

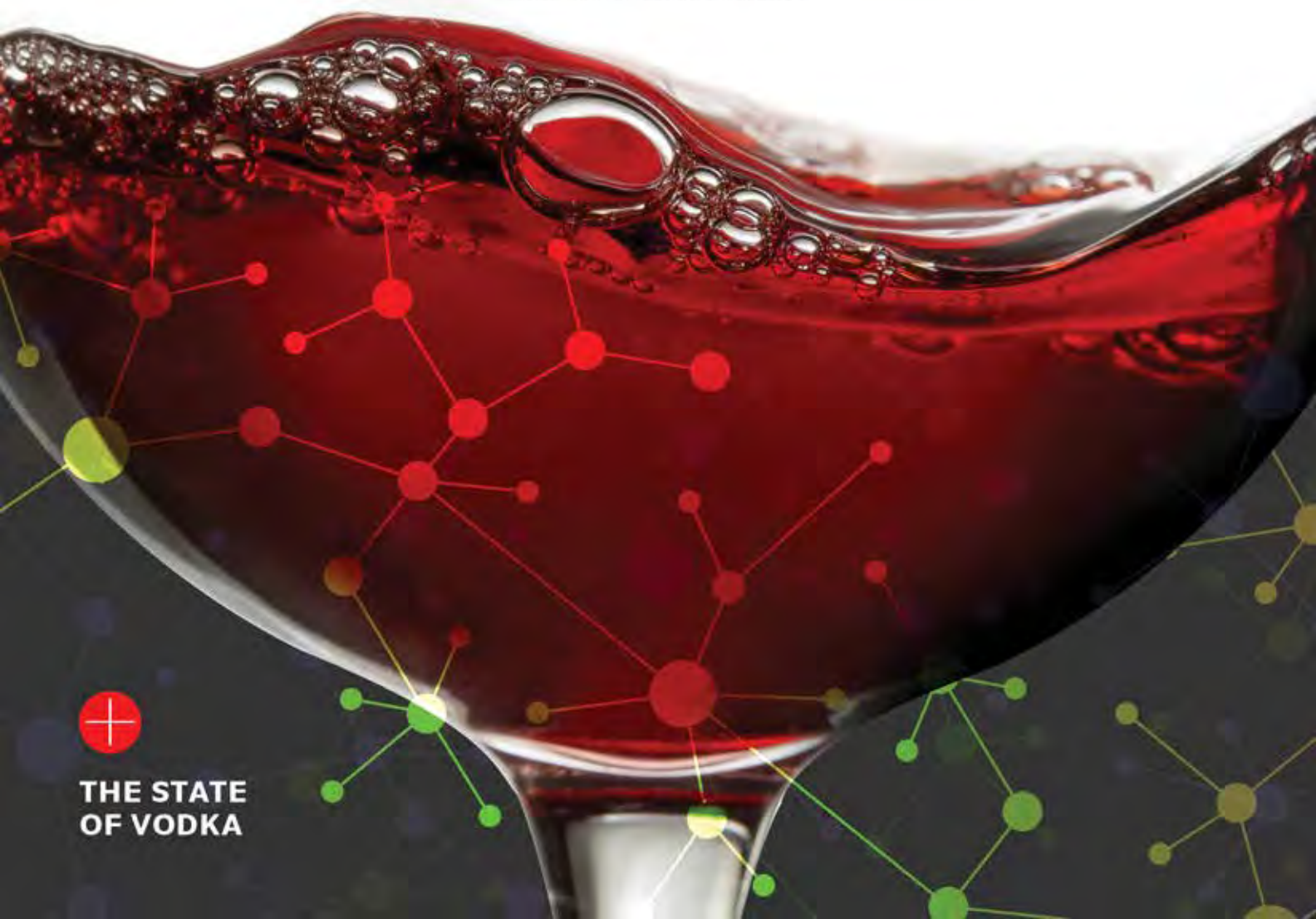
# Beverage Journal

JULY 2023

## THE SCIENCE OF DRINKS

INSIDE GRAPE CO-FERMENTATION

HIGH-TECH HOPS



THE STATE  
OF VODKA



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## ON-PREMISE: GROWTH DIPS BUT STAFF RETENTION IMPROVES

I recently checked in with the National Restaurant Association chief economist, Bruce Grindy. The May numbers are in, and although job growth has slowed in recent months, operators are having more success keeping employees.

The industry's on-premise side continued to expand payrolls at a moderate pace in May, adding a net 33,100 jobs (entire U.S.) on a seasonally-adjusted basis, according to preliminary data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

"May's increase followed similar gains in March (32,900) and April (22,400). Employment growth during the last three months was down somewhat from the average monthly gains of 51,000 jobs during the previous 12 months," Grindy explained.

May marked the 29th consecutive month of employment gains – representing a total increase of more than 2.5 million jobs.

"Driven by the steady growth, the on-premise workforce is inching closer to a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels. As of May 2023, eating and drinking places were 51,700 jobs – or 0.4% – below their February 2020 employment peak.

Although job growth slowed somewhat in recent months, operators are having more success keeping the employees that they have. An average of 4.8% of employees quit their jobs in March and April, according to Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data from BLS.

That was a full percentage point below the average monthly quit rate of 5.8% during the

previous 24 months (March 2021 – February 2023). In addition, it was just below 2019's average monthly quit rate of 4.9%.

If this trend holds, it could signal a return to more typical workforce churn in the industry, which would help ease staffing challenges."

Let's hope so.

## POTENTIAL STAFFING SOLUTIONS

"Surfing the breaks and swells brought on by circumstances beyond operators' control requires the restaurant industry to adopt a new way of thinking to adapt," states Brian Duncan, President of me&u USA, an at-table ordering technology company serving restaurants and bars.

"It's been a difficult time for the restaurant industry, especially dealing with labor challenges post-pandemic and the rising cost of goods associated with inflation. By leveraging technology, restaurateurs can work smarter, improve operations, maximize revenue, and elevate guests' dining experience. At-table ordering technology makes the ordering experience more fluid and friction-free, giving servers more time to build relationships with their customers without neglecting other tables, resulting in a much-enhanced customer experience, and increasing customer spending by as much as 30%."

I'm thinking I'd like to hear more from Brian Duncan, of me&u USA in an upcoming issue. Let me know if you agree: [steve@beveragejournalinc.com](mailto:steve@beveragejournalinc.com). ■

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INTRODUCING

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## 1. SOVI WINE CO.

Already known for its lineup of canned non-alcoholic varieties, Sovi Wine Co. has now ventured into bottled territory. The alcohol-removed wines, made with grapes sourced from sustainable growers, include the 2022 dry Rosé of Pinot Noir, sparkling rosé blend of Pinot Noir and Tempranillo, and the sparkling white featuring Chenin Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer.

**\$** SRP: \$30 per 750-ml bottle

**🌐** [drinksovi.com](https://drinksovi.com)

## 2. MOUNT GAY RUM

The sixth installment in Mount Gay Rum's Master Blender collection is the limited-edition PX Sherry Cask. This fusion of pot and column still rums was matured in one-time American whiskey barrels for a minimum of 20 years in tropical Barbados, then finished for an additional year in Pedro Ximénez casks. Flavors of red fruit, salted caramel, and banana make it a choice one for sipping.

**\$** SRP: \$270 per 700-ml bottle

**🌐** [mountgayrum.com](https://mountgayrum.com)

## 3. LAPOSTOLLE

Crafted from a single block of Cabernet Sauvignon at the Clos Apalta estate in Chile's Apalta Valley, Lapostolle's La Parcelle 8 2018 (the second edition) was aged for 29 months in 100 percent new French oak casks. Its classic notes of red fruit and spice especially pair well with red meats and mushrooms.

**\$** SRP: \$180 per 750-ml bottle

**🌐** [lapostollewines.com](https://lapostollewines.com)

## 4. FUNKIN COCKTAILS

Long a fixture on U.K. retail shelves, Funkin Cocktails is now making a splash in the U.S. with its velvety, nitro-infused ready-to-drink libations (5% ABV). The initial range—Piña Colada, Strawberry Daiquiri, and Passion Fruit Martini—all pair real fruit with quality rum or vodka.

**\$** SRP: \$13.99 per four-pack of 200-ml cans

**🌐** [funkincocktails.co.uk](https://funkincocktails.co.uk)

## 5. CAKEBREAD CELLARS

Sauvignon Blanc was the first varietal Cakebread Cellars ever planted, and decades later, it remains a favorite. The citrusy 2022 release, sourced from grapes grown throughout the Napa Valley and North Coast of California, expresses layers of ripe melon, grapefruit, and citrus zest.

