

Beverage Journal

JULY 2022

VODKA NOSTALGIA

INSIDE THE CHANGING
DEMAND FOR THIS STAPLE AT
RESTAURANTS AND BARS



WINE'S NEXT-GEN
MARKETING PROBLEM

VODKA PRODUCTS
TO WATCH





08



18



24



26



34



36

FEATURES

08

After Battening Down the Hatches, **DEAD FREDDIES** Roars to Life.

18

SOARING ON-PREMISE VODKA SALES

Customer demand for the clear spirit is booming in restaurants and bars.

24

SPOTLIGHT ON VODKA

A look at the innovations and activations that continue to drive the category.

26

MARKETING WINE TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Can the industry learn from its past mistakes to get millennials on board?

DEPARTMENTS

02

PUB PAGE

Some History Behind the Day • AARA of Maryland's Trade Show Returns

04

NEW PRODUCTS & PROMOTIONS

14

WHISKEY WHAT'S NEW

16

SUMMER COCKTAILS

Refreshing libations that encourage alfresco sipping.

34

WINE BUZZ

36

THE FIND



COVER CREDIT:
Courtesy of Absolut Elys

246 YEARS

This July 4th we will celebrate the 246th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. Though the battle at Lexington Green (the shot heard round the world) on April 19, 1775 is considered the start of the American Revolution, *The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America*, is the formal pronouncement adopted by the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This document officially dissolved the political bands connecting the American colonies to Great Britain—essentially marking the birth of our great nation.

I hope you have noticed that earlier this year, we started publishing a monthly column entitled, "Some History Behind The Day." Thus far, on page 3MD of the Maryland Price List section, we have covered Saint Valentine's Day, Saint Patrick's Day, April Fools' Day, Memorial Day and



AARA of Maryland members: Rupen Parikh, Sanjay Chokshi, Harry Mehta and Pinal Talati.



Konstantin Khizder and Lenny Samus of Interbalt Products.



Flag Day. I'm sure you can determine this month's subject. (Did you know that if we followed the same logic that has us celebrate Constitution Day on September 17, we'd celebrate Independence Day in August?)

AARA OF MARYLAND HOLDS TRADE SHOW

It's been a few years, but the Asian American Retailers' Association (AARA) of Maryland has again held their Annual Trade Show. Having not held the event for the last couple years due to covid, the members were excited to again gather, network and learn from each other.

The event recently took place at La Fontaine Bleue in Glen Burnie. ■

STEPHEN PATTEN
PUBLISHER



At the Breakthru Beverage booth: Paul McBride, Kate Melde, JT McCray, and Anuja Mehrotra.



Ryan and Chris Lombardi representing Royal Wine Co.

Maryland • Washington, DC

Beverage Journal

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

Over 80 Years of Continuous Publication

BEVERAGE JOURNAL, INC.

President / Publisher Stephen Patten
steve@beveragejournalinc.com
410.796.5455

Board of Directors Lee W. Murray
Thomas W. Murray

Information Technology Peter Williams
Director

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief Kristen Bieler

Senior Editor Courtney Schiessl

Contributing Editors Alia Akkam, Arielle Albert,
Keven Danow, Jim Clarke,
Edward Durgin, Jeff Siegel

ART & DESIGN

Creative Director Larry Lee

Senior Designer Jeff Tsui

TECHNOLOGY & WEB

eCommerce Director Ian Griffith

Online Web Programming Vali Balescu

PRINT & PRODUCTION

Print Services Manager Lee Stringham

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

MD & DC Advertising Sales Stephen Patten

National Advertising Sales Jody Slone-Spitalnik

POSTMASTER:

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

The Maryland Beverage Journal and the Washington, DC Beverage Journal are registered trademarks of Beverage Journal, Inc. All rights reserved.

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.

The opinions expressed by guest columnists are their own and not necessarily those of Beverage Journal, Inc. Beverage Journal, Inc. is an equal opportunity corporation.

Copyright 2022 Beverage Journal, Inc. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. Not responsible for unsolicited material or advertising claims.

BeverageJournalInc.com

• MAKE IT A TEQUILA. •

SUMMER



HORNITOS

DRINK RESPONSIBLY.
Hornitos® Tequila Seltzer, Made
with Plata Tequila, Natural Flavors
and Seltzer Water, 5% alc./vol.
©2022 Sauza Tequila Import
Company, Chicago, IL



1. LAS CALIFORNIAS GIN

Modern-day California and coastal Mexico are steeped in history, and Las Californias Gin aims to shed light on that heritage with the roll-out of its first two dual-origin expressions: Nativo and Citrico. Both star a base of the piney native *Juniperus californica*, but whereas Nativo highlights indigenous botanicals like Pacific kelp, Californian artemisia, and damiana, Citrico illuminates the key roles lemongrass, fig, and almond have long played in the region.

\$ SRP: \$32.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 lascalifornias.com

2. SHINER ¡ÓRALE! MEXICAN LAGER

One of the newest additions to the slate of Texas-made Shiner Beers is ¡Órale! Brewed with agave, the Mexican-style lager (4.5% ABV) is a crisp, earthy, subtly sweet complement to taco night.

\$ SRP: \$8.99 per six-pack and \$14.99 per 12-pack of 12-oz. cans or bottles
🌐 shiner.com

3. PORTOFINO DRY GIN

Portofino Dry Gin, now available in the U.S., is an homage to cofounder Ruggero Raymo's grandfather, Klaus Pudel, who helped salvage the spirit's namesake village from the devastation of World War II. A recipe of 21 botanicals organically grown on the hills of Portofino, such as juniper, lemon, lavender, rosemary, marjoram, sage, iris, and rose, beckons the Italian Riviera.

\$ SRP: \$56.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 portofinogin.com

4. CAMPARI NEGRONI READY TO SERVE

Aperitivo hour has become a tad easier to orchestrate with the arrival of Campari's on-the-go iteration of the classic Negroni. Each bottle contains four servings of the drink, an equal parts blend of Campari, London dry gin, and sweet vermouth, that can be simply poured over ice and spruced up with an orange slice garnish.

\$ SRP: \$24.99 per 375-ml bottle
🌐 campari.com

5. ESCUDO ROJO BARONESA P.

Escudo Rojo, Baron Philippe de Rothschild's Chilean enterprise, has unveiled the complex, concentrated Baronesa P. 2019. An ode to the late Baroness Philippine de Rothschild, the cuvée is dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon and rounded out with Carménère, Petit Verdot, Syrah, and Cabernet Franc, unleashing a tangle of blackcurrant, blackberry, and Ente plum.

\$ SRP: \$65 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 escudo-rojo.com

6. SHIPWRECK RUM'S WRECKERS

Brinley Gold Shipwreck Rum ventures into the ready-to-drink realm with Wreckers, a trifecta of summery 6% ABV cocktails packaged in 100 percent recyclable cans. A portion of all sales from the tropical libations—Mango Mojito, Vanilla Creamsicle, and Coconut Club—go toward preserving wildlife through the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network.

\$ SRP: \$14.99 per four-pack of 12-oz. cans
🌐 brinleygoldshipwreck.com

UNLEASH WHAT'S INSIDE BUSK IT!

WINEENTHUSIAST
SCORE OUT OF 100 POINTS

THE BUSKER
2021 "BEST BUY" **94**PTS

BUSHMILLS
ORIGINAL **90**PTS

JAMESON IRISH
WHISKEY **88**PTS

TULLAMORE DEW **87**PTS

PROPER 12 **86**PTS

94PTS
SCORE OUT OF 100 POINTS

WINEENTHUSIAST
WINE & SPIRITS

2021 "BEST BUY"



BREAKTHRU
BEVERAGE GROUP

SCAN HERE
TO BEGIN
YOUR
DISCOVERY



AN EXCEPTIONAL IRISH WHISKEY EXPERIENCE

DRINK RESPONSIBLY. Imported by DISARONNO INTERNATIONAL, SOMERSET, NJ. ©2022. | 40% ALC. by VOL. | 80 PROOF.



7. HARDIN'S CREEK

To celebrate the vast Beam family legacy, the James B. Beam Distilling Company has debuted Hardin's Creek, a collection of rare, limited-edition whiskeys from Freddie Noe, the master distiller at Fred B. Noe Distillery. The first of the annual releases are the 108-proof Jacob's Well and Colonel James B. Beam. The former is a blend of 16-year-old traditional and 15-year-old high-rye bourbons, while the latter is a two-year-old whiskey showcasing unusual depth because it's taken off the still at a lower distillation proof.

\$ SRP: \$149.99 (Jacob's Well) and \$79 (Colonel James B. Beam) per 750-ml bottle

beamsuntory.com

8. DOMAINES OTT ÉTOILE

Domaines Ott, led by fourth-generation winemaker Jean-François Ott, has added Étoile 2020 to its lineup of Provence wines. Comprised of 80 percent Grenache and 20 percent Mourvèdre, the rosé brings together grapes from three distinct terroirs: Clos Mireille, Château de Selle, and Château Romassan, culminating in a tangy mélange of wild peach, raspberry, and mango.

\$ SRP: \$199.99 per 750-ml bottle

domaines-ott.com

9. JACOB'S PARDON SMALL BATCH RECIPE #2

The latest edition of Jacob's Pardon, the Kentucky whiskey that traces its roots to two resourceful bootlegging brothers during Prohibition, is the 109.3-proof Small Batch Recipe #2. Exhibiting motley notes of cocoa butter, clove, caramel, and baked honey ham, it's ideal in an Old Fashioned.

\$ SRP: \$89.99 per 750-ml bottle

palmbay.com

10. CURAMIA TEQUILA REPOSADO

In 2021, Jalisco-raised chef Dafna Mizrahi launched woman-centered Curamia Tequila, a brand that stands out for its sustainable distillation process using deep well water. Mizrahi's initial blanco offering is now followed up by an herbaceous reposado made from 100 percent Blue Weber agave that is distilled twice in copper pot stills and aged for four to five months in American oak casks.

\$ SRP: \$44.99 per 750-ml bottle

curamiatequila.com

11. BENRIACH CASK EDITION

Speyside distillery Benriach has, for the first time ever, introduced its single cask, single malt Scotch whisky bottlings to the U.S. market. Drawn from individual barrels selected by master blender Rachel Barrie, the expressions include the 116.4-proof Cask #3812: Pedro Ximénez Puncheon from 2009, the 110.8-proof Cask #10297: Marsala from 1998, and the 110.8-proof Cask #15058: Oloroso Puncheon from 1997.

\$ SRP: \$100 (3812), \$330 (10297), and \$380 (15058)

benriachdistillery.com

12. LOST LANTERN SUMMER 2022 SINGLE CASK COLLECTION

Independent American whiskey bottler Lost Lantern presents its summer bundle of seven single casks from six craft distilleries. The bundle includes McCarthy's three-year-old Oregon peated single malt, Frey Ranch Distillery in Nevada's three-grain straight bourbon, Starlight Distillery in Indiana's straight bourbon, St. George Spirits' California single malt, Balcones Distilling's Texas single malt, and two expressions of Dad's Hat Pennsylvania straight rye.

\$ SRP: \$80 to \$160 per 750-ml bottle

lostlanternwhiskey.com

BUSINESS SALES & ACQUISITIONS

ATKINS Business Solutions

Recognized Industry Expert



**Steve Atkins, Principal Broker
Business Intermediary**

Email: atkins.steve@comcast.net
www.atkinsrealtygroup.com

Testimonials

“He did a great job and I would recommend anyone who is thinking of selling their business to contact Steve prior to signing with anyone else. He does his research and puts people together...”

Barry G., Prince George's County

“Your knowledge and ability to put out fires can't be measured in dollars and cents. With all the things that came up, I'm not sure this sale would have happened without your expertise...”

Ron S., Frederick County

“Steve followed the transaction through every step of the process offering advice on dealing with the Landlord, the Governmental authorities as well as the buyer. The expertise that Mr. Atkins brought to the sale was appreciated by both parties and was the sole reason that I was able to complete the sale and retire.”

Maben K., Anne Arundel County

- Mountain Liquors
- Kenilworth Liquors
- Phelps's Liquors
- Harbor Spirits
- Arundel Liquors
- Market Place W&S
- Chesapeake Liquors
- Leeds Liquors
- All Saints Liquors
- I.M. Wine
- Dual Hwy. Liquors
- Decker's Wine & Spirits
- Hideaway Lounge
- Franks Den
- Shop Rite Liquors
- Harpers Choice Liquors
- John's General Store
- Star Liquors
- Cranberry Liquors
- Woodensburg Market
- Ye Old Packaged Goods
- Old Orchard Liquors
- The Liquor Store
- Camelot Liquors
- Centreville Liquors
- Federal Hill Wine & Spirits

- Staples Corner Liquors
- Short Stop Beverage Barn
- Milford Liquors
- Clauss Liquors
- 7 Courts Liquors
- Walther Liquors
- Bernie's Liquors
- Muddy Creek Liquors



Atkins Business Solutions

A division of Atkins Realty Group, Inc.

Call us today!

410-757-4965



After Battening Down the Hatches During COVID, Dead Freddie's Roars to Life

WRITTEN BY TEDDY DURGIN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK BAILEY

If you are going to commit to a series of articles on themed bars and restaurants around the State of Maryland, sooner or later you have to cover one that boasts a pirate theme. One such place is Dead Freddie's, one of the more popular eating and drinking destinations in Ocean City.

Stephen Carullo, managing member of Dead Freddie's, is quite proud of his establishment. He stated during a recent interview with the *Beverage Journal* that "Dead Freddie's has multiple areas to dine in that accommodate every demographic. It also has multiple kids' areas with playgrounds

for families; multiple bar areas for adults to enjoy; and multiple dining rooms, some with TV walls that are more of a sports bar theme." Other dining rooms have no televisions, and Dead Freddie's has seen fit to give those spaces more of a laid-back vibe with fish tanks as the main décor item.

Dead Freddie's is perhaps best known as one of Ocean City's most family-friendly destinations, and a big part of that has to do with its pirate theme. But the proprietors don't go overboard with the theme. Carullo noted, "We started out as a Baltimore-style pub focused on the 21-and-



NOW AVAILABLE

Republic National Distributing Company's
New Online Product Search And Ordering Experience



DISCOVER NEW ITEMS

DIVE INTO BRANDS

SAVE YOUR FAVORITE PRODUCTS

SEARCH & ORDER WITH EASE

GET STARTED TODAY BY VISITING

www.eRNDc.com



over crowd. The overwhelming success of the concept caused issues from drawing too much night life. To better adapt to the community, we scaled back the night-life aspect of the concept and expanded the dining focus adding a kid's playground."

He continued, "The theme came around by accident. Our main pirate skull logo was presented to us by one of our T-shirt designers, who had developed it as a shirt design for Seacrets. When they declined to use the design, he offered it to us and we loved it! We thought it would go great, and we incorporated it by adding the logo we used for years into the eye patch of the skull. So we try to stay true to our pub heritage while incorporating an immersive experience for kids and families."

The pirate theme has definitely extended to Dead Freddie's menu. For instance, its appetizers are referred to as "St-Arrr-ters" (it's almost impossible not to talk like a pirate for at least a few seconds when you're a customer). Fun menu items include: Black Beard's Burger; the Captain's Chicken; and, for the kids, Chicken Planks (not Nuggets). The drink menu, meanwhile, includes such creative concoctions as Pirate Punch, the Drunken Pirate, Freddie's Pain Reliever, and the Shipwreck.

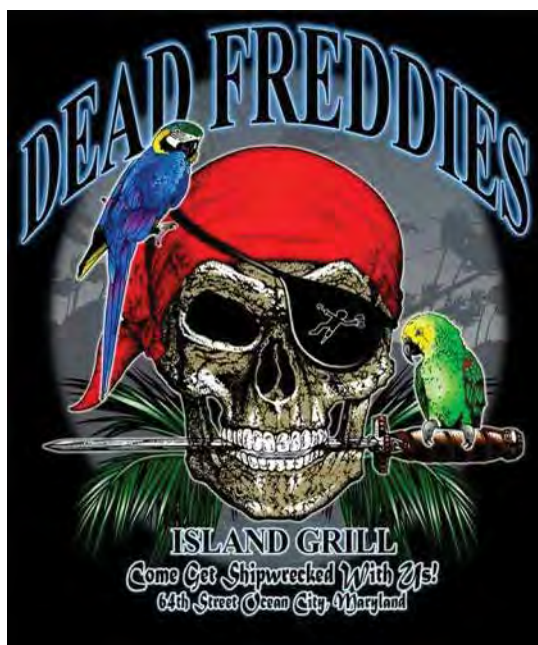
Carullo said, "The one we are most excited about is a classic we

have been serving for 10 years that is being reworked & rolling out next week [this interview was conducted in early June], which is the Freddie's Shipwreck. It features a Corona 'shipwrecked' in a skull mug with a frozen strawberry or regular margarita."

He added, "The great news is we are coming out of COVID. So, this year, we are implementing new sections to the drink menu. One is Mocktails, a trend that is rapidly gaining steam. We'll also have a Tequila cocktails section. Being beach driven, we focus on the white liquors and lighter, fruitier beers. We have a drink menu that has fish bowls and refreshing drinks, which are great when you come off the beach and need to hydrate. We also have options, like the Pain Reliever, which do the opposite. We apply the same concept of the restaurant to the drink menu to give people multiple options from relaxing to pain relieving."

The COVID-19 crisis did its best to sink Dead Freddie's. But Carullo's savvy leadership along with the steady hands of his managers and waitstaff kept the business afloat. The team did every-

thing from put up dividers in the dining room for in-person dining to implementing contactless curbside pickup for those customers uncomfortable with eating and drinking out. Carullo further stated, "We had to go to market pricing for a lot of items, and we had a QR code that brought you to an online



room for in-person dining to implementing contactless curbside pickup for those customers uncomfortable with eating and drinking out. Carullo further stated, "We had to go to market pricing for a lot of items, and we had a QR code that brought you to an online

EASTERN LIQUOR DISTRIBUTORS, INC.

14229 CHERRY LANE COURT, LAUREL, MD 20707

PHONE: 301-470-0310 / 410-880-1337 | FAX: 301-470-0311

EMAIL: DOUGSONHITE@GMAIL.COM



JINRO



menu so we could update prices as inflation rages.”

From out of this period of trial and hardship, Carullo developed a thick skin and stuck to his proverbial guns even when conventional wisdom told him not to. He remarked, “Ever since I entered the business, all anyone has ever done is question the name, the concept, the changes throughout the years, and beat us down for choosing a business or name at the time was considered taboo. Anytime you innovate or do anything outside the norms, people will question and doubt you. However, if you are not innovative, you more than likely will not stay successful. Copying others will only get you so far. You must passionately pursue your goals. My advice is: Don’t let others get in your head. Guide your vision to achieve your goals, but always respect your customers!”

Freddies dates back to its 1949 founding. Carullo relates that the business was purchased years later and had a large neon sign that said Freddies due to a lack



of funds for a new sign. “A contest for a bar tab was started for anyone who could incorporate Freddies in the name,” he recalled. “A customer walked in during the day, during construction, and said, ‘No one is here. You should call the place Dead Freddies!’”

And the name stuck. Today, it welcomes people from far and wide at its waterfront location at 64th Street in Ocean City. The scenic trappings, the bayside

views, the enthusiastic clientele – they all have Carullo looking to the near future with optimism. But challenges remain, and Carullo has a pessimistic side also. He concluded, “I am optimistic that the industry is starting to return to some level of normality. But I am pessimistic about inflation and the regulatory environment that is raising costs on all items and making it harder to operate and innovate.” ■

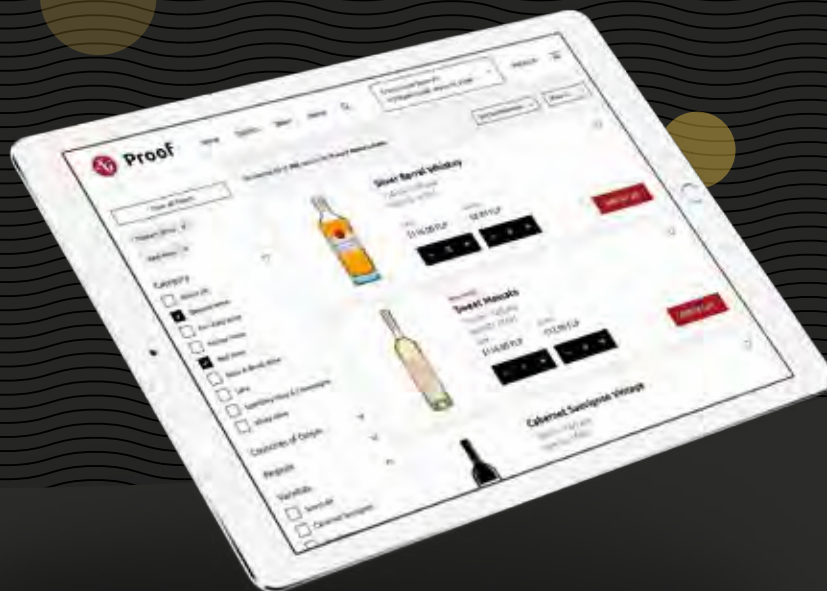


**SHOW MORE
TO SELL MORE**

- ➔ Solid Shelves
- ➔ Maximum display
Edgeless Doors
- ➔ Maximum efficiency

3141 Frederick Ave. Baltimore MD | 410-945-7878 or 800-848-7748 | careysales.com

Turning inventory.
And heads.
That's Proof.



ProofTM
BY SOUTHERN GLAZER'S

Visit about.sgproof.com to find out more

PERFECT PARTNERS

The centerpiece of **The Balvenie** Single Malt Scotch Whisky's Rare Marriages range is The Balvenie 25. This new 96-proof expression fuses stocks of 25-year-old liquids hand-picked by the brand's malt master, David C. Stewart, in traditional oak tuns to garner a blend that is rife with crystallized ginger and honey aromatics. Rounding out the luxe collection are revamped versions of The Balvenie 30 and The Balvenie 40.

SRP: \$799.99 (25-Year-Old), \$2,400 (30-Year-Old), and \$6,750 (40-Year-Old) per 750-ml bottle



GOING DEEPER

Following the stateside arrival of McConnell's Irish Whisky in 2020, the Belfast distillery has now introduced a 92-proof sherry cask finish variation. Upon aging in select first fill bourbon barrels, the liquid is finished in Oloroso sherry casks, eliciting flavors of ripe cherry, black raspberry, and bitter dark chocolate shavings.

SRP: \$42.99 per 750-ml bottle



TOP OF THE LINE

Barrell Craft Spirits has already made a splash with its Barrell Seagrass and limited-release BCS Gray Label Seagrass, and now the series makes way for the rare, 20-year-old BCS Gold Label Seagrass. Distilled in Canada and then bottled in Kentucky at cask strength, the 128.12-proof rye whiskey was finished in Martinique rum, Malmsey Madeira, and apricot brandy casks.

SRP: \$499.99 per 750-ml bottle



ISLAND IN THE SUN

Chicken Cock Whiskey's summery Rooster Rum Barrel Rye looks to the tropics for inspiration. Featuring a mash bill of 95 percent rye and five percent malted barley, the 95-proof limited release begins with Chicken Cock's Kentucky straight rye whiskey and is then finished for a minimum of six months in Caribbean rum casks, where it acquires layers of vanilla, butterscotch, and pepper.

SRP: \$199.99 per 750-ml bottle

DOWN-UNDER EXPERIMENT

Melbourne's **Starward** distillery, known for maturing its Australian single malt whiskies in red wine casks, has teamed up with the family-owned Barossa Valley winery Yalumba to unveil the limited-edition 96.4-proof Starward Octave Barrels. Once Yalumba's The Octavius Shiraz is bottled, the freshly emptied 100-liter American oak barrels are sent to Starward, where they are filled with new make spirit that plays with the wood to conjure notes of rich forest fruit and toasted marshmallow.

SRP: \$79.99 per 700-ml bottle



ANGEL

PRODUCED IN UKRAINE



**A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN
(JOSE ANDRES LED CHARITY)**

IMPORTED BY INTERBALT (301) 793-1818 WWW.INTERBALTPRODUCTS.COM



FERRAND CRUSTA

2 oz. Ferrand 1840 Cognac ¼ oz. maraschino liqueur
½ oz. Ferrand Dry Curaçao 2 dashes Angostura Bitters
½ oz. fresh lemon juice

Method: Rub the rim of a glass with a lemon wedge and dust the rim with white sugar. Combine all ingredients in a shaker with ice. Shake and strain into the glass.



BIRRIA-CHELADA RECIPE

1 oz. Camarena reposado tequila *2 oz. Birria Sangrita
2 dashes Mexican hot sauce 1 ice cold Mexican lager

Method: Combine all ingredients except beer in a chilled pint glass rimmed with chile-lime salt. Add the beer and garnish with lime wedges and cilantro.

*For the Birria Sangrita:

46 oz. can tomato juice 2 tsp. black pepper
6 oz. white grapefruit juice 1 tsp. salt
6 oz. orange juice 1 tsp. ancho chile powder
2 oz. lime juice 1 tsp. guajillo chile powder
1 oz. Mexican hot sauce ¼ tsp. chile de árbol

Combine all ingredients, mix completely, and allow to sit overnight until dried spices are fully dissolved.



SEVEN MILE

¾ oz. Jamaican rum ¾ oz. lemon juice
¾ oz. apple brandy ½ oz. orgeat
1 oz. Amaro Lucano

Method: Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker and shake with ice. Double strain into a double old-fashioned glass with crushed ice. Garnish with a mint bouquet and edible flowers.

FREIXENADE

2 oz. Freixenet Cordon Negro Brut or Rosé
1 oz. lemonade

Method: Pour Freixenet into a glass. Top with lemonade. Garnish with lemon wedge and mint.



HERBED HONEY SMASH

2 oz. Aberfeldy 12-year-old single malt Scotch whisky *1 oz. honey syrup
1 oz. lemon juice 6 to 8 herb leaves (basil, mint, tarragon)

Method: Add all ingredients except herbs to a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously and strain using a fine mesh strainer into a honey bear glass filled with ice. Garnish with fresh herbs of choice.

*Combine 1 oz. of boiling water and 2 oz. of honey and fully combine. Let cool before using.



ORGANIC TOGETHER



Grainger's Deluxe Organic Vodka is 100% American-made. Crafted from organic, non-GMO corn in the country's heartland, this gluten-free vodka is distilled 7 times & filtered 5 times to deliver a smooth, enjoyable drinking experience.



VODKA IS BACK IN VOGUE

RESTAURANTS AND BARS ARE SEEING INCREASED BUZZ
FOR ALL THINGS VODKA, FROM PREMIUM CALLS
TO NOSTALGIC RECREATIONS OF CLASSIC COCKTAILS

BY JAKE EMEN

There's a change happening in the world of vodka. It may be subtle, and long in the coming, but it's gaining momentum nonetheless. It's a change in perception most of all. The types of consumers who previously wouldn't consider ordering a vodka cocktail are now doing so in droves, specifically naming the top-shelf brand they prefer, and the bartenders who came up in an industry which labeled vodka the black sheep of the backbar are now innovating in the category with nostalgic recreations flooding the pages of the consumer press.

"We have seen considerable growth in sales in on-premise establishments recently," says Estelle Horysa-Hubert, Absolut Elyx's brand manager. "Our sales are surpassing pre-pandemic levels."

An ever-increasing push for premiumization has occurred across the spirits industry, but vodka, more than any other category, saw a drop off in sales of cheaper price segments compared to gains in the premium categories, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS), losing 1.68 million nine-liter cases of sales in the lowest two price tiers, while gaining 3.6 million cases in the highest two tiers.

Even ahead of the pandemic, numbers were indicating a bump to vodka's already lofty status. In 2019, total vodka sales on-premise were up 5.9 percent in the U.S., according to IWSR Drinks Market Analysis. But with consumers' long-awaited return to the bars after the pandemic-era interruption, vodka's on-premise positioning has only been further padded, and looks set to continue.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Absolut Elyx // Elyx Monday Blues // Haku-Hi cocktail // Death & Co. NYC's Haku Vodka-based Supper Club Martini

"The Martini is having a massive boom in both cocktail and pop culture. Last year, demand for martinis increased by 25 percent at bars and restaurants nationwide."

- Katie Redlien, Grey Goose

The Big Picture

Vodka is by far the largest category in terms of total sales in the U.S.. According to DISCUS, in 2021 vodka accounted for \$7.3 billion in revenue with 78.1 million nine-liter cases sold. It's no secret that vodka has long been a key driver of revenue for many on-premise establishments.

"Vodka has been the top seller in bars for quite some time now—even with the rise of other spirit categories, such as American whiskey and agave spirits spe-

cifically,” says Tyson Buhler, the national beverage director at Death & Co.

As consumers head back to bars on the whole, though, they’re displaying more of a treat-yourself mentality, opting to upgrade their calls because after the past two years, they feel as if they deserve it. “Now, when consumers are going out for drinks, they’re trading up for top-shelf liquors that really enhance the entire experience,” says Katie Redlien, the brand director at Grey Goose, which has seen a significant increase in on-premise sales.

St. George Spirits has also benefited from this boon. “Understandably, people seem to really want to be back out at their favorite bars and restaurants,” says Dave Smith, the head distiller. “Some markets have seen minor growth, while others have roared back to life with strong demand and significant growth.”

Suffice to say, vodka’s status as a stalwart of sales but little else of relevance is changing, as is its currency in cocktail culture. Vodka is moving from the elephant in the room to, well, the elephant on the top shelf. Increasing demand continues to build momentum for the category.

Broad Shifts in Vodka's Appeal

Many of the cocktails that seem to be dominating the conversation today—the ones that consumers walk into a bar and order by name even when they aren’t on the menu—are made with vodka, from the Vodka Martini to its caffeinated cousin, the Espresso Martini.

“Even the Cosmopolitan is making a huge comeback—[you can thank the new] *Sex and the City* streaming series [*And Just Like That*],” says Johnny Swet, the founding partner at Jimmy rooftop bar at Modernhaus SoHo in New York City. Alcohol has absolutely soaked the digital airwaves—alcohol brand’s digital ad spend grew nine percent between 2019 and 2023, according to a Zenith report—and it’s driving some



"You can hardly walk through a bar or restaurant and not see at least one [Espresso Martini] on a table at any given time."

– Tyson Buhler, Death & Co.

of the trends. “The marketing on TV and streaming services with product placement has gotten into our psyche,” adds Swet.

Go one step further and it’s easy to connect the dots with viral cocktail trends and endless TikTok how-to videos—like Stanley Tucci’s instructionals—and even the semi-ironic odd sensations, including, yes, the Dirty Shirley, which has been bewilderingly posited as the drink of the summer by consumer publications far and wide. For those more classically inclined, though, the Martini reigns supreme. “The Martini is having a massive boom in both cocktail and pop culture,” says Redlien. “Last year, demand for Martinis increased by 25 percent at bars and restaurants nationwide, according to Technomic, and dominated pop culture, as we saw the Dry Martini, Dirty Martini, and ever-popular Espresso Martini take over our social media feeds.”

ABOVE: Death & Co.’s Tyson Buhler

As for the Espresso Martini, it’s become a wrecking ball. “You can hardly walk through a bar or restaurant and not see at least one on a table at any given time,” says Buhler.

The idea of cyclical trends, as well as the lure of nostalgia, is something Redlien, Buhler, and Horysa-Hubert each call out. “It’s a glamorous serve that’s been sipped for years and can transport the drinker to another era of elegance, and I think consumers are so drawn to the Martini right now because of how nostalgia is trending everywhere we look,” says Redlien.

A number of the cocktail renaissance’s early leaders famously banished vodka from their menus as a means of establishing their craft credentials. The pioneering Audrey Saunders, co-owner of New York City’s now-shuttered Pegu Club, didn’t carry vodka as a means of introducing drinkers to the then unfashionable gin. Vodka was previously defined as “without distinctive character, aroma, taste, or color,” by The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), but both the attitude towards the spirit and its definition by the TTB has been updated, and many of the current crop of bartenders are now embracing it.

“Bartenders are driving the resurgence and reinvention of vodka as the world knows it, with key players like Leo Robitschek

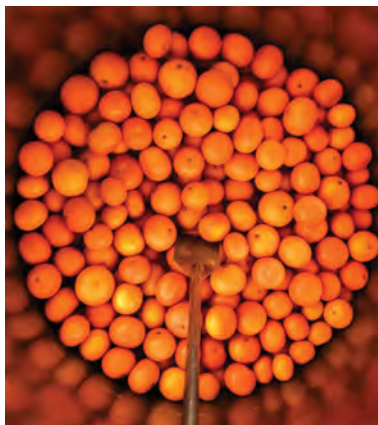
BORN TO MIX.



ABSOLUT.®

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY.

ABSOLUT® VODKA, PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40% ALC./VOL. DISTILLED FROM GRAIN. ©2022 IMPORTED BY ABSOLUT SPIRITS CO., NEW YORK, NY.



ABOVE FROM LEFT: Copper stills at St. George's distillery // Seville oranges at St. George // Absolut Elyx Martini

championing the spirit and showcasing its versatility in cocktails, giving vodka drinks the spotlight they deserve on their menus,” says Horysa-Hubert.

Haku Vodka is experimenting with vodka's potential reach by pairing it with food, especially with other touted culinary touchstones of Japan, drawing a straight line that consumers can easily connect. “We've been focusing on our food-pairing programs in on-premise establishments that showcase Haku Vodka with a variety of gastronomic categories, including high-end sushi,” says Susan Gibbons, the senior director of North American marketing for Beam Suntory.

“Great chefs and leading mixologists across the country have embraced Haku as a spirit they can build great programs around,” adds Gibbons. For instance, during the early stages of the pandemic, chef Sonoko Sakai led virtual cooking classes pairing Haku Vodka highballs with her Japanese curry dishes. Meanwhile, at Chicago's Bar Kumiko, Julia Momose has served up Haku Martinis and highballs in her cocktail flights and alongside dishes from the kitchen's touted culinary program.

Flavored vodkas, which account for one-fifth of on-premise vodka sales, according to CGA's On Premise Measurement, continue to thrive, particularly from brands with more natural processes and authentic flavors. The days of cotton-candy and bubblegum vodkas are long gone.

“Bartenders are driving the resurgence and reinvention of vodka as the world knows it, with key players like Leo Robitschek championing the spirit and showcasing its versatility in cocktails.”

– Estelle Horysa-Hubert, Absolut Elyx

“Vodka drinkers tend to have their preferred call and are often less interested in exploring other brands,” says Smith. “They need to have a significant reason to go outside of their comfort zone. Naturally-made, premium flavored vodkas are one of the few ways we can connect with that person.” St. George has seen great success with its Green Chile and California Citrus vodkas, for instance, with the former being deployed in Mules and Bloody Marys, and the latter in martinis.

While Death & Co. doesn't dedicate much of their menu to vodka cocktails, Buhler calls out St. George as being among the craft vodkas which have long stood out to their team for “being made with a focus on spirit character,” in addition to options including DSP, Good, and Woody Creek.

Another growth area is vodka designed to be both lower in alcohol and calories. While most brands would stop

short of denoting any alcohol as being good for you, consumers are showing a preference for drinks they perceive as healthier options.

“Like most other categories, the spirits industry has seen a growing desire for 'better-for-you' products made with less calories, lower ABV, and quality ingredients,” says Redlien, pointing to the line of botanically-infused Grey Goose Essences as an example. “Since launching last winter, consumer reaction has been even better than we'd hoped for.”

Looking Ahead

The trends driving vodka's current momentum aren't going anywhere, and premiumization will continue to be paramount in the conversation. Of course, interest in premium vodka isn't novel. “While we've continued to see people more interested in the premium end of the vodka market, the vodka category has been leading the charge in premiumization for decades,” says Smith.

One new point, though, is how consumer behavior changed during the pandemic to build atop that. “After so many months spent at home during the pandemic, consumers have really embraced the true luxury of ordering a craft cocktail at their local bar, served just the way they like it by their favorite bartender,” says Redlien. “It's great to see consumers share this feeling, and we're hopeful that the momentum will continue for the on-premise in the coming months.” ■

BRUICHLADDICH

PROGRESSIVE HEBRIDEAN DISTILLERS

THE AWARD-WINNING WHISKY OF SUMMER

A COMPLEX AND FLORAL UNPEATED
SINGLE MALT FROM ISLAY



Certified



Corporation

This company meets the
highest standards of social
and environmental impact

2022 BRUICHLADDICH DISTILLERY CO. LIMITED,
BRUICHLADDICH SCOTCH WHISKY 49.2-64% ALC./VOL.,
IMPORTED BY REMY COINTREAU USA, INC., NEW YORK, NY.
PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.



PROGRESSIVE HEBRIDEAN
DISTILLERS

BRUICHLADDICH



**THE
CLASSIC
LADDIE**
SCOTTISH BARLEY

IT IS OUR MISSION TO
PURSUE THE ULTIMATE
PEDIGREE, PROVENANCE
AND TRACEABILITY OF
OUR RAW MATERIALS -
CHIEF OF WHICH IS OUR
BARLEY - AND TO PUSH
THE BOUNDARIES OF THE
CONCEPT OF TERROIR IN
ARTISANAL SINGLE
MALT WHISKY.

**UNPEATED
ISLAY SINGLE MALT
SCOTCH WHISKY**

DISTILLED, MATURED AND BOTTLED,
UN-CHILL, FILTERED AND COLOURING-FREE,
AT BRUICHLADDICH DISTILLERY,
ISLE OF ISLAY, SCOTLAND.
PRODUCT OF SCOTLAND.

50% alc./vol.

750 ml



NEW TAKES ON VODKA

New releases and creative innovations are pushing this go-to category forward

BY ALIA AKKAM

C risp, clean, unfussy vodka is exactly what summer demands, but the spirit undoubtedly has year-round appeal. According to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, vodka represents 27 percent of all spirits sales. Here is a look at some of the brands and innovations that are keeping the market dynamic.

● New Amsterdam Vodka

Along with a classic 80-proof version, New Amsterdam Vodka is known for a mighty 100-proof iteration and a lineup of flavors such as pineapple, red berry, and coconut. Spirit of Gallo has recently pushed the brand into the ready-to-drink sphere with Wildcard. This range of 8% ABV canned



vodka-based beverages consists of a tart Original Hard Lemonade, a sweet-and-sour Classic Hard Punch, and a citrusy Lemon Hard Tea.

● CÎROC Ultra-Premium Vodka

Now part of CÎROC's permanent collection, CÎROC Summer Citrus embodies the lighthearted season with its five-times distilled vodka buoyed by tangy notes of blood orange and lime zest. The versatile spirit works just as well in an easy-to-prep spritz as it does in a Cosmopolitan.



● Smirnoff Vodka

Ready-to-drink Smirnoff Ice Smash Lemonades are a boozy (8% ABV) upgrade to summer's go-to quencher. In both of the 16-ounce can offerings, Peach Lemonade and Pink Lemonade, zippy citrus is the star, melding either with juicy peach or bright raspberry.

● Broken Shed Vodka

Sustainable vodka brand Broken Shed is deeply intertwined with its homeland of New Zealand. Distilled from whey, it is heightened by the country's natural aquifer and spring waters. Highlighting this relationship is Broken Shed's Vodka of Tomorrow campaign. First introduced last year, it will continue through 2022, spanning video, print, and social media, with displays that put the spotlight on New Zealand's forward-thinking mindset.

● Deep Eddy Vodka

Texas-made Deep Eddy turns out a number of flavored vodkas like sweet tea and cranberry. The brand's ready-to-drink, carbonated Vodka + Soda line, then, was a natural outgrowth. Enlivened with real juice, these 12-ounce cans of 4.5% ABV, 120-calorie seltzers are available in ruby red grapefruit, lemon, and just-unveiled lime.



● Seagram's Vodka

Concocting summer cocktails is a cinch with Seagram's fruity Strawberry Lemonade or tropical Mango Pineapple vodkas. Pair the former with sparkling water and lemonade and cap it off with a fresh strawberry garnish. The latter can be savored on the rocks or mixed with fruit juice.



● Grainger's Deluxe Organic Vodka

Grainger's Deluxe Organic Vodka, part of the M.S. Walker portfolio, is a celebration of America's heartland. Produced in Missouri from whole-kernel corn grown at organic-certified and non-GMO farms within 100 miles of the distillery, the vodka is distilled seven times and filtered five.



● Barr Hill Vodka

Vermont distillery Caledonia Spirits is well known for its Barr Hill and Tom Cat gin varieties, but Barr Hill Vodka also stands out for its embrace of local and regional wild honey. Distilled entirely from this raw, unheated honey (each bottle contains four pounds) no



more than two times, the vodka balances nectar aromatics with floral depth.

● Redmont Vodka

Founded in 2015 (NBA legend and Alabama native Charles Barkley became the majority owner in 2019), Redmont Vodka is produced at Birmingham's first legal distillery since Prohibition, which is also home to Vulcan Gin. Spawned from non-GMO corn and reverse osmosis water, the vodka is distilled eight times, winding its way through an advanced carbon filtration system that extracts impurities.

● Smoke Lab Vodka

NV Group's Smoke Lab Vodka is a pure expression of India, spun from freshly harvested native basmati rice and Himalayan natural spring water one batch at a time. Following a five-step distillation process that utilizes charcoal filtration, the vodka then benefits from an additional two-step Sparkle Filtration treatment that ensures a smooth finish. Joining the nutty classic is the aniseed variant that illuminates the Indian herb through layers of fennel and licorice.



● Dirty Devil Vodka

Canada's Dirty Devil Vodka is ramping up its presence across the U.S. with the help of newly appointed global brand ambassador Giancarlo Esposito, star of *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*. The pioneering vodka from St. Lucifer Spirits is made with Canadian corn spirit that is distilled five times and filtered three. It then undergoes a proprietary hyper-oxygenated water process that transforms the liquid's density and viscosity to elicit an especially soft mouthfeel.

● Absolut Vodka



Absolut Vodka has teamed up with actress and author Garcelle Beauvais to roll out the Front Yard Citrus Club, a campaign to encourage and facilitate outdoor summer get-togethers, fueled by a quartet of custom coolers produced by Outside Gang. Showcasing vibrant colorways that reference Absolut's citron, lime, mandarin, and grapefruit flavors, the coolers invite neighborhood hangouts. Bonus: they are accompanied by limited-edition cocktail kits complete with all the ingredients needed to whip up an Absolut Citrus Swizzle, as well as Beauvais' new memoir. ■



WHAT WINE GETS WRONG ABOUT MARKETING TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS

THE INDUSTRY HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR WAYS TO REACH NEWLY OF-AGE CONSUMERS SINCE THE 1990S. WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO GET IT RIGHT IN TODAY'S MARKET?

BY TINA CAPUTO

A

documentary produced for California winery executives issued a wake-up call about the younger generation's disinterest in wine. "There are 70

million people in the U.S. between the ages of 21 and 30," the narration stated, "yet less than eight percent are regular wine drinkers." To help turn the tide, it was time for the industry to put a new twist on wine to emphasize enjoyment rather than appellations and hillside terroir.

The year was 1995, and the video, which I helped create, was about Generation X. More than 25 years later, the wine industry now finds itself in a similar situation with the next generation: millennials. Silicon Valley Bank's 2022 State of the Wine Industry report made a splash ear-

lier this year with dire warnings about declining sales to millennials, yet calls to do a better job of marketing wine to younger generations are hardly new, and the industry has yet to master the practice.

According to the Wine Market Council's latest U.S. Wine Consumer Segmentation Survey, conducted in the fall of 2021, only 14 percent of those aged 21 to 30 drink wine on a weekly basis, and 11 percent drink it occasionally. Thirty-eight percent don't drink wine at all, but they do consume beer, spirits, and other alcoholic beverages. The news is somewhat better among older millennials in the 30 to 39 age group: 20 percent are weekly wine drinkers, 13 percent drink wine two or three times per month, and 37 percent skip wine in favor of other beverages.

ABOVE: Bay Grape wine shop in Oakland, California.

Though this is certainly an improvement over the 1995 data, the wine industry still has work to do in order to attract younger generations in an increasingly competitive beverage alcohol landscape. This will involve not only revisiting the lessons of the past, but employing new tactics for each new generation as it reaches legal consumption age.

LESSONS FROM PAST EFFORTS

Long before the Silicon Valley Bank report made headlines, Jeff Bundschu, Jon Sebastiani, and Mike Sangiacomo—then rising through the ranks of Sonoma's Gundlach Bundschu winery, Sebastiani Vineyards, and Sangiacomo Family Vineyards, re-

CIAO! SCAN ME TO



LEARN MORE



CANTINE
MASCHIO
D'ITALIA

NO END TO THE WEEKEND



Non-GMO



Gluten-Free



Vegan Friendly



Proud Sponsor of

Please drink responsibly. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons Ltd., New York, NY www.frederickwildman.com



spectively—came together to form the Wine Brats. Founded in 1994, the nonprofit aimed to demystify wine through “wine rave” events across the country.

The California Wine Institute provided an initial \$65,000 in funding, and industry players such as E. & J. Gallo kicked in the rest of the Brats’ first-year budget. Over the next decade, Wine Brats grew to include 45,000 members and 27 regional chapters, and it produced more than 300 events each year.

“I think we created a big shift in the perception of how and when wine could be enjoyed,” says former Wine Brats executive director Joel Quigley, now the head of marketing communications at Lloyd Cellars and Prescription Vineyards in Napa. “Our focus was to bring wine to Gen X’s scene—to their music, to their venues, to their lives—in a contemporary way. Stuff events with smooth jazz were not going to bring them into the world of wine.”

The Wine Market Council also recognized the need to reach younger generations. In response, the organization launched two targeted marketing campaigns: “Wine: What Are You Saving it For?” in 1999, and “Wine: Since 6,000 B.C.” in 2003. Running in New York and Texas test markets, the first campaign featured

“We talk about wellness a lot these days, and for the younger consumer it's not just the wellness of ‘me,’ but the wellness of ‘we.’”

– Dale Stratton, Wine Market Council

billboards, TV and radio ads, and in-store merchandising. The second was a print ad that ran in the Columbus, Ohio, market.

“With both campaigns, they were able to show statistically that they increased awareness and that they did increase sales,” notes current Wine Market Council president Dale Stratton. “They took a very broad approach with the 1999 campaign, which I think is really important when you think about these things in today’s world.”

While the industry still has work to do in reaching younger adults, says Quigley, “It’s still way better than it was. Just look at BottleRock. I think we laid the groundwork for that kind of stuff.”

Gen X consumers are certainly drinking more wine today than they did in their younger years. In the mid-’90s, less

than eight percent of adults aged 21 to 30 were regular wine drinkers. In 2021, according to the Wine Market Council’s recent survey, 15 to 16 percent of Gen X consumers—now in their 40s and 50s—identify as weekly wine drinkers. Though it’s likely that some naturally became interested in wine as they grew older and began earning more money, Wine Brats’ geographical reach and membership numbers suggest that the industry’s efforts also had an impact.

However, little was done to engage younger drinkers after the Brats’ national organization dissolved around 2004. As millennials reached legal drinking age and early research suggested that these young adults were not only open to wine but were driving sales, the wine sector felt no particular urgency to court them. Now, the industry is playing catch-up.

In approaching younger consumers today, Quigley says, it’s important for the winery to remind itself that younger consumers want many of the same things—whether the year is 1990 or 2022.

“The commonalities with Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z are that they don’t want to be talked down to and made to feel stupid,” he says, “and they want products and the people behind them to be authentic.”



Tyler Balliet, founder of New York's amusement park-like Rosé Mansion.



Over 260 years of
ITALIAN WINEMAKING EXPERTISE



AWARD-WINNING SPARKLING
WINES, PERFECT FOR
EVERYDAY ENJOYMENT.



Cinzano Prosecco D.O.C. ©2022 Campari America, New York, NY. Please enjoy responsibly.
CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EU REGULATION NO. 1308/2013

A DIFFERENT MARKET

Though there are parallels between the 1990s and 2022, today's market presents myriad challenges that didn't exist 25 years ago.

"Wine was growing massively during the 1990s, following a decade of plummeting interest," notes Damien Wilson, the chair of Sonoma State University's wine business program. "With boomers fueling the '90s wine boom, there was both sufficient cash and a need to feed the industry's growth. It's a very different situation now. The industry is not growing like hotcakes."

Since the '90s, the number of wineries in the United States has tripled, says Wilson, yet the volume output has only doubled. Because the industry has seen a disproportionate influx of smaller wineries that are producing their wines at a higher cost, he adds, younger consumers are being priced out.

"Most producers are eager to try and exploit what they're referring to as premiumization of the market, but what that's done is set the entry point at a cost that is too high," explains Wilson. "While profitability is up at the top end of wine's markets, the foundation of its success—penetrating the market with an increase in new consumers—has eroded to the point that it's now jeopardizing the industry's long-term viability. This is likely to be the first generation that is poorer than the previous generation, so we are going about it the wrong way."

Wine is also expensive compared to other beverages, explains Rob McMillan, the executive vice president and founder of Silicon Valley Bank's wine division. He argues the industry isn't producing enough interesting wines at entry-level price-points. "Look at BMWs," he says. "You don't start with the 7 Series. You start with the 3 Series and that's the on-ramp



Bay Grape's shops strive to create inclusive, welcoming atmospheres.

for that category. So what's our on-ramp?"

Not only does the industry need to create a range of simple, affordable, cleanly made wines, says Wilson, it must rethink the way it presents wine to younger consumers.

"When we think of the language used by initiates when they're talking about wine, they don't talk about elements of regionality, nuances, and complexity," he says. "Basically, wine becomes a platform for the delivery of alcohol within a context of social interaction. Recognizing that element of wine and coming up with packages and products that are conducive to that situation is really one of the keys."

McMillan points out that in decades past, most beer and spirits offerings were mass-produced and uninteresting. Wine was the only beverage with premium options, which led consumers to view it as special. "Now, younger consumers think of beer, wine, and spirits on equal footing," says McMillan. Wine also faces competition from new, growing categories like hard seltzer and ready-to-drink cocktails.

As a result of these headwinds, tactics that were once successful—like waiting around for younger consumers to "age into wine"—are no longer working.

"I hear people say, 'Oh, well, all we need to do is wait,'" McMillan says. "I understand where everybody's coming from—they're thinking of their own experience and saying, 'Well, I didn't like wine at first, either.' But it's different now."

RAMPING UP WINE MARKETING

To help the industry address market realities and create a unified message, McMillan and Stratton have joined with other industry veterans to create a national marketing effort targeting younger consumers. Dubbed WineRAMP (which stands for "Wine Research and Marketing Project"), the group seeks to pursue a USDA Research and Promotion Program, which would provide a framework for the wine industry to collectively fund promotional efforts through mandatory assessments.

While the project is still in the early "listening" stage and its direction has yet to be determined, WineRAMP founders say they recognize the need to focus on values that are important to the new consumer, including sustainability and diversity.

"We talk about wellness a lot these days, and for the younger consumer it's not just the wellness of 'me,' but the wellness of 'we,'" says Stratton. "Not just what is best for me, but best for whatever my cause might be—inclusion, the environment, world issues. So we also need to be communicating with them from that standpoint. And I do think our category hits on so many of those areas."

Elaine Chukan Brown, a wine educator and the cofounder of the Diversity in Wine Leadership Forum, believes the initiative can be successful if it takes a multi-level approach and treats younger consumers with respect.

SUN'S UP

HIGH NOON ✨ HARD SELTZER



PLEASE SUN SIP RESPONSIBLY. VODKA WITH REAL FRUIT JUICE, SPARKLING WATER, AND NATURAL FLAVORS. ALCOHOL 4.5% BY VOLUME (9 PROOF).
©2022 HIGH NOON SPIRITS COMPANY, MODESTO, CA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. AVERAGE ANALYSIS PER 12 FL OZ PINEAPPLE: 100 CALORIES, 0 PROTEIN, 0 FAT, 2.9G CARBOHYDRATES.

“To move the needle, it needs to be dynamic, with guiding principles expressed through a mix of initiatives—smart ads, fun interviews, by-the-glass programs, wine-in-the-city weeks around the country, immersive experiences for media or trade,” she says.

It will also be crucial, she adds, for the campaign to look beyond traditional wine-drinking demographics. “If welcoming people from diverse backgrounds isn’t the core principle of every outreach effort, then those efforts are in the process of failing,” she says.

Stevie Stacionis, who co-owns the Bay Grape wine shops in Oakland and Napa, California, with her husband Josiah Baldino, also contends that embracing diversity is essential in making connections with millennials and Gen Z.

Having experienced discrimination in shopping for wine as “a girl and a brown dude,” Stacionis says it was important for the couple to create an inclusive and welcoming space. From Bay Grape’s fun-and-friendly sales approach to its hip-hop soundtrack and bright, modern aesthetic, everything about the concept was designed to make customers feel at ease.



Stevie Stacionis, co-owner of Bay Grape wine shops.

Consumption Frequency Among U.S. Wine Drinkers: 2015 – 2021

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2021 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Wine Drinkers | 36% | 38% | 40% | 37% | 39% | 32% |
| High End Wine Drinker (> than 1 x week, buy \$20+ 750s at least monthly) | 5% | 5% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 4% |
| High Frequency, not High End ((> than 1 x week, but buy \$20+ 750s less often than monthly) | 8% | 9% | 9% | 9% | 10% | 7% |
| Drink Wine 1x week or less often | 23% | 24% | 26% | 25% | 25% | 21% |

Highlighting = Statistically significantly higher than 4, 3, 2 other segments.

WINE MARKET COUNCIL

Base: U.S. Adults 21+: 2015, n=2,903; 2016, n=6,770; 2017, n=5,724; 2018, n=5,646; 2019, n=5,640. Source: WMC – U.S. Wine Consumer Segmentation Surveys, 2015 – 2019

“The big problem with the wine industry is that all of the marketing is targeted toward a really specific, pretty homogeneous demographic,” she says. “And yet, other people like wine—people that are different colors with different gender identities and different ages. But you need to show them that this is a place for them, too.”

It’s also important to show younger generations a good time, says Tyler Balliet, the former publisher of *Second Glass*, a wine magazine for millennials. After realizing that his generation was far more interested in experiencing wine than reading about it, he and partner Morgan First pivoted in 2009 to launch a series of pop-up wine festivals called Wine Riot—not unlike the wine rave concept of the 1990s.

In 2018, they founded Rosé Mansion in Manhattan—an Instagram-worthy, 14-room “wine amusement park” devoted to pink wines. Before its pandemic-related shutdown, the venue attracted 30,000 young adults each month.

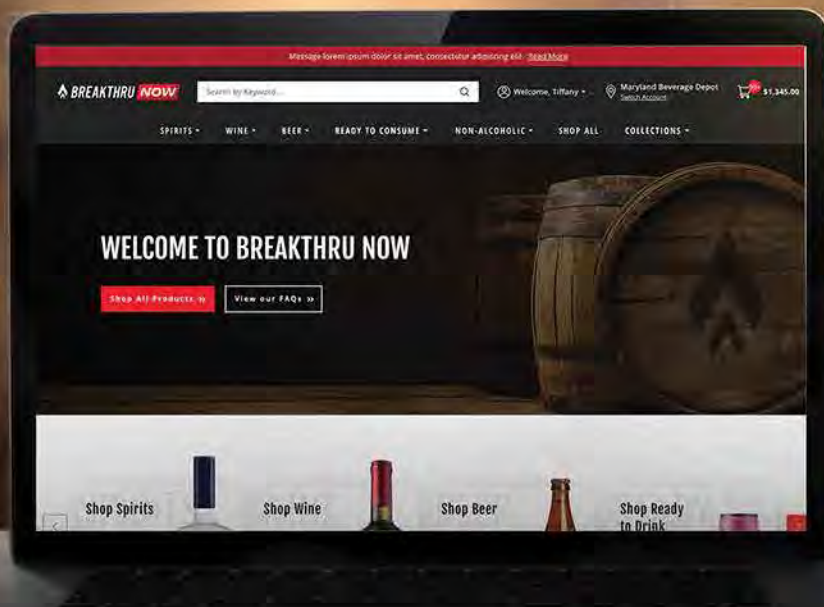
“It was a fun night out, so you could run through all these rooms and try different rosés,” says Balliet. “If you wanted to learn about science, we had that there.

