

# FOOD & WINE

## Secondary Barrel Finishes Are Changing How Tequila Tastes

Beyond blanco, reposado, and añejo, the type of wood and secondary cask can dramatically shift a tequila's flavor profile.



Barrel aging is an important factor in how a tequila expresses itself. Blanco, reposado, and añejo are classifications based on time spent in wood. Yet the range of vessels in which the spirit is aged, and any secondary barrels in which it may have been finished, have a greater effect than most people realize.

“I see barrel-finished tequilas as an intentional and highly curated part of our beverage narrative,” says Emanuel Nunes, director of bars at [The Riviera Maya EDITION](#) at Kanai, located in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

“While they are not the central focus of our signature cocktail program, which is rooted in showcasing the pure expression of agave, they play a significant role in how we elevate familiar experiences.

“In classic cocktails, especially our [Margarita](#), barrel-finished tequilas create a distinct sense of discovery,” he says. “[It’s a] drink guests already know, reimagined with added richness, softness, and complexity, delivering a clearly elevated and more luxurious expression of a timeless favorite.”

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## 1800 Añejo



The [1800 Añejo](#) bottling is one of the more popular barrel-aged tequilas. Interestingly, it leverages the unique character of both American and French oak, as the year-plus that the spirit matures in them allows the more generous vanilla of the former and the subtlety of the latter to shine. It's earned a fan in Emanuel Nunes. "I value 1800 Añejo for its structure and approachability, offering a profile that bridges tequila and brown-spirit drinkers," he says. "It delivers aromas and flavors of caramel, toasted oak, cocoa, and roasted agave, with a warm, lingering finish...its richness adds depth and weight to the drink."

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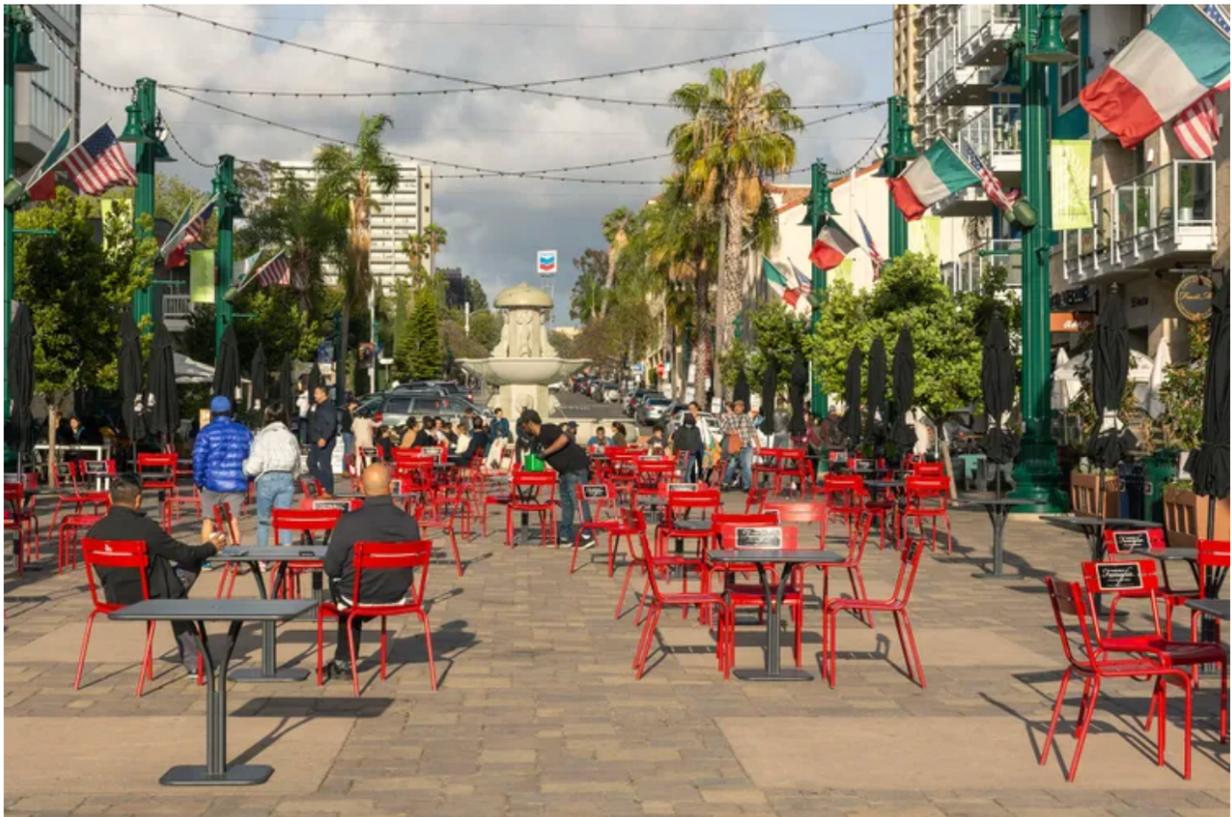
## Casa Dragones Añejo Barrel Blend