**\$** SRP: \$30 per 750-ml bottle

**🌐** [cakebread.com](https://cakebread.com)

## 6. KAH TEQUILA

Amber Beverage Group has expanded its 100 percent Blue Weber agave Kah Tequila portfolio with a peppery and smoky extra añejo expression. Aged for at least three years in American Oak barrels, it is housed in a striking bottle slicked with phosphorus ink so that it glows in the dark for dramatic effect.

**\$** SRP: \$129.99 per 750-ml bottle

**🌐** [kahtequila.com](https://kahtequila.com)

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7

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11



12

## 7. CHOPIN VODKA

Chopin's potato, rye, and wheat vodkas have always mixed well in cocktails. Elevating these drinks, either at home or on-premise, was the impetus behind the family-owned Polish brand's new 119.6-proof, rye-based Bartender's Choice. The vodka has an herbaceous nose with nuances of crushed black pepper, mountain ash, and sloe berries.

**\$** SRP: \$35 per 700-ml bottle  
**🌐** chopinvodka.com

## 8. THE GLENDRONACH

Master blender Rachel Barrie's heavily sherried 12th batch of The GlenDronach Cask Strength has arrived. After mellowing in Pedro Ximénez and Oloroso casks from Andalucía, the 116.4-proof Highland single malt Scotch whisky elicits notes of raisin cake, Seville orange peel-topped tiramisu, and toasted almond.

**\$** SRP: \$104.99 per 700-ml bottle  
**🌐** glendronachdistillery.com

## 9. FISHERS ISLAND LEMONADE

Two summery additions, sweet-tart Blueberry Wave and juicy Nude Peach, join the Fishers Island Lemonade collection of cocktails spiked with barrel-aged whiskey and vodka. Made with real blueberry and peach, the 7% ABV beverages also sport brand-wide packaging updates, including paperboard wrapping and breezy ocean wave imagery.

**\$** SRP: \$15.99 per four-pack of 12-oz. cans  
**🌐** filemonade.com

## 10. SMOKEHEAD

Smokehead, the Islay single malt Scotch whisky from Ian Macleod Distillers, continues to blaze an innovative path with the 86-proof Tequila Cask Terminado. Upon its release from maturing in former bourbon barrels, the whisky is then finished in tequila oak casks, conjuring bursts of blood orange, meringue, and barbecued pineapple.

**\$** SRP: \$79.99 per 700-ml bottle  
**🌐** smokehead.com

## 11. WHIPSOTS

Along with vanilla, caramel, and mocha, and last winter's limited-edition peppermint, there is now a tangy lime rendition of Whipshots. The seasonal vodka-infused whipped cream, which plays a starring role in the "Whip It, Beaches" summer campaign with brand partner Cardi B, can be heaped upon margaritas and slices of key lime pie alike.

**\$** SRP: \$14.99 per 200-ml can  
**🌐** whipshots.com

## 12. SONOMA-CUTRER

Dutton Ranch Chardonnay, part of Sonoma-Cutrer's annual Winemaker's Release series, is an ode to the Dutton family, growers who farm some 1,200 acres of sustainable grapes in the Russian River Valley, Green Valley, and Sonoma Coast. Fruit from Gerboth and Alpers, two Dutton Russian River Valley vineyards, form the backbone of this wine, which was aged sur lie in French oak from the Orleans region of France and reveals notes of toasted sourdough bread with butter and oak spice.

**\$** SRP: \$39.99 per 750-ml bottle  
**🌐** sonomacutrer.com

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# THE MANOR TAVERN

## STILL HORISING AROUND AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

WRITTEN BY TEDDY DURGIN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASHLI MIX PHOTOGRAPHY

**A** lot of places have a plaque or some type of marker that says “George Washington Slept Here” or something to that effect. But the Manor Tavern in Monkton is able to boast that our first President’s horse actually slept there! Once upon a time, this 267-year-old property was a stable. And, yes, while our country’s greatest founding father slept somewhere else locally, his horse stayed on the premises.

Over the years, the property has evolved into a blacksmith’s shop, a general store, and a saloon. Today, it is a wonderful restaurant, bar, and catering business, and its logo – inclusive of a horse – is a tip of the hat to Monkton’s historic roots. This certainly makes the Manor Tavern an excellent place to feature in our ongoing series of articles on the historic bars and restaurants of the Old Line State.

The Tavern is run by Jerry Edwards. From 1981 to 2020, he was founder and owner of Chef’s Expressions Catering and Events, which has twice been named The National Catering Company of the Year. Edwards, who holds an honorary doctorate in hospitality, said during a recent interview with the Beverage Journal, “We merged Chef Expressions Catering, which was my company for many years, with the Manor Tavern. Now, I’m the General Manager of the entire operation.



**Jerry Edwards**  
*General Manager*  
**The Manor Tavern**

---

Sam Sara manages the restaurant, and we have another GM for our catering division.”

Edwards says he and staff specialize in serving “elevated comfort food. We call it ‘modern country cuisine.’ Things that you would consider ‘country food’ like shrimp and grits, we put a modern twist on it to make the presentation look more elegant than what a bowl of shrimp and grits would look like.”

But it’s the Manor Tavern’s drinks menu that really makes it stand out. The bar menu changes seasonally. So, four times a year, customers get treated to new cocktails and concoctions. “We have a big garden where we grow all of our own herbs,” Edwards noted. “We grow some fruit there, too. And

they end up in the drinks at the different times of the year. We have also grown some edible flowers this year, and you’ll see some of them in the cocktails. It also helps that a couple of our bartenders have been with us for over 10 years. They’re quite experienced.

And we have a regular bar crowd who literally come in almost every night. These are literally the same seven or eight guys who come in every night. Hey, [laughing] bless ‘em. They pay my bills!”

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**Sam Sara**  
*Manager*  
**The Manor Tavern**

---

ernized and up to date,” he urged. “That’s the big thing. These days, technology plays such a big role in efficiency and marketing. So if you have bad Wi-Fi or a bad POS system, you have to upgrade to modern times and standards.”

He continued, “Modernize where you can without affecting the ambiance and beauty of the location. We totally renovated the aesthetics of the place. We’ve taken down all of the old wallpaper. We tore up the old carpeting and put in hardwood floors. There’s been a lot of cosmetic changes. If people haven’t been here in a while and remember the Manor Tavern being kind of dingy, it’s not that anymore. Some of our regulars were not thrilled with some of the changes we’ve made in upgrading. But now they love it!”

Edwards definitely speaks with the voice of experience. In 2008, he was inducted into the NACE Hall of Fame. Seven years later, he was honored as a National Industry Icon by the hospitality community. He has won more than 50 industry competitions, including: Baltimore’s Best Crab Soup, three ACF Gold Medals, the “Best Chef” for the Meals on Wheels Culinary Extravaganza, The Crystal Toque Award in the Nation’s Capitol, the Special Event Award for best event, Baltimore’s “Iron Chef” competition, and the Mid-Atlantic Taste of Elegance competition.

For him, though, the job is less about accomplishment and more about the personalities he mixes and mingles with each day. “I love the people,” he stated. “I would say that 70 percent of our guests are regulars and 30 percent are first-timers. But we always have customers who tell us, ‘I’ve been coming here since I was 16,’ and now they are of retirement age. ‘It was a dirt-floor bar, and there was a band playing in the basement.’ Well, the basement isn’t big enough for a band,

a historic business or have dreams of one day running such a place, Edwards was quick to give advice. Chiefly is the need to keep up with the times. He and his staff are currently in the midst of planning a bar renovation to make the space larger and more upscale looking. “We’ve already done that with the rest of the restaurant,” he pointed out. “The bar is the last thing we’re getting to. It’s more a logistical decision than a business one because of the way the building is designed and built. You really need to have a good infrastructure that’s mod-





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but whatever. We love our regulars.”

He also loves the fun that comes with operating such a historic place. He said, “We have one urban legend. Walter! Walter is a guy who worked here years and years ago. There is a painting of him hanging in the saddle room bar. He has a pipe and he’s dressed like someone from the 1800s. There have been many situations where people have heard doors opening and closing. In the basement wine cellar is where most of the activity happens. I’ve never personally

encountered Walter. Well . . . OK, I was in the wine cellar once, and I kept hearing this tapping. But it was probably a pipe. Probably! [laughing] At any rate, Walter is the ghost of the Manor Tavern. He doesn’t show himself very often. But when he does, people definitely report it.”

