# George Clooney's Casamigos tequila faces class-action suit over alleged adulteration claims



In a significant shake-up for the spirits industry, George Clooney's Casamigos tequila is at the centre of a bombshell class-action lawsuit that alleges the brand has compromised its integrity by selling adulterated tequila under the guise of being 100% agave. Co-founded by Clooney and entrepreneur Randy Gerber, Casamigos has quickly risen to become one of the best-selling tequilas worldwide, but these allegations could tarnish its reputation and shed light on wider issues in tequila production.

The lawsuit, filed in the federal court of New York, accuses Casamigos and the well-known Don Julio brand—both owned by the liquor giant Diageo—of misleading consumers about the quality of their products. Plaintiffs, which include a New York mixologist and a restaurant, allege that the tequilas contain significant levels of cane alcohol or other non-agave substances, despite marketing claims of being crafted solely from 100% Blue Weber agave. The lawsuit seeks over $5 million in damages, asserting that consumers would not have paid premium prices for these brands had they known the truth about their ingredients.

Although Diageo has categorically denied these claims, asserting that both Casamigos and Don Julio tequilas are made from pure Blue Weber agave and comply with official standards, the lawsuit brings to light important questions about the integrity of tequila production. Tequila, a spirit that must be produced in the designated tequila region of Mexico, traditionally limits its ingredients to agave, water, and yeast. However, additives such as glycerin, oak extract, and caramel colour may legally constitute up to 1% of the product, often resulting in a highly debated grey area regarding what can be sold as "pure" tequila.

Industry experts express concern that the burgeoning popularity of brands like Casamigos has fuelled a rush to cut corners. Fonseca Aquinaga, a Texas tequila coach, highlighted this issue on social media, noting that many celebrity-endorsed tequilas rely on unripe agave and artificial additives to maximise profit margins. This race for efficiency in production undermines the traditional methods that respect the lengthy maturation process of the agave plant, which can take five to ten years to achieve optimal flavour and quality characteristics.

Tequila's regulatory environment is complex, heavily influenced by the Consejo Regulador del Tequila (CRT), a private organisation that oversees production. Critics argue that the CRT operates on an honour system, relying on producers to self-report ingredient usage without rigorous testing or oversight. As such, the addition of non-agave alcohols could easily escape scrutiny, raising issues of transparency and consumer trust in a market increasingly crowded with celebrity brands.

The fallout from this lawsuit is significant for Diageo, especially as it navigates the claims that could require tequila producers to demonstrate the authenticity of their ingredients in court for the first time. As consumer awareness grows regarding what constitutes genuine tequila, there is a tangible shift toward demanding greater transparency from manufacturers. Alcohol retailers, recognising this trend, have begun offering additive-free labels, indicating a potential change in market dynamics as informed consumer choices challenge established brands.

Diageo’s commitment to defending its tequilas and maintaining their purported quality underscores the stakes involved not only for the company's reputation but also for the future of tequila production as a whole. Should the plaintiffs succeed, it might lead to a recalibration of marketing standards within the spirits industry, ensuring that consumers can truly trust what they are purchasing.

