BOTANICALS WITHOUT BORDERS
GIN GOES GLOBAL. AND LOCAL

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Support of State Regulation of Alcohol Remains Strong.

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A new poll commissioned by the Center for Alcohol Policy on public opinion toward alcohol regulation found that Americans continue to overwhelmingly support states maintaining the authority to regulate alcohol within their own borders. Notably, this support is remarkably strong across political party lines despite the heightened political polarization of today. 85% of Republicans, 81% of Democrats and 83% of Independents express support for alcohol being regulated at the state level.

Key findings from the Center’s survey additionally show that Americans are in favor of a broad array of state-level alcohol regulations and the three-tier system, which separates the manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol. In particular, they are satisfied with the consumer choice fostered by the American system of alcohol distribution.

Additional results indicate that Americans want lawmakers to prioritize public health and safety over convenience and price when weighing changes to alcohol regulations.

"Public support for responsible state alcohol regulation has remained consistently high over the last decade. Despite the many attacks within the industry on regulation and the independent distribution system, the vast majority of Americans remain supportive," says Jim Hall, former Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board and Center for Alcohol Policy Advisor. "This steady support cuts across all demographic groups, even the red/blue divide, on nearly all these issues. Americans clearly agree public health and safety are essential when considering changes to current law."

Key findings from the survey include:

Americans continue to support state regulation of alcohol.
- > 86% of respondents agree that alcohol is a product that needs to be regulated.
- > 82% agree that alcohol is different than other products, and therefore should be regulated differently.
- >Support remains high for individual state regulation of alcohol (83%).
- >A wide majority support requiring license holders to be a resident of their respective state (77%).
- >76% agree that alcohol sold should come through a licensed system for tracking.
- >87% of respondents displayed a high confidence in the safety of alcohol products sold in their state.

Americans are satisfied with current alcohol regulations in their state.
- >82% of Americans continue to be satisfied with the existing system for alcohol in their respective states.
- >Nearly 9 out of 10 Americans are satisfied with the variety of alcohol products available (88%).

The three-tier system is viewed very positively.
- >75% of respondents show support for states regulating through a three-tier system, which has been consistent over the past decade, and 3 out of 4 agree that the system works well.

Americans want alcohol laws to prioritize safety.
- >Most Americans reject that alcohol is just like other consumer products.
- >Drunk driving is seen as the most serious alcohol-related problem.
- >Survey respondents want lawmakers to address drunk driving first. 78% agree reducing drunk driving is a priority, followed by protecting health and public safety (70%) and reducing underage drinking (64%).
- >Given the nation’s priorities, it is not surprising that 85% of Americans support keeping the legal drinking age at 21 years old.

The survey was conducted by New Bridge Strategy among 1,000 adults ages 21 and older throughout the nation. The interviews were conducted online and distributed proportionally throughout the U.S. and are demographically representative of this age group. The confidence interval associated with this sample is +/-3.5% at the 95% confidence level; with varying confidence for population subgroups within the sample.
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SMIRNOFF Red, White & Berry. Vodka Infused With Natural Flavors. 20.5% Alc/Vol. The Smirnoff Co., Norwalk, CT.
Seventeen independent beverage licensees from states across the country have been recognized as Brown-Forman Retailers of the Year. Nominated by their state licensed beverage associations for commitment to their state associations, dedication to the beverage alcohol industry and their success in business, these licensees were honored in a ceremony at the ABL Annual Meeting.

For more than two decades, the Brown-Forman Retailer of the Year awards have celebrated retail beverage licensees who engage in the responsible sale and service of beverage alcohol, are committed to their state beverage associations, and demonstrated excellence in innovative retailing. ABL congratulates all of the honored businesses and licensees for their outstanding and continued contributions to their state associations, the industry and their communities.

"America’s independent beer, wine and spirits retailers support a dynamic and exciting industry, while striving to both encourage and promote the responsible enjoyment of beverage alcohol by adult consumers," said ABL Executive Director John Bodnovich. "These retailers have gone above-and-beyond the call of duty in their businesses, their state beverage associations, and their communities with their commitment to outstanding beverage alcohol sales and service."

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING 2019 ABL RETAILERS OF THE YEAR:**

**Michael Ball | Silver Run Liquors | Westminster, MD:**

Michael Ball is the owner of Silver Run Liquors in northern Carroll County, MD. Ball has been in business with multiple locations for over 25 years. He is an active member of the Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association (MSLBA) and serves as a member of their Board representing Carroll County. He also is a long-time supporter of local charities (High Schools, Fire Departments and youth sports) in the community his business is part of.

**Gary Rogow | ABC Liquors | California, MD:**

Gary Rogow is the owner of ABC Liquors in Lexington Park, MD. Rogow serves as Secretary for the Saint Mary’s County Licensed Beverage Association and is on the MSLBA Board of Directors and Legislative Committee. In his local community, Rogow supports Hospice, Community Alcohol Coalition, Ambulance, Fire Company and Police organizations.
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[Image of various bottle designs]
Since 2010, Ultimate Spirits Challenge’s CHAIRMAN’S TROPHY has become the most coveted award of excellence in distilled spirits history. But, what attributes, what virtues constitute a great whiskey, brandy, vodka, gin, tequila, liqueur, baijiu, rum, shochu or mezcal? Moreover, how are these attributes arrived at?

Judging Chairman and Founder of Ultimate Spirits Challenge (USC) F. Paul Pacult explains, saying, “Each March, we convene the foremost group of spirits experts comprised of authors, journalists, consultants, and bartenders to carefully evaluate the entries covering all categories of distilled spirits. In order to identify the ‘best of the best’ in every spirits category, it is necessary for this formidable team of international authorities to follow USC’s strict and uncompromising methodology.

“Held at the custom-designed Ultimate Beverage Challenge Evaluation Center in Hawthorne, NY, the judging panels take weeks to determine which of the entries are benchmarks. Through multiple-panel tasting procedures, the spirits deemed as ‘finalists’ are decided upon and then they go through one more round of judging to choose the highest scoring spirit. The USC judging process is admittedly complex. But, when you are charged with selecting the handful of the finest spirits currently in the world, why should the road to ultimate excellence be simple? Unlike every other spirits competition operating in 2019, USC Chairman’s Trophy winners have to earn their way to that lofty position.

“In the end, to be bestowed the USC Chairman’s Trophy each outstanding spirit must be seamlessly integrated at every qualitative level of alcohol, base material, acidity, pH, and, when necessary, wood impact. This is why we attract the world’s most respected authorities. It requires the best people utilizing the fairest, most innovative methodology to arrive at the best conclusions.”

This year’s star-studded roster of judges included Dale DeGroff, Jacques Bezuidenhout, Tad Carducci, Charlotte Voisey, Jillian Vose, Meaghan Dorman, Justin Lavenue, Tyler Hudgens, Joaquin Simo, Tim Cooper, Clay Risen, Aisha Sharpe, Leo DeGroff, Sean Kenyon, Brian Bevilacqua, Berit Jane Soli-Holt, Dave Roochvarg, Dave Bletsch, Don Lee, Troy Clarke and Anthony Mendez.

