



ULTIMATE SPIRITS CHALLENGE

LIKE NO OTHER COMPETITION

2015 Ultimate Spirits Challenge

Award Recipients

Ultimate Spirits Challenge lists below the award recipients for 2015. Each Chairman's Trophy winner and group of Finalists represent the best in their individual category.



A note on the icons:

 **Product Image:** to assist you with visual identification, we've included an image for each product evaluated. (Please note that age statements, vintages or label may vary slightly from the specific product evaluated but it represents a helpful portrayal of the brand.) *Click icon to view.*

Vodka

Unflavored Vodka All vodkas were judged in category flights of like-with-like. The Chairman's Trophy - Vodka was awarded based on the highest scoring vodka across all the unflavored categories.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	95	<p>Russian Standard Original Vodka Russia, 40% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Shimmering clear appearance. Dry breakfast cereal aroma is classic. Integrated, harmonious in midpalate and aftertaste. Superb balance from start to finish. A world standard. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Khortytza Platinum Vodka Ukraine, 40% abv, \$14.99, 700 ml</p> <p>Spring water clear. Big, assertive, snack cracker-grain aroma. Toasty on the palate, dry, creamy texture. A winner on all levels. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Purity Vodka Sweden, 40% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml</p> <p>The name reflects this vodka's admirable balance, integration, and overall delicate graininess. A world-class spirit of grace and elegance. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>

Finalist	94	Spud Vodka Poland, 40% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml
		Crystal clear. Bouquet is slightly sweet, earthy, minerally. Offers chewy, rich, dry flavors that last long into the finish. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Viche Pitia Classic No. 25 Vodka France, 40% abv, €45.00, 500 ml , <i>seeking US Importer</i>
		Clear as rainwater. Nose is chockful of exotic aromas, from beeswax to asphalt to charred grain. Taste is desert dry, mildly toasty. Delicious. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Belvedere Vodka Poland, 40% abv, \$39.99, 1 L
		This supple vodka owns snap, a rich, substantial charm to the aroma and the flavor that last long into the aftertaste. A classic European style that never grows old. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Boyd & Blair Potato Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$24.49, 750 ml
		Elegant, integrated, substantial in the aroma. Taste is round, supple, deeply alluring. A classy vodka that is sturdy enough to be enjoyed on the rocks with a twist. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Deep Run Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$27.99, 750 ml
		Clean, clear appearance. Owns a grainy, corny bouquet that's more tangy than sweet. Taste echoes the aroma in its zestiness. Grainy, sweetish aftertaste. Substantial, creamy texture. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Finlandia Vodka Finland, 40% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml
		Opens with lemon pith, sweet grass, and vanilla bean on the nose with deeper tropical notes. It envelops the palate in a happy marriage of honeydew melon and sea minerals before finishing clean. Outstanding. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	93	Luksusowa Vodka Poland, 40% abv, \$13.99, 750 ml
		Crisp and clean notes of snack cracker, freshly cracked black peppercorn, and a hint of thyme. Pure and fresh, minerals and sea spray with a delicate fruitiness on the palate. An invigorating finish ensues. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Menage a Trois Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$24.99, 750 ml
		Wispy, herbal, fresh spirit aromas make for pleasing sniffing. On palate, the flavor is rich without being unctuous, dry, vegetal, with loads of black pepper spice. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Prairie Organic Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$24.99, 750 ml
		Clean rainwater appearance. The toasty, slightly sweet breakfast cereal aroma is tantalizing and fresh. In mouth, it's weighty, dry, chewy. An organic beauty. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Snow Leopard Vodka Poland, 40% abv, \$34.99, 750 ml
		Biggest asset to this vodka is its innate crispness, which makes it pleasingly fresh in nose and mouth. Aftertaste reveals a deeper side, as the flavor goes grainy, earthy. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Starlite Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$17.99, 750 ml
		Earthy, woody, vegetal opening aromas highlight the bouquet. Taste is sweeter than aroma, but is richly textured, chewy. One of the best American craft vodkas around. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Van Gogh Blue Triple Wheat Vodka Netherlands, 40% abv, \$29.00, 750 ml
		Flawlessly pristine appearance. The opening aroma, which is toasty dry, has WHEAT written all over it. Flavor is deep, desert dry, and like honeywheat bread. Really delicious. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Vodka

Flavored VodkaAll flavored vodkas were judged in category flights of like-with-like flavors. The Chairman's Trophy - Flavored Vodka was awarded based on the highest scoring flavored vodka across all the flavor categories.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	94	Van Gogh Dutch Caramel Flavored Vodka Netherlands, 35% abv, \$27.00, 750 ml The immediate impact of the bittersweet Dutch caramel influence is what makes this a pinnacle achievement in astute flavoring. A benchmark flavored vodka. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	92	Crop Organic Spiced Pumpkin Flavored Vodka United States, 35% abv, \$28.99, 750 ml Autumnal, amber color. Nose offers notes of ginger, nutmeg, pumpkin in equal amounts. Taste profile is richly textured, spicy, zesty, luscious. A superbly crafted flavored vodka that is world-class. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	92	Enlightened Grain Inspiration Rosemary & Lavender Flavored Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$31.99, 750 ml Distinctly earthy and vegetal aromas are pungent. Round and soft, the flavors are mostly herbal with subtly elegant hints of violet and lavender. The finish is aromatic, leaving a floral quality lasting on the palate. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	92	Zu Bison Grass Flavored Vodka Poland, 40% abv, \$24.99, 750 ml Faint, greenish/silver color. Nose is grassy, vegetal, earthy, mossy, clean as a whistle. Taste echoes the bouquet, adding a delicate note of sap. Seriously tasty and classic. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	91	Bainbridge Organic Vanilla Flavored Vodka United States, 40% abv, \$36.95, 750 ml Amber appearance. Striking vanilla bean fragrance is rich, beany, keenly spicy, yet sweet. Taste is slightly toasted, egg cream-like, zesty, silky textured. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	91	Charbay Green Tea Flavored Vodka United States, 35% abv, \$36.00, 750 ml	Pretty greenish/topaz color. Smells clearly of green tea, but also citrus zest. Flavor is clean, engagingly tea-like, dry and slightly spicy. Unique. Delicious. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	91	Crop Organic Cucumber Flavored Vodka United States, 35% abv, \$28.99, 750 ml	The delicate cucumber aroma is like freshly sliced English cucumber and is therefore tart. Flavor profile is rich, zesty, vegetal, fresh. Excellent flavoring job. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	91	Van Gogh Double Espresso Flavored Vodka Netherlands, 35% abv, \$27.00, 750 ml	Opaque brown color. Fragrance is powerfully espresso- and coffee bean-like. Taste profile is sumptuous, thickly textured, intensely beany, concentrated, massive. Strikingly authentic, luscious. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Gin

Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score		
Chairman's Trophy	97	Cold River Gin United States, 47% abv, \$26.99, 750 ml	Wonderfully fragrant and complex with bright scents of juniper taking the lead with supported by orange, cardamon, coriander, and fresh herbs. Lush and silky on the palate being decadent while ideally balanced. A new American classic. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Beefeater London Dry Gin United Kingdom, 47% abv, \$19.00, 750 ml	A true classic and a staple in any respectable bar. The nose is generous and complex while ever-evolving in the glass. Vibrant and focused on the palate with a silky texture. The quintessential London Dry Gin. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	96	<p>Citadelle Gin France, 44% abv, \$25.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Wisps of juniper with subtle blanched nuts, brown spice, fennel, and leafy herbs fill the generous nose. Superbly balanced and complex on the palate with clean citrus notes that carry to the finish. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Queens Courage Gin United States, 45% abv, \$40.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Beautifully fragrant with waves of toasted grains mingling with honey, dry seed spices, citrus zest, and dried fruit with hints of Christmas tree. Perfectly balanced with the viscosity and touch of sweetness that you desire in an Old Tom style. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Tanqueray London Dry Gin United Kingdom, 47.3% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Balance and sophistication are the descriptors that leap to mind. Juniper, lemon and orange zest, dry and fresh pine needles, and an underlying mineral note. A benchmark. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Tanqueray No. Ten Gin United Kingdom, 47.3% abv, \$29.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Bold and complex this classic offers layers of citrus fruits, juniper, brown baking spices, angelica, and citrus zest. Rich while balanced with a defining black pepper eruption on the finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Monkey 47 Schwarzwald Dry Gin United States, 47% abv, \$44.99, 375 ml</p> <p>Brilliant notes of citrus zest and fruit take the lead with juniper, ginger, and white pepper in support. Sweet orange notes rise on the palate and mingle carefully with the other botanicals on a rich bed of grain spirit. Lovely. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Plymouth Gin United Kingdom, 41.2% abv, \$30.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Splendidly unique and vibrant with juniper being nearly equaled by citrus fruit and candied zest, coriander, cardamon, and bold black pepper on the palate. Ideally proportioned and versatile for the bar. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>

