

Glenfiddich Timeline

1839 - William Grant is born

William Grant was born in 1839 in the Scottish Highland town of Dufftown.

1866 – William Grant enters the World of Whisky

It was when William took a position as a book keeper at a local distillery that he really found his calling. There, he instantly fell in love with the whisky industry, and swiftly became Distillery Manager.

1886 – Valley of the Deer

For 20 years, William had nurtured the dream of building his own distillery so that he could create ‘the best dram in the valley’ (‘dram’ is the Scottish word for a measure of whisky).

By 1886, he and his family of nine had saved enough money to buy their own piece of land at Glenfiddich (meaning ‘Valley of the Deer’). With the help of his seven sons and two daughters they wasted no time and built the distillery brick by brick with their own hands within a year.

1887 – The first spirit runs from the stills

On Christmas Day 1887, 125 years ago this year, everyone involved in building and creating the distillery celebrated as the first spirit ran from the small copper pot stills at the Glenfiddich Distillery.

1909 – Grant’s travels the world

William Grant appointed his son-in-law, Charles Gordon, as his first salesman. It was no easy job, but Charles was as passionate about success as his father-in-law. It took 181 calls to make his first sale, but he never looked back, and within two years, Charles would be making footprints across the globe.

1914 – International Grant’s

By 1914, William Grant & Sons had a thriving international business - with no fewer than 60 agencies established in 30 countries worldwide. With the onset of war, however, the industry began to suffer. Sales became erratic, and by 1917 the distillery was forced to shut down. Thankfully, distilling re-started in 1919.

1919 – Prohibition

In 1919, Prohibition took effect in many markets, ensuring continued hard times for Scotch whisky. Ever optimistic, however, William Grant increased production, looking to meet demand when the crisis was over.

1923 –William Grant dies

In 1923, William Grant died aged 84. At his funeral he was remembered for his liveliness, his generosity and his legendary sense of humour. As well as, of course, for his world-class whisky. William’s passion, determination and pioneering spirit were the legacies passed on not only to his

children, but also to his four succeeding generations – and his philosophy continues to guide the company today.

Over the next 40 years, William Grant & Sons continued to go from strength to strength, despite a period of closure during WWII, when barley was used only for food production.

1957 - The Iconic Triangular Bottle

In 1957 the new, now iconic, triangular bottle was unveiled. Initially used to bottle Grant's Scotch Whisky, Glenfiddich soon embraced the distinctive triangular bottle, which remains part of the Glenfiddich packaging today.

1963 – The rest of the UK – and beyond!

Glenfiddich became the first single malt Scotch whisky to be commercially exported outside the UK, effectively introducing the world to the single malt Scotch whisky category. In addition, David Stewart joined the company as an apprentice blender, and he became Master Blender just seven years later, until 2009, making him the longest serving Master Blender and Malt Master in the industry.

1974 – Queen's Award

William Grant & Sons won the Queen's Award to Industry for Outstanding Export Achievement, becoming the first Scotch whisky company ever to receive the prize.

1987 – Glenfiddich's Centenary

Glenfiddich celebrated 100 years in production. This huge milestone was commemorated with over 3 months of events and activities around the world, including formal Scottish dinners, featuring piping and dancing at the distillery itself.

1991 – A New Vintage

A true example of Glenfiddich's pioneering spirit is the foresight and planning that meant that in this year Glenfiddich was able to release a whisky which had been maturing for 50 years – and was the first single malt whisky to do so, highlighting Glenfiddich's commitment to crafting 'the finest dram in the valley' and challenging conventions.

2001– Rare Whisky

The first decade of the new millennium was greeted with characteristic passion and commitment. In 2001, the Glenfiddich 1937 was bottled, making it the oldest single malt Scotch whisky in the world. Only 61 bottles of this rare whisky exist.

2006 – Global expansion

In 2006, William Grant & Sons opened new offices in Taiwan and Shanghai to manage the sales, marketing and distribution of the company's brands in Asia.

2009 – A new expertise

In 2009 David Stewart retired after celebrating over 45 years as the Glenfiddich Malt Master and having become the longest serving Master Blender to remain with any one distiller in the industry. In his place Brian Kinsman was appointed as the Malt Master to continue Glenfiddich's pioneering whisky making. In this year the company appointed a new Chief Executive Officer – Stella David.

The Present Day

This Christmas Day will mark 127 years since the first liquid ran through the distillery's copper pot stills. To this day, William Grant's simple legacy to create 'the best dram in the valley' inspires the company in all its ventures. Today, the family remain represented on Main Board and retain active involvement within the business. Indeed, Glenfiddich has grown to become the world's most awarded single malt Scotch whisky, found in homes and bars on every continent in the world.