The USC Chairman’s Trophy and Finalist awards identify the best spirits in the world by category, coming this year from 46 nations. USC Tried & True Awards recognize consistent quality while the USC Great Value citations point out spirits with extraordinary price/value ratios. At USC, every entry receives the most thorough and even-handed professional analysis possible. It’s just how Ultimate Spirits Challenge does things. No shortcuts. Just honest, impartial judging.
CHAIRMAN’S TROPHY
2019 WINNERS

AMARO
Lucano Anniversario

APERITIF
Select Aperitivo

BAIJU
TTL Yushan Chiew XO Kaoliang

BRANDY
American:
Argonaut Fat Thumb
Armagnac:
Marie Duffau Hors d’Age Bas Armagnac
Calvados:
Christian Drouin Pays d’Auge 1999
Cognac:
Courvoisier Initiale Extra
European Brandy:
Asbach 15 Years Old
Pisco:
Demonio de los Andes Achochalo

GIN
American:
Junipero
London Dry:
Fords

LIQUEUR
Berry/Fruit:
Merlet Soeurs Cerises
Citrus/Triple Sec:
Grand Marnier Cuvée Louis Alexandre
Cream/Dairy:
Carolans Salted Caramel Irish Cream
Herbal/Mint/Spice/Botanical:
Becherovka

MEZCAL
Real Minero Barril

RUM
Aged:
Appleton Estate 21 Years Old
Dark/Gold:
Banks 7 Golden Age
White Rum:
Banks 5 Island

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Reposado: Partida
Añejo: Azunia
Extra Añejo: El Tesoro

VODKA
Flavored:
Van Gogh Double Espresso
Unflavored:
Boyd & Blair Potato

WHISKY – CANADA
Blended:
Crown Royal XR

WHISKY – IRELAND
Blended:
Jameson Bow Street Cask Strength 18 Years Old Batch 1
Single Pot Still:
Red Spot
Single Malt:
Knappogue Castle 14 Years Old

WHISKY – JAPAN
Kamiki Intense Wood

WHISKY – SCOTLAND
Blended:
Buchanan’s Special Reserve 18 Years Old
Single Malt-Highland:
Glenglassaugh 30 Years Old
Single Malt-Island:
Highland Park Viking Pride 18 Years Old
Single Malt-Islay:
Bowmore 25 Years Old
Single Malt-Speyside:
BenRiach Authenticus 30 Years Old

WHISKY – USA
American/Other:
Stolen 11 Years Old
Bourbon:
George T Stagg
Rye:
Peerless 3-Year-Old
Single Malt:
Peat Week 5th Annual
Tennessee:
Uncle Nearest 1820 Nearest Green Single Barrel Edition US-1

WHISKY – WORLD
Kavalan Solist ex-Bourbon Single Cask Strength

For a complete list of 2019 results, go to ultimate-beverage.com/usc2019results
For USC Cocktail Commendations go to ultimate-beverage.com/usc2019cocktailresults
**BCLBA ROCKIN’ THE RACES**

Members of the beverage alcohol industry recently gathered for the Baltimore County Licensed Beverage Association’s (BCLBA) Rockin’ the Races event at the Timonium Fairground Grandstand Concourse. Industry members from all three tiers and from all over Maryland joined the fun. Attendees enjoyed live music, bartender competitions, corn hole toss competitions, beer, wine and liquor tasting stations, local restaurant tasting stations, pig on a pit, pit beef, raw oysters, money wheels, liquor wheel, betting on the ponies and much, much more.

Some VIPs in attendance were Jane Springer, Executive Director, MSLBA; Goose Kaiser, Past President, BCLBA; Dan Minnick, Former Delegate and Owner of Minnick’s Restaurant; Jeri Zink, Executive Director, BCLBA; Paul King, President, BCLBA (King Liquors); and Jack Milani, Legislative Chairman, BCLBA/MSLBA (Monaghan’s Pub).
Baltimore County Licensed Beverage Association

Extends a sincere thank you to everyone for their participation and help in making Rockin’ At The Races 2019 a success!

Our deepest appreciation is extended to our Sponsors. The success of our event would not be possible without the support we receive from our many friends & partners in the licensed beverage community!

Special thanks to our local restaurants and beer, wine & liquor suppliers for generously sharing their products with our guests!

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Fifico-Seagram’s/Pura Sill
Fifth Generation-Tito’s
Flying Dog Brewery
Grandstand Grille
Go America Go—Whistle Pig
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Sazerac
Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits of MD
Swag Dog
Sweetwater
Sysco
The Big Orange
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Ellen M., Seller

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LE CREMA AT DOWNTOWN CROWN

Jen Walsh (r) Le Crema Winemaker visits Downtown Crown Wine and Beer in Gaithersburg.

Jay Tarigo, Monument Fine Wines; at Downtown Crown Wine and Beer in Gaithersburg.

LA CREMA PREMIER CREW

Liz Kitterman, Jackson Family Wines; recently acknowledged Annmarie Burmeister, Monument Fine Wines; as a member of the La Crema Premier Crew.

SAINT MICHAEL'S WINE FESTIVAL

Jason Hartsfield, Palm Bay Spirits and Wine.

Kaela Murphy, The Wine Group.

David Kleb pours Trinchero Family Estates.

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STELLA MARIS’ ANNUAL TASTING OF WINE AND CRAFT SPIRITS

Stella Maris recently held their Annual Tasting of Wine and Craft Spirits at the Grand Lodge in Hunt Valley, MD. The sophisticated and casually elegant evening offered more than 100 wines and spirits to sample and to purchase. Guest also enjoyed heavy hors d’oeuvres and food stations provided by The Classic Catering People, music from the Cold Spring Jazz Quartet, and a small, but selective, Silent Auction.

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JACK DANIEL’S AND JACK DANIEL’S TENNESSEE HONEY KICK-OFF NBA POST-SEASON

Jack Daniel’s and Jack Daniel’s Tennessee Honey joined the NBA post-season fun with a series of basketball themed promotions. Jack Daniel’s is an official partner of the NBA.

THE 1870 SOCIETY

The 1870 Society program is a Breakthru Beverage Group competition across all markets, to activate Brown-Forman brands above and beyond in the marketplace.

Quarterly winners are Jerry Bittner, Diamondback Sales representative, and Bob Distler, Field Sales Manager.

NATIONAL BROWN-FORMAN AWARD FOR GENTLEMAN JACK

Breakthru Beverage was recently presented with the National Brown-Forman Award for Gentleman Jack. The award is based on the sales excellence of the Diamond Division in volume and distribution growth of the brand.
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ALEETHIA PROVIDES FRIDAY NIGHT DINNERS TO OUR WOUNDED AND INJURED SERVICE MEMBERS RECUPERATING AT THE WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER.
Rougeon, a black French-American hybrid grape, is known for its ability to make simple, tasty wines. Rougeon produces medium-sized compact clusters. Its grape vines are hardy, but production can be erratic at times, causing its yields to come as often as twice a year or as few as every two years.

Like all other grapes, Rougeon is susceptible to disease. The two highest disease exposures this grape could suffer from are downy mildew and powdery mildew. These diseases have the potential to reduce vine growth, yield, quality, and winter hardiness, especially because the Rougeon grows in tight clusters. Other disease susceptibilities are black rot and botrytis as well as some sensitivity to sulfur.

Rougeon also produces a beautiful red color and is often mixed to make a blended wine. However, it has also been used to make port wines. Rougeon grape is often blended with grapes such as Chambourcin and Baco Noir. Erik Bandzak, of Aliceanna Winery chose this grape due to its deep red color and very dry taste. "Most winemakers use this grape to make port-style wines, but I believe it has a great taste on its own," said Bandzak.

Bandzak maintains that his use of the grape has little to no downsides. "While most winemakers dislike it because of its inconsistent yields, I have been able to source enough from the farm for the last 10 years to make the smaller amounts I require," said Bandzak. "I have found it to be consistent in taste and color."

