



The Ten Best New Tequilas You May Not Have Heard Of.. Yet

Nothing breeds success like success and tequila continues to be an impressive story. From humble beginnings it has grown into a major international export and an expanding sector of the spirits industry in the United States. So is there a point where there are too many brands of premium tequilas on our shelves?

“Perhaps, but don’t start looking for that saturation point to come soon,” contends Rich Krumm, food and beverage director for the *Brennan Restaurant Group* of New Orleans. “At one of our restaurants we carry 45 labels of tequila and they’re all extremely active. Tequila drinkers are different than, let’s say, vodka drinkers who find a brand they like and typically stick with that brand. Tequila aficionados are very open to trying new brands.”

Brendan Moylan, owner of *Noonan’s Bar & Grill* in Larkspur, CA, agrees that tequila enthusiasts thrive on the sense of discovery. “Stocking new brands is a significant sales driver. We carry over 300 labels of tequila and invest in new brands when they enter the market. I’m a devoted fan of 100% agave tequilas, and like most, I appreciate getting an opportunity to sample a new range. It’s an enriching experience.”

The past year or so has seen the introduction of a number of new brands of 100% agave tequilas. These are super-premium products in price and degree of excellence. Their impeccable quality suggests extending them V.I.P. treatment—snifters and chilled cocktail glasses versus serving in a tall slushy concoction.

So who’s at the head of the class? Here’s our list of the 12 best new tequilas that you may not have heard of...yet.

- **4 Copas Tequila** — Made at La Quemada Distillery in the lowlands of Jalisco, 4 Copas is a masterfully crafted line of organic, super-premium tequilas. The blanco is filtered and bottled immediately after distillation. It has a wafting bouquet and a delectable palate of lemon zest and white pepper. Aged for nine months in American white oak, 4 Copas Reposado is graced with an array of orange, honey and ripe fruit flavors. The añejo spends up to three years in oak and has lingering finish marked by the flavors of vanilla, spice and toasted oak.
- **Don Julio 1942 Tequila** — This highly acclaimed ultra-premium is made at

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La Primavera distillery under the supervision of legendary tequilero, Don Julio Gonzalez Estrada. Issued to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Don Julio's first distillery, the limited edition extra añejo spent a minimum of three years in oak, during which it develops a satiny, medium-weight body, and the enticing flavors of vanilla, fruit, spice, and toasty oak. The lingering finish is sweet and sublime.

- **El Diamante Del Cielo Tequila —**

These ultra-premium, limited production tequilas are handcrafted in Jalisco. El Diamante Del Cielo is made from estate-grown agaves triple-distilled in state of the art pot stills. The blanco is bottled straight from the still and brimming with bakery fresh flavors. The reposado is aged up to 364 days in white oak barrels, imbuing it with honey and floral aromas and a classy, long lasting finish. El Diamante Del Cielo Añejo is magnificent, noble spirit. It's a blend of tequilas aged up to four years in oak with a generous bouquet; sultry, full body and a palate laced with fruit flavors.

- **Gran Centenario Leyenda Extra Añejo Tequila —**

Tequila enthusiasts have cause to rejoice. Famed Gran Centenario has extended its world-class range with the release of Leyenda, an extra añejo aged an average of four years in French Limousin oak barrels. After which the Maestro Tequilero blends in older reserves to complete the masterpiece. The ultra-premium añejo drinks like a dream come true. The tequila is a dark amber with a satiny, medium weight body and a vanilla, clove and oaky bouquet. The palate starts spicy and finishes long and luxurious. Leyenda is the epitome of seduction.

- **Jose Cuervo Platino 100% Agave Tequila —**

This artisanal tequila is a genuinely charming spirit with tremendous depth of character. Platino grabs your attention at once with a medley of fruity, citrusy, lightly peppered, aromas. It has a curvaceous body and layered palate of ripe plums, figs, toasted oak, black pepper, and spice. The warm,

lingering finish seals the deal. Platino will make Jose Cuervo a household name—guaranteed.

