



Drinks you really

don't want to \$

**PICTURED DRINK: SIDECAR 13**

**How Much:** \$175, ATLANTA'S 4TH MOST EXPENSIVE COCKTAIL

**Where To Get It:** **Park 75** at Four Seasons, 75 14th St., (404) 881-9898, [www.fourseasons.com/atlanta](http://www.fourseasons.com/atlanta)

**Why It's Worth It:** "Louis XIII is Remy Martin's premium cognac," says Edward Healey, lounge manager for Park 75 at Four Seasons. It lingers long on the palate with "a warm feeling that goes down your throat, revealing its quality and age," he says. Gran Marnier 100 lends sweetness, while fresh lemon and lime juices lighten the drink. "If you're a novice, the typical American palate lends to the sweeter side," says Healey. "If you already like cognac, this is a different twist."



Spill

TEXT HOPE S. PHILBRICK PHOTOS CHRIS RANK

## THE 10 MOST EXPENSIVE COCKTAILS IN ATLANTA, AND WHY THEY'RE WORTH IT

Two events inspired this article. First, I was recently invited to preview the drinks on a new martini menu. The concoctions proved to be tasty, but I secretly believed they'd never sell: Who'd pay \$7 for one? Days later, I attended a cognac tasting where I was shocked to learn that the spirit being poured routinely sells at bars for hundreds of dollars per shot. Yet, as I sipped, my shock was tempered by the sensations washing over my taste buds. I soon found myself thinking: "It's totally worth it." I started wondering how much Atlantans will pay for cocktails and which ones make extravagance worthwhile. We at **THE WINE REPORT** figured that you'd like to know, too.

In choosing these Top 10 costly cocktails, we established some guidelines. Yes, shots of premium liquors can cost hundreds of dollars, but because no single establishment has a monopoly on a bottled spirit—and, in fact, you can buy a bottle at the liquor store and enjoy the same stuff at home—none of these costly shots made our list. A cocktail, by definition, is a blend of various ingredients, and the best ones convey a flavor that is greater than the sum of their parts.

We also excluded drinks where some add-on souvenir might jack up or help justify the high price tag. None of these drinks includes a glass you get to keep or a tennis-bracelet-as-a-garnish gimmick. These prices may empty your wallet in one fell swoop, but the cost is for the beverage alone.

To justify its high price, a cocktail cannot merely include a high-priced spirit. For example, you could order an \$85 margarita at Sala – Sabor de Mexico [1186 North Highland Ave. NE, (404) 872-7203] by requesting Herradura Supremo Selection tequila and Gran Marnier 150. "But I'd talk somebody out of that," says Matt Coggin, general manager. "Both those liquors taste great on their own, but I'd recommend the \$12 version that uses La Odeirosa, which we do sell on a regular basis. If you want to spend \$85, order a bottle of wine." We couldn't agree more. The chosen spirit needs to add some flavor element that's crucial to the final results. Therefore, our list highlights those cocktails that we discovered are most worth their high price.



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**8 SOUTHERN AMBASSADOR**

How Much: \$40

Where To Get It: **Park 75** at Four Seasons, 75 14th St., (404) 881-9898, [www.fourseasons.com/atlanta](http://www.fourseasons.com/atlanta)

Why It's Worth It: This drink presents three Southern traditions in one glass: Georgia peaches, Kentucky bourbon and mint julep. "To honor one of our regular guests who's the largest peach owner in Georgia, we did a little twist to the traditional julep by adding peaches," says Edward Healey, lounge manager. Southern Ambassador features 20-year-old Distiller's Masterpiece, "the oldest and most expensive bourbon," he says.

**7 SAKE FISHBOWL**

How Much: \$55

Where To Get It: **Lucky China**, 4524 Chamblee-Dunwoody Road, (770) 458-5199

Why It's Worth It: This party-in-a-glass features watermelon-, apple- and mango-flavored Korean Soju, plum-flavored Choya Umeshu Japanese Sake, Zitang Sparkling Sake and two other high-quality sakes with fresh orange juice and lemon juice. It's served in a large fishbowl glass and comes with four straws—so bring friends

**6 SWEET SUICIDE**

How Much: \$55

Where To Get It:

**Pampas Steakhouse**, 10970-A State Bridge Road, Alpharetta, (678) 339-0029 [www.pampassteakhouse.com](http://www.pampassteakhouse.com)

Why It's Worth It: Mike Madonna, loyal customer and tequila aficionado, and Mark Carter, manager, created this recipe featuring three top-tier tequilas—Don Julio 1942, Cuervo Reserva de la Familia and Asombroso Añejo—and Gran Marnier 100, mixed with sweet and sour plus a dash of Coca-Cola, "for color," says Madonna. "We were going for an upgraded version of a Long Island Iced Tea. It's smooth and easy to drink." It is tasty. But be careful: Folks have been known to fall off their stools after finishing just one.

**5 MILLION-DOLLAR MARGARITA**

How Much: \$55

Where To Get It: **Park 75** at Four Seasons, 75 14th St., (404) 881-9898, [www.fourseasons.com/atlanta](http://www.fourseasons.com/atlanta)

Why It's Worth It: Sure, it's got lemon, lime and salt just like other margaritas. But every detail has been upgraded. "For the rim, we get fresh sea salt that's soft as a snowflake," says Healey. "This cocktail tastes unlike typical margaritas, because it uses Corizon—the premium tequila," he says. "It's 100% añejo, aged 10 years, and it's got a whole different mellow taste." Gran Marnier 100 adds just the right amount of sweetness.

**4 SIDECAR 13**

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**3 LES FLEURS DU ROI**

How Much: \$400

Where To Get It: **Au Pied de Cochon** at the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel, 3315 Peachtree Road NE, (404) 946-9070, [www.aupieddecochonatlanta.com](http://www.aupieddecochonatlanta.com)

Why It's Worth It: Pairing Remy Martin Louis XIII with Perrier Jouet La Belle Epoque Fleur de Champagne makes sense. "It's a perfect combination," says René van Camp, corporate beverage director of the Americas for InterContinental Hotels Group. "Cognac and Champagne are a fantastic combination, and these two are the most exclusive examples you can get." Dashes of brown sugar syrup and Angostura Aromatic Bitters add elements of flavor that take these "flowers of the King" to regal heights.

**10 THE GREAT CAVALLI**

How Much: \$20

Where To Get It:

**The Oceanaire Seafood Room**

1100 Peachtree St. NW, (404) 475-2277, [www.theoceanaire.com](http://www.theoceanaire.com)

Why It's Worth It: This drink features ultrapremium Roberto Cavalli vodka—distilled from fine Italian grains and filtered through crushed Italian marble—mixed with POM pomegranate juice and Pama pomegranate liqueur, shaken and served straight up. Some believe the pomegranate was the original forbidden fruit; why resist a temptation like this?

**9 SUPREMA CENTANARIO MARGARITA**

How Much: \$35

Where To Get It: **Agave**, 242 Boulevard SE, (404) 588-0006, [www.agaverestaurant.com](http://www.agaverestaurant.com)

Why It's Worth It: What sets this margarita apart from the multitude of margaritas out there are the quality and simplicity of its ingredients: José Cuervo Reserva de la Familia tequila, Gran Marnier 100, fresh-squeezed lime juice and a splash of sour served straight up. Pairing the "oak, honey and caramel flavors of aged tequila with sweet orange, lime and sour" creates "unsurpassed" results, says Tim Pinkham, general manager.



2

**L'ESPRIT XO**

How Much: \$450

Where To Get It:

**Au Pied de Cochon at the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel,** 3315 Peachtree Road NE, (404) 946-9070, [www.aupieddecochonatlanta.com](http://www.aupieddecochonatlanta.com)

**Why It's Worth It:** This smooth and flowery cocktail combines Courvoisier L'Esprit and Extase XO. "This highest-end Courvoisier mixes perfectly with orange," says van Camp. "It's the best combination you can get."

While the fine cognac is enjoyable on its own, this recipe, created in consultation with a Courvoisier representative, "adds sweetness and makes it more accessible to our guests."

1

**LE RÊVE DES ANGES**

How Much: \$550

**Where To Get It: Au Pied de Cochon at the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel,** 3315 Peachtree Road NE, (404) 946-9070, [www.aupieddecochonatlanta.com](http://www.aupieddecochonatlanta.com)

**Why It's Worth It:** Named Angels' Dream because this drink is "the best it ever gets," says van Camp, the recipe combines top-of-the-line Hennessy Ellipse cognac with a dash of Chambord, topped with Dom Perignon Champagne. "Maurice Hennessy was very involved with the drink's creation," he says. The flavors wash the palate in layers: sweet raspberry is followed by Champagne that quickly dissipates to reveal the smooth cognac, which lingers into a vanilla note.

It's no coincidence that the four priciest cocktails count cognac as an ingredient. Cognacs are expensive because they're expensive to make. "Production costs for cognac are as much as eight times higher than whiskey," says Jerome Durand, marketing and communication manager for the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac. On top of that, some cognacs are aged for generations before bottling. Older cognacs are smoother and carry a hefty price.

You may wonder: Is anyone really buying these top-priced cocktails? "We sell an average of 15 per month of the top three combined," says van Camp. "Which is actually more than we expected." He adds that, excepting drinks garnished with diamonds, rubies and gold—which does seem like cheating—Le Rêve des Anges is not only Atlanta's most expensive cocktail; it's the most expensive cocktail in the world.

*Hope S. Philbrick is THE WINE REPORT'S assistant editor.*

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**April issue, Travel and Leisure**

*Atlanta's Best Restaurants:* Floataway Café, Toulouse, Seeger's

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Toulouse award for Best Wine List/Service, Bistro, Southeast United States*

**2001 - Where Magazine Fifth Annual Awards**

*Most Exceptional Wine List in Atlanta: Toulouse*

*Runners up: Atlanta Grill - Ritz Carlton, Bones, Chops, ENO, Morton's - Buckhead, Ray's on the River, Soho, Tiburon Grille, Watershed*

**2000 - Santé Magazine Third Annual Hospitality Awards**

*One winner from Atlanta: Toulouse award for Best Wine List/Service, Bistro, Southeast United States*

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