Romano Winery, founded by Joseph and Jo-Ann Romano, also uses Rougeon in its wines. The founders say that Rougeon boasts "a black cherry aroma leads to a medium-bodied red with a deliciously sweet finish." The label suggests enjoying with red meat, ripe cheeses or good conversation.

Joe Romano spoke highly of the Rougeon grape. "One of the reasons that I selected Rougeon was because Rougeon wine was not widely available as a varietal as it is typically used in blending for its color," said Romano. He was looking for a wine that would stand out, and he found the dark red color and aroma attractive and thought as a sweet wine—also atypical for this grape—it would be very interesting. "In the end, the wine turned out to be everything I hoped for, and it’s great with chocolate!"

Taste Maryland Wine
Come to The Maryland Wine Festival in September. We have passes available for members of the trade to come to The Maryland Wine Festival in September at the Carroll County Farm Museum in Westminster. To register for passes, contact a Maryland winery representative. Limit two passes per account.

Come early on Saturday, September 15 or Sunday, September 16 to try Maryland wines and learn more about our industry before the crowds arrive. Learn more about the event on www.marylandwine.com/events-festivals.

KEVIN ATTICKS is the executive director of the Maryland Wineries Association, the trade group representing Maryland’s wineries. He is a regular contributor to the Daily Record and was the wine editor of The Grapevine magazine. Kevin may be reached at 410 252-WINE or kevin@marylandwine.com.
NEW LOOK
SAME SMOOTH TASTE

ENJOY OUR QUALITY RESPONSIBLY.
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Ever since it emerged on the scene more than three centuries ago, gin, for all intents and purposes, has been identified as a quintessentially British spirit—or, at the very least, British by way of Dutch, thanks to the influence of the latter’s genever on the former’s iteration.

The most iconic brands—Beefeater, Gordon’s, Tanqueray, Bombay and their ilk—hail from either England or Scotland and tend to adhere to a “dry,” juniper-forward style with “London” in its very name. It wasn’t until the 1990s when Hendrick’s came along and pushed the boundaries on what the spirit could be that people and the industry really began to think differently about gin.

And two decades after that, gin has become about as untethered to a geographical place as it is to a singular style, becoming a spirit that truly belongs to the world. That’s thanks to a combination of factors: evolving drinking habits worldwide, the global craft spirits movement and, in no small part, the elevation of the dusty, old gin and tonic to a classy, stylish drink.

IBERIA AS TREND SETTER
The industry has bartenders on the Iberian peninsula to thank for that last point. The Spanish “Gin-Tonic” (sans the ‘and’) emerged in stemmed, wide-mouthed gobelet glass with fresh, innovative garnishes complementing the particular flavor profiles of the gin in the vessel. Gin culture exploded in Spain and Portugal and spread across Europe.

“What happened in Spain had more to do with the on-trade,” says Spiro Malandrakis, industry manager for alcoholic drinks at Euromonitor International. “Bars continued to move more and more toward premiumization, mixing [gin] with better mixers, adding a little flair to the actual cocktail ritual.”

According to the market research firm, global on-premise gin revenue totaled nearly $9.4 billion, while off-premise sales topped $6 billion—a combined $15.4 billion—in 2017.

The active gin market has attracted an appropriate wave of new labels. It also helps that, unlike whiskey and other brown spirits that call for barrel-aging, gin is faster to market. “On the production side of things, the story is how these small-scale producers have popped up everywhere in a category that was sidelined,” Malandrakis says. With craft gin producers springing up on every populated continent, you might say the hottest trend in global gin is the explosion of new local-minded ones. Gin’s juniper mandate is proving to be like a bloodline that keeps the multi-generational family connected as it grows. Beyond juniper, botanicals are being gathered and infused as never before, not merely as points of distinction, but as genuine captures of terroir.
GIN GOES GLOBAL

EIGHT TRADITIONAL ONES. "THE JAPANESE BO-

TWO YEARS AGO, GLOBAL SPIRITS GI-

THE GIN BUG HAS CROSSED THE PACIFIC

THE GIN ALL AROUND

A DECADE AGO THE PREVAILING TREND WAS TO SOURCE

GLOBAL, MEET LOCAL

CONSIDER GERMANY'S BLACK FOREST, A RE-

THE BARREL-AGED PRODUCT, REALLY

GIN ALL AROUND

While the term London Dry is not a protected term, it generally can still be used to help classify specific products when shelving and discussing.

LONDON DRY
- Beefeater
- Bloom
- Bombay Sapphire
- Boodles
- Broker's
- Bulldog
- City of London
- Cotswolds
- East London
- Fifty Pounds
- Gordon's London Dry
- Greenall's
- Martin Miller's

AMERICAN PIONEERS
- Aviation (Portland, OR)
- Bluecoat (Pennsylvania)
- Breckenridge (Colorado)
- Brooklyn (New York)
- Corsair (Tennessee)
- Death's Door (Wisconsin)
- Dorothy Parker (The New York Distilling Company)
- Dry Fly (Washington)
- Farmer's Gin (New York)
- FEW (Chicago, IL)
- Greenhook Ginsmiths (Brooklyn)

VALUE GINS
- Burnett's
- Fleischmann's
- Gilbey's
- Gordon's
- New Amsterdam
- Seagram's

left behind. Among the notable UK-based brands launched this century: Bulldog, the first gin infused with poppy and dragon eye (related to lychee). Others popping up to reinforce the U.K.'s spiritual claim to gin importance: Brockmans, Cotswolds, Fifty Pounds, Portobello Road and Carounn.

On top of myriad botanical combinations, gin makers are tinkering with unusual distilling and finishing techniques. In Finland, Kyrö Distillery makes two rye-based gins, both including some botanicals foraged from local forests. Their American-oak-matured Koskue typically accounts for 10 to 20% of Kyrö's gin sales, but in the U.S. it's more of a 50-50 split, notes Head Distiller Kalle Valkonen: "The barrel-aged product, really seems to fit your palate on that side of the Atlantic."

Barrel-aging is picking up advocates, such as FEW and Koval in Chicago; Bluecoat (PA) and Tom's Town (Kansas City). Big Gin (Washington State) uses bourbon barrels. In California, Benham's and No. 209 both batch gins in ex-varietal wine barrels.

As with botanical recipes and wood-finishing, distillation techniques can provide interesting selling points. Many distillers boast of vapor infusion; others, infuse before and/or after distillation. Hepple Gin, and English gin launched in 2015, uses a threefold process for extracting botanical flavors: heavier ones are distilled with the grain, lighter examples are vacuum distilled, and juniper is extracted using carbon dioxide.
Signature Serve

–1.5 oz. Drumshanbo Gunpowder Irish Gin
–Top-off with chilled premium tonic water
–Fresh Ruby Red Grapefruit
SELLING COMPLEXITY
With Euromonitor predicting robust growth of 5% CAGR, vaulting annual U.S. sales from $15.4 billion in 2017 to nearly $20 billion by the end of 2022, the “new normal” in the gin market presents some novel challenges for bars and retailers alike.

Fortunately, gin does have some natural hooks on which re-sellers can hang their hats. In some cases, a stand-out botanical can become a simple selling point. Like citrus? Malty, from Italy’s Adriatic Coast, has two lovely citrus-forward gins, one lemon, another blood orange. New Sipsmith Lemon Drizzle incorporates sun-dried lemon peels, lemon verbena and “vapour-infused fresh hand peeled lemon,” leaving no doubt as to its citric intentions. Brockmans showcases blueberry; Caroum has apple; Puerto de Indias and Beefeater Pink lead with strawberry. With the simplicity of usage: using a signature botanical as a garnish often makes a naturally copacetic Gin & Tonic.

