

# Malt Advocate BTAC 2008 Reviews

## From: What Does John Know? Blog

<http://www.whiskeypages.com/what-does-john-know.asp>

### [Review: George T. Stagg \(2008 release\)](#)

October 27th, 2008

#### **George T. Stagg, 70.9%, \$65**

Stagg is so smooth, it's quite drinkable at higher proofs. On the other hand, when you bring it down to the strength that you would normally drink your whiskey, it's almost too easygoing. (I made the same comment about last year's William Larue Weller bottling.) The main theme to this whiskey is lush toffee sweetness and, like last year's expression, some vanilla fudge, nougat and molasses. Underlying notes of dates, tobacco, dark berry fruit, spearmint and a hit of coffee round out the palate. Given the higher strength, it's true value bourbon—almost like getting two bottles in one. A very nice whiskey but, when brought down to comparable strength, the Eagle Rare 17 has more complexity.

Advanced *Malt Advocate* magazine rating: 90

### [Review: Thomas H. Handy Sazerac \(2008 release\)](#)

October 26th, 2008

#### **Thomas H. Handy Sazerac, 63.75%, \$65**

Powerful, lush, and boldly spicy. A mouth-coating, invigorating rye whiskey with chewy toffee, fig cake, and candied fruit penetrated by thumping mint, warming cinnamon, and clove ultimately revealing more subtle notes of allspice, coconut and nutmeg. Long, delicious finish. An amazingly vibrant whiskey that lets you know you're alive. The American whiskey equivalent of a young, cask-strength Islay single malt scotch or an Imperial IPA (India Pale Ale) beer.

Advanced *Malt Advocate* magazine rating: 91

### [Review: Eagle Rare 17 yr. old \(2008 release\)](#)

October 25th, 2008

#### **Eagle Rare, 17 year old, 45%, \$65**

The other whiskeys in the Antique Collection get all the attention but, for the past few years, Eagle Rare 17 yr. bourbon has been very impressive. Vanilla taffy, caramel almonds, maple syrup and candy corn, with balancing notes of polished leather, summer fruit, a dusting of cinnamon, mocha and soft mint. The flavors are nicely integrated with good depth. A rock solid effort that will not disappoint.

Advanced *Malt Advocate* magazine rating: 94

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## [Review: William Larue Weller \(2008 release\)](#)

October 24th, 2008

### **William Larue Weller, 62.65%, \$65**

A significant improvement over the previous release in 2007, which I felt was the weakest of Buffalo Trace's Antique Collection last year. Wheated bourbons, like William Larue Weller, lack the bold zing of rye, and therefore are vulnerable to being too tame, too easygoing, like the 2007 WLW release. What wheated whiskeys gain in drinkability, they can lose in vibrancy and zest. The distiller might need to augment this with something. A good way to do this is by increasing the oak impact (spice, resin, balancing dryness), as was done here (quite masterfully, by the way) with this new expression. Sweet notes of vanilla custard, maple syrup, Demerara rum, shortbread cookie and marzipan are balanced by raspberry jam, cinnamon, nutmeg, teaberry and gentle oak resin that lingers on the finish. Great balance too!

Advanced *Malt Advocate* Magazine rating: 93

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## [Review: Sazerac Rye 18 yr. old \(2008 release\)](#)

October 23rd, 2008

As promised, this is the first of five in-depth reviews (one each day for five days) encompassing the new 2008 release of Buffalo Trace's "Antique Collection."

Last night, I lined up and tasted the last four years of Sazerac Rye 18 year old. The last great vintage of Sazerac Rye 18 year old was 2005, which I rated a 95. It was impeccably balanced and still displayed great youthful qualities.

The three vintages since then, including this one, came from a different batch of whiskeys which were transferred to stainless steel to keep them from any additional aging (and additional oak impact). This was a smart move. These recent vintages are similar in flavor profile and, while still very nice whiskeys, show just a tad too much oak and lethargy to reach the classic status of the 2005 release.)

### **Sazerac Rye, 18 year old, 45%, \$65**

Deep and complex, yet still quite lively for an 18 year old whiskey. Not as lush and sweet as its younger sibling (Thomas H. Handy Sazerac), showing more oak, dried spices and a certain degree of sophistication. Toffee and molasses are quickly matched and then dominated by notes of brittle mint, vanilla, cinnamon, dried fruit, and black raspberry leading to a long, earthy, resinous, polished leather finish.

Advanced *Malt Advocate* magazine rating: 87