

BOURBON

96 Old Fitzgerald Bottled-in-Bond Spring 2019 Edition (USA; Heaven Hill Distillery, Bardstown, KY). The third release in the series is a 100-proof Bourbon. Toasty aromas suggest croissant and dulce de leche. The palate opens spicy, with cayenne and cinnamon heat. Adding water unlocks the confectionary promise of the aromas, unfurling rounded vanilla and coconut, finishing with the right amount of assertive spice. Bottled in an ornate decanter, this is composed of liquid from barrels produced in September 2005.

abv: 50% Price: \$130

95 Four Roses Small Batch Select (USA; Four Roses, Lawrenceburg, KY). Created by master distiller Brent Elliott to mark the distillery's grand reopening, this Bourbon is the first permanent addition to the portfolio since 2006. This is a concentrated sip—even with plenty of water—showing warm, toasty vanilla, sugar cookies and buttery brioche, finishing extra-long and drying, accented by plenty of baking spice. It's a real lip-smacker.

abv: 52% Price: \$60

95 Maker's Mark Wood Finishing Series 2019 Limited Release RC6 (USA; Maker's Mark Distillery, Loretto, KY). A newcomer from stalwart Maker's Mark, this limited release is finished with virgin oak staves for nine weeks. The end result is a rich and delicious toffee aroma and a spiced, strong palate. Adding water brings more caramel forward, while each sip still finishes with piquant cayenne-edged baking spice and a hint of Sherry.

abv: 54.1% Price: \$60

94 Bardstown Bourbon Company Discovery Series #1 (USA; Bardstown Bourbon Company, Bardstown, KY). A masterful blend, an 11-year-old Kentucky Bourbon makes up the base, accented with older 13-year-old and younger 10-year-old and five-year-old Bourbons. Showing maple-drizzled pecan pie and cinnamon spice, the long finish is refreshed by a lemony bite. Launched June 2019.

abv: 60.6% Price: \$130

94 Hotel Tango Kentucky Straight Bourbon (USA; Hotel Tango, Indianapolis, IN). An easy-drinking, versatile crowd-pleaser right for a wide range of cocktails. The bright, fresh aroma balances oak and vanilla. The palate is smooth and light from first sip, with plenty of concentrated vanilla bean. Adding water coaxes a bit more spice into the finish, along with a fleeting butterscotch note. Aged two years. *Best Buy.*

abv: 45% Price: \$35

94 King of Kentucky 2019 Release (USA; Brown-Forman Beverages, Louisville, KY). The second edition of Kings of Kentucky is a 15 year-old single barrel Bourbon. An assertive oak note in the aroma mixes with toffee; the overall effect is warm and enticing. The velvety, weighty palate explodes with a progression of coffee, toffee, cocoa and clove, finishing long and drying, with a final curl of orange

peel. It's a good contemplative sipper, with a cube of ice. Limited edition, 2,100 bottles produced.

abv: 65.5% Price: \$250

94 Wilderness Trail Small Batch Bourbon (USA; PM Spirits, Brooklyn, NY). This high-rye Bourbon opens with a mild caramel aroma and a hint of booziness on the nose. The palate echoes those notes, adding water tames the heat while maintaining the caramel, roasted nuts and hint of butterscotch. All that winds into a drying baking-spice finish laced with citrusy zing.

abv: 50% Price: \$56

93 Milam & Greene Triple Cask Bourbon (USA; Milam & Greene Distillery, Austin, TX). As the "Triple Cask" name suggests, this newcomer is a blend of three straight Bourbon whiskies: a two-year-old Texas Bourbon, a three- to four-year-old Tennessee whiskey, and a 10- to 11-year-old Tennessee whiskey. It offers complex orange peel and vanilla aromas and a silky palate that opens with vanilla and evolves into a long maple sugar finish topped up with a bit of spicy cinnamon glow.

abv: 47% Price: \$43

93 New Southern Revival Straight Bourbon Whiskey 100% Jimmy Red Corn (USA; High Wire Distilling, Charleston, SC). Made from 100% Jimmy Red corn—a previously endangered heirloom variety—and bottled at cask strength. The first sips are beerlike, with a hoppy hint. Adding water smooths it a bit, revealing dried fig, oloroso Sherry, and hints of dark chocolate and spice. The overall effect is dark and intriguing.

abv: 54% Price: \$97

93 Penelope Bourbon Barrel Strength (USA; Penelope Bourbon, Frankfort, KY). Distilled in Indiana, bottled in Kentucky and named for the founder's daughter, this offers a bold, concentrated caramel tone that mingles with a hint of plum skin. A pleasant prickle of sweet spices—cinnamon, cardamom, clove, cayenne—lingers on the finish. Aged a minimum of 24 months.

abv: 58.3% Price: \$55

92 Angel's Envy Cask Strength Bourbon Finished in Port Wine Barrels (USA; Angel's Envy, Louisville, KY). Concentrated caramel and maple aromas are enriched with more than a hint of red fruit. The palate is quite fiery—as would be expected from a cask-strength bottling—showing lots of mouthwatering red fruit from the outset, plus spicy fireworks. Adding water gives plush texture and allows a chocolate hint to come forward, while dialing back fruit and spice.