Looking ahead, Edwards sees blue skies for the Manor Tavern. “I am very optimistic,” he concluded. “COVID put us back at square one. But now we’re growing the business again. We are at 20 percent above last

year in terms of restaurant sales. Catering is 140 percent up from last year. I’m literally turning away 25 percent of the leads that come in right now because we don’t have enough labor. We’re a premier caterer. We will only deliver the best food and service to our customers, so I’m not going to book an extra event and then not be able to deliver our A+ product. But staffing is the struggle everyone is having right now. We’re just glad to see our restaurant sales up.” ■

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## CONTINUOUS ADVENTURE

Smoked peated malt, rarely embraced in American whiskeys, takes the place of traditional barley in **Buffalo Trace** Experimental Peated Bourbon, the 26th offering in the brand's Experimental collection. Smokey and nutty with a toffee finish, the extremely limited-release, 90-proof Kentucky straight bourbon was aged for nearly a decade in new, charred white oak casks.

SRP: \$46.99 per 375-ml bottle

## GIFT HORSE

Desiring a refined tequila that can either be sipped or savored in cocktails, equestrian and philanthropist Jack Morgan launched **Chrome Horse Society**. Produced at Destileria Leyros, home to a state-of-the-art lab that implements proprietary toasting and advanced triple distillation methods, the inaugural blanco expression exhibits bright citrus and spicy pepper notes. Sustainability is also central to the brand, reflected in a manufacturing process that reduces water consumption and steam energy by 50 percent more than the industry norm.

SRP: \$75.49 per 750-ml bottle



## EVENING BUZZ

Neil Patrick Harris is the latest celebrity to team up with **Thomas Ashbourne Craft Spirits**, and the result is The After Hours Espresso Martini. Developed by Harris and bartender Nico de Soto, Thomas Ashbourne's creative cocktail director, the bottled, caffeinated cocktail (12% ABV) unites vodka and flavors of extra dark roast espresso beans with tinges of vanilla and dark chocolate.

SRP: \$13.99 per 375-ml bottle and \$19.99 per four-pack of 200-ml cans



## TASTE OF HOME

In her native Germany, Ute Londrigan, the founder of the liqueur brand **Heimat New York**, grew up eating black currants, so she was surprised by how uncommon they are stateside. It is her hope with the newest seasonal offering from Heimat, however, that more consumers will catch on to the fruit's depth and complexity. The whole black currants used in Londrigan's liqueur are sourced from CurrantC in the Hudson Valley, the producer that helped overturn the 100-year-old ban on growing them in the state in 2003. It can be sipped neat, over ice, or added to a simple gin and tonic.

SRP: \$29 per 375-ml bottle

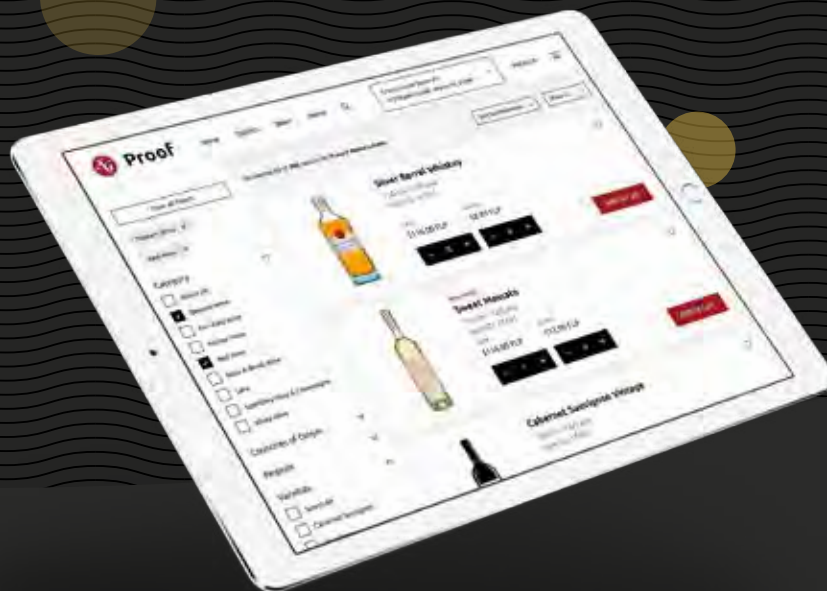
## APERITIVO HOUR

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## BORN IN BOLGHERI

Bolgheri, on Italy's Tuscan coast, is home to **Podere Sapaio**, the organic-certified winery established by Venetian engineer Massimo Piccin in 1999. The newest vintage of Sapaio, its flagship Super Tuscan red label, is the Toscana IGT 2019, a blend of 70 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 20 percent Petit Verdot, and 10 percent Cabernet Franc. It expresses both soft tannins and a refreshing acidity that make it well-suited to aging.

SRP: \$94 per 750-ml bottle



## SPARKLING TWIST

Chardonnay may be the white grape of choice to plant in Russian River Valley vineyards, but for more than two decades, Kathleen Inman has championed Pinot Gris at **Inman Family Wines**. Consider the Extra Brut Luxe Cuvée 2018, a *méthode champenoise* sparkler, to which the proprietor and winemaker invigorated the Chardonnay-Pinot Noir blend with an unconventional burst of Pinot Gris.

SRP: \$90 per 750-ml bottle



## MOUNTAIN TERROIR

Recognized as the largest Demeter Biodynamic-certified ranch in Napa County, the 750-acre (220 of them under vine) **Ink Grade Estate Vineyard** in Howell Mountain is the springboard to bold wines like Andosol. An homage to California's old-vine field blends, the annual cuvée is significantly influenced by the rugged land's volcanic soils. The 2018 vintage comprises 89 percent Zinfandel and 11 percent Cabernet Sauvignon.

SRP: \$75 per 750-ml bottle

## FIRST TRY

For its first foray into Chardonnay, a complement to its highly regarded Cabernet Sauvignon and red blend, Napa Valley's **Mount Veeder Winery** looked no further than Los Carneros, a region characterized by fog and cool breezes. The 2021 edition opens with aromas of banana, pineapple, and hints of caramel and vanilla, culminating in a bracing mineral finish.

SRP: \$50 per 750-ml bottle



## A DECADE IN

Georges and Daniel Daou, the brothers behind **Daou Family Estates**, unveiled Soul of a Lion, their flagship Cabernet Sauvignon, in 2010. Paying tribute to this 10-year milestone is the 2020 anniversary release, 78 percent Cabernet Sauvignon rounded out with 12 percent Cabernet Franc and 10 percent Petit Verdot culled from a parcel atop Daou Mountain in the Adelaida District AVA of Paso Robles.

SRP: \$150 per 750-ml bottle



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# THE SCIENCE OF CO-FERMENTATION

RESEARCHERS AND WINEMAKERS WEIGH IN ON HOW THIS CENTURIES-OLD WINEMAKING PRACTICE AFFECTS THE COLOR, FLAVOR, AND TEXTURE OF THE FINAL WINE

BY JACOPO MAZZEO

In a wine industry driven by an increasing fixation on single-origin and single-variety expressions, some long-standing winemaking practices would be implausible if introduced today, such as Porto's unspecified field blends or Champagne's intra-regional cuvées. The co-fermentation of white and red grapes is similarly unusual by today's standards (although co-fermenting varieties of the same color is a more common practice). It has comparable historical value to the production methods of Porto or Champagne, yet perhaps lesser renown.

Much of today's red wine is made exclusively with red-skinned grapes, but co-fermenting varieties of different colors is still allowed by a number of European denominations, and is occasionally employed in the New World, too. It is widely practiced across the Rhône Valley, including in Côte-Rôtie, where up to 20 percent Viognier can be added to Syrah, and Châteauneuf-du-Pape. In Burgundy, a portion of white grapes can still be used in red wines of any quality level, though this doesn't happen very frequently. In Rioja's Basque enclave of Alavesa, winemakers still regularly use Viura or Malvasia to round off their younger reds. Portugal even has a distinct term for this style of wines—*palhete*—whose history can be traced back hundreds of years, as

18th-century wine merchant John Croft documents in his *Treatise on the Wines of Portugal*.

