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Bonhams Will Auction a One-of-a-Kind 58-Year-Old Scotch Whisky Estimated at £20,000-30,000

The House of Hazelwood release draws on a David Ramsay watch linked to King James VI of Scotland and I of England

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Bonhams said on Wednesday, November 18, that it will offer a one-of-a-kind 58-year-old Scotch whisky in an Edinburgh sale opening on Thursday, November 19, pairing the release with the first installment of a separate single-owner auction from the late collector Derek Mather.

The whisky, called The King's Measure, was created with House of Hazelwood and will lead Bonhams' Spirits History: House of Hazelwood Exclusive Release, Casks & Treasures sale, which runs from Thursday, November 19, to December 3. Bonhams has estimated the lot at £20,000-30,000.

According to the auction house, the bottle was produced specifically for the sale and was inspired by a historically important pocket watch by David Ramsay that is associated with King James VI of Scotland and I of England. Bonhams is also selling that watch in a separate online auction ending December 3, with an estimate of £250,000-350,000.

The whisky is being marketed as a cross-department collaboration between Bonhams' spirits and watches specialists, the first such project of its kind at the auction house. Bonhams said the release was designed to connect Scottish whisky making, royal history and decorative craftsmanship around the story of the Ramsay watch.

The lot includes a 700-milliliter bottle of 58-year-old Scotch whisky in a custom-made presentation cabinet. Bonhams said the cabinet incorporates wood from an ancient oak tree at Doune Castle, used with the permission of the Earl of Moray. The company said the tree has stood on the estate since the 16th century and may have shaded the young King James.

The package also includes a private House of Hazelwood experience in Speyside for up to six guests, a feature aimed at high-end collectors who increasingly seek access and provenance alongside the bottle itself.

Jonathan Gibson, a director at House of Hazelwood, said the whisky was intended to reflect the long historical arc of the watch and the period linked to James VI and I. Patricia Byott, Bonhams' head of spirits in Scotland, said the release sits at the top end of the collector market because it combines age, scarcity and a strong historical narrative.

The sale will include more than the headline lot. Bonhams said it will also offer six whisky casks from Scottish distilleries including Springbank, Glenrothes and Ben Nevis, along with a broader selection of rare bottles. Among the named highlights is The Macallan Tree of Life in Lalique 46 Year Old, 1979 and The Macallan Art Is The Flower, with a combined estimate of £35,000-50,000.

The auction house said the lineup reflects continuing international demand for rare casks, collectible bottles and other whisky-related property. Edinburgh has become a more prominent base for that part of Bonhams' business as competition for top-end Scotch has widened beyond traditional whisky buyers to include luxury collectors and investors.

The linked watch sale adds another layer of value to the program. Bonhams described the David Ramsay piece as a unique watch bearing a portrait of King James I. Ramsay, a noted clockmaker and watchmaker of the early 17th century, served the Stuart court, and any object associated with that history carries appeal for both horology buyers and collectors of royal material.

The December schedule also includes the first part of The Derek Mather Collection, a two-part sale drawn from the holdings of the late whisky enthusiast and restaurateur. Part I, titled Artisan Wishaw – Islay, Independents & Icons, runs from November 26 to December 9 in Edinburgh.

Bonhams said the Mather sale centers on the whisky collection assembled for The Artisan restaurant in Wishaw and is particularly strong in Bruichladdich, Port Charlotte and Octomore, as well as independent bottlings. Mather was also identified by Bonhams as a founding member of Friends of Bruichladdich, a detail likely to add interest for buyers focused on modern Islay whisky history.

Single-owner whisky sales have gained traction in recent years because they offer a clearer collecting story than mixed consignments. Auction houses often emphasize provenance, storage history and the personal reputation of the collector, especially when the bottles come from a known cellar or a well-regarded hospitality setting. In Mather's case, Bonhams is presenting the group as part of a larger legacy sale rather than simply a batch of individual bottles.

The Bonhams announcement points to a market that is still dividing into distinct tiers. At one end are casks and younger collectible releases that attract trade buyers and speculative bidders. At the other are highly limited bottles, old blends and distillery-linked experiences that function more like luxury objects. The King's Measure is aimed squarely at the second group, with its estimate driven as much by uniqueness and

presentation as by liquid age alone.

Both sales will be handled through Bonhams’ Edinburgh operation, with the Ramsay watch offered online through the company’s website. Together, they give the auction house a December program built around two familiar themes in the high-end Scotch market: the value of scarcity and the power of a strong story.