



Ale and hearty

Winner of the coveted prize of UK Brewer of the Year, Cornwall's St Austell has recently launched a new oak-aged beer. Smugglers Ale isn't your average pint; it's made from a blend of dark ale and oak-aged

barley wine, before being matured in whisky casks for three months in the brewery's Victorian vaults. You'll get bits of spice, toffee and a lick of vanilla but at 6% alcohol, you should take it easy. £2.50 for 500ml; the beer is widely available across the south-west, or you can buy it online at st.austellbreweryshop.co.uk



Drinks NEWS

Gin with a Celtic kick

A sleek new Scottish gin has hit the shelves. Caorunn is a small batch gin produced at Balmenach distillery in Scotland using pure grain spirit and Scottish Highland water. The blend of botanicals includes heather, bog myrtle and dandelion, giving a dry and citrusy

gin. The quirkily shaped bottle makes it a great gift for gin lovers. £21.99 for 700ml; royalmilewhiskies.com or from the London and Edinburgh shops.



Taste trial

The Sampler in London's Islington is a wine shop that allows you to try up to 80 wines before you pick a bottle. The store has ten sampling machines that work on a charge card system – top up the card and away you go. It's been so successful the company is opening two new stores in west London (Notting Hill and Kensington). With samples starting at 30p, it also has an 'icons' machine, with some of the world's most sought-after wines for you to try without breaking the bank, such as Château Latour. thesampler.co.uk



Want to taste new wines or learn how to mix rum cocktails? Rebecca Gibb has it covered



A not so rum do

Sample spirits, meet mixologists and sip exotic cocktails at The Rum Experience. The event takes place at The Royal Horticultural Halls in Victoria, London,

on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 October. *Food and Travel* readers can buy tickets for £18 (normally £25), email rumfest@rt-com.com to request a discount voucher, which you can use to purchase tickets on the door. For further information, go to rumfest.co.uk

The Wine Show

Taste wines from around the world at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London, from 22-25 October. Discover new regions and grape varieties on a wine walk and let the experts guide you through various bottles at the tasting theatre, before meeting the *Food and Travel* team at our stand.



Tickets start from £12.50; you can book online at wineshow.co.uk or call the ticket hotline on 0871 230 7144.

Life's too short

Life's Too Short to Drink Bad Wine is not only a hardback compilation of Simon Hoggart's top 100 wines. It's also an incredibly engaging read. The wine correspondent for *The Spectator* and *Guardian* columnist recommends great value wines, like Chile's Errazuriz Wini Ferment Chardonnay, as well as fine wines for special occasions. However, this isn't a shopping list – there are interesting features interspersed, ranging from how to read a German wine label (with difficulty!) to an account of the 1976 Judgement of Paris, when Californian wines beat the French in a blind tasting. Quercelle. £14.99.