According to Gonzalo Sáenz de Samaniego, the owner and winemaker of Rioja Alavesa's Ostatu winery, the practice emerged in response to practical—rather than enological—needs. “Our ancestors were harvesting a single plot in one go, which often involved grapes of different colors,” he says. “That was the reason for co-fermenting then. Nowadays ... a small contribution of white grapes gives red wines some freshness, tannic stability, and elegance.”

Pierre Fabre, the manager of Château Mont Redon, still uses Clairette, Bourboulenc, Picpoul, and a little Grenache Blanc as part of his Châteauneuf-du-Pape field blend for no other reason than upholding tradition. “Historically, most vineyards here had both white and red grapes, though whites might be just three percent. Maybe people thought it would help cross-fertilization?” he speculates.

Despite several academic studies on the subject, the effects of co-fermenting different grape varieties is still debated. Some researchers—and winemakers—find that co-fermentations result in noticeable differences in the final wine, while others are less convinced. *Beverage Media* spoke with several experts to gain a better understanding of the science behind this ancient winemaking technique.

## THE QUESTION OF COLOR

Fabre dismisses the prevailing myth that white grapes aid in fixing a red wine's color, a notion that finds support in recent academic research. “It has been anecdotally said that white grapes were added to

stabilize color ... We never found that,” says Federico Casassa, an associate professor of enology, wine, and viticulture at California Polytechnic State University. “Quite the opposite, that is, dilution of color.”

Casassa’s research involved studying Viognier and Syrah co-ferments in varying proportions. He found that additions of up to five percent Viognier showed no perceivable color differences compared to a pure Syrah wine; 10 percent and 20 percent Viognier lowered most of the chromatic parameters, while “20 percent Viognier wines had lower concentrations of anthocyanins and flavonols, suggesting possible dilution of these phenolics,” writes Casassa. “These results suggest that additions of Viognier at the rates studied here neither improve the phenolic composition nor enhance the color stability of the final wines.”

A study published in the *Australian Journal of Wine and Grape Research* on the co-fermentation of Tempranillo with Viura found similar results. It also highlighted that Viura additions do not significantly change any of the wine’s aroma or flavor attributes, but, when made via carbonic maceration, the addition of Viura may lead to increased perceivable acidity.

Some studies, however, found diverging results. A study from 2013 demonstrated increased color in one-year-old Chianti made with Sangiovese, Malvasia, and Trebbiano. A 2014 paper published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* confirmed that larger additions of Pedro Ximénez pomace (20 percent) lead to color dilution, but argues that smaller ratios (10 percent) can benefit the phenolic potential of warm-climate reds in their youth.

Meanwhile, an experiment with Chambourcin, the lower-tannin, red hybrid variety, found that the addition of 20 percent Viognier diluted the wine’s color, but it benefited from significantly increased concentrations of phenolics such as catechin (seed tannin) and total tannins.



**“We found that the dilution effect occurs across the board with additions of [white grapes]. But this is a dilution effect on color, not on flavor.”**

– Federico Casassa, associate professor, California Polytechnic State University

A 2018 Canada-based research paper published in *Food Chemistry* noted that dilution can actually be beneficial when working with hybrid varieties, particularly in regions that are not subject to strict regulations on blending. According to the study, “Red hybrid cultivars such as Frontenac carrying high anthocyanin content are known to produce dark coloured reds as well as highly coloured rosés that are unsuited for customer preferences. Addition of [white pomace] proves to be an effective tool to modulate the phenolic, volatile, and color profile of wine, which

may result in a positive impact on wine mouthfeel, aroma, and appearance.”

#### THE QUESTION OF FLAVOR

According to Fabre, picking times are the main challenge when it comes to co-fermentations. To ensure simultaneous fermentation, all grapes must be harvested together, which occasionally requires picking white grapes slightly overripe. “We have late-ripening whites [in order] to have everything ripe roughly at the same time,” says Fabre. “But last year, ripening was [out of sync], so for the very first time we didn’t use the whites. I didn’t see much of an effect on the wine. It’s such a small amount of white grapes, no more than five percent. If you would co-ferment more white grapes, those would of course lower the alcohol but also dilute the structure, the tannin, and fruit concentration.”

Nicole Rolet, the CEO of Provence winery Chêne Bleu, argues that even small additions of white grapes have an effect on a red wine’s structure and flavors. “Our Syrah is very similar to that of the northern Rhône. Nice aromas, good tannin and aging potential, but also a bit austere,” she says, hinting at her Syrah, Grenache and Roussanne blend, Héloïse. According to Rolet, co-fermenting Roussanne lends the wine a certain fleshiness and pleasant aromatics.

OPPOSITE: Pinot Noir and Chardonnay co-fermenting.  
ABOVE: Jenny Mosbacher, Fossil & Fawn, adding pied de cuve to a Pinot Noir and Chardonnay co-fermentation.





Harvest at Ostatu winery in Rioja Alavesa.

Casassa's research partly corroborates Rolet's claims: "We found that the dilution effect occurs across the board with additions of [white grapes]," says Casassa. "But this is a dilution effect on color, not on flavor. Flavor is sometimes lifted by these additions, depending upon the variety. Viognier seems to work best, and I suspect this is because of the addition of Viognier's terpenes to the red ferments."

Following years of experiments, Rolet found that blending white and red wines after fermentation yielded significantly different results as the white variety's aromas were "getting lost in the blend"—a claim that this time clashes with Casassa's research. "We never found that co-fermentation actually results in better liquids than simply blending the finished wines," says Casassa. "This applies both to red-red or red-white co-ferments ... chemically and sensorially, the difference between co-fermenting and blending seems to be relatively minor."

In this instance, Casassa's research focused on Syrah blends with white Rhône varieties, including Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne, Picpoul, and Grenache Blanc. The study reports that, of all white varieties investigated, Viognier does appear to

provide more aromatics to the wine. This outcome, however, is experienced both by co-fermenting the grapes as well as by blending post-malolactic conversion. In fact, the paper notes that "co-fermentation had no effect on wine composition ... [but] post-[malolactic] blending gave increased aromatics and color, while offering greater flexibility and fewer logistical issues than co-fermentation."

### OLD TRADITION, NEW WINES

Beyond the confines of appellation rules, unconventional winemakers are harnessing co-fermentation's potential to craft vibrant and captivatingly aromatic red wines that show unique and unusual flavor combinations and textures, and whose style transcends conventional red and white categories. New Zealand's The Hermit Ram, for instance, regularly produces multi-skin-color field blends, its latest featuring Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Gewürztraminer from "one of North Canterbury's earliest planted vineyards."

Meanwhile, Oregon's Fossil & Fawn applies the carbonic maceration process to an ever-changing mix of white and red varieties to craft its Do Nothing cuvée.

"In some vintages, it is a dark rosé in appearance, and in other years looks like a typical red wine ... For the sake of brevity, we call it a red wine, but in truth, it's kind of its own thing," says co-owner Jim Fischer. "Thankfully, it seems like a lot of consumers don't really get too hung up on needing to categorize things. And, for that matter, we've also stopped worrying about it. Our wine usually ends up in the light/chillable red section of menus and bottle shops if that category exists there."

Co-fermentation of white and red grapes was once a customary technique across Italy's wider Chianti area. While the practice is still permitted in the Chianti DOCG, it was prohibited in 2006 from the regulations governing the more prestigious Chianti Classico DOCG. Some local winegrowers are eager to revive this historical practice, and are prepared to declassify their wine to Toscana IGT in order to do so (in much the same way Tuscan winemakers did when white and red co-ferments were the DOCG norm and Super Tuscan blends were the IGT outliers).

L'erta di Radda owner and winemaker Diego Finocchi uses the traditional local recipe of Sangiovese, Canaiolo, Trebbiano, and Malvasia on his Due & Due Toscana IGT. "Blending red and white grapes together to make a unique wine is something that has always fascinated me," he says. "I use white grapes to slim the wine down, soften the Sangiovese's tannins, while at the same time creating a more complex aromatic profile."

Despite the contradictory nature of the research, winemakers like Finocchi continue to experiment with co-fermentation. They are defying traditional classifications based on grape skin color in order to explore the value of this somewhat misperceived and neglected historical practice, and the uncharted textures and flavor profiles it has the potential to generate. ■



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## WHISKEY: WHAT'S NEW



### VOLCANIC BACKDROP

Laden with notes of apricot and white grape, the 86-proof blended Fuji Japanese Whisky is the latest stateside offering from **Fuji Whisky's** Mount Fuji distillery, known for both its malt and grain bottlings. Matured for an average of eight years in 100 percent American white oak, it evokes the area's distinctive terroir (Fuji incorporates the mountain's snowmelt in its distillation process) and has spawned a new category approved by the Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association: whiskies produced entirely on a single site and expressive of their location.

