WE ASKED

We Asked 7 Bartenders: What's the Most Underrated Tequila? (2022)

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The year was 1958 when the Champs released the hit song "Tequila" (you know the one). If there's any question as to whether the beloved agave spirit has stood the test of time, one must simply look to the music industry. There's the Eagles' 1973 song "Tequila Sunrise," "Tequila Sheila" released by Bobby Bare in 1980, and a whole slew of modern odes to tequila that have topped country music charts.

The data also tells a compelling story when it comes to tequila's staying power. Together, tequila and mezcal make up the second best-selling spirit category by volume in the U.S. next to vodka. Agave spirits are also one of the fastest-growing categories, boasting a 30.1 percent increase in revenue during 2021 alone.

All that's to say: There are a lot of tequila lovers out there with plenty of options to choose from. VinePair turned to bartenders to give us the scoop on the unheralded bottles they love and think more people should reach for. Read on to learn about the most underrated tequilas, picked by the pros.

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THE MOST UNDERRATED TEQUILAS ACCORDING TO BARTENDERS:

- *Lunazul Blanco*
- *Tequila Fortaleza*
- *Tapatío Tequila*
- *4 Copas Blanco*
- *Arette*
- *Pueblo Viejo*
- *Reyán Blanco*

"I absolutely love Lunazul Blanco. Lunazul has a delicious and clean flavor, and the price point is great for both the well and cocktail making. Most importantly, in my opinion, it makes the perfect Margarita." **—Jennifer Sandella, general manager & beverage director, Pineapple Cafe, NYC**

"Tequila Fortaleza is most certainly the most underrated tequila in the market. With its wide range of aromas like citrus, caramel, butter, cooked agave, and sage, it's certainly the most earthy of tequilas. It's quite unique when compared to newer brands, who nowadays lean towards the sweeter end of the flavor spectrum. Fortaleza as a company might also be new, but it doesn't lean on any celebrity. Instead, its strength is in its rich family history of both tequila making and establishing the laws that now govern the tequila industry. It's a complex and well-balanced spirit that is unbeatable in flavor, price, and quality." **—Cliuth Lopez, bartender, Silver Lyan, Washington, D.C.**

"Fortaleza. It's not overly expensive but offers a quality and flavor profile that rivals much more expensive and exclusive brands. This brand is family-owned and the process to create their product has not changed in over 100 years, so the consistency is unmatched." **—Miguel Lopez, director of operations, The Guild Hotel, San Diego**

"I am absolutely in love with Tapatío Tequila. It's affordable, has been around for 80 years, and it's so tasty. I'm more than obsessed with their overproof Tapatío 110 if you want something with a bit of a kick. It has a nice, clean taste that I can drink neat, on the rocks, or in cocktails, and I know it will hold up. Not to mention, the price point on this is super affordable." **—Evan Sewell, bartender, Atrium, Atlanta**

"4 Copas Blanco is a top pick, back-pocket tequila that I reach for when educating guests on what tequila should actually taste like. The cooked organic agave notes are very present but soft, while balanced with notes of almond and tamarind. It's a superior product that's very affordable and flows here good tequila doesn't always need to be expensive." **—Beau du Bois, bar & spirits creative director, Pueblo, San Diego**

"Many options came to mind. We all know the obviously amazing, traditionally made tequilas like Fortaleza, Tequila Ocho, and G4. But to put in my well at work, cheer with my co-workers, or have a quick nightcap at home after a long shift, I find myself reaching for the same three bottles: Arette, Tapatío, or my personal favorite, Pueblo Viejo. Zippy, bright, free of additives, and at a great price point, these tequilas have been available consistently — even in the hardships of allocation and all the Covid-19 related distribution issues." **—Koky López, bar manager, Bar Vauté & Brasserie La Banque, Charleston, S.C.**

"Reyán Blanco. Not only do they use state-grown agave plants, but it is actually a blend from neighboring fields. This characteristic makes the tequila higher in alcohol, and it tends to be overlooked by people." **—Pablo Aguilar, mixologist, Tasca, NYC**

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