glenfarclas for a remarkable 52 years.

His son John L.S. Grant, joined Glenfarclas in 1973, and succeeded his father as Chairman in 2002. He also has a son, George, who represents the sixth generation of the Grant family and is the firm's Director of Sales.

Whilst you may not find Glenfarclas in every supermarket, the Distillery's reputation is well regarded around the world. In March 2006 Glenfarclas was named Distiller of the Year by Whisky Magazine "for being consistently good and staying true to its core values".

Now in 2011, as the Distillery celebrates 175 years of licensed distilling, the Grant family continue to act as custodians of the Glenfarclas Distillery, and remain committed to the principle of producing superior quality Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky.