

Beverage Journal

JUNE 2023

on the **ROAD**

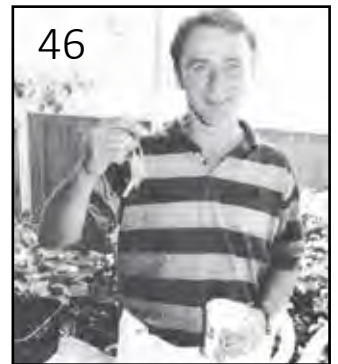
**DRINKS TOURISM
INSIGHTS FOR RETAILERS,
PRODUCERS, AND BEYOND**

**MAKE THE MOST OF
WINERY VISITS**

**THE BIG BUSINESS OF
BOOZE TRAILS**

**TRANSFORMING
BORDEAUX TOURISM**





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COVER CREDIT:
Courtesy of Adobe Stock



MEMORY LANE

Thank you to everyone who congratulated me on my 30 years with the Beverage Journal or thanked me for the “stroll down memory lane.” There were far more of the latter. It was great to hear from so many of you that enjoyed revisiting the pages of the May 1993 edition of the Beverage Journal. Some of you hoped for a continuation of republished articles and events from years ago in future editions. And some even requested specific outings or events be ‘revisited.’

I’m happy to announce that we will continue the stroll down memory lane—for a little while, anyway. I did some digging and found one of the requested events I was asked about. “Bill Shenan’s Hole-in-one Highlights Cranbrook Open” was an Industry Event article originally published in the July 1993 Beverage Journal. I’ve republished the original pages of the article on pages 46 and 48 of the Maryland edition.

For those of you that made other requests ... Keep an eye out; your request could be published in the next issue.

HISTORIC BARS & RESTAURANTS SERIES

Staff writer, Teddy Durgin, is at the halfway point with his 2023 editorial series on historic bars and restaurants. So far, Teddy has featured Free State Atlantic Bar, The Waterfront Hotel Bar, Oliver’s Old Towne Tavern, and Middleton Tavern. In this issue, Teddy takes us just a stone’s throw from The White House to The Hay-Adams Hotel. Teddy goes on the record with Alex Roig, director of food & beverage, about the hotel bar, aptly named, Off the Record ... “a place to be seen, but not heard.” Teddy’s article can be found on page 10.

ABL ANNUAL MEETING

Registration is open for the 2023 American Beverage Licensees (ABL) Annual Meeting to be held June 10-11, 2023 at LIVE! By Loews in St. Louis, Missouri. ABL is turning 21 in 2023, and will be marking that beverage alcohol industry milestone by continuing to unite independent on- and off-premise beverage licensees, just as it has since 2002.

The meeting will feature speakers on a variety of topics, including alcohol industry practitioners as well as experts on issues facing beverage licensees. Topics that will be featured during the meeting’s general sessions include:

- Alcohol Industry Economic and Market Update
- Retailing Cannabis: What Beverage Retailers Should Know
- Payment in Retail: What’s Going on with Swipe Fees?
- Direct-To-Consumer Alcohol Sales
- The Workforce and Labor Landscape
- Reporting on the Industry: Beverage Alcohol Media Insights
- ABL Alcohol Policy Overview

For more details visit: <https://ablusa.site-ym.com/>. Registration is open and is \$349 per person. Make sure to book your room (<https://ablusa.site-ym.com/page/hotel>) at LIVE! By Loews – St. Louis to get the discounted ABL Annual Meeting rate.

The event is an opportunity for attendees to meet with their peers from across the country and the industry. Participants will enjoy a wide range of industry products from well-established and up-and-coming industry brands and supporters during the event. ■

STEPHEN PATTEN PUBLISHER

Maryland • Washington, DC

Beverage Journal

Published Monthly by
The Beverage Journal, Inc.
(USPS# PE 783300)

Over 80 Years of Continuous Publication

BEVERAGE JOURNAL, INC.

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POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to
THE BEVERAGE JOURNAL, INC.
PO Box 2062, Williamsport, PA 17703

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Periodicals postage paid at Baltimore, MD and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: MD edition; 1 year \$49.00 plus tax, 2 years \$79.00 plus tax, 3 years \$109.00 plus tax, FedEx Ground delivery \$85.00 plus tax per year per edition, single copies \$10.00 plus tax. DC edition; 1 year \$36.00 plus tax, 2 years \$60.00 plus tax, 3 years \$83.00 plus tax, FedEx Ground delivery \$85.00 plus tax per year per edition, single copies \$5.00 plus tax.

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1. ASTRAL TEQUILA

Astral Tequila, known for its traditional production process utilizing the tahona and bagazo (agave fibers crushed by the stone wheel), has bolstered its blanco expression with a reposado and añejo distilled from 100 percent Blue Weber agave. The reposado (SRP: \$27.99 per 750-ml bottle), aged for five months, works well in cocktails like Astral's signature Sun Beam Fizz with lemonade, ruby red grapefruit juice, and club soda, while the añejo is matured for 12 months and can be savored neat.

\$ SRP: \$34.99 per 750-ml bottle (añejo)
🌐 astraltequila.com

4. CUPCAKE VINEYARDS

Uniting California grapes from warm and cool climates, Cupcake's Citruskissed Pinot Grigio balances appealing acidity with jolts of fresh lemon zest and Granny Smith apple. It's a suitable accompaniment to alfresco dinners, whether served on its own or as the backbone of a white sangria.

\$ SRP: \$12.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 cupcakevineyards.com

2. SCHEID FAMILY WINES

Typically, it's the Monterey AVA that Scheid Family Wines is synonymous with, but its new Fog & Light label, overseen by winemaker Dave Nagengast, shifts the spotlight to the Paso Robles AVA. Its first offering, the full-bodied Vintage Reserve Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon 2020, capitalizes upon the region's warm days and chilly nights to elicit well-structured tannins and ripe fruit notes accented with tobacco and cedar.

\$ SRP: \$39 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 fogandlightwines.com

5. KNOB CREEK

It exhibits the same taste profile of black pepper, vanilla, and caramel, but Knob Creek's 100-proof Kentucky straight rye whiskey now features an updated seven-year age statement. This additional time in the barrel translates to more nuanced layers of oak and rye spice.

\$ SRP: \$36.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 knobcreek.com

3. SMIRNOFF

Joining Smirnoff's summery peach and pink lemonade vodkas is sweet-tart Blue Raspberry. Ideal for weaving into breezy libations like the Bramble, it's also available as part of the ready-to-drink Smirnoff Ice Neon Lemonades variety pack (SRP: \$15.99 per 12-pack of 12-oz. cans) containing a dozen Miami-inspired cans of four different flavored malt beverages.

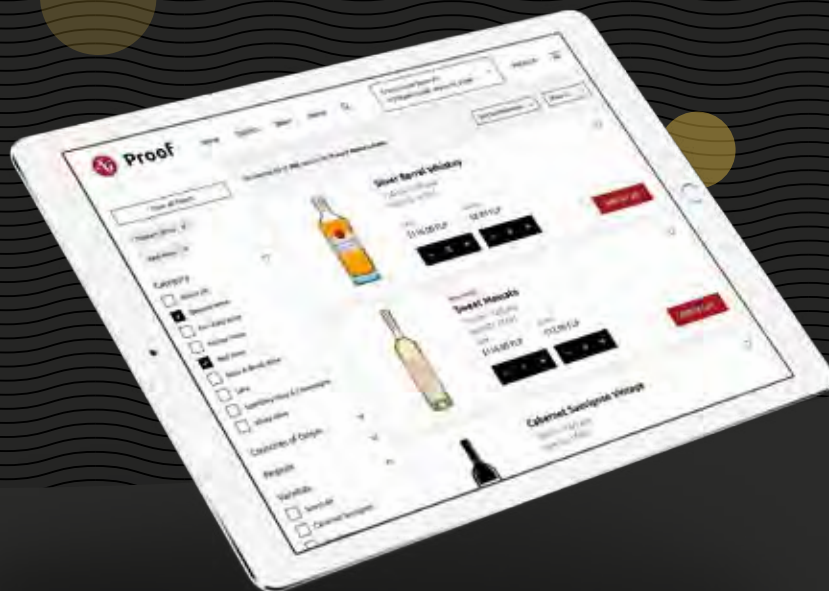
\$ SRP: \$11.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 smirnoff.com

6. RHUM J.M

Rhum J.M has been producing rum agricole on the French island of Martinique since 1845. To celebrate its tropical Caribbean landscape and sustainably managed volcanic sugarcane fields, the distillery has rolled out Terroir Volcanique. A blend of rums that are at least three years old, it is matured in new American oak barrels that are distinguished by custom heavy toasts and double-charred at the on-site cooperage.

\$ SRP: \$42.99 per 700-ml bottle
🌐 rhumjmus.com

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7



8



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10



11



12

7. SONOMA-CUTRER

Sonoma-Cutrer has made its first foray into the versatile canned wine realm with the yellow striped Simply Cutrer. The Chardonnay, with its lively peach, nectarine, and melon notes, is sprung solely from grapes sourced throughout well-known California wine regions.