Finalist	94	Plymouth Navy Strength Gin United Kingdom, 57% abv, \$35.00, 750 ml
		Beautifully grainy and crisp with scents of pine needle, orange blossom, a dried herb melange, juniper, and dried flowers. Voluptuous on the palate while maintaining perfect balance with the juniper notes rising with each passing second. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Sipsmith London Dry Gin England, 41.6% abv, \$40.00, 750 ml
		Beautifully fragrant and floral on the nose with waves of juniper and citrus fruits shining through. The palate is decidedly dry while generous with layers of fruit, juniper, and dried spices. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Rum		
Unflavored Products were judged like-with-like. The Chairman's Trophy was awarded to the highest scoring product in the category.		
Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	Ophimus Finished in Port Casks 25 Years Old Rum Dominican Rep., 43% abv, \$99.99, 750 ml
		Sweet baked breads, molasses cookies, and cooked grape must all bloom on the nose. Incredibly rich in the mouth, flavors of baking spices, piloncillo, cooked red fruits and vanilla are deeply concentrated. The texture is luxurious. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Banks 5 Island Rum West Indies, 43% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Somewhat funky, vegetal nose that also features citrus and a dollop of earthiness. Crisp in the mouth, with some vegetal flavors, licorice, spice (including pepper) and also a touch of sweetness. A long, lingering spice finish—some of the vegetal greenness comes back intertwined with the molasses. A lot going on. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Ophimus Finished in Malt Whisky Casks 25 Years Old Rum Dominican Rep., 43% abv, \$99.99, 750 ml
		Distinct sweet and savory aromas are well integrated in the nose. It is spicy on the palate with plenty of brown sugar and sweet spice alongside slightly malty flavors and savory spice. Complex and interesting. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	95	<p>Banks 7 Golden Age Rum West Indies, 43% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Given its dark amber color, the bright, citrusy nose is a surprise. There are oranges, orange blossoms and vanilla. The flavors are consistent: it's bright, dry, complex, woody and citrusy. The flavors linger. Very nicely put together.</p> <p>Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Diplomatico 2000 Single Vintage 13 Years Old Rum Venezuela, 43% abv, \$119.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Brilliant burnt orange, old copper kettle color. An astounding amount of fruitiness leaps from the aroma in ambrosial waves of dried pear, dried apricot, white raisins (sultanas), figs, pineapple, but also loose leaf tobacco, cedar plank, sawdust. Taste profile soars with top rank flavors of candied walnut, cola, vanilla bean, nutmeg, rancio. Finishes long, bittersweet, cola-like, slightly salty, hugely satisfying and complex.</p> <p>Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Don Q Gran Anejo Rum Puerto Rico, 40% abv, \$59.99, 750 ml</p> <p>A wonderfully complex bouquet of coconuts and ripe tropical fruit. Similarly complex on the palate with flavors of juicy pineapple and rich coconut with a thread of light caramel enhancing the fruit. Soft and lovely. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Ophimus 18 Years Old Rum Dominican Rep., 40% abv, \$59.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Aromas are gentle and integrated, offering brown sugar and warm vanilla. Spice blooms on the tongue while the rest of the texture stays smooth, carrying flavors of spiced granola, coconut and sweet brown sugar. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>

Finalist	95	Stroh 160 Rum Austria, 80% abv, \$32.99, 750 ml	Fiery burnt umber in color. The powerful aromas is filled with butterscotch. On the palate there is more butterscotch and tons of hot spicy cinnamon with notes of red fruits popping up at the end. Powerful and warming. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Ophimus 21 Years Old Rum Dominican Rep., 40% abv, \$69.99, 750 ml	Warm spice cake aromas fill the nose. Clean and focused on the palate with flavors of sweet spice cake, brown bread, sweet rock candy, and small amounts of cinnamon and mace on a long smooth finish. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Phraya Deep Matured Gold Rum Thailand, 40% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml	Golden hued. The nose is full of butterscotch, coconut, pie crust and a not-unpleasant bit of acetone. The flavors are intense, with wood, butterscotch, caramel, coconut, cola and sugar, ending in a long, spicy finish. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Plantation XO 20th Anniversary Rum Barbados, 40% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml	Pretty rosy amber in the glass. Rich, sweet and pretty bourbon-y oak notes on the nose. Very rich and sweet with brown sugar, caramel, chocolate and coconut flavors bouncing around. Quite long on the finish. Dessert! Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	South Bay Small Batch No. 18 Rum Dominican Rep., 40% abv, \$27.99, 750 ml	In the nose it is subtle with aromas of spiced muffins and lightly roasted tobacco leaf. Sweet in the mouth with flavors of dark brown sugar, molasses and hints of sweet chocolate. Rich and concentrated without being cloying. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Tequila

Blanco, 100% Agave Tequila

Award	Score
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Chairman's Trophy	95	El Tesoro Platinum, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$50.00, 750 ml
		Aromas are mostly savory with green peppers and minerals, with a touch of candied sugarcane. Smooth and elegant on the palate, the flavor of green chillies is well integrated with green grass and hints of citrus. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	3 Amigos Blanco, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$28.00, 750 ml
		Silvery clear appearance. Meaty, piquant aroma is alive with dill pickle, anise, black pepper, toasted agave scents. Taste profile reflects the bouquet but also adds a slight smokiness that's delightful. Elegant, zesty finish. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Blue Nectar Silver, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Incredibly refreshing aromas of green apples, limes, young grass and flowers are well integrated. Silken on the palate, the fresh fruitiness is complemented by a subtle spice that is warming, giving way to a clean mineral driven aftertaste. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Malinalli Platinum, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$50.00, 750 ml
		Crystalline, silvery appearance. Bouquet is fresh, peppery, dill-like, zesty, vegetal (kale, spinach). Flavor-wise, bountiful tastes of green vegetable, salt, green pepper, and green tea impress long into the dry, spicy aftertaste. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Roca Patrón Silver, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 45% abv, \$69.99, 750 ml
		Subtle aromas of green papaya and lime. In the mouth the flavors are saline, like sea salt and lime rind mixed with strong minerality. The texture is peppery and goes hand in hand with the generous white pepper spice. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	94	Siete Leguas Blanco, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml	Savory aromas of green chillies and dark green moss are soft and inviting. Opulent and clean in the mouth with deep concentration of minerality, lime rind and a touch of brown sugar. A touch of spice on the finish keeps it fresh. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Lunazul Blanco, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml	Opulent and crisp on the nose, hints of mango and lime shine through. Silky on the palate, the texture is rich and luscious, complemented by soft fruitiness and strong minerality that lasts in the mouth. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Tequila			
Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila			
Award	Score		
Chairman's Trophy	97	Blue Nectar Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml	Both earthy dried grass and sweet vanilla aromas swirl in the glass. A very soft mouthfeel carries candied citrus zest with small suggestions of baking spice and roasted tobacco leaf. A caramelly flavor is left to linger in the mouth. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Chinaco Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml	The herbaceous aromas on this reposado are alluring. Desert brush and cooked agave give way to vanilla and salt taffy in the mouth. There's a spicy prickle on the finish, but it's the trace of brine that piques the interest. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Lunazul Double Barrel Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$n/a, 750 ml	Unique aromas are rich with sweet vanilla caramel and toasted coconut. Opulent and clean in the mouth, roasted agave plant flavors showing through with supporting clove and mace. The finish is pleasantly mouth tingling with hints of caramel. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	94	Lunazul Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$21.99, 750 ml
		Soft aromas of lightly toasted cinnamon and hints of vanilla are pleasant and tame. It is suede in texture with concentrated flavors of burnt sugar and toasted clove that give way to a fresh and floral finish. Balanced between light and dark flavors. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	El Tesoro Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$55.00, 750 ml
		Earthy aromas are pungent with pineapple skin and moss. Considerably sweeter on the palate there are grapefruit and orange rinds and a sweet candied coffee flavor. It is ultra smooth and round, leaving a pleasant mouthfeel. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Roca Patrón Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 42% abv, \$79.99, 750 ml
		Slightly cheesy aromas are mixed with charred and candied pineapple. It is light and fresh in the mouth with green mango and coffee flavors followed by warm cinnamon and sweet caramel, leaving a light roast coffee finish. Complex. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Siete Leguas Reposado, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$42.99, 750 ml
		Caramel and pineapple aromas abound on the nose. Soft and slightly sweet flavors of cooked tropical fruit turn into spice-laden caramel with a hint of coffee with cream. The fine grained texture enhances the pleasant spiciness. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Tequila

Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	Siete Leguas Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml
		A rich mossiness is the main aroma from the glass, with well integrated notes of spice box. Light in the mouth it is savory and aromatic with spiced tobacco, charred moss and coffee. Subtle and focused. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	95	Roca Patrón Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 44% abv, \$89.99, 750 ml
		Sweet pineapple dominates the nose, with hints of moss and fresh tobacco. Deeply concentrated flavors of coffee, tobacco and cacao beans intermingle with rich baking spices and a touch of vanilla, leaving a pleasant smokiness on the leathery but smooth finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Tres Agaves Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Aromas are structured with lots of minerality and savory earth. Luxuriously smooth on the palate, the effect is warming with plenty of sweet baking spices, roasted tobacco and a touch of charred barrel. Overall soft and spicy. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Corazon Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml
		Aromas of both fresh and cooked earthy vegetables are nicely balanced. The flavor is focused on salinity and spice, with darker notes on the finish like rich tobacco and espresso alongside a fresh hint of sea salt. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	el Jimador Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$22.99, 750 ml
		Richly layered aromas of slow roasted pineapple, dark green moss and minerals make up the nose. The flavors are broad, encompassing sweet fruit, earthy grass and spiced cake with hints of brown sugar and sea salt. Wonderfully complex. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	IZKALI Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$38.00, 750 ml
		Aromas are rugged and earthy with a subtle nuttiness. In the mouth it starts out saline and quickly turns to full on spice box, dark caramel, vanilla and suggestions of orange peel. It is fine grained in texture with a pleasant leatheriness. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	93	Espolon Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$34.99, 750 ml
<p>Aromas are light and playful, offering candied apple and charred grass. More savory than sweet at first, tobacco flavors give way to perfumed floral qualities with rich espresso. Slightly leathery in texture and thoroughly aromatic. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		
Finalist	93	Lunazul Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$22.99, 750 ml
<p>Rich and leathery aromas of cigar box are nicely spiced. Ultra smooth in the mouth, layers of spice unfold one at a time revealing woody flavors with hints of campfire and a touch of medium dark caramel. Long lasting. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Tequila

Extra Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	96	Malinalli Extra Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$107.00, 750 ml
<p>Deep amber/topaz color. Aroma bursts open with vegetal, herbal fragrances of asparagus, thyme, dill, sage. Flavor features tightly wound tastes of dill, pickle brine, saltine cracker, tobacco, black tea that last deep into the smoked, toasted aftertaste. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		
Finalist	93	Herradura Seleccion Suprema Extra Añejo, 100% Agave Tequila Mexico, 40% abv, \$350.00, 750 ml
<p>Deeply concentrated aromas of cigar box and slight maple. The spice continues on to the palate with cinnamon and hot red chili balancing the ultra smooth body. Subtle sweetness rounds out the flavors, allowing the spice to flourish. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Mezcal

Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairmen, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
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Chairman's Trophy	98	Amaras Mezcal Mexico, 41% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml
		An elegant 100% espadin mezcal that does not overwhelm with smoke. Aromas are subtle and enticing, reminiscent of a desert breeze. Silky and suave on the palate, it shows notes of tropical fruit and charred vegetables with a clean, mineral finish. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	97	Del Maguey Santo Domingo Albarradas Mezcal Mexico, 48% abv, \$70.00, 750 ml
		Smoke and custard aromas abound. The flavors are fiery with red chilli, red berries and sweet papaya. A gentle smokiness perfumes from start to finish along with a warming spice that lasts and lasts on the palate. A pleasure to sip. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Del Maguey Espadin Especial Mezcal Mexico, 48% abv, \$100.00, 750 ml
		Incredibly complex aromas of mineral rich soil, roasted stone fruit and campfire. It is bright and almost briny in the mouth with flavors of dried pineapple and green chillies. Perfumed with smoke and a subtle leatheriness throughout. Complex and delightful. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Convite Ensemble Silvestre Joven Mezcal Mexico, 46% abv, MXP1250.00, 750 ml , <i>seeking US Importer</i>
		A bit wild in the nose, pungent aromas include clay, leather and green mango. Bright and clean in the mouth, the texture is pleasantly suede. Flavors are dominated by deep smoke with green fruits and spice peeking through. Intense and long lasting. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Del Maguey San Luis Del Rio Azul Mezcal Mexico, 47% abv, \$100.00, 750 ml
		Aromas are layered with brine, smoked pineapple and minerals. Very bright on the palate with high toned spiciness, lime rind, minerality, and an almost meaty savory quality. Smoked red peppers and roasted root vegetables offer sweet undertones. Delightful. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	93	El Silencio Espadin Mezcal Mexico, 43% abv, \$35.00, 750 ml
<p>Tropical fruits and campfire are an unlikely yet integrated combination of aromas. Exceptionally soft in the mouth, the sweet ripe fruits dominate the palate here with a backbone of subtle and intermingled smoke and spice. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		
Whiskey		
American Whiskey		
Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	95	Lone Elm Texas Wheat Whiskey United States, 45% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml
<p>Eye pleasing orange/copper color. Smells of Wheat Thin crackers, baker's wax paper, corrugated cardboard, with nuances of aniseed, palm oil, sesame seed, coriander. Taste profile is significantly sweeter, juicier than the aroma led on, offering succulent, nearly ambrosial flavors of dried cherry, dates, black raisins. Hearty, oily finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		
Finalist	94	Colkegan Single Malt American Whiskey United States, 46% abv, \$n/a, 750 ml
<p>The smoke is obvious, but it's a sweeter and meatier smoke than one gets from peated whiskies. The spirit shines through a bit more in the mouth, then the smoke comes back and finally the nicely astringent finish cleans the palate for the next sip. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		
Finalist	93	Balcones 1 Texas Single Malt American Whiskey United States, 53% abv, \$70.00, 750 ml
<p>Bright bronze/copper color. Smells stunningly of malted milk balls, tropical fruits (guava, papaya), cornbread, unsweetened breakfast cereal, Graham crackers. Taste is alluringly sweet, sappy, maple-like, biscuity, honeyed, spicy (clove plays the major role), with a curious nuance of mustard seed. Finishes long, toasty, woody, supple. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Finalist	93	Barrell Cask Strength Batch 001 7 Years Old American Whiskey United States, 61.25% abv, \$56.99, 750 ml
<p>Light topaz, wheat field golden color. Toasted marshmallow opening scent is strong and dominant but that eventually fades into a more toasted cereal fragrance with hints of dried pineapple. Flavor highlights the alcohol heat, but in a manner that's engagingly sappy and maple-like. Aftertaste is toasted, honeyed, cola-like, campfire warm. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Finalist	93	Rebecca Creek Fine Texas Spirit American Whiskey United States, 40% abv, \$32.99, 750 ml
<p>An interesting combination of Dill pickle, dried herbs, coconut and sweet wood on the nose. The whiskey itself is nicely restrained with pepper, sweet grain and pretty wood flavors playing nicely with each other. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Whiskey