A BRITISH GIN SENSATION HITS U.S. SHORES

Created by Johnny Neill, whose family has been distilling since 1762, Whitley Neill is anchored by an award-winning London Dry and complemented by an array of unusual flavors inspired by his ancestors’ “exploits abroad” and his grandparents’ English farm.

Whitley Neill’s recent and meteoric rise—from 5,000 cases to 350,000 cases in under four years in the U.K.—has been extraordinary. “In my 20 years of experience in the drinks industry, I’ve seen extremely few premium spirits brands grow so quickly in such a short time,” says James Stocker, Director of Marketing, Halewood International (who owns the brand).

Whitley Neill is currently the #1 premium gin in the U.K., with 24% of the premium market. Flavors represent 61% of the growth in the U.K.’s gin category overall, and Whitley Neill is far and away the market leader with their 10 flavors—the vibrant purple-hued Rhubarb & Ginger is the top seller.

With aspirations to create this same success stateside, Halewood has commissioned David Katz’s Symphony Importers (creator of Zyr Vodka) to represent Whitley Neill in the U.S. market, where four gins—Dry, Rhubarb & Ginger, Quince and Blood Orange ($29.99)—have just become available. As exotic as they are (even the London Dry is flavored with South African baobab and Cape gooseberries), it’s the simplicity of consumption where opportunity lies, says Katz: “Just add soda, tonic, or Champagne.”

GIN’S NEXT GEM: OLD IS NEW AGAIN?

Gin’s globalization accelerating, plus a vibrant craft gin movement here in the U.S., but don’t be surprised to see an ancient type of gin join the party. Genever (pronounced juh-NEE-vuhr) remains the largest spirit category in the Netherlands and Belgium, might best be thought of as the “O.G.” (“Original Gangsta”) gin. Used in Medieval times for supposed medicinal benefits, genever by the 17th century was one of Europe’s largest exports; recipe books from the 1880s show that about one quarter of U.S. cocktails were based on the spirit.

Genever all but disappeared from the world stage following the two World Wars and Prohibition. But today, genever is in the midst of a three-year U.S. marketing campaign, key by five genever brands (Bobby’s-Notaris, Bols, deBorggen, Rutte and Smeets). Genever’s main distinction, being distilled from malted grain mash and often aged in oak casks, lends itself easily to being positioned as “the missing link between Gin and whiskey,” notes Sandie van Doorne of Bols International. She asserts that genever’s character—“smooth and malty with a botanical finish”—makes a great alternative in cocktails such as the Collins and the Martini. Bols has carved out a special cocktail niche for the Red Light Negroni—Bols Genever, Campari and sweet vermouth, served in glasses shaped like inverted light bulbs.

GIN GOES GLOBAL
California) makes a “peppered” gin. And for thyme, olive and basil; Uncle Val’s (California from Spain incorporates rosemary, Gin from Colorado features sage; Gin Hendrick’s got the party started with its raw Vermont honey. On the savory side, Spirits’ Barr Hill Gin is finished with rally copacetic Gin & Tonic.

nothing really different, from Ireland comes Drumshanbo, infused with dried gunpowder tea.

Gin points of distinction go even further than botanical and origin. O.R.E 118 is the first raw vegan Gin. Prairie and Farmer’s gins are both made in America and organic. Tanqueray Malacca and Fords Gin both lay claim to being “bartender’s gin.” Pink gins (in addition to the strawberry-tinged Beefeater Pink and Puerto de Indias) include Gin Lane 1751, Wolffer Estate and The Bitter Truth.

Geography is also a selling point. Nothing says gin has gone global like a display that features spirits from India (Jaisalmer); Brazil (McQueen and the Violet Fog); Australia (Four Pillars); New Zealand (Scapegrace); Roku (Japan); and Germany (Monkey 47).

GIN & TONIC

Bols Genever has a signature cocktail in the Red Light Negroni. Situated in the heart of Amsterdam, Bols also produces a Barrel-Aged Genever; a 100% Malt Spirit; and a dry gin, Damrak, with pronounced citrus character.
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First came the Aperol Spritz. The radiantly orange concoction, made up of the mild amaro Aperol, Prosecco and sparkling water, was long a favorite of Italians lounging at piazza-side cafés and as a pre-prandial aperitivo.

It took a long time to make its way here, but after the legwork of Aperol brand reps and the adoption of many bartenders looking for light, refreshing and sessionable drinks, the Aperol Spritz has become a behemoth, especially for brunch. So popular has it
become that the spritz has developed into a drink category of its own, gaining precious menu space across the country.

“The spritz is popular because it is easy to make and is delicious to drink,” says Bridget Alpert, Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits National Director of Education Beam Suntory. “The consumer is looking for more than spirit-forward classic cocktails on a menu and spritzes can be enjoyed before a meal, during or after.”

“Low-ABV cocktails are on-trend and a simple spritz can fit easily into this narrative,” she says. “A spritz is a blank canvas and can easily be manipulated to fit any season.”

One of the noted progenitors of the spritz is New York City’s Dante, where Bar Director Naren Young has aperitivos, vermouths and Italian-style sipping front and center, including spritz variations on a menu that includes an Aperol Spritz on tap.

Lots of places are adding at least one variant: Chicago’s Sable Kitchen & Bar has Head Bartender Jenee Craver’s Marcia, Marcia, Marcia!—rhubarb and strawberry-infused Aperol; fermented rhubarb and strawberry; and the sparkling water Topo Chico. Dave Fisher, Beverage Director at Gran Tivoli and Peppi’s Cellar, New York, offers the GT Spritz (falernum, Comox Blanc Vermouth and Brut Champagne).

**SUMMERTIME HUES**

As summer nears, the full menu trend is popping: the Kimpton Epic Hotel in Miami’s Area 31 restaurant and terrace is set to roll-out a five-spritz menu, including a non-alcoholic offering, on the rooftop patio and pool deck on Saturdays.

Called the “Summer of Spritz” with a tagline “Rosé Passé: Get Spritz Faced,” the menu will include the traditional Aperol Spritz and variations made with, for example, Campari, passionfruit and cava; Ketel One Grapefruit Rose, Dolin Blanc Vermouth, earl grey tea and Prosecco; and a non-alcoholic (tequila-optional) version made with grapefruit soda, basil, black volcanic salt and a grapefruit wedge.

“I’ve always been a big fan of spritzes in general and the bartender scene has recently brought the spritz forward,” says Amy Currens, Area 31 Beverage Director in Miami. “This is really about featuring spritzes that are sessionable, refreshing for summer, and on top of that there are so many creative takes and ingredients you can play with.”

Spritzes with solid savory elements also work very well as a meal accompaniment—something most cocktails can’t manage. “These make for great food pairings that are not going to overpower because the alcohol isn’t so high and hot that it would kill your taste buds,” says Currens.

At New York’s Santina, Beverage Director Ryan Davis is planning a variety of spritzes for the spring and summer menu to join their popular Santina Spritz (pitchers of frozen Aperol and blood orange topped with a bottle of Prosecco). Coming on: the Pompelmo Cooler—an Aperol variation including grapefruit; Sbagliato, a Negroni varia-
Cruel Spring

**Ingredients:**
1 oz Santa Teresa 1796 Rum
¼ oz Genepy le Chamois (herbal liqueur)
¼ oz Mandarine Napoléon
1 spoonful Combier Crème de Banane
¾ oz fresh Lemon Juice
Sparkling Wine

**Method:**
Shake with ice and strain into a highball glass with ice sphere. Top drink with sparkling wine, and garnish with a plantain chip and edible orchid.