abv: 61.2% Price: \$200

92 Legent Bourbon (USA; Beam Suntory, Deerfield, IL). A collaboration between Kentucky Bourbon-distiller Fred Noe and chief blender Shinji Fukoyo of Japan's Suntory, this Bourbon is partially finished in wine and Sherry casks. The result is a caramel-rich nose and palate that reads almost like dulce de leche with a pleasantly silky texture. There's a hint of dried fruit and spice on the exit. *Best Buy.*

abv: 47% Price: \$36

91 Huber's Single Barrel Bottled-in-Bond (USA; Starlight Distillery, Borden, IN). The notably dark hue of this Bourbon matches the deep toffee aroma. Distinct coffee notes persist from start to notably long finish, with the middle filled in by bold toffee, fudge, a red fruit hint and peppery spice. Sherry barrel finished.

abv: 50% Price: \$60

91 Oppidan Smoke & Sea (USA; Oppidan Spirits, Wheeling, IL). A ringer for Scotch, this Bourbon is finished in peated Islay Scotch barrels to intriguing, earthy effect. The peaty aroma wows from first sniff, while the smoky, slightly saline palate winds into an espresso- and clove-tinged finish.

abv: 46% Price: \$40

COGNAC

97 Gilles Brisson XO Cognac (France; David Bowler Wine, New York, NY). An enjoyable mix of fruit, cocoa and spice makes this ideal for sipping or dessert pairing. Dried fig and plum aromas are echoed on the notably silky palate. It finishes long, with rich cocoa accented by cayenne and clove notes. Aged 18-22 years.

abv: 40% Price: \$105

96 Park XO Cognac (France; Back Bar Project, Seattle, WA). Look for a deep amber hue and bold, sweet aromas suggesting dried fig and baked pear. The palate is equally bold, folding cassis, dried cherry, and port notes into dusty cocoa and walnut. It finishes long with a hint of clove. Aged a minimum of 20 years.

abv: 40% Price: \$170

95 Merlet Selection Saint-Sauvant Assemblage No 1 Cognac (France; Bedford & Grove, Louisville, KY). The aromas are relatively demure: dried apricot, grilled pineapple, a whiff of coconut. Yet, this is a powerhouse of a Cognac, opening big with robust stone fruit, rounding into rich, dripping honey, it seems to expand with every sip under an umbrella of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg.

abv: 45.2% Price: \$100

94 Chateau Montifaud XO Cognac (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). Dried figs and dates lead the nose. The bold palate opens with vanilla and oak, finishing elegant and complex, with stone fruit, barely-there hints of vanilla and cocoa, and a long, dusty cinnamon fade. A blend of brandies aged at least 30 years.

abv: 40% Price: \$150

93 Frérot Extra Cognac (France; Wooler Brands, Ventura, CA). This honey-hued Cognac offers apricot and peach nectar aromas, the initial alcohol on the nose dissipates after some time in the glass. The complex palate opens lightly with maple and honey, followed by baked pear and stewed peach midpalate, and finishes gently with a flurry of baking spice and orange peel. This is an hors d'âge Cognac, with a blend of brandies aged between 30-50 years.

abv: 41% Price: \$200



92 Branson XO Cognac (France; Sire Spirits, Katy, TX). Delicate vanilla and apricot perfume this Cognac. The palate is more forward, showing mouthwatering butterscotch, golden raisin and maple, finishing with baking spice warmth.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$250

92 Distillerie du Peyrat XO Classic Cognac (France; Heavenly Spirits, New York, NY). Golden in the glass, the dried apricot aroma includes a smoky tinge. The palate echoes the dried apricot note, layering it with vanilla, cinnamon and clove. It finishes rounded and mouthwatering.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$92

91 Delamain Pale & Dry Cognac (France; Kobrand, Purchase, NY). Look for a burnished gold hue and mild aroma. The palate is light and soft, with delicate hints of cedar, almond and golden raisin yielding to a briskly spiced finish accented with lemon and grapefruit peel.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$120

91 Frapin Chateau Fontpinot XO Cognac (France; Pacific Edge Imports, Agoura Hills, CA). This burnished gold Cognac offers aromas of red fruit and baked pear, plus a floral hint. The piquant palate opens with cayenne, cinnamon candy and black pepper, followed by concentrated vanilla. It finishes on a juicy baked apple tone.
abv: 41% **Price:** \$140

GIN



95 Bixby Dry Gin (USA; Lloyd Distillery, Gonzales, CA). The slightly sweet aroma offers a hint of spearmint. Grapefruit peel astringency leads into an herbaceous midpalate, finishing brisk and minty alongside a hit of ginger heat. This hits all the right notes for a top-flight Martini. It's a small-batch gin made with citrus, elderflower and California bay leaf.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$39

