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## [Spirits competition highlights best options for use in classic cocktails](#)

By [Emma Janzen](#) | Wednesday, April 13, 2011, 01:24 PM

Ever wonder what kind of whiskey works best in a Manhattan, or what vodka packs the most punch in your vodka tonic? Not sure you want to trust the recommendations from your local liquor store employee or co-worker?

Instead of taking years to do side-by-side comparisons yourself, and spending tons of cash (and potential liver damage) to do so, a highly respected panel of expert judges have taken on the work for you.

Results just came in from the Ultimate Beverage Challenge (UBC), a New York-based beverage competitions and events company, that holds a series of “challenges” to judge and rate spirits brands and how they perform in cocktails. (They are currently seeking entries for the Ultimate Wine Challenge, too.)

The 2011 UBC conducted several challenges this year, but one of the more interesting ones was the Ultimate Classic Cocktail Challenge. The idea was to judge how each spirit brand performs in a classic cocktail. Each cocktail was mixed using the same recipe and fresh mixers, and the judges blind-tasted and rated each entry on a 100 point scale.

Below is a taste of the results from this year’s Classic Cocktail challenge.

I bookmark the website on my phone or reference the list before heading out to the liquor store, to avoid the confusion that arises when I am standing hopelessly in front of shelves filled with seemingly endless brand options. If anything, it’s a great starting point to discovering new spirits (and cocktails too).

What do you think about this year’s winners? Is there a brand you always use in your classic Martini or Old Fashioned? Share it in the comments below.

### **BEST GIN in a...**

*Aviation* - Plymouth

*Extra Dry Martini* - Beefeater London Dry

*Gin & Tonic* - Beefeater 24

*Negroni* - No. 3 London Dry

### **BEST VODKA in a...**

*Bloody Mary* - Vesica

*Cosmopolitan* - Absolut Citron

*Vodka & Tonic* - Luksusowa

**BEST TEQUILA in a...**

*Margarita w/Cointreau* - Olmeca Plata  
*Paloma* - Izkali Reposado  
*Tequila Sunrise* - 901 Silver

**BEST RUM in a...**

*Daiquiri* - Banks 5 Island  
*Mojito* - Banks 5 Island  
*Mai Tai* - Holey Dollar Silver Coin

**BEST CACHAÇA in a...**

*Batida de Fresa* - Leblon  
*Caipirinha* - Leblon  
*Caipirinha de Uva* - Leblon

**BEST COGNAC/BRANDY in a...**

*Brandy Julep* - Remy Martin VSOP  
*Sidecar* - Camus VS Elegance  
*Stinger* - Camus VSOP Elegance

**BEST SCOTCH WHISKY in a...**

*Blood & Sand* - Highland Park 12 Years Old Single Malt  
*Rob Roy* - Highland Park 12 Years Old Single Malt  
*Rusty Nail* - The Macallan Fine Oak 10 Years Old Single Malt

**BEST AMERICAN WHISKEY in a...**

*Manhattan* - Bulleit Rye  
*Mint Julep* - Bulleit Rye  
*Old-Fashioned* - George Dickel #12

**BEST IRISH WHISKEY in a...**

*Irish Coffee* - Jameson Gold Blended  
*Wild Irish Rose* - Michael Collins Blended

**BEST ORANGE LIQUEUR in a...**

*Cosmopolitan* - Cointreau  
*Margarita* - Cointreau  
*Sidecar* - Cointreau

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