\$ SRP: \$19.99 per four-pack of 250-ml cans
sonomacutrer.com

8. BACARDÍ

In Mexico, one of the most clamored-for street snacks is mango sprinkled with chile pepper, and that interest has propelled Bacardí's latest flavor. Launching in the U.S. following a successful run in Mexico, this mango chile flavor marries white rum, natural mango extracts, and fiery spice that can either jazz up Mojitos or star in a simple shot garnished with a Tajín rim.

\$ SRP: \$12.99 per 750-ml bottle
drinkbacardi.com

9. THE KRAKEN RUM

The Kraken ventures into new territory with its Gold Spiced Rum. Unlike the black-spiced original, this iteration opens with a rush of molasses, giving way to a subtly toasted oak and vanilla finish that makes it ripe for riffs on classics like the Daiquiri.

\$ SRP: \$21.99 per 750-ml bottle
krakenrum.com

10. DON Q RUM

Don Q has extended its slate of flavored rums—Don Q Coco, Don Q Piña, Don Q Limón, and Don Q Pasión—with Don Q Naranja. Mellowed with natural orange essence and flavor for up to 18 months in American white oak barrels, the low-proof (21% ABV) variety is an homage to Puerto Rico's bounty of fresh, tropical fruits.

\$ SRP: \$14.99 per 750-ml bottle
donq.com

11. FREIXENET

Its Prosecco was a hit, and now the Spanish cava juggernaut Freixenet continues its journey through Italy with the sparkling, food-friendly Asti DOCG. Made with Moscato Bianco grapes from Piedmont, it mixes delicate notes of peach, citrus, and a touch of white flowers.

\$ SRP: \$18 per 750-ml bottle
freixenet.com

12. CLEAR CREEK DISTILLERY

More than a decade ago, legendary bartender Dale DeGroff and absinthe distiller T.A. "Ted" Breaux collaborated on Pimento Aromatic Bitters. Now the duo has teamed up with Oregon's Clear Creek Distillery to craft the Italian-style Bitter Aperitivo (SRP: \$29.99 per 700-ml bottle) and New World Amaro. The former heightens Negronis and spritzes alike; the latter shows off Caribbean spices that can enliven Mai Tais and Manhattans.

\$ SRP: \$39.99 per 700-ml bottle (amaro)
degroffspirits.com

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WHISKEY: WHAT'S NEW

THINK TWICE



To bring the 92-proof **Chicken Cock** Double Oak Kentucky Whiskey from Grain & Barrel Spirits to life, the liquid was matured for eight years in used casks. Then, it mellowed for another 18 months—during a hot summer conducive to whiskey-making—in new white American oak barrels placed on the top floor of Bardstown Bourbon Company's rickhouse, culminating in berry and baking spice notes.

SRP: \$99 per 750-ml bottle

CUSTOM MADE

Barrell Craft Spirits has ramped up its Private Release program with a slew of rye whiskey offerings. The 10 extremely limited-release blends, crafted with whiskeys from Indiana and Canada, reflect different cask finishes: Armagnac, bourbon, XO Cognac, oloroso sherry, Madeira, ruby port, Barbados rum, Sauternes, Tokaji, and Pedro Ximénez sherry.



SRP: \$109.99 per 750-ml bottle



GRAND FINALE

Previously, the Outpost Range from Seattle's **Westland Distillery** put the spotlight on oak and barley native to the Pacific Northwest with its limited-edition Garryana and Colere single malt whiskeys. With the arrival of the 100-proof Solum Edition 1, the range's third and final expression, the focus shifts to peat sourced from Washington's Skagit Valley (Skagit Valley Malting assisted with harvesting and smoking the barley) extracted in an eco-friendly manner from below the bog's waterline.

SRP: \$149.99 per 700-ml bottle



THE ONLY ONE

Lost Lantern has joined forces with Balcones Distilling in Waco, Texas, and Whiskey Del Bac in Tucson, Arizona, to inaugurate its Single Distillery series. These initial limited-release single malts, featuring blends of various casks from a sole distillery, include the fruit-forward Gentle Giant (115.2-proof) from Balcones, as well as Whiskey Del Bac's smoky Desert Dessert (113.8-proof) and Mega Mesquite (120-proof).

SRP: \$100 per 750-ml bottle



GOOD TASTE

Oregon's Hood River Distillers takes an innovative turn with its 80-proof Northwest Whisky collection. Along with a five-year-old Canadian whisky invigorated by glacier-fed spring water from Mount Hood, there is a trio of flavored varieties made with proprietary natural blends—vanilla-tinged Shiny Apple, tangy Giant Peach, and clove- and nutmeg-laden Spice of Life—packaged in 100 percent recyclable glass bottles.

SRP: \$29.95 per 700-ml bottle



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OFF THE RECORD

ALEX ROIG GOES ON THE RECORD ABOUT OFF THE RECORD

WRITTEN BY TEDDY DURGIN

Off the Record has perhaps the best tag line of any bar in the nation's capital. "It's the place to be seen, but not heard." Situated in the basement of the landmark Hay-Adams Hotel, which itself is located on Lafayette Square with a clear view of the White House, Off the Record has long been a favorite upscale watering hole of Capitol Hill lobbyists and Washington, D.C., power brokers. And it's just the place to feature in our ongoing series of historic bars and restaurants.

Overseeing Off the Record is Alexander "Alex" Roig, Director of Food & Beverage for The Hay-Adams. During a recent interview with the Beverage Journal, he confirmed, "We get a lot of senators and representatives and politicians down there. We also get a lot of celebrities. Pretty much anyone you can think of has been to Off the Record! A lot of buzz starts around 3 p.m., and it will continue on and off all the way until 11:30 when it's last call. It doesn't matter if it's Tuesday. It doesn't matter if it's Sunday. It's cracking."

In addition to the clientele, Off the Record is known for its eye-popping red décor. Everything from the couches to the walls are some shade of red similar to the old Russian Tea Room in New York City. As for prime places to sit, have a drink, and share appetizers, Off the Record has a table behind the bar called "The Bench" surrounded by the Supreme Court Justices' caricatures. It's the most popular table in the place.

The Bench

"As for prime places to sit, have a drink, and share appetizers, Off the Record has a table behind the bar called "The Bench" surrounded by the Supreme Court Justices' caricatures. It's the most popular table in the place."



But the most popular feature is not the booths or the fancy bar or cool lighting. It's the caricatures that hang on the wall – caricatures that also are on full display on the bar's coasters. The stylized drawings of previous and current political figures were made by a trio of celebrated cartoonists: Kevin Kallagher of The Economist, Ann Telnaes of the Washington Post, and Politico's Matt Wuerker. Roig remarks, "Everybody goes to Off the Record for one of these coasters."

So often, we get people coming in who say, 'I've brought my friends, and we love these coasters!' It's become a real thing."

Roig is the real thing. As a younger man, he moved to the U.S. from Puerto Rico in search of the American Dream. He rose through the ranks in some of the finest eating and drinking places in Miami, New York, and Washington. He has been with The Hay-Adams since July 2021 after serving as Assistant Director of Food and Beverage at the

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Alexander "Alex" Roig
Director of Food & Beverage
The Hay-Adams



Trump International Hotel Washington, D.C.

He said, "It became one of my passions to lead a team made up of the best of the best. What is unique at Off the Record is we try to create stories behind everything that we do. It's not just me creating a cocktail and saying, 'Alright, this is what we're going to put on the menu, and this is what you're going to do.' I involve staff. So that way, we are creating something that is unique to Off the Record. Our drinks tell a story about them

and about us. It's a way to engage with the guests, and the people enjoy that. So, when a guest asks, 'Why is this cocktail called The Martin?' The bartender can answer, 'Well, that's me. I'm Martin, and I created this cocktail because. . .'"

Roig also decided to retain the speakeasy allure of Off the Record. He stated, "I'm all about Prohibition. I focus on whiskeys and bourbons from that timeline, as well as known spirits that people enjoy. We do have a couple of cocktails that are staples. One is

the Pear Martini. About twelve years ago, one of our bartenders created this martini that has become one of the most favorite cocktails on the menu. When I first started, I almost removed it! But I had people literally tell me, 'You can't!'"

He continued, "I kid you not. You'll see that cocktail at every single table on our busy nights. Some other favorites include the Trumpy Sour and the A La Kamala. They're ones the bartenders have fun with. One that is really popular is called the Sena-



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The Caricatures

"... the most popular feature is not the booths or the fancy bar or cool lighting. It's the caricatures that hang on the wall – caricatures that also are on full display on the bar's coasters. The stylized drawings of previous and current political figures were made by a trio of celebrated cartoonists: Kevin Kallagher of The Economist, Ann Telnaes of the Washington Post, and Politico's Matt Wuerker."

tor's Secret. It's made with Old Forrester, which was the first bottled bourbon in the United States."

Off the Record has even found its way into pop culture at times. For instance, Hillary Clinton wrote a book called "State of Terror," and Off the Record was mentioned several times throughout. Factoids like that are what makes the bar's legend grow, and

the people keep coming. "It's incredible the amount of people who come to this property from groups to weddings to families," Roig marvels. "It's great to see all of them."

Looking ahead, Roig is philosophical about the challenges the nation's capital faces both as the center of government and as one of the nation's top hospitality markets. "I don't have a crystal ball," he concluded.

