

Spirit OF THE SEASON

**As the Temperatures Drop,
Warm Up With Cognac**

Mention Cognac and images of a stuffy room with dark wood paneled walls and leather bound books come to mind. In reality, this distilled brandy is flexible, with rich textures and flavors perfect for any setting — particularly in the winter. If there's ever a time when Cognac shines, it's when the snow is flying.

Get to know Cognac

In order to be classified as Cognac, it must be produced in the Cognac region of France — located a few hours' drive southwest of Paris and just north of Bordeaux. It's created by double distilling white wines and then aging it in oak casks, where it develops tannins, color and complexity. The resulting spirit, eau de vie (literally, "the water of life") is stored, and that's where things get interesting: the grading of the Cognac — which often decides how it ultimately will be consumed — depends entirely on how long it's allowed to age. At times elegant and aromatic, Cognac can ground a cocktail in its complex character, or it can be sipped neat. It depends on which Cognac you've chosen.

By Bill Burke

There are three primary grades of Cognac:

The Very Special (VS) grade has been stored for at least two years in oak casks. A straw/yellow color will tell you that it's a fairly young Cognac. Feel free to blend this grade of Cognac with a mixer or water. This grade of Cognac will sit perfectly in a cocktail.

IN THE BOTTLE: Hennessy VS features flavors of grilled almonds and fresh grapes, Courvoisier VS has strong notes of fresh fruit and a fresh oaky taste, and Remy Martin VS offers notes of fruit and a hint of vanilla.

IN THE GLASS: VS grade Cognac lends itself well to mixed drinks. One of the classics is the Sidecar, which first came to popularity during the Prohibition. Others include the French Connection — a simple drink that allows the character of this complex spirit to shine through and the Summit — a cocktail created specifically for the International Cognac Summit in 2008.

ON THE COVER

The Sidecar

courtesy punchdrink.com

- 2 ounces Cognac (VS or VSOP)
- ¾ ounce Cointreau
- ¾ ounce lemon juice
- Orange peel for garnish

Prepare a coupe or cocktail glass ahead of time with a sugar rim (optional). Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake until chilled. Strain into prepared coupe or cocktail glass. Garnish with an orange peel.



The Summit

courtesy thecocktailproject.com

- 1½ ounces Cognac
- 1 lime peel
- 4 thin slices fresh ginger
- 2 ounces lemon-lime soda
- 1 long piece of cucumber peel
- 1 rosemary sprig

Prepare directly in the glass — place the lime zest and ginger slices in the glass. Pour in ¾ parts of Cognac. Lightly press the lime and ginger 2 to 3 times using a pestle. Half-fill the glass with ice. Stir well for five seconds using a bar spoon. Pour in the last of the Cognac, add lemon-lime soda and the cucumber peel. Stir well for five seconds. Add rosemary sprig and serve.

Always drink in moderation.



DE KUYPER
SINCE 1695

Part of the reason DeKuyper® cordials are so good is that we've been making them as a labor of love for over 300 years. In fact, the word cordial derives from the Medieval Latin cordialis, meaning of or for the heart.

WHY DEKUYPER?

DeKuyper® has #1 best-sellers in 10 flavors, making it one of the most recognized names in Cordials for consumers and bartenders alike.

VT #86112
DeKuyper Triple Sec 1.75L

DeKuyper® Cordials & Liqueurs, 15%-50% Alc./Vol.
©2018 John DeKuyper & Sons, Frankfort; Clermont, KY



The Marks of the Maker.



MADE WITH CARE.
SIP WITH CARE!™
Bourbon 45% and 47%abv,
Maker's Mark Distillery, Loretto, KY

PARAMOUNT

PARAMOUNT PUNCH SERVES 4

- 1/8 Cup Paramount Gold Rum
- 151 Proof
- 2/3 Cup coconut-pineapple juice
- 1/4 Cup fresh lime juice
- 1/2 Cup ginger ale

45306 PARAMOUNT GOLD
RUM 151 PROOF 750ML

PLEASE ENJOY RESPONSIBLY. ©2018 Luxco®, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



MIXOLOGY: GET TO KNOW COGNAC

The Very Special Old Pale (VSOP)

has been stored and allowed to age for at least four years. As you choose Cognac of higher quality, you'll want to sip it neat — and though it's not as common as adding water to whiskey, a drop of water at this grade wouldn't turn heads, either. If you add ice, just wait for it to melt enough so it introduces enough water to suit your tastes. The melting ice will also continue to change and alter the flavors and aromas of the spirit.

