



# THIS IS SAN FRANCISCO (and this is the morning after)



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## Bar (Almost) None

What happens when the city's top bartenders are forced to choose? Introducing the ultimate five-bottle bar, perfectly sized for apartment dwelling. BY CAMPER ENGLISH



**E**ven star bartenders have limitations. The reality of the city's small spaces often forces them to choose between spirits, like picking a favorite child. Jeff Hollinger and Jonny Raglin of Absinthe have learned this all too well as they prepare Comstock Saloon this spring. The centerpiece of the renovated 1907 space—which has served as a speakeasy during Prohibition, a dive bar and most recently a microbrewery—is only big enough to hold one or two bottles of each key spirit. So

**We posed the question: What would you choose if you could only choose one?**

we posed the question to some of San Francisco's best bartenders—Raglin, Martin Cate of Smuggler's Cove and Marcovaldo Dionysos, formerly of Clock Bar: What would you choose if you could only choose one?

### • VODKA

"You don't want to get too crazy because it's such a neutral spirit," said Dionysos, yet he chose the most expensive (and sippable) vodka of the three: **Charbay** (\$36). Raglin went with the accessible **Ketel One** (\$24), which he said is "neutral but has some character to it," while Cate chose harder-to-find **Sobieski** (\$14), well-made and sold at a "very agreeable price point." **Our pick: Ketel One**

### • TEQUILA

SF bartenders drink pricey tequila. Dionysos and Cate both favored the lightly-aged **Siete Leguas Reposado** (\$48), of which Cate said "Reposado has better versatility for both classic tequila drinks and for enjoying neat

or on the rocks," while Raglin dissented with the unaged **El Tesoro Platinum** (\$46). **Our pick: Siete Leguas Reposado**

### • RUM

**Appleton Estate Reserve** (\$30) was the first choice of reluctantly-pigeonholed rum-lover Cate, but both Dionysos and Raglin ultimately chose **Barbancourt**. Dionysos went with the 8-year-old (\$27) and Raglin the White (\$18), about which he said, "You need [white] for cocktails in general." **Our pick: Rhum Barbancourt White**

### • AMERICAN WHISKEY

Though Raglin considered **Buffalo Trace Bourbon** (\$23)—which was also Cate's choice ("The 1.75

liters go real quick," he said)—Raglin ultimately picked **Rittenhouse 100-Proof Rye** (\$20). Dionysos, on the other hand, chose **Bulleit Bourbon** (\$25). **Our pick: Buffalo Trace Kentucky Straight Bourbon**

### • GIN

We expected all three to choose **Plymouth** (\$30), as SF is one of its top markets. Cate picked it for its element of "bright citrus with mellow juniper, which makes it a very flexible mixer." Dionysos also picked Plymouth, but gin-obsessive Raglin opted for the more robust **Beefeater** (\$16). **Our pick: Plymouth**

*Ketel One is widely available in stores; all others at Cask, 17 Third St., 415-281-6486, caskstore.com*