

ARMAGNAC

98 **Domaine d'Espérance XO Bas-Armagnac (France; PM Spirits, Brooklyn, NY).** The wonderful aroma suggests juicy orchard fruit brushed with vanilla and cocoa. On the supersoft palate, a concentrated cocoa note leads to peach nectar, gingery spice and a delicate curl of orange peel on the finish. Made with a blend of four vintages, the youngest of which was aged 10 years.
abv: 40.7% **Price:** \$94

97 **Eric Artiguelongue 1974 Bas-Armagnac (France; T. Edward Wine & Spirits, New York, NY).** The aroma shows oak and a hint of fudge. Give this Armagnac some time to open in the glass to coax the most out of this surprisingly light, lively brandy. The first sips show dried fig and baked apple, followed by a cocoa midpalate and finishing long with walnut astringency, hints of baking spice and lemon peel.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$128

97 **Jollité VSOP 5 Years Armagnac (France; Sarranto Exports, Stamford, CT).** This is exactly what you want a VSOP to be: smooth and balanced, yet lively. Rich vanilla sweetness is enlivened by a hint of fresh apple, finishing with a sprinkle of baking spice. Easy sipping, but not too precious to mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35

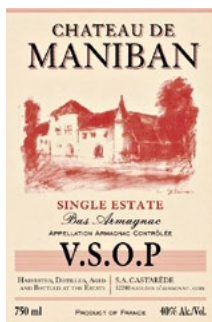
96 **Castarède 1979 Bas-Armagnac (France; 375 Park Avenue Spirits, Louisville, KY).** Look for deep dried-and-cooked-fruit aromas: fig, date and baked apple drizzled with caramel. The silky, remarkably light palate shows plum-flesh tartness at first, then dried dates and figs, and finally a long mocha finish accented by cinnamon, clove and orange peel.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$169

95 **Château de Laubade 1998 Bas-Armagnac (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY).** Blended and bottled in 2018, this 20-year-old Armagnac, made from a blend of Baco and Colombard grapes melds rich vanilla, maple and brown sugar with a drying blast of fiery spice, notably allspice, ginger and cayenne heat, plus lemon peel. Adding water releases some of the tannic grip and adds a creaminess that reads as lemon custard or vanilla cream pie.
abv: 52.1% **Price:** \$150

95 **Jean Cavé Trois Étoiles Bas-Armagnac (France; David Bowler Wine, New York, NY).** The funky, fruity aroma suggests dried apricot and quince paste. Intriguing and complex, the relatively dry palate is reminiscent of honey without the sweetness, coupled with chamomile tea, cigar wrapper and fruit leather, finishing with ginger and white pepper. Aged a minimum of two years, the equivalent of a VS.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$31

94 **Domaine de Papolle 20 Years Bas-Armagnac (France; Columbus Wine & Spirits, Amityville, NY).** Look for a deep amber hue and concentrated oak and vanilla bean aromas. The palate has a dusty cocoa-powder quality and fair amount of alcohol bite. Complex, rounded vanilla leads to a violet hint and exits with a swirl of clove and black pepper heat, plus a burnt orange-peel note.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$110

94 **Larressingle XO Armagnac (France; Kobrand, New York, NY).** This dessert-worthy pour opens with concentrated, sweet caramel on nose and palate. The first sips double down with palate-coating crème brûlée, edged with espresso and baking spice, leading to a long, gentle, custard fade.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$100



93 **Château de Maniban V.S.O.P Single Estate Bas Armagnac (France; Biagio Cru and Estate Wines, New Hyde Park, NY).** The bold, oak-forward aroma is accented by hints of roots and bark. Silky and soft, the palate opens with cocoa, fresh fig and cinnamon, finishing brisk and mouthwatering on a bright hint of lemon peel.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$55

93 **Château du Tariquet 12 Ans Pure Folle Blanche Bas-Armagnac (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA).** This 12-year-old Armagnac is made from Folle Blanche and bottled at cask strength. The caramel aroma offers a whiff of fragrant violet. The drying palate echoes that subtle floral note but finishes with more confectionary flavors: caramel, brown sugar, maple and hazelnut richness, enlivened by bright orange peel.
abv: 48.2% **Price:** \$80

BLENDED SCOTCH

97 **Compass Box Delilah's XXV Blended Scotch Whisky (Scotland; MHW Inc., Manhasset, NY).** A collaboration to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Chicago whiskey bar Delilah's, this burnished-gold whiskey has a fresh apples-and-pear aroma softened by a hint of butterscotch. The light, smooth palate unfolds toasty oak, vanilla, fresh pear, hints of gingery spice and a faint whiff of smoke—amazingly, every sip is different, right into the elongated finish. Limited edition, 8,520 bottles available worldwide; new to U.S. starting June 2018.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$100