SRP: \$70 per 700-ml bottle

### GOING FORWARD

With Seth MacFarlane of *Family Guy* fame on board as chief storyteller (he owns an equity stake) and Valedor Partners and The Seagram Company heir Matthew Bronfman signed on as investors, Next Century Spirits' **Bear Fight American Single Malt Whiskey** is ramping up its nationwide presence following a \$1.9 million investment. Soft-launched in 2022, the 90-proof whiskey is distinguished by a production process that melds tradition and technology with proprietary cask-finishing and filtration techniques that yield a consistently subtly sweet and smoky profile.



SRP: \$39.99 per 750-ml bottle

### FRIENDS FIRST

**Brothers' Bond Bourbon**, founded by *The Vampire Diaries* stars Paul Wesley and Ian Somerhalder, has bolstered its flagship straight bourbon whiskey with a duo of complex releases distilled and matured in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. The 95-proof American Blended Rye is composed of a four-grain mash bill, while the 115.1-proof Original Cask Strength is born from a batch-barrel blend of three bourbon mash bills.

SRP: \$59.99 (rye) and \$84.99 (cask strength) per 750-ml bottle



### THE BIG SMOKE



Islay is synonymous with peated Scottish whisky, and County Donegal is fast becoming recognized as Ireland's own epicenter of smoky whiskey. Historically, the northernmost county in Ireland has produced this kind of style, and **The Legendary Silkie Irish Whiskey** is reclaiming that heritage through the likes of the extremely limited-edition Red Silkie. A nod to Red Hugh O'Donnell, the county's last chieftain, there are only 3,500 bottles available of the rich 92-proof spirit finished in Rioja and Ribera del Duero red wine casks from Spain.

SRP: \$54.99 per 750-ml bottle



### FOR THE TREES

Limited-edition single pot still Irish whiskeys are the focus of **Teeling's** Wonders of Wood series, sales of which aid in the reforestation of Irish woodlands. The second expression, combining 50 percent malted barley and 50 percent unmalted barley, was triple distilled in Teeling's Dublin distillery and then aged in virgin, high-tannic Portuguese oak, lending the 100-proof liquid undertones of tobacco and pepper. Through a collaboration with the Tree Council of Ireland, each bottle purchased will allow for an acre of native oak trees to be planted in County Dublin.

SRP: \$99.99 per 700-ml bottle



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*— Dr. Pat Heist & Shane Baker,  
Co-Founders of Wilderness Trail*

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# HOPS ARE GOING HIGH TECH

**FROM GENE-EDITING TECHNOLOGY TO CRYOGENIC FREEZING, SCIENTIFIC INNOVATIONS IN HOPS ARE HELPING BREWERS IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND DELIVER NEW, INTENSE IPA AROMAS**

BY JOSHUA M. BERNSTEIN

America is not a nation of great nuance. We like loud music, louder cars, and pumpkin spice lattes. Intensities attract attention, which is a guiding principle for the country's approach to IPA production. Over the last decade, IPAs grew stronger and hazier with ever-larger doses of the latest fruity and tropical hops. Up-ping hop quantities delivered bigger flavors and fragrances, and customers happily paid for aromatic oomph.

The wins—lines for \$20 four-packs at taprooms—came with efficiency losses. Hops are sponges that soak up beer. More hops? Less finished beer. “You get more intensity by adding more hops, but at a certain point it’s really not efficient,” says Stan Hieronymus, the author of *For the Love of Hops*.

As the price of raw materials, labor, and utilities increase, breweries are rethinking their more-is-better approach. “We’re way past the heyday of craft where you can hop with 10 pounds per barrel and

lose 50 percent of your beer,” says Phillip Chou, the director of brewing solutions for John I. Haas, a hop products supplier in Yakima, Washington.

Breweries seeking cost savings, increased yield, and intense aromas in their IPAs are turning to a growing number of high-tech innovations. Brewers are fermenting beers with genetically modified yeast strains, as well as embracing cryogenically concentrated hops additives that might create consistently hazy beer or deliver a cleaner bitterness. Brewing advanc-

es are no longer about developing another novel hop variety. “There’s been a huge acceleration in the space of efficiency,” says Blake Crosby, the CEO of Crosby Hops in Woodburn, Oregon. “It’s a little bit of the Wild West.” Welcome to the fast-evolving frontier of science and hoppy beer.

## HOP INNOVATIONS DELIVER BETTER YIELD

America’s craft brewing industry partly built its reputation on simplicity. With just water, grains, hops, and yeast, breweries transformed four ingredients into worlds of uncharted flavor. Extracts, enzymes, and other science-lab hacks were reserved for multinational Goliaths, not the Davids brewing up businesses in old warehouses. Now that craft breweries are comfortable making hard seltzers and experimenting with every conceivable culinary ingredient, and start-up breweries have expanded into competitive regional and national players, some breweries are rethinking that recipe formulation.

“We have customers that would never have considered using something other than a pellet or a whole-cone hop,” says Chou. (Hops are commonly dried, pulverized, and pelletized, looking like rabbit food.) “Now those same customers are willing to talk about extract-based products for making beer.”

Hops’ central lupulin glands, which contain the essential oils, resins, and acids that lend beers their scents, are surrounded by leafy matter that can contribute a grassy, vegetal character. Like many suppliers, John I. Haas has developed products that break the hop into constituent parts that efficiently deliver flavor, bitterness, and other beneficial attributes. HopHaze can help beers



CGX, cryogenically frozen hops made by Crosby Hops.



Jeremy Moynier, the senior manager of brewing and innovation at Stone Brewing.

keep a cloudy outlook, while Flex is a flowable bittering product. Lupomax delivers concentrated versions of popular hop varieties, such as Citra and Mosaic, minus any potential astringency.

“Anything that can give you better yield, along with better flavor, is kind of a no-brainer,” says Jeremy Moynier, the senior manager of brewing and innovation at Stone Brewing in Escondido, California.

## CRYOGENIC FREEZING HELPS HOPS

To deliver maximum aroma, hop suppliers are increasingly turning to a cryogenic freezing process. In a nutshell: Liquid nitrogen is used to separate a hop’s leaf from its lupulin gland, which is compressed into pellets. A cryogenic hop product can “give you an extra pop,” says Hieronymus.

Yakima Chief Hops in Yakima, Washington, pioneered the process with its Cryo Hops sold in single varieties and blends such as Cryo Pop. Freestyle Hops in New Zealand sells SubZero Hop Kief made from native hops like Nelson Sauvin. And this January, Crosby Hops released its version of cryogenically frozen hops, CGX.

Big fragrances aren’t the only benefit. Brandon Capps, the founder and head brewer of New Image Brewing in Arvada, Colorado, regularly makes IPAs with cryo products. The concentrated pellets deliver savings on ship-

ping, a steadily increasing expense. “It behooves us to figure out how to get extra yield and reduce our cost of goods without compromising quality,” says Capps.

## UNLOCKING THIOLS CAN ACCENTUATE AROMAS

Hops lack an aromatic monopoly. Yeast strains can also deliver supercharged scents like a hefeweizen’s banana notes. That’s nature’s handiwork. Now yeast suppliers are using gene-editing technology to tailor strains to deliver the fruity, tropical scents that are prized in IPAs.

Of note, Berkeley Yeast in California and Chicago’s Omega Yeast are exploring the impact of thiols, a class of aromatic compounds commonly found in hops, wine grapes, and fruits including guava and grapefruit. With thiol-boosted strains

Lance Shaner, the owner of Omega Yeast.







LEFT TO RIGHT: Scott Janish, a cofounder of Sapwood Cellars; beer hops; HopHaze, developed by hop products supplier John I. Haas, helps beers keep a cloudy outlook.

such as Cosmic Punch and Helio Gazer, Omega Yeast helps breweries create fragrant IPAs without going gung ho on hops.

The rise of thiolized strains creation aligned with a Southern Hemisphere innovation. In late 2020, Jos Rufell, the cofounder of Garage Brewing in Wellington, New Zealand, introduced Phantasm powder that's derived from local Sauvignon Blanc grape skins that remain rich in thiol precursors. Thiolized strains work in concert with Phantasm to unlock a huge tropical bouquet.

