

9 NEW TEQUILAS THAT PROVE AGING IS A MAGICAL THING

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Posted on Oct 07, 2016



When you're looking to get your night going, a round of tequila shots is in order. But when you're looking to truly enjoy your [tequila](#) and slowly but surely and get your warm buzz on throughout the night, you want to turn to high-quality tequila. Sure, any reposado or añejo might do, but barrel-aged tequilas, whether in new American oak or in used [whiskey](#) or wine barrels, add a level of nuance not found in others. So where to turn? Check out these nine bottles to try right now.

1. [PASOTE AÑEJO](#)



Introduced in early 2016 by 3 Badge Beverage Corporation of Sonoma, Calif., Pasote is a collaboration between founder August Sebastiani and third-generation master tequilero Felipe Camarena who produces [Tequila G4](#) (his family also makes [Tapatio](#), [Ocho](#) and [Camarena](#) tequilas). While Pasote offers blanco and reposado, it's the añejo (\$55) that stands out (don't get us wrong—the clean fruit-forward taste of the reposado is also worth seeking out). Aged for 18 months in American oak, the tequila mellows and offers hints of baking spices, orange peel and a lovely sharpness found in aged whiskeys but is clearly tequila. It's packaged in handmade glass bottles emblazoned with a hand-screened graphic of an Aztec eagle warrior, which is as cool as the tequila is fantastic.

2. EXPRESIONES DEL CORAZÓN



With the rise in **bourbon** obsession over the last decade, it only made sense things would cross over with agave. Enter Expresiones del Corazón, a partnership between **Sazerac**, which owns the **Buffalo Trace Distillery**, and **Casa San Matías**. These two houses came together to create high-quality 100 percent blue agave tequila produced in the Jalisco Highlands. But what sets these apart is how they're aged. Starting in 2013, they produced these now-annual expressions (\$60–\$80) that are aged in Buffalo Trace and **Old Rip Van Winkle** bourbon barrels. The Buffalo Trace reposado is aged 10.5 months and yields a rounded, sweet well-balanced tequila. The Old Rip Van Winkle añejo is aged 23 months to produce a super smooth woody tequila. These, along with a Thomas Handy Rye añejo, hit the market this month.

3. SAUZA HORNITOS BLACK BARREL



You may not think of Hornitos as high-end, but its Black Barrel (\$30) is pretty special. It starts as a 100 percent blue agave añejo aged for 12 months. Then to add a rich, smoky flavor and a deep amber hue, it sits in deep-charred oak barrels for another four months. But that's not good enough. The tequila then rests for another two months in specially toasted barrels to yield more depth. The result after 18 months is a slightly sweet, slightly spicy, incredibly smooth and award-winning tequila with a hint of vanilla and a rich amber color that goes great in a rocks glass with just a few ice cubes or even neat.

4. DULCE VIDA EXTRA AÑEJO



It's not often you find a five-year barrel-aged tequila. It's less often still you find an extra añejo that's aged a little more than five years in used wine barrels, specifically merlot and cabernet sauvignon barrels from [Rombauer Vineyards](#) in California's Napa. But Dulce Vida isn't messing around. This limited-release, 100-proof, caramel-hued tequila produced in Los Altos Highlands in Jalisco offers vanilla and spiced oak on the nose, which leads to rich cinnamon and butterscotch. Sure, at a suggested retail of \$150 it's pricey, but how often will you find tequila that can stand in for a fine [cognac](#)? Be on the lookout for Dulce Vida's new aged 80-proof organic line of blanco, reposado and añejo tequilas and also a line of 70-proof lime- and grapefruit-flavored tequilas; the latter is like bottling [Margaritas](#) and [Palomas](#) for easy drinking.

5. CHINACO NEGRO EXTRA AÑEJO



Unlike most premium tequilas, Chinaco doesn't hail from Jalisco but rather the Tamaulipas region on Mexico's Gulf Coast. This offers a different climate, with mineral rich ocean air and land that is more flinty and chalky. It results in heartier agave plants that offer a little more spice and herbaceousness while still giving off acidity. The extra añejo (\$250) gets aged for five to six years in super small batches, and each bottle is a single-cask selection with a unique lot and bottle number that sells for about \$250. Looking for something slightly less aged and less expensive? Chinaco's añejo ages for about 30 months in used bourbon barrels and sells for about \$60.

6. HERRADURA SELECCION SUPREMA AND ULTRA



Casa Herradura has long experimented with aging tequila, going back to the 1960s. It released the first-ever reposado expression in 1974 and the first extra añejo in 1995. Today, its Selección Suprema 100 percent estate-grown blue agave ages for 49 months in American oak barrels, yielding a dark copper color and brown spice on the nose. It offers robust vanilla, coffee and dark chocolate with notes of dried fruit on the palate and a creamy, soft finish. It has been called one of the finest tequilas in the world and retails for \$350. Another Herradura worth exploring is the 80-proof Ultra, which blends a 25-month-aged añejo with the Selección Suprema. It's a clear, smooth sipping tequila that sells for a much more palatable \$60. Watch for Herradura's Colección de la Casa offerings, which will come out this fall. Past expressions have been aged in port, cognac and scotch casks and sell for around \$45 to \$50.

7. ESPOLÓN AÑEJO X



You would expect a six-year-aged extra añejo to retail for at least \$200, right? Then you'd better figure out how to get your hands on this 82-proof limited release from Espolon because it's only—ready for it?—\$100. And it's delivered in a matte black glass bottle featuring art depicting the story of The Day of the Dead. This incredibly smooth and rich tequila has a lot going on: tropical fruit, vanilla, nutmeg, bitter dark chocolate and, of course, agave. Even if you don't drink it much, this bottle looks great on your bar.

8. TEQUILA FORTALEZA AÑEJO



The expressive caramel, vanilla and butterscotch notes in this 80-proof añejo come courtesy of aging for 18 to 24 months in used bourbon barrels. Not bad, eh? But those flavors are just the tip. This refined, complex tequila can also offer hints of tropical and stone fruits, even citrus oil. At \$86, if you're looking for a reasonably priced superior tequila, you definitely can't go wrong with this. In fact, you'll go quite right.

9. OCHO EXTRA AÑEJO



Surprisingly light in color for a three-year-aged tequila, this tequila (\$150–\$180) is quite the stunner. It's grown on the single estate El Refugio, and each bottle gets hand-numbered. It's produced in partnership between third-generation master tequilero Carlos Camarena and Tomas Estes. The two create high-quality tequila that has a light green hue and an array of nuances like peach, honey and cotton candy. It's sweet, smooth and spicy. Ocho also has an añejo that is aged only one year (the minimum for an añejo) in used bourbon barrels.