

The Balvenie tells more Stories in travel retail



The Tale of the Dog 46yo is available in 10 exclusive travel retail locations, including Gebr Heinemann, retailing at US\$22,000

Scotch whisky brand The Balvenie has unveiled two additions to its The Balvenie Stories Collection – The Tale of the Dog and The Creation of a Classic – available exclusively in travel retail from this month.

Both expressions are created to highlight the many unique and varied stories that emanate from The Balvenie distillery.

The Tale of the Dog 46yo is available in 10 exclusive travel retail locations, including Gebr Heinemann, with a retail price of £16,500 (US\$22,000). Only 34 bottles will be available for sale, drawn from an exclusive single cask.

The whisky is described as a smooth and honeyed expression of The Balvenie where spice and subtle hints of liquorice are met with dashes of bergamot.

A 42yo expression is also available in the domestic market.

David Wilson, Managing Director at Global Travel at The Balvenie brand owner William Grant & Sons, said: “The Balvenie Tale of the Dog release is an amazing story which has been brought to life in this very rare 46yo single cask offering which is being made available exclusively for travel retail.

“Beyond its rarity as a single cask offering, our Malt Master David Stewart M.B.E and Apprentice Malt Master Kelsey McKechnie selected this exceptional cask, paying homage to our long-serving coppersmith Dennis McBain and his tireless service while revealing a little secret found within our distillery. This is an exceptional whisky from Balvenie which we are delighted to showcase to the whisky community through several of our global partners.”

Gebr Heinemann Director Purchasing Liquor, Tobacco and Confectionery Ruediger Stelkens said: “We are delighted to work closely with William Grant & Sons to be the exclusive European airport retailer to offer this remarkable interpretation of The Balvenie Stories. We have always taken great pride in curating an assortment of some of the world’s finest single malt Scotch whiskies and bringing the stories behind it to life, giving our clients an opportunity to own a piece of The Balvenie’s storied history.”

The Creation of a Classic

The Creation of a Classic celebrates the story of The Balvenie Malt Master – the longest-serving malt master in the industry – David Stewart MBE, who pioneered the first cask-finished whisky in 1983, The Balvenie Classic. It was created by transferring Balvenie whisky matured in traditional oak barrels to sweet Oloroso sherry casks. This new expression brings to life the story of the Classic and showcases the same process in the choice of wood, the warehousing, the testing and tasting.

The Creation of a Classic is matured in American oak casks and finished in sweet Oloroso Sherry casks, offering an innovative reinterpretation of The Balvenie Classic.

Commenting on the release of The Balvenie Stories in travel retail, The Balvenie Malt Master David Stewart MBE said: “The Balvenie Distillery is built on stories. It’s what sets us apart and makes our whisky what it is. Each expression in the Stories range has a distinct narrative as to how it came to be, and each whisky tells its unique tale in liquid form through first-hand recollections of the many characters involved.”

The story behind The Tale of the Dog was inspired by the memories of Dennis McBain, a long-time coppersmith at The Balvenie Distillery. As a young apprentice, McBain was asked by a brewer for a copper dog, which he soon discovered was a little copper tube used for secretly siphoning off whisky from the cask. The copper dog would then be flattened as a way of calling out the illicit activity. Thus, expressions such as ‘taking the dog for a walk’ became common at the distillery. This recollection inspired McBain’s suggestion of using dogs instead of unwieldy valinches for distillery tour tastings, a protocol which remains today.

Packaging tells the story

The story behind Tale of the Dog is depicted on the whisky's packaging. The bottle is presented with a replica, flattened copper dog and encased in a wooden tube wrapped in leather, printed with a bespoke illustration, specific to the liquid, from British artist and printmaker Andy Lovell.

Lovell's work, which draws its inspiration from the distillery, can also be seen across the labels and tubes for the entire Balvenie Stories range. It uses bold, hand-made gestural marks to build up images that capture the light and atmosphere of the distillery's landscape.

The story of The Tale of the Dog and The Creation of a Classic can be heard via a specially recorded podcast series, featuring the craftspeople behind the expression, as well as The Balvenie Global Ambassador Gemma Paterson.

This podcast will be available through Spotify and iTunes and via a QR code tag inside the pack, which drinkers can scan using their smartphones.

The Tale of the Dog 46yo will launch globally in November 2021, available in 10 exclusive travel retail locations, including Gebr Heinemann, with a retail price of £16,500 (US\$22,000). Only 34 bottles will be available for sale, drawn from an exclusive single cask.

The Balvenie Creation of a Classic, retailing at £57 (US\$76), will launch globally in November 2021, exclusively in travel retail across all key markets.