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Drinking With James Bond: Why Bollinger Is 007's Go-To Champagne



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Ian Fleming created the character of James Bond in 1953. He was featured in 14 novels and two short story collections written by Fleming. Since Fleming's death in 1964, eight more authors have penned 33 additional books in the James Bond saga, typically to coincide with the release of a movie.

The films started in 1962, and have continued to this day. Eon Productions, a company founded by Harry Saltzman and Albert R "Cubby" Broccoli, released the first Bond film, *Dr. No*, in 1962. Collectively, the 25 Bond films have grossed over seven billion dollars from theatrical release. They are the longest running film series of all time.

The character of James Bond has undergone significant changes over the intervening fifty plus years. The early Bond, best exemplified in the rakish portrayal by Sean Connery, was a compulsive womanizer whose conversations with women invariably dripped of sexual innuendo and double entendre.

In his more recent portrayals by British film actor Daniel Craig, the sixth actor to portray Bond, he is envisioned as a dark, tortured soul, brokenhearted, beset by internal demons that he can barely keep under control.

Most of the sexual innuendo is gone, and Bond's treatment of women in his contemporary films lacks, thankfully, the chauvinism of his earlier portrayal. Craig has been praised for his human portrayal of Bond as a man who loves and suffers, whose love is unrequited and is remarkably vulnerable for a secret agent "licensed to kill."

Of course, you cannot speak about Bond without referring to his conspicuous consumption of alcohol, both in the novels and the subsequent films. It is, after all, Bond who coined the universally recognized order of "a martini, shaken not stirred."

Critics of Bond's drinking have noted that in the average film he consumes a drink, on average, every eleven minutes. In the 2006 remake of *Casino Royale* he consumes 12 drinks. The original novel had him consuming even more — 13.

Although the character of James Bond is closely associated with the vodka martini, in the original novels of Ian Fleming his usual drink was Champagne. In Fleming's novels, Bond downs a total of 317 drinks: Champagne 65 times, bourbon 57 times, whisky 42 times, vodka martini 41 times, sake 37 times, Cognac 24 times and gin and red wine each 21 times.

Bond's whisky consumption has moved significantly upmarket over the last 50 years. In the novels, Bond's whisky consumption was usually in the form of a Scotch and soda, typically made with Black and White, an entry level, blended whisky produced by James Buchanan & Co. Ltd, a Diageo company.

In the later movies, however, Bond prefers single malt Scotch. In *The World is Not Enough* (1999) and *Die Another Day* (2002), Bond is drinking Talisker. In *Skyfall* (2012) and *Spectre* (2015), Bond drinks Macallan.

The age statement isn't always clear, but appears to be the Macallan 18 YO. In one memorable scene in *Skyfall*, the villain, Silva, offers Bond a 50 YO Macallan. This would have been the 1962 The Macallan Anniversary Malt 50 YO Single Malt Scotch Whisky. It's not clear however if the actual whisky was served. At a price of \$35,000/bottle, that would seem unlikely.

Champagne is Bond's preferred drink, however. Bond drinks Taittinger and Krug in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. In other novels, he drinks Veuve Clicquot, Veuve Clicquot Rosé and Pommery.

Bollinger first makes an appearance in the novel *Diamonds are Forever*.

Its first appearance in films is in the movie *Moonraker*, 1979. In one memorable scene, Bond crawls through Holly Goodhead's window into her hotel room in Venice. When he sees the ice bucket, prominently emblazoned with the Bollinger Brand Logo, he remarks, "If it is the 69, you were expecting me."

Bollinger has remained Bond's favorite Champagne, followed by Dom Perignon. Taittinger was an early favorite that was dropped from the films. Product placement in films is nothing new. But Bollinger insists that it has never paid any placement fees for the portrayal of its Champagne in the Bond films. Its sole contribution, rumor has it, at Broccoli's request, was to provide three cases of Champagne for each film.

In celebration of its 40-year association with the Bond film franchise, Bollinger is releasing the “Official Champagne of 007.” Bollinger’s Limited-Edition Special Cuvée was released with the debut of the latest Bond film: *No Time to Die*.

The limited-edition box set features Bond’s legendary Aston Martin DB5 and a silhouette of the British secret agent. The gold neck collar features Bollinger 007, as well as the trademark 007 seal where the 007 is depicted as the handle of a pistol. The Champagne is set to retail for around \$79.

No description of Bond’s drinking habits is complete without examining his preference for martinis that are “shaken not stirred.” Is there really a difference between shaken versus stirred martinis? Actually, there is.

Bartenders will tell you, that shaking rather than stirring a martini will result in more ice melting, diluting the drink. It will also make the martini cloudy. Neither characteristic is desirable to a serious martini drinker.

In fact, in the original novel, Fleming has Bond asking for his martini to be “stirred not shaken.” In the script for the film *Goldfinger*, 1964, the order was accidentally reversed. When Bond is asked for his drink order he replies, for the first time, “A martini, shaken not stirred.” The error stuck, and has followed Bond through all of the subsequent films.

Cheers, Mr. Bond