94 Highside Distilling Gin (USA; Highside Distilling, Bainbridge Island, WA). Distilled from Washington apples, this robust gin is malty on nose and palate. Lemony acidity leads into a savory, lip-smacking finish tinged with cucumber, black pepper, grains of paradise and cayenne sparks.
abv: 44% **Price:** \$38

93 Occitan London Dry Gin (Italy; Oliver McCrum Wines, Berkeley, CA). The aroma is mild, almost neutral. The palate opens with cucumber and a hint of tarragon freshness, while the crisp, smooth finish brings in juniper, grapefruit pith, and a hint of white pepper. Ideal for Gin & Tonics, Collins and other cocktails.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$43/1L



92 100 Mill St Gin (USA; 100 Mill St., Minneapolis, MN). Made from a base of maple sap, this newcomer offers a malty aroma freshened with a whiff of eucalyptus. The palate is pleasingly sweet-savory, tinged with pink peppercorn, rosewater and a fleeting raspberry note, finishing with assertive coriander spice. Small batch; only 3,000 bottles made each year.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$50

92 Malfy Gin Con Limone (Italy; Pernod Ricard, New York, NY). Clear in the glass, this flavored gin, made with Italian lemons, offers gentle lemon and grapefruit peel aromas. The bracing, lightly sweet palate has a nicely authentic lemon flavor, with hints of peel and pith, finishing appropriately bitter. Skip the lemon twist, and mix into Martinis and other drinks.
abv: 41% **Price:** \$28

92 Mulholland Gin (USA; Mulholland Distilling, Downey, CA). A waft of cucumber leads the nose, echoed on the silky palate from start to finish, accented by brisk white pepper and lime peel. Distilled from corn.
abv: 48% **Price:** \$27

92 Nordes Atlantic Galician Gin (Spain; Ole & Obrigado, New Rochelle, NY). With time in the glass, this gin becomes particularly aromatic, mixing citrus and floral notes. The palate leads with herbaceous sage and bay leaf, leading into a floral exhale—hibiscus is one of the botanicals—tinged with grapefruit peel and lemon verbena.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35

91 Highclere Castle London Dry Gin (England; Highclere Castle Spirits, Centerbrook, CT). For fans of *Downton Abbey*, this gin hails from the owners of Highclere Castle, where the series was filmed, and made with botanicals inspired by those grown in the Castle's herb garden. Look for a citrusy aroma and demure hints of pink peppercorn, mint and lavender, plus a mouthwatering salinity. A floral note emerges on the mentholated exit.
abv: 43.5% **Price:** \$40

91 Manatawny Still Works Zimbrow (USA; Manatawny Still Works, Pottstown, PA). This unusual gin finished in used port casks has a tawny hue and distinct coconut aroma. The palate echoes that coconut note, layered in almond and spice, a hint of cedar, and a pleasant, sweet vanilla fade. It drinks like a cross between whiskey and gin. Part of a small batch series, this limited edition is currently sold out but is expected to return to production in winter 2020.
abv: 47% **Price:** \$40

91 Prairie Organic Gin (USA; Ed Phillips & Sons, Princeton, MN). Light and herbaceous, this is a veritable herb garden of a gin. Hints of fresh rosemary entice nose and palate, while delicate tarragon, mint, sage and eucalyptus add complexity, finishing with grapefruit peel astringency. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20

90 Empress 1908 Gin (Canada; Azure Spirits, Las Vegas, NV). This gin is vivid indigo-blue, thanks to an infusion of butterfly pea blossoms, and transforms to an attractive pink hue as tonic or citrus are added. The aroma is relatively neutral and the palate is mild and malty, with hints of coriander, orris root and white pepper. But it's really all about the eye-popping blue color and all the party tricks that can be performed with this gin.
abv: 42.5% **Price:** \$40

90 Freeland Spirits Gin (USA; Freeland Spirits, Portland, OR). Look for a mild cucumber aroma and robust palate that showcases anise and lemon tartness, echoing a hint of cucumber and clove heat on the exhale. With repeated sips, the anise note seems to expand and blossom, and adds a minty finish.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$35

LIQUEUR



96 Coole Swan Irish Cream Liqueur (Ireland; MHW, Manhasset, NY). A milky appearance and bold white chocolate aroma mark this luxe sipper. The light, frothy palate layers vanilla buttercream, cocoa butter and white chocolate, exiting with a pleasing minty exhale and a warming alcohol kick. Made with Belgian white chocolate and single malt Irish whiskey.

abv: 16% **Price:** \$32

95 Hard Truth Toasted Coconut Rum Cream (USA; Hard Truth Distilling, Nashville, IN). Lingering softly on the palate like cream of coconut, this milky-hued liqueur opens with vanilla and toasted coconut tones. There is a surprising saltiness on the finish that suggests Maldon salt flakes on top of a vanilla wafer, unusual in a cream liqueur, it begs for a second sip. Mix into tropical cocktails.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$30