"I don't know what is going to happen. This morning, I was on my way to work and listening to the news, and they were talking about big companies doing a lot of layoffs. It's all so unfortunate. But I can only control what I can control. I have to block all of the noise, all that's happening in the news and around the world, and just do my job." ■



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QUEEN BEE

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| 1 ½ oz. Aberfeldy 12-Year-Old
Scotch whisky | 1 dash Angostura bitters |
| ¾ oz. lemon juice | 1 dash orange bitters |
| ¾ oz. honey syrup | Top with Prosecco or sparkling
wine |
| Mint leaves | |

Method: Slap the mint leaves to release their oils. Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake vigorously for 20 to 30 seconds. Strain through a fine mesh strainer into a coupe and top with sparkling wine. Garnish with a mint sprig and bee pollen.



CANTARITO FAMILIAR

- 1 liter Tequila Cazadores Reposado
- 25 oz. orange juice
- 10 oz. fresh lime juice
- 25 oz. grapefruit juice
- 1 tsp. salt
- 12 oz. grapefruit soda

Method: Combine all ingredients for this large-format cocktail in a jug. Stir and pour over ice in a Cantarito cup. Garnish with orange, grapefruit, and tamarind candy. Serves 17 to 18 people.



WOODFORD PORCH SWING

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1 ½ oz. Woodford Reserve
Straight Bourbon Whiskey | ½ oz. honey |
| ¾ oz. lemon juice | 6 oz. peach tea |

Method: Combine all ingredients into a tall glass and stir. Garnish with a slice of peach or lemon wheel.

ORANGE FIZZ

- 1 ½ oz. Don Q Naranja rum
- ½ oz. elderflower liqueur
- 1 oz. orange juice
- Top with sparkling wine

Method: Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker. Fill the shaker three-quarters full with ice and shake hard. Strain into a rocks glass over fresh ice and top with sparkling wine. Garnish with an orange wheel.



OLD PARR GOLDEN

- 1 ½ oz. Grand Old Parr 12-Year-Old Scotch whisky
- 1 oz. ginger syrup
- ½ oz. lemon juice
- Top with club soda

Method: Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker. Shake well and strain into a rocks glass over ice. Top with premium club soda and garnish with an orange wedge.



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HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF WINERY VISITS

A GUIDE TO MAXIMIZING THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE
AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
OF IN-PERSON WINERY TRIPS

BY LAURA BURGESS



For most wine professionals, nothing beats getting out of the office and into the vineyards with the winemakers and vineyard managers responsible for crafting the wines they work with every day. On-the-ground tasting opportunities can also cement wine education in a way that book study cannot. The planning minutiae and execution of those visits, however, rarely elicit the same joy. To maximize the educational and networking benefits of a trip to wine country, *Beverage Media* gathered best practices from experts across the industry.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

To get the most from any winery visit, it's important to have a foundation in the region as well as the specific winery you're visiting and the people who work there. "The first thing you should do is study the place you're going to before you go there," says Jeffrey Porter, the wine director for the Barclays Center in Brooklyn and the host of Sip Trip. "Know who you're meeting and do some investigation because when you're there, you can ask deeper questions and get more information."

"In Napa Valley, we have over 400 estate properties and every single estate offers something different," echoes Genevieve Echavarrie, the general manager of Memento Mori in Napa Valley. "The most important thing is to know who you're visiting and do your research."

Producer websites detail background for each individual winery, while appellation and grape variety basics can be found in regional websites, guides, and reference books like *The World Atlas of Wine* and *The Oxford Companion to Wine*. George Athanas, who has organized private and sponsored wine travel for over two decades in partnership with Wines of Greece, notes that when they help organize travel for wine professionals, they often send background information in advance.

CREATE A GOAL FOR EACH TRIP

The most effective trips to wine country also offer broader insights into the producer side of the industry, so setting a



clear goal ensures a valuable return on the time and money invested in each trip. When creating a goal, it's best to find a topic—such as a specific soil series, grape variety, or winemaking style—that aligns with your current beverage program, exams, or personal interests. Then, seek out wineries or regions that suit that goal.

When setting up a visit, it's helpful to ask if it's an option to go into the vineyard or cellar, which can educate about viticulture and production in a hands-on way that book study can't. "It makes it a cohesive experience with the wine," says Erik Segelbaum, the Denver-based founder of wine consulting firm Somlyay and the former beverage director for Starr Restaurants. "You'll remember it more when you've been there, seen the slopes, the landscape, the terroir. It creates a three-dimensional experience."

MAKE APPOINTMENTS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL CHANNELS

Making tasting appointments in advance is crucial whether the winery has an established tasting room or not. Though it's always an option to make a reservation through an online portal, if the winery uses one, reaching out through a professional connection offers a better chance that a winemaker or vineyard manager will host.

"If you don't have a relationship with the winery, my recommendation is to go through the importer or distributor," says Porter. "They want to know that you're there. Even today, I like to tell importers



ABOVE: Jeffrey Porter, the wine director for the Barclays Center and host of Sip Trip.

and distributors when I'm visiting their wineries, just as an FYI."

This is easier for buyers thanks to their relationships and purchasing power, but it holds true for anyone in the industry, as roles can always change. "Let them know what your role is, even if you're not a buyer," says Segelbaum. "Any winery that's worth their salt is going to recognize the value of the loyalty of a young sommelier. There's the potential for a much larger ROI." Porter agrees, noting that most importers and distributors recognize the "potential for further sales if you understand that wine better."

Regional organizations may also be able to help secure appointments, and even if a winery doesn't have a formal tourism offer, it never hurts to reach out directly. When reaching out to a winery in a non-English-speaking country, Porter often drops his request into Google Translate and copies the translation above his original message in English.

ALWAYS ASK WHAT'S INCLUDED

"Being candid is the way to go," says Sally Srok, the hospitality director for Arista Winery, who advises guests to be open and upfront with their hosts whenever possible. It is especially important to inquire about vineyard visits in advance, since many wineries are not located on the same property as their source vineyards. While it's likely that a visit set up by an industry connection



or regional body will be hosted by a winemaker or vineyard manager, reservations made through a consumer-facing site will likely be hosted by tasting room staff, so it's good to clarify.

While most estates offer free tastings to professionals—neither Porter nor Segelbaum could recall paying a tasting fee recently—it's never a good idea to assume that a discount will be applied, and guests should be gracious either way.

"It's really up to the winery to extend that level of hospitality to a guest," says Lauren Van Ness, the sales and hospitality director of Memento Mori, noting that inquiring about tasting fees or industry discounts should be handled during the reservation process. "Unfortunately, we're not afforded the luxury of being able to extend a discount to our industry friends. We hope that through our hospitality approach and our style of hosting that everyone can experience the joy behind our wines and get a sense of our generosity, and understand that generosity looks different for every winery."

It's likewise best to share details about the group if you're visiting with non-industry professionals. "If you work in the industry and you're visiting Northern California with three friends, I think it's great to call ahead and say 'this is a social visit,'" says Srok. "You don't want to pretend the whole group is industry if they're not because the staff wants to be prepared to host you at an appropriate level for the whole group."

LIMIT DAILY WINERY VISITS

"It is impossible to try and do everything in a four- to seven-day trip," says Atha-

nas. "Try to focus on a particular region and the wines and winemakers of that region to really get an in-depth look at the wines, how they are made, and who is making them." Also, if you're booking a series of appointments, "plan more time than the map tells you the travel will be," says Segelbaum.

To avoid burnout while experiencing the maximum of a place, Van Ness suggests diversifying wine experiences throughout a trip. "I like to go to a few newer wineries that are offering approachable wines, plus some classic producers, and then a few bottle shops and bars where you can keep learning from the staff," she says.

PREP YOUR PALATE

"[Make] sure to carry some sort of carbonated beverage to recalibrate your palate between each tasting," says Echavarrie. "A lot of the wines are going to be young or barrel samples, which can have a really huge effect on your palate."

While most wineries will have water on hand, it doesn't hurt to bring your own in addition to simple, palate-cleansing snacks. "It's really easy to get palate fatigue, and at some point, you'll be unable to keep track of all the details," adds Echavarrie.

ALWAYS FOLLOW UP

Winery visits are also excellent networking opportunities that can continue on well after the trip itself, so always ask for the business card of the tasting host. "We're in a relationship-based business," says Segelbaum. Handwritten thank-you notes are the gold standard, but emails

LEFT TO RIGHT: Erik Segelbaum, the founder of Somlyay // Lauren Van Ness, the sales and hospitality director for Memento Mori // Genevieve Echavarrie, the general manager of Memento Mori.

are perfectly suitable as well. If a sales rep, public relations firm, or regional organization helped coordinate the experience, send a thank you message to them as well.

"Feedback is such a powerful thing," says Echavarrie. "Using good manners and saying thank you is one of the most important things to do." Even if you're not in a position to purchase from the winery for your job now, the relationship could become even more valuable in the future. "Even if it's a Napa Valley winery and you have an all-Italian wine list, things change," says Segelbaum. "Sommers move on and you can reach out for partnership later."

This is also a great chance to reciprocate the hospitality that was shown to you during your visit. "If you work at a restaurant, always invite the producers to see you the next time they're in town," says Porter.

In the end, there's no better way to learn about the wine industry than by visiting producers, and a genuine interest is the most important thing to bring with you. "When you're there, be earnest and be giddy," says Porter. "People like when you are excited to be there. Don't be too cool for school."

