

# Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

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## Passport 6 month Rule

Most people know you need a passport to travel. But did you know that an adult American passport isn't good for 10 years? It's really only good for 9 ½. The last ½ year isn't actually usable. The US Department of State recommends renewing your passport if you intend to travel within 6 months of your passport's expiration. The reason for this is because many countries extend a six month visa to visiting Americans. If your passport expires before the end of your visit you may be stuck in their country. While they may like you, they don't want to keep you.

Actually, the airlines are tasked with enforcing this rule, so you won't even make it out of the USA with a passport that expires in 6 months.

I hear you saying, "But Europe issues 3 month visas to Americans, so isn't it a 3 month rule for Europe?"

Most of the EU has signed the Schengen Treaty which follows the 3+3 rule. Meaning your passport must be valid for 3 months beyond the issuance of the initial entry which is good for 3 months. Even

if your stay is less than 3 months the countries still issue you a 90 day visa. Therefore you must have a passport that is valid for 6 months.

Remember, the people tasked with enforcing this rule are gate agents, not immigration officials.

I've never heard of anyone being denied access to a country because the passport is about to expire but a simple Google search found plenty of examples, [like this poor guy who was denied boarding his flight to Copenhagen](#).

Passport renewals are easy. It can take 6 to 8 weeks to get your renewed passport processed.

[Follow this link to get or renew your passport.](#)

## ROME AND THE BARREL

The Romans were a thirsty bunch. In their conquest of the known world one of the first things that they'd do was to plant vineyards and make wine. I can imagine a Roman legionnaire interrogating a newly captured foe, "...and what do you have to drink around here?!"

Sometimes the answer was nothing. But the Roman legions were always prepared and they transported everything from olives to wine in clay amphora.

When Caesar conquered Gaul he discovered not only Chardonnay and Pinot Noir growing in the forests but also the Gallic tradition of building watertight containers out of the local trees.

The Gauls, which were part of a larger northern European cultural group call Celts, were excellent iron workers. Their craftsmen were making oak barrels held together with iron hoops. The Romans, always quick to adopt good ideas, started using oak barrels to transport trade good from the newly captured northern territories. Soon, wine from Gaul, transported in oak barrels, was fetching a high price at the markets in Rome.

The oak barrel is superior to clay in every way. It is practically indestructible, watertight, easier to move (roll) and imparts a flavor to its contents that is pleasing. By the year 100 AD most of the empire was using oak barrels for transporting everything from gold coins to salt to wine. Effectively ending over 5500 years of use of the clay amphora.

Oak barrels are still made in the same way as they were made 2000 years ago: by hand. And they are still used to age everything from balsamic vinegar to beer to wine and whiskey.

[Follow this link to watch a short 4 minute YouTube video on how an oak barrel is made.](#)



~ March 9th ~

[13 spots still available](#)

We will be sampling: Tyrconnell, Bent Anchor, Willet, Old Overholt, George Dickel and Canadian Club

Practical Information:

Class starts @ 7:30pm ~ *sharp*  
@ 2620 E. Superior Street.

Cost is \$15/pp.

Class size is limited to 20.

Light *hor d'oeuvres* after tasting.

R.S.V.P. required.

April 13th ~ *Cognac*  
Sample V.S., V.S.O.P, and X.O.,  
plus Armagnac and 2 liqueurs

## A PRIMER ON BOURBON

When you ask for Bourbon you are asking for a very specific American whiskey. There are many types of American whiskey such as Rye, Malt, Corn, and Straight. Each one has specific rules on how it's made and labeled. But Bourbon is the only one with a strange name. Here is how Bourbon got its name and how it's made.

Bourbon is made with at least 51% corn. Corn or Maize, as everyone else outside of North America calls it, is an indigenous plant to our continent. The first people learned how to grow it and harvest it so it makes sense that corn is a key ingredient in American Whiskey.

Bourbon must be made in the United States and it must be aged in a new oak barrel for at least some amount of time. Bourbon makers are prohibited from adding artificial coloring, caramel or flavorings.

The origin of the name Bourbon is shrouded in mystery and if you visit a distillery in Kentucky you'll probably be told that the name comes from the Kentucky county which shares the name.

But the most likely name for Bourbon evolved when the Tarascon brothers arrived in New Orleans from Cognac around 1807. Using their knowledge of aging spirits in oak, and their connections in the French Quarter, the brothers started shipping barrels of corn whiskey from Louisville, Kentucky down river to the thirsty city of New Orleans. Louisiana's French settlers craved a taste of home and the brothers knew they could sell a lot of whiskey if they labeled it "French Brandy." They'd mark the barrels for delivery to saloons, brothels, and alehouses on Bourbon street.

The trip down the Mississippi mellowed the whiskey as it aged in the new American oak barrels. The reputation of the whiskey spread and people would ask, "Do you have that whiskey they sell on Bourbon street?" And eventually it just became, "Do you have that Bourbon Whiskey?"

And where does the word Bourbon come from? It comes from one of the ruling houses of the French monarchy. When New Orleans was being laid out in 1721 the royal engineer named this street after his king and queen.



## *Midi and the Camarque*

We've got 6 spots open for a fantastic week on a boat in the South of France.

Week of 9/21-9/28: 6 available

If you are interested in joining us or you'd just like to know more [follow this link to our Fall 2019 trip planner.](#)

It's been 5 years since our last trip to the Languedoc but this sun kissed region of France is never very far from our minds. Here is a picture of a typical door in a small village along the canal.