94 Abadía da Cova Galician Cream Liqueur (Spain; Seaman's Beverage & Logistics, Clifton, NJ). An easy-drinking crowd-pleaser, this liqueur has a milky coffee appearance. It's smooth and not too heavy, with a subtle, refreshing minty note on nose and palate. The base spirit is orujo, distilled from the skins and other solids left over from wine production, macerated with milk.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$44

94 Ambrosia Aperitivo (USA; Don Ciccio & Figli, Washington, DC). The bittersweet, grapefruit-y flavor of this rosy-red craft liqueur lands somewhere between Campari and Aperol. It pours fairly viscous, and plays well with ice, bubbly mixers, or gin; ideal for Negroni fans. Launched in 2019.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$31

94 Atxa Pacharáan Sierra de Orduña (Spain; T. Edward Wines & Spirits, New York, NY). With its bright rosy hue and dried cherry fragrance, few would guess this liqueur is made with three different types of anise, blended with a maceration of sloe berries. This classic Basque spirit is light-bodied and tart, suggesting dried cranberry and cherry, finishing with barely there hints of anise and eucalyptus. Sip or mix.

abv: 25% **Price:** \$40

94 RumChata Limón (USA; Agave Loco Brands, Vernon Hills, IL). Cooling and refreshing, this liqueur has a pale, buttery yellow tinge and pleasing

aroma of lemon cream pie. The light, almost frothy palate suggests lemon curd and vanilla wafer, finishing with bright lemon peel and a fresh herb exhale. It's a Caribbean rum base. Sip or mix into citrusy cocktails.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$22

93 Barrow's Intense Ginger Liqueur (USA; Proof of Concept, Brooklyn, NY). Look for a cloudy pale lemon hue, with a sweet ginger aroma and a hint of lemon peel. The viscous palate opens sweet and finishes long and warming, with plenty of ginger zing, a mouthwatering citric quality and flurry of white pepper sparks.

abv: 22% **Price:** \$32

93 Meletti Anisetta Dry (Italy; Opici Wines, Glen Rock, NJ). Recommended by the producer for cocktails, this higher-octane, lower sugar anisetta offers a bright orange peel aroma and fruity-spiced palate that finishes with brisk cayenne and cinnamon, fading off into an earthy aniseed hint.

Best Buy.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$25

93 Sömrus Coffee Cream Liqueur (USA; SomPria Fine Spirits, Pewaukee, WI). This addictive sipper is a blend of coffee and chicory with a base of Caribbean rum. A gentle coffee aroma leads the nose, while the light, silky palate shows plenty of vanilla and cocoa powder, exiting with a mild coffee exhale. Sip alongside or in place of dessert.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$25



92 Misceo Coffee Liqueur (USA; Allied Wine, Ellenville, NY). This vodka-based liqueur looks, smells and tastes much like sweetened espresso. The bold palate is not too overbearing on the coffee notes, allowing pleasing caramel to emerge along with a refreshing mentholated exhale. Would be dynamite in Espresso Martinis. Kosher.

abv: 35% **Price:** \$35

92 Mr Stacks Toasted Coconut Cream Liqueur (USA; Saranty Import, Stamford, CT). Expect a creamy hue and pleasing coconut meat aroma. Concentrated coconut flavor carries through on each sip, ending lightly on nutmeg and cinnamon. Overall, a dessert-worthy pour.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$10

91 Amarula Vanilla Spice Cream Liqueur (South Africa; Terlato Artisan Spirits, Lake Bluff, IL). Pours out with a light, latte-like hue and nutty, faintly spiced aroma. The light, smooth palate opens with a burst of cardamom underpinned by a mild fruitiness that resembles dried dates. The long finish is tinged with vanilla, caramel and sweet spices.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$24

91 Last Shot Chocolate Crème Brûlée Liqueur (USA; Last Shot Distillery, Skaneateles, NY). Distiller and owner Chris Uyehara is a former pastry chef and chocolatier; his 35-year career inspired this lip-smacking liqueur. Made with a Bourbon base, the delectable aroma is pure caramel, while the smooth palate is more nuanced, leading with vanilla and cocoa and exiting with a distinct almond paste note.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$30

RUM

96 Admiral Rodney HMS Formidable (St. Lucia; Spiribam, Miami, FL). Made with rums aged from nine-12 years, this rich, full-bodied spirit offers brown sugar, caramel and spice aromas. The soft palate balances vanilla sugar and custardy flan with lively citrus, perfect for a dessert pairing.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$130

95 Plantation Isle of Fiji Rum (Fiji; W.J. Deutsch & Sons, Stamford, CT). The aroma suggests banana bread drizzled with honey and just a whiff of pineapple. The palate magnifies that tropical note, exploding with juicy grilled pineapple and landing lightly with vanilla, coconut and cinnamon tones. Mix into pineapple Daiquiris and Piña Colodas. Distilled and aged two to three years in Fiji, then another year in the cooler climate of France in ex-Ferrand Cognac casks.

