

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Raise a Glass to the 1494 Whisky Club](#)

### Lead

According to the figures, the 10 most collectable single malt Scotch whiskies rocketed in value by 400 per cent between 2008 and 2011, and the top 100 by 245 per cent. Gold, by contrast, rose a comparatively paltry 146 per cent during the same period.

Regardless of whether or not the numbers are entirely accurate, there's no doubt that recent years have seen a surge in interest for the best single malts and many enthusiasts now collect them in the sort of quantities once reserved for oenophiles. Not long ago, for example, I spoke to a Japanese movie producer who had amassed 2,000 bottles which he stored in an apartment bought specifically for the purpose.

It is that sort of 'spirited' enthusiasm that prompted a 35-year-old Glaswegian named David Clelland to found the New York club '1494', which recently opened its membership list after two years in the making. The name relates to the first written record of Scotch whisky distillation which dates from 1 June, 1494, when Friar Jon Cor was commissioned to make the potent spirit for King James IV.





Clelland, a former 'international whisky specialist' with Morrison Bowmore - the Glasgow-based distiller which owns Auchentoshan, Bowmore and Glen Garioch - wants 1494 to serve as a link between the best whisky distilleries and collectors, as well as providing a comprehensive service to the clubbable connoisseur with guidance on how to buy, invest in and enjoy the finest single malts.

Based in a 16,000 square foot Manhattan town house, 1494 offers various tiers of membership, ranging from the \$15,000 'collector' level to founding membership, which costs \$175,000 and will be restricted to 10 individuals. There is also the option to bequeath one's membership to an heir.



The club aims to set a membership ceiling of around 550, with perks to include access to the house and bars, regular whisky tastings, a private concierge, a 'whisky hunter' who will track down your favourite malts to create a bespoke collection and a professional storage service with \$5 million worth of insurance cover.

There will also be an on-site Savile Row tailor, private jets and luxury cars, trips to the distilleries and an endless supply of cigars from legendary New York tobacco house Nat Sherman. Clelland has also secured partnerships with Bonhams (which will provide collectors with annual valuations), the British Consulate and Range Rover.

Please note, however, that 1494 is very much a 'whisky' club as opposed to a 'whiskey' club - the latter spelling, of course, generally referring to spirits distilled in America or Ireland rather than bonny Scotland. Where, of course, it all began...

Photos: 1494 Whisky Club

## **Gallery**





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