

Food & drink

THE 0.1 PER CENT

Hennessy's most premium cognac, Paradis Imperial, combines the knowledge of generations of master blenders gained over more than two centuries

How do we measure excellence? In an age of ever-evolving technology the demarcation between "good" and "best" is perhaps a subjective one. But above these is a third category, one reserved for the undeniably remarkable – the best of the best. Excellence. It's an apt description for the jewel of the Hennessy collection, Paradis Imperial.

Created from a blend of only 10 out of every 10,000 eaux-de-vie harvested, Paradis Imperial is Hennessy's most elite cognac, and a testament to the art of selection. Its production demands perfection from Hennessy's master blender, whose job it is to choose, nurture and blend each individual component to create his masterpiece.

It's a labour of both skill and savoir-faire that takes years to acquire. Over time, with precise tasting techniques and secrets inherited from his predecessors, the master blender learns to detect the promise of excellence. He then patiently nurtures each eau-de-vie, ageing it in casks until it reaches the peak of elegance. Only then is it ready to become part of the final Paradis Imperial blend. The result is an exquisite, light liquid that refuses to be ordinary and defies preconceptions about aged cognacs.

Paradis Imperial is a subtly elegant drink. Its light golden hue belies its remarkably complex composition, and its lengthy transition from grape to fine cognac over more than two centuries. Each decanter of Paradis Imperial consists of a rare blend of carefully chosen 19th- and 20th-century eaux-de-vie, matured in low-tannin, traditional old casks to preserve finesse.

On the nose, a fresh bouquet of floral notes plays with subtle aromas of orange, jasmine, and a light smoky accent, evoking sensations of a crisp spring day. To finish, it comes presented in a suitably regal crystal glass decanter, adorned with a crystal stopper.

The key to perfecting Paradis Imperial lies in the prioritisation of quality over quantity. The master blender works like a chef preparing a dish, carefully choosing a few ingredients and cooking them separately to best preserve their taste, before assembling them. The recipes and techniques he uses have been passed down to him through generations, and taught to him in practice, so he knows exactly when and how the right eaux-de-vie are ready to be blended. When each eau-de-vie has been added to the final blend, the outcome goes beyond the individual characteristics of each one.

Inspired by a bespoke Hennessy cognac blend first produced in 1818, Hennessy Paradis Imperial was created by seventh-generation master blender, Yann Fillioux in 2011. The original blend on which Paradis Imperial is based was a bespoke production made on request by the first Fillioux family master blender for Tsar Alexander I's 40th birthday.

Since then the Fillioux family has aged and protected an elite selection of eaux-de-vie, curating a rare and bespoke collection of superior liquids. It is this 0.1 per cent, the undeniably remarkable, that comes together to create the final Hennessy Paradis Imperial blend, a superior cognac experience 250 years in the making.

[hennessy.com](https://www.hennessy.com)

Opposite: Hennessy Paradis Imperial is the result of generations of savoir-faire for which only the top 0.1 per cent of eaux-de-vie are selected