Bourbon Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairmen, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	98	Pappy Van Winkle Family Reserve 20 Years Old Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 45.2% abv, \$149.99, 750 ml
<p>Incredible aromatic layers of malted grains, honeyed oats and salted caramel. Buttery and rich in texture, the flavors are deeply concentrated and warming with more salted caramel, baking spices and hints of baked stone fruit. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		
Finalist	97	Col. E.H. Taylor Single Barrel Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 50% abv, \$59.99, 750 ml
<p>Complex aromas of red berries and honeyed cereal grains. Highly aromatic throughout with cinnamon, clove and coriander spices. Burnt orange zest and hints of cooked red berries give way to dark roasted coffee beans with a touch of smoke. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		

Finalist	97	<p>Old Forester Birthday Bourbon Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 48.5% abv, \$59.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Bright orange, bronze color. Fragrance is of burnt match, sulphur, espresso in the first inhalations then the bouquet unfolds in stages of breakfast cereal, oatmeal, toasted bread, hominy, wet hay aromas that while disparate really work well. Taste phase is warming, bordering on fiery, but tightly controlled, semisweet, peppery, spicy. Lots happening here from start to long, charred finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Lost Prophet 22 Years Old Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 45.05% abv, \$120.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Smells old, but in a good way: earth, leather, cinnamon and cloves. Very rich, with all the spices that were in the nose, but also salted nuts and dried fruit. The oakiest part is the finish, but even there the wood is not overwhelming. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>W.L. Weller 12 Years Old Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 45% abv, \$24.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Fresh and complex aromas combine red and stone fruits with brown butter and light brown sugar. Focused and clean on the palate with more fruit flavors, dark molasses and hints of coffee and cacao are deep and long lasting. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Barrell Bourbon Batch 004 5 Years Old Bourbon United States, 60.1% abv, \$79.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Powerful aromas of vanilla, creme brûlée, stewed red berry fruit, and honey. Rich with a molasses-tinged sweetness and a balanced sweetness. Molasses lingers on the finish accompanied by chocolate covered cherry. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Blanton's Original Single Barrel Bourbon United States, 46.5% abv, \$55.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Orange blossom honey and wheat berry aromas fill the nose. Dark caramel, coffee, tobacco and burnt brown sugar all intermingle on the palate, creating a dark flavor profile. The texture is smooth and flavor long lasting. Very nice. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>

Finalist	95	<p>Blanton's Gold Edition Single Barrel Bourbon United States, 51.5% abv, \$80.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Warm cinnamon aromas are nicely spicy. A touch of sweetness on the palate is followed by rich dark roasted coffee and caramel flavors. Layers of spice continue to unfurl, leaving the impression of vanilla and nutmeg in the mouth.</p> <p>Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Four Roses Limited Edition Small Batch 2014 Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 55.9% abv, \$99.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Bright copper/bronze color is an eye-catcher. Hearty, expressive aroma is chockfull of toasted marshmallow, candied citrus peel, toffee, baked pear notes. Taste-wise, there's a wide array of flavors, from baked pineapple to crème brûlée to pine, that challenge the palate while simultaneously delighting. Aftertaste is long, pruny, built for post-prandial consumption.</p> <p>Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Four Roses Single Barrel Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 50% abv, \$39.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Burnt orange color. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Jim Beam Single Barrel Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 47.5% abv, \$34.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Deep, dark caramel color. Aromas of orange peel vanilla and sweet spices. The flavors are rich and round with vanilla and brown sugar. Finishes a bit hot and spicy with noticeable oak tannins, and the flavors go on forever. Great Value.</p> <p>Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Jim Beam Signature Craft Soft Red Wheat 11 Years Old Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 45% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Pretty, sweet American oak aromas. At 90 proof the wood dominates, but with water the whiskey begins to open, revealing its sweet, caramel flavors. A long, somewhat woody finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>

Finalist	95	<p>Knob Creek 9 Years Old Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 50% abv, \$30.99, 750 ml</p> <p>The nose is distinctly floral and fruity with notes of red fruits and peaches. Powerfully spicy and woody in the mouth with hints of smoke, cigar box and tobacco leaf that lingers long on the palate. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Old Forester 1870 Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 45% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Soft orange, copper hue. Concentrated smells of cornmeal, caramel corn, newly tanned leather, grain kernel, and oak resin highlight the bouquet in a stylish manner. Flavor profile mirrors the bouquet, especially in the caramel corn/Cracker Jack aspect that's the dominant in-mouth feature. Ends solidly, sweetly. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Old Forester 86 Proof Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 43% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Brownish/sienna coloring is appealing. Juicy aromas of white raisins, quince preserves, butcher's wax paper, parchment, nutmeg highlight the wide-ranging bouquet. Taste profile features big-hearted, assertive flavors of wax, cooking oil, orange peel, lemon drop, corn syrup. Toasty finishes closes the circle nicely. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Old Forester Signature Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 50% abv, \$22.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Highly attractive bronze color. Aromatic notes of honey, marzipan, nougat, candy bar, and candied walnut make for delightful sniffing enjoyment. Flavor profile is ripe, fruity, semisweet, succulent, slightly toasted, buttery. Aftertaste highlights the cereal grain, cornmeal aspects. Hefty, robust. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Stagg Jr. Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 66.05% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml</p> <p>A blend of green tobacco leaf and maple aromas are warm and comforting. Intensely spicy flavors with savory undertones of salted caramel, coffee and hints of vanilla are all in balance on the palate. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>

Finalist	95	Woodford Reserve Double Oaked Kentucky Straight Bourbon United States, 45.2% abv, \$54.99, 750 ml
		Bronze/ochre color is pretty. Notes of white pepper, parsley, cardamom, cola nut, jasmine highlight the early aroma which then turns toastier, roasted in the latter stages. Flavor impact is immediate in the forms of deep oak resins, maple syrup, vanilla bean. Aftertaste is long, oily, buttery, semisweet.
		Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Whiskey

Rye Whiskey Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	Thomas H. Handy Sazerac Straight 6 Years Old Rye Whiskey United States, 64.6% abv, \$80.00, 750 ml
		Deeply concentrated aromas of toasted grains, brown rice and molasses. Equally rich and deep in the mouth with layers of baked goods, cigar box and fresh herb flavors. On the finish it is lightly spiced with dark caramel. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	95	Pikesville 6 Year Old Straight Rye Whiskey United States, 55% abv, \$49.99, 750 ml
		Wonderfully delicate, with aromas of Boston creme pie, plantain, butternut squash, and brown sugar. Spicy, with a buttery sweetness to match and deep baked dark cherry flavored leading into a vanilla-tinged and spicy finish. Outstanding. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	94	Col. E.H. Taylor Rye Whiskey United States, 50% abv, \$69.99, 750 ml
		Fresh and baked stone fruits characterize the aromas. In the mouth it is spice laden and full of peach pie and brown sugar flavors, along with a distinct herbal quality that is long lasting after each sip. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	94	Sazerac Rye Whiskey United States, 45% abv, \$26.99, 750 ml
		Interesting aromas of wheat and red berries. Decidedly savory and spiced in the mouth, the flavors develop into dark coffee and vanilla caramel after each sip. A fine grain texture is a nice balance of smooth and rustic. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Woodford Reserve Straight Rye Whiskey United States, 45.2% abv, \$37.99, 1 L
		Coloring is pale bronze, burnt orange. Nose is fruity, spicy, nutty, minerally, sawdust-like, cedary/piny. Taste profile reflects the aromatic findings and adds nuances of dried apricot, fruitcake, roasted walnut flavors that work in unison with the attractive fragrance. Aftertaste is medium long, resinous/woody, cheese-like. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Whiskey

