

## Highland mists descend over Hillary House for dram-tasting

Turn your mind back to the waning days of the 19th century when one of Aurora's busiest doctors hung up his stethoscope for the day, retired to the parlour, and poured himself a wee dram of scotch to reflect on the day that was.

Did he go for a full, peaty variety? A lighter blend? Despite their lack of a time machine, the Aurora Whisky Society has a pretty good idea: a nice Glenmorangie, known for its port finish.

It is just one of the five high quality whisky brands local scotch expert Keith Scott and the Aurora Whisky Society will bring to Hillary House virtually next month in a fundraising whisky tasting benefiting the Aurora Historical Society. (AHS)

The fundraiser was the brainchild of former Aurora mayor Geoff Dawe who is himself a founding member of the Aurora Whisky Society while also volunteering his time as treasurer for the AHS.

The act of tasting, however, can't be virtual.

Ahead of the September 9 event, ticket-holders will be able to pick up everything they need for a full experience, including five two-ounce samples of the showcased whiskeys, a specially-designed tasting glass and more.

When you're comfortably logged into Zoom with your scotches in front of you, Keith Scott and the AHS will provide a virtual tour of Hillary House, with selections picked out especially for each room on the tour.

In the doctor's office, as soon as you walk through the door, you will taste an Ardbeg 10, which was, in keeping with the location, selected for its "medicinal" aroma, says Dawe. Moving on to the living room where Dr. Hillary might have once settled in for a night cap, it's the Glenmorangie. Moving on to the ballroom, which was a focal point for Aurora society in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, a Highland Park Cask Strength, a limited release chosen for its decadent taste. There is even a selection for outdoors, with a tour of the barn accompanied by Bruichladdich Barley, picked for its earthy and grassy notes.

"There are an incredible number of whiskeys, not just scotch whiskeys, but Irish, Canadian, American, and Japanese as well, a tremendous amount of product out there," says Dawe. "If you happen to like the beverage, which I do, this is a great opportunity to try things you would not normally buy and this time we're going with a very Scotland-based lineup."

The identity of the fifth selection, however, is a secret Dawe is keeping close to his vest.

"I look at fundraising as two elements. First, is obviously to raise some money and old buildings [like Hillary House] are always in need of loving, but it also helps us increase awareness," says Dawe. "I believe this whisky tasting will allow us to reach out to people who may not necessarily fall into our typical group of people who are engaged with or even aware of Hillary House."

"This is an opportunity to, first of all, taste some really unique scotches, have a bit of a tour, maybe get a taste of Hillary House and we look forward to welcoming anybody into the building after that!"

The Aurora Historical Society's Virtual Scotch Tasting will take place Saturday, September 9 at 7 p.m. over Zoom. Tickets are \$131.25 per person and can be secured through September 2 through the AHS' website at [aurorahs.com/Hillary-house-virtual-scotch-tasting-1](http://aurorahs.com/Hillary-house-virtual-scotch-tasting-1). The event is sponsored by Bazil Developments Inc., Thomas Foods International Canada, Highland Gate Developments Inc., Kerbel Group, Groundswell Urban Planning, and ERA Architects Inc.

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter