

F. PAUL PACULT'S

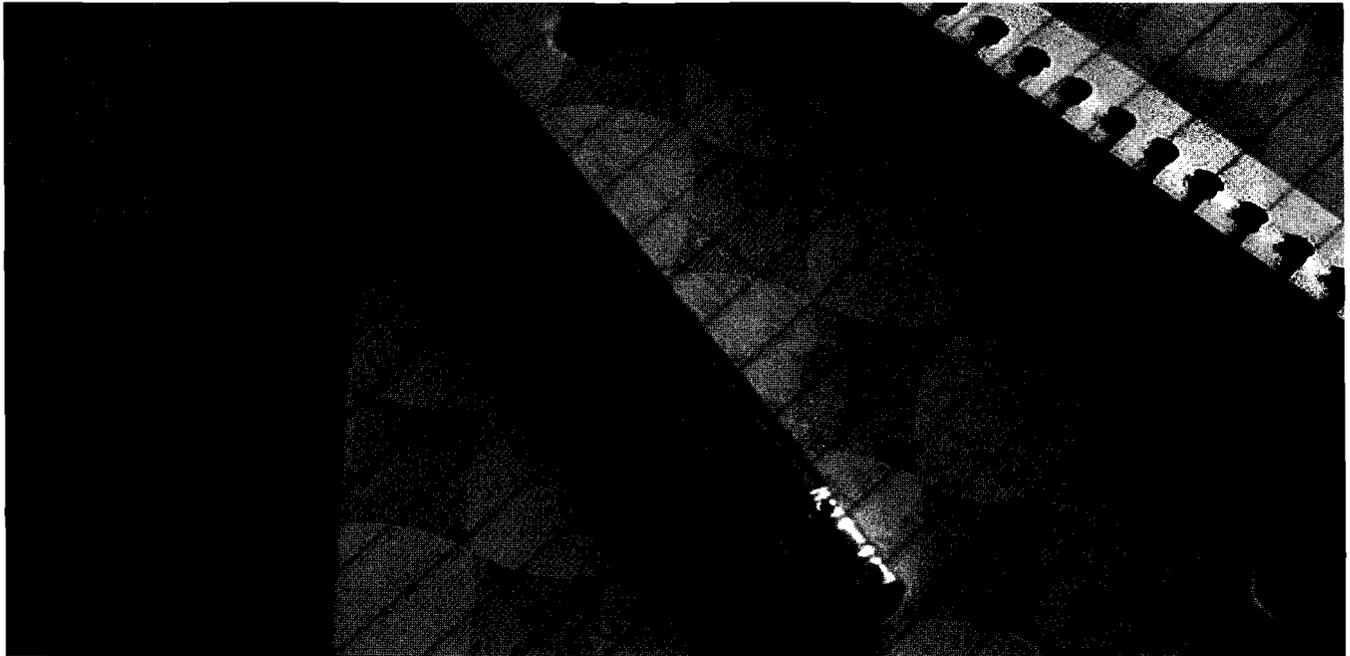
SPIRIT JOURNAL

THE QUARTERLY INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO DISTILLED SPIRITS, BEERS AND WINES

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THE SPIRIT JOURNAL'S

TEST YOUR SPIRITS KNOWLEDGE 2009 QUIZ

TO kick off 2009, our 19th consecutive year of publication, we have the temerity to hit you with a 35-question quiz on spirits. The quiz, of course, is optional and is designed to entertain but we thought it might be illuminating to get some pertinent information across on distilled spirits through one of the best means ever thought of: a fun-to-do, brain-teasing quiz in which the questions are neither too soft nor too tough.

Several subscribers have brought this idea up to us and we like to entertain as many reader-generated story concepts as we reasonably can. The fact is, tackling a quiz is a wonderful way to improve your spirits comprehension.

This inaugural quiz is a mixture of fill-in-the-blanks, true-and-false, and multiple-choice questions. Let us know what you think and if you'd like to see a follow-up quiz sometime in 2009.

Best of luck!

SECTION A: Fill in the blanks.

1. Distilled spirits must first undergo a biochemical transformation, called _____ wherein innate sugars are converted into alcohol through interaction with yeast

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(Canada; Constellation Spirits, Chicago, IL)

40% abv, \$14.

Bright saffron/topaz color; good clarity overall. Comes off aromatically heavily toasted/roasted and leathery in the alluring opening inhalations; another six minutes of aeration bring about heightened leather/cowhide notes that dominate the remaining sniffing period except for a zesty black pepper scent that runs parallel to the saddle leather/chaps/gloves aroma. Entry is acutely and nicely raisiny sweet and date-like; midpalate underscores the pastry/cookie quality (mince meat, fig Newtons) and adds concentrated supplemental flavors of dark honey/dark rum, prune juice,

and cream sherry. Finishes unabashedly sweet, rum-like, to be sure, but neither cloying nor unctuous. I suggest that you have a sweet-tooth before trying. This is not an understated whisky.

Spirit Journal Rating 2009:

★★★/Recommended

**Hirsch Special Reserve
20 Year Old Canadian Rye Whisky**

(Canada; Preiss Imports, Ramona, CA)

43% abv, \$61.

Pale chablis chardonnay yellow/maize color; excellent purity; this appearance is strikingly and curiously light for a 20 year old, oak-aged whisky. The spice level is high and

acutely snappy/botanical in the first sniffs after the pour; an extra eight minutes of air contact unleashes wildly charming aromas of hemp/rope/fiber, sage, rosemary, lavender, vines/brambles, forest floor, and spice cake; this bouquet is all over the map and I'm willing to follow with GPS. Entry is unexpectedly sweet, herbal, and oily; midpalate features long, fruity/spicy flavors of apple butter, baked pears, baked pineapple, baked apple with cinnamon, lavender, and egg cream. Finishes on an intensely herbal/oily note. The best of the Hirsch Canadian ryes by several furlongs.

Spirit Journal Rating 2009:

★★★★/Highly Recommended

new white spirits reviews

VODKA - INTERNATIONAL

45th Parallel Vodka
(USA; 45th Parallel Spirits, New Richmond, WI)

40% abv, \$27.

Bright grain-based vodka with flaw-



less purity. Very becoming and invitingly grainy, dry breakfast cereal opening bouquet that's generous yet lean and focused on the grain; this cracker of a nose grows in intensity with further aeration, offering waves of semisweet, cracked wheat biscuit, molasses, and honey. Entry tastes of succulence and semisweetness and feels oily and rich and velvety on the grateful tongue; midpalate flavors bounce around the palate in the forms of cocoa bean, vanilla bean, coffee bean, and pipe tobacco. Finishes on a sappy sweet note that's candied, botanical, and luscious. The best unflavored vodka I've tasted in the last two to three years, bar none. Superb distilling. A must buy for all vodka lovers.

Spirit Journal Rating 2009:

★★★★/Highest Recommendation

Alchemia Pure Vodka
(Poland; Alchemia Vodka, Brooklyn, NY)

40% abv, \$30.

Impeccably clear and transparent; grain-based. First nosings detect paraffin-like scents of wax paper, sealing wax, and parchment; after another seven minutes of air contact, the waxiness recedes slightly, allowing for more traditional scents of wheat,

maize, and barley. Entry is semisweet, concentrated, and keenly peppery; midpalate displays a full range of grain vodka tastes, from parchment to sap to wheat crackers.

Ends on a metallic/nickel note, which took points away, but it is still lovely and composed.

Spirit Journal Rating 2009:

★★★★/

Highly Recommended

