



AgentRank

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WHITEPAPER · JUNE 16, 2026

The New AI Battlegrounds in Spirits

How AI Recommendations Are Reshaping
Tequila · Vodka · Whiskey · Gin



TEQUILA



VODKA



WHISKEY



GIN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Spirits is too broad to be a single AI recommendation market.

At umbrella level, Spirits looks fragmented. Jose Cuervo, Baileys, Hennessy, Bacardi and Smirnoff each hold only around 4–5% AI recommendation share. The top three hold 14%, the top five 23%.

But broken down by spirit type, the structure sharpens. **Tequila, Vodka, Whiskey** and **Gin** behave like four separate AI markets — different leaders, different challenger dynamics, different platform risks, different proof requirements.

AI does not recommend "spirits". It recommends a specific brand for a specific category, occasion, taste profile, price tier or use case.

*AI recommendation visibility in Spirits is not won at mega-category level. It is won **category by category, brand by brand, answer by answer.***

BATTLEGROUND MAP

Each category has its own leader and its own level of stability.

TEQUILA**Jose Cuervo · 33.8%**

HIGHLY CONCENTRATED

Strong leader. Defendable stronghold; selective challenger windows in premium and agave.

VODKA**Smirnoff · 29.0%**

HIGHLY CONTESTED

Open battleground. Absolut at 26.5% — a 2.5pt gap that can move.

WHISKEY**Johnnie Walker · 26.2%**

MODERATELY CONCENTRATED

Defensible authority lead. Jack Daniel's, Chivas, Jameson and Jim Beam remain pressure points.

GIN**Bombay Sapphire · 23.9%**

TWO-BRAND BATTLE

Most fragile leadership: Tanqueray 23.7% — separated by 0.2pt.

UMBRELLA VS CATEGORY

At Spirits level, leaders are tightly grouped — and misleading.

The umbrella Spirits view shows the top brands within 1pt of each other. It hides the fact that AI recommends within a specific spirit type, not across them.

Rank	Brand	AI Share	Note
1	Jose Cuervo	4.8%	Tequila lead drives umbrella position
2	Baileys	4.8%	Cream liqueur — separate AI question
3	Hennessy	4.6%	Cognac authority — separate AI question
4	Bacardi	4.5%	Rum lead — separate AI question
5	Smirnoff	4.1%	Vodka lead drives umbrella position

CATEGORY LEADERS — A SHARPER PICTURE

Category	Leader	Leader Share	Structure
Tequila	Jose Cuervo	33.8%	Highly concentrated
Vodka	Smirnoff	29.0%	Highly contested
Whiskey	Johnnie Walker	26.2%	Moderately concentrated
Gin	Bombay Sapphire	23.9%	Two-brand battle

TEQUILA

Jose Cuervo holds a commanding AI lead.

Jose Cuervo leads with 33.8% AI recommendation share — more than double Patrón at 16.0%. Don Julio (13.2%), Sauza (9.4%) and a separate Patron entry (7.7%) complete the top tier. Top three: 63%. Top five: 80%.

AI TOP BRANDS



Jose Cuervo



Patrón



Don Julio



Sauza



Patron

AI LEADERS

Rank	Brand	AI Share	Avg Score	Coverage
1	Jose Cuervo	33.8%	33.76	102
2	Patrón	16.0%	23.71	69
3	Don Julio	13.2%	17.29	78
4	Sauza	9.4%	16.05	60
5	Patron	7.7%	24.53	32

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

Jose Cuervo must defend mainstream leadership while strengthening authenticity cues. Patrón and Don Julio should attack with premium agave, additive transparency and expert endorsement.

TEQUILA · DRIVERS

What AI rewards — and what weakens recommendation confidence.

PLATFORM PATTERN

**ChatGPT**

Jose Cuervo balanced; Patrón and Don Julio show premium pull.

**Gemini**

Leader strong; challengers weaker — structural opportunity.

**Grok**

Patrón and Don Julio over-perform on cocktail and value signals.

**Claude**

Sauza unusually strong; trust signals reward authenticity cues.

