

WHISKY:EDITION

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Caol Ila (2011/2023) - Malts of Scotland

The Caol Ila distillery on Islay is known for its accessible, clear smoky style – a welcome alternative to the island's more intense representatives. Independent bottler Malts of Scotland has selected a fascinating single cask with this 11-years bottling from 2011, which was released in 2023.

TYPE	COUNTRY	REGION	DISTILLERY
Single Malt	Scotland	Islay	Caol Ila
BOTTLER	AGE	ABV	PRICE/LITER
Malts of Scotland	11 Years	47.5% Vol.	82.86 €/l

TASTING NOTES

NOSE

Vanilla forms the first layer – not the sweet, creamy Bourbon vanilla, but a lighter, almost crystalline variety. Directly behind it, a remarkable floral component unfolds, reminiscent of coastal meadows after a rain shower. The salt water is present but not intrusive; it behaves like a fine spray blowing in from the sea rather than a wave rolling over you. The peat smoke is moderate and surprisingly precise. It is neither medicinal nor heavy, but reminiscent of the cold ashes of a long-extinguished campfire. The pebbly note we identified is characteristic of Islay whiskies with a maritime character – mineral, almost stony, like the smell of wet pebbles on the beach.

PALATE

The creaminess acts as a carrier for the subsequent flavours. Seaweed emerges as a prominent note, not as an aggressive iodine attack, but as an authentic maritime essence reminiscent of freshly washed seaweed on Scottish shores. Citrus notes – presumably lemon zest and a hint of grapefruit – bring a welcome freshness that opens up the flavour profile and creates space. Interestingly, the saltiness on the palate is less pronounced than on the nose, a phenomenon we occasionally observe in well-aged Islay malts. The vanilla returns, but more subtly than on the nose, more as a hint than a statement. Then comes the most remarkable note: the association with asphalt, or more precisely, with the surface of a freshly tarred road after rain. This mineral-tarry component may sound unconventional, but it is characteristic of certain peated whiskies and gives this Caol Ila a distinctive grounding.

FINISH

The smoke, which was rather subtle on the nose and palate, gains significantly in volume and presence here. It is as if it had been waiting for this moment all along. The finish is impressively clear and focused. Where some whiskies blur or stray in many directions in the finish, this Caol Ila stays on course.

THOUGHTS

MARCEL

This Caol Ila 2011/2023 from Malts of Scotland is simply a joy – it forgoes any frills while remaining wonderfully clear and honest in its smoke. A whisky that hits the mark perfectly with its focused flavor profile and maritime flair, ideal for cozy evenings with a sea breeze in the glass.

SASCHA

With its balanced structure and precise aromatic clarity, this Caol Ila 2011/2023 impressively demonstrates how moderate peat smoke and maritime notes can harmonize beautifully. The concentrated finish reveals remarkable focus, clearly defining the character of this single cask without feeling overloaded.

RATINGS

MARCEL
78/100
Very good

SASCHA
81/100
Excellent

VALUE FOR MONEY
0/5
No rating

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