Nonino Spritz

**Ingredients:**
⅓ oz Amaro Nonino Quintessentia
1 slice of Orange
Sparkling Wine to taste

**Method:**
Fill an aperitif glass with ice cubes and the slice of orange, then add Amaro Nonino and sparkling wine to taste.

Santina Spritz

Recipe by Ryan Davis at Santina

**Ingredients:**
10 oz Aperol
3 oz Blood Orange Purée (Perfect Purée of Napa Valley preferred)
2 oz fresh Lemon Juice
1 oz cane or Simple Syrup
1 750ml bottle Prosecco

**Method:**
The first step is to combine and freeze all of the ingredients except the Prosecco. Bars may make batches in a Pacojet; you can also freeze in ice cube trays and blend. Place frozen/slush mix into a pitcher with orange wheels and then add a 750ml bottle of brut Prosecco. Garnish with orange wheel and fresh mint sprig.

Silencio Spritz

**Ingredients:**
1 oz El Silencio Espadin Mezcal
½ oz Grenadine
½ oz fresh Lime Juice
½ oz fresh Orange Juice
1 oz Champagne

**Method:**
Shake first four ingredients with ice; strain into a chilled flute; top up with Champagne. Garnish with lime wheel.

Via Alpina

Recipe by Camille Ralph Vidal, from How to Spritz French Fluently

**Ingredients:**
⅓ oz Lemorton Pommeau
⅓ oz Clear Creek Douglas Fir Brandy
⅓ oz St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur
2 oz dry Sparkling Cider
1 oz Soda Water

**Method:**
Pour all ingredients except sparkling cider and soda water into a wine glass filled with ice. Stir to combine. Top with sparkling cider and soda water. Garnish with a lemon twist and olive on a pick.
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SECOND COMING
IS AUSTRIA’S FLAGSHIP WINE COOL AGAIN?
BY KRISTEN BIELER

R egarding Grüner Veltliner’s original ascent, the wine world is in agreement: In the late 1990s, Austria’s flagship wine skyrocketed to prominence in the U.S. market, becoming de rigueur in top wine programs across the country.

Exactly when and why the grape fell out of favor, however, is a matter of debate. Somewhere towards the later-2000s—roughly a decade after it burst onto the scene—Grüner Veltliner was disappearing from wine lists and conversations. Some blame the influx of inexpensive one-liter Grüner bottles. (Yet, given the excellent quality-for-money these offer, it’s hard to believe they did any real damage.)

Others conclude Grüner Veltliner was a victim of overexposure followed by the inevitable backlash. “It’s hot then it’s not,” says Jodi Stern, Austrian Portfolio Specialist for The Winebow Group. “Many wines are cyclical in their popularity and Grüner Veltliner fell under this lens. It was simply the pivoting of people’s attention and fascination with new wines.”

In other words, a casualty of the fickle hipster sommelier culture. “Somm’s just got sick of talking about Grüner and moved onto the next thing—which was Chenin Blanc,” believes Gabe Clary, Terry Theise Portfolio Manager for Skurnik Wines.

Flash-forward a decade, and the winds of change appear to be blowing in Grüner’s favor. Gatekeepers are once again excited about the grape. “I’m seeing more interest in Grüner Veltliner from buyers, particularly for by-the-glass lists. It’s a very vibrant time for the variety right now,” reports Stern.

Jienna Basaldu, sommelier at The Morris in San Francisco (whose list features 30 Austrian wines), is witnessing the same trend with her customers: “I have more and more guests asking for Grüner by name; the Tegernseerhof I pour by the glass is one of our best-selling whites.”

Last year, Austrian wine imports to the U.S. were up almost 20%, and while some of this enthusiasm is fueled by the country’s increasingly impressive red wines, some excellent Sauvignon Blancs and a blossoming natural wine movement, the growth-driving stalwart remains Grüner Veltliner, which represents more than a third of the country’s vines.
A Fresher Take

Could it be an evolution in the wines themselves that partially explains this newfound spotlight? “A number of influential Austrian winemakers are going for more acid, freshness and balance today,” believes Arvid Rosengren, partner/sommelier at New York’s Legacy Records. “There was a trend towards impressive, opulent Grüner Veltliners that were built for critics, not for gastronomy. Now winemakers are leaning towards less ripe, less botrytis-laden styles, yet they are still able to craft wines with richness and intensity.” In regions across Austria, producers are “realizing that freshness is what Austria has to offer,” explains Sabine Bauer-Wolf of Austrian Wine Marketing Board.

Climate change may ironically be helping. A string of warmer vintages has allowed vintners to more easily achieve ripeness without relying on botrytis—the noble rot that can occur when grapes are picked late—to bring concentration and roundness, explains Michael Dolinski, Sommelier at Wallsê, the Austrian restaurant in New York’s West Village. “Consider many smagard-level Grünners from Wachau; famous producers like Knoll and Hirtzberger are using less botrytis than they used to,” he says.

A “changing of the guard” may also be a factor in this subtle style shift, Dolinski adds: FX Pichler, Emmerich Knoll and Franz Hirtzberger are now all in the hands of the younger generation. “I see an increase in purity,” says Stern, who believes the young leadership has a role in this. “There is a new generation taking over and they are passionately committed to finding an authentically Austrian voice. Some producers are reigning back on oak and alcohol levels, which yield wines that better showcase their origin and the diversity of Austrian terroir.”

Grüner the Shape Shifter

It’s hard to generalize about Grüner because it is incredibly chameleon-like in its sensitivity to terroir: Powerfully rich, tropical and oily from the warmer Wachau region; citrusy, spicy and elegant from Kamptal; and often high-toned, mineral-driven and smoky from Kremstal. What most Grünners do tend to have in common is a savory acidity

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UNUSUALLY GREEN

Austria boasts the highest proportion of organic and biodynamically-farmed vines in Europe—over 13%. “Rudolf Steiner—the founder of biodynamic agriculture—was Austrian and the impact of his philosophy is enormous,” says Monika Caha. While Caha’s portfolio includes natural-leaning producers, even her non-biodynamic, more traditional estates craft wines “very close to nature with very little intervention; these practices have deep roots in Austria.”

A new group of biodynamic producers, called Respekt, has 20 members and is growing. A big reason for this, believes Skurnik Wines’ Gabe Clary, is that many producers see biodynamic viticulture as the best defense against climate change and the increasing frequency of warmer vintages (like 2017 and 2018). “Our growers talk a lot about soil health as the solution to climate change. Biodynamically-farmed vines retain more water and allow grapes to ripen more slowly to achieve phenolic ripeness, not just sugar and alcohol,” he explains.

Jienna Basaldu, Sommelier at The Morris in San Francisco, says, “Because Grüner has acidity and roundness it can work throughout a whole meal and with challenging dishes; a huge selling point.”
“Sommeliers who want to feature interesting, Old World, mid-weight, textured whites are increasingly turning to Grüner, particularly as regions like Burgundy get more expensive.”

– Gabe Clary, Skurnik Wines

wines is becoming available and bottles are being snatched up,” Dolinski reports.