It's not a question of which came first: the powder or the yeast? "They just so happened to be complementary," says Omega Yeast owner Lance Shaner. "We've done enough research to know that there was something special about New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc grapes."

John I. Haas provides hop varieties as well as newly developed hop products.



**"We like to try out everything. Sometimes it really fills up the R&D schedule, but we love that. It's just more information and more possibilities."**

– Jeremy Moynier, Stone Brewing

Phantasm powder is becoming a more common additive for standout IPA producers such as Other Half, The Veil, WeldWerks, and Stone, which just released the Phantasm-packed Patio Magic Double IPA. "We like to try out everything," Moynier says. "Sometimes it really fills up the R&D schedule, but we love that. It's just more information and more possibilities."

#### HOW MUCH INNOVATION CAN THE IPA MARKET BEAR?

Scientific brewing innovations are now debuting at a dizzying clip, each one promising to unlock new levels of efficiency and aromatics. For breweries, figuring out which products are impactful can be overwhelming.

"At some point, it's almost hard to keep up with all the new stuff," says Scott Janish, a cofounder of Sapwood Cellars in Columbia, Maryland. He's the author of *The New IPA: A Scientific Guide to Aroma and Flavor* and regularly experiments

with hop products, from Phantasm to cryo hops and hop oils—they improve yield and offer consistent flavor profiles.

Boosting efficiency is imperative for larger breweries, says Janish, but the cost-benefit might not make sense for smaller breweries that largely sell out of taprooms. "We would only add something to a beer if it enhances it," says Janish, who regularly uses cryo hops.

Turning to science for scents can also be an unnecessary step into an uncanny valley. "You're going, 'Why not just add fruit to an IPA?'" says Hieronymus. "In some of those beers, that's what they taste like."

The next few years will be a feeling-out period for these functional hop products. Some will succeed, some will retreat into the research lab. Just because something is new doesn't mean breweries need it "unless it's going to be dramatically better than something they're already using," says Crosby.

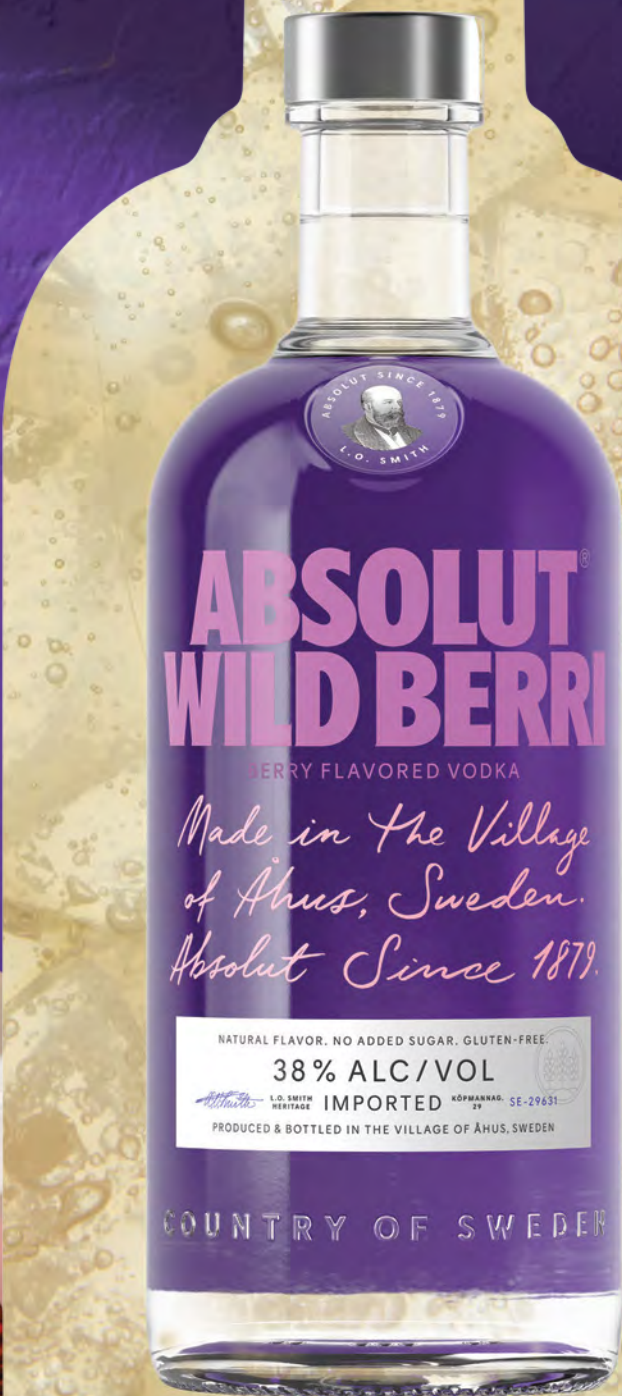
Freestyle Hops managing director Dave Dunbar is focused on advancements like Mega Motueka, a blend of Phantasm powder and a native hop. He works closely with brewers to connect "what made good beer with what was happening on the farm and in the field."

Adjusting harvest windows, farming practices, and hop processing on a varietal-by-varietal basis might seem old school, but the end goal is similar: intensity, in turn leading to a more considered approach to IPA construction. Instead of excess, Dunbar says, breweries are "starting to think much more in terms of flavor impact." ■



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# THE STATE OF VODKA

BY KELLY MAGYARICS

VODKA COCKTAILS ARE MAKING A COMEBACK— BUT VODKA ITSELF NEVER REALLY WENT AWAY

## THE VODKA MARKET TODAY

### STATESIDE STATS

2022 VODKA SALES

**\$7.2 BILLION**

■ In 2022, vodka sales in the U.S. totaled \$7.2 billion, but were flat year-over-year.

The second-highest grossing category of distilled spirits was tequila and mezcal, coming in at \$886 million. Source: Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS)

■ Approximately half of all vodka consumed in the U.S. is made in the U.S. Source: IWSR Drinks Market Analysis (IWSR)

■ There are 547 vodka distilleries in the U.S., an increase of 9.7 percent from 2022. Source: Ibis World

### SPIRITS SALES VOLUME



**27%**

Vodka has become the backbone of the spirits industry, accounting for 27 percent of total spirits volume.



**21%**

Flavored vodkas account for 21 percent of all vodkas sold.



Source: DISCUS

### INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION

**\$1.4 BILLION**  
VODKA IMPORTED INTO U.S.

Source: DISCUS



**\$660 MILLION**

FRANCE

**\$290 MILLION**

NETHERLANDS

**\$176 MILLION**

SWEDEN

**\$137 MILLION**

LATVIA

**\$63 MILLION**

POLAND

Roughly \$1.4 billion of vodka was imported into the U.S. in 2021. France is the biggest supplier of imported vodka, followed by the Netherlands, Sweden, Latvia, and Poland.



Partner  
**SKYY**

Packaged in a refreshed but still iconic blue bottle, SKYY Vodka is made with water enriched by Pacific minerals. This innovation results in a smoother vodka and soda, brightening any citrus element added to the cocktail.

**30%**  
OF GLOBAL PRODUCTION

Russia is the largest vodka producer in the world, with over 30 percent of global production; however, 90 percent of it is consumed domestically. In spring 2022, both the U.S. and EU banned imports of Russian-made vodka as a response to the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Data source: IWSR



### CHANGING VODKA DEFINITIONS

The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau

(TTB) long required that vodka be "without distinctive character, aroma, taste, or color." In 2020, the TTB removed this stipulation, defining vodka as a neutral spirit that may contain a small amount of sugar and citric acid, but must not be aged or stored in wood barrels. This essentially creates room for vodkas to carry individuality.





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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF VODKA

12<sup>TH</sup>-13<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY



The earliest record of distilling vodka in Eastern Europe (especially Russia and Poland) was in the 12th or 13th century, but it most likely dates further back than that.

1474 &  
1553



Ivan the Great nationalized all distilleries in 1474; Ivan the Terrible nationalized the bars where vodka was served in 1553.

18<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY



"Vodka" may be a Russian diminutive of the Polish phrase "*woda życia*," which means "water of life," a reference to the fact that this purified liquid was far safer than the communal water available at the time. However, the term wasn't used until the late 18th century.

19<sup>TH</sup>-20<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY



Some European bars, particularly those in Paris, stocked vodka in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but at that time American bars barely knew what it was.

