



## Virginia Boone's BEST SPIRITS



**Virginia Boone** is a longtime wine writer, critic, and educator who finds the complementary world of spirits equally fascinating. Here she takes a wine taster's approach to trying new spirits from producers big and small.



### **Cambio Tequila Blanco, Mexico (\$50)**

Made from high-altitude blue agave that is roasted low and slow and without additives, this 92-proof tequila is 100% barrel fermented in American white oak and Mexican pine; it's then moved into ex-

wine barrels of French oak for aging. Woody notes of spice and charcoal mix with richer overtones of butterscotch and orange before the concentrated, long-lasting finish. **93**



### **Cambio Tequila Reposado, Mexico (\$60)**

Given more exposure to oak than its blanco counterpart, this 92-proof tequila is aged one month in white Burgundy and Bordeaux barrels before mellowing another five months in French oak

Chardonnay casks. Notes of cedar, baked agave, jalapeño, and vanilla strike a balance between sweetness and spice, marked by a lingering richness and purity of flavor. **94**

**Coppa Cocktails Mai Tai, Netherlands (\$18)** This 30-proof RTD cocktail made from white rum, orange juice, and lime juice needs only to be poured over ice to be enjoyed. Well balanced and not overpowering, it weaves flavors of orange, lime, and almond in complementary swirls, offering impressive complexity within the context of convenience. **91**

### **Coppa Cocktails Strawberry Daiquiri, Netherlands (\$18)**

Another fun concoction to be poured over ice, this combines white rum, lime juice, and strawberry flavor to good effect, showing deep, rich berry aromas and flavors that remain textured and slightly sweet throughout. 30 proof. **90**



### **Kentucky Owl Maighstir Edition, USA (\$150)**

Produced in collaboration with master blender Maureen Robinson, this rare, third-edition blended bourbon combines four-, five-, eight-, and nine-year-old Kentucky straight bourbons with mash bills of corn, wheat, and malted

barley. Robust in corn, molasses, and smoky overtones, it has a nice, long finish of orange peel and vanilla plus a subtle, Scotch-like hint of peat. 100 proof. **96**



### **Ocean Organic Vodka, USA (\$30)**

Grown by Ocean Organic Farm & Distillery, 30-plus certified-organic heirloom

varieties of sugarcane go into this small-batch 80-proof vodka made on the island of Maui, along with ocean water rich in magnesium, potassium, and calcium that's drawn from 3,000 feet deep off the Kona Coast of the Big Island. The result shows great intensity and clarity, founded on aromas and flavors of citrus and wet stone. **96**



### **RD1 Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, USA (\$70)**

Aged four years, this is made from Kentucky-grown corn, rye, and barley blended with limestone well water. Subtle notes of caramel, vanilla, and baked pineapple present as both expansive and powerful on the palate, giving way to a lengthy finish of baking spice. 98 proof. **92**

### **RD1 Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished with French Oak, USA (\$80)**

This four-year-aged 101-proof whiskey boasts a refined woody character that persists on a smooth, elegant palate of balanced sweetness and texture. French oak staves are used, adding notes of chocolate-covered cherry, maple, and toasted oak. **96**

### **RD1 Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Finished with Brazilian Amburana Wood, USA (\$80)**

Amburana wood staves are used in the aging regimen of this 110-proof whiskey, adding a distinct cinnamon spiciness on the nose and palate that persists throughout. The spicy components intensify over time, melding with warm and inviting notes of apple, nutmeg, and brown sugar. **95**

### **RD1 Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Double Finished in Oak and Maple Barrels, USA (\$80)**

After an initial aging period of four-plus years, this 99.9-proof expression is finished in barrels with French oak staves steeped in maple syrup. The result offers a welcoming sweetness of molasses and caramel corn with a nutty side note of pecan. Rounded, rich, and smooth, it has plenty of length and breadth to complement a complex body of balanced weight and intensity. **94**