IN THE BOTTLE: The Remy Martin VSOP has flavors of dried apricot and nutmeg; Hine Rare VSOP offers fruity fragrances and a long, mellow taste in the mouth and Camus Grand; VSOP Elegance boasts prominent jasmine aromas with vanilla and light woody notes on the palate.

IN THE GLASS: While VSOP Cognacs can be used in cocktails, it's also enjoyable to drink from a snifter with ice, or neat.

Sage Advice

courtesy hennessy.com

- 2 ounces Hennessy VSOP Privelege
- 1 bar spoon yellow chartreuse
- 1 bar spoon honey syrup
- 3 dashes Peychaud bitters
- 7 sage leaves

Add the sage leaves to the bottom of a mixing glass, press them with a muddler, add all other ingredients with ice and stir to chill. Strain into a rocks glass and garnish with a fresh sage leaf.



TRADICIONES DE OAXACA
BANHEZ
MEZCAL ARTESANAL



CO-OP OWNED MEZCAL FROM
THE VILLAGERS OF OAXACA

JOIN THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

@BanhezMezcalArtesanal

@BanhezMezcal BanhezMezcal.com



**DOUBLE
GOLD
and
BEST
MEZCAL**

San Francisco
World Spirits
Competition

Cognac in the Spotlight

While Cognac is produced in France, by definition, the French don't consume a great deal of it. Only 1-2 percent of the Cognac produced in France actually remains there. The rest is exported. The U.S. remains the top market for Cognac by volume, with 86.5 million bottles exported to the U.S. from France annually, according to the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac.

For the fourth straight year, exports of Cognac have continued to rise, with an increase of 8.2 percent in volume. With roughly \$300 billion dollars in revenue, Cognac contributes significantly to France's trade surplus in the wines and spirits sector, accounting for nearly a quarter of the total value of French wine and spirits exports and placing Cognac at the top of the major appellations.

The Extra Old (XO) grade of Cognac has been stored for a minimum of six years, and some premium blends of XO have been known to spend at least 20 years in storage. Older Cognacs tend to take on an amber or auburn/red hue.

IN THE BOTTLE: Great examples of XO include Courvoisier XO, with vanilla and crème brûlée notes, and the boutique Comandon Single Barrel XO or the Hennessy XO Cognac, which has hints of cocoa and a long finish.

IN THE GLASS: In this case, it's probably best to embrace tradition — sip it neat while relaxing in an overstuffed chair in front of the fire. Swirl it, allowing it to hand-warm and release those complex, delicate notes.

Can We See Some ID?

There are guidelines that mandate just how the age of a Cognac is determined. The youngest eau de vie in the blend dictates the age. Therefore, if a 10-year-old Cognac is blended with a cask of 20-year-old spirit, it is aged at 10 years.

With these tools in your arsenal, exploring the world of Cognac becomes an enjoyable experience to savor. When sampling more than one Cognac, it's best to clear the palate with some cold water or a neutral flavored food like white bread between samples. Experts also recommend sniffing fresh coffee grounds, which can have the same effect on your sinuses. Doing so allows you to best appreciate the subtleties of the next Cognac sample.



"At Sipsmith®, we passionately believe in gin made the way it used to be, the way it should be."

SIPSMITH.COM | @SIPSMITH

Please Sip Responsibly

Sipsmith® London Dry Gin, 41.6% Alc./Vol. ©2018 Sipsmith Distillery, London, Chicago, IL. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

An advertisement for Exotico Tequila. The background is a vibrant yellow and teal pattern of small starburst shapes. On the right is a bottle of Exotico Blanco 100% Agave tequila. The bottle has a white label with a colorful sugar skull graphic. The text on the bottle includes 'TEQUILA Exotico', 'BLANCO', and '100%'. In the center, the text reads 'TASTE THE DIFFERENCE' in large, bold, black letters, followed by 'AWARD WINNING, 100% AGAVE'. Below this is a gold award medal from the '2018 GOLD MEDAL AWARDS'. At the bottom, the text says '87648 EXOTICO® BLANCO 1.75L' and '#MAKETHEXOTICO'. The website 'ExoticoTequila.com' is listed at the very bottom.