Best Buy.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$25



94 Dos Maderas Selección Superior Reserve Rum (Spain; Palm Bay International, Port Washington, NY). Expect a dark brown hue and rich toffee and espresso aromas. This rich, velvety sipper offers plenty of mocha and fudge, finishing with dusty cocoa and a hint of dried fig that belies PX Sherry is part of the mix. This bottling starts with rums from Barbados and Guyana aged in the Caribbean for 10 years, then transported to Spain for blending with

casks of a five-year-old rum that has been finished in PX Sherry casks.

abv: 42%

Price: \$60

94 Rhum Barbancourt Estate Reserve Aged 15 Years (Haiti; Crillon Importers, Paramus, NJ).

Maple, coconut and honey sweetness, even a hint of cookie dough entice nose and palate, finishing gently with warming baking spice and candied orange peel. Made from fresh sugarcane juice.

abv: 43%

Price: \$55

93 Appleton Estate 8 Year Old Reserve (Jamaica; Campari America, New York, NY).

This reserve bottling, released in spring 2020, is intended to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the brand. Complex and smooth, look for an amber hue and mildly funky aroma that mingles banana funk, vanilla and a hint of red fruit. The palate amplifies that fruit, opening with dried cherry, caramelized pineapple and vanilla, drifting into a drying finish laced with nutmeg, clove and coconut. **Best Buy.**

abv: 43%

Price: \$29

93 Hidden Harbor White Rum (USA; Allegheny Distilling, Pittsburgh, PA).

Made for Pittsburgh tiki bar Hidden Harbor, this rum is specially formulated for use in Daiquiris and other tropical cocktails. Most of what's in the bottle (80%) is made by Pittsburgh distillery Maggie's Farm, and the remaining 20% is a blend of Caribbean rums. It's a full-flavored, robust white rum, with a mildly funky aroma and a surprising hint of red fruit jazzed up with ginger and white pepper on the finish. Should stand up nicely to fruit and bold flavors.

abv: 50%

Price: \$35

93 The Rum Cooperative Volume 2 (Caribbean; Bully Boy Distillers, Boston, MA).

This delightful tawny sipper opens with aromas of dried apricot, golden raisin, maple syrup and candied ginger, finishing long, spiced and a little sticky. It almost sips like a spiced rum but it's not—just a blend of rums from five different rum-making regions, namely Martinique, Panama, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Colombia, with an age range spanning eight–12 years and representing various raw materials and distillation methods.

abv: 42%

Price: \$35

91 Saison Rum (France; Romina Foods, Inc., San Mateo, CA).

This light and silky sipper from Cognac-maker Jerome Tessendier has a mild vanilla fragrance and a pleasing brown sugar and vanilla bean profile. The elongated finish is laced with cinnamon and nutmeg. Made with a blend of rums from Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica aged up to five years in American white oak, the blended rum is then finished in Limousin casks in France's Cognac region. **Best Buy.**

abv: 42%

Price: \$28

91 Thrasher's Green Spiced Rum (USA; Potomac Distilling, Washington, DC).

Think of this unusual newcomer as a mix between spiced rum and gin, with the usual spice additions mostly replaced by citrusy and herbaceous flavors. Veteran bartender Todd Thrasher uses botanicals grown in his own

backyard, including lemon verbena, lemongrass and mint. The aroma is malty and brisk, with a hint of dill, while the palate is slightly sweet, with a mouth-watering citrusy tartness and a hint of coconut that winds into the complex finish laced with ginger and cardamom. **Best Buy.**

abv: 40%

Price: \$27

RYE

96 A Midsummer Nights Dram Act 7 Scene 6 (USA; High West Distillery, Park City, UT).

This polished annual release is always a pleasure, and the seventh release in the series is no different. Concentrated caramel tinged with oak and red fruit entice the nose and palate. Adding water eases the alcohol bite, and brings more lush fruit and spice forward. A blend of straight rye whiskies finished in French oak port barrels, bottled by High West.

abv: 49.3%

Price: \$100

95 Ragtime Applejack Barrel Finished Rye (USA; New York Distilling Company, Brooklyn, NY).

This unusual limited edition starts with two-year-old rye, then aged for 90 days in barrels that previously held applejack made by Black Dirt Distillery. The end result is delightful and surprisingly delicate, offering fleeting hints of butterscotch and baked apple, finishing long with nutmeg, cinnamon sprinkle and lemon zest. Sip or mix.

abv: 50%

Price: \$45



94 Catoctin Creek Roundstone Rye Whiskey Distillers Edition (USA; Catoctin Creek Distilling, Purcellville, VA).

This single-barrel rye is suitable for sipping or a dessert pairing. Look for bold sugar-cookie aromas and confectionary richness on the palate: vanilla, cocoa, hazelnut, maple sugar and mocha. The moderately long finish is marked by lemon peel and nutmeg.

abv: 46%

Price: \$51

93 Old Henry Clay Whiskey Straight Rye Whiskey (USA; James Pepper Distilling, Lexington, KY).

Distilled in Indiana and aged about 2 years, look for a honey hue and oak aroma. The palate opens big and bold, with lots of vanilla sweetness. Adding water is a game-changer: It intensifies into butterscotch and vanilla, with a weightier, buttery texture and cinnamon spiced finish. Big and delicious. **Best Buy.**

abv: 43%

Price: \$20



93 Peerless Rye Whiskey (USA; Kentucky Peerless Distilling, Louisville, KY).

This four-year-old, barrel-proof rye is a beast, but it can be tamed with a bit of water. The intense caramel aroma signals what is to come. With enough water, this big, flavorful, downright chewy whiskey offers dense and delicious maple sugar, creamy caramel, red fruit and candied ginger heat.

abv: 54.6%

Price: \$90

93 Rod & Hammer's Distiller's Reserve Rye Whiskey (USA; Rod & Hammer, San Luis Obispo, CA).

Aromas of vanilla, caramel, oak and orange peel fill the glass. The palate is silky, with just a hint of maple sweetness. Adding water brings a cocoa note forward. The drying, grippy finish rounds out with clove and a hint of cayenne heat. Aged 12 months and "cut with the Pacific," a purified ocean water.

abv: 40%

Price: \$59

93 Whistlepig Farmstock Rye Crop 003 (USA; GoAmericaGo Beverages, Shoreham, VT).

This rye is complex and palate-coating, especially with a dose of water added. Each sip opens with honey, coconut and white chocolate, and finishes long with delicate candied ginger, lemony acidity and white pepper. Made with 100% rye, this is the third version of Farmstock, with the goal of eventually moving toward a fully estate-sourced whiskey. For now, about half the liquid in the bottle comes from a three-year-old Vermont rye, supplemented with six-year-old Canadian rye and a small amount of 10-year-old Canadian rye.

abv: 43%

Price: \$73

92 Jack Daniel's Tennessee Straight Rye Whiskey (USA; Jack Daniel Distillery, Lynchburg, TN).

Made with 70% rye, a moderately high amount, this whiskey is brisk and spiced, with plenty of flavor. It also has plenty of alcohol punch on nose and palate, so plan to mix into cocktails or add water to taste, which softens the impact and coaxes out vanilla, lemon peel and allspice notes on the drying finish.

Best Buy.

abv: 45%

Price: \$27

92 Kindred Straight Rye Whiskey Single Barrel (USA; Kozuba & Sons Distillery, St. Petersburg, FL).

This wheated rye offers baked apple and brown sugar aromas. The palate is lively and light. Hints of honey and butterscotch are perked up by clove and cinnamon punch. **Best Buy.**

abv: 45%

Price: \$39

92 Old Forester Kentucky Straight Rye Whiskey (USA; Old Forester Distilling, Louisville, KY). Look for a bright topaz hue and concentrated sweet vanilla bean and caramel aromas. The palate skews toward darker flavors: toffee, mocha, espresso and clove, with a drying finish. Adding water brings out a dark chocolate hint. **Best Buy.**
abv: 50% **Price:** \$25

92 Rebellion Rye Whiskey (USA; Meier's Distilled Products, Silverton, OH). Pleasing, integrated vanilla and oak entice the nose. The palate is light and nicely spiced, opening with almond and citrus. Adding water lightens and brightens, exposing grapefruit peel, ginger and cinnamon sparks. Overall, a lean and likeable rye that's ready to mix.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$41

SCOTCH

96 Compass Box Great King Street Artist's Blend Scotch (Scotland; MHW Ltd., Manhasset, NY). Part of the Great King Street series, this is a sweetie of a blended Scotch. The first feather-light sips open with vanilla custard, orchard fruit and coconut cream, rounding into enticing red fruit on the finish. A splash of water unlocks more red fruit, along with tinges of butterscotch, oak and spice. **Best Buy.**
abv: 43% **Price:** \$37

94 Murray McDavid Òrdha Meas 13 Year Old Scotch (Scotland; Glass Revolution, Las Vegas, NV). Òrdha meas means golden fruit in Gaelic. Look for a burnished gold hue and mellow aromas that suggest baked apple drizzled with caramel. The velvety palate opens on a toffee note coupled with fiery clove, cinnamon and black pepper, while salted caramel flows into the finish. This limited edition bottling is made using a blend of whiskies from all five Scotch-making regions.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$50

93 Duncan Taylor Politician Blended Scotch (Scotland; Shand Import, Duarte, CA). So named because it was originally an exclusive for The Politician bar on Scotland's remote Eriskay island, this golden whisky has a mild, slightly floral aroma. Hints of almond butter, pear and white flowers lead into a warming toasted coconut finish laced with plenty of tingly white pepper. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20

92 Monkey Shoulder Scotch (Scotland; William Grant & Sons, New York, NY). This blended Scotch opens with a bright, fresh-cut apple aroma. On the palate, butterscotch richness gives way to mild hints of smoke and juicy citrus. This versatile pour could be enjoyed on its own or recommended for mixing. **Best Buy.**
abv: 43% **Price:** \$33

90 Islay Mist 8-Year Scotch (Scotland; M.S. Walker, Boston, MA). Made at Laphroaig, the Islay distillery famed turning out uber-peaty single malts, this blended Scotch offers a more moderate

approach to peat. Look for a wispy peated aroma and mild, pleasant smokiness on the palate mixed with almond sweetness. The spiced midpalate segues into a smoky waft. Sip or mix. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$26

TEQUILA

96 Maestro Dobel Silver Tequila (Mexico; Proximo Spirits, Jersey City, NJ). The sweet aroma hints at tropical fruit and white chocolate, underpinned by jalapeño. The buttery palate delivers on the promise of fruit, showing melon, lychee, and grapefruit peel that wind into a delicate white-pepper finish.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$44

95 Los Rijos Silver Tequila (Mexico; Distiller Sales, Princeton, MN). This Tequila is brisk and slightly vegetal, with tones of bell pepper and tarragon layered with almond. The generously spiced finish shows clove, cinnamon and a hint of cardamom. It's a complex blanco to sip or mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$32

94 Fortaleza Still Strength Blanco Tequila (Mexico; Winebow, New York, NY). The savory, spicy aroma hints at fresh tomato. The drying, astringent palate opens with a savory, herbal blast, rounding into sun-dried tomato earthiness, mouth-watering lemon peel and bright lemon-pepper on the long finish. The producer chose to go with the extra-proof "still strength" because "this is how Tequila was enjoyed over 125 years ago by my Great Grandfather." The bottle, topped with a hand-painted agave piña, was hand-blown by bottle artisans in Mexico.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$55

93 Corazón Expresiones Blanco Artesanal Edition Tequila (Mexico; Sazerac, Metairie, LA). This blanco Tequila was briefly aged in ex-American whiskey barrels from the Sazerac portfolio, specifically those from George T. Stagg, Old Rip Van Winkle, Buffalo Trace and Sazerac Rye. The end result is a mild almond aroma and tantalizing notes of brown sugar, brown butter and nutmeg on the palate, with a plushness that's unusual for a blanco. Overall, this drinks like a whiskey, save for the jalapeño zippiness on the finish. Interesting and complex.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$60

92 4 Copas Blanco Tequila (Mexico; Preiss Imports, Ramona, CA). Complex, enticing tropical fruit aromas entice. A fleeting, mouthwatering saline note up front carries over into a burst of salted fruit: guava, lychee, prickly pear lead into a waxy rosewater exhale laced with grapefruit peel and cardamom.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$43

92 Casa Dragones Blanco Tequila (Mexico; Casa Dragones, Manhasset, NY). Mild, sweet mango and coconut aromas lead into a mouthwateringly tart, fruity palate. Vanilla and coconut take

over into the smooth, elegant finish, exiting with a sprinkle of sweet cinnamon.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$75

92 Vida de Louie Blanco Tequila (Mexico; LDDV Inc., Jacksonville, FL). This is a delicate, slightly floral blanco with hints of lime blossom, lime peel and granite leading into a fleeting violet note on the brisk, peppery exhale. The bottle topper is a hard to miss round wooden piece with skull and crossbones in the middle.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35

91 Cincoro Blanco Tequila (Mexico; Park Street Imports, Miami, FL). The mild aroma of this Tequila shows just a hint of coconut. The palate opens with robust honey and jalapeño tones, settling into coconut sweetness on the exit, and braced up with a drying burst of clove. It's all packaged in a dramatic, extra-tall sculptural bottle.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$70

91 Villa One Silver Tequila (Mexico; Stoli Group, New York, NY). With mellow tinges of coconut on nose and palate, this Tequila is generally mild, with hints of almond and charcoal, finishing light and clean, with a bit of spicy clove heat. Backed by celebs Nick Jonas and John Varvatos.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$45

VERMOUTH

96 González Byass Vermouth La Copa Extra Seco (Spain; González Byass, Chicago, IL). Made with fino Sherry, this pale-straw vermouth greets with a mild, slightly herbaceous aroma. The palate shows golden raisin and ripe pear tinged with basil and sweet cinnamon, with mouthwatering salinity on the finish. It's delightful to sip straight—especially when chilled—or mix into killer Martinis.
abv: 17% **Price:** \$25

95 Mommenpop Vin D'Pampe Pamplemousse Vermouth (USA; Mommenpop, Napa, CA). This highly quaffable vermouth blends Pinot Noir rosé and grapefruit fortified with American brandy (also made with Pinot Noir). Look for a peachy hue and flavors that suggest both grapefruit-peel bitterness and grapefruit-flesh juiciness. It's a joy to drink, including in a Martini.
abv: 17% **Price:** \$22/357 ml

93 C. Comoz Vermouth de Chambéry Blanc (France; Haus Alpenz, Easthampton, MA). This golden-hued vermouth offers peach nectar and ripe pear aromas. The palate is sweet and honeyed, showing stone fruit and vanilla, finishing moderately long and mildly sweet. Pleasing to sip or mix.
abv: 16% **Price:** \$17

92 Cinzano Vermouth Extra Dry (Italy; Campari America, New York, NY). Look for a mild, earthy aroma with hints of fresh melon and pear. The palate is brisk, crisp and fresh, opening with

lemon and a twist of bittersweet grapefruit peel, finishing with a green melon exhale. **Best Buy.**
abv: 18% **Price:** \$8

92 Ransom Sweet Vermouth (USA; Ransom Spirits, Sheridan, OR). The bold, rich aroma is redolent with cocoa, cinnamon, fig jam and strawberry compote. The palate echoes the nose, layering on dried date, walnut and strawberry-rhubarb, winding into a gentle, lingering waft of cocoa and spice.
abv: 17.8% **Price:** \$18/375 ml

91 Guerin Vermouth Blanc (France; Heavenly Spirits LLC, Lakeville, MA). Sweet, sticky and fruity, this rose-gold vermouth leads with strawberry jam on the nose and palate, but finishes with a tartness closer to cranberry. Made with a base of Pineau de Charentes and finished in Cognac casks. Best well-chilled.
abv: 17% **Price:** \$22

91 Vermut Lustau Rosé (Spain; Europvin USA, Van Nuys, CA). A juicy, easy-drinking newcomer made with a fino Sherry base blended with Moscatel wine and Tintilla de Rota, a fruity red wine from the Jerez region. The end result is a vermouth with a pretty dusty-rose hue and grapefruit-tinged aroma. The palate is quite sweet and juicy, finishing with soothing vanilla. Serve over ice or mixed with tonic water.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$20



90 Massican Sweet Red Vermouth (USA; Massican Winery, St Helena, CA). This garnet-hued Napa Valley vermouth is lean and drinks almost like a dry red wine. Fleeting blackberry and cherry give way to grapefruit peel astringency and plum skin bitterness, leading into coriander and black pepper on the finish. 2018 vintage.
abv: 16% **Price:** \$22

VODKA



93 D. George Benham's Vodka (USA; Graton Distilling, Petaluma, CA). Made from grapes and a blend of grains (wheat, rye, corn), this smooth vodka is neutral on nose and palate, with whispers of grapefruit, almond and charcoal. It slides into a clove-accented finish.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$27

93 Hangar 1 Fog Point Vodka (USA; Hangar 1, Alameda, CA). This limited-edition vodka is "inspired by the Bay Area fog," the producer says. The base is distilled from a Chenin Blanc and Viognier blend from California's Pine Ridge Vineyards, then cut with water sourced from Hangar 1's "fog catchers." The finished vodka is remarkably silky and layers a distinctly fruity note with earthy unsweetened chocolate, finishing lightly with a dusting of lemon-pepper.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$134

93 Smugglers' Notch Moroccan Rose & Grapefruit Flavored Vodka (USA; Smugglers' Notch Distillery, Jeffersonville, VT). A candied orange peel aroma entices the nose. The palate is relatively neutral at first, then plenty of orange peel and grapefruit pith emerges on the rounded, surprisingly long finish, adding ginger and white pepper sparks. Mix with tonic or soda water.
abv: 35% **Price:** \$27

92 ATX Vodka (USA; Sangiovanni Distillery, Pflugerville, TX). Look for a neutral aroma and palate laced with almond sweetness. The long, bracing finish suggests pink peppercorn, grapefruit peel, cardamom and clove. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$19

92 Belvedere Single Estate Rye Vodka Lake Bartezek (Poland; Moët Hennessy, New York, NY). One of two new bottles introduced to demonstrate the impact of terroir in vodka, this bottling is crisp, light and overall neutral on nose and palate. A vegetal hint on the palate leads into white pepper, ginger and lemon peel on the exhale.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$38

91 Shelta Cavern Spirits Vodka (USA; Straight to Ale Brands, Huntsville, AL). Made from malted barley and wheat, look for distinct fruity notes

on nose and palate. It's not the absolute neutrality some seek in vodka, but it's still pleasant, light and soft with tinges of coconut and cinnamon heat into the finish.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30

91 Tom of Finland Vodka (Finland; Wolf Spirit, Eugene, OR). Named for Touko Laaksonen, the Finnish artist and gay icon better known as Tom of Finland. Made from organic wheat and rye, this versatile vodka has a mild, slightly citrusy scent and a smooth, vanilla-tinged palate that finishes brisk, with peppery hints of lemon peel and white pepper.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35

90 Hanson of Sonoma Organic Vodka (USA; Hanson of Sonoma Distillery, Sonoma CA). A small-batch wine country vodka distilled from organic grapes. The faintly fruity aroma channels bubble gum or lychee. Those notes echo on the palate, layered with hints of rosewater, cinnamon and white pepper heat. Sip or mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30



90 Round Rock Vodka (USA; Gulf Coast Distillers, Houston, TX). Made from 100% corn, this versatile small batch vodka is relatively neutral on nose and palate, with brushes of charcoal, citrus and white pepper, with a bracing, drying finish. Sip or mix. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20

90 South Fork Vodka (USA; Satellite Spirits, Grass Valley, CA). This small batch vodka distilled from corn has a distinctly sweet, marshmallow-like aroma. The palate also has a sugary tone, hinting at marshmallow and coconut, finishing brisk. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$19

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