96 **Nomad Outland Whisky (Scotland; Gonzalez Byass USA, Chicago, IL).** Labeled as a blended whisky, but not as Scotch. This collaboration between a Sherry master and Scotch blending guru starts with blended Scotch whisky, which is aged five to six years in Scotland, then transferred to Jerez, Spain to age for one more year in casks that previously held PX Sherry. Together, this yields a rich, spiced cake flavor profile, layering vanilla and molasses with dried apricot and pecan, unwinding into a long, beautifully spiced fade.
abv: 41.3% **Price:** \$50

96 **The Six Isles Blended Malt Scotch Whisky (Scotland; Keeper's Quest, Chattanooga, TN).** A judicious blend of malts from six of Scotland's whisky-making isles means you can almost smell and taste the ocean. The aroma is distinctly smoky and saline. The palate opens with brine, iodine and a modest amount of peat, plus brisk citrus and vegetal bell pepper midpalate and finishing with a mouthwatering twist of black pepper. Adding water coaxes out a hint of almond sweetness, though it's quickly tempered by a bracing blast of sea spray in the face.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$50

94 **The Naked Grouse Blended Scotch Whisky (Scotland; Edrington Americas, New York, NY).** Part of The Famous Grouse collection and named "naked" because there's no label on the bottle. All the better to view the amber liquid within, which is richly scented with caramel, dried fig and espresso. It's weighty on the palate, layering caramel with campfire smoke, finishing long on tones of dried fruit, spicy black pepper and clove. Adding water tames the heat and teases out a hint of dried cherry, suggesting a Manhattan-style cocktail. Matured in Sherry casks.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$35

93 **Black Bull Kylee Blended Scotch Whisky (Scotland; Shand Import, South Pasadena, CA).** Light gold in the glass, look for a toasty vanilla scent. The flavor shows as concentrated custard, ac-

cented by hints of espresso and dark chocolate, finishing long on a medicinal iodine hint on the exhale.
abv: 50% **Price:** \$34

BOURBON

96 Wild Turkey Master's Keep Revival (USA; Campari America, San Francisco, CA). Aged 12 to 15 years in American oak, then finished in oloroso sherry barrels, this starts with a big, spicy kick, rounding into a long vanilla and caramel finish. Adding water reveals delicious, concentrated layers of spiced caramel, finishing with hints of mocha, hazelnut, lemon peel and dazzling candied ginger heat.
abv: 50.5% **Price:** \$150

95 Barton 1792 Bottled in Bond Bourbon (USA; Sazerac Company, Frankfort, KY). Bright to-paz in the glass, this displays a mellow vanilla aroma and a light palate that integrates sweet vanilla and oak, before drying to attractive cocoa, leather and grapefruit peel.
abv: 50% **Price:** \$36

94 Booker's Bourbon 2017 Sip Awhile (USA; Beam Suntory, Clermont, KY). Dark amber in the glass and bottled at cask strength as a tribute to former Jim Beam Master Distiller Booker Noe, look for a mellow vanilla aroma while cinnamon fireworks start from the first overproof sip on the bold and drying palate. Flavors soften to vanilla and oak with water, finishing with hints of unsweetened chocolate, espresso and black cherry.
abv: 64.1% **Price:** \$73

94 Coopers' Craft (USA; Brown-Forman Beverages, Louisville, KY). Intended to celebrate the coopers who make Brown-Forman's barrels, it makes sense that this is a particularly oak-forward Bourbon. Oak and vanilla lead the nose and buttery palate, rolling into more concentrated vanilla on the midpalate and finishing with baking spice and a hint of orange peel. **Best Buy.**
abv: 41.1% **Price:** \$23

94 Redemption Wheated Bourbon (USA; Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits, Stamford, CT). Made with 45% winter wheat, more than most wheat-forward Bourbons, and aged four years, this honey-hued whiskey offers gentle vanilla and all-spice aromas. The flavor is light at first, showing vanilla, hops and a bouncy hint of sarsaparilla. Adding water brings dramatic changes, coaxing forward silky hints of butter cookie, buttered brioche and pecan, finishing with an allspice twang.
abv: 48% **Price:** \$46

93 Border Bourbon (USA; 45th Parallel Spirits, New Richmond, WI). Enticing oak and vanilla aromas are joined by a hint of black cherry. The palate is deep and complex, opening with plenty of oak integrated with vanilla, drying espresso and cayenne heat. Adding water tames the fire, bringing out more

vanilla and black cherry. Sip or mix. This should make for a fierce Old Fashioned.
abv: 46.4% **Price:** \$45

93 Hillrock Solera Aged Bourbon Pinot Noir Finished (USA; Hillrock Estate Distillery, Ancram, NY). This wine cask-finished Bourbon entices with a mellow caramel aroma. The drying palate opens relatively woody, with cedar and spice, and a hint of raisin. It takes quite a lot of water to adjust, but it's worth tinkering with, finding the balance pulls out cocoa powder, vanilla and almond tones and rounds out the oaky edges, finishing with a flurry of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg.
abv: 46.3% **Price:** \$100

