

N.R. JAGDALE GROUP

AMRUT DISTILLERIES LIMITED

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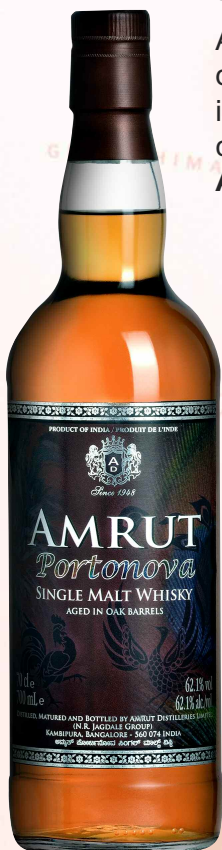
December 2011

Amrut navigates Port with flying colours

The newest addition to Amrut's collection of limited edition Single Malts once again weaves international links. Returning to the successful concept of transferring the Indian malt into special barrels during the maturation process, this time Amrut Distilleries looked to Portugal for inspiration. At its Bangalore distillery, the unpeated Amrut single malt was matured initially in a combination of new American oak and ex-Bourbon barrels. Then it was transferred to once-used Port pipes imported specially from Portugal before being put back into ex-Bourbon casks. **Amrut Portonova Single Malt Whisky** is the result.

The time spent in the Port barrels, has not only added a rich profile to the whisky, but acknowledges India's strong links with Portugal, the home of the rich fortified wine. Thanks to their adventurous maritime explorers, the Portuguese had colonies across India from the early 16th century. In 1498, having discovered the sea route to India, Vasco da Gama landed at Kappad (in the present-day western state of Kerala). The Portuguese empire soon grew and among Portugal's eastern territories was Porto Novo in Tamil Nadu. Porto Novo – now known as Parangipettai – was one of several trading centres on the Coromandel coast under Portuguese control from the early 16th century to the early 18th century.

"This was a maturation we just had to try," says Ashok Chokalingam of Amrut Distilleries Ltd. "The Indian links to Portugal go back centuries, so it was natural that we should want to put our whisky into barrels that had spent time there. It's also a new port of call for Amrut."



Amrut's use of Port pipes in this limited edition single malt also nods to the international dimensions of Port. Port found popularity in Britain when war with France stopped the import of French wine in the 18th century. The Portuguese wine was fortified to compensate for the long journey and the British love affair for Port was ignited. Today **Amrut Portonova Single Malt Whisky** captures the spirit of adventure of the Portuguese seafarers and honours the way that fine drinks can forge strong bonds between nations.

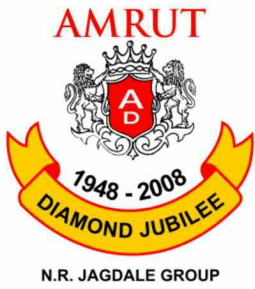
Exotic, vibrant, complex, are all words that have been used to describe Amrut **Portonova Single Malt Whisky** and the whisky experts seem to agree it is a powerful addition to the Amrut Distilleries' collection.

Almost immediately **Portonova** was awarded a prestigious award. The Malt Maniacs handed it the Best Cask Innovation title in their 2011 awards on 1 December. **Portonova** won the award for the best whisky "matured or finished in 'special' or unusual casks" in the Premium category which is for bottles with a retail price between 50 and 150 euros.

Jim Murray, author of the *Whisky Bible 2012*, describes **Portonova** as "outrageous". He adds: "I have never come across such a flavour profile before anywhere in the world. But my word: what a statement this makes... unique."

Dominic Roscrow, international writer and editor, says: "The result is a Pink Floyd show of a whisky: vibrant, colourful, complex, and nearly too much. A blackcurrant and wispy, smoky nose gives way to an intense and bittersweet mix of chilli, blackcurrant, oak, damson, dark chocolate, and peat. Astounding."

Amrut Distilleries Ltd, The Grainger Suite, Dobson House, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE3 3PF, UK.
Tel + 44 (0) 7838 229914 or + 44 (0) 191 233 6316. Email ashok@amrutdistilleries.com



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Tasting notes *Amrut Portonova*

Mark Davidson

Manager of Cadenhead's whisky shop, Edinburgh.

I had expected that this would be another whopping Amrut. When I got my hands on Portonova I certainly wasn't disappointed. This is high quality single malt whisky there's no question about that. I'm so pleased Amrut is being innovative and giving us more flavours to think about. Portonova is a welcome addition to the family. It is distinct in that it is Amrut. It has that curious uniqueness that is so hard to define accurately. It's exotic. It's fruity, but what kind of fruit? There are all different sorts of fruit. Amrut is already a full bodied whisky, so the Port is not struggling with the whisky. It's wearing it well. Drinking it neat, the nose is suppressed by the high strength (as is the finish) but, with the water, the nose really opens up. It blossoms in the finish with the water.

