



TAKEN WITH AN INCH OF MALT

At the end of a meal, it's time to relax, digest and tell a few tales over a good glass of whisky. To really get the measure of malt, try replacing the traditional dessert and cheeseboard (and heavy dessert wine or port) with something lighter – here are the treats that will help you form the perfect postprandial partnership

PHOTOGRAPH BY MILES ALDRIDGE

THE traditional savoury that closes a meal has been making a comeback and couldn't be a finer complement to a good glass of whisky. The best combinations meld the salty and the sweet. Try a truly devilish devil on horseback: a sweet prune plumped by soaking in a little whisky and water, wrapped in salty bacon, baked fast in a hot oven and sent to the table sizzling hot, accompanied by a fine, sherry-cask matured malt. Or you could serve a light and salty blue cheese made from sheep's milk, such as a Beenleigh Blue or Roquefort, as an elegant single-cheese cheese board with sweetish biscuits and fat raisins on the vine, enhanced by the rich flavour of an oak-matured whisky.

CHOCOLATE

THE depth of a *grand cru* dark chocolate is the perfect match for a fine whisky. The sweetness of one meets the smoothness of the other in a marriage made in heaven. One rich and dark; the other golden and clear; both a delicious end to an evening. Keep it simple with a chocolate mousse, plain and unembellished. For ingredients of the finest quality, no more is needed. The complexity of the perfectly distilled whisky will bring out the fruity notes of the chocolate and cut the richness of the dessert. For sheer indulgence, try a warmed chocolate fondant – a baked chocolate pudding with a melting centre that flows over your plate as a delectable sauce. This is a heady match for the clean, pure taste of a well-matured malt.



JELLY



IN the soft candlelight at the end of a winter meal, nothing looks more beautiful than a small, jewel-like jelly. Fortunately for the grown-ups, jelly has been rescued from the nursery and brought into the 21st century. With a little gelatine and liquid, anything can be jellied, so your creativity has free rein. Consider colour and think about what flavours will complement one another. For many it's sacrilege to think about mixing fine whisky with anything but water, but most of us have a few guilty pleasures on this front. For example, what can be finer than a warming whisky and ginger on a cold night? Play with this idea and you'll produce a fabulous combination. Serve a glass of whisky alongside a ginger jelly, either made from ginger ale or ginger beer to be slightly fizzy, or sweet and powerful made from ginger wine. In traditional dessert making, whisky and orange has long been a subtle pairing. Try mixing a little marmalade into some orange juice to make a sharper, subtler, bitter-orange flavour, and smooth its edges with a glass of malt. **JANE LEVI**

SAVOURY

