

Gourmet

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CHAMPAGNE

Schramsberg's **J. Schram 2000** (\$90) combines ripe fruit flavors and crisp acidity. If you like your bubbly a little yeastier, **Pol Roger Brut 1998** (\$80) is rich, beautifully balanced, and quite complex. **Charles Ellner Brut Prestige 1999** (\$65) and **Cuvée de Réserve Brut** (\$42) are both great for the money. They're also both intense, with very persistent finishes, but the 1999 is lush. Taittinger's **Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1998** (\$172) is a perennial favorite. This vintage is bright and elegant, with a pleasant hint of oak.

SPIRITS

Bartenders love **St. Germain** elderflower liqueur (\$33); a spritz of seltzer is all it needs. **Karlsson's Gold Luxury Vodka** (\$40) is made from seven varieties of Swedish new potatoes. The classy **Don Julio 1942** (\$125) *añejo* tequila has a lovely agave sweetness. **Auchentoshan Bourbon Matured** (\$120) 16-year-old single-malt Scotch is bold for a Lowland whisky but still has finesse. The latest Compass Box release, **Flaming Heart** (\$85), is a smooth and spicy blend of single malts. Raise a glass to America's most important

bartender, Jerry Thomas, the subject of David Wondrich's *Imbibe!* (\$24).

WINE

Jayson Pinot Noir 2005 (\$65) is big and ripe, but well-balanced. **L'Ecole No 41 Ferguson 2004** (\$45), a delicious Bordeaux blend, has grapes from some of Washington State's oldest vineyards. Bonny Doon Vineyard's **Le Vol des Anes 2006** (\$30) evokes apricots, pears, and citrus. **Eroica Single Berry 2005** (\$200), an incredibly rich dessert wine, has great acidity that keeps it from being cloying. ☞