**DeepSeek**

Additive-free, agave-source and NOM proof help challengers.

WINNING PHRASES (EUROPE & NA)

smooth agave flavour · clean finish · premium tequila · great for margaritas · 100% agave · no additives · smooth finish · great neat or in cocktails

WHAT WEAKENS RECOMMENDATION

additive concerns · weak NOM transparency · celebrity-brand skepticism · industrial diffuser concerns · artificial vanilla masking · missing agave source · no additive-free verification

VODKA

Smirnoff leads — but Absolut is within striking distance.

Smirnoff leads with 29.0% AI recommendation share; Absolut is 2.5pt behind at 26.5%. Grey Goose holds a premium position at 16.2%, with Belvedere and Ketel One smaller but established. Top three: 72%. Top five: 81%.

AI TOP BRANDS



Smirnoff



Absolut



Grey Goose



Belvedere



Ketel One

AI LEADERS

Rank	Brand	AI Share	Avg Score	Coverage
1	Smirnoff	29.0%	29.83	99
2	Absolut	26.5%	26.79	101
3	Grey Goose	16.2%	18.40	90
4	Belvedere	6.1%	11.46	54
5	Ketel One	3.1%	10.06	31

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

Smirnoff converts mainstream familiarity into preference (57% win rate vs Absolut 28%). Absolut's path: close the gap via purity, heritage and creative identity. Grey Goose and Belvedere must convert premium visibility into preference.

VODKA · DRIVERS

What AI rewards — and what weakens recommendation confidence.

PLATFORM PATTERN

**ChatGPT**

Absolut over-performs; Smirnoff's mainstream lead is not absolute.

**Gemini**

Both leaders weaker — clean filtration and heritage matter.

**Grok**

Smirnoff and premium tier strong; Absolut softer.

**Claude**

Smirnoff trust signal strong; Belvedere and Grey Goose competitive.

**DeepSeek**

Absolut and Belvedere lift on technical purity and filtration proof.

WINNING PHRASES (EUROPE & NA)

clean smooth taste · crisp finish · mixes well · versatile spirit · premium vodka · smooth texture · no burn · crystal clear · no aftertaste

WHAT WEAKENS RECOMMENDATION

generic purity claims · weak distillation explanation · price confusion · harsh chemical taste · missing distillation count · no source ingredient · weak filtration detail · no gluten certification

WHISKEY

Johnnie Walker leads — but Jack Daniel's signal is stronger than share suggests.

Johnnie Walker holds 26.2% AI recommendation share with a 60% visibility-to-preference win rate. Jack Daniel's (13.2%), Chivas Regal (8.9%), a Jack Daniel's variant (7.4%) and Jameson (6.6%) follow — with Jim Beam at 6.1%. Top three: 48%. Top five: 62%.

AI TOP BRANDS



Johnnie Walker



Jack Daniel's



Chivas Regal



Jameson



Jim Beam

AI LEADERS

Rank	Brand	AI Share	Avg Score	Coverage
1	Johnnie Walker	26.2%	29.07	92
2	Jack Daniel's	13.2%	22.05	61
3	Chivas Regal	8.9%	18.57	49
4	Jack Daniel's (variant)	7.4%	27.93	27
5	Jameson	6.6%	16.39	41

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

Johnnie Walker should strengthen flavor, age and distillery authority. Jack Daniel's should consolidate naming and capitalise on its strong preference signal. Chivas, Jameson and Jim Beam should sharpen category roles.

WHISKEY · DRIVERS

What AI rewards — and what weakens recommendation confidence.

PLATFORM PATTERN

**ChatGPT**

Chivas and Jameson over-perform; Johnnie Walker softer.

**Gemini**

Jack Daniel's and Jameson lift on American/Irish style cues.

**Grok**

Johnnie Walker and Jack Daniel's dominate; Chivas weaker.

**Claude**

Johnnie Walker very strong; trust and authority pay off.

**DeepSeek**

Chivas and Jameson reward distillery and tasting-note depth.