"This community starts to form when we really show up with genuine interest and support for other people's business," adds Srok. "It just naturally reciprocates." ■

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BORDEAUX'S TOURISM TRANSFORMATION

TWO DECADES AGO, BORDEAUX VINEYARDS WERE VIRTUALLY CLOSED TO TOURISM; NOW, IT'S ONE OF THE WORLD'S PREMIER WINE DESTINATIONS. WHAT CHANGED?

BY ROGER MORRIS

Like most people in Bordeaux, 20 years ago we weren't open for tourists," says Michel Marengo, the owner and winemaker of the family-run Château Hourtin-Ducasse, located a five-minute drive inland from such famous first growth estates as Lafite Rothschild, Mouton Rothschild, and Latour. "There existed a certain snobbishness, and people felt like it was a dirty business taking in visitors."

While Lafite, Latour, and Mouton did accept guests, it was only if they were certified customers of retailers who recommended



them by letter or fax well in advance of an audience at the château. First growths simply did not allow everyday tourists to visit.

Yet, by the end of last year, Marengo says, 60 percent of his winery's revenue came from visitors. Similarly, in 2019, the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic, Bordeaux welcomed 6.8 million tourists according to the Bordeaux office of Great Wine Capitals, three times what it was 15 years earlier, and tourists spent \$1.6 billion in the region. Moreover, eight percent of all local jobs now depend directly on tourism. And although an appointment is still necessary at Lafite, Latour,



OPPOSITE PAGE: Château Chauvin in Saint-Émilion is owned by Sylvie Cazes.

ABOVE: Michel Marengo, the owner and winemaker of Château Hourtin-Ducasse. // Barrels at Château Phélan Ségur in Saint-Estèphe.

and Mouton, as with most other classified growths, any visitor can make one by following the instructions on their respective websites.

So, what caused Bordeaux's about-face from "dirty business" to essential revenue? Twenty years on, we can look back at the making of a wine destination and what impact a colossal increase in tourism has had on the region.

A LATE START IN TOURISM

It is easy to get lost in the miles of rolling countryside that mark Bordeaux. In addition to the now well-visited Medoc, Graves, and Sauternes on the Left Bank, and Saint-Émilion and Pomerol on the Right Bank, there are the various Côtes de Bordeaux villages, the satellite regions of Saint-Émilion, and the vast Entre-Deux-Mers region between the two banks. There are literally thousands of châteaux—but for many years the region's reticence towards tourism, poor infrastructure, and lack of a well-appointed hub in Bordeaux city made visiting a trial.

Following the devastation of World War II, when the region was occupied by German troops, there was a scarcity of funds to replant vineyards and rebuild wine cellars. International markets were slow to redevelop and at least half of the

vintages during the 1960s were judged substandard. "The 1970s were hard times and renovations needed to be made. While some people opened to sell their wines in the 1980s, wine merchants didn't like the competition," says Sylvie Cazes, whose family has owned fifth growth Château Lynch-Bages in Pauillac since 1939.

After the Judgment of Paris in 1976 and the publicity around it, the American market began paying more attention to French wine, with vintages in the late 1970s and 1980s much improved, gaining the attention of wine critic Robert Parker. "Bordeaux became the reference point for the American market, and eventually many came to visit," says Dominique Renard, who for 30 years was the manager of the Moueix family estates, including Petrus.

The Cazes family became instrumental in shifting Bordeaux's approach to tourism. "We had the chance to visit the U.S. and see how Napa vintners were so successful in receiving a great number of visitors and how faithful those visitors remained after their experience," Cazes says.



RIGHT: Sylvie Cazes, an active member of the winemaking family that owns Château Lynch-Bages and the founder of Bordeaux Saveurs.

"In France, wine tourism had not started, but we felt that it was essential to create a link with all wine lovers who could come to Bordeaux."

In the 1980s, the Cazes family opened the newly renovated cellars at Lynch-Bages to visitors—when few others were doing so—and then in 1989, they converted neighboring château Cordeillan-Bages into a luxury hotel with a gourmet restaurant (which went on to earn two Michelin stars). To meet growing demand, in 2005 Sylvie Cazes launched Bordeaux Saveurs, a tourism agency offering bespoke tours and events; and in 2006, with her brother Jean-Michel Cazes, repurposed the four-block village of Bages into a warren of tourist shops and eateries providing much-needed hospitality options.

Even the prestige châteaux realized a strong Bordeaux brand at all levels would further their prosperity. Many now trade on their brand names with popular entry-level wines, as Mouton Rothschild does with its Mouton Cadet line. And, in turn, these popular wines help sponsor tourism events, as Mouton Cadet does with the annual Marathon du Médoc. The marketing concept is that wine drinkers move up the quality ladder as they become more prosperous.

BUILDING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Word spread across the region that tourists valued wine experiences and offered a potential revenue stream to any châteaux that accommodated them. The jurisdiction of Saint-Émilion was amongst the first to capitalize on wine tourism, with eight villages listed as a UNESCO World

Heritage site since 1999. Sauternes followed suit about a dozen years ago when several châteaux, led by Château Guiraud, decided they needed a wine trail to attract visitors and began adding eating and lodging facilities. “Now the town of Sauternes is the latest to embrace visitors, with new hotels, shops and restaurants,” says Cazes.

But even as options opened for visiting châteaux, Bordeaux city remained uninspiring and dilapidated as a destination, which hampered efforts. That changed when Alain Juppé became mayor in 1995 and set about revitalizing the city, setting in motion a period of time in which city and local governments and regional wine associations worked together to create or update the necessary infrastructure to attract visitors.

The culmination of those efforts was the 2016 opening of the \$47-million tourism masterpiece La Cité du Vin, a soaring, gleaming—in Juppé’s words—“Guggenheim of wine.” They received 400,000 visitors last year, according to Cazes, who serves as president of its board, with a program of wine-tasting workshops, expositions, and presentations. City officials had observed that, previously, at events such as the annual *en primeur* trade tastings or the semi-annual Vinexpo there was little to draw visitors to spend time in the city itself; an architecturally stunning wine museum was the answer.

BELOW: Armelle Cruse, the fourth-generation co-owner of Château du Taillan.



LESSER-KNOWN ESTATES STEP UP TO COMPETE

As wineries at all levels began tapping into the tourism business, smaller wine regions and lesser-known estates, like Hourtin-Ducasse, began innovating to create offerings to compete with the big players, whether in terms of affordability or novelty. Now there are a whole range of wine experiences at every price point, and plenty of rental cars, bikes, and tour guides to access them.

These developments among smaller wineries have been spurred on by Great Wine Capitals, which for two decades has sponsored tourism awards at the regional and international levels and has heavily publicized the winners. This has further encouraged regions within Bordeaux to include tourism incentives in their marketing plans. For example, about ten years ago, lesser-known Côtes-de-Bourg opened its own Maison du Vin with a tasting bar and river transportation from downtown Bordeaux, which went on to win a Best of Wine Tourism award from Great Wine Capitals in 2017.

“What has evolved in Bordeaux wine tourism in recent years is the hospitality services, such as lodging and dining or food with tastings being offered by the châteaux,” says Catherine Leparmen-tier Dayot, the managing director of Great Wine Capitals.

Armelle Cruse is one of five sisters who inherited Château du Taillan near the Margaux region. “We opened to visitors in 2005 when we created a group with other local women winemakers,” says Cruse. “Taillan was the first château to open during harvest, which is now standard for Bordeaux. People were happy to see what we actually did for a living. And it gave value to workers because visitors were interested in what they did and took photos with them.” Today, tourism makes up 40 percent of Taillan’s income and special events another 10 percent.

Veronique Dausse, the director general of Château Phélan Ségur in Saint-Estèphe, emphasizes the personal touch,



ABOVE: Véronique Dausse, the director general of Château Phélan Ségur.

a reflection of recent owners being in the luxury hospitality business elsewhere in France. “We were one of the first to have visitors for lunch or dinner tastings,” says Dausse, “and we’ve had a resident chef for 30 years, both for public and the trade. I believe the best way to showcase what we do—our wines—is during a meal. We want to enhance the relationship, and we invest a lot of time and money to do so.”

As Marengo points out, the lesser-known châteaux can offer a different level of intimacy. “If you go visit the big châteaux in Pauillac like Lynch-Bages, Lafite, or Mouton, it’s like going to Disneyworld with all the staff they have available. Here, we’re more the real world,” he says. “But at the same time, both are important. People plan for years to come here, and they want to visit the places they’ve read about. But they also want to see how things are done at places like ours, to drink wine on the barrel head in an informal situation.”

Looking ahead, Bordeaux is focused on sustainability. By 2030, all winegrowers must adopt a certified environmental approach to meet the specifications of the Bordeaux AOC. Its efforts were rewarded in 2022, when Bordeaux was named a European Capital of Smart Tourism by the European Commission and specifically lauded for pioneering sustainable wine tourism—the same year the Bordeaux Wine Festival was certified sustainable. All these measures are working toward the longevity of both the wine industry and its capacity for tourism. ■

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A NEXT-GENERATION TAKE ON CALIFORNIA TERROIR

WITH JULIA JAMES WINES, THE OPICI FAMILY IS INTRODUCING A NEW GENERATION OF WINE LOVERS TO CALIFORNIA'S INIMITABLE TERROIRS

For over 100 years, the Opici family has discovered, nurtured, and shared some of the world's leading wines. In honor of the fifth generation, the family launched Julia James wines, leveraging decades of experience and wine country connections to create a range of classic, consumer-friendly California wines.

The Julia James brand honors classic winemaking traditions with its Chardonnay and Pinot Noir offerings. The brand represents an homage to family and tradition, relying on the Opici family's multi-generational experience in California to access exceptional vineyard sites. Julia James wines are thoughtfully sourced bottlings that provide a high quality-to-price ratio, enabling them to be enjoyed and shared widely.

While utilizing time-honored growing and winemaking techniques, the packaging channels the modern outlook of contemporary wine drinkers. The labels' new, clean design and prominent J stand out on the retail shelf. With easy-to-read labels and screw caps, Julia James bottlings are likewise easy for consumers to

"[This wine] is not only a testament to our perseverance and success in the industry, but also an acknowledgment to the bright future ahead!"

- Dina Opici,
Opici Family Distributing

Julia James



enjoy on-the-go and for restaurateurs to use as by-the-glass offerings.

Sourced from the Green Valley subzone of Solano County, Julia James Chardonnay benefits from the cooling influence of the San Pablo Bay. In the glass, the wine is vibrant and bright, showcasing citrus and orchard fruit flavors with an undertone of melon. Partial malolactic fermentation adds a roundness to the palate, while partial stainless steel aging keeps the wine refreshing and crisp.

The Pinot Noir is grown in Lodi, where the San Francisco Bay plays a similar role—re-

sulting in a wine that shows a harmonious synergy between fruit and earth elements. The Pinot Noir is also traditional in its flavor profile, showing aromas of ripe cherry and soft floral notes. The finish shows just a touch of oak influence with lingering spicy notes.

"Legacy and family have always been an integral part of our company's culture at Opici," says Dina Opici, the president of Opici Family Distributing. "We have wine brands within our portfolio that honor my grandfather and grandmother who established our benchmark for excellence and are responsible for our success today. Being able to have a wine named after my children, who represent the fifth generation, is not only a testament to our perseverance and success in the industry, but also an acknowledgement to the bright future ahead."

By combining best-in-class viticulture practices with high-value appellations, Julia James wines offer a refreshing twist on California offerings that stand out even within the Opici family's portfolio of blue-chip wines. ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Opici Wines and Spritis.



Julia James



ELEVATE YOUR ENTERTAINMENT



BARTENDER-QUALITY COCKTAILS IN A BOTTLE

WITH FIVE DELICIOUS COCKTAILS IN EVERY 750-MILLILITER BOTTLE, COPPA COCKTAILS OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF DRINKS THAT ARE PERFECT FOR ENTERTAINING BOTH AT HOME AND ON-PREMISE

In 2018, Coppa Cocktails was developed in The Netherlands to bring bottled cocktails made with premium spirits to upscale, high-volume bars, clubs, and restaurants in Europe. The ready-to-drink beverages allowed businesses to serve bartender-quality drinks quickly without the need for a team of skilled mixologists.

Coppa Cocktails has a line of 15 non-GMO cocktails, 10 of which are distributed to the U.S., including favorites like Mojito, Margarita, Piña Colada, and Sex on the Beach. The shaker-inspired glass bottles have labels with eye-catching flora and fauna elements that reflect each drink and stand out on the back bar or home liquor cabinet.

Today, the brand is a proven hit, with a 92-point score for the Mojito in the 2022 Ultimate Spirits Challenge, along with Double Gold in the 2023 WSWA Spirits Competition and a 91-point score from the Beverage Testing Institute for Sex on the Beach—all earned in the past 12 months. The Coppa Cocktails lineup also won a 2023 Growth Brands Award, far exceeding the minimum sales volume requirement of 20,000 nine-liter cases.

The original inspiration for Coppa Cocktails only rings more true today. The brand is the perfect solution for bars,

restaurants, events companies, and other on-premise businesses amidst ongoing staffing shortages. Yet it's not just for the on-premise market. Coppa Cocktails bottles also provide consumers an economical way to drink cocktails without the need to stock up on ingredients or do any shaking or stirring. Choosing Coppa Cocktails is essentially like having a bartender in every bottle.

"Post-COVID, consumers continue to yearn to celebrate life in person, with friends and family, whether at home or in bars and restaurants," says José B. Chao, the president and CEO of Coppa Cocktails USA. "Coppa Cocktails are a great solution for any of these settings. Consumers entertaining at home don't need to worry or feel intimidated about making cocktails. A simple sprig of mint in, say, our Mojito makes it look homemade."

In the U.S., Coppa Cocktails (15% ABV) come in 750-milliliter bottles that are built for sharing; the \$17.99 suggested retail price comes out to around \$3.60 for each bartender-designed cocktail. All that's needed is to open the bottle, pour over ice, and serve with a garnish of choice.

"Coppa Cocktails are a unique lineup of the most well-known and popular cocktails in a growing but crowded category," says Gary Shaw, the executive vice president of M.S. Walker Brands. "Unlike single-serve products, we offer our consumers professional-quality cocktails in a size designed for entertaining. All of our cocktails were developed in Europe with the guidance of top mixologists, and the taste is true to bartender quality." ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Coppa Cocktails.





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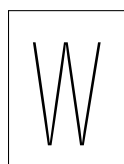
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THE BIG BUSINESS OF BOOZE TRAILS

HOW LINKING UP BEVERAGE BUSINESSES
IS REDEFINING REGIONAL DRINKING ECOSYSTEMS

BY SARAH BAIRD



Whether visitors are meandering along the backroads of Kentucky between bourbon distilleries or checking directions to an out-of-the-way brewery in Maine, it's no secret that the rise of tourist-driven trails has influenced how people travel—and drink.

For the public, it's as simple as following a boozy treasure map linking up local producers, but establishing a beer, wine, or liquor trail requires a keen understanding of both the industries they serve—tourism and beverage—and the communities around them. This makes the process of creating these lucrative tourist pathways both deeply region-specific and collaboratively driven.

The Kentucky Bourbon Trail is one of the original spirit-focused tourism paths in the United States. But when it was established in 1999, it was a novel concept that raised a lot of eyebrows. Fast forward



almost 25 years and booze trails are a tourism stalwart for rural regions across the country, raising the bottom line for the producers involved while giving local economies a much-needed boost.

There are currently 42 unique distillery trails, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS), and dozens upon dozens of beer and wine pathways in the U.S. Regional tourism boards and county officials are now working with new technologies to provide ease of access for those drinking along the paths, lobbying lawmakers to ensure their continued success, and innovating to create new, revenue-driving visitor experiences.

CREATE INCENTIVES FOR TRAIL VISITORS

Trail structure varies widely, but local personalization and an understanding of how visitors will make the most out of their experience is of utmost importance. Sometimes, that means offering a signature hat or a recipe-packed trail passport. Other times, it



means focusing specifically on seasonal events.

Along 20 winding miles of the Missouri River, the Hermann Wine Trail organizers found that a set schedule of events has proven to be the secret sauce—not the traditional year-round trail map. “We started with a couple food and wine events and it took off,” says Patty Held, the president of the Hermann Wine Trail. “Our idea was to schedule events for our wineries at not traditionally busy times of the year because we wanted to increase tourism when it was slow. We never would have had 1,200 people in February until we did the Chocolate Wine Trail.”

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, a tiered prize system has incentivized not only tourists, but locals, to take part in the Santa Fe Margarita Trail. Approximately 32,500 people have participated in the trail since its creation in May of 2016, with 6,300 participants receiving five stamps or more earning them an official Margarita Trail t-shirt.

Sean Sullivan, the executive director of the Maine Brewers’ Guild, agrees that prizes have been key to the Maine Beer Trail’s success since launching in 2009. And while Sullivan isn’t sending out hats for simply visiting 10 breweries anymore (“People will do that in a weekend!”), the

Maine Brewers Guild still hands out plenty of grand-prize packages to people who have visited every single brewery on the trail. “In our experience, people want to be incentivized to visit more breweries, and we get really nice emails, letters, and scrapbooks from people. It’s so cool.”

BOOZE TRAILS CAN REVIVE RURAL COUNTIES

Distillery, wine, and beer trails not only raise the bottom line for the craftspeople behind the beverages, but they are contributing to a holistic economic outlook in rural America. Across regions of the country where “dry” counties were the norm less than half a century ago, liquor trails now serve as tourism engines, revenue-drivers, and cultural anchors.

“Distillery trails are creating an economic impact on areas that were not as visited,” says Maggie Quinn, the director of public relations for the DISCUS. “We’re



seeing in certain towns that local distillers partner with local farmers, so the economic impact isn’t just in tourism dollars; it’s also going into agricultural [spaces] and the bars and restaurants in local areas, too. Its reach is pretty expansive.”

Sullivan agrees that the trail system has worked to give breweries located at a wide spot in the road just as much credence, attention, and accessibility as those in major cities. “Our breweries are all over the place. They’re not just in the cities; they’re not just in the biggest towns; they’re in random dirt roads in rural towns where your average Mainer couldn’t point to on a map.”

Hermann Wine Trail has also created a symbiotic and lucrative relationship with the local chamber of commerce. “We work very closely with the Hermann Chamber of Commerce—they actually sell our tickets for us,” says Held. “Our ticket sales are the largest source of revenue for the Chamber. We couldn’t do what we do without our Chamber of Commerce, and they need our ticket revenue to help do what they do, too.”

“Think about Bardstown: they really do play on the same playing field as Louisville and Lexington in a lot of ways when it comes to bourbon tourism,” says Mandy Ryan, the director of Kentucky Bourbon Trail Experiences. “They are the bourbon capital of the world. They’ve had distilleries 10, 20, 30 years longer than Louisville has. You really cannot undervalue [a trail] ... in a small community like that.”

LOOSENING LAWS BOOSTS SALES OPPORTUNITIES

Whether in small towns or big cities, statewide shifts in where and how alcoholic beverages are sold has also helped in the growth of trail tours anchored by distilleries, wineries, and breweries. In Maine, Sullivan notes that it wasn’t until 2011 that breweries were allowed to sell beer on site. “Once breweries could sell beer where they

OPPOSITE: Kentucky Bourbon Trail is one of the first spirit-focused tourism routes in the U.S.

ABOVE: Visitors on the Hermann Wine Trail in Missouri.

RIGHT: The Kentucky Bourbon Affair is the signature event of the Kentucky Distillers’ Association.



made it, it became a real driver of tourism and also a real value proposition for being a member of the Maine Brewers' Guild."

In Kentucky, the recent legalization of satellite tasting rooms is poised to expand, and rethink, what a "distillery experience" means along the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. "We're thinking a lot about satellite tasting rooms because we just got that legislation passed last session," says Ryan. "For me, it's a challenge of how do I advertise and set the visitor expectation? You might not see a still, but you might have an awesome tasting experience or an awesome cocktail class. I think that's really going to change the landscape of Kentucky."

With legislation freshly passed, Castle and Key 502 became a first-of-its-kind satellite tasting room for Castle and Key Distillery when it opened 55 miles away from the official bourbon-making grounds in early April inside the Louisville Omni Hotel's Falls City Market. Similarly, in New Mexico, a reciprocity law passed in 2015 allowed their tasting rooms to sell other New Mexico-made beers, wines, and ciders, improving the economic outlook for producers across the state—as well as the experience for visitors.

BEVERAGE TRAILS ARE GOING DIGITAL

The Santa Fe Margarita Trail launched in 2016 with a paper map of where to grab

the best Margaritas in town, but still sees an almost even split between visitors who use the analog version and those who use their app (16,350 app downloads and 16,155 paper passports sold last year, according to Tourism Santa Fe). The reason the paper passport has remained so popular? Joanne Hudson, the Tourism Santa Fe public relations manager, guesses it's because of the recipes included. "The paper passport is also kind of an active souvenir [and] something to remember the trip. The recipe for every Margarita is in there ... so it's a little cocktail recipe book to take home."

The market for one-of-a-kind, experience-driven souvenirs found exclusively along liquor trails is only poised to grow, according to Quinn. "It will be really interesting to watch just how ecommerce will be more integrated into these trails in the future. As the consumer bases grow and people want that taste of local flavor, how they'll be able to purchase these spirits will also be interesting to see," she says. "So, you could buy distillery-exclusive bottles or a particular trail [bottle] through that platform. There are a lot of creative approaches."

On the front end, it's well-known within the tourism industry that half the anticipatory excitement of a trip is planning it out ahead of time, and engaging, highly visual online resources help trail-trippers do just that. "I think the first thing is just making it easy for the visitor to envision their trip there and then to plan it ... really developing some resources is so key," says Ryan. "That might be itineraries on your website. It might be work-

ing with your local tourism agencies. Just kind of painting a picture of what people can expect when they're there, I think is important."

CREATE COOPERATION, NOT COMPETITION, BETWEEN PRODUCERS

One of the biggest concerns for anyone thinking about starting a regional liquor trail comes down to the local players: How do we ensure that everyone cooperates for the greater good of the tourism draw instead of competing? That, in essence, is what makes trails such an inviting prospect for the larger regional or state economy. It's an opportunity to reimagine what an industry can achieve when resources are pooled.

In Kentucky, it boiled down to a spirit of looking out for the greater good. "We are moving into our 25th year next year as the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. And we do have people reach out to us pretty regularly [to ask] how do you get your stakeholders to work together and agree on things? What our members do very well is, in those situations, they're able to take off their brand hats and ... make decisions that are in the best interest of the entire industry."

Analisa Leppanen, the founder of Golden Muse Winery, agrees. "The folks on the Lake Michigan Shore Wine Trail have been very helpful during the start-up process for my fledgling winery. I changed fields from academia, which is a very competitive industry, so something that I really appreciate about the wine industry is the feeling of camaraderie." ■

ABOVE LEFT: The Santa Fe Margarita Trail offers both a paper map and an app. // ABOVE RIGHT: Michter's takes part in the Kentucky Bourbon Affair.

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LIVE LEGENDARY

ROOT:1 DOUBLES DOWN ON ITS COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

WITH ITS NEW LOOK, THE CHILEAN WINERY DEMONSTRATES ITS DEVOTION TO PRODUCING HIGH-QUALITY, TERROIR-DRIVEN EXPRESSIONS—THAT ARE ALSO SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

Root:1 has always exemplified a deep, genuine commitment to sustainability: in the vineyard, cellar, community, and beyond. Recently, the Chilean producer has doubled down on that devotion with a relaunch that better communicates and encapsulates its ethos, and speaks directly to the socially- and environmentally-conscious consumer.

This rebrand is expressed visually through its new bottle, with its simple, clean paper label that proudly portrays its Wines of Chile sustainability seal, and a redesign of the brand's "mother root" motif to express its authenticity and connection to nature.

"Protected by the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountain range, Chile is a land of magnificent landscapes that have always embraced nature to nurture life," says winemaker Ángel Marchant. "Our wines are a reflection of this culture." Woven throughout Root:1's philosophy is the concept of being "wildly sustainable," a

reference both to the company's steadfast initiatives to produce world-class wines in the most responsible way and the wilderness outside their doors.

Root:1 was founded in 2000 in Chile's Maipo Valley; the region's prolonged dry season, coastal influence, and alluvial soils draw comparisons to Bordeaux. The company's vineyards here are joined by ones in the Colchagua Valley and the Casablanca Valley, whose long growing season, ample sunshine, and cool maritime influence make it the perfect setting for Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc.

Chile's isolated location means it remains one of the few wine regions in the world where ungrafted European rootstock was unaffected by phylloxera. While that offers a leg up on embracing minimal interventions, Root:1 has continued to pursue natural techniques. In 2002, the winery obtained the ISO 14001 Environmental Management certification for its dedication to preventing pollution and complying with environmental protection laws, and in 2013, it was the first winery to be certified 100 percent sustainable by Wines of Chile.

For Root:1, those coveted achievements proved a catalyst for its continued efforts to protect and preserve their surroundings while making estate-bottled expressions that offer high quality and superior value—a rare combination.

"All vineyards were planted in complete harmony with streams and natural

corridors," says Marchant. "We have preserved every single tree in all of our vineyards, and we take care of them as essential organisms in the life balance."

These efforts stretch from water conservation to pest control. For example, there is no scheduled fumigation, and chemicals are used only as a last resort; the natural fungus *Trichoderma* battles harmful fungi, and products made from tea and citrus extract keep botrytis at bay. Since 2001, 100 percent of the grape residue has been composted and reused as fertilizer. Their vine "re-education" program has lessened water usage across the vineyards, by as much as 80 percent. And because sustainability doesn't stop at the loading dock, Root:1 pursues projects tied to social responsibility, too.

All of this results in a portfolio of five vibrant wines (Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Carmenère, and Heritage Red) that reflect a sense of place—and stem from a profound synergy with Chile's natural environment. As Marchant puts it, "for the conscious wine drinker, Root:1 is a ... determined and contemporary brand that embraces nature and empowers people to live consciously." ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Root:1.



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*The vision of Chile's first
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UNITING TWO CULTURES IN DOS MADERAS RUMS

BODEGAS WILLIAMS & HUMBERT SHIPS ITS OAK-AGED CARIBBEAN RUMS TO SPAIN, WHERE THEY FINISH AGING IN A SHERRY-STYLE SOLERA SYSTEM

Traveling introduces people to new cultures and concepts, key components for growth and maturity. Spirits are similar. Provenance is a great start, but some spirits evolve into their most elegant forms far from home.

The passport-punching approach has been perfected by Bodegas Williams & Humbert, the Spanish wine and spirits specialist famed for its refined sherries, nuanced brandies, and super-premium Dos Maderas rums—the last of which brings together Caribbean and Spanish cultures in complex, characterful spirits.

A CARIBBEAN BEGINNING

The rums of Dos Maderas (which translates to “two woods”) begin in the sugarcane-rich countries of Guyana and Barbados. The spirits are first aged for five years in former bourbon barrels—the first wood—developing a rich hue and robust character in the tropical Caribbean climate. Next, the rums are blended and sail to Jerez, Spain, the ancestral home of sherry production.

Once there, the spirits are transferred to palo cortado and Pedro Ximénez sherry casks arranged in a solera system, a traditional technique for continuously aging sherry. The rums slowly travel through the casks before emerging a minimum of three years later, tasting deeply of dried fruits and pecans sprinkled with allspice. Each intricate

sip is wrapped in wisps of tobacco and smoke, the sherry notes present but never overpowering. That’s the strength of the second wood.

