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## TOP SHELF: ANEJO TEQUILAS



### Tequila, pour favor?

Cork up the Courvoisier, stow The Macallan – it's time to head South

Selections by EVANGELOS MIHELIS  
Photography by BOB BIELK

These añejos – or old ones – are the Rolls Royces of the tequila family and are meant to be savored the same way as a fine single-malt scotch. Unlike the “mixtos” that are plentiful at your local cantina, añejos are distilled from 100 percent blue agave (plant) and aged for more than one year in oak barrels. I chose a dozen personal favorites from my collection to fit all palates and pocketbooks. Although any one would be a bold addition to your bar, I've rated these 750mL bottles on a 10-point scale. As with other premium spirits, the length of aging directly affects the smoothness and the barrels themselves may impart a flavor to their contents. These tequilas should be enjoyed as a simple pleasure – served neat, with no lime or salt-rimmed glass. Only the traditional chaser of sangrita (a spicy tomato/orange drink) should accompany these offerings from south of the border.

And if someone asks, “Where’s the worm?” Tell them that’s mezcal, and that’s another story.



#### Milagro Romance

The bottle is a marvel to look at: a 1-year-old reposado (750 mL) surrounds triple chambers of a 3-year-old añejo (250mL). Although the quality of the liquors does not compare to others on this list, the unique presentation is



#### Stallion

An uncomplicated 4-year-old that is reasonably priced. Not an ultra-premium añejo, but a solid offering from one of the most consistent producers. Price: \$60 • Rating: 7.5

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**Chinaco Emperador**

More bourbonlike than others with an aggressive agave nose and robust flavor. Released in limited quantity, this 7-year-old añejo is a collector's tequila.  
Price: \$300 • Rating: 8

**Rey Sol**

Bold with a slight caramel sweetness to 6-year-old is a treat for the mouth. The liquid, as well as the bottle, will bring a smile to your face.  
Price: \$230 • Rating: 8.7

**Jose Cuervo Reserva**

Forget what you know, this is the only Jose Cuervo worth tasting. Based on a 200-year-old recipe, the Reserva de la Familia is a must for your bar.  
Price: \$80 • Rating: 9.5

**Herradura Seleccion Suprema**

Smooth with just a hint of sweetness. This year-plus aged tequila is one of the stars in its class. An amazing after-dinner drink.  
Price: \$300 • Rating: 9.8

**El Tesoro Paradiso**

Aged in bourbon and cognac barrels, this 5-year-old has a slight bourbon flavor and a beautifully dark amber color. One of the smoothest available.  
Price: \$110 • Rating: 9.2

**Porfidio Single Barrela**

Sweet like dark chocolate caramel, with a texture that dances on the palate. It is hard to find, but well worth the search.  
Price: \$140 • Rating: 9.0

**Don Fulano Imperial**

Flowery with a slight honeysuckle taste. This 5-year-old is deceptively dark in color, but surprisingly sweet and mellow tasting.  
Price: \$110 • Rating: 8.9

**Don Julio Real**

It begins with a full agave nose and finishes silky smooth with just a hint of sweetness. This 5-year-old is the flagship for Don Julio's consistently outstanding line.  
Price: \$350 • Rating: 8.8