

W.G. of Chicago

Summer 2012 Whiskey Gentlemen Newsletter

The Whiskey Round-up

The Gents cruised Chicago's west suburbs and visited Lincoln Whiskey Kitchen (Schaumburg), Five Roses Pub and Ram Restaurant (Rosemont)

The Summer of 2012, as any good summer will boast, has been filled with plenty of celebration and relaxation. While not all of those occasions involved whiskey (gasp!), the Gents still found time to partake in a glass or two (or three) of the beloved stuff.

What's more, the Gents welcomed a fourth member, Johnny, to the group as we made our round of spirited outings.

Finally, true to the promise made in [March's newsletter](#), during Mike's trip through Michigan – strictly to keep Joe honest – he picked up an ample supply of Divine Bourbon! (What a guy!)

The Mode of the mid-year outings has been leisurely and casual. Our approach to enjoying the various whiskeys has been, therefore, a bit more laid-back these last few months.

By contrast, the folks at Lincoln Whiskey Kitchen are hardly slouches; they take their whiskey rather seriously.

Much to our wide-eyed excitement, LWK offers a two-sided menu chock full of choices. Easily 150

Selected Spirits

 Woodford Reserve Blend	 Tullamore Dew (12 yr)
 Woodford Reserve Double Oaked	 Millars
 Jack Daniel's Single Barrel	 John L. Sullivan's
 Four Roses Single Barrel	 Midletons
	 Johnny Walker – Black Label

varieties are listed in categories and sub-categories. Bourbons are divided into straight, small batch, wheated and single barrel selections, whereas the American Whiskey cluster has rye, wheat, single malt, Tennessee, and “other” selections.

Similar groupings and regional divisions are listed for the Scotch and Irish offerings, followed by a few Canadian whiskeys.

Throw in the single barrel selections and house blends, and the whole gorgeous menu lists north of 200 unique choices – and that's not counting the cocktails or the food items *prepared* with whiskey!

I think needless to say, there were flights available with predefined and customer-selected choices.

Johnny and I chose the Four Roses Single Barrel, Jack Daniel's Single Barrel, and the Woodford Reserve Blend flight.

The Four Roses set off a four-alarm fire! An exhale of dragon breath follows every swallow of this stuff, and it even smells a little charred to the nose.

Jack Daniel's Single Barrel had a sweet smell and peppery finish, with a bit of a bitter bite.

The Woodford Reserve Blend was a little disappointing, only because I feel the Double Oaked version

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had a more interesting and flavorful appeal by comparison. As a stand-alone, the blend was okay, but not remarkable.

Rick, Mike and I all sampled the Woodford Reserve Double Oaked bourbon. The maraschino cherry sweetness was evident to at least two of us, and a very spicy kick was hard for anyone to miss. When compared to the Blend, which offered a typical caramel note on the nose and char backdrop on the palate, the layers of flavor offered by the Woodford Reserve Double Oaked easily won us over.

“ An exhale of dragon breath follows every swallow of the stuff. ”

The cuisine at Lincoln Whiskey Kitchen left none of us wanting. Burgers were the order de jour for more than one of the Gents, and all of us were pleased with our plate. Service was also better than average. The staff was accommodating and quickly corrected a perfectly understandable incorrect drink order. The confusion was over a “double” pour of Woodford Reserve instead of the “Double Oaked” that I ordered. Fret not, however: despite the mix-up, not a drop of either was wasted!

Written by Joe

The June junket brought the Gents to [Five Roses Pub](#) – Irish Food & Music House. Mike contributes the write-up.

I decided to kick off the night with a generous pour of Buffalo Trace Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey. While not comparable to the complexity of the Woodford Reserve Double Oaked I have been enjoying, this sipping bourbon was just the right amount of sweet-and-smooth needed for a late afternoon sipping session prior to another evening out with the Whiskey Gentlemen of Chicago.

Five Roses offered a relaxed Irish pup atmosphere with an elegant décor. A constant flow of visitors from the surrounding hotels and convention center brought a vibe to this place that is reminiscent of a metropolis location.

Friendly staff greeted us upon entering. They were very responsive and courteous in answering many questions, including Wi-Fi access (ask the hostess/server for the password), parking and validation, and general menu inquiries.

Once we explained that whiskey was on our minds, our server quickly offered assistance from the manager to explain the Irish whiskey selection. After discussing the various options available, the manager decided he would do a bit of reconnaissance for the evening’s sampling. Once he returned, we were pleasantly surprised by the collection he presented.

With four individual pours for each of us, the manager offered whiskeys ranging in single-serving prices from six to nineteen dollars. There was no obligation to purchase the entire tray, which he mentioned immediately, thus no pressure was on us as we determined whether we wanted the entire sampler.

It was a short conversation.

We quickly and unanimously agreed that sampler was the perfect selection for this evening’s event, and we graciously accepted the offer in front of us!



After hearing of the daily special – roasted leg of lamb with potatoes and veggies – I immediately decided the dish would complement the whiskey night appropriately. A well-portioned, savory sliced lamb cooked to a delectable doneness was a great pairing of food needed to enjoy the whiskey.

The Five Roses Pub will easily be put on my “take-my-wife-on-a-date-night” list of places to enjoy!

Written by Mike
Photo by Joe

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Tasting notes from Five Roses Pub

Tullamore Dew

Mike: This whiskey had an extremely long peak and finish. Sweet as Joe said. Hints of apricots follow this pleasant draw.

Joe: Citrusy, apricot; smooth and light

Millars

Mike: Average/medium boldness. Without water I noticed a small measure of bitterness at the end. This whiskey opens up nicely after water. It made it a bit cleaner tasting while cutting down the bitterness that I noted after the first sample. The water also changed the smell allowing its low-key aromas to enhance.

Joe: Thinner, opened up with water, oaky scent.

John L Sullivan's

Mike: A punch in the mouth with a bite of pepper was my immediate reaction. This is the first whiskey where I actually noticed a heavy amount of an oil mouth-feel. By far, the most oil I've ever tasted in a whiskey. The mouth-feel lasted longer that I'm used to. I also decided to sample this while eating my dinner. I think it paired well with my lamb, but it's not a variety that I would look forward to again.

Joe: Definitely oily with a hot finish.

Midletons

Mike: The Gentlemen's Irish whiskey favorite for the evening with its extremely smooth, non-sweet, almost salty/savory finish. I enjoyed this whiskey both before and after dinner. I would be very interested in sampling this whiskey in a proper Glencairn glass to appreciate the full nose range.

Joe: Smooth! Light peppery finish. Slight citrus flavor.

Definitely worth picking up a bottle. Special thanks to the manager for including this in our flight!

The Waning months of summer, July and August, brought the Gents out only once. Ram Restaurant and Brewery proved a suitable place to enjoy a drink and a tasty bite to eat among friends.

Although its selection of whiskey is not its main feature, Ram is stocked with the essentials.

Rick's choice was Johnny Walker Black. I indulged in one of my consistent favorites, Woodford Reserve Double Oaked.

I also must highlight the utterly delicious Faburgé, a burger that is three square meal on a bun, complete with a burger patty, cheese, ham, bacon, and a fried egg. And oh, mama, was it ever good!

Mike made a dent in the Round Barn Distillery's stock!



The Payload!!



Written by Joe and Mike,
Photos by Mike