1941



In 1941, John Martin (owner of Smirnoff Vodka), Jack Morgan (who had an oversupply of ginger beer at his Cock 'n' Bull bar), and Sophie Berezinski (who designed copper mugs) created the Moscow Mule as a way to sell their respective products. With a creative marketing campaign, the drink's popularity took off, and so did the American vodka market.

1988



Created in 1988, the Cosmo became the iconic cocktail of the '90s, buoyed by the hit *Sex and the City*—though it later got a bad rap.

2000s



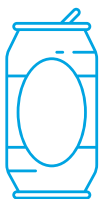
In the aughts, vodka fell out of fashion, particularly among the ranks of craft cocktail bars to debut this decade. Death & Company famously did not even carry vodka.

2021



A Martini renaissance has come about since 2021, bringing vodka back into the craft cocktail conversation. Even sweet takes on the Martini—most notably the Espresso Martini—are coming back in vogue.

READY-TO-DRINK



Among newly released, spirits-based ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails, vodka is the most common base, according to IWSR Drinks Market Analysis. Vodka-based RTDs really took off in 2019 with the introduction of High Noon, marketed as a vodka-based hard seltzer. Now, malt-based hard seltzer producers are getting in on the vodka game, with both White Claw and Truly launching vodka and soda RTD cocktails, and White Claw launching unflavored and flavored vodkas.



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**NEFT**

Crafted in Austria, NEFT Vodka lets the quality of its ingredients shine: mineral-rich Alpine spring water and non-GMO rye, triple distilled for a smooth finish, perfect for sipping neat or building exquisite cocktails.



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THAT DESERVES THE SPOTLIGHT**

**AWARD WINNING TASTE**





## CLASSIC VODKA COCKTAILS



**VODKA MARTINI** Vodka and dry vermouth; stirred with ice; served up in a Martini glass; garnished with a lemon peel or olive.



**COSMOPOLITAN** Vodka, Cointreau, cranberry juice, and lime juice; shaken with ice; served up in a cocktail glass; garnished with a lemon peel.



**BLOODY MARY** Vodka, tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce, celery salt, horseradish, Tabasco sauce, and black pepper; built in a pint glass over ice; garnished with some combination of citrus wedge, olive, celery stalk, and other savory items.



**SCREWDRIVER** Vodka and orange juice; mixed in a highball or double highball glass over ice.



**ESPRESSO MARTINI** Vodka, coffee liqueur, freshly-brewed espresso, and simple syrup; shaken over ice; served up in a Martini glass; garnished with a few whole coffee beans.



**WHITE RUSSIAN** Vodka, Kahlua, and heavy cream; built in a rocks glass over ice and stirred to combine.



**MOSCOW MULE** Vodka, ginger beer, and lime juice; built in a copper mug over ice; garnished with a lime wheel.



**VODKA & TONIC** Vodka and tonic water; served over ice in a highball glass; garnished with a lime wedge. Vodka soda is a popular variation today, a drink scoffed at by some as it is meant to taste like nothing.



### Partner ABSOLUT

The latest addition to the Absolut flavor range, Absolut Wild Berri combines the flavors of freshly picked blueberries, blackberries, and wild strawberries. Its refreshingly sweet versatility makes Absolut Wild Berri easy to mix, serve, and enjoy classics with a twist.



## THE MANY FLAVORS OF VODKA

The tradition of flavored vodka in Russia and Eastern Europe dates back a long time, with natural infusions like blackberries, ginger, horseradish, dill, and coriander. In the U.S., the flavored vodka landscape has changed over time.

**CITRUS:** First gaining popularity in the 1980s with the introduction of SKUs like Absolut Citron, citrus-flavored vodkas remain popular today. Lemon dominates, but many brands produce grapefruit, lime, orange, and more.



**FRUIT:** Peach, berry, melon, pineapple, and many more fruits can be found in the flavored vodka landscape today—some of which are combined, like strawberry lemonade or honey melon.



**SPICE:** Spicy vodka flavors are not especially popular, but they persist—and notably, the first widely marketed flavored vodka, Absolut Peppar, falls under this category.



**DESSERT:** A fad of the 2010s, flavored vodkas entered the market with confectioned flavors that ranged from whipped cream, caramel, and chocolate to Swedish Fish and peanut butter and jelly.



**BOTANICAL:** After the launch of Ketel One Botanical in 2018, more brands have shifted to infusing vodka with natural ingredients like cucumber, mint, rose, and chamomile (and often distilling it to a lower proof).



### Partner SMOKE SAFFRON

India's award-winning SMOKE LAB Vodka produces the special-release SMOKE LAB Saffron Vodka. The vodka, distilled from locally sourced basmati rice, is made with the rare Kashmiri saffron, yielding subtle earthy flavors.



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# RISING-STAR AAPI INNOVATORS

OUR ORIGINAL AAPI DRINKS INNOVATORS ARE PASSING THE MANTLE TO THE NEXT GENERATION, NOMINATING THE AAPI BEVERAGE DIRECTORS, PRODUCERS, BARTENDERS, AND MORE WHO ARE BREAKING BOUNDARIES

BY CAROLINE SHIN

It's been those out-of-the-box thinkers and doers who've broken through the barriers that have kept

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders a stark minority in the beverage industry. From systemic biases, such as the prioritization of Eurocentric drinks, flavors, and language, to cultural values amongst AAPI immigrant parents who prioritize professions in medical or legal fields for their children, these barriers are both intrinsic and extrinsic.

But these beverage industry innovators are making a difference. Last year, AAPI-owned brands accounted for over 0.5 percent share of sales on ecommerce platform Drizly, an increase of six percent year-over-year. Further, the number of AAPI-owned brands on Drizly has increased 28 percent from 2022 and 60 percent from

2021. They're also harnessing vast buying power: Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic and racial demographic in the U.S., following mixed-race populations, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The first guard featured in our inaugural "AAPI Drinks Innovators" issue have nominated rising-star AAPI beverage professionals who are ushering in exciting new ways of contemplating and consuming beverages. Get to know them here.

## BRINGING THE SPIRITS AWARDS INTO 2023

### NICOLETTE TEO, COFOUNDER, L.A. SPIRITS AWARDS

*Nominated by: Thanh Nam Vo Duy, vice president, sales, prestige experiential retail, Moët Hennessy USA*

Nicolette Teo knows the ins and outs of competition more than most of the world ever will. The three-time Olympic swimmer became a managing director of the San Francisco World Spirits Competition in 2015. She learned that, in the spirits world, too, winning means a lot: a bottle with a gold medal sticker stands out right at the point of sale.

But the judges—there and at other drinks competitions she'd observed—were a homogenous bloc of old white men whose palate and knowledge base judged a vast world of spirits. So in 2019, she and her business partner inaugurated the L.A. Spirits Awards, and they've taken liberties to shake off the dust.

"This is not your daddy's spirits competition," reads the website. Modernizing tactics have run the gamut from branding with fun illustrations to including

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Barry G., Prince George's County

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Ron S., Frederick County

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Maben K., Anne Arundel County

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- Hideaway Lounge
- Franks Den
- Shop Rite Liquors
- Harpers Choice Liquors
- John's General Store
- Star Liquors
- Cranberry Liquors
- Woodensburg Market
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Nicolette Teo

new drink categories like non-alcoholic, ready-to-drink, flavored vodkas, and contemporary North American single malts. More impactfully, however, Teo brought in a broader spectrum of experiences and insights, as informed by race, culture, gender, and profession. So it's not just one demographic's perspective that dominates. She's really trying to "break barriers in wines and spirits" with this "diverse panel of judges," says Thanh Nam Vo Duy, the vice president of sales, prestige and experiential retail at Moët Hennessy USA, who nominated her.

"It's not really reflective of the modern-day spirits industry, or its consumer," says Teo.

Instead, her panel can judge based on what a baijiu, for instance, is supposed to taste like or bring in the cultural context for sweet tea vodka.

Teo's innovativeness doesn't end there: In March, she launched the High Spirits Awards for cannabis drinks.

## DISRUPTING BEVERAGE MARKETING

### JEREMY KIM, COFOUNDER, 하드NECTAR HARD SELTZER

*Nominated by: Carol Pak, founder, Sool*

If you couldn't already tell from his pink wig, Jeremy Kim has chucked out the old

playbook on how to launch a beverage. Instead, he's pulled in tactics from his music artist management career, and executed an entrepreneurial nimbleness that's led to the kind of wild success where a drop of 10 pallets (208 boxes each) of Nectar Hard Seltzer sold out in two hours.

