

THE BEST RUM UNDER \$50

Contributed by Liquor.com

Posted on Nov 07, 2017



(illustration: Elizabeth Reyes)

You know who knows best which bottles to buy? The people who pour and sell drinks—that's who. We asked dozens of top bartending and spirits industry professionals to tell us which bottles they love and why.

Have more shopping to do? [Find more bottles in our Holiday Gift Guide.](#)

Heads up: The numerical order below is not organized by importance or quality; it's an alphabetical list, not a ranking. Prices are averages and can vary from state to state.



1: APPLETON ESTATE 12 YEAR **(\$36)**

“This [rum](#) is a long-aged example of blended Jamaican rum. It's full-bodied but refined by a minimum of 12 years spent in oak. It's an exceptional value for a rum with such complex character. Appleton's 12-year-old is a mandatory component of a great [Mai Tai](#) but is also well-suited for enjoying neat or on the rocks.”—Kevin Beary, beverage director at Chicago's [Three Dots and a Dash](#)



2: AVUÁ AMBURANA CACHAÇA (\$45)

“While technically not rum, nothing compares to to this Brazilian sugar cane distillate. It’s like [Cinnamon Toast Crunch](#) without the milk.”—Matthew Voss, head bartender at Minneapolis’ [Marvel Bar](#)



3: BRUGAL 1888 GRAN RESERVA FAMILIAR (\$49)

“This high-quality molasses distillate works like the Swiss army knife of rums. It’s great in stirred and shaken drinks.”—Neal Bodenheimer, owner and bartender at New Orleans’ [Cane & Table](#) and [Cure](#)



4: CACIQUE RON AÑEJO (\$33)

“It showcases the best molasses flavors from Venezuela. It’s great for a Rum Old Fashioned.”—Mason Salicetti, head bartender at New York City’s [Crimson & Rye](#)



5: CLÉMENT CANNE BLEUE (\$40)

“This is one of my favorite rhum agricoles—so floral and complex. It clocks in at 100 proof and makes an incredible [Daiquiri](#).”—Jonathan Shock, head bartender at Detroit’s [Prime + Proper](#)



6: COCKSPUR 12 YEAR (\$32)

“It has all the things you want in an aged rum—dark and rich with banana, toffee and clove and great for the bourbon drinker looking to branch out.”—Max Green, senior bartender at New York City's Amor y Amargo



7: DIPLOMÁTICO RESERVA EXCLUSIVA (\$40)

“This rum has notes of burnt sugar and vanilla. My favorite way to drink it is with a frozen block of coconut water and chocolate shavings. So good!”—Darnell Holguin, bar director at New York City's Fifty



8: DOS MADERAS 5+3 (\$33)

“It’s perfect for any whiskey lover. Aging in bourbon and sherry casks provides vanilla, spice and savory nuttiness.”—Jamie Jennings, general manager and sommelier at Tulsa's Hodges Bend



9: EL DORADO 12 YEAR (\$33)

“It’s just the tastiest sipping rum, in my opinion. It is not cloyingly sweet but definitely has enough residual sugar to make it perfect to drink on its own.”—Michelle Szot, general manager at Chicago's Split-Rail



10: EL DORADO SPECIAL RESERVE 15 YEAR (\$49)

“Rich and satisfying, this demerara rum is a blend of four different stills and rums from 15 to 25 years.”—Bodenheimer



11: FLOR DE CAÑA 18 YEAR (\$49)

“There’s rich dried fruits and banana through and through. Savory cinnamon and vanilla ring in the glass.”—Jennings



12: KŌ HANA KEA (\$35)

“It’s a super funky rum, with lots of fresh pressed cane, plantains and some dry minerality on the end.”—Brian Means, bartender at San Francisco's [Mina Group](#)



13: LA FAVORITE COEUR DE CANNE BLANC (\$32)

“As complex and grassy as white rums get, this agricole-style rhum makes a mean [Ti’ Punch](#).”—Bodenheimer



14: MOUNT GAY BLACK BARREL (\$30)

“The water used in this rum comes from the fabled ‘fountain of youth’ in Barbados, and the bourbon cask aging adds notes of vanilla and fresh caramel, while the rum itself has tropical notes of tamarind and banana.”—Holguin



15: NEISSON BLANC (\$55)

“This high-proof (140 proof) rum evokes a sense of place more than a specific profile for me. It's grassiness reminds me of a challenging walk in the Badlands in fall, right before a drink of water. It's hard to describe and not for the faint of heart but a study in the limits of sugar cane distillation.”—Peder Schweigert, general manager at Minneapolis' [Marvel Bar](#)



16: NOVO FOGO CACHAÇA (\$32)

“This Brazilian ‘rum’ is grassy and dry and makes a great Daiquiri. It's a step away from your classic dry white rum.”—Green



17: PAMPERO (\$15– \$29)

“It always surprises me how its amazing and unique climate makes such an exciting bold and particular flavor, also accentuated by the Venezuelan mineral water.”—Salicetti



18: PLANTATION O.F.T.D. OVERPROOF (\$32)

“Like many bartenders, I have a soft spot for a good Daiquiri, and we’re always fiddling with the rum (or rums) used to make one. Right now, I’m really into O.F.T.D. At 69 percent ABV, it’s a bit of a face puncher, so I usually cut it with something else, but the rounded fruitiness that comes through is incredible.”—Michael Lazar, whiskey concierge and lead bartender at San Francisco’s [Hard Water](#)



19: [PLANTATION STIGGINS' FANCY PINEAPPLE](#) (\$34)

“It’s legitimately the most delicious flavored booze I’ve ever had. There are no artificial flavors, and the pineapple is prominent from the distillation process.”—Szot



20: [SANTA TERESA 1796](#) (\$43)

“This is probably in the top three of my personal favorites. It’s Venezuelan rum made using the solera system, which consists of four separate levels of oak barrels. The initial rum is poured into the first level of oak barrels, where it’s aged for a time before half of it is poured into the next level of oak barrels, where the process repeats again and again. What results is a softer and rounder rum that tastes of sweets and spices, as well as other profound flavors. Sometimes when it’s available, I add delicious super cold, fresh coconut water from a young coconut. Delicious!”—Salicetti



21: [SMITH & CROSS TRADITIONAL JAMAICA](#) (\$28)

“This complex rum has a beautiful smoky and funky aroma with tropical notes like banana peel that make it perfect for Tiki cocktails.”—Holguin

Locations: [California](#) [Chicago](#) [Detroit](#) [Illinois](#) [Louisiana](#) [Michigan](#) [Minneapolis](#) [Minnesota](#) [New Orleans](#) [New York](#) [Oklahoma](#)
[San Francisco](#) [Tulsa](#)

Brands: [Appleton](#) [Avuá](#) [Brugal](#) [Cacique](#) [Clément](#) [Cockspur](#) [Diplomatico](#) [Dos Maderas](#) [El Dorado](#) [Flor de Caña](#) [Ko Hana Kea](#)
[La Favorite](#) [Mount Gay](#) [Neisson](#) [Novo Fogo](#) [Pampero](#) [Plantation](#) [Santa Teresa](#) [Smith & Cross](#)

Series & Type: [Products](#) [All Bottles at \\$](#) [All Bottles at \\$\\$](#) [Holiday Guides](#) [Rum](#)