

COTTAGES & GARDENS

Holiday Gift List

23 elixirs worth the splurge.

This blockbuster list of limited-edition spirits, prestige cuvée Champagnes, and distinctive red wines will make you thirsty—and maybe a bit curious. I attended scores of spirits launches, Champagne soirées, and serious wine tastings to bring you the back stories of these remarkable bottles. To inspire, I've thrown in a few outrageously priced collectibles—a \$10,000 bourbon and a \$25,000 whisky—to fulfill the fantasist in all of us.

CHAMPAGNE

Bollinger R.D. Extra Brut 2008 (\$440)



With major wine critics raving about the R.D. 2008 and awarding it close to 100-point scores, this Extra Brut, with only three grams of dosage, is highly aromatic and has notes of nectarine, apricot, marzipan, and ginger along with a spectrum of nutty flavors—almond, macadamia, and hazelnut. Composed of 71% Pinot Noir and 29% Chardonnay, which rested on its lees for 13 years, the R.D. (recently disgorged, late last year) Champagne has energy and shows a bone-dry, slightly saline finish.