Tennessee Whiskey

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	95	George Dickel No. 12 Tennessee Whiskey United States, 45% abv, \$24.99, 750 ml
		Opening with fresh fig, honeysuckle, and very intriguing allusions to fresh sourdough bread. Round and elegant, with morel cherry, vanilla, and barrel spice. Baking spices line the finish, which is delicate and long. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	93	George Dickel Barrel Select Tennessee Whiskey United States, 51.5% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml
		Banana and bakers dough come to mind followed by baked apricot and toasted coconut. Very mellow with complex fruit and nut flavored balanced by sweet brown sugar notes. Brown sugar notes continue onto the finish dotted by baked apricot. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Whiskey

Blended Irish Whiskey Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score
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Chairman's Trophy	97	Jameson 18 Years Old Blended Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$85.00, 750 ml
		Pretty topaz/sienna color. Assertive bouquet is long on deep, dry, and concentrated breakfast cereal fragrance. Taste profile offers baked cherry, strudel, pastry, yeasty notes. Luscious, viscous delights await. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Midleton Very Rare Blended Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$125.00, 750 ml
		Auburn/russet appearance is gorgeous. Concentrated aromas are layered in waves of prune, pie crust, baked cherry, toasted marshmallow. Highlighted flavors of buttered toast, dry cereal, oatmeal, plum pudding, treacle thrill the taste buds with their integration. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Jameson Rare Vintage Reserve Blended Irish Whiskey Ireland, 46% abv, \$250.00, 750 ml
		Burnt orange appearance. Scent profile features oak, vanilla, clove, dried orange rind. Flavor stage is lush, oily, creamy, moderately toasted, complex in its deep graininess that is multilayered. Robust classic that deserves wide recognition. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Kilbeggan 18 Years Old Blended Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$n/a, 750 ml
		Attractive orange/russet color is vibrant. Wow, the intense fruitiness is wildly charming in the animated bouquet, which is also a bit citrusy. Flavor profile is a sophisticated mixture of campfire smokiness and baked fruit pastry that hits the right balance. Lovely, robust. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Teeling Small Batch Blended Irish Whiskey Ireland, 46% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Honeyed and floral aromas with purple wildflower, lemon drop, ginger, and mango flesh. Lighter and sweeter in style, a nod to bourbon with baked cherry, honey roasted nuts, baked apple, and vanilla. Composed, elegant, and delicious. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Whiskey

Irish Pot Still Whiskey Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairmen, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	98	<p>Redbreast 15 Years Old Irish Pot Still Whiskey Ireland, 46% abv, \$75.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Deep ginger color. Truckloads of baking spices, including allspice, clove, toasted cereal in aroma. Toasty, slightly saline flavor that's intensely grainy, breakfast cereal-like. A bona fide pure pot still classic. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Redbreast Cask Strength 12 Years Old Irish Pot Still Whiskey Ireland, 57.7% abv, \$65.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Golden sunset yellow color. First aromas are spirity, buoyantly aggressive, then the bouquet turns meaty, intensely grainy. Flavor profile highlights the cereal grains more than anything else. Finishes long, oily, textured, peppery. Not for the timid drinker. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Yellow Spot 12 Years Old Irish Pot Still Whiskey Ireland, 46% abv, \$100.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Autumn leaf gold color. Big-hearted aromas of black tea, pine needle, baked apple are appealing. Fruit-driven taste focuses on mash, spice orchard fruits, apple crumble. Highly sophisticated, ambrosial, sensual. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Powers John's Lane Reserve Irish Pot Still Whiskey Ireland, 46% abv, \$65.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Brilliant straw yellow/golden hue is eye-catching. Nose is vibrant with succulent tropical fruit (banana, guava) scents that are dry but ripe. Flavor profile oozes with luxurious tastes of honeydew melon, sherry, oaky vanilla, and sweetened breakfast cereal, wrapped in a viscous cloak. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Redbreast 12 Years Old Irish Pot Still Whiskey Ireland, 43% abv, \$40.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Marigold/wheat field yellow appearance that shines. Assertive, breakfast cereal bouquet is desert dry, woody/oaky, slightly pine needle-like. Taste profile features integrated flavors of white raisins, buttered honey wheat toast, cooking oil, and baked pear. A fine-tuned whiskey of preeminent class. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>

Whiskey

Single Malt Irish Whiskey Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	Bushmills 16 Years Old Single Malt Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$91.00, 750 ml Malty with notes of cocoa, rhubarb, cherry liqueur, and honey. Nutty and full on the palate, with a savory edge. Baked apricot and honey linger onto the finish, which is luscious and lengthy. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Bushmills 21 Years Old Single Malt Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$120.00, 750 ml Red wine poached pear, dried tobacco, baking spice, and baked apricot on the nose. Much softer and honeyed on the palate with guava and roasted cherry tomato. Quite exotic with an exacting and complex fruit-forward finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Connemara Peated Single Malt Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$34.99, 750 ml Topaz color. Aromas of pine nut, wood smoke, baked pear come alive right from the first inhalation. Flavor profile is long, oily, roasted, savory. Superbly delicious! Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Knappogue Castle 16 Years Old Single Malt Irish Whiskey Ireland, 40% abv, \$100.00, 750 ml Chestnut brown appearance. Beguiling aromas include hard cheese, hazelnut, cedar plank, cereal. Flavors include cooking spices, especially sage. parsley plus toasted oats, marshmallow. Long, moderately oily aftertaste. One of Knappogue Castle's finest in memory. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Whisky

Canadian Whisky Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
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Chairman's Trophy	94	Tap Rye Sherry Finished 8 Years Old Canadian Whisky Canada, 40.5% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Both earthy and sweet, aromas encompass sandalwood, stone fruits and dried berries. Soft on the palate, the considerable cinnamon and slight chili spice is mellowed by a rich core of caramelized nuttiness and hints of cranberry and date. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Wiser's Red Letter Canadian Whisky Canada, 45% abv, CAD99.95, 750 ml
		Quintessential toast and almond notes followed by baked apricot and lemon meringue. Unctuous with biscuit, raspberry jam, almond and mineral on the palate. Equally round and smooth finish ensues. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	92	Wiser's Rye Canadian Whisky Canada, 40% abv, \$19.99, 750 ml
		Soft aromas of baked apricot, prune, fig, brown sugar, and baked cherry. Open, ripe, and round on the palate with broad stone fruit flavors and baking spice leading into a soft, mineral-driven finish. Delightful. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Whisky

Single Malt Scotch Whisky Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	98	Aberlour A'bunadh Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 59% abv, \$70.00, 750 ml
		Gorgeous chestnut brown color is dazzling. Huge aromatic thrust is led by toasted barley malt, oak-influenced vanilla, plum pudding, dark chocolate scents, maple. Taste profile mirrors those attributes and adds a deft touch of honey. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	97	<p>Bowmore Darkest 15 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43% abv, \$69.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Gorgeous auburn/henna color. The aroma is chockfull of toasted, roasted grain elements plus hallmark sherry cask traits of black raisins, figs, and high cocoa content chocolate. Taste profile is offers a generous, satin-like viscosity that supports the rich, dark caramel, dark roasted malt, and espresso flavors. A titanic Islay malt that echoes the legendary Black Bowmore 1964. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	97	<p>Glenmorangie Quarter Century 25 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43% abv, \$579.00, 750 ml</p> <p>The color is topaz, with core hints of amber. Bouquet offers succulent fragrances of dried fruits (black raisin, prune), breakfast cereal, porridge, dates, pork rind. Taste features a mild pepperiness that underscores the dried fruits and maltiness. Aftertaste is long, beany, slightly peaty. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Ardbeg Uigeadail Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 54.2% abv, \$78.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Color of golden wheat field. Smells seductively of peat smoke, cigar ash, tobacco, sea salt, smoked fish, campfire. Taste profile is toasty, semisweet, honeyed, multilayered, toffee-like. Amazingly elegant, considering the peat level. Classic. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Bowmore 18 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43% abv, \$129.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Lovely, light-catching golden straw color bedazzles the viewer. The aromatics build with aeration as the first scents of malt, oatmeal, breakfast cereal expand into tidal waves of campfire smoke, tobacco, old leather books, salted fish. Flavors of sea air, saltine cracker, Graham cracker, dried flowers, and marzipan abound deep in to the satisfying aftertaste. A monumental malt. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>