**Value Factor**

Value—in addition to complexity and ageability—is what makes Grüner a triple threat. “To match the quality of what you get for $100 out of Austria in other fine wine regions, you would have to spend at least twice as much,” says Stern. When Dolinski made the bold move last year to make Wallse’s wine list 100% Austrian, his team was nervous about bottom line: “My somms were worried when we eliminated the Pétrus and Krug and Montrachet; we had nothing left at those price points. Austria offers the same quality for a fraction of the cost.”

Other regions pricing themselves out of by-the-glass reach has meant new opportunity for Grüner. “Sommeliers who want to feature interesting, Old World, mid-weight, textured whites are increasingly turning to Grüner, particularly as regions like Burgundy get more expensive,” Clary observes.

But while Grüner Veltliner’s praises are being sung once more, there is still tremendous work to be done, cautions Monika Caha, who founded Monika Caha Selections 15 years ago—and created her Grooner brand to bring more national awareness to the grape. Aside from some sommeliers who chose it “for a short time in mainly trendy high-end places in urban areas,” Grüner Veltliner never really had its heyday. She explains, “Austrian wine has never reached the popularity with the consumer that wines of other countries have—it’s still new to most Americans. Austria still needs champions; sommeliers and retailers who are leaders who aren’t afraid to distinguish themselves from the crowd.”

Only then, Caha believes, will Grüner Veltliner finally transcend its passing fad status and assume its rightful place as a timeless classic.

that is refreshing yet not sharp. “Grüner is vibrant and invigorating and because it has acidity and roundness it can work throughout a whole meal and with challenging dishes,” says Basaldu. “That’s a big selling point for Grüner.”

It’s hard to argue with outgoing managing director of the Austrian Wine Bureau, Willi Klinger, when he boldly proclaims: “There is simply no other place on earth where refreshing wines are so concentrated and substantial, or where the opulent wines exhibit such grace.”

Basaldu particularly loves “blowing people’s minds” with older vintages which remain unctuous, focused and bright decades after they were bottled, she finds. Although older Grüner Veltliners are in short supply, a broker market is developing in response to new demand. “A trickle of

The organic Fritsch estate in Wagram was a biodynamic pioneer in Austria, and a founding member of the Respekt group. Monika Caha created her Grooner label to bring national attention to the grape.

Monika Caha founded her Austrian import company 15 years ago and believes that Austria still needs more “champions” (aka, influential buyers and sommeliers) to build a true national audience.
A “TWIST” ON TRADITION

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As sparkling wines continue to soar in popularity, more buyers and consumers are looking to traditional method alternatives to Champagne. While Cava, Franciacorta and California sparklers are frequent selections, many point to French Crémant as the closest value option to Champagne, as the categories share a country of origin. The eight Crémant appellations in France (plus one in Luxembourg) span most of the country’s major wine regions, using local grapes and the traditional method of sparkling winemaking to make high-quality, high-value bubbly.

“I believe Crémants let consumers have ‘Champagne light’ at half the price of a good Champagne,” says Michel Abood, the owner of national wine importer Vinotas Selections, who brings in one Crémant de Bourgogne. “It makes bubbles more accessible, which is always a good thing in my mind.”

Crémant, a term initially used by Champagne producers for wines with less effervescence, was adopted widely throughout France after a 1985 agreement—sparkling wine producers from other French regions would stop using the term méthode Champenoise, and Champagne producers would give up the term Crémant. But many of these regions have long histories of making traditional method sparkling wine, and the first Crémant appellations—Crémant de Loire and Crémant de Bourgogne—were awarded in 1975.

Though each of the Crémant appellations have separate designations surrounding grape varieties allowed and legal boundaries, they all agree to meet certain shared regulations set by the Institut National de l’Origine et de la Qualité (INAO), including hand harvesting, inducing secondary fermentation in the bottle, and aging for at least a year in bottle before release, nine months of that time spent on lees. This creates a spectrum of sparkling wines that have a base level of quality, yet still span a wide range of styles and prices.

Beyond discovery, Crémant also offers value. “Crémant wines punch above their weight,” says Jen Pelka, owner of The Riddler in San Francisco and New York. “If you pick up a bottle, you’re likely to find a good quality wine at a much more affordable price point than Champagne.” That allows for plenty of budget flexibility to explore these white and rosé sparkling wines from across France.

**Crémant de Loire**
The Saumur and Vouvray regions of the Loire Valley were some of the first outside of Champagne to use the term Crémant for their sparkling wines, and the Crémant de Loire region was the first of the Crémant AOCs approved, in 1975. The Crémants, made from grapes like Chenin Blanc,
Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, and Pinot Noir, accounted for just 5.9% of Loire Valley wine in 2017, though it is one of the three largest production Crémant appellations. Gratien & Meyer Crémant de Loire is reliable and well distributed.

**Crémant de Bourgogne**
Crémant can be produced throughout Burgundy, from Chablis to Beaujolais, and is made from the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes that dominate these vineyards, along with other varieties; even Gamay is allowed, though it may only have a minority stake in the blend. “Crémant de Bourgogne is appealing to me because it’s quality wine from Burgundy I can afford,” says Alisha Blackwell-Calvert, sommelier at Elaia in St. Louis. “I like that the wines typically mimic Champagne: yellow apple notes, hazelnut, toast, or brioche, with a soft mousse.” An average of 11% of Burgundy is Crémant de Bourgogne, making it a widely available option. Two standouts: Simonnet-Febvre Crémant de Bourgogne and Albert Bichot Crémant de Bourgogne.

**Crémant d’Alsace**
“More than half of all Crémants in France are made in Alsace,” says Pelka. Indeed, Alsace produces about 2.5 million cases of Crémant per year, accounting for a quarter of all wines produced in this region. Local varieties like Riesling, Pinot Blanc, and Auxerrois are used for Crémant d’Alsace, and any rosé must be entirely made from Pinot Noir. Because so much Crémant d’Alsace is made, it can range from clean and aromatic to rich and toasty. Reliable producers: Lucien Albrecht, Dopff & Irion.

**Crémant de Bordeaux**
Though the Crémant de Bordeaux appellation was created in 1990, it comprises a small amount of wine made in Bordeaux: about 1.3 percent. However, the production of Crémant de Bordeaux has tripled since 2013 to over 66,000 hectoliters, and there are 50 percent more Bordeaux winemakers making Crémant. “The consumption of sparkling wines is booming all over the world,” says Céline Lannoye, the executive director of Celene Bordeaux, which only makes Crémants. “Bordeaux couldn’t miss that strong trend.” Any red or white grape allowed in Bordeaux is permitted in the production of Crémant de Bordeaux. Jaillance Crémant de Bordeaux has a good footprint in the U.S.

**Crémant de Die**
Located in the Rhône Valley at altitudes of about 400 meters, Crémant de Die has the smallest production of the French Crémant AOCs at 1,700 hectoliters. Historically based on the Clairette grape, Crémant de Die may also blend in proportions of Aligoté and Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains to make white sparklers only.

**Crémant du Jura**
Roughly 16% of Jura AOC production is Crémant, primarily based on Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Trousseau, though varieties like Savagnin and Poulard are allowed. “Crémant du Jura appeals to my geeky side,” says Blackwell-Calvert, “because it tends to show more earth tones than some of the other Crémant producing regions.” Tissot is one label to look for.

