

OH YES

for pure, intense flavor.

Orchard & Stone Fruit



Apricot
Kineman Small Batch Texas Rakia Apricot Brandy; \$50
This unusual spirit is made in the Central European style of rakia, fruit brandy traditionally made from grapes and/or stone fruit and occasionally herbs. Although distilled in San Antonio, this eau de vie is made using Serbian fruit and a cooper still brought over from Belgrade, so about as close to the old-country version as you can get from a domestic producer. Look for a bold apricot aroma and almond richness on the palate, with a floral touch on the finish.

Pear
St. George Pear Brandy; \$40
I don't do many rakia-style bottlings, but pear is one of the most versatile fruits to turn into eau de vie. This is one of the bolder ones, with plenty of bright, rounded pear aroma and flavor warmed by notes of honey and baking spice. It's made from about 30 pounds of dry-fermented organic Bartlett pears per bottle.

Plum
Maraska Sljivovica; \$26
Among Eastern European countries, plum eau de vie has many names: slivovitz, slivovica, slivka, slivovica and, as this Croatian producer calls it, sljivovica. Some bottlings are practically firewater, but this is not one of them. It shows robust blackberry and dark plum flavors touched with anise and black pepper.

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BY KARA
NEWMAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CHRISSEY LAU

The world of *eau de vie*, French for “water of life,” was once a sleepy category, relegated to the back corner of the bar. But it’s wide awake now.

“For me, *eau de vie* is a really exciting spirit,” says Collin Moody, general manager at Chicago’s Income Tax Bar. He’s curated a selection of *eaux* made by small grower-producers. “It’s really about preserving fruits and a sense of place.”

Most water-clear *eau* is unaged fruit brandy, as tradition dictates. It’s being made across the world in a wide variety of styles, from plum *slivovitz* to cherry-based *kirsch*, but not always just from fruit: There’s an American-made Douglas Fir brandy that’s like a breath of fresh forest air.

At home, Moody often serves the spirit neat after dinner parties.

“It has the lightness and freshness to energize me and our guests at the end of a meal,” he says. With a chuckle, he adds, “It helps you wake up and go do the dishes after everyone leaves instead of falling right to bed.”