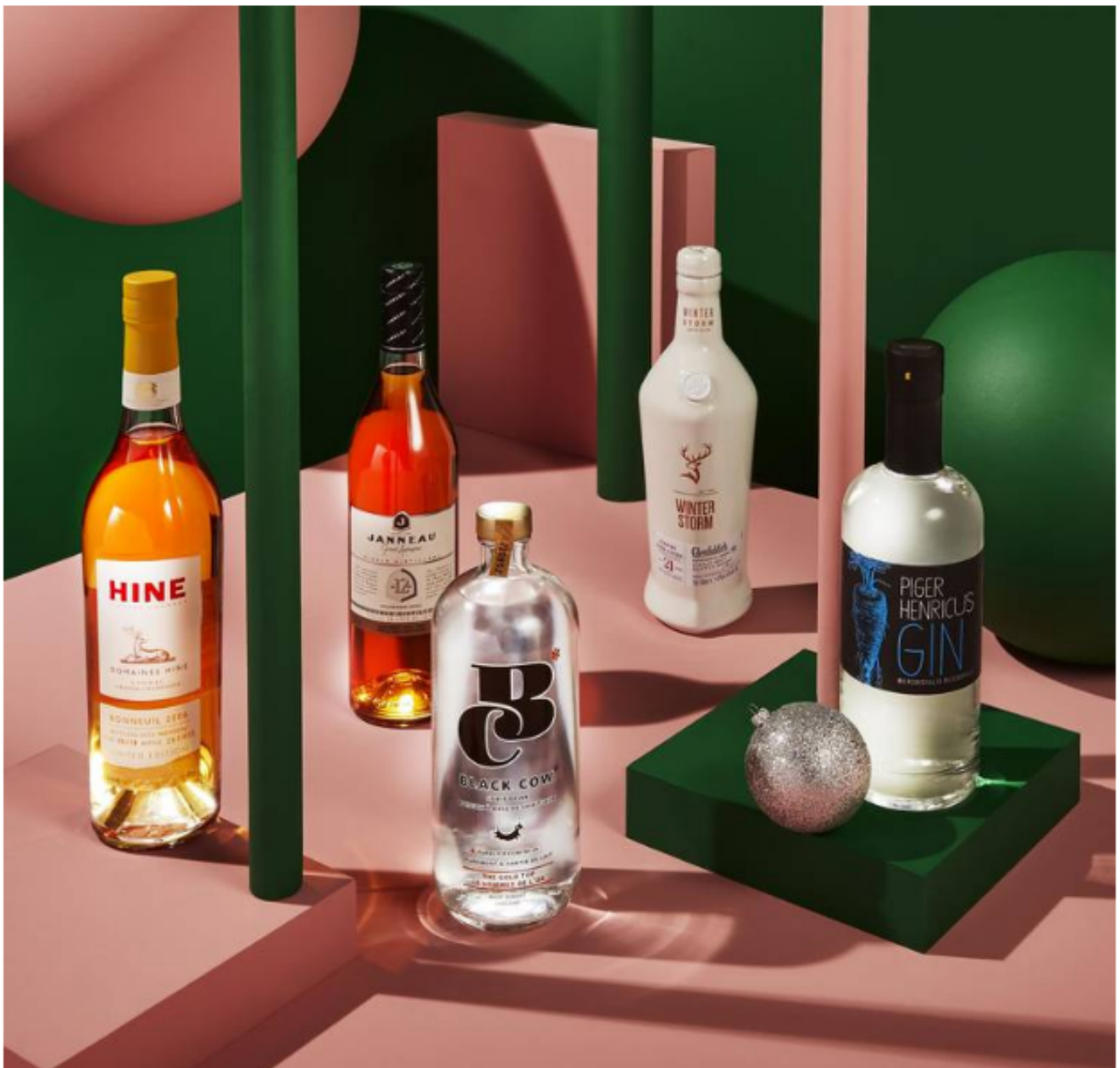




spirits enthusiasts

Cheers to a well-lubricated holiday with novel bottles guaranteed to elevate any bar cart



SUPPORT QUALITY JOURNALISM

Get full access to [globeandmail.com](https://www.globeandmail.com)



JUS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH SARACENO; STYLING BY WILSON WONG

BEPPY CROSARIOL >

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 30, 2017

UPDATED DECEMBER 1, 2017

1. SINGLE ORIGIN

Most Cognacs are blended from casks of varying age to achieve a uniform style year after year. The 19 casks of this limited edition represent a single wine harvest in the Cognac region's finest district, Grande Champagne. In other words: collector-worthy, top-end brandy. But don't let that stop you from dispensing a few a generous drams to (valued) guests this season. Dry and trim, with notes of orange blossom, honey, nougat and a heaping helping of spice.

Hine Bonneuil 2006 Cognac Limited Edition, \$169.60 at select Ontario stores (www.hinecognac.com).

2. REFINED RUSTICITY

Unlike most small-scale Armagnac producers, who rely on single runs in column stills, Janneau takes more of a Cognac approach, with pot stills and a double distillation. What we have here, then, is sort of a hybrid, both rustic and refined, for lack of better terms. Velvety, with a sweet caramel-toffee richness oozing with a flambéed-peach and vanilla centre. Oh, and a sprinkling of roasted nuts. Dessert is served.

Janneau Armagnac 12-year-old, \$59.70 at select Ontario stores, various prices in Alberta (www.armagnac-janneau.com).

3. ICEWINE MASH-UP

This bottle was inspired by a fateful visit Glenfiddich malt master Brian Kinsman made to Niagara one frosty January. It's a 21-year-old Scotch whisky finished in French oak barrels that had once contained Peller Estates icewine. Succulent with a satiny texture and luscious, chewy weight, it unfolds with orange, honey, butterscotch and baking spices along with a classic icewine infusion of tropical fruit from the Great White North. A perfect storm.

Glenfiddich Winter Storm, \$349.95 in Ontario, various prices in Alberta (www.glenfiddich.com).

4. EARTHY FLAVOUR

Gin flavoured with parsnips. Hey, why not? Conceived by Subversives Distillers, a
artisan distillery in Leamington, Ont., in partnership with British Columbia's Leamington

microdistillery in Longueuil, Que., in partnership with Patrice Fortier of La Société des plantes in Kamouraska. That offbeat root vegetable gives this otherwise classically styled and superb dry gin a subtly earthy character that smartly complements the bright-and-spicy botanicals. Who needs a Vitamix kale smoothie when you can drink your vegetables like this?

Piger Henricus Gin, \$44.95 in Ontario, \$30.75 in Quebec (www.subversifs.ca).

5. MILK SHAKE

It's technically a "spirit drink" in Canada because domestic law defines vodka as made from potatoes or grains. This marvellous and unusual potation is made entirely from milk of grass-grazed cows in southern England. Not even water is added (don't ask how they do it, the formula is proprietary). Unsurprisingly, it happens to be exceptionally creamy, with a vanilla-like core and whispers of licorice and cracked pepper. Sorry, not suitable for the vegans on your gift list!

Black Cow Vodka, \$49.95 in Ontario and Nova Scotia (www.blackcow.co.uk).