

Beