

Scotch



98 The Glenlivet 25 Years Old (Scotland; Pernod Ricard USA, New York, NY). Finished in PX sherry and Cognac casks, this single malt has a deep amber hue and toffee and red fruit aromas. The complex palate opens with dried cherry and oak. A splash of water unlocks chestnut, lemon cream and vanilla, teased by fleeting hints of peach, Muscat grape and violets. A puff of campfire smoke gathers on the exhale, along with drying hints of leather and black pepper. Part of the Sample Room Collection.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$650

97 Isle of Skye 25 Years Old (Scotland; Silver Lake Imports, Miami, FL). A rich and inviting sip, from start to finish. Caramel, cocoa and oak aromas lead to deeper toffee and fresh-roasted coffee bean flavors. The long, lush finish shows orange marmalade, almond butter and crushed hazelnut.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$205



96 The Dalmore 14 Years Old (Scotland; E&J Gallo Spirits, Healdsburg, CA). Almond and vanilla aromas entwine with a floral whiff. The palate opens with concentrated caramel and finishes buttery and rich with hints of dried fig, cinnamon and clove. Finished in PX sherry casks.
abv: 43.8% **Price:** \$90

96 Lismore Aged 18 Years (Scotland; Sans Wine & Spirits, Irvine, CA). Fresh apple and vanilla bean aromas entice. The bold palate unfurls a light

layer of peat smoke wrapped around a caramel core tinged with butterscotch, toffee and roasted nuts. Cinnamon and clove warm the finish, accompanied by a subtle violet exhale.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$70



96 Jura 18 Years Old (Scotland; Whyte and MacKay USA Imports, Healdsburg, CA). This single malt was finished in Bordeaux casks, yielding an amber hue and rich toffee and oak aromas. The big, bold palate suggests caramel, sticky toffee pudding, dried dates and roasted nuts, finishing long with hints of allspice and peat smoke. A splash of water brings out milk-chocolate tones. Consider it as a dessert pairing.
abv: 44% **Price:** \$100

95 Blackadder Black Snake Single Malt Scotch (Scotland; Glass Revolution, Las Vegas, NV). Rich, nutty tones make it clear this is an oloroso sherry-finished bottling. The first sips open with concentrated butterscotch and oak, followed by mouthwatering roasted pecan, salted caramel and finally hints of smoke and black-pepper tingle. Ginger sparks enliven the finish.
abv: 59.9% **Price:** \$85/700ml



95 Old Pulteney Pineau des Charentes wine cask matured (Scotland; Hotaling & Co., San Francisco, CA). This is a non-age-statement single malt matured in casks that previously held Pineau des Charentes, a fortified wine from France's Cognac region. The result is a complex, pleasing whisky layered with delicate peach, apple and mar-

zipan tones, finishing with a floral hint and a waft of smoke. Part of the limited-edition Coastal Series.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$80

95 Glenmorangie The Cadboll Estate 15 Years Old (Scotland; Moët Hennessy USA, New York, NY). It would be simplistic to say this single malt Scotch is a dead ringer for a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios. So we'll deconstruct: Dried apricot and almond aromas lead into a lively palate showing honey and toasted grain, along with hints of caramelized pineapple and toasted coconut. A splash of water draws out a puff of smoke into the long, rounded finish. Made with barley grown on Glenmorangie's Cadboll Estate—and zero Cheerios. Third batch of limited-edition Cadboll Estate series. 2023 Edition
abv: 43% **Price:** \$100

95 Octomore 14.1 (Scotland; Remy Cointreau, New York, NY). In this super-peated single malt from the iconic Bruichladdich distillery, look for a golden hue and mild vanilla and spearmint aromas. The palate opens with mouthwatering butterscotch and menthol, finishing long with a smoked maple-sugar effect that ever so slowly tapers off.
abv: 59.6% **Price:** \$220

94 Kingsbarns Balcomie (Scotland; Palm Bay International, Boca Raton, FL). Expect a burnished gold hue and fresh apple scent. The palate opens distinctly sweet, with salted caramel, rum raisin and baked-apple tones, but finishes gently with ginger spice and vanilla. *Best Buy.*
abv: 46% **Price:** \$58

94 Tullibardine 500 Sherry Cask Finish (Scotland; Prestige Beverage Group, Mendota Heights, MN). This is a non-age-statement single malt finished in oloroso and PX sherry casks. Look for a honey hue and baked-pear aromas, plus a faint smoky whiff. The palate unfurls a modest amount of smoke around a core of baked pear, vanilla and candied ginger, leading into a long, nuanced finish perfumed with white flowers and sandalwood incense. *Best Buy.*
abv: 43% **Price:** \$40

-Irish Whiskey-

97 Bushmills 29-Year-Old Rare Cask (Ireland; Proximo Spirits, Jersey City, NJ). The second release in the Rare Casks collectors' series spent 12 years in bourbon barrels, then another 17 in PX sherry casks. All that barrel time imparts a deep amber hue, and dried fig and toffee aromas. Add plenty of water to take off the tannic edge and open up luxuriously deep, dark flavors: dried figs and dates, plum skin, mocha and clove spice. Released in May 2022; limited edition of 500 bottles.
abv: 53% **Price:** \$750

96 **Limavady Single Malt Whiskey Single Barrel No. 0040 (Ireland; Whistlepig LLC, Shoreham, VT).** The mild, grassy aroma has a tinge of green apple. Meanwhile, the palate leads with brown sugar and caramel. A splash of water pulls a deep-toasted grain note forward, finishing with bitter espresso plus cardamom and black pepper heat. A bit of apple freshness returns on the complex exhale.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$45/700ml



95 **Redbreast 12-Year-Old Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Pernod Ricard USA, New York).** Sip solo or mix a first-rate toddy with this classic. Baked apple and pear notes mingle with caramel and a light sprinkle of baking spice, leading into a long but bright finish. The flavor stands up well to dilution, making it a favorite for cocktails.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$65

94 **Teeling Virgin Chinkapin Oak Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Bacardi, Coral Gables, FL).** Chinkapin, a type of North American oak, is the sole wood used to mature this pot-stilled whiskey. Here, it imparts a deep, burnished gold hue and bold, desert-like aromas and flavors: dulce de leche, vanilla cookies, spiced cocoa and cinnamon heat. This is the debut expression in the “Wonders of Wood” series in partnership with Tree Council of Ireland.
abv: 50% **Price:** \$119

94 **Slane Special Edition Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Brown-Forman, Louisville, KY).** Extra-virgin oak is at the heart of this special edition, meaning the wood hasn’t been exhausted of its potential to contribute caramel and spice. It follows through: Look for a bright topaz hue and inviting, concentrated caramel aromas. The palate layers that with inviting tropical fruit and just a hint of campfire smoke, resulting in caramelized pineapple, burnt orange peel, dried fig and toasted coconut, finishing long with black pepper sting. *Best Buy.*
abv: 45% **Price:** \$37



93 **Busker Irish Whiskey Single Malt (Ireland; Disaronno International, Somerset, NJ).** Look for an orange-gold hue and bold baked-apple notes on the nose and palate, accompanied by orange peel and honey-drizzled walnuts. Adding water lightens the texture, with mild cocoa, smoke and cinnamon tingling on the exhale. *Best Buy.*
abv: 44.3% **Price:** \$30

93 **Egan’s Conviction Irish Whiskey Aged 10 Years (Ireland; MHW Ltd., Manhasset, NY).** This is a blend of single grain and single malt whiskeys, each aged at least 10 years and finished in XO Cognac cask. The end result is a dark-gold hue and almond aromas. Look for palate-coating honey, golden raisin and dried-apricot flavors shot through with cigar smoke and espresso. Overall, the effect is rich and luxe.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$100

92 **McConnell’s Irish Whisky Sherry Cask Finish (Ireland; Conecuh Brands, Garden City, NY).** Concentrated caramel leads the nose and palate. Hints of dark chocolate and espresso balance it out, finishing with a cayenne pepper tingle. This is a five-year-old whiskey finished in oloroso sherry casks.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$43

Bourbon



97 **Lost Lantern Soaring Spice (USA; Lost Lantern, Weybridge, VT).** The name is apt: This bourbon truly offers an explosion of spice from the first sip. Bold cayenne, cinnamon-sweet heat and

cardamom meld with caramel, maple and oak, finishing long, with black-pepper sparks and a touch of sandalwood incense. From independent bottler Lost Lantern, this is part of the Single Distillery Series, specifically a bottling from Frey Ranch Distiller in Fallon, NV.
abv: 63.8% **Price:** \$100

96 **Bhakta Armagnac Cask Finish Bourbon 2013 (USA; Balthazar Rex, Shoreham, VT).** What’s in the bottle is a nearly 100% corn bourbon distilled in Indiana in 2013, aged about nine years, finished in ex-Armagnac casks and bottled in Vermont. That translates into robust caramel plus an unusual explosion of orange peel and orange oils on the first sips. Add a splash of water to draw out hints of hazelnut, pecan and mocha. Salted caramel and a hint of prune frame the long, mouthwatering finish. Enjoy on its own or mix a drink with minimal adornment, like an Old Fashioned.
abv: 50.3% **Price:** \$149

96 **Barrell Bourbon Batch #035 (USA; Barrell Craft Spirits, Louisville, KY).** This is a mix of straight bourbons from Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana, ranging in age from six to 13 years old. The end result is a mix of rich caramel and toffee on nose and palate. Each sip opens relatively dry, with oak and hints of espresso and dark chocolate, but finishes long and luxe, showing mocha tinged with hazelnut and a final burst of fiery ginger heat.
abv: 58.75% **Price:** \$90



95 **High N’ Wicked Bourbon (USA; High N’ Wicked, Harrodsburg, KY).** This super-high-rye bourbon is complex and enticing. Mellow toffee and oak aromas lead into a silky but spicy palate. Sarsaparilla, allspice, nutmeg and clove surround a faint ripple of butterscotch. The relatively dry finish offers hints of cedar, roasted grain and cigar tobacco.
abv: 52% **Price:** \$80

95 **Maker’s Mark Cellar Aged (USA; Maker’s Mark, Loretto, KY).** The oldest expression from the venerable distillery, this includes a blend of 11- and 12-year-old bourbons, each aged about half its life in a limestone cellar to slow the extraction of tannins. It drinks similarly to the standard Maker’s, with plenty of caramel, charcoal and spice, but with a bit

more intensity and oak. This is the 2023 edition; there will be a new edition each year going forward.
abv: 57.85% **Price:** \$150

94 Dragon's Milk Origin Small Batch Bourbon (USA; New Holland Brewing Company, Holland, MI). From a producer known for aging beer in bourbon casks (and vice versa), this is a five-year-old bourbon with a high-malt mash bill. A mild, slightly sweet vanilla scent steers into a palate that explodes with red fruit and spice. Mouthwatering cranberry and dried cherry lead into a hoppy mid-palate tinged with nutty and cocoa tones, finishing with allspice and rooty sarsaparilla.
abv: 47.5% **Price:** \$55

95 Wolcott Bottled-in-Bond Bourbon (USA; Sazerac, Bardstown, KY). Look for vanilla and stone-fruit aromas. The palate opens with almond and toasted oak; a splash of water amplifies the almond and vanilla tones, and adds a mouthwatering saline note. Perky baking spices and lemons emerge on the fade. **Best Buy.**
abv: 50% **Price:** \$40

94 Castle & Key Small Batch Wheated Bourbon 2022 Batch #1 (USA; Castle & Key, Frankfort, KY). This is a five-year-old bourbon, released in 2022. Concentrated caramel aromas entice. The bold palate opens with vanilla and oak, and a surprising peach-nectar hint. Grapefruit peel and coconut emerge on the exhale, shored up by ginger and white-pepper sparks.
abv: 50% **Price:** \$65

94 Bank Street Reserve Bourbon (USA; Laird & Co., Scobeyville, NJ). Expect a honey hue and an aroma that suggests rich caramel and toasted nuts. The palate opens with vanilla sweetness, pecan and chestnut cream, lingering in a clove and black-pepper finish. This is a five-year-old Kentucky straight bourbon bottled in New Jersey. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$32

93 Blade and Bow Bourbon (USA; Stitzel-Weller Distilling/Diageo, Louisville, KY). There's no age statement on the label; that's intentional. The lore of this liquid is that it includes a small amount of the last bourbon ever produced at the iconic Stitzel-Weller distillery, which closed in 1992. (Diageo reopened it in 2014.) This blend of straight bourbons offers vanilla on nose and palate, leading into almond and a hint of dried apricot. The finish is lively and relatively dry, with grapefruit peel, leather and chamomile tea. Overall, it's a light-handed and pleasing take, regardless of how much (or little) old/rare distillate is actually in the glass.
abv: 45.5% **Price:** \$50

93 Elijah Craig Barrel Proof Bourbon (USA; Heaven Hill Distillery, Bardstown, KY). Aged 11 years and five months, the latest edition in the Barrel Proof series is a straight-up vanilla bomb, start to finish. Along the way, espresso and hints of dark fruit, clove and black pepper add complexity, ending

long and super-drying, with oak and toasted almond. Batch #B523.
abv: 62.1% **Price:** \$70

Other Whiskey

95 Courage & Conviction American Single Malt Sherry Cask (USA; Virginia Distillery, Lovings-ton, VA). Aged a minimum of three years in ex-Sher-ry casks, this dessert-worthy whiskey offers fruit-cake-like aromas. The palate opens with honey and golden raisin, while adding water softens the flavors to honey-drizzled apricot and grilled pineapple. It finishes long and rounded, with cinnamon glow.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$85



94 Rampur Select Single Malt. Special Release 2022 (India; SG Worldwide, Edison, NJ). This pleasing, complex sipper has a honey hue and aromas that suggest red fruit and oak. The bold palate opens with sandalwood, incense and candied ginger, rounding into an elongated finish that echoes red fruit and warming baking spice, plus a fleeting floral hint on the exhale.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$140

Cognac

97 Normandin Mercier 7 VSOP (France; Heav-enly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). This delicious and delicate Cognac opens with a distinctly nutty aroma. The palate unfolds pecan and almond, plus vanilla sweetness that lingers into the complex finish. Subtle white flower and pear mingle with ginger and clove on the graceful exhale.
abv: 41.5% **Price:** \$70

95 A de Fussigny VSOP Cognac (France; Total Wine & More, Bethesda, MD). Vanilla and caramel aromas show on the nose. Initially, cocoa and vanilla coat the palate, but tinges of dried dates and violet emerge on the gentle exhale. Clove and black pepper brace up the finish.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$70

94 Camus Borderies VSOP Single Estate (France; CIL Amerique, Manhasset, NY). Bold vanilla bean and peach nectar on nose and palate are layered with hints of maple and caramel. The velvety, toasty finish is accented with baking spice and a hint of orange peel. Made exclusively with grapes from the producer's vineyards in the Borderies appella-tion.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$70/700ml

93 Courvoisier Cognac VSOP (France; Beam-Suntory, Chicago, IL). Look for a dark amber hue and restrained aroma. The soft, warming palate opens with red fruit, leading into elongated caramel and hazelnut tones, plus a hint of baking spice. Sip or mix. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$50

93 Godet Cognac VSOP (France; Roust USA, New York, NY). Nutty, honeyed tones perfume this Cognac. The palate echoes honeycomb and roasted nuts, layering that with a whiff of toasted brioche and a zippy lemon-peel note, before finish-ing with gentle baking spice. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$40/700ml

92 Cognac Park Cognac Mizunara (France; Back Bar Project, Seattle, WA). This Cognac was aged four years in used French oak casks, then trans-ferred to new Japanese casks made from rare Mizu-nara wood for another six months. The end result is a mild, fresh apple aroma and light palate. Each sip evolves. Pineapple and tropical fruit lead to gin-ger and white pepper sparks, followed by a delicate floral exhale.
abv: 43.5% **Price:** \$90

92 Residence Cognac VSOP (France; JP Bour-geois, Asheville, NC). The rich caramel aroma is coupled with a hint of red fruit. Robust vanilla leads into traces of cocoa powder, sandalwood and grapefruit peel, plus an earthy finish laced with nut-meg and ginger. Certified organic.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$68

92 Cognac Frapin VSOP (France; PM Spirits, Wilmington, DE). Initial caramel and oak aromas open to a more red-apple scent. The brisk palate shows some vanilla, but it's light, under-scored by another red-apple note. Vanilla treads lightly on top. A quick baking-spice finish suggests nutmeg, cinnamon and clove. There's also apple but-ter, with a vanilla-cream exhale.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$83



91 Merlet Cognac VSOP (France; Bedford & Grove, Louisville, KY). Rich caramel and toasted almond lead the nose. Drying tannins and alcohol warmth show up front. Adding water unlocks dried date and fig notes, plus a hint of cocoa powder and clove heat on the exhale. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$49

91 Bache Gabrielsen Cognac American Oak (France; RBE Drinks, Jacksonville, FL). Finished in American oak barrels, this Cognac offers mild almond aromas and a nutty, citrusy and spiced palate. Nuanced vanilla and pecan jostle with hints of orange and lemon peel, while the drying finish offers lots of cinnamon sweet heat.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$60/700ml

Gin

95 Gin de Las Californias Citrico (Mexico; Casa Lumbré Spirits, Melville, NY). This refreshing gin delivers on the citrus promised in its name, unfolding nuanced layers of bright lemon, tangerine and kumquat on nose and palate. Grapefruit peel and coriander perfume the exhale. Made with a sugar cane base. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$33



94 Chemist American Gin (USA; Apothecary Beverage Company, Asheville, NC). Expect a classic London Dry profile, plus a bit of savory edge. A whiff of dried coriander leads into a palate showing pine and savory spice, finishing brisk and mouthwatering with a lemon-peel hint.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$38

94 Linden Leaf Botanicals 88 Organic Molecular Gin (England; Eighty8, Bow Mar, CO). A clean, classic juniper profile, plus a whiff of savory spice leads the nose. The palate opens citrusy and brisk—botanicals in the blend include yuzu, calamansi, and lemon thyme—and finishes tingly, with rosemary and mint. Ideal for Martinis. *Best Buy.*
abv: 43% **Price:** \$29

94 Mojave High Desert Dry Gin (USA; Purple Brands, Petaluma, CA). The aroma is mild and lightly sweet, leading into a citrusy palate that hints at lemon peel and white pepper, plus a fleeting floral note. Juicy lime frames the mouthwatering finish. Mix into gin and tonics. *Best Buy.*
abv: 42% **Price:** \$29

93 Garnish Island Gin (Ireland; M.S. Walker, Boston, MA). Named for County Cork's Garnish Island, this gin opens with bold mint and licorice aromas. The palate offers anise, ginger and rosemary, drying to a pleasantly spiced and mouthwatering finish drifting gently away.
abv: 46% **Price:** \$35

93 Kapriol Lemon & Bergamot Gin (Italy; Opici Wine & Spirits, Glen Rock, NJ). The bright, sweet candied-lemon-peel fragrance entices. The palate echoes that bright lemon, adding pine and lime peel note into the long finish, with just a touch of lingering sweetness. Consider this gin a head start on Martinis with a twist and other citrusy drinks.
abv: 40.7% **Price:** \$35/700ml

93 Constant Reader Gin (USA; Temple Distilling, Lynwood, WA). Sweet and savory spices frame this versatile London Dry Style. Look for coriander on nose and palate, mingled with cardamom and cubeb pepper piquancy. *Best Buy.*
abv: 42% **Price:** \$21/1L

93 Ransom Old Tom Gin The Geezer (USA; The Great Oregon Wine Company, Dundee, OR). An extra-aged version of Ransom's original Old Tom

gin means an amber hue and complex allspice and vanilla aromas. The palate melds maple, orange peel and oak, plus a hint of cayenne into the finish. Sip with ice or mix into a very special Martinez.
abv: 44% **Price:** \$35

92 Bayab Gin (Africa; Spearhead Spirits, West Hollywood, CA). Pleasant dried spice aromas include nutmeg, cardamom and coriander. The palate echoes the spice notes, leading into a mild fruity note, suggesting kumquat and a citrusy finish. (Africa's subtly tangy baobab fruit is a key botanical.) Enjoy topped up with tonic water.
abv: 43% **Price:** \$35

Vodka

94 Royal Mash Vodka (England; PACE, Morristown, NJ). Distilled from potatoes, this soft, silky vodka offers hints of grapefruit pith and pink peppercorn heat. The finish is pleasingly crisp. Mix into vodka martinis with a citrus peel twist.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$43

93 Ovo Vodka (USA; Ovo Vodka, Jersey City, NJ). This corn-based vodka has a relatively neutral aroma and flavor, landing lightly with a vanilla tinge on the warming exhale. A versatile choice for Vespers and other cocktails.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$27

92 Streeter Flynn Vodka (USA; Denver Distillery, Denver, CO). Brisk and neutral on nose and palate, this versatile vodka has a light, soft feel and just a shadow of nutty flavor. Faint lemony acidity creates a tingly finish. Distilled from organic sugar cane. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$24

92 Fête Vodka with Pure Gold Flakes (USA; Elixir, Eugene, OR). As a festive take on vodka, the name is apt. It's fun to shake the bottle and watch the gold flakes swirl, though once poured, they don't stay suspended for long. Distilled from sugar cane, the liquid has soft vanilla sweetness and a wave of cinnamon heat into the finish.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30

92 Ocean Organic Vodka (USA; Hawaii Sea Spirits, Maui, HI). This is packaged in a notably heavy, globe-shaped bottle, while the vodka inside is feather-light on the palate, with hints of almond and graphite, finishing crisp with black pepper heat. Distilled from organic sugar cane and blended with "deep ocean mineral water."
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30

92 Tightline Organic Vodka (USA; Tattersall Distilling, River Falls, WI). Distilled from Midwestern corn, this vodka skews lightly sweet on nose and palate. Look for a distinct cocoa powder note and a mouthwatering baking spice finish. Mix into White Russians, Espresso Martinis and other sweeter-style cocktails. *Best Buy.*
abv: 40% **Price:** \$20

Tequila

96 Don Vicente Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Don Vicente, El Paso, TX). The aroma suggests fresh-cut jalapeño, with a spicy hint that makes the nose prickle. Peppery notes follow on the palate. Jalapeño as well as bell pepper and black pepper are framed with hints of tarragon and graphite. Grapefruit-peel astringency and white-pepper sparks complete the lively finish. Sip or mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$40

96 El Sativo Tequila Blanco (Mexico; El Sativo, Reno, NV). A whiff of fresh spearmint introduces the lightly herbaceous aroma. The light palate echoes the fresh herb note, mixing it with lemon peel and fresh jalapeño, plus a hint of vanilla. Each sip finishes bracing and crisp, with pleasantly peppery heat. Sip or mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$50

95 Campovaso Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Distiller Sales, St. Paul, MN). Honey richness and sun-dried tomato on nose and palate give depth to this limited-production tequila, while lemon peel jazzes up the exhale. A teasing oaky note suggests the barrel-aged expressions will be worth a closer look.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35



94 Lagrimas del Valle Tequila Palo Verde Plata 2022 (Mexico; Altamar Brands, Corona del Mar, CA). Savory and smoked—but not smoky—hints mean this complex blanco is a wild ride. Lively lemon, sun-dried tomato and tarragon open each sip, leading into a zesty, savory blast of smoked paprika, mesquite, ancho chile powder and a fleeting hint of bacon, finishing with black-pepper fumes. Note: each bottling will be a single vintage (2022 was the first), harvested from a single field (in this case, Palo Verde).
abv: 46% **Price:** \$55



94 Hacienda Navarro Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Carreon Enterprises, Denver, CO). A vegetal aroma, with a hint of fresh tomato, leads into a light, crisp palate. Mild honey and vanilla flavors fade into a lightly peppery exit warmed with cayenne heat.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$45

