

Single Malt connoisseurs meet to try out limited edition varieties from different regions with a set of cigars.
Abhinav Aggarwal takes you to an exclusive meeting with the members of **The Cigar and Single Malt Society** to sniff and swirl the golden liquids

Malts 'n' Mates



Mehul: Single Malt is THE water of life. The recently concluded sale at the distillery, The Macallan's, Fine and Rare limited edition series saw bottles of their oldest and finest 1926 vintage being offered at \$38,000. It was a complete sell-out.

Akhil: A quantum leap from our dads' generation of whisky or Scotch with soda, water and ice.

Mehul: For today's meeting, I thought we would do a regional tour of Scotland but with a twist. We have a Glenkinchie ten years for the Lowlands, a Longmorn 15 years, a Knockando for Speyside Highlands and a Caol Ila 12 years for the Islay. The Caol Ila is very subtle for an Islay and should balance the other lighter regions. The two Speysides will let us explore the differences in the same region.

Jetu: Excellent.

Glenkinchie (Single Malt from the Scottish Lowlands)

Mehul: Very aromatic. Almost like perfume.

Akhil: Definitely sweet.

Jetu: This has definitely come as a very pleasant and fragrant surprise.

Abhinav: What cigar would you guys like to blend this with?

Mehul: I definitely need something mild. If you guys don't mind, I shall go with the Dunhills.

Akhil: Good choice. I think I will go for the Partagas Luisitanias.

Abhinav (smiles): The Series D No. 4 is the official cigar of our Club. Right Jetu?

Jetu: Oh, absolutely! It's the only one I will give you at my place. Given that you guys are not sporting them today, I shall have the Romeo Y Julieta Churchills.

Jetu (taking a puff): Excellent draw. A handmade cigar has an eco-system of its own.

Jetu: Okay, guys. Let's get on with the tasting.

(The Glenkinchie is sipped and swirled in the mouth.)

Mehul: Body is very light; although the palate has some of the sweetness we smelt.

Akhil: It is certainly smooth; almost too smooth. Seems to have much potential but just doesn't quite make the cut.

Jetu: Almost flat, a real letdown after that wonderful nose.

Abhinav (smiling): Maybe this one should meet the fate of some of the blended scotch we tried the other day?

Akhil: Down the drain?

Fresh snifters are taken and Longmorn, a Single Malt from the Speyside district of the Scottish Highlands, is poured. Each member takes a deep whiff of freshly roasted coffee beans to clear their nasal passages before going ahead.

Longmorn (Single Malt from the Scottish Highlands, Speyside District)

Mehul (nosing the glass): Certainly less pronounced than the Glenkinchie

Akhil: Strange. Would have expected it to be the other way round.

Mehul: That's what I love about Single Malts. Each one has its unique characteristics.

Jetu: Do you get the flowery bouquet?

Abhinav: I get a syrupy, green apple fragrance. Be interesting to see how the bouquet opens out.

(A few drops of water are added)

Mehul: Wow! What a difference. I get a sweet, almost chocolaty fragrance and taste.

Akhil: Yes, and the body has held really well. Medium firm, I would say?

Jetu: Lovely finish. Do you get a hint of sherry? Definitely, a pre-dinner malt.

Single Malt is a malt whisky, made by malting barley that is produced in a single distillery only

JETU LALVANI

Entrepreneur, industrialist;
Director: TEL Group;
philanthropist, educationist and
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Cigar and music lover.

MEHUL PATEL

First generation, tech-entrepreneur, art
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AKHIL SHAHANI

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ABHINAV AGGARWAL

Entrepreneur, restaurateur and corporate
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Director: Emerging Technologies (I) Pvt. Ltd.
and II Nidas Restaurants Pvt. Ltd.
Single Malt and Cigar enthusiast.



(And so the evening moves on...to the Speyside Single Malt Knockando and then to Caol Ila from the Islay region of Scotland. The conversation meanders from Single Malts to foreign affairs, literary matters etc. And the Club becomes the platform for lovers of Single Malts and Cigars to meet, bond and discourse)

The Cigar and Single Malt Society's Top Ten

SINGLE MALTS

Lagavulin: Rs 3,500 for a 70 cl. bottle of 12 year old to Rs 36,000 for the Rare 12 year old

Ardbeg: Rs 2,050 for a 70 cl. bottle of 10 year old to Rs 32,500 for the 1975

Laphroaig: Rs 1,500 for a 70 cl. bottle of 10 year old to Rs 29,000 for the 1974

Talisker: Rs 1,950 for a 70 cl. bottle of 10 year old to Rs 50,500 for the 1947

The Macallan: Rs 4,500 for the 18 year old to Rs 1,750,000 for a 1926 vintage

Royal Lochnagar: Rs 3,200 for a 14 year old, single cask to Rs 40,000 for a 27 year old

The Balvenie: Rs 3,750 for a 21 year old to Rs 4,20,000 for a 50 year old

Glenfiddich: Rs 2,800 for a 70 cl. bottle of 18 year old to Rs 3,58,000 for the 50 year old

Caol Ila: Rs 1,850 for a 70 cl. bottle of 12 year old to Rs 21,500 for the 1969

Oban: Rs 2,500 for a 70 cl. bottle of 14 year old to Rs 24,000 for the Rare 14 year old

CIGARS (BOX OF 25)

Hoyo de Monterrey - Double Coronas: Rs 19,000

Partagas Series D No. 4: Rs 12,000

Cohiba Robusto: Rs 15,500

Romeo Y Julieta Selecion Limitadas 2002: Rs. 19,500

Cohiba Siglo VI: Rs 22,500

Bolivar Robustos: Rs 15,000

Partagas Luisitanias: Rs 14,500

Punch Double Coronas: Rs 16,800

Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2: Rs 14,250

Romeo Y Julieta - Belicosos: Rs 13,750

Tasting the Malts

Serve at room temperature. Single Malts tend to throw an unattractive haze when refrigerated and ice brings about changes in the malt.

Glasses: Snifter glasses are ideally suited for "nosing".

Dilution: The texture of Single Malts is best appreciated undiluted. A few drops of water opens the bouquet, oft altering and enhancing, the aroma and palate.

Nosing: Pour about 10-15 ml into a snifter. Swirl the glass and take a pleasant, deep breath.

Tasting: Take a small sip and swirl in the mouth.

Watch for: The Colour; The Nose or aroma; Body, texture or mouth-feel; Palate: how each sip interacts with your tongue and palate; After-taste; See what changes take place after a few drops of water are added.

Lighting a Cigar

Cut at closed end leaving about ¼ cm of the cap intact.

Lighting: Use a butane lighter or long, slow burning, match-stick; Hold the cigar horizontally, in direct contact with the flame, slowly rotating it till the end is evenly charred; Put the cigar to your lips; Hold the flame about half an inch away from the end and draw slowly while rotating it. The end should now ignite; Make sure it is evenly lit; otherwise one side will burn faster. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUBHASH SHARMA

Abhinav Aggarwal will focus on lifestyle and trends in entertainment in this regular column

The Macallan's limited edition 1926 vintage was bought at \$38,000. A complete sell-out.