Finalist	96	<p>Bowmore 25 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43% abv, \$500.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Aromas open up with sweet baking spices, fruit leather, yeasty bread and gentle smoke. Medium viscous on the palate the texture is luxuriously grainy with hints of brown sugar, and a nutty coffee with cream finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Glenfarclas 105 Proof Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 60% abv, \$89.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Russet/tawny color. Seductive aromas include roasted chestnut, leather bound books - men's club, vanilla wafer, candle wax, pork rind. Flavor profile features heady, big-hearted, robust tastes of sherry, cocoa, hazelnut, tree sap/maple, dark toffee. Hearty aftertaste is ribboned with zesty, salty sherry. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Glenfarclas 25 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43% abv, \$149.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Copper/bronze color. Amazing fruitcake aromas of roasted walnut, dried pineapple, dried apricot, nutmeg, dark honey dazzle the senses. Flavor profile highlights the bakery-like richness found in the bouquet. But it's the sumptuous, wholly integrated aftertaste that's the star attraction. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Highland Park 12 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43% abv, \$45.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Golden yellow appearance. Elegant aromas include nut paste, almond, sea air, light peat smoke, baked banana, leather. Taste profile features more grain than found in the bouquet. Integrated, harmonious finish is a model of perfection. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	96	<p>Highland Park Dark Origins Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 46.8% abv, \$79.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Brilliant bronze color. Mesmerizing aromas include bread dough, egg yolk, baker's yeast, citrus, malted milk balls, barley, saltine cracker. Taste profile features honey, dark caramel, black raisins, oloroso sherry, dried rose petals. Aftertaste is extended, creamy, profoundly delicious. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>

Finalist	96	Highland Park 18 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 18% abv, \$104.99, 750 ml
		Brilliant burnt orange/ copper color. Majestic aroma offers sea air, malt, saltine cracker, coffee bean, light peatiness/smokiness, pork rind fragrances that are integrated. Taste highlights the maltiness and beaniness wrapped in a toffee-like flavor that lasts deep into the dry finish. Top rank maritime malt. Elegant, swank. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Mortlach 18 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 43.4% abv, \$300.00, 750 ml
		Nut brown/burnished orange color. Aroma highlights candy shop elements of dark caramel, candy bar, cocoa, butterscotch. Flavors feature an array of tastes, from vanilla bean to marshmallow to loose leaf tobacco to caramel. A confectionery treat that's world class all the way. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Talisker 10 Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 45.8% abv, \$50.00, 750 ml
		Wheat field yellow/amber color. Distinctive aroma serves notice immediately that this is a spirited, robust malt of consequence. Flavor profile supports the bouquet, adding traces of sea salt, tobacco, cooking oil, sage. Maritime malt magnificence in a glass. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Whisky

Blended Scotch Whisky Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	Dewar's 18 Years Old Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$79.99, 750 ml
		Attractive amber/goldenrod color. The aroma leaps from the glass in tsunamis of cocoa, coffee bean, tobacco scents that are perfectly integrated. Flavor profile highlights the tangy beaniness that's dry and piquant, almost peppery. Finishes long, oily, viscous, majestic. Utterly spectacular. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	95	<p>Buchanan's Special Reserve 18 Years Old Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$69.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Bronze/copper color, with orange core highlights. Very toasty, doughy, yeasty aroma at first that expands to include cocoa, brown sugar later on. Flavor profile is multilayered, caramelized onion-like, burnt, charcoal-like, toasty yet fruity. Superb blending of the highest order. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Grand Macnish Sherry Cask 15 Years Old Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$37.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Attractive marigold/amber color. Nose offers traces of spice cake, lanolin, nutmeg, candied almond, gooseberry. Flavor elements are finely integrated, off-dry, intensely grainy, slightly waxy, a touch winey. Excellent finish of gentle smoke, toastiness, maple. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	95	<p>Johnnie Walker Platinum Label 18 Years Old Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$110.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Eye-catching golden wheat field color. Dense, dusty dry aromas include breakfast cereal, cookie batter, dough, worn leather, banana, guava. Taste-wise, it's flowery, complex, grainy, with hints of Graham cracker, allspice, vanilla bean. Finishes creamy, elegant, toasty. Seriously luscious. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Buchanan's Master Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$48.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Fiery orange color. The floral inland malt bouquet mingles with a bit of peatiness and maritime influence to make a big impression. Flavor features toast tastes of baked bread, S'mores, toffee, cocoa. Finishes long, creamy, sweet. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	94	<p>Buchanan's DeLuxe 12 Years Old Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$31.00, 750 ml</p> <p>Topaz/amber appearance. First inhalations detect dry grains, peach then later sniffs get new leather, lanolin, cooking oil. Flavors include toasted marshmallow, baked apple, nutmeg, peanut butter, black pepper. Aftertaste is long, deep, complex. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>

Finalist	94	Grand Macnish Black Edition Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$29.99, 750 ml
<p>Pretty auburn/topaz color. Toasty bouquet offer two or three layers of aroma, most prominently, S'mores, toasted marshmallow, old wood, maple, wheat toast. Flavor package features baked bread, baker's yeast, BBQ sauce, dried violets, dried cherry. Lovely finish is robust, warming, roasted. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Finalist	94	Johnnie Walker Double Black Blended Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$42.00, 750 ml
<p>Auburn appearance. Smells upfront of prunes, figs, black raisins, dark caramel, mace, sage. Flavor profile is equally fruity and grainy, highlighting the dry breakfast cereal aspect as well as the figs, dates. Concludes long, rich, a touch smoky, floral. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Whisky

Blended Malt Scotch Whisky Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairmen, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	96	Sheep Dip Islay Blended Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$64.00, 750 ml
<p>Roasted peaches and tomato aromas mingle with notes of campfire smoke on the expressive nose. Flavors in the mouth are thoroughly smoky with sweet undertones of sugared grains, creating a pleasant balance that is long lasting. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		

Finalist	93	The Feathery Highland Blended Malt Scotch Whisky Scotland, 40% abv, \$66.00, 750 ml
<p>Fruit aromas are of muddled berries and stone fruit. Fresh on the palate with lightly fruity flavors of peaches balanced with rich nutmeg and barley. The finish is marked by subtle caramel and light roasted coffee beans. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Whisky

Single Malt Welsh Whisky

Award	Score	
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Chairman's Trophy	95	Penderyn Single Malt Welsh Whisky Wales, 46% abv, \$69.99, 750 ml
<p>Aromas of grape jelly and sweet cream give way to a lush, creamy mouth. Toffee dominates at first, then notes of baking spices, pepper and a hint of the vegetal reveal themselves. A sweet, toasty whisky. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		

Whisky

French Whisky

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	94	Armorik Single Malt Sherry Finish French Whisky France, 46% abv, \$62.00, 750 ml
<p>This French whisky drinks a lot like a Scottish single malt. Traces of rubber, peat and toffee comes through on the nose. In the mouth, it's apples and sherry with a peppery edge. Still, fresh and vibrant. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Brandy

Armagnac

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	Chateau de Laubade Cask Strength 1989 25 Years Old Bas-Armagnac France, 49.2% abv, \$234.99, 750 ml
<p>Soft aromas are of sweet peaches and baked apple cake. Lively in the mouth, the texture is lithe and piquant with plenty of baking spices and undertones of coffee and bitter chocolate. The finish is long and richly spiced. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		
Finalist	96	Dartigalongue 1984 Bas-Armagnac France, 43% abv, \$135.00, 750 ml
<p>Rich caramel on the nose, with undertones of spiced raisin bread. Medium thick and rich in the mouth, it is supple and round with deeply concentrated flavors of peach, nutmeg, dried figs and light blonde caramel. A pleasure to drink. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		