The rums are excellent in a snifter, but the cocktail-friendly Dos Maderas 5+3 can lend profound depth to an Old Fashioned and tropical classics including the Mai Tai, Piña Colada, and Jungle Bird, making it a smart back-bar bet.

BLENDING IS A FAMILY SPECIALITY

Marrying such distinct climates and casks requires a skillful touch. The Medina family, who took over Bodegas Williams & Humbert in 2005, didn’t need to branch out beyond their family tree to find the perfect blender. Second-generation owner Paola Medina joined Dos Maderas full time in 2010; the highly acclaimed winemaker, technical director, and master blender oversees 60,000 casks aging brandy, sherry, and rum.

“We should not forget the enduring and long tradition of the art of blending in the Jerez region.” — Paola Medina



“I try to infuse our Dos Maderas rums with all the wealth of knowledge and experience gained by Williams & Humbert over more than 150 years making sherry and Brandy de Jerez,” she says. “We should not forget the enduring and long tradition of the art of blending in the Jerez region.”

A SUPER-PREMIUM OPPORTUNITY

Mainstream premium rum brands are struggling to grow sales, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, but super-premium rums grew by 27 percent in 2022. According to NielsenIQ data, last year Dos Maderas rums like the 5+5 and limited-edition Luxus grew 51 percent within the ultra- and super-premium rum categories—the highest percentage change compared to other rum brands.

The success is built upon a deep foundation that, like the finest solera-aged rum, will only deepen and improve over time. Says Medina, “Our ethos is to honor our inheritance by combining tradition with innovation, thanks to the years of accumulated experience making spirits and sherry.” ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Dos Maderas.

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TASTES OF ITALY

RETAIL AND RESTAURANT BUYERS SPOTLIGHT THE ITALIAN WINES THEY'RE EXCITED TO SELL THIS SEASON

BY LAURA BURGESS

W

ith over 1,000 indigenous grape varieties and hundreds of appellations, Italy has long been a favorite wine source for sommeliers and retailers, offering both discovery and value. Today, the range of Italian wines coming to the U.S. is more expansive than ever. *Beverage Media* asked nine buyers from across the country which Italian wines they're most excited about right now, and their results span the country from Sicily to Piedmont. (All wines are listed with price per bottle at the noted establishment.)

TIARE SAUVIGNON BLANC 2021, COLLIO GORIZIANO, FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA (\$25)

Selected by Laura Koffer, vice president of wine, Wine Access, Napa, California

"I love Sauvignon Blanc in all its forms," says Laura Koffer, the vice president of

wine at online retailer Wine Access. "But Italy has been quietly making some of the world's best Sauvignon Blanc in the northeastern region of Friuli for decades." Based in Napa Valley, Wine Access offers wines through its daily offer emails, curated wine clubs, and online store, where Tiare is a regular feature. Koffer is partial to Friulian Sauvignon Blanc like Tiare during the summer months because the wine is perfect "on its own poolside with a good book," and when lighter fare like shellfish and salads take center stage. "The wines are powerful and dense with notable minerality yet defined fruit character," she says. "They are in a category all to themselves and well worth exploring."



BARBERANI 'CASTAGNOLO' ORVIETO CLASSICO SUPERIORE, UMBRIA (\$39)

Selected by Hugh Preece, operating partner, Salt Creeke Grille, New Jersey and California

For Salt Creeke Grille operating partner Hugh Preece, OBarberani's Orvieto Superiore is a summertime go-to across locations with diverse wine offerings. "It's a great wine to enjoy as an aperitif, but also versatile enough to go with various dishes, from seafood to pastas and grilled vegetables," he says. It's a crisp, light blend of grapes including Grechetto, Procanico, Verdello, Drupeggio, and Malvasia in Umbria. With locations in New Jersey and southern California, Salt Creeke Grille offers classic American fare on their seafood-heavy menus



and caters to a wide range of palates, but Preece finds the Barberani Orvieto to be a match across the board thanks to its citrusy and floral aromatic profile. “It’s a really versatile wine worth trying, and should be on everybody’s radar,” he says.

ERMES PAVESE BLANC DE MORGEX ET DE LA SALLE 2021, VALLE D’AOSTA (\$50)

Selected by Sarah Milstein, wine director, Betty, Sacramento, California

“This is springtime in the Italian Alps ... in a glass,” says Sarah Milstein, Betty’s wine director. Betty, a combination wine bar and bottle shop in Sacramento’s Southside Park neighborhood, offers a thoughtful global selection of wines. The casual neighborhood spot highlights top values that pair with simple cuisine and intrigue a curious clientele—qualities that make this white wine from one of the highest elevation vineyards in Europe a home run. Millstein particularly loves this 100 percent Prié Blanc for its “combination of ‘fresh alpine flowers, brilliant clarity, [and] racy springtime core.’”



BARONE DI VILLAGRANDE ETNA BIANCO SUPERIORE, SICILY (\$58)

Selected by Michael Klinger, wine director, Supperland and Ever Andalo, Charlotte, North Carolina

In North Carolina, wine director Michael Klinger is reaching for wines from

the sunny shores of Sicily to quench the thirst of patrons at the Supperland and Ever Andalo. While the two restaurants are wildly different—Supperland describes itself as “southern steakhouse meets church potluck,” while Ever Andalo has a 300-bottle list dedicated to Italy—Klinger finds common ground with Sicilian wines thanks to their versatility on the table. “I love this with almost any seafood—especially raw or baked oysters, shrimp cocktail, or scampi-style pasta—tarragon chicken salad, as well as any pesto or mushroom cream sauce,” he says. It’s mostly made from Carricante, yielding an “elegant, racy, and mineral-driven wine, bursting with white peach and candied lime fruit, nutty almond and caraway spice notes, and finishing with tingling, mouthwatering acidity.”



MARCO DE BARTOLI 'INTEGER' GRILLO 2020, SICILY (\$120)

Selected by Morgan Harris, head sommelier, Angler, San Francisco

At San Francisco’s Michelin-starred temple to sea life, head sommelier Morgan Harris is putting Marco De Bartoli’s unique Integer Grillo on a pedestal this season. Within a bottle program that emphasizes classic wine regions and benchmark



producers, Harris finds that the Integer stands out thanks to its unique skin-contact winemaking. “Most Grillo I find to be kind of leaden and un-animated, but a small amount of skin contact gives the wine a lot more aromatic presence, and the texture and acid are both riveting,” he says, adding the wine is an exceptional seafood pairing. “It doesn’t necessarily follow that the grandmaster of Marsala would make great unfortified, dry, white table wines, but this is stellar.”

FABULAS 'FECERUNT' PECORINO 2020, TERRE DI CHIETI, ABRUZZO (\$40)

Selected by Eric Prato, owner, Garagiste, Las Vegas

“The 2020 Fabulas 'Fecerunt' Pecorino is made by a group of friends who have made it their goal to improve the quality coming from Abruzzo,” explains Garagiste owner Eric Prato, who curates a selection of over 40 small-production, off-beat wines by-the-glass at his Las Vegas bar and retail shop. “Wine can often be overwhelming and pretentious, so we are trying to create more of a relaxed, inviting environment with a by-the-glass that changes weekly.” Prato consistently reaches for this Pecorino when temperatures rise because “the wine is clean and thirst-quenching,” and he believes there’s no better pairing for this crisp white than the Italian sheep’s milk cheese of the same name. ■





WSWA'S ANNUAL CONVENTION RETURNS IN PERSON AS ACCESS LIVE

THE CORNERSTONE INDUSTRY EVENT PLACED AN EMPHASIS ON GROWTH AND INNOVATION IN ITS REIMAGINED FORMAT

For the first time since 2019, the beverage industry converged in person at Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) Access LIVE. Held from April 2 to 5 in Orlando, Florida, Access LIVE—formerly known as the WSWA Convention and Exposition—attracted people from across all three tiers of the beverage industry, including wholesalers, suppliers, and, for the first time, retailers.

As it had been for more than 75 years, the event was a valuable opportunity for networking and learning, but the reimagined Access LIVE offered attendees more than ever. Innovation, growth, and wellness were central themes throughout the event, as the industry came together with an eye towards the future.

WSWA LEADERSHIP

WSWA kicked off Access LIVE with a keynote address from chairman Tom Cole, who encouraged beverage alcohol industry members to join WSWA in their advocacy for federal cannabis legalization and regulation. He noted that the beverage alcohol industry could be considered a model for a safe and competitive cannabis market, and detailed the steps that WSWA

has taken to present Congress members with a cannabis regulatory framework.

The WSWA Access Craft initiative also released Volume 02 of their wine and spirits Distribution Playbook, which provides small-production, craft startups with success insights into the U.S. alcohol marketplace. Brand owners and distributors offer their thoughts in this free resource.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Education sessions covered wide-ranging topics such as tackling environmental impacts, creating more equitable businesses, the future of retail and restaurants, and the changing digital landscape for distributors. Access LIVE also welcomed attendees to convene in the wellness lounge and participate in outdoor group workouts and yoga sessions.

The ever popular Brand Battle Championship, which had been held virtually during the pandemic, returned live on stage in 2023, following eight

virtual category tournaments previously held during the month of February. After each emerging brand presented its product to distributors and received feedback in this *Shark Tank*-style format, both attendees and judges voted on a winner.