As this legal battle unfolds, the reputation and future of popular brands like Casamigos and Don Julio remain perilously poised between market success and authenticity, a contention that may redefine consumer expectations of what tequila should represent.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750719/George-Clooney-founded-Casamigos-broke-cardinal-rule-tequila-making-bombshell-lawsuit-says.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.hbsslaw.com/cases/casamigos-don-julio-tequila)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.marketscreener.com/quote/stock/DIAGEO-PLC-4000514/news/Diageo-sued-for-allegedly-misleading-consumers-about-tequila-content-49864175/), [[4]](https://www.foodbusinessmea.com/diageo-faces-lawsuit-over-alleged-mislabeling-of-casamigos-and-don-julio-tequilas-as-100-agave/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.lawyer-monthly.com/2025/05/diageo-lawsuit-100-percent-agave-tequila/), [[6]](https://drinksdigest.com/2025/05/08/diageo-faces-tequila-class-action/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.hbsslaw.com/cases/casamigos-don-julio-tequila), [[3]](https://www.marketscreener.com/quote/stock/DIAGEO-PLC-4000514/news/Diageo-sued-for-allegedly-misleading-consumers-about-tequila-content-49864175/), [[7]](https://www.edgarindex.com/2025/05/07/diageo-faces-lawsuit-for-100-agave-tequila-claims/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750719/George-Clooney-founded-Casamigos-broke-cardinal-rule-tequila-making-bombshell-lawsuit-says.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.lawyer-monthly.com/2025/05/diageo-lawsuit-100-percent-agave-tequila/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://drinksdigest.com/2025/05/08/diageo-faces-tequila-class-action/), [[7]](https://www.edgarindex.com/2025/05/07/diageo-faces-lawsuit-for-100-agave-tequila-claims/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750719/George-Clooney-founded-Casamigos-broke-cardinal-rule-tequila-making-bombshell-lawsuit-says.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hbsslaw.com/cases/casamigos-don-julio-tequila> - Hagens Berman, a consumer rights law firm, has filed a class-action lawsuit against Diageo, alleging that its top-selling tequila brands, Casamigos and Don Julio, are falsely marketed as '100% Blue Weber Agave' while containing significant levels of cane or other types of alcohol. The plaintiffs argue that consumers were misled by Diageo's product marketing and would not have paid premium prices or would have chosen not to purchase had they known the truth about the ingredients. The lawsuit seeks damages for the premium prices consumers have paid.
3. <https://www.marketscreener.com/quote/stock/DIAGEO-PLC-4000514/news/Diageo-sued-for-allegedly-misleading-consumers-about-tequila-content-49864175/> - A lawsuit has been filed against Diageo, alleging that its tequila brands, Casamigos and Don Julio, are falsely marketed as '100% agave' despite containing significant amounts of cane alcohol or other non-agave ingredients. The plaintiffs, including a mixologist, a New Jersey resident, and a Japanese restaurant, claim they paid high prices for these tequilas, believing them to be 100% agave, only to find out they may contain other alcohols. The lawsuit seeks damages in excess of $5 million and an injunction against Diageo's alleged false advertising.
4. <https://www.foodbusinessmea.com/diageo-faces-lawsuit-over-alleged-mislabeling-of-casamigos-and-don-julio-tequilas-as-100-agave/> - Diageo is facing a federal lawsuit alleging that its popular tequila brands, Casamigos and Don Julio, are falsely marketed as '100% agave' despite allegedly containing other types of alcohol. The lawsuit, filed on May 5, 2025, in a U.S. federal court, was brought forward by a group of consumers and a restaurant who claim that the tequilas were misrepresented. The plaintiffs allege that product labels stating 'Tequila 100% Agave Azul' on Casamigos bottles and '100% de Agave' on Don Julio bottles mislead consumers into believing the spirits are made entirely from Blue Weber agave.
5. <https://www.lawyer-monthly.com/2025/05/diageo-lawsuit-100-percent-agave-tequila/> - Diageo North America is facing a class-action lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. The suit alleges that the company falsely marketed its Casamigos and Don Julio tequilas as '100% agave' while allegedly using non-agave alcohols in the production process. The plaintiffs argue that they were misled by Diageo's product marketing and would not have paid premium prices or would have chosen not to purchase had they known the truth about the ingredients. The lawsuit seeks damages for the premium prices consumers have paid.
6. <https://drinksdigest.com/2025/05/08/diageo-faces-tequila-class-action/> - Diageo has strongly refuted claims in a lawsuit that it falsely advertised its Casamigos and Don Julio tequilas as being 100% agave. The lawsuit, filed in New York, alleges Diageo misled consumers by labelling Casamigos tequila as 'Tequila 100% Agave Azul' and Don Julio bottles as '100% de Agave.' The proposed class action was filed by cocktail enthusiast Avi Pusateri, Brooklyn restaurant Sushi Tokyo Inc., and consumer Chaim Mishulovin. Lawyers for the plaintiffs said laboratory tests of Casamigos and Don Julio tequilas had shown 'they consist of significant concentrations of cane or other types of alcohol rather than pure tequila' and do not meet regulatory requirements of the United States or Mexico to be called '100% agave.'
7. <https://www.edgarindex.com/2025/05/07/diageo-faces-lawsuit-for-100-agave-tequila-claims/> - A recent lawsuit filed against Diageo, a global drinks company, has brought into question the authenticity of their popular tequila brands, Casamigos and Don Julio. The lawsuit alleges that these tequilas, advertised as '100% agave,' actually contain significant amounts of alcohol from other sources, such as cane. Plaintiffs claim that they paid a premium price for what they thought was pure agave tequila and would have made different purchasing decisions had they known the truth. Diageo has vehemently denied these claims, calling them baseless and promising to defend themselves in court. The lawsuit seeks damages amounting to over $5 million for consumers in New York and New Jersey, as well as an injunction to prevent Diageo from continuing their alleged false advertising practices.