Finalist	94	Chateau de Laubade Cask Strength 1975 39 Years Old Bas-Armagnac France, 44.2% abv, \$344.99, 750 ml
		On the nose aromas of fresh peach pie are inviting. Deep concentration on the palate with dried stone fruit flavors, intense baking spice and a hint of toasted hazelnut. On the finish it is cinnamon and coffee with cream. Delicious.
		Excellent, Highly Recommended

Brandy

Calvados Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	95	Boulard XO Auguste Calvados France, 40% abv, \$250.00, 750 ml
		The pungent aromas are that of a fresh apple grove, bright, sweet and floral. Clean in the mouth with more spice than fruit, brown sugar, light caramel and spice cake dominate the flavors, finishing soft and perfumed. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	94	Boulard XO Calvados France, 40% abv, \$459.00, 750 ml
		Rich aromas of spiced apple cake, apple tart, and sweet cider are complex and enticing. Equal depth on the palate offers deeply concentrated flavors of roasted apples, mace, nutmeg and medium dark caramel that carry on through the long finish.
		Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	94	Calvados Lecompte Originel Calvados, Pays d'Auge France, 40% abv, \$33.00, 750 ml
		Light honey, lemon and beeswax play on the nose. In the mouth it is exceptionally smooth and floral with sweet lemon and honey flavors that are bright and clean. It is at once light and fresh while maintaining an enchanting complexity. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	93	Calvados Pere Magloire Fine VS Calvados France, 40% abv, \$32.00, 750 ml
		Light on the nose with faint aromas of pear and citrus. Medium thick and luxuriously soft and smooth on the palate, flavors of white grapes and golden apples are a sweet prelude to rich cinnamon and cardamom spices. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	93	Roger Groult 12 Years Old Calvados, Pays d'Auge France, 41% abv, \$85.00, 750 ml
<p>Bright on the nose, it is reminiscent of applesauce and white grapes. In the mouth it is spicy and complex with meyer lemon, white flowers and deep clover honey. The play between savory and sweet is intriguing. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>		

Brandy

Cognac Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	97	ABK6 XO Family Reserve Cognac France, 40% abv, \$79.99, 750 ml
<p>Sweet custard aromas fill the nose. Nicely structure mouthfeel is soft and full of cherry and nectarine fruit, hints of cinnamon and sandalwood and a slight suede leather texture on the spicy and toffee like finish. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		
Finalist	96	Cognac Frapin Chateau Fontpinot XO Cognac France, 41% abv, \$150.00, 750 ml
<p>Slightly earthy on the nose with subtle herbs and orange zest aromas. The pleasant mouth coating texture is richly laden with baking spices and a touch of tobacco. Clove-spiked oranges and light caramel round out the finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		
Finalist	96	Cognac Leyrat XO Vieille Reserve Cognac France, 40% abv, \$82.99, 750 ml
<p>Orange blossoms and lemon flesh lightly perfume the nose. Vaguely sweet in the mouth, fresh fruits are like ripe nectarines and dried yellow peach, also an earthiness like lightly roasted coffee with cream. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation</p>		

Finalist	96	Delamain Extra Cognac France, 40% abv, \$307.99, 750 ml
		Pungent aromas of white grapes and nectarines. Bright and citrusy flavors pair well with the smooth and somewhat suede-like texture that is laden with spices such as white pepper, mace and cardamom. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	96	Drouet Cuvée Ulysse XO Cognac Grande Champagne France, 40.3% abv, \$134.99, 750 ml
		Aromas of baked apples and raisins with cinnamon are warm and comforting. Opulent flavors of dried flowers, raisins and roasted coffee beans leave a long and pleasantly complex impression on the palate. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	D'Usse XO Cognac France, 40% abv, \$230.00, 750 ml
		Concentrated aromas of golden raisins and apple cider. Indulgently round and soft in the mouth, the deeply rich flavors offer dried fig, date, almond and toasted baking spices. A slight tobacco finish is subtle and long lasting. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Delamain Pale & Dry XO Cognac France, 40% abv, \$124.99, 750 ml
		Aromas are pretty with honeysuckle and hints of dried peach. Sweet in the mouth, the texture is clean and crisp. Stone fruit flavors mix with baking spices like nutmeg and mace before revealing a rich coffee and toffee finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Martell Cordon Bleu Cognac France, 40% abv, \$130.00, 750 ml
		Dark and caramelized aromas are spicy and rich. Thick with spice, the flavors are reminiscent of sandalwood and cigar box with sweet cream and coffee and roasted peaches showing through on the finish. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Brandy

Grappa Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score
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Chairman's Trophy	95	Candolini Grappa Bianca, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Exceptionally aromatic and fruity on the nose, there are plenty of juicy grape and fat Sun-Maid raisin flavors going on in the mouth. Dry and pleasantly spiced, it has a waxy quality and clean finish. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Bocchino Riserva Carlo Bocchino Grappa Italy, 43% abv, \$250.00, 700 ml , seeking US Importer
		A rich golden color and an opulent body. Aromas of overripe fruit, black tea and vanilla are followed up by a mouth of wood spice with a trace of tobacco and a crack of white pepper. Round and lush, yet dry. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Marolo Barolo 12 Years Old Grappa Italy, 50% abv, \$100.00, 750 ml
		Wonderfully complex aromas of tropical flowers, ripe stone fruit, and grape skins. Intense layers of flavor unfold one at a time. First a burst of sweet ripe fruit followed by aromatic spice and finally finishing with rich caramel. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Marzadro Le Diciotto Lune Stravecchia Grappa Italy, 41% abv, \$50.00, 750 ml
		Toasty aromas of baked sourdough with raisin and honey tinged almond. Supple mouthfeel, redolent of citrus, with vanilla, baked stone fruits and a lasting herbal quality. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Brandy

Pisco

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	96	Pisco Porton Mosto Verde Italia 2014 Pisco Peru, 43% abv, PEN n/a, 750 ml
		Bright and citrusy aromas are playful. On the palate it is smooth with well integrated flavors of flowers, tangerine and gentle cardamom spice. It leaves a clean and pretty impression on the tongue. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	94	Pago de Los Frailes Puro Torontel Pisco Peru, 43% abv, PEN n/a, 1 L
		The enticing aromas are light and fruity. Bright and clean in the mouth with undertones of tropical fruit, hints of floral flavors, and a core of minerals. Delightfully complex while retaining an accessible simplicity. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	La Caravedo Pisco Peru, 40% abv, PEN n/a, 750 ml
		Fruity and floral aromas are pretty and enticing in the nose. Clean on the palate, the texture is almost oily in its richness. The flavors are equally rich and clean with notes of yellow plums, sage and white pepper on the finish. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Pisco Porton Mosto Verde Quebranta 2012 Pisco Peru, 43% abv, \$40.00, 750 ml
		Pungent and earthy aromas of lime and herbs in the nose. Soft and intense on the palate, the flavors are warm and deep, redolent of yellow plums, lime zest and hints of white pepper. Long lasting in the mouth. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Pisco Porton Mosto Verde Acholado Pisco Peru, 43% abv, \$39.99, 750 ml
		Pungent aromas of stone fruit and flowers are focused and lovely. It starts out incredibly soft in the mouth before turning to spicy and piquant. Flavors of lime and lime zest mingle with tart stone fruit and fresh green herbs. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Brandy

Spanish Brandy Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairmen, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	94	Cardenal Mendoza Solera Gran Reserva Brandy de Jerez Spain, 40% abv, \$44.99, 750 ml
		Rich and nutty aromas offer raisins and sugared walnuts. Agre-dolce on the palate with deeply concentrated layered flavors of Tahitian vanilla spiked raisins, hazelnuts, and burnt sugar. A slight and sweet texture features baking spices throughout. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Brandy