94 Codigo 1530 Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Codigo, Niwot, CO). This limited edition is bottled at still strength, meaning plenty of flavor intensity and alcohol power. Look for a roasted jalapeño scent and a hint of rubber. The memorable palate opens with graphite, fading into coconut sweetness framed by baking spice and a mouthwatering saline hint.
abv: 45% **Price:** \$75

93 Mijenta Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Altos Plenos, Dallas, TX). Hints of bell pepper and fresh mint perfume this blanco. The palate opens with vegetal bell and jalapeño peppers, leading to a mouthwatering saline hint on the midpalate. The exit blazes with alcohol heat, melding with cayenne, ginger and jalapeño, soothed with cooked agave and rich honey on the way out.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$49

93 Buendia Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Buendia, Wyomissing, PA). This tequila has a tropical touch, opening with coconut, citrus and pineapple aromas. The complex palate offers coconut and bracing hints of rubber and graphite. Almond sweetness smooths the exit, sprinkled with clove and cinnamon heat.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$48

93 La Pulga Tequila Blanco (Mexico; La Pulga Spirits, Fort Worth, TX). Overall, this is a citrusy and lively tequila. A fresh tomato scent welcomes the savory and zesty palate. Lemony acidity leads to pickled jalapeño and ginger, plus white-pepper heat.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$45

93 Jaja Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Proximo Spirits, Jersey City, NJ). This tequila shows the sweeter side of blanco. Agave nectar, vanilla cookie and almond are balanced by drying white pepper and ginger notes. The exhale includes a hint of butterscotch.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35



93 Lalo Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Lalo Spirits, Austin, TX). Look for bold tropical fruit on nose and palate. Each complex sip opens slightly sweet and finishes with citrus zing, mouthwatering salinity and a mineral hint of graphite.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$50



92 Painted Donkey Tequila Blanco (Mexico; Dynasty Spirits Brands, Dallas, TX). Herbaceous notes lead the nose and palate, with a bouquet of mint, tarragon and lemongrass that heads to a mentholated finish. Fennel seed, bell pepper and lime peel exit with a final, sneaky burst of heat. **Best Buy.**
abv: 40% **Price:** \$25

Mezcal

98 QQRQ Mezcal Destilado Con Mole (Mexico; Preiss Imports, Ramona, CA). Savory, spiced and stunningly complex. Bold cayenne and smoked paprika aromas set the nose twitching, while the super-earthly palate delivers an ever-evolving rotation of flavors: meaty/umami notes, cocoa powder, hints of tropical fruit, a suggestion of roasted tomato, a whiff of smoke, subtle spices that waft into the lip-smacking finish. Every sip tastes different.
abv: 47% **Price:** \$92

96 Ilegal Mezcal 7-Year-Old Añejo (Mexico; Ilegal Mezcal, Miami, FL). Think of this enjoyable sipper as a mezcal for the smoky Scotch set. The amber hue and mellow caramel aroma lead into a rich caramel and toffee palate. The complex fin-

ish offers plenty of campfire smoke, plus cacao nib, clove and burnt orange peel.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$175

96 Mi Mamá Me Dijo (Mexico; Pinnacle & Associates, Port Washington, NY). Mild tropical-fruit aromas lead into a complex palate bursting with roasted and meaty tones, and a long, distinctly saline finish with a pine-needle hint. All that umami wrapped around a fruity core brings to mind roasted tomato sprinkled with plenty of sea salt, or roasted pineapple swathed in prosciutto. Overall, a memorable sipper. Espadín. **Best Buy.**

abv: 45% **Price:** \$42



95 Bozal Cenizo Mezcal (Mexico; 3 Badge Beverage, Sonoma, CA). Mild almond aromas lead into a palate that unfurls hints of vanilla and brown sugar. The midpalate surprises with plum skin, espresso and rootsy sarsaparilla, plus mouth-watering lemon zest, drying to a long and spicy finish laced with cayenne, clove and sandalwood.

abv: 47% **Price:** \$80

95 Pluma Negra Mezcal - Tobala (Mexico; Cultured Spirits, Bridgeport, PA). Overall, this mezcal opens floral and exits smoky. Think rose petals tumbling over wet pavement: Floral hints on nose and palate lead into more austere graphite and stone notes midpalate. Numbing black and pink peppercorn and a puff of smoke frame the exhale.

abv: 48% **Price:** \$120

95 Fosforo Mezcal Tobala Penca (Mexico; Fosforo, Vernon Hills, IL). Expect a honey hue and smoky aroma. The palate mingles smoke and salted butterscotch, finishing long with mesquite smoke laced with tingly clove and black pepper. Aged 1-3 months in glass with penca (agave leaves).

