

SPECIAL VALUE ISSUE



WINE ENTHUSIAST

MAGAZINE

BEST BUYS 2008

OUR EDITORS WEIGH IN ON THE

TOP WINES UNDER \$15



wineenthusiast.com/magazine

category that is large because of its relative availability and affordability. A good choice for its smooth taste and deeper character is Canadian Club Classic 15, a smooth, subtle blend that shows its best face when enjoyed on the rocks with a touch of maple. Meanwhile, Canadian 4-year-old is a really good budget brand with some punch.

WHISKEY—USA

CLASSIC (60-65% ABV)
HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION

Black & Tan 100 Straight Rye Whiskey (100%); 40% abv, \$25

CLASSIC (60-65% ABV)
HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION

Four Seasons Straight 100% Single Grain Kentucky Straight Bourbon (100%); 40-42% abv, \$25

Old Grand Dad 114 Kentucky Straight Bourbon (100%); 47% abv, \$22

VERY GOOD (60-65% ABV)
Old Grand Dad 114 Kentucky Straight Bourbon (100%); 47% abv, \$22

Old Grand Dad Kentucky Straight Bourbon (100%); 47% abv, \$22

Produce Supreme 3 Year Old Straight Rye Whiskey (100%); 40% abv, \$22

Old Turkey 100 Kentucky Straight Bourbon (100%); 40-42% abv, \$22

Inside scoop: This is one of the most popular categories, except for wine, when it comes to the masses. There are a lot of brands, and the market is highly competitive. Specialty whiskeys like rye, straight rye, and Tennessee have had a resurgence. After getting their start in the late '90s, they are getting their own momentum. The rate of growth in 2007 is average at most, though American whiskeys continue to show steady growth. International whiskeys are still a niche, but some of the more interesting brands are in the premium and super-premium range. As consumers expect their whiskeys to be smooth, well-aged, and have a rich, deep flavor, they are looking for brands that offer a good story. From the group listed above, the biggest value and perhaps the best budget is the newcomer in the genre: Black & Tan. Brewed & Bottled Straight Rye Whiskey, distilled solely by Four Seasons Village Distillery and bottled in 100% rye.

BRANDY—INTERNATIONAL
CLASSIC (60-65% ABV)
HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION

Monte Sierpe 100% Pinot di Poli Grappa (Italy); 40% abv, \$34

F. Meyer Eau de Vie de Quetsch (France); 40% abv, \$25

Monte Sierpe 100% Uva Viva Italiana di Poli Immature Grape Brandy (Italy); 40% abv, \$34

Monte Sierpe 100% Acholado (Spain); 40% abv, \$25

Monte Sierpe 100% Martell VS Cognac (France); 40% abv, \$25

Monte Sierpe 100% Romate Brandy de Jerez (Spain); 40% abv, \$25

Monte Sierpe 100% KVV 10 Brandy (Germany); 40% abv, \$25

Monte Sierpe 100% Frapin VS Cognac (France); 40% abv, \$25

Monte Sierpe 100% Monte Sierpe Acholado (Spain); 40% abv, \$25

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FLAVORBOTS

VALUABLE SPOILS

Gracely hot



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GRAPPA

CLASSIC (96–100)/ HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION

Jacopo Poli Barrique 1993 Single Vintage Grappa (Italy; Winebow Inc., New York, NY); 55% abv, \$61. Fruitcake, cinnamon, nutmeg and honey aromas are followed by baked banana, pineapple and vanilla soda smells. Entry is concentrated, Sherry- and honey-flavored, and spiced; midpalate taste profile expands to include baked fruit (nectarine, peach), clove, fruit pastry (Danish, prunes, black raisins). Finishes with integrated flavors. Could sell for \$100 per bottle.

Jacopo Poli Sarpa di Poli Grappa (Italy; Winebow Inc., New York, NY); 40% abv, \$29. Smells of ripe grapes, grape must and lead pencil in the initial whiffs; air contact stimulates baking spices, black currants, jasmine, pepper and paraffin. Entry is crisp, tart and intensely ripe; midpalate highlights black grape to maximum concentration. Finishes bittersweet to sweet. *Best Buy.*

SUPERB (90–95)/HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Jacopo Poli Sarpa Riserva di Poli Grappa (Italy; Winebow Inc., New York, NY); 40% abv, \$37. Sniffs discover zesty aromas of green, red and jalapeño pepper as well as notes of parchment, coin, lead pencil and paraffin. Entry is oily, smooth, off-dry and peppery; midpalate features tastes of oak, vanilla, cream, cooking oil and butter. Concludes clean, bittersweet and oily.

Jacopo Poli Po' Moscato di Poli Grappa (Italy; Winebow Inc., New York, NY); 40% abv, \$34. Smells of tropical fruits, especially guava, pineapple and banana. Entry is chalky, pleasantly ripe and viscous in texture; midpalate is earthy, floral (since this is Moscato, where has the floweriness been up to this point?), stony and off dry. Finishes minerally and drier than the midpalate.