Grape Brandy - World Chairman's Trophy and Finalist status are determined by the judging chairman, using a scoring curve based upon the number of entries and overall categorical scoring.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	95	Asbach Gothe Vintage Reserve 1952 Cask No. 1777 Grape Brandy Germany, 41.8% abv, \$2999.99, 1 L Aromas play between sweet and savory, with elements of salted caramel and ripe nectarines. Light and silky in the mouth, it shows flowers, yellow stone fruits, brown sugar and a hint of sea salt. Smooth and sumptuous. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	93	Singani 63 Grape Brandy Bolivia, 40% abv, \$29.99, 750 ml Intensely pungent aromas of guava, lime, and flowers. Very clean and bright in the mouth with a soft texture. Flavors range from lime rind and white pepper to more tropical fruits and thoroughly perfumed with fresh flowers throughout. Pungent and exciting. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Liqueur

All liqueurs were judged in category flights of like-with-like (e.g., flights of dairy liqueurs, flights of herbal liqueurs, etc.). The Chairman's Trophy - Liqueur was awarded based on the highest scoring liqueur across all the liqueur categories.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	98	Grand Marnier Cuvee du Centenaire Liqueur France, 40% abv, \$199.99, 750 ml Gorgeous orange/copper hue. Seductive fragrance of fresh orange peel is totally delightful and beguiling, but it's the foundational flavor of XO cognac that gives wings to the orange. Flavor echoes the bouquet perfectly as the orange peel zestiness is matched and supported by the supple spirit base. A masterpiece of the top ranking. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	Grand Marnier Cuvee 1880 Liqueur France, 40% abv, \$349.99, 750 ml Pretty auburn/henna color. Smells out of the aromatic gate like burnt orange peel, chocolate orange, spice cake. Taste profile is supple, tangy, citrusy, and more like clementine than navel orange, but it's the graceful manner in which the various elements all integrate in the midpalate that makes this a world class spirit. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation

Finalist	95	Sorel Hibiscus Liqueur United States, 15% abv, \$29.00, 750 ml	A spicy nose full of cooked red berries, nutmeg, cinnamon, clove and dried herbs. More tart than sweet in the mouth, red berries mix with allspice and generous cloves for a warm flavor profile. The texture is pleasantly grainy and extra dry. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	95	St-Germain Liqueur France, 20% abv, \$33.99, 750 ml	Incredibly aromatic with heady notes of elderflower, grapefruit zest, golden plum, and honeysuckle. Sweet but balanced with perfumed notes of lemon, cantaloupe, and sage. Such a graceful finish. Great Value. Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation
Finalist	94	Benedictine Liqueur France, 40% abv, \$34.99, 750 ml	Yellow-green with light golden highlights. Intensely herbal aromas are pungent. Slightly spiced on the tongue, there are hints of mint, thyme and oregano. A touch of sweetness enhances the earthy flavors and leaves them lingering long after each sip. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Borghetti Sambuca Italy, 38% abv, \$26.99, 1 L	Clear as rainwater appearance. The snappy anise aroma is delightfully tangy, sassy, and herbal. Taste profile is zesty, deeply anise-like, semisweet, elegant. Finish is sweet, deeply herbal. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Brancamenta, \$29.99, 750 ml	Dark brown/cola/coffee brown color. Smells of pine tar, mountain laurel, peppermint, spearmint, damp earth, forest floor. Flavor profile features elegant, integrated tastes of mint, cardamom, coriander, basil. Finish is very long, with the mint in a subtle role. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Lejay Crème de Cassis, Blackcurrant Liqueur France, 18% abv, \$29.99, 750 ml	Tart aromas of concentrated raspberry and blackberries. Quite tart in the mouth with mouthwatering raspberries and juicy blackberries carried on a puckery and suede-like texture. Just enough sweetness underneath to maintain balance. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Finalist	94	Merlet Crème de Cassis, Blackcurrant Liqueur France, 20% abv, \$34.99, 750 ml	Enticing and deep with tart blackberry, chocolate, and blueberry aromas. Decadent yet maintains a tart currant and blueberry character which lends a hand to a well-balanced, tart blackberry finish. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Merlet Trois Citrus Liqueur France, 40% abv, \$37.99, 750 ml	A blend of orange, tangerine and lemons make up the aromas. Mouthwatering zest opens up the palate with very balanced sweetness that is full of citrus flavor. Somewhat floral with hints of bitter orange oil on the finish keep it clean. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	94	Sipsmith Sloe Gin England, 29% abv, \$50.00, 750 ml	Light ruby color. Blackberry aromas are generous. Quite tart, the flavors are of juicy red and black berries with hints of orange blossom underneath. The texture is smooth and piquant to keep it light on the palate. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Bitters/Amaro

Products were judged like-with-like. The Chairman's Trophy was awarded to the highest scoring product in the category.

Award	Score		
Chairman's Trophy	94	Foro Amaro United States, 30% abv, \$28.00, 750 ml	Dark brown with amber highlights. The aromas are characterized by a blend of citrus fruits and dried herbs. Hints of burnt sugar are not too sweet on the palate, followed by dried herbs with a clean bitter finish. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended
Finalist	93	Ramazotti Amaro Italy, 30% abv, \$24.99, 750 ml	Dark amber with burnt umber highlights. Aromas are gentle, offering orange zest and cooked red berry aromas. Nicely balanced in the mouth, starting out with sweet oranges that turn to bitter herbal notes and finally a hint of dark chocolate on the finish. Excellent, Highly Recommended

Vermouth

All vermouths were judged in category flights of like-with-like (e.g., flights of sweet vermouths, flights of dry vermouths, etc.). The Chairman's Trophy - Vermouth was awarded based on the highest scoring product across all the vermouth categories.

Award	Score	
Chairman's Trophy	94	<p>Noilly Prat Rouge Vermouth France, 16% abv, \$12.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Pretty medium brown/chestnut color. Aroma is a banquet of dried and fresh herbs, roots, leaves, wine. Flavor profile offers richness, seductive bittersweet highlights. Long, succulent finish. Superb. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	93	<p>Cinzano 1757 Sweet Vermouth Italy, 16% abv, \$29.99, 1 L</p> <p>Cola-like appearance. Nose is zesty, herbal, citrusy, delicate, mossy, woody. Taste profile highlights the intensity of the herbs, vegetation, dry leaves, parsley, coriander, fennel, sage. Lovely and easily one of the better rossos from Italy. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	93	<p>Noilly Prat Extra Dry Vermouth France, 18% abv, \$12.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Pale oyster color. Aroma is juicy, herbal, crisp, fresh. Exotic flavors include saltine cracker, stone, white wine grapes, citrus peel. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	92	<p>Punt e Mes Vermouth Italy, 16% abv, \$18.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Exotic opening with blackened cherry tomatoes, stewed peach, and marionberry on the nose. Dark berry fruit and honey occupy the palate with a lingering sweetness which turns to a savory and lengthy finish. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	91	<p>Martini Rosso Sweet Vermouth Italy, 15% abv, \$7.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Light cola brown color. High notes of woody botanicals, fennel, black pepper, tubers. Flavors include beet, berries, dried rose petal, dried citrus peel. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>
Finalist	91	<p>Noilly Prat Ambre Sweet Vermouth France, 16% abv, \$18.99, 750 ml</p> <p>Complex, earthy, foresty aromas abound in this exotic bouquet that's sweet/sour in nature. Taste is supple, sweet, nutty, almost sherried. Great Value. Excellent, Highly Recommended</p>

Finalist	91	Riserva Carlo Alberto Red Vermouth Italy, 18% abv, \$38.95, 750 ml
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Complex layers of aroma reveal fresh and dried berries, herbs, and cloves. Tart and piquant in flavor, combining heady clove and allspice with dried red fruits. The herbal character blossoms on the finish leaving the mouth clean and dry.

Excellent, Highly Recommended

Soju/Shochu/Baijiu

Award	Score	
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Chairman's Trophy	95	iichiko BLŪ Barley Shochu Japan, 30% abv, \$50.00, 720 ml
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Bursting with aromas of ripe melon and fresh lychee. At just 30% ABV, it's lush yet light in the glass. Fleshy fruit flavors continue on the palate. The finish is subtle, marked by a hint of candied ginger. **Extraordinary, Ultimate Recommendation**