abv: 43% **Price:** \$125

94 Xicala Joven Mezcal (Mexico; Global Beverage Team, Chicago, IL). The delicate aroma is slightly sweet, slightly floral, with a peppery undertone. Those notes are echoed on the light-bodied palate, reading as rose petal and a hint of tropical fruit, leading into a long, peppery finish. Bell pep-

per and torched sage create a final vegetal exhale. Espadín. **Best Buy.**

abv: 43% **Price:** \$40

94 Vamonos Riendo Mezcal (Mexico; Good Spirits Ventures, Manhasset, NY). A blend of espadín and tobala, this mezcal receives an extra distillation with fruit, in the style of pechuga. The end result is a mild citrus aroma and perky lime zest, pine and sandalwood flavors. Pleasing honey sweetness leads into the warming finish.

abv: 42% **Price:** \$60

94 Mezcal Sacrificio Joven (Mexico; Mexcor, Houston, TX). Pencil lead and rubber aromas are underpinned by honey and citrus. The brisk palate opens with rubber, slate and smoke, leading into a crisp finish with black pepper and a mouth-watering tinge of lemon peel. Espadín. **Best Buy.**

abv: 40% **Price:** \$38

94 Don Amado Mezcal Reposado (Mexico; Hass Brothers, San Francisco, CA). Look for a light gold hue and robust dried oregano and sage aromas. The bold palate mingles unsweetened chocolate, roasted bell pepper and sun-dried tomato, finishing long with tinges of vanilla, mesquite smoke and cayenne heat. Espadín, rested for six months in used brandy casks.

abv: 45% **Price:** \$55

Rum



96 Rhum J.M Terroir Volcanique (Martinique; Spiribam USA, Wakefield, RI). Orange peel and toasted almond lead the nose. The lively palate offers lots of vanilla and caramel up front, drying into hints of leather and cigar wrapper. The finish shows a faint but refreshing bell pepper-like vegetal exhale.

abv: 43% **Price:** \$43/700ml



96 Holmes Cay Heritage Blend Esotico Edition (Barbados/Martinique/Venezuela; Windy-side Spirits, White Plains, NY). Complex aromas include almond and vanilla, plus a seaside saline breeze. The mouthwatering palate shows coconut and espresso bitterness and finishes notably long—a ribbon of almond, coconut and vanilla fading off into the distance. **Best Buy.**

abv: 43% **Price:** \$39

95 Plantation Rum Under the Sea Guyana 2007 (Guyana; Maison Ferrand, Quincy, MA). The concentrated vanilla aroma leads into a robust salted caramel palate mixed with freshly grown espresso, clove and an intriguing hint of lemon peel.

abv: 51% **Price:** \$80

95 The Lost Cask Collection Single Cask Rum Aged 17 Years Distilled in Fiji (Fiji; Rolling Fork Spirits, Louisville, KY). This memorable bottle is bold and complex. Add some water to this overproof beauty; a lively core of ripe tropical fruit emerges, surrounded by dark chocolate, espresso and touches of char and funk, warmed with black pepper and clove.

abv: 63.6% **Price:** \$180

95 The Rum Cooperative Vol 3. (Multiple; Bully Boy Distillers, Boston, MA). Part of an ongoing series of stellar rum blends, this one, introduced May 2022, melds 12-year-old rums from the Dominican Republic (60% of the blend), Panama (39%) and small amounts from Barbados and Brazil. Look for an amber hue and pleasing caramel and vanilla aromas. The palate reads almost like boozy cream soda, fading into a long, drying finish accented with cocoa, leather and flickers of clove and black pepper. **Best Buy.**

abv: 46% **Price:** \$38

95 Transcontinental Rum Line Mauritius 2017 (Mauritius; La Maison & Velier, Manhasset, NY). Vanilla and allspice aromas, plus a distinct cherry hint, unfold into a drying, complex palate. Cocoa, dried date and clove-cayenne-cinnamon spice winds into a long finish, with hints of mesquite smoke and burnt orange peel.

abv: 50% **Price:** \$53/700ml

94 Amagi 9-Year-Old Rum (Japan; Honkaku Imports, Mineola, NY). Made from kokuto sugar, this Japanese rum has a deep nut-brown hue and deep aromas of roasted coffee, toffee and leather. Since it's overproof, add some water to let the cocoa and espresso bloom along with dried cherry and fig—the long, warming finish displaying subtle violet and torched cinnamon.

abv: 64.2% **Price:** \$100

94 Rum Explorer Thailand (Thailand; Pacific Edge Imports, Agoura Hills, CA). Tawny and bright, this five-year-old rum shows rich caramel on nose and palate. The long, nutty finish includes burnt orange peel, cocoa powder and a bold burst of cayenne, cinnamon bark and star anise. Distilled in Thailand and aged in France, in American oak casks that previously held Cognac.

abv: 42% **Price:** \$55/700ml

93 Ron Zacapa Sistema No. 23 Solera (Guatemala; Ron Zacapa Co, New York, NY). Zacapa tends to make rums on the sweeter and more luscious side; this is no exception. Look for a deep nut-brown hue and concentrated toffee aroma. The plush palate shows cocoa, dried dates and figs, and finishes with a hint of chocolate-covered cherry. What's in the bottle is a blend of rums aged for at least six years, blended via solera.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$50