The [Casa Dragones Añejo Barrel Blend](#) brings together two tequilas, one aged in French oak and the other in American. The result is a well-spiced yet generous añejo. “What I most like about it is how that multi-barrel approach adds extra layers to it, soft spices, and subtle dried fruits, while still keeping the agave character,” says Nunes. “We typically use it in our high-end tequila tastings, where guests can really experience how secondary barrel aging adds complexity, while still respecting the identity of the agave. It also works beautifully in cocktails. It makes for an exceptional [tequila Old Fashioned](#), and even an amazing [Tommy’s Margarita](#), where that added depth takes a familiar classic to a next level.”

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

## This Is Where You'll Find the Largest Little Italy in the World—and No, It's Not in New York City



In terms of stays, meanwhile, Little Italy benefits from its proximity to Balboa Park and the [Gaslamp Quarter](#), which is to say that you'll have no shortage of choices for accommodations. Upscale boutiques like [Carte Hotel San Diego Downtown](#) and [La Pensione Hotel](#) have thoughtful amenities and unbeatable locations. Both are a short walk away from Waterfront Park, Little Italy's go-to spot to enjoy ocean views and a reminder that, after all, you are still in San Diego.

# THE BEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

YOUR GUIDE TO SOUTHWEST TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE

WELLNESS

## Southwest winter wellness spa experiences: Sedona to San Diego



Winter in the Southwest can leave mind, body and skin depleted. Instead of hibernating, make this the season for desert clarity, ocean air resets and skin-saving rituals. It's the ideal time to counter dry air, chilly-weather weariness and get some much-needed pampering.

From Arizona energy work to coastal longevity therapies in Southern California, these standout spa experiences are designed to restore balance, boost radiance and support deeper renewal before spring's momentum returns.



## Spa Brezza (Mission Bay, California)

Why it's perfect for winter wellness: A bayside reset blending hydration, magnesium-rich relaxation and stress-reducing therapies designed to restore balance and support full-body renewal.

Winter wellness highlights: Adorned from Head to Toe (100 minutes): A 50-minute Hydramemory Glow Facial paired with a 50-minute Magnesium Neroli Blossom Massage to promote muscle relaxation, replenish skin and encourage deep restorative calm.

Good to know: Seasonal wellness experiences are available through late winter and early spring. Advance booking recommended.

Website: [Book seasonal treatments, Spa Brezza](#)

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# Southern California



## L'Auberge Del Mar x LIVV Natural (Del Mar & Cardiff-by-the-Sea, California)

Why it's perfect for winter wellness: A coastal longevity escape blending oceanfront luxury with advanced therapies designed to support recovery, restore energy and promote cellular vitality.

Winter wellness highlights: LIVV Well Suite (two-night minimum stay): A personalized longevity-focused experience combining luxe accommodations at L'Auberge Del Mar with VIP roundtrip transportation to LIVV Cardiff for a four-hour Longevity Spa Experience. Four-Hour Longevity Spa Experience: A curated selection of therapies, including IV therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, wellness injections, and contrast therapy, each designed to enhance recovery, optimize cellular health and support sustained vitality. In-Room Wellness Amenities: Restorative touches designed to extend the benefits of treatment and encourage continued relaxation between sessions.

Good to know: Two-night minimum required. Priced at \$2,485 per night for two guests. Advance coordination is required to customize therapies.

Website: [LIVV Natural Cardiff](#), [L'Auberge Del Mar](#)