- **La Certeza 100% Agave Tequila —**

This range of small batch spirits are crafted at the state-of-the-art Tierra de Agaves distillery, which was founded in 2002 by Francisco Beckmann, former co-owner of Jose Cuervo. The ultra-premium tequilas are distilled entirely from agaves grown on the Beckmann Gonzalez estate, land that has been in their family since 1758. Aged in both American white oak and French Limousin barrels, La Certeza Añejo is generously aromatic, and loaded with engaging semi-sweet flavors that linger like a pleasant dream. Top-notch.

- **Partida Elegante Tequila —**

Partida is the fastest growing brand of premium tequila in the country and their recently released extra añejo, Elegante, will certainly fan the flames. Handmade by maestro tequilero Enrique Partida at the family's estate outside of Amatitan, Mexico, Elegante is distilled entirely from estate-grown agaves and matured in American oak barrels for 36 to 40 months. It has a radiant golden hue, captivating layers of dry spicy flavors, and a long memorable finish. Partida Elegante is too marvelous to share with the in-laws.

- **Patrón Gran Platinum Tequila —**

Those who find themselves with a few extra dollars and a palpable thirst for a classy spirit should invest in a bottle of Gran Patrón Platinum. The ultra-premium silver tequila is light bodied, richly textured and imminently satisfying. It is triple-distilled in alembic pot stills. Another twist is that a portion of each batch is aged briefly in American oak barrels prior to being blended back. It has a satiny texture and a bouquet of black pepper and citrus. The initial attack is warm—not hot—and the tequila immediately fills the mouth with spicy, peppery flavors. The finish is perhaps best described as luxurious.

- **Gran Patrón Burdeos Tequila —**

The world's bestselling brand of 100% agave tequila recently launched its most inspired

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and compelling marque to date, Gran Patrón Burdeos. Debuting at around \$500, Burdeos is made from a blend of añejos aged more than a year in American and French oak. The tequila is then transferred to ex-Bordeaux barrels and raked for a year or more in the cellars of Patrón's hacienda in the highlands of Jalisco. Over that time the tequila develops a dark honey/amber hue and a bouquet of lightly spiced, floral and fruity aromas. It has a velvety, surprisingly light body, and a captivating palate of nutty, and wine-induced flavors. The finish is long and thoroughly satisfying.

- **p.i.n.k. 100% Agave Tequila** — By far the most innovative and interesting brand making its American debut is ultra-premium p.i.n.k. 100% Agave Tequila. Made at the famed La Cofradia Distillery, this superior blanco tequila is delectable in every respect. It has a marvelous mouth feel, wafting floral and spice bouquet, and an extended, flavorful finish. Perhaps the tequila's most singular feature is its natural infusion of flavorless caffeine and guarana. Stimulating and delicious is an unbeatable combination.

- **Scorpion Mezcal** — While not tequila, this skillfully produced line of 100% agave spirits more than deserves inclusion. Small

batch Scorpion Mezcals are triple distilled in pot stills and aged in charred, oak barrels. The FDA approved, scorpion exoskeleton inside the bottle is a harmless observer. The flagship of the Scorpion range is the triple-distilled, 7 year old Añejo Gran Reserva Mezcal. It has captivating bouquet marked with the aromas of vanilla, black cherries and peaty smoke. The oily, medium weight body delivers a semi-sweet array of flavors, including maple, caramel, vanilla and a lingering dose of smoke on the finish.

- **Tanteo Chocolate 100% Agave Tequila** — High on the list of new, sure-fire prospects is super-premium Tanteo Chocolate 100% Agave Tequila, one of three jalapeño-infused tequilas in the range. The jalapeño infusion imbues the Tanteo tequilas with a precise dose of peppery heat, a measure of sizzle that's impeccably balanced and amazingly delightful. The monster hit of the trio will likely be the Tanteo Chocolate Tequila. It's even dazzling alone in a glass. It has a pale Champagne hue, an irresistible cocoa and lightly peppered bouquet, and a velvety textured body. The palate is a lavish affair of creamy milk chocolate laced with jalapeño. Top-notch all the way.

Robert Plotkin is a judge at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition and the author of numerous books including the 5th edition of *The Bartender's Companion: The Original Guide to American Cocktails and Drinks*. To read more from Robert (and other members of BarMedia) visit his blog, BarMedia.com/blog. You can reach him at BarMedia— 1-800-421-7179 or robert@barmedia.com.

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