But in the beginning, he suffered his share of dishonest co-packers, broken supply chain issues, and dried-up cash flow. He walked into 200 stores and got 200 rejections. The mom-and-pop shops wouldn't take the risk on an unknown brand. He'd finally produced a box but had nowhere to sell it.

A lightbulb went off. So for Nectar, which comes in flavors like yuzu, Asian pear, and lychee, he figured he'd "create a world beyond the can," and use texting to connect to this community—particularly one that comprised even lesser-represented AAPIs. Not the "clean, cookie-cutter AAPI that mainstream media likes," but ones that are "rougher around the edges," "not so buttoned-up." It's this unfiltered and sales-impacting "community-building" that's impressed nominator Carol Pak, the founder and CEO of Sool, which produces traditional Korean beverages in cans.

On Black Friday of 2020, Kim posted a TikTok of Nectar's origin story along with a number to text for sales info. The video went viral. He convinced a store owner to



Jeremy Kim

carry 75 boxes. And the next morning, "it's lines-out-the-door pandemonium."

He's since launched a podcast called Under the Influence, recruiting influential social media cohosts, and stepped onto every social media platform from YouTube to Discord. In the process, he's racked up 1.3 million followers, who get news of upcoming drops and accompanying night events via text and on the respective media platforms.

He still has a lot on his plate in his goal to bring Nectar nationwide: a seven-city tour, two new flavors, and a live on-the-road podcast show.



Lauren Hoey

## CLIMBING QUICKLY THROUGH NEW YORK CITY'S WINE RANKS

### LAUREN HOEY, WINE DIRECTOR, JUPITER, NEW YORK CITY

*Nominated by: Jhanel Faelnar, beverage director, Atomix, Atoboy, and Naro, New York City*

When Lauren Hoey took the reins as wine director at Jupiter, an acclaimed new pasta-and-wine spot in Manhattan's Rockefeller Center, she inherited a list of about 800 wines that she'd have to know by heart.

She's added new wines, too, like those of winemaker Luigi Tecce in Taurasi. "I've only done a harvest once and that was very intense, really complicated, and I always kind of admire someone who's self taught

# GOOD DAY



SoJU

**Tiffany**  
Rose

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and then is able to make really beautiful, powerful, age-able wines,” says Hoey.

Her experiences had prepped her for running the show. Since 2014, she’d been honing her palate at some of the city’s top wine destinations: the now-closed Pearl and Ash, that emphasized a robust internal education program and non-interventionist wines; Acme, where mentor and beverage director Nicole Hakli encouraged her to pursue a sommelier certificate; and NoMad, also now closed, which focused on classical winemaking regions. And, of course, she had pitched in on one harvest.

At Jupiter, which stocks California, Italian, and French wines, she’s been further fine-tuning her global intel, going deep on obscure grapes like Timorasso in the same way she does Burgundy. She’s also meeting an uptick in demand for sustainable wines and sparkling wines; Jupiter, for instance, carries 66 sparkling wines.

“She’s taking favorite Italian foods and pairing them with new and classic producers. I think it’s super cool,” says Jhonet Faenar, the beverage director of Atomix, Atoboy, and Naro in New York City, and himself an alumnus of NoMad. “She’s also working the floor, introducing these wines herself. That’s really special.”

## DISTILLING ASIAN DISHES INTO COCKTAILS

**KYLE SATINA, BEVERAGE DIRECTOR, BELLTREE COCKTAIL CLUB, CARRBORO, NORTH CAROLINA**

*Nominated by: Paula de Pano, owner, Rocks and Acid, Chapel Hill, North Carolina*

For Kyle Satina, an avid cook, the inspiration behind his cocktails is his own home cooking. Naturally, his flavor profile stems from childhood. So he finds himself distilling Asian dishes into cocktail form by preserving an array of creative cocktail shrubs and using them as a base for his drinks at the Belltree Cocktail Club in Carrboro, North Carolina. “He’s really creat-



Kyle Satina

ing new flavors,” says Paula de Pano, the owner of nearby Rocks and Acid wine shop in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, who nominated Satina.

For an example of his approach, Satina describes one evening when he was stirring pad krapow gai (Thai minced chicken and basil) and found himself thinking, “I like these flavors in the food. Could I translate that into a cocktail?” He rejiggered the mainstream recipe for shrubs, typically made with fruits in the U.S., instead, muddling Thai chilies, Thai basil, soy sauce, and fish sauce. He added simple syrup, and let it all sit for about a week. Then he strained out the solids, poured in rice vinegar, and let those flavors coalesce for another week. For the cocktail, he figured the smokiness of a mezcal would play well with the savoriness of the fish sauce and soy sauce. And the raisin-like ancho chiles of an Ancho Reyes chile liqueur would round out the spice and the heat from the Thai chilies. It debuted at the bar this May, as the Oaxacan in Bangkok.

Satina’s also put his spin on mapo tofu and tonkatsu ramen, and the complex recipes are hitting the spot. His shrub-based cocktails are consistently among the top five sellers at the Belltree Cocktail Club.

## PAVING THE WAY FOR WOMEN OF COLOR IN HIGH-END COCKTAIL SERVICE

**KRISTEN NEPOMUCENO, HEAD BARTENDER, REFUGE BAR, HOUSTON, TEXAS**

*Nominated by: Caer Maiko, cofounder, Daijoubu*

Before helming the bar at Houston’s Refuge, native New Jerseyan Kristen Nepo-



Kristen Nepomuceno

muceno worked the bar at the now-shuttered Augustine, a lauded French brasserie in New York City, and became a regular at other hot spots like Pegu Club and Death and Co.

She’s brought the ins and outs of impeccable service that she acquired in New York to Houston, along with the sensibility that, given the smaller number of high-end bars, she could really make a difference. That’s not just with regard to implementing her vision for service—“luxury without pretension”—but also for staff, which means more women of color building out their careers behind the bar.

Through Refuge, Nepomuceno has focused on bringing a diverse community of women into the Houston bar scene, offering training on all notes service-wise: from the hot towels upon greeting patrons to walking them through the menu and expanding their knowledge of drinks. “It’s about building long-lasting relationships,” she says. In addition to on-the-job training, Nepomuceno hosts one-on-one mentoring sessions with women in an industry that’s particularly prone to sexual harassment and discrimination.

She also welcomes collaborations like the one between Refuge and Caer Maiko and Sharon Yeung, hosting their Asian cocktail pop-up in February. Daijoubu, which is based in Austin, Texas, champions Asian-American women and flavors. “It’s great because it’s not just like one person is carrying the flag,” says Nepomuceno. That solidarity deeply resonated with Maiko, too. ■

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## Quality Brands Hosts Double Header at Camden Yards

The Quality Brands crew invited area retailers from all over the state to attend a dinner party at Camden Yards. The event gives Quality Brands employees, area supplier representatives, and retailers a chance to interact in a more relaxed and entertaining atmosphere as opposed to everyday business.

The Birds were up against the Indians for two-in-a-row starting at 5:00pm. At about 6:00 Will Commotto, on-premise manager Quality Brands, opened the gates to a private area on the club level of the ball park.

Upon arrival guests were greeted with name tags, refreshments, and a plentiful supply of edibles. It was a perfect night weather wise and the hosts (Quality Brands, Schieffelin & Somerset, United Distillers, and Mott's) made sure everyone enjoyed themselves. Some of the privileged few even received autographed Louisville Sluggers as door prizes.



(l-r) Here are Jack Kelly, field manager Quality Brands; Jim Crone, sales manager United Distillers; and Ira Kassoff, vice president Quality Brands.



(l-r) Bruce and Barry Pachino of Shoppers Liquors on Liberty Road; and Frank Hessler, vice president general sales manager Quality Brands.



(l-r) Chris Lombardi, sales manager Quality Brands; Tom Hollywood of Dawson's Liquors; and Bob Van, Quality Brands.



(l-r) Taking a break from the fun are Ted Kohnle, manager for Cranbrook Liquors; Dee Hutton, regional sales manager Schieffelin & Somerset; and Debe Keadle, who will become Debe Kohnle this month in Tahoe. Congratulations Ted and Debe!!



(l-r) Happy because the O's just won the first of the double header are Tim Prohaska, sales representative Quality Brands; Mike and Karen DeCesaris, Nick's of Clinton in Waldorf; and Jim Crone, sales manager United Distillers.