

# a matter of taste

ALCOHOL: FOR SOME A SIGN OF SAD ADDICTION, FOR OTHERS THE EPITOME OF SOPHISTICATION. BUT MATT WHEELER IS A MAN WHO DOESN'T LIKE TO TAKE SIDES, PREFERRING INSTEAD TO SIT SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE AND WALLOW/REJOICE IN 'ADDICTION'...

The gods had nectar; the cowboys had gulpin' whiskey; the pirates had rum; Dennis Thatcher had aftershave (according to Spitting Image), and the staff here have a drinks cabinet that simply overflows. Yes, good old fashioned booze is essential to life, but with so much around how can you navigate your way through the good, avoiding the bad (and, consequently, the ugly) completely? Well, it's a tricky one, so the best thing you can do is just sit back in your leather armchair, relight your pipe and simply browse this month's SmartLife drinks trolley. God knows we can't guarantee the quality of the eye-candy pushing it, but we can vouch 100% for the quality of the booze it holds...



## Hennessy XO Swarovski Crystal Exclusive Edition

Like a gentleman in a bright pink shirt, Hennessy's XO is secure enough in its masculinity to pull off this dazzling Liberace-esque Swarovski accessory explosion. Indeed, renowned for its powerful, woody, spicy, oily, leather aroma and long-lasting, full-bodied flavors, even though it may look a little more delicate now in its crystal-studded evening wear, it could still take any other cognac in a fight.

Coated way back in 1670 by Naison Hennessy and blended from over 100 eaux-de-vie, if you want to impress both male and female friends at dinner, simply stick this on the table.

ABV: 40%  
Price: 704 £116  
[www.drinkdirect.co.uk](http://www.drinkdirect.co.uk)



## Chateau de Pellehaut La Reserve de Gaston armagnac

Chateau de Pellehaut has been producing armagnac for more than 280 years, so you can be instantly reassured that they've got it nailed by now. Blended from a selection of Ugni Blanc and Folle Blanche grapes, single distilled in a wash-traited alambic and then aged in oak, the youngest blend in the mix is 25 years old. A deep, rich color with orange highlights, La Reserve de Gaston has a bouquet of ripe greenapples and fresh straw with a soft, full flavor of well-matured wood and oak.

Despite being fresh on the scene, La Reserve de Gaston has already won a gold medal in Paris... and we all know how picky those Parisians can be.

ABV: 48%  
Price: 704 £54

[www.pellehaut.com](http://www.pellehaut.com)



## Snow Leopard Vodka Jereboom

Can there be anything more exclusive than a drink made out of an endangered animal? We suspect not. With two fully grown snow leopards destined to sway... what? Ah, I see. Arise.

Produced in a strictly limited edition run of just 25, those whopping 3 lire proceeds of Snow Leopard vodka will give you a warm feeling inside for two seasons. First, this 40% ABV Polish number is made from the finest ingredients and four-stage distilled to create a truly exceptional, smooth vodka with a subtle heat and sizzle. In addition to the usual 10% of profit that's donated to the Snow Leopard Trust UK, a further £30 will be donated for each Jereboom sold, so to make how your head feels the next day, you'll still be free to feel good.

ABV: 40%

Price: 704 £54  
(the best edition, certified and numbered Jereboom)  
[www.theblackdogpub.com](http://www.theblackdogpub.com)