92 Catamount Whiskey Straight Bourbon (USA; Grand Teton Distillery, Driggs, ID). This single barrel wheated Bourbon is tawny in the glass, with orange highlights. Distilled in Indiana and aged in Idaho for a minimum of four years in high-altitude conditions, the mild palate shows sweet cinnamon spice, vanilla, almond and a hint of peach nectar; adding water pulls out an unexpected cocoa note.
abv: 44% **Price:** \$40

92 Isaac Bowman Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished In Port Barrels (USA; A. Smith Bowman Distillery, Fredericksburg, VA). This plush port barrel-finished Bourbon opens with brown sugar, drying to a spiced edged with red fruit notes. Adding a splash of water snaps it into focus, suggesting a slice of cherry pie topped with caramelized brown sugar and maple.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$40

92 William Wolf Bourbon (USA; Wolf Distilleries, North Charleston, SC). Toasty vanilla and stone fruit aromas launch this well-structured straight Bourbon. Although the palate opens with a distinct sweet vanilla note, it finishes dry, with a core of espresso, mocha and leather accented by clove and black pepper heat.
abv: 43.4% **Price:** \$35

91 Traverse City Barrel Proof Straight Bourbon Whiskey (USA; Traverse City Whiskey Co., Traverse City, MI). This delivers a sweet, delicious aroma of pecan pie drizzled with caramel. The palate offers a hit of that expected sweetness up front, though it quickly dries to a darker, more brooding flavor profile with espresso, dark chocolate, burnt orange peel and black pepper. Adding water lightens things up a bit, tilting back toward a walnut note on the elongated finish.
abv: 51.9% **Price:** \$80

CACHAÇA

96 Maison Leblon Reserva Especial Cachaça (Brazil; Leblon USA, Coral Gables, FL). This single-batch cachaça opens with hints of banana cake, baking spice and golden raisins on the nose and palate, and slips down the throat as smooth as

spiced honey. Each sip finishes with a restorative lemon zest tone and a soft vanilla glow.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20/375 ml

95 Novo Fogo Graciosa Cachaça (Brazil; Novo Fogo, Issaquah, WA). This incredibly complex sipper entices with aromas of vanilla, honey and ripe banana. These are echoed on the palate, layered with surprising dried cherry and dusty cocoa notes, which linger into the long, gently spiced finish. A good option for an Old Fashioned variation.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$35

92 Soul Premium Cachaça (Brazil; Bibo International, Newport, RI). The aroma entices with tones of lychee and flowers. The palate is bright and bouncy, echoing that lychee note, along with hints of bubblegum, white pepper and pink peppercorn that finish long and elegantly on a rosewater exhale. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$25

CANADIAN WHISKY

95 Crown Royal Blenders' Mash Whisky (Canada; Diageo, Norwalk, CT). This is one of five whiskies that make up the Crown Royal signature blend. The complex aroma combines vanilla, maple and a hint of espresso. The big, bold, buttery palate echoes those flavors, finishing with a flurry of spice. Limited edition. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$28

94 Canadian Club 100% Rye Whisky (Canada; Beam Suntory, Deerfield, IL). You don't see many 100% rye whiskies, and even fewer this easy-sipping. Look for vanilla and oak layered with hints of apricot and golden raisin, plus an elongated, drying finish sprinkled with plenty of baking spice. Sip or mix. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20

GIN

96 Hayman's of London Old Tom Gin (England; Haus Alpenz, Edina, MN). This is clear in the glass, with a lightly sweet, complex aroma that promises lemon peel, anise and vanilla. The slightly viscous palate delivers anise, powdered sugar and vanilla, finishing with cinnamon piquancy. Overall pleasing, it boasts a classic flavor profile that's exactly what an Old Tom gin is expected to be.
abv: 41.4% **Price:** \$25

95 City Bright Gin (USA; Greenbar Distillery, Los Angeles, CA). This exciting newcomer is complex in aromas of spice and lime, while the palate explodes with juniper, mint and citrus. The finish brings a breeze of savory spices and lingering minty sweetness.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$33

92 **Oppidan Barrel Reserve Old Tom Gin (USA; Oppidan Spirits, Wheeling, IL).** This is golden and bright in the glass, with warm, inviting honey, grapefruit and cinnamon aromas. The spiced palate shows oak and has an amaro-like roots-and-bark quality, finishing with tons of ginger and cinnamon on the fiery fade. Feels right for any drink made with sweet vermouth.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$30

92 **Sourland Mountain Gin (USA; Sourland Mountain Spirits, Hopewell, NJ).** Pink peppercorn piquancy leads the nose and palate, followed by faint hints of rosewater, white pepper and grains of paradise, plus lemon zest on the brisk, bracing finish. Enjoy this in a floral Gin & Tonic variation.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$33