Dominic Roskrow

International whisky writer and editor, London

This release is a Port version of Amrut's Intermediate Sherry – a sort of Port pipe sandwich. The spirit is matured in both unused casks and bourbon casks, then spends a few months in Port pipes, and then returns to bourbon casks. The result is a Pink Floyd show of a whisky: vibrant, colourful, complex, and nearly too much. A blackcurrant and wispy, smoky nose gives way to an intense and bittersweet mix of chilli, blackcurrant, oak, damson, dark chocolate, and peat. Astounding.

Advanced Malt Advocate magazine rating: 92

Gordon Homer

Spirit of India, Newcastle, UK

A lovely light mahogany with golden highlights and a ruby tinge. The nose is definitely Amrut, the liquorice, millionaires' shortbread (chocolate, caramel toffee and biscuit) and spices but in with the mix are dark fruits – sultanas and raisins – there is also a slight chocolate cherry liqueur (can't remember the name...). It's a cracking nose, very smooth, no tingling of the nose hairs for 62.1%. As it left to stand you can tell it's not a standard Amrut but I don't think the Port is as pronounced as the Sherry was. The Port is slightly more predominant on the palate, a touch of wineyness especially towards the back of the palate, there's still everything there you'd expect from an Amrut. The finish is long, creamy, liquorice and it's very chewy. It is another very good Amrut, at first I didn't notice any of the Port wood finish but as the dram goes on it comes in, not overpowering just a subtle hint, which is the way it should be in my opinion.

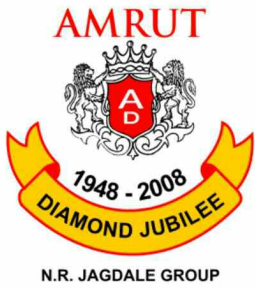
Davin de Kergommeaux

Malt Maniac and whisky writer, Canada

Robust mouth-filling crème caramel with zesty citric notes that ripen step by step through yellow plums, sultanas and luscious dark fruit. Warming pepper evolves into sweet baking spices, cognac-cured pipe tobacco, then a vague earthiness. Intertwined layers of oak, cereal, candied orange peel, and sweet ripe fruit are simply alive with complexity.

90 points





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Tasting notes
Amrut Portonova

Steffen Brauner

Danish Whisky Blog, Denmark

Nose: wood, rhubarb and tropical fruits.

Palate: quite woody, liquorice, tropical fruits, a kaleidoscope of tastes.

Finish: very long and very complex. I really enjoy it. It has the earmark of old whisky, which is a fantastic accomplishment when you know that Amrut whisky is around five years old give or take a few days.

Rating: 4 out of 5 or 92 out of 100.

Comment: This is a very delicious and complex whisky, where the different flavours plays around and around and around. A masterpiece. The ABV is high but the whisky is very welcoming.

Krishna Nukala

Malt Maniac, India

Colour: deep golden yellow.

Nose: bold, strong, hits you on the nose directly. Instantly you recognise that it is Sherry giant, having spent some good time in a quality wine cask. Lots of oriental fruit akin to guava followed by some citrus, mild bitter notes like orange peel. Give some time and you get a concoction of dried fruits such as Indian sultanas, dried dates, hints of polished leather and some spices like cloves.

Palate: full bodied with excellent mouth feel. Creamy texture with more citrus and dried fruits coming back that usually accompany a heavy sherried whisky. Excellent mouth feel and highly drinkable.

Finish: long, spicy and citrusy finish.

The best Amrut version I have ever tasted.

Score: 90 points.

Jim Murray

author of Whisky Bible 2012

Whisky Bible 2012 verdict: Amrut Portonova db (93) n22: A thick pudding of a nose, fruit and caramel have merged into one slightly over-oaked soup, burnt apple pie; t24: this is essentially a Port pipe sandwich ... and it shows. The spicy, jammy fruit is interwoven through any amount of caramel while the oaky saltiness gets the taste buds both salivating and puckering until you run dry; f24 long, massive oak with quite evident traces of the virgin barrels now detectable. And more of a cocoa hue as it progresses. At last some muscovado sugars arrive to supplant the berry fruits; b23 this is a whisky so big, so blinding that when I first tasted it I was so dazzled I could barely see a thing. It was like coming out of the pitch black into a fierce light. My first instincts, while recoiling, was that there was too much oak at work. Only on acclimatisation did I work out what was going on here ... and fall helplessly in love. There is still way too much oak, however you look at it and the nose, which neither improves nor worsens over time confirms that. Indeed, the entire thing is outrageous. I have never come across such a flavour profile before anywhere in the world. But my word: what a statement this makes... unique.



Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2012 has over 4,000 tasting notes, including 1,210 of the very latest releases. Published by Dram Good Books priced at £12.99, signed copies can be purchased from www.whiskybible.com

