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Top whisky auction bottles fetched $644,528 in August

A Macallan TIME:SPACE 84 year old sold for $128,487, helping lift the monthly total 16% above a year earlier.

Monday, September 7, 2026



The 20 most expensive single bottles sold at international whisky auctions in August brought in $644,528 in hammer prices, up 16% from the same month a year earlier, according to data published by Whisky Advocate. The gain means the comparable total for August 2025 was about $555,600, or roughly $88,900 lower than this year’s figure.

The monthly rise was driven in large part by one sale. A bottle of Macallan TIME:SPACE 84 year old sold for $128,487 at Whisky Auctioneer on August 10, the highest single-bottle hammer price recorded in August and the largest item on the list by a wide margin. That one bottle accounted for about 19.9% of the combined value of the top 20 sales for the month.

The figures cover only the 20 highest hammer prices for individual bottles and do not represent the full whisky auction market. Hammer prices also may not include buyer’s premiums and other fees. Even with those limits, the August results point to continued strength at the top end of the collectible whisky trade, especially for rare Macallan releases and other scarce bottles with strong followings among buyers.

Whisky Advocate said the top end of the market has outperformed recent years over a longer stretch as well. For the first eight months of 2026, the combined value of the 20 highest single-bottle hammer prices each month topped $7 million. That was 21%, or about $1.2 million, higher than the same period in 2025. The publication said the August Macallan sale helped widen the brand’s lead over rivals after tighter competition in July.

Macallan had four bottles on August’s top-20 list with a combined value of $214,015. That was the highest total for any brand in the month. Year to date, Macallan has placed 43 bottles on the list for a combined $1,558,070, keeping it well ahead of other names tracked in the ranking. Yamazaki stood at $1,344,641 year to date, and Karuizawa at $1,231,705.

The August results also showed broad geographic representation among the most expensive bottles. American whiskey had nine entries on the list, its highest monthly count since January, according to Whisky Advocate. Japanese whisky had five entries, while Scotch filled the remaining places. That mix suggests collectors remain willing to pay for scarce bourbon and rye alongside older and rarer bottles from Scotland and Japan.

Behind the Macallan TIME:SPACE bottle, the second-highest hammer price in August was $60,862 for a Hanyu Ichiro’s Malt Card Series Jack of Clubs 1991, sold by Whisky Auctioneer on August 10. Third was a Willett Family Estate 23 year old Bourbon

“Bigfoote” Private Barrel B57, which sold for $39,200 at Unicorn Auctions on August 2. A Macallan in Lalique 72 year old Genesis Decanter reached $37,828 at McTear’s in Glasgow on August 12, and a Van Winkle Old Advocate Special Reserve 15 year old sold for $34,300 at Unicorn Auctions on August 16.

Other strong results came from LeNell’s Red Hook Rye 23 year old, which brought $32,600; a Willett Family Estate 18 year old Bourbon “Soppressata” Private Barrel 79 at $28,900; and an A.H. Hirsch Reserve 18 year old at $26,000. An Old Rip Van Winkle 25 year old Decanter sold for $25,600, while a Macallan Millennium Decanter 50 year old 1949 reached $25,200.

Japanese bottles were also active across the middle of the table. Three Karuizawa bottlings sold between $22,992 and $23,398. A Yamazaki Junshin sold for $21,682 at Bonhams in Hong Kong on August 28. Those sales added to a year in which Japanese whisky has remained near the top of the high-value auction market, even as Macallan continues to dominate in total dollars.

Scotch had a smaller share of August’s list than American whiskey, but it still produced several notable sales beyond the leading Macallan bottles. A Glenfarclas Pagoda Ruby Reserve 62 year old 1954 sold for $20,287 at Whisky Auctioneer. Highland Park made its first appearance on the monthly top-20 ranking this year when a Highland Park 50 year old, 2020 Release, sold for $18,100 at Unicorn Auctions on August 30. Whisky Advocate noted that bid came in below the bottle’s retail price.

The August data also showed how concentrated value can be in a small number of lots. Macallan’s four entries alone represented about one-third of the total value of the month’s top 20 sales. Van Winkle placed four bottles for a combined $97,500. Willett placed three bottles worth $84,100, and Karuizawa placed three worth $69,382. Hanyu had only one bottle on the list, but its $60,862 result made it one of the month’s highest-value brands.

The report comes at a time when parts of the whisky business are moving in different directions. According to the editorial framing provided with the data, top-tier collecting has improved even as the Scotch market aimed at regular consumption continues to deal with excess inventory. That split highlights a gap between scarce, trophy-level

assets that attract global bidders and the wider commercial whisky trade, where supply pressures have weighed on sentiment.

Auction houses are now moving into the fall sales calendar, which typically brings more high-profile consignments to market. Whisky Advocate said Sotheby’s in New York is resuming auctions this month with offerings that include wax-sealed Willett bottlings, a bottle of Very Very Old Fitzgerald 15 year old Blackhawk estimated at $40,000 to $50,000, a Bowmore 1968 Arc-54 estimated at $40,000 to $60,000, and another gold wax bottle of A.H. Hirsch Reserve 18 year old estimated at $20,000 to $30,000. Whisky Auctioneer is also offering several high-value bottles, including a Macallan Anniversary Malt 1928 50 year old, a Bowmore 1964 46 year old, and a Gordon & MacPhail Generations Glenlivet 1940 70 year old, while Unicorn Auctions is listing more rare Macallan releases.

Taken together, the August results show that demand for the rarest bottles remains firm at the top end of the auction market, with buyers still competing for limited Macallan, old American whiskey, and select Japanese releases in international sales.