91 **Alchemy Dry Gin (USA; Maine Craft Distilling, Portland, ME).** Made with a base distilled from Maine-sourced grains, this gin opens with an earthy, spicy scent. The palate skews a bit sweeter, but continues the spiced trajectory, with plenty of anise, clove and black pepper, trailing off on a hint of coriander. It's a little fiery, but should hold up well in Gin & Tonics and other long drinks.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$35

91 **Dutch Courage Old Tom's Gin (The Netherlands; One Good Arrow, Charleston, SC).** On the sweeter side of the (already-sweet) Old Tom category, this barrel-aged gin has a light rose-gold hue and mild vanilla-mint aroma. The vanilla-tinged palate has a powdered sugar flavor, finishing with pleasing cinnamon, orange peel and cayenne.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$37

91 **New Columbia Distillery Old Tom Gin (USA; New Columbia Distillers, Washington, DC).** The first-ever Old Tom from the makers of Green Hat Gin, this is rested in used PX Sherry barrels, offering layers of stone fruit and honey. This mild, honeyed gin brings warming whiffs of vanilla and peach pie, with just enough lemony tartness to get the mouthwatering on the clove-accented exit.
abv: 45.3% **Price:** \$37

91 **Rabbit Hole London Dry Gin Kentucky Rye Barrel Finish (USA; Rabbit Hole, Louisville, KY).** Look for a light straw hue and bright aroma showing white flowers and sprightly tropical fruit. The palate is lightly sweet, with delicate pineapple, lychee and ginger fading into mouthwatering lemon peel and white peppercorn. Seems ready for mixing into tropical-inspired or summery cocktails.
abv: 41.5% **Price:** \$36

90 **Applewood Distillery Gin (Australia; Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA).** Here's a savory gin to put your Dirty Martinis on steroids. An earthy, peppery aroma tickles the nose, with a fleeting briny note that edges into pickle territory. The silky palate has a distinctly savory, mushroomy quality underpinned by juniper and lemon; it almost drinks like bone broth, then refreshes with a faint lavender exhale. Distilled from grapes.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$40

90 **Scofflaw Real Old Tom Gin (USA; North Shore Distillery, Green Oaks, IL).** Developed in collaboration with Chicago bar, Scofflaw, this complex, small-batch gin leads with vanilla-sugar sweetness and exits with a juicy hint of Mandarin orange dusted with nutmeg, cocoa and cinnamon.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$30

GRAPPA



94 **Bonollo Grappa of Amarone Barrique (Italy; Park Street Imports, Miami, FL).** This tawny grappa offers dried apricot and golden raisin aromas. The silky, complex palate echoes those dried-fruit notes, adding layers of Sherry, vanilla and spice, finishing long and enticing. Ideal as a post-prandial sipper. Distilled from the grapes used in Amarone and aged 18 months in small oak casks.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$72

93 **Bottega Grappa Fumé (Italy; Palm Bay International, Boca Raton, FL).** Made from a base of grapes used in Prosecco, this golden brandy offers fresh pear, banana and almond aromas. Honey leads the palate, finishing feather-light with cinnamon spice and a teasing floral lilt. Palate-cleansing and pleasurable to sip. **Best Buy.**
abv: 38% **Price:** \$21/700 ml

92 **Il Grigio da San Felice Grappa (Italy; Vision Wine & Spirits, Manhasset, NY).** A light vanilla scent is echoed on the palate along with gentle hints of banana, coconut and custard, developing into a clove- and cayenne-accented finish. Pair alongside a fruit dessert. Base pomace from Chianti Classico.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$55

90 **Grappa di Franciacorta Barricata (Italy; Opici Wines, Glen Rock, NJ).** This burnished-gold grappa offers ripe, slightly funky pineapple, coconut and vanilla aromas. The palate shows waxy honey, ripe tropical fruit, banana taffy and lychee, while the finish is clean, with a fleeting clove note and a final brush of honey. Made from the grapes used to make Franciacorta sparkling wine—Pinot Nero, Chardonnay and Pinot Bianco—and aged for 1 year in former sherry casks. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$32/1L

90 **Nardini Grappa Riserva (Italy; Leonardo LoCascio Selections—The Winebow Group, New York, NY).** Mild aromas of tropical fruit lead the nose, while the soft palate shows mellow apple blossom lightly fading into sweet coconut and ginger.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$25/375 ml

LIQUEUR



96 **Chareau Aloe Liqueur (USA; Charron Favreau, Camarillo, CA).** This ethereal, delightful liqueur is clear in the glass, with a fresh, bright aroma that suggests fresh-cut green melon and cucumber water, plus a zesty citrus hint. The palate teases with sweet, vegetal, floral and fleeting jalapeño spice in turn, without quite settling in one space. A treat with tequila.
abv: 25% **Price:** \$45



94 **Galliano L'Aperitivo (Italy; Lucas Bols USA, Manhasset, NY).** Ideal for Negronis and other aperitivo cocktails, this bright red bitter is a touch lighter and more citrusy than standard-bearer Campari. The aroma skews fruity, while the palate is immediately bitter. A bit of red fruit emerges on the midpalate, while the long finish offers tones of grapefruit peel and cinnamon.
abv: 24% **Price:** \$17/375 ml

94 Jägermeister Manifest (Germany; Mast-Jägermeister US, Inc., White Plains, NY). The brand best-known for college shooters may finally have a product to transition away from that image. This complex, sweet-spiced liqueur shows hints of gingerbread, honey and warming baking spices, finishing long on hints of dried fruit and vanilla. Sips nicely over a chunk of ice; ready to mix into cocktails too. Limited release as of May 2018.
abv: 38% **Price:** \$60/1L

94 Pomp & Whimsy Gin Liqueur (USA; Pomp & Whimsy LLC., Los Angeles, CA). This is lightly sweet, distinctly (but not overly) floral and compulsively quaffable. You'll want to add this cucumber-dominant gin liqueur to spring cocktails, although it also sips surprisingly well straight up.
abv: 30% **Price:** \$40

93 Marble Gingerello Liqueur (USA; Marble Distilling, Carbondale, CO). Described by the producer as "a contemporary cello adaptation," look for a pale straw hue in the glass and sprightly fresh ginger root fragrance. The palate is moderately sweet and viscous, spiced with plenty of ginger and finishing with lemon peel brightness.
abv: 35% **Price:** \$39



93 North Forest Kreme Pumpkin Liqueur (USA; Chankaska Spirits, Kasota, MN). Ready for all manner of autumnal imbibing, this easy-sipping liqueur pours out chocolate milk brown with a sweet, spiced aroma. The palate is pleasingly soft, with a flavor evoking mellow baking spice more than actual pumpkin flesh.
abv: 17% **Price:** \$24

92 Destillaré Intense Orange Curacao (USA; Copper & Kings, Louisville, KY). This is made with a base of Copper & Kings apple brandy liqueur plus orange peels and honey, then finished in former brandy barrels. The end result is a viscous liqueur with a golden-orange hue and not-too-sweet honeyed palate, followed by subtle orange peel flavor and cinnamon sizzle. Mix into Sidecars and other brandy cocktails.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$35

92 Griffio Cold Brew Coffee Liqueur (USA; Griffio Distillery, Petaluma, CA). A coffee aficionado's liqueur, this limited release was made as a partnership with San Rafael-based Equator Coffees & Teas. The liquid looks, smells and drinks like coffee, with just a touch of sugar leaving this soft and not at all bitter. Sip or mix.
abv: 25% **Price:** \$33

91 Rucolino Amaro (Italy; Empson USA, Alexandria, VA). A traditional amaro made with arugula leaves, citrus, roots and spices, this inky-dark liqueur has a slightly viscous palate that balances sweet, bitter and spiced notes, showing hints of espresso and bitter chocolate. Drink as a digestivo or pair with coffee.
abv: 30% **Price:** \$49

91 Somrus Alphonso Mango Cream Liqueur (USA; SomPriya Fine Spirits, Pewaukee, WI). Inspired by mango lassis, this unusual cream liqueur has a pale orange hue and fruity, fresh scent. It's thick, palate-coating and refreshing, offering plenty of vibrant tropical fruit flavors. Like its inspiration, it's easy to see this as soothing after a spicy meal.
abv: 13.3% **Price:** \$25

91 Suau Orange Liqueur (Spain; The Marsalle Company, Elk Grove Village, IL). Look for a tawny hue and bold orange peel scent. This liqueur opens with orange flesh sweetness but isn't cloying, thanks to a spicy hit of ginger and cayenne. It offers a bit more alcohol heat and spice compared to most orange liqueurs, but still pleasing overall.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$25

90 Cerasum Aperitivo (USA; Don Ciccio & Figli, Washington, DC). A nice alternative to Campari and other traditional red bitters, this nuanced American-made aperitivo has a deep cherry hue and very mild dried-cherry scent. The palate is bitter from the outset, with hints of cherry and ripe plum on the midpalate, finishing bitter and brisk.
abv: 23% **Price:** \$36

RUM



94 Barceló Imperial Onyx Ron Dominicano (Dominican Republic; Shaw-Ross International, Miramar, FL). This deep amber-hued rum offers a caramel aroma, with an intriguing hint of violet. The silky palate opens with caramel and brown butter, accented by dried fig and walnut, finishing long and gently spiced. Made with a blend of rums aged for 10 years in ex-Bourbon casks with heavy char, then filtered through onyx stones. That unique filtration may not add much except a point to contemplate while sipping, which is highly encouraged.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$40



94 Rhum J.M. V.S.O.P. (Martinique; Spiribam, Wakefield, RI). For those who like rum with a bit of sweetness to it, this honey-hued sipper offers vanilla bean and brown sugar on the nose and palate, drying to a hot cinnamon finish smoothed by decadent hints of cocoa, espresso and hazelnut.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$50

