



The city's Scotch whisky scene is among the best in the world.

## Scotch 2.0

### The Scotch scene in Calgary

DON TSE

Calgary has one of the most vibrant Scotch communities in the world — local liquor stores have such an incredible selection, including rare and collectible bottlings, that people travel from around the world to purchase it here. This really shouldn't come as a surprise. After all, Calgary, Airdrie, Canmore and Banff are all Scottish names and are proof of the Scot influence on our region.

### BOOZE

with a vibrant chapter in Calgary, and hosts (almost) monthly tastings of rare or unusual Scotch. Another interesting club is the Scotch Malt Whisky Society ([smws.ca](http://smws.ca)). The SMWS is a worldwide society with a relatively new Canadian branch. SMWS hosts monthly tastings, but the real benefit of joining is the opportunity to buy dozens of members-only bottlings.

Some of these bottlings come from distilleries that ceased to exist while the SMWS was aging their whisky, or from distilleries that never offered their own single malt before. To join

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But, if you're new to the scene, how should you go about getting involved in this internationally recognized Scotch subculture?

• Go shopping — Kensington Wine Market's ([kensingtonwinemarket.com](http://kensingtonwinemarket.com)) focused selection of Scotch features the best and most interesting kinds available in the world. For certain rare bottlings, Kensington is often the only place in North America where they are available. Also, Kensington's buyer makes frequent trips to Scotland where he samples individual casks in the distilleries' warehouses, hand selecting the best casks for exclusive bottlings. Similarly, Willow Park Wines & Spirits ([willowparkwines.com](http://willowparkwines.com)) boasts an entire wall of Scotch and glass cabinets showcasing some of the most expensive brands money can buy.

• Join a club — A quaich is a traditional Scottish bowl often used for celebratory drinking of Scotch. The Companions of the Quaich is an international Scotch appreciation society,

the Companions, contact Andrew Ferguson ([scotchguy@kensingtonwinemarket.com](mailto:scotchguy@kensingtonwinemarket.com)). To join the SMWS, contact [curious@smws.ca](mailto:curious@smws.ca).

• Go for dinner — Buchanans Chop House & Whisky Bar ([buchanans.ca](http://buchanans.ca)) features a Scotch menu that stretches 11 pages. If that isn't reason enough for you to check it out, Buchanans also offers upscale dining and occasionally hosts Scotch pairing dinners where multiple courses are served alongside an appropriate dram. Contact them for details or drop in on Whisky Wednesday, which features a weekly selection of three whiskies for sampling.

• Buy something special — The beauty of Scotch is in its variety and versatility. Why stock your bar with standard fair when the city has so much to offer. Even at prices well below \$100 per bottle, you can purchase something exclusive to Calgary.

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