WINNING PHRASES (EUROPE & NA)

smoky finish · rich oak notes · smooth sipping whisky · balanced flavor · smooth finish · caramel notes
· great neat or on rocks · complex but approachable · great value

WHAT WEAKENS RECOMMENDATION

confusing tasting notes · inflated premium claims · weak age transparency · harsh young ethanol burn
· artificial notes · missing age statement · no mash bill · weak tasting-note depth · no distillery source

GIN

Bombay Sapphire and Tanqueray are separated by 0.2 of a point.

Bombay Sapphire leads Gin with 23.9% AI recommendation share — Tanqueray follows at 23.7%. Gordon's holds 13.1%, Beefeater 8.1%. This is a true two-brand AI race where wording, retailer signal quality and review language can shift leadership.

AI TOP BRANDS



Bombay Sapphire



Tanqueray



Gordon's



Beefeater

AI LEADERS

Rank	Brand	AI Share	Avg Score	Coverage
1	Bombay Sapphire	23.9%	—	—
2	Tanqueray	23.7%	—	—
3	Gordon's	13.1%	—	—
4	Beefeater	8.1%	—	—

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

The Gin race is a language battle. Bombay Sapphire and Tanqueray both need sharper botanical, G&T, citrus and style language. Gordon's is the under-covered challenger with the highest preference upside if coverage grows.

GIN · DRIVERS

What AI rewards — and what weakens recommendation confidence.

PLATFORM PATTERN

**ChatGPT**

Bombay and Tanqueray near-tied; G&T language decides.

**Gemini**

Botanical specificity and style clarity favour the most explained brand.

**Grok**

Gordon's punches above weight on value and familiarity.

**Claude**

Tanqueray reads as the "classic" trust answer.

**DeepSeek**

Citrus, juniper and botanical lists separate the leaders.

WINNING PHRASES (EUROPE & NA)

crisp botanical flavour · refreshing G&T · citrus notes · smooth finish · juniper forward · balanced botanicals · crisp and refreshing · no bitterness

WHAT WEAKENS RECOMMENDATION

vague botanical claims · weak style explanation · polarising flavor profile · harsh juniper · artificial notes · missing botanical list · no distillation base · weak citrus or floral notes · no ABV context

CROSS-CATEGORY LESSONS

Five patterns that hold across Tequila, Vodka, Whiskey and Gin.

01 AI rewards category-specific clarity

Generic "premium" language is weak. AI needs agave/origin in Tequila, smoothness/filtration in Vodka, flavor/age/distillery in Whiskey, botanicals/style in Gin.

02 Leaders are not equally secure

Tequila and Whiskey have defensible leads. Vodka and Gin can move with small shifts. Monitoring cadence should differ by category.

03 Visibility and preference are different metrics

Smirnoff converts 57% of visibility to preference. Grey Goose 1%. Brands need to track both appearance and selection.

04 Platform variance is now strategic

The same brand does not perform equally across ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, DeepSeek and Grok. Platform-specific optimisation is part of brand strategy.

05 Retailers and sources are AI infrastructure

AI learns from retailer product pages, reviews, enthusiast communities and editorial sites. The brand website is one piece of the evidence system.

RETAILER & SOURCE INFLUENCE

AI visibility does not come only from brand-owned content.

In Europe and North America, AI recommendations for spirits are shaped by a wide ecosystem of retailers and editorial / community sources. Brands should treat both as strategic assets.

RETAILER INFLUENCE

Total Wine · Drizly · LCBO · Costco Canada · Majestic Wine · Amazon UK · Tesco · Waitrose · Amazon Germany · Carrefour · Sainsbury's · The Whisky Exchange · BevMo · SAQ · BCLIQUOR · Auchan · Coop · Gall & Gall · Albert Heijn · Jumbo · Bol.com · Amazon.nl · Whisky.de

SOURCE INFLUENCE

Liquor.com · Difford's Guide · Distiller app · Whisky Advocate · YouTube reviewers · Reddit communities · Tequila Matchmaker · TasteTequila · Cognac Expert · Gin Foundry · Consumer Reports · Stiftung Warentest · Que Choisir · Systembolaget · cocktail mixology networks · retailer product pages · enthusiast communities

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Different categories require different AI playbooks.