94 Santa Teresa 1796 Solera Rum (Venezuela; Bacardi, Coral Gables, FL). Made with a blend of rums ranging from four to 35 years, look for a mild caramel aroma and plush palate echoing with rich vanilla bean, fudge and mocha. The drying finish weaves in oak and walnut, laced with a bit of clove zing.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$40



92 Dubar Imperial Ron Dominicano (Dominican Republic; RLD Imports, Houston, TX). Vanilla sweetness leads the nose and palate. The first sip of this rum adds hints of sarsaparilla and allspice, which carries through to the rounded finish. Made with a blend of 13-, 15- and 19-year-old rums married in ex-Bourbon casks.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$45

92 Lowcountry Agricole (High Wire Distilling, Charleston, SC). This complex, intriguing rum is made 100% from South Carolina sugarcane, then barrel rested for 10 months. The end result is a golden-yellow hue and pungent aroma of banana bread. A long swath of palate-coating waxy honey leads the way, finishing long on touches of agave nectar, banana, nutmeg and cardamom.

abv: 44% **Price:** \$80



92 Saint James Paille Rhum Agricole (Martinique; 375 Park Avenue Spirits, Louisville, KY). Golden in color, this offers mild honey and banana aromas. The notably silky palate has a gentle, custardy flavor, underpinned by tropical fruit, honey and vanilla tones that finish long on a cinnamon exhale. The overall effect is pleasing and suggests vanilla cookies studded with fruit or banana pudding.

Best Buy.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$22

91 Casa Magdalena Ron Blanco (Guatemala; House Spirits, Portland, OR). Clear in the glass, this offers gentle wafts of coconut and marshmallow on nose and a plush palate that finishes with the faintest hint of lime. Ready for daiquiris and other rum cocktails. Distilled in Guatemala, then aged and bottled in Portland, Oregon; barrel aged for six to 12 months. **Best Buy.**

abv: 41.5% **Price:** \$20

90 The Real McCoy Aged 10 Years (Barbados; Real McCoy Spirits, Miami, FL). This limited-edition blends rum aged for 12 years in Bourbon barrels with rum aged 10 years in virgin oak. The end result is a burnished gold liquid redolent of maple and brown sugar on the nose and palate. Sweet vanilla and hazelnut wraps around a warming core, finishing with a cinnamon tingle. Micro batch of 3,000 bottles.

abv: 46% **Price:** \$60

90 Twenty Boat Cask Finish Reserve Rum (USA; South Hollow Spirits, North Truro, MA). This is a limited-edition blend of molasses and cane rums, finished in a barrel that previously held white Port. Look for an amber tint and rich caramel and mocha perfume. The palate is lighter than the aroma suggests, showing vanilla, spice and a puff of campfire smoke on the midpalate, finishing with a burst of mouthwatering lemony astringency.

abv: 42.5% **Price:** \$100

RYE WHISKEY

95 Low Gap 2 Year Old Rye Whiskey (USA; Craft Distillers, Ukiah, CA). Delicate and light, this golden rye whiskey almost drinks like a brandy—not surprisingly, this is made by a leading producer of small-batch American brandies, and is partly finished in barrels that previously held Germain-Robin brandy. The rich scent mixes vanilla and dried apricot. The palate echoes those flavors, winding into a mild cookie dough note, and lands lightly, brushed with rye spice. Limited edition, only 3,900 bottles made.

abv: 44% **Price:** \$75

94 Yippee Ki-Yay Rye Whiskey (USA; High West Distillery, Park City, UT). Historically, this producer sourced its whiskey elsewhere, blending and bottling it at their Utah facility. The 2018 bottling is the first time whiskey made on site by High West is included, one of three straight ryes blended together, finished in barrels that previously held California vermouth and Syrah. The end result is ready to mix into Manhattans, opening with red fruit aromas and a silky palate that offers cinnamon, oak, vanilla and crème brûlée, with a hint of juicy red fruit emerging on the mouthwatering fade. A splash of water integrates fruit, sweetness and spice.

abv: 46% **Price:** \$80



91 Rosville Union Master Crafted Straight Rye Whiskey (USA; MGP Ingredients, Lawrenceburg, IN). The bold, fruit-spiked scent beckons. The palate is relatively dry, opening with a wallop of vanilla and finishing long with zingy cinnamon, allspice and a hint of red fruit. A judicious splash of water tames the rye bite but keeps the spice. Aged at least four years.

abv: 47% **Price:** \$40

91 Woodinville Whiskey Straight Rye Whiskey (USA; Woodinville Whiskey Company, Woodinville, WA). This is a 100% rye whiskey made with Washington state grain. Look for a tawny hue and distinctly fruity scent layered with a wash of vanilla. The bracing, lean palate shows plenty of vanilla and caramel up front plus a hint of espresso, sparked with fiery cayenne and hot cinnamon on the drying fade. A splash of water coaxes out a pleasing nuttiness and tones down the spicy heat.