**Crémant de Savoie**
The newest Crémant appellation, Crémant de Savoie was approved in 2015 and is currently being made by 43 producers. The wines must be based on local grapes Jacquère and Altesse and may be blended with Chasselas, Aligoté and Mondeuse. Of the relatively small production—just over 4,000 hectoliters—very little is exported.
When RumChata entered the market in 2009, the cordial sector was accustomed to Baileys knock-offs. But this sweet, creamy, rum-based horchata made with a touch of cinnamon, vanilla, sugar and other secret flavors was different. “Baileys was at about 1.2 million cases then,” notes brand creator Tom Maas, “and they’re still about 1.2. We’ve added 500,000 cases to the category.” As RumChata turns ten this year, with multiple variations of the core product, the proverbial cream is still rising.

Sweet Zigs & Zags
It all began at a taco stand near Chicago, where Tom Maas’s son, Nick, introduced him to horchata, a nonalcoholic rice drink beloved in Mexico. The elder Maas had heard of horchata before, from Hispanic consumers in focus groups during his years at Beam. He set about developing an alcoholic version. From 2006 into 2008, Maas experimented in his kitchen, trying brandy, bourbon, vodka and tequila before arriving at the 13.75% alcohol Caribbean rum version that hit the spot.

That combination of flexibility, creativity and persistence would serve RumChata well again and again over the course of the product’s first decade.

Traction initially was difficult—Mexican restaurants, a seemingly natural market, hesitated because an alcoholic version of horchata struck them as inauthentic. Reorienting toward bars, the revelation that RumChata’s flavor evoked the end of a bowl of Cinnamon Toast Crunch gave rise to the “CTC” shot (replete with cereal garnish). “The good part was that it opened up lots of new accounts and brought a lot of new fans,” Maas recalls. “The problem was we got pigeonholed as a shot.”

Extending the Core
Taking a cue from consumer feedback, the RumChata team turned their innovation arrow toward coffee. The MiniChata—RumChata in small (25ml) peel-off creamer cups, are designed to be ready to add to coffee, hot or cold. Alas, some people thought it was a K-cup; others thought it was nonalcoholic creamer. Adjusting, they convinced retailers to stock the 15-packs beside the 750ml size; and for the holidays, a coffee mug filled with 8 MiniChatas was a hit.

FrappaChata, their next innovation, took two years of development to get the right balance of coffee, cream and rum. Again, the route to market called for a pivot. Modeling after the most popular RTDs at the time, margaritas, FrappaChata launched in a 1.75L size. The switch to 200ml four-packs proved a winner; the sweet and creamy iced coffee RTD now comes in Mocha as well as Original.

Optimal Exposure
RumChata’s product development has been paralleled by aggressive advertising and promotions, headed up by Charlie Maas, Chief Marketing Officer at parent company Agave Loco Brands. “Our focus is on expanding our user base,” he explains. “We’re asking: Where are the most people?”

RumChata is among a handful of national alcoholic beverage brands advertising on TV. Their outreach emphasizes special events—like the Country Music Awards—and magazine editions, such as People’s “Sexiest Man Alive” and Sports Illustrated’s swimsuit issue. A tailgating promotion in test markets with specially wrapped pigskin-style bottles generated an 82% lift. Looking ahead to summer, following the annual Freedom bottle, look for 8 MiniChatas packed in iced-coffee tumblers.

“We are small and agile. We see trends quickly and can react,” notes Tom Maas. With that approach and RumChata brand awareness currently at 25-30% (“household” names register 70%), the unique rum cream has both a great foundation and room to keep growing.
sweet, salty, sour and umami are the most easily approachable when it comes to the flavor senses, but bitter hasn’t felt quite as cuddly toward American palates. However, alongside the popularity of IPA style beer, American drinkers, especially younger ones, are reaching increasingly for amaro and other bitter tastes. These new consumers are also selective about brand authenticity, which puts a product like Zucca, a balanced bitter made for over 175 years, smack dab in the sweet spot.

Zucca has gone through some transformations since it was first introduced as a medicinal digestivo in Milan in the 19th century, including a late 1990s/early 2000s version at a mere 16% ABV in a frosted apothecary-like bottle. Disaronno re-launched the brand in 2016 with a sleeker, bar-friendly bottle shape and retro label; they also brought the proof up to 60 (30% ABV).

When it comes to choosing an amaro, Zucca Brand Ambassador Matt Hirsch says to think of the “amaro flavor arc.” Some amari fall on the most bitter/medicinal side of that arc, and some show much sweeter. He says the lower proof made Zucca taste more like a sweet style of amaro, but raising the proof brought its flavors—showcased by Chinese rhubarb as its botanical base—in the middle. “When you first taste it, you get that sweetness, but then on the finish, you get the herbal notes,” says Hirsch. “Bartenders love that because it sits in the middle [flavorwise] and gives them a little of everything that they look for with most amari.”

Hirsch notes that whether a bartender is well versed in amari or is new to tasting it, Zucca, which was awarded a Platinum medal and 96 points by the 2016 International Review of Spirits, seems to immediately spark drink creativity. “The rhubarb rootstock makes it taste slightly smoky, so it’s a natural match for spirits like mezcal, which bartenders like to use,” Hirsch says. He adds that the rhubarb component makes strawberry a natural companion ingredient—like a boozy, liquid version of strawberry rhubarb pie.

Born Again & Broadening
While it makes sense Zucca is a staple in built-in bitter-friendly establishments such as New York City’s Amor y Amargo, because of its versatility it’s also finding its way onto menus in less likely venues, including on tap at Miami Cuban cocktail bar Abi Maria in their “Camaguey” cocktail. It’s also featured at Two Ten Jack in Nashville, a cocktail-focused ramen joint that bestowed the name “No. 1” on their drink made with Zucca, gin, tamarind, passionfruit syrup and lemon juice because it has always been in their first tap position.

Paul Warren of Disaronno International says to expect big “Zune” and “Zuly” campaigns this summer to drive sales on- and off-premise with a mix of marketing materials and boots on the ground to taste and educate staff. Hirsch reminds that for many drinkers, the best way to learn about new products and categories is through a knowledgeable bartender or sales clerk. He says when he himself first became familiar with the category, “It wasn’t an ad or billboard, it was one-on-one interaction with someone who knew what they were talking about.”

In terms of authenticity, it’s important to consider that Zucca, born in Milan, was among the first amari ever created for medicinal purposes as a cure for indigestion. At over 175 years, it predates many familiar brands like Campari, and has been the inspiration for others. “What other brands are trying to create, we already have,” says Hirsch.
Discover the Bitter Truth that Master Mixologists Can’t Get Enough of

Dating all the way back to 1845, the Zucca story is an Italian tale about a family that had faith in a unique product, one created with a very special ingredient: the rhizome of the Chinese rhubarb plant.

The Amaro Category is the Hottest in Spirits, Experiencing Double Digit Growth in Both Volume & Value.*

Zucca is poised to Capitalize and Drive Profit!

ENJOY ZUCCA RESPONSIBLY
1. EFFEN VODKA
Effen Vodka has added two new flavors to their super-premium vodka portfolio. Effen Rosé is a crisp, clean and fruity expression that emulates a classic rosé; best served with soda or bubbles. Effen Yuzu Citrus showcases this Japanese fruit that resembles a blend of lemon and grapefruit; best neat or with grapefruit soda. The two new expressions extend from Effen’s “Different by Design” campaign, celebrating self-expression and encouraging fans to enjoy cocktails as unique as they are. 75 proof.

2. BOOKER’S BATCH 2019-01
The first “Booker’s Batch” of 2019—“Teresa’s Batch”—is now available nationwide. This batch is named after three-decade distillery employee Teresa Wittemer. Working in both Quality Control and in the lab, she became an expert on mingling bourbon barrel samples to the exact taste profile Booker preferred for his namesake bourbon. Like all of Booker’s batches, “Teresa’s” is bottled at its natural proof (125.9). Enjoy neat, over ice or with a few drops of water.

