



MacInnes

The Spirit of Opportunity

Whisky Cask Ownership Guide



We are MacInnes.

Home is where the heart is. For MacInnes, it's in the windswept western isles of Islay and Jura, the fresh clear waters of the River Spey, the smoky peat aromas of an amber dram of single malt. You'll find our spirit in the peace and quiet of whisky warehouses, where time works its alchemy inside the oak casks.

Our purpose is to bring you closer to that process, through a cask of your own.

MacInnes. The *Spirit* of Opportunity.

Introducing MacInnes Whisky



MacInnes was founded on a simple belief: owning a cask of Scotch whisky should be clear to understand, with every cost, document and risk explained before you buy.

Our founder, Jonathan Hook, has over 35 years of experience in accountancy, from PwC to his own multi-award-winning firm, Norwich Accountancy Services Ltd. He knows good decisions are only made when you have access to the right information, and it's this ethos that underpins the MacInnes team.

Inspired by a passion for whisky, we take the time to explain how cask ownership works, what it costs and what to consider, so you can decide whether it is right for you.

Why own a whisky cask?

Scotch whisky is one of the UK's best-known exports. In 2025, Scotch whisky exports were worth around £5.3 billion, reaching around 163 markets worldwide.* Behind every bottle is spirit that has spent years maturing in oak casks in Scotland's bonded warehouses.

Owning a cask brings you closer to that story. A cask is a physical asset: a specific, identified cask of maturing spirit from a named distillery, with its own cask number, fill date, cask type and warehouse location.

Many people buy a cask out of a love of Scotch whisky, to mark a family milestone, or as something to pass on to children or grandchildren. Ownership also brings ongoing costs and responsibilities, including storage, insurance and regular checks, so understanding the practical details is as important as enjoying the whisky itself.

While a cask remains in an HMRC-approved bonded warehouse, excise duty and VAT on the whisky are generally suspended. Duty and VAT may become payable when it is removed from bond, including for bottling. A cask may qualify as a wasting asset for UK Capital Gains Tax purposes, depending on the circumstances and the applicable rules.

This does not mean that every purchase, sale or gift is free from tax. Tax treatment depends on individual circumstances and may change. This is not tax advice; you should seek independent advice.

Whisky cask ownership is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. You will not have access to the Financial Services Compensation Scheme or the Financial Ombudsman Service. The value of a cask can go down as well as up and your capital is at risk. A cask is not a liquid asset and selling one may take time.

*Scotch Whisky Association, 2025 figures. Export value is rounded and the market count is approximate. These figures describe the wider Scotch whisky industry and do not indicate the value, sale prospects or potential returns of an individual cask.

The ownership *process*



1. Consider your options

We start with a conversation about what you're looking for, your budget and any questions you have, then talk you through the casks available, their costs and the risks.



2. Buy your cask

Once you've decided, we'll confirm the distillery, cask number, cask type and warehouse location, and explain your ownership documents and the storage and insurance arrangements.



3. Give it time

Maturation takes years, and time in cask changes the character of the whisky. We'll keep in touch with updates on your cask. Further maturation does not guarantee a higher value.



4. Decide what's next

When you're ready, we'll talk you through the options, from selling your cask to bottling it, and the costs of each. Neither the timing nor the outcome of a sale is guaranteed.

Support, today and to come

We strive for the highest standards of personal service. From the very beginning, you will have your own cask specialist to explain how ownership works, the costs involved and the risks, and to help you choose a cask that suits you. They will help you complete the Purchase Order Form and collect the anti-money laundering documents our administrative team needs. We will then secure your cask, take payment and provide your ownership documents.

But this is only the start. Your cask may be maturing for many years, and we will be available throughout to answer your questions, help you arrange checks on your cask and keep you informed. If you decide to sell, we will talk you through the options available at the time.



Storage in a bonded warehouse

Where your cask is held for the duration of your ownership is important. Scotch whisky matures in HMRC-approved bonded warehouses, where it can be held under the relevant duty-suspension arrangements.

While your cask remains in bond, excise duty and VAT on the whisky are generally suspended. Duty and VAT may become payable when it is removed from bond, including for bottling and personal use.

Separate charges for services, such as storage, may be subject to VAT. Tax treatment depends on individual circumstances and may change, so please seek independent advice.

Your cask needs attention as well as time. Some spirit is lost each year through natural evaporation, known as the angels' share, and its alcohol strength can change. Regauging and sampling help establish its remaining volume, strength and condition, and we can help you arrange these and discuss the results. Storage and insurance charges continue while you own your cask.



Ensuring your HMRC-approved storage

MacInnes holds WOWGR (Warehousekeepers and Owners of Warehoused Goods Regulations) approval from HMRC, which allows us to buy, sell and move duty-suspended spirit. This is an excise approval, not financial regulation, and it does not provide FCA, FSCS or Financial Ombudsman Service protection.

Before you buy, we'll explain where your chosen cask is stored and how your ownership is recorded, including whether a Delivery Order will be issued in your name and how the warehouse acknowledges the transfer.

We'll also explain the storage and insurance arrangements for your cask and what they cost. Insurance is subject to its policy terms, limits and exclusions, and it does not protect against a fall in your cask's market value.

Selling your cask *in future*



Whisky takes time, and it may be several or many years before you think about selling your cask. Whenever that time comes, we will be on hand to talk you through the options.

These could include selling your cask to another private buyer, a distillery or an independent bottler, or bottling it yourself. Each has its own costs, and bottling depends on the cask's condition, the applicable rules and any restrictions in your purchase terms.

As the owner, you are free to sell your cask however you choose, including finding a buyer yourself. Selling depends on finding a buyer and agreeing a price. Neither the timing nor the outcome is guaranteed, and you may get back less than you paid.



Why choose MacInnes?



Whether you are buying for yourself or for future generations, you'll find support and knowledge from every member of the MacInnes team.

We hold our own stock. We buy casks from established suppliers and offer them directly to our clients, so you know exactly which cask you are buying: the distillery, cask number, cask type and warehouse location are confirmed before you complete your purchase. Our prices are published, so you can see what each cask costs.

We also care deeply about the centuries of craft that go into whisky-making. We'll guide you through our stock list, explain the costs and risks clearly, and support you throughout your ownership.



Embrace the spirit of *opportunity*

If you would like to find out more about cask ownership, or to talk about buying a cask from MacInnes, please get in touch. Our team will be happy to answer your questions. Simply call us, send us an email or visit our website.

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