abv: 45% **Price:** \$40



90 Limousin Rye Whiskey (USA; Dancing Goat Distillery, Cambridge, WI). This rye whiskey is finished in Limousin oak casks, typically used to age French brandy and not often seen in American whiskey. The end result is a honey hue, with vanilla bean and orange peel scents. The distinctly sweet, vanilla-forward palate includes an intriguing dark fruit note that suggests juicy blackberry or plum, then exits with allspice, clove and black pepper.

abv: 46% **Price:** \$40

90 Whistlepig Farmstock Rye Crop No. 002 (USA; GoAmericaGo Beverages, Shoreham, VT). This is a limited edition blend of straight ryes, including 32% estate-grown Vermont rye aged two years, 45% Indiana rye aged six years and 23% Canada rye, aged 10 years. The golden whiskey has an oaky, spicy scent, with a hint of peach. The bold palate resounds with spice and concentrated vanilla, finishing long and drying.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$73

TEQUILA

95 Oro de Lidia Reposado Tequila (Mexico; World Trade Liquor Imports, Laredo, TX). This golden Tequila puts the agave front and center, without burying it under wood. Pleasantly savory honey, pineapple and jalapeño aromas lead the nose and palate. A wash of vanilla smooths the exit, accented by gingery spice. Sip or mix. Aged six to nine months in a mix of American and French oak.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$45

94 G4 Reposado Tequila (Mexico; PRP Enterprises, Portage, IN). The zesty jalapeño aroma and sweet tomato undercurrent suggests what is to come. The savory palate delivers fresh mint, basil, jalapeño and green pepper, finishing with a hint of black pepper smoothed by vanilla-mint sweetness. Sip or mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$60

93 Blue Nectar Reposado Extra Blend Tequila (Mexico; Blue Nectar Spirits, Miami, FL). This is a reposado Tequila blended with extra añejo. The aroma mixes tropical fruit and jalapeño. The silky, delicate palate opens with vanilla and almond elegance, almost reminiscent of a blended Scotch infused with jalapeño peppers, finishing with peppery edge. Recommended as a sipping Tequila.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$50



93 Corralejo Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Wilson Daniels Ltd., St. Helena, CA). Look for a pale rose-gold hue and a mild, herbaceous aroma that hints at basil and slate. The palate is light and silky, echoing that slate-like minerality alongside hints of cedar, coconut and honey, finishing with a flurry of white pepper and brush of raspberry. Aged four months.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$26

93 Tres Agaves Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Trinchero Family Estates, St. Helena, CA). The light but zesty aroma evokes tomato water, bell pepper freshness and agave nectar. Meanwhile, the palate leads with honey and jalapeño, finishing with hints of vanilla and sweet cinnamon. Aged in Tennessee and Kentucky whiskey barrels for a minimum of six months. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$28



92 Espanita Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Double Eagle Imports, Alpharetta, GA). The herbaceous, bright aroma suggests basil and mint warmed by the sun. The palate is herbaceous too, hinting at bell pepper and jalapeño before winding into a co-

conut finish, edged with citrus peel and cinnamon sparks. Aged six months. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$29

92 Milagro Select Barrel Reserve Reposado Tequila (Mexico; William Grant, New York, NY). Pineapple aromas lead the nose. The silky palate opens with vanilla and almond, drying to a long finish marked by mint, oregano, cayenne and clove. Aged in American and French oak barrels.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$57

91 Chinaco Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Anchor Distilling, San Francisco, CA). The distinctly fruity aroma mixes cooked pear and pineapple, while black pepper tickles the nose. The palate is fruity and lightly sweet, evolving from fresh pear to a honed-cooked fruit note on the exhale, plus cinnamon and spearmint tingle. Barrel aged 8–11 months.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$55



91 Gran Dovejo Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Puente Internacional, Sonoma, CA). Look for a pale straw hue and mild, herbaceous aroma. The soft palate opens with lychee and tropical fruit before drying to pepper, clove and cayenne on the mouth-watering finish.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$49

91 Lunazul Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Heaven Hill, Louisville, KY). Dried herb aromas lead the way, edged with lemon and agave. The complex palate offers a vanilla tone that leads to a spicy finish embellished by cayenne, jalapeño and black pepper sparks. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20

91 Patron Roca Reposado Tequila (Mexico; The Patron Company, Las Vegas, NV). A sweet, almost raspberry-like scent in the aroma is echoed on the palate, translating as delicate lychee and berry. Creamy vanilla and coconut tones smooth out the otherwise fiery, cinnamon-accented finish.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$80

91 Tapatio Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Charbay, Ukiah, CA). Very pale in the glass, with almost no color at all, this offers a herbaceous scent of green bell pepper and fresh basil. The palate is very dry, with mineral notes and a wild hint of rubber leading into the peppery exhale. Aged eight months in used Jim Beam barrels.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$42/1L

