

# Tobermory

## REGION

There are five Scottish whisky distilling regions; Highlands (including Islands), Speyside, Islay, Campbeltown and Lowlands, each with their own distinctive characteristics. Key to understanding the flavour distinctions between various Single Malts is knowing these regions and the kind of whiskies that they produce.



Region  
Islands

Production Type  
Single Malt

Distillery Status  
Active

Brands  
Caermory  
Ledaig  
Tobermory

## HISTORY OF TOBERMORY

From multiple closures to multiple owners, how one of Scotlands oldest distilleries finally became the safe haven it always wanted to be.

Tobermory distillery as we know it today was founded in 1798 by John Sinclair, making it one of Scotland's oldest. Sinclair named his distillery "Ledaig" (pronounced Lu-Chaig) which means "safe haven" in Gaelic. Tobermory was a small fishing port in a quiet bay - a veritable safe haven, yet the distillery was anything but in its early years and has laid silent for more than half of its existence.

The distillery experienced its first closure in 1837, laying silent until 1878 before being taken over by W Campbell & Co in 1881. The distillery was visited by journalist and distillery enthusiast Alfred Barnard in 1885 who described their Mull Whisky as a pure Highland Malt. The period of steady ownership was not to last, again being taken over by John Hopkins & Co. in 1890 where ownership lay until 1916 when Scotch Whisky giant DCL took over the company. As with many other Scottish distilleries Ledaig fell victim to the economic slump during the Great Depression and the US Prohibition era, causing it to be mothballed yet again from 1930 until 1972. The distillery was repurposed as a canteen for sailors and the warehouse was used for naval stores during World War 2.

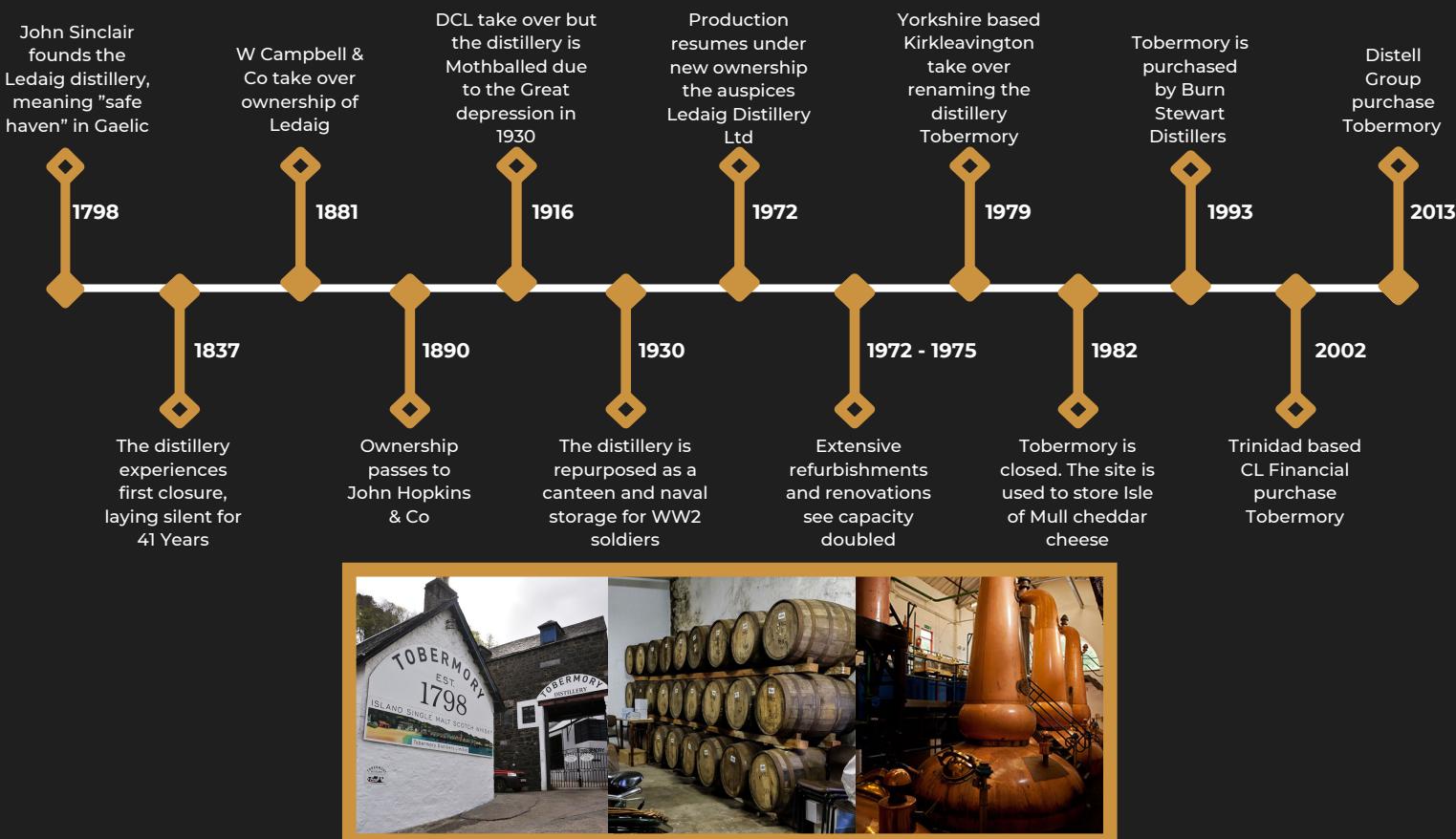
Production resumed in 1972 under new ownership of Ledaig Distillery Ltd, a partnership formed between Spanish sherry firm Pedro Domecq, a Liverpool based shipping operator and an unspecified Panamanian company. The distillery underwent extensive refurbishments and reconstruction which saw the capacity more than doubled, though despite this investment Ledaig Distillery Ltd filed for Bankruptcy in 1975, leading to another closure, this time for four years. 1979 saw the turn of Yorkshire based Kirkleavington Property try their luck with the distillery, renaming to today's Tobermory, yet they quickly sought to repurpose the Tobermory's only warehouse into holiday apartments and closed the distillery from 1982 until 1989 where they used the site, somewhat unconventionally, as storage for Isle of Mull cheddar cheese.

With a distillery steeped in such history, Burn Stewart Distillers (who also owned Deanston Distillery), decided to purchase Tobermory in 1993 for £600,000, spending a further £200,000 for the inventory of maturing stock. Their first and most important task was to remove all traces of said cheese and once again embarking on making whisky. With the distillery having previously produced both peated and unpeated whisky at varying times, Burn Stewart deciding in 1996 that annual production would be split 50/50 with the peated spirit being labelled Ledaig in ode to the distilleries original name, with the unpeated variant named Tobermory. They devoted significant amounts of time and money to raise the profile of the Malts, leading to both becoming very popular Single Malt brands.

The success of Burn Stewarts operations led to it being sold to Trinidad based Venture Capital firm, CL Financial for £50m in 2002, subsequently being purchased by South African drinks behemoth Distell Group for £160 million in 2013. Today, despite such a chequered yet interesting past, the distillery enjoys great success with both Tobermory and Ledaig being highly sought after, multi award winning Single Malt Scotch Whiskies, showing that the desire of John Sinclair and the potential which Burn Stewart saw in the distillery, were both certainly well placed, even if it did take longer than expected!

## TIMELINE

### The events that shaped Tobermory



## TOBERMORY FACTS

### Everything you ever wanted to know about the inner workings of Tobermory Distillery

CAPACITY (MLPA) 0.85	HEAT SOURCE Steam heaters	MALT SUPPLIER Various	YEAST TYPE Bagged 'M' type strain	GRIST WEIGHT (T) 5
WASHBACK TYPE Wood	FERMENTATION TIME: 50-100hrs	CONDENSER TYPE Shell and tube	WORT CLARITY: Bright	WATER SOURCE The Burnside Springs
NEW-MAKE STRENGTH 68% ABV	MALT SPECIFICATION Plain malt (Tobermory) maximum 2ppm, peated malt (Ledaig) minimum 35ppm	MASH TUN MATERIAL Cast iron body, copper dome	SINGLE MALT PERCENTAGE: 15%	
SPIRIT STILL SHAPE Medium with reflux bowls				



## ACCOLADES AND RANGE OF WHISKY

Although Tobermory has suffered from a chequered past, in its later years it has risen from the flames like a phoenix to create some award winning whiskies enjoyed the world over.

- Gold Award, Signature expression, Tobermory 12, International Spirits Challenge
- Best Scotch Islands Single Malt, Ledaig 18 years old, World Whiskies Awards 2021
- Scotch Islands (Non-Islay) 12 years and Under, Ledaig 10 years old World Whiskies Awards 2020
- Scotch Islands (Non-Island), 13-20 years, Ledaig 18 Years old Gold World Whiskies Awards 2020
- Ledaig 10 Years Peated, Silver Award IWSC 2020
- Tobermory 12 Years, Silver Award IWSC 2020

Tobermory's core range offers signature expressions and flavours that encapsulate their history. The Ledaig Sinclair series uses heavily peated barley before being matured in ex-bourbon casks, and finished in hand-selected Spanish Rioja casks. This series is an ode to Tobermory's founder John Sinclair. Tobermory 23 Year Old has been housed in ex-Bourbon casks for 15 years, then re-racked into Oloroso casks for a further 8 years, creating a delicious 23 Year Old.



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