3. 90+ CELLARS FRENCH WINES
On the heels of a trio of new Sonoma County wines, 90+ Cellars is expanding its portfolio with five true-to-type French AOC wines. The new batch includes a fresh, everyday 2018 Muscadet uplifted by extended time on its lees (SRP $12.49); a village-level white Burgundy (2016 Auxey-Duresses, $39.99); a lively, mineral-driven 2017 Aligoté ($17.99); a flinty 2018 Pouilly-Fumé (100% Sauvignon Blanc, $23.99) from in the Loire Valley; plus 90+ Cellars’ first organic rosé from Languedoc ($14.99) arriving next month.

4. MUDDY BOOT ‘OFF-ROAD’ CANS
Extending the outdoorsy Muddy Boot brand into cans makes perfect sense. Already geared toward an active lifestyle, now these fun-loving California wines go anywhere, anytime… especially off-road, whether that means biking, hiking or just hanging at the beach. Off-Beat comes in Crisp White (Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc); a rich Red Blend (Petite Sirah, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel); light, dry Sparkling; and dry Rosé (Pinot Noir). 250ml four-packs. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

5. FOUR VIRTUES WINES
Rutherford Wine Company is expanding their Four Virtues brand with two varietal wines. The new pair joins the original release, a Bourbon Barrel Aged Zinfandel, sharing a contemporary wine style and sleek package design. The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon is sourced from the Lodi AVA, aged in French and American oak, and finished in heavily charred oak bourbon barrels. The 2017 Pinot Noir, from Monterey County, sees no time in bourbon barrels due to the more delicate nature of the variety.

6. PATRÓN TEQUILA 2019 ‘MEXICAN HERITAGE TIN’
Just ahead of Cinco de Mayo, Patrón Tequila unveiled its 2019 Mexican Heritage Tin for the fourth consecutive year. Created by Smithe, the design on the tin was inspired by traditional forms of Mexican embroidery: Tenango-Hidalgo, and Mariachi. Embroidery has been used for centuries to distinguish different groups and family history. Combining these unique styles with important elements of Mexican folklore and Patrón iconography (bees, piña, agave), the tin celebrates rich Mexican heritage.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING 2019 ABL RETAILERS OF THE YEAR:

WILLIAM JOHNSON III
LIQUOR EXPRESS & CRAFT BEER STORE
HUNTSVILLE, AL

GRANT MCCABE & SCOTT MCREYNOLDS
ROUNDERS
TUSCALOOSA, AL

DENNIS DINSMORE & JOE HENRY
WYATT’S WET GOODS
LONGMONT, CO

MIKE KELLEY
BEACH LIQUORS & WINE MERCHANTS
FT. WALTON BEACH, FL

ART OHMER
GILLIGAN’S PARTY BEVERAGE CENTER
SAVANNAH, GA

BRUCE J. HAMPTON
DUTCH HOLLOW BARN
BELLEVILLE, IL

TODD ANTZ
KEG LIQUORS
CLARKSVILLE, IN

ERIC HALL & JAMES FOGLE
MAMMOTH LIQUORS
CAMPBELLSVILLE, KY

MICHAEL BALL
SILVER RUN LIQUORS
WESTMINSTER, MD

GARY ROGOW
ABC LIQUORS
CALIFORNIA, MD

HARRY PATEL
HELLER’S LIQUOR MART
CHELSEA, MA

MERTICE MAROTTEK
BUCKHORN BAR
POPLAR, MT

ANGELO MARRACINO
CLARENCE LIQUOR MART
CLARENCE, NY

JOSH & MORGAN HAMMOND
BUSTER’S LIQUORS & WINES
MEMPHIS, TN

ERVIN LEE
L & M RETAIL VENTURES, LLC
DALLAS, TX

JERRY DAY
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FENNIMORE, WI

VAN GALLOWAY
EL MARKO LANES
CASPER, WY

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7. CÎROC ‘SUMMER WATERMELON’ VODKA

Sean “Diddy” Combs and Diageo North America have unveiled Cîroc Summer Watermelon. Like its portfolio peers, its base is vodka five times distilled from French grapes. Combs collaborated with long-time friend DJ Khaled on the flavor profile—a juicy, fresh taste accented by a sweetness and zest. “With this spirit we aimed to capture the essence of summer and bottled it,” says Combs. Summer Watermelon’s launch at the Coachella Festival in April kicked off a series of promotional events.

SRP: $33.99
ciroc.com

8. SMIRNOFF ZERO SUGAR INFUSIONS

Smirnoff, no newcomer, is shaking up the flavored vodka category with three new variants boasting zero sugar. Infused with natural flavors, the brand-new Smirnoff Zero Sugar Infusions lineup features Cucumber & Lime, Watermelon & Mint and Strawberry & Rose—tailored for casual occasions, from brunch to backyard BBQs. The new line will be supported by TV spots featuring Ted Danson and Saturday Night Live’s Cecily Strong “oohing” and “ahhing” over each of the three new flavors. 60 proof; 72 calories/1.5oz.

SRP: $11.99
smirnoff.com

9. BARDSTOWN BOURBON ‘FUSION SERIES #1’

The Bardstown Bourbon Company (BBCo) has released Fusion Series #1, a blend of estate-made, two-year-old wheat and high-rye bourbons, with an 11-year-old Kentucky bourbon. The BBCo team, led by Master Distiller Steve Nally, a 40-year industry veteran and Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Famer, blind-tasted more than 50 samples to arrive at a rich blend in which the lively fruit and spice of the two-year-old counters the leather, roasted nuts and caramel of the aged bourbon. 98.9 proof.

SRP: $59.99
bardstownbourbon.com

10. KIN & CASCADIA

Celebrating their second-generation partnership in wine, the Sager and Master families have released a new wine of their own. The label, Kin & Cascadia, nods to the wine’s backstory of two industry acquaintances turning into partners and lifelong friends as well as the wine’s Pacific Northwest provenance. The first Kin & Cascadia releases are a 2017 Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and 2017 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, both presenting authentic regional character.

SRP: Cabernet $15.99 | Pinot Noir $13.99
winesellersltd.com

11. A MON FRÈRE WINERY

New from Palm Bay, Mon Frère (French for “my brother”) is a celebration of our connections to each other, to those special people with whom we choose to share life’s triumphs and tribulations. Like its celebrated sibling, Au Contraire Wines, Mon Frère champions the very best in California sourcing and winemaking. The range includes: a fresh Chardonnay with moderate, well-integrated oak; a ripe Pinot Noir, and a Cabernet that shows concentrated fruit and evident structure while remaining approachable.

SRP: $15.99 - $16.99
palmbay.com

12. DE LA COSTA SANGRIA IN CANS

All three De La Costa Sangrias—Red, White and Rosé—are now in cans. Based on California Zinfandel and Merlot, De La Costa Red Sangria surrounds a core of dark fruit with bright citrus (lemon, lime, grapefruit) and balancing sweetness. Best over ice with fresh fruit; 13% ABV keeps flavors vivid. De La Costa is produced by fifth-generation Glunz Family Winery & Cellars. Rosé is also available in a 1L fliptop bottle (SRP $13.99). Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

SRP: Cabernet $15.99 | Pinot Noir $13.99
winesellersltd.com

SRP: $15.99 - $16.99
palmbay.com

SRP: $24.99/four-pack of 375ml
broncowine.com