90 Codigo 1530 Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits, Syosset, NY). A mild whiff of tropical fruit leads the nose. The palate is light and mildly sweet with a trace of coconut, finishing peppery, crisp and a bit fiery. Aged for six months in former Napa Cabernet barrels.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$60

VERMOUTH

96 Priorat Natur Vermut (Spain; Think Global Wines, Santa Barbara, CA). Ruddy orange in hue, this Catalonia vermouth offers earthy aromas. The deep, intriguing palate has plenty of bittersweet interplay, flitting between hints of melon and white floral freshness to orange peel and almond bitterness, accented with rosemary and vanilla. Complex and delicious. New to the U.S. as of July 2017.
abv: 16% **Price:** \$31

94 Vermut Lustau Blanco (Spain; Europvin USA, Van Nuys, CA). This pale gold, Sherry-based vermouth is made from fino, sweetened with Moscatel wine. Mild, grassy aromas lead into a sweet and citrusy palate, with mouthwatering acidity and a fresh, grassy exit accented by a floral hint.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$22

94 Vermouth Routin Blanc (France; Back Bar Project, Seattle, WA). Herbaceous aromas lead into a light-bodied palate marked by mild pear sweetness, finishing light and crisp with hints of fresh-snipped herbs and cinnamon. Versatile; sip or mix. *Best Buy.*
abv: 16.9% **Price:** \$17

93 Imbue Dry Classic Vermouth (USA; Imbue, Gaston, OR). Mild honeysuckle and fresh apple aromas lead to an orchard fruit palate warmed up by honey and vanilla. Mix this light, easy-drinking vermouth into a spritz or sip straight.
abv: 17.3% **Price:** \$27

92 Vittore White Vermouth (Spain; Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA). Pale straw in the glass, look for a fresh, light vanilla-pear scent and a juicy palate showing mild sweetness up front, finishing grassy with green apple tartness. Sip or mix.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$20

91 Montanaro Vermouth de Torino Bianco (Italy; Domaine Select Wine & Spirits, New York, NY). This golden vermouth offers bright tropical and orchard fruit aromas, which are echoed on the sweet-tart, citrusy palate. The finish is appropriately bitter.
abv: 16% **Price:** \$25

VODKA

94 Pinckney Bend Distillery American Vodka (USA; Pinckney Bend Distillery, New Haven, MO). This small-batch vodka, made from a blend of wheat, corn and rye, is neutral overall on the nose and palate, with a notably plush feel and plenty of ginger and white pepper crackle on the finish. Would be ideal chilled and paired with savory bites.
abv: 41.5% **Price:** \$28

93 Cathead Pecan Flavored Vodka (USA; Bottletree Beverage Company, Madison, MS). This shows a honey hue and slightly cloudy appearance. The aroma is honeyed and rich, with a nutty hint, while the velvety palate carries a dry, walnut flavor into the clove-laced finish, showing only a trace of sweetness. Would be welcome at the dessert table or mixed into cocktails.
abv: 35% **Price:** \$20



93 Purus Organic Vodka (Italy; Pure Holdings, LLC, St. Louis, MO). Subtle and refreshing, look for mild almond sweetness on the nose and palate, finishing crisp on a surprising minty note. Distilled from grain.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30

93 Spirit of Hven Swedish Organic Vodka (Sweden; Preiss Imports, Ramona, CA). Crisp and complex, this silky vodka starts with vanilla sweetness, opening up to a breezy herbaceous and mineral notes on the midpalate, finishing with white pepper on the exhale. Ideal for a dry Martini.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$43

93 Veil Caramel Flavored Vodka (USA; Veil Brands Company, Princeton, MN). Clear in the glass, this vodka offers a sweet, nutty scent. The slightly viscous palate leads with caramel sweetness and spice, winding into pleasingly a nutty finish reminiscent of pecan pie, plus a warming cinnamon-clove kick. Sip it straight or mix into dessert-style drinks. *Best Buy.*
abv: 35% **Price:** \$12

92 Hierarchy Vodka (USA; HS Beverage, Henderson, NV). This corn-based vodka opens with perky lime peel on the nose and palate, expanding into earthy hints of graphite, slate and anise on the midpalate, finishing clean and citrusy.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30

91 Gold Star Vodka (USA; Local Choice Spirits, N. Charleston, SC). This grain-based vodka has a neutral scent. The palate hints at coconut-like sweetness, finishing crisp and clean on a dose of cinnamon heat. For each bottle purchased, \$2 is donated to charities that benefit military veterans and their families.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$25



91 Nemiroff Vodka (Ukraine; Conech Spirits, Manhasset, NY). Bracing and versatile for a wide range of cocktails, this wheat-based vodka is relatively neutral in terms of aroma and flavor, though the palate hints at vanilla and hot cinnamon. It feels very light, almost effervescent. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$18

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