In the end, Sunshine Punch, the winner of the lifestyle category, was crowned as the 2023 Brand Battle Champion with its ready-to-drink, 18% ABV, rum and citrus cocktail. Previous winners have pointed to the exposure that the Brand Battle offers as a launching pad for growth, making this win a valuable one.

Throughout the event, Access HQ welcomed attendees to meet with exhibitors. It also hosted The Hub, which was open to help exhibiting brands grow by creating marketing assets with photographers and videographers, participating in cocktail development with bartenders, and getting feedback from wholesale advisors.

Already WSWA is gearing up for the next Access LIVE in Las Vegas, taking place from January 29 to February 1—just about eight months away. ■



ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Cocktail R&D; Jason Mormoa presented Meili Vodka; opening night cocktail reception.

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Hall of Champions Collection

Crafted to honor the excellence of sport, the Hall of Champions Line will turn heads with its ornamental award winning sport themed decanters and overdeliver with its exquisite taste. The Hall of Champions Line consists of the Doubleday baseball collection including our Beanball Bourbon and Spitball Cinnamon Whiskey, the Canton Distillery (Brand) football collection, the Hall of Champions Distillery (Brand) golf collection, and the new Springfield Distillery (Brand) basketball collection. The Hall of Champions Collection is one of a kind offering and the perfect addition for sports enthusiasts/fans.



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NOSTALGIC REVAMP

Boochcraft has expanded its core line-up of flavors with Cherry Limeade (7% ABV), part of the organic hard kombucha label's Liquid Art Lab series. By melding the freshly pressed juices of limes and oranges from Dickinson Family Farms in Fallbrook, California, with just five grams of sugar, the usually syrupy sweet concoction gets a refined spin.

SRP: \$15.99 per six-pack of 12-oz. cans



TWO SIDES

Glengoyne Highland single malt Scotch whisky is recognized for having the slowest stills in Scotland—and a light and fruity profile as a result. Consider the 86-proof 15-year-old that brings together liquids matured in either bourbon or sherry casks. The subtly sweet result is a profusion of candied lemon, vanilla, and apple pie underpinned by tropical fruit.

SRP: \$129.99 per 750-ml bottle



MEXICAN LOVE LETTER

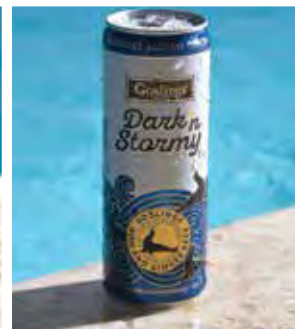
One hundred percent Blue Weber agave tequila from Destilería La Experiencia combines with natural ingredients in **Cultor**, the ready-to-drink cocktail brand from Juan Felipe Alviz and bartender Shauna O'Neil. The four refreshing libations (12.5% ABV) include Mayahuel Passion (passion fruit and chile), Xochi Flora (hibiscus, grapefruit, lime, and cucumber), Metzli Soul (pineapple and ginger), and Quaalcat Coco (coconut water and lime), and can be served over ice or sipped straight from the can.

SRP: \$22.99 per four-pack of 200-ml cans

ROSE-TINTED GLASS

Founded by Javier Alonso, Jose Beckmann—who represents the 12th generation of Jose Cuervo Tequila—and Paul Pietrini, **Celosa Tequila** is distilled from 100 percent Blue Weber agave grown and harvested at the single-estate Hacienda La Capilla distillery. It then mellows in French oak barrels from Napa Valley that formerly held Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon, eliciting a pale shade of pink that stands out in Palomas and Negronis.

SRP: \$129 per 750-ml bottle



ISLAND VACATION

A true Dark 'n Stormy can only be made with **Goslings** Black Seal Rum (the family-owned Bermuda producer trademarked the cocktail in 1980). Reinforcing this connection is the roster of ready-to-drink flavored riffs (7% ABV)—mango, black cherry, and pineapple—joining the original canned Dark 'n Stormy in updated packaging. All four variants mix the rum with Goslings Stormy Ginger Beer and cane sugar.

SRP: \$13.99 per four-pack of 355-ml cans



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RICH RED

Born from **Marchesi Frescobaldi's** pioneering Tenuta di CastelGiocondo estate, the Ripe al Convento Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2017 is now available stateside. The complex wine is produced with 100 percent Sangiovese grapes grown from a single hilly vineyard and pairs velvety tannins with notes of red berry, cracked black pepper, and cedarwood.

SRP: \$136 per 750-ml bottle



GRILL COMPANION

An ideal accompaniment to the season's bounty of cookouts is the Cabernet Sauvignon 2020 from family-run **Larkmead Vineyards** in Napa Valley. Tasting of fig, cocoa, and fresh mint, it's produced from some of the estate's oldest vineyard blocks and rounded out with a touch of soft Merlot.

SRP: \$125 per 750-ml bottle



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Cakebread Cellars unveiled its very first vintage in 1973, and to commemorate that historic occasion, the Napa Valley winery has curated a 50th anniversary Chardonnay collection. The four single-vineyard estate bottles—Milton Road, Cuttings Wharf, Tinsley Ranch, and Foster Road—are adorned with labels showcasing photography by late cofounder Jack Cakebread, who discovered the site of his and his wife Dolores's future enterprise while on a shooting assignment in Napa Valley.

SRP: \$300 per collection of four 750-ml bottles



SPANISH SUMMER

The salmon-hued Radio Boka Rosé 2020 from **Hammeken Cellars** is a warm-weather quencher made with a blend of 80 percent Tempranillo and 20 percent Bobal grapes from Spain's VdT Castilla. It is characterized by bright acidity and flavors of ripe strawberry and cherry.

SRP: \$12 per 750-ml bottle

ALL-NATURAL

Eco-minded **Rabble Wine Company** (a member of the 1% For the Planet organization) is targeting millennial and Gen Z drinkers with its newly reintroduced vibrant Sauvignon Blanc. Made from grapes grown in Certified California Sustainable vineyards on the Central Coast, it expresses crisp grapefruit, lemon, and mango on the palate.

SRP: \$18.99 per 750-ml bottle



New

Introducing Hudson Whiskey's **New** Limited Time Offering



New York Straight Bourbon Whiskey

- Aged for 5 years in new American oak barrels
- 100% NY Made
- Mash bill of 95% Corn / 5% Malted Barley
- Kosher Certified

Notes

Nose: Corn bread, citrus, vanilla, almost buttery

Palate: Cashew butter, caramel

Finish: Long and balanced

**Hudson
Whiskey
NY**

Bill Shenas' Hole-in-one

Over 130 industry golfers teed off at the 13th annual Cranbrook Open, a tournament that Steve Golueke, owner of Cranbrook Liquors, has been organizing since its first year. All money raised is donated to the Our Lady of Grace Church on Middleton Road in Parkton.

The most exciting moment of the day was when Bill Shenas of Chateau St. Michelle sunk a 165 yard hole-in-one. This alone is surprising enough, but it also happened to be the Boyle Buick sponsored "Hole-in-One for a New Buick La Sabre". The fun didn't end at the 18th. There was a friendly lunch held at the Manor Tavern after the tournament.

On hand to hear the stories of the day's happenings were the *Beverage Journal's* Bud Finkelstein and Stephen Patten. The *Beverage Journal* would like to congratulate Bill Shenas on his extraordinary six iron that won him the \$22,000 Buick. Also making an "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty" performance was Steve Golueke who again organized a fun-filled day that benefitted a great cause. We suggest if you haven't participated in the Cranbrook Open in the past, you start, it's a lot of fun for a good cause.



The smiling Bill Shenas of Chateau St. Michelle holding the keys to his brand new Buick La Sabre compliments of Boyle Buick.



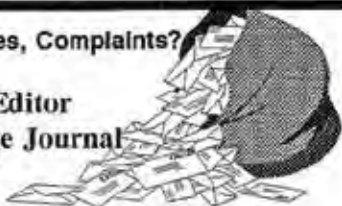
The people to thank for the fun-filled afternoon: Steve Golueke, tournament organizer and owner of Cranbrook Liquors; Susan Schmaltz, general manager of the Manor Tavern.



Jim Gardner of the Winner Distributing Co. and F. P. Winner, Al McPherson and Joe Stanley, both of F. P. Winner claim that "What counts is that it was for a good cause, not for how we shot, right?"

Suggestions, Gripes, Complaints?

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Highlights Cranbrook Open



Bill Leland, Quality Brands; Rick Bond, Super York Liquors; and Tom Cover, Reliable Liquors all cool down after a long 18.



Some ladies that "par"-ticipated in the tournament: Susan Currance, Debbie Peyton, Denise Noll, and Lynn Smith.



Bill Leland and Ira Kasoff, both with Quality Brands, stop for a quick photo.



The always jolly Francis "Pineapple" Schmitz of Mt. Airy Liquors.



Clifton Rhea of the Mt. Washington Tavern and his friend Dave Williams.



Joe Ciletti of The Wine Merchant and Joe Mezzadra of Reliable Liquors enjoy a cool drink after a tough 18 holes.



Andy Korczynski of Churchill Distributors, Mike Mattozzi of Monsieur Henri Wines, and Bruce Richardson of Churchill Distributors discuss strategy for next year.