If you wanted to learn about culture, we had that. But at what point did wine become memorizing note cards? That’s not wine enjoyment.”

Taking the stuffiness out of wine is not a new idea, yet it is one that the industry has yet to embrace on a large scale.

“I actually think it’s a super exciting time, because there’s a massive hole in the market and the old guard botched it,” says Balliet. “Those wineries aren’t selling wine to young people because they don’t want to sell it to them.” That opens up opportunities both for new producers and forward-thinking established wineries that make the effort to adapt—for example, by using lesser-known grape varieties and cutting out pricey French oak barrels to make a line of affordable and interesting wines that will appeal to younger drinkers.

“I am wildly hopeful,” Balliet says of the U.S. wine industry’s future. “Things are going to change and it’s going to be messy, but wine’s not going anywhere. Wine drinking might dip for a little bit until the industry can respond, but there’s so much opportunity. But you can’t just keep doing what you’re doing.” ■



INTRODUCING **BREAKTHRU NOW**

To meet the explosive growth of online alcohol sales, we are proud to introduce *BREAKTHRU NOW*, a best-in-class eCommerce solution to help our customers manage their businesses anytime, anywhere.

BREAKTHRU NOW BENEFITS

- Real-time pricing and visibility to active deals
- Track my truck
- View full order history
- Detailed product information
- Live chat support

PAY NOW

Access *Pay Now*, Breakthru's online payment portal to managing invoice payments, on *BREAKTHRU NOW*. It's a fast, convenient, and secure way to pay bills.



Visit **now.breakthrubev.com** to create your account today!

FRANCE MEETS CALIFORNIA

Along with its classic Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 2020, sustainable California winery **Sonoma-Cutrer** has launched Les Pierres Chardonnay 2019, a bright, creamy wine with notes of lime and melon. Exemplifying a high-end approach to winemaking, Les Pierres is barrel-fermented on the lees for five months in one-year-old oak. Then, individual block components are blended and further matured in three-year-old oak.

SRP: \$46 per 750-ml bottle



TWENTY-YEAR RUN

It's been 20 years since California's **Medlock Ames Winery** produced its first commercial wine from Bell Mountain Vineyard in the Alexander Valley. To commemorate this milestone, cofounder Ames Morison and winemaker Abby Watt crafted The Flag Cabernet Sauvignon 2019 with choice barrels from the estate's Cabernet blocks. As a nod to the *Russian River Flag*, the 1860s Healdsburg newspaper published by Morison's great-great-grandfather, each bottle is enveloped with a reprint of an original editorial.

SRP: \$200 per 750-ml bottle



PALATE PRIMER

Hama Hama Oyster Company, located on Washington's Puget Sound, was founded in 1922. To celebrate a century in operation, the business has teamed up with another Pacific Northwest legend, **Cooper Mountain Vineyards** in Oregon's Willamette Valley, to release Oyster White. A blend of organically and biodynamically grown Tocai Friulano, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer, the bivalve-friendly wine will direct proceeds of its sales to the Puget Sound Restoration Fund.

SRP: \$28 per 750-ml bottle



FIT FOR A PICNIC

Pinot Noir, a go-to in the **Bread & Butter Wines** portfolio, is now available in a convenient canned format. Marking the brand's debut in this format, the fruit-forward California Pinot Noir is made just like the 750-ml bottle version, expressing black cherry, raspberry, and cassis.

SRP: \$4.99 per 250-ml can and \$19.99 per four-pack of 250-ml cans



SUMMER GATHERINGS

Ideal for the season's bounty of alfresco fêtes is the **Cakebread Cellars** Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2021 (a tiny selection of Sonoma Valley grapes also make an appearance). Fragrant with pink grapefruit and ripe melon, it simultaneously flaunts tropical and mineral undertones.

SRP: \$30 per 750-ml bottle



**Bodily injury • Property damage • Medical payments
Legal defense and judgment • Personal and advertising injury...**



Workplace Incidents and Accidents happen...

WHO CAN YOU DEPEND ON?

Call **Passauer & Miller • 410-871-4400** now!

Your independent
agent representing



**Erie
Insurance®**

and other Premier
Carriers

IMPROVED COVERAGE. SUPERIOR SERVICE. BEST RATES POSSIBLE!

At Passauer and Miller, we are dedicated to becoming your insurance counselors. We work hard to develop lifelong alliances spanning both your business and personal insurance needs.



Passauer & Miller Insurance, Inc
Knowledge, Integrity & Superior Service

3215 Main St., P.O. Box 360, Manchester, MD 21102

dwmiller@passauerandmiller.com • (410) 871-4400 or (877) 731-8311

Passauer & Miller Insurance, Inc is your partner in the food and beverage industry.

Does your cooler
need a
Face Lift?



Does your
cooler
suffer from:



- ✗ Bad shelving?
- ✗ Leaky doors?
- ✗ Foggy glass?
- ✗ Lighting on the fritz?

Call Today for a **FREE** cooler health
check! Mention "BEVERAGE JOURNAL"
for an extra \$50 OFF a future service.

*\$50 discount on purchase of Service within 30 days
of a free health check.



Like us at
facebook.com/CAREYSALESANDSERVICES



Serving the Local Beverage Industry since 1933

3141 Frederick Ave. Baltimore, MD

410-945-7878 or 800-848-7748 • careysales.com



TOUCH OF PINK

Former Chicago attorney Mara Smith launched **Inspiro Tequila** with an additive-free, Kosher-certified blanco expression. Now, she has debuted the Rosa Reposado, distilled from 100 percent Blue Weber agave and aged in oak casks that previously held rosé wine. The tequila, briefly finished in Pinot Noir wine barrels to acquire a rose gold hue, flaunts layers of roasted pineapple, nuts, and red berries.

SRP: \$78.99 per 750-ml bottle



PURE IMAGINATION

Produced at Holy Water Distillery in Lewisberry, Pennsylvania, crystalline **KLYR Rum** takes its cues from vodka. Distilled 12 times and filtered 18, the gluten-free silver rum embraces a distinctive water filtration process and is devoid of sugar, making it a versatile foundation for cocktails.

SRP: \$26.99 per 750-ml bottle

AFTERNOON IN MEXICO

Joining the **Mamitas** roster of ready-to-drink hard seltzers, including pineapple, paloma, mango, and lime varieties, is a duo of 95-calorie, 5% ABV canned cocktails made with real tequila, sparkling water, and less than 1.5 grams of sugar. Spicy Margarita features a jolt of cayenne pepper, while Tequila Sunrise is brightened with a splash of orange juice.

SRP: \$5 to \$7 per 12-oz. can and \$9.99 to \$12.99 per four-pack of 12-oz. cans



KOREAN TWIST

Carolyn Kim, the Korean-American lawyer-turned-entrepreneur behind **Yobo Drinks**, expands her vision for American craft soju with Yobo Soju Luxe. Distilled in Southern California from organic wheat as well as rice and grapes grown in the northern part of the state, the clear spirit is enlivened by hints of apricot and vanilla.

SRP: \$19.99 per 375-ml bottle and \$37.99 per 750-ml bottle



THE FINALE

After the success of two inaugural offerings, **Bully Boy Distillers** has released the full-bodied, tropical Volume Three, the last in the Boston craft distillery's experimental The Rum Cooperative series. Redolent of stone fruit, vanilla, and honey, it marries premium rums from Panama, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Barbados, and can be sipped neat or woven into cocktails.

SRP: \$38 per 750-ml bottle