TEQUILA**Defend Jose Cuervo's lead. Watch premium challengers.**

Strengthen authenticity, agave proof and recommendation consistency. Patrón and Don Julio sharpen premium, additive-free and origin language.

VODKA**Monitor the Smirnoff vs Absolut gap closely.**

Smirnoff defends smoothness, mixability and conversion. Absolut attacks via distinctive purity, heritage and creative identity. Grey Goose and Belvedere convert premium visibility into preference.

WHISKEY**Defend Johnnie Walker's authority. Track Jack Daniel's signals.**

Strengthen flavor, age, origin and expert authority. Jack Daniel's consolidates AI identity. Chivas, Jameson and Jim Beam clarify category role.

GIN**Treat Bombay vs Tanqueray as a live leadership race.**

Both leaders sharpen botanical, G&T, citrus and style language. Gordon's is the high-conversion challenger to scale carefully.

VISIBILITY CHECKLIST

Ten questions every spirits brand should be able to answer.

- 01 Do we know our AI recommendation share by category, not only across Spirits?
- 02 Do we know whether we are visible but not preferred?
- 03 Do we know our visibility-to-preference win rate?
- 04 Do we understand our category-specific drivers?
- 05 Do our product pages contain clear tasting notes and use-case language?
- 06 Do we provide enough production proof for AI to justify recommendation?
- 07 Are retailer pages consistent with our desired AI positioning?
- 08 Are third-party sources describing us in the right language?
- 09 Do we have weaknesses on ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, DeepSeek or Grok?
- 10 Do we separate Europe & NA drivers from Asia-specific assumptions?

FAQ

What teams ask about AI recommendations in Spirits.

Q01 Why should Spirits be split into separate AI categories?

Because AI recommendations are category-specific. Tequila, Vodka, Whiskey and Gin have different leaders, different proof requirements and different consumer questions.

Q02 Which Tequila brand leads AI recommendations?

Jose Cuervo, with 33.8% AI recommendation share — well ahead of Patrón and Don Julio.

Q03 Which Vodka brand leads AI recommendations?

Smirnoff at 29.0%, with Absolut close behind at 26.5%. Vodka is an open AI battleground.

Q04 Which Whiskey brand leads AI recommendations?

Johnnie Walker at 26.2%. Jack Daniel's is the main challenger, with Chivas, Jameson and Jim Beam relevant.

Q05 Which Gin brands are fighting for AI leadership?

Bombay Sapphire (23.9%) and Tanqueray (23.7%) — separated by 0.2pt. Gordon's is the high-conversion challenger.

Q06 Are the AI recommendation drivers global?

No. The driver evidence used here is Europe & North America only. Market visibility covers 20 countries; Asia needs separate driver analysis.

Q07 What makes AI recommend a spirits brand?

Category-specific signals: agave in Tequila, smoothness and purity in Vodka, flavor and distillery in Whiskey, botanical clarity in Gin.

Q08 What is Generative Engine Optimization for Spirits?

The process of improving how a brand appears in AI-generated recommendations by making its evidence, language and proof easier for AI systems to understand and repeat.

CONCLUSION

The strongest spirits brands will be the ones AI can explain most confidently.

Tequila is led by Jose Cuervo. Vodka is a close contest between Smirnoff and Absolut. Whiskey is led by Johnnie Walker but still faces challenger pressure. Gin is a live two-brand battle between Bombay Sapphire and Tanqueray.

Each category has its own AI logic — agave and origin in Tequila, smoothness and purity in Vodka, flavor and authority in Whiskey, botanicals and style clarity in Gin. The future of AI visibility in Spirits will be won **category by category, brand by brand, answer by answer.**

NEXT STEP

See your spirits brand on the AI shelf

AgentRank shows which retailers, sources, reviews and language are shaping AI recommendations across Tequila, Vodka, Whiskey, Gin and the wider spirits category. See where your brand is visible, where it is preferred, and where it is missing.

GET IN TOUCH

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