93 Samuel Maverick White Rum (USA; Sam Maverick Spirits, San Antonio, TX). Floral aromas with a hint of tropical fruit entice. The palate echoes soft notes of flowers and lychee, exiting crisp and clean with a powdery floral exhale generously laced with white pepper and ginger. *Best Buy.*

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

Amaro

96 Amaro Lucano Anniversario (Italy; Kobrand, Purchase, NY). The plush palate opens with a burst of dark fruit—plum, dried fig and date, black cherry—leading into hints of espresso and vanilla. Clove and cinnamon bark warm the long, tingly finish. Consider as a dessert sipper.

abv: 34% **Price:** \$37

95 DeGross New World Amaro (USA; Clear Creek Distillery, Hood River, OR). This new amaro, the first from “King Cocktail” Dale DeGross, commands attention. From the moment the bottle is opened, the bold, deeply spiced aroma invites. The palate surprises with a vibrant burst of lemony brightness, drying to a grippy plum-skin effect mid-palate. A long finish is perfumed with curry-like spice, with warm cinnamon, anise, cardamom, cum-in, plus a menthol exhale. Made for mixing.

abv: 35% **Price:** \$40/700ml

94 Amaro di Toscana (Italy; Saranty Imports, Stamford, CT). Mild blackberry aromas lead into a comforting sweet-tart palate that recalls dried cherry or cranberry compote, with a bitter edge that suggests espresso with sugar. A faint sprinkle of dried mint and thyme refreshes. Versatile and mixable. *Best Buy.*

abv: 30% **Price:** \$25

94 Accompani Amaro (USA; Straightaway, Portland, OR). Look for a burnished gold hue and aromas of marigold and honey. The palate opens bracing and relatively dry, with light gentian bitterness. Chamomile tea lifted with mint, cinnamon and a whiff of orange peel fades into honeycomb on the long but light finish. Consider slipping a little into a cup of tea. *Best Buy.*

abv: 25% **Price:** \$30



94 Amaro di Erbe Trieste (Italy; Uva Imports, Atlanta, GA). Named for the port city of Trieste, this amaro has a honey hue and floral aroma. The palate opens bitter and very dry, teasing hints of chamomile, lemon pith and peel, and ginger root heat. The finish is sharp, slightly astringent and appropriately bitter, with a hint of dark honey that lingers on the tongue. Made with 12 botanicals including hops, dandelion and eucalyptus.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$70 for 700 ml

94 Amaro Mysteriosa (USA; Van Brunt Stillhouse, Brooklyn, NY). This distinctly herbaceous liqueur will remind some of yellow Chartreuse. The burnished gold liquid has a bitter scent, suggesting roots and barks, and a sweet-bitter palate. Honey sweetness unfurls into cinnamon and clove tingle. Turkish rhubarb is used to add earthy backbone.

abv: 30% **Price:** \$50

93 Black Note Amaro (Italy; Preiss Imports, Ramona, CA). On the sweeter side of the amaro spectrum, this deep-brown liqueur has a pleasing fruity aroma, suggesting red fruit, plum and fig, framed by a rooty bitter note. Roasted coffee and vanilla flavors coat the palate, leading into a lightly bitter finish.

abv: 21% **Price:** \$37

Liqueurs

94 Black Irish White Chocolate Liqueur (Ireland; Selected Imported Wine, New York, NY). Backed by Mariah Carey, this silky liqueur has a pale, creamy appearance, indeed like melted white chocolate. The flavor is familiar, like a typical Irish cream liqueur, with just enough zing from the whiskey lifting the finish.

abv: 17% **Price:** \$29

98 Chinola Passion Fruit Liqueur (Dominican Republic; Park Street Imports, Miami, FL). Absolutely delicious, and a must-have for tropical cocktails. The juice-like appearance is burnished orange and cloudy, with a bold, juicy passion fruit and apricot scent. The fruit carries over to the thick, viscous palate, with a peach nectar texture that clings, finishing with a faint hint of ginger.

abv: 21% **Price:** \$33

94 Grand Marnier Cuvée Louis-Alexandre (France; Campari America, New York, NY). This liqueur has an amber hue and candied orange and marzipan aromas. The viscous, distinctly sweet palate swirls together dried fruit, honey and baking spice, emerging as amaretto cookie, orange cake and honey cake. Orange zest leads the long finish. Mix or enjoy as a post-meal sipper. 82% VSOP cognac, 18% orange liqueur.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$80

91 Ume Plum Liqueur (USA; Plumeshu, San Francisco, CA). The startling deep-purple hue catches the eye, while the aroma mixes violet and fresh apple notes. The mouthwatering, sweet-tart palate reads like fresh-cut Granny Smith apples, white grape juice, or plum flesh, winding into a gentle floral exhale. It's pleasant, but the color is the real reason to pour this for a wide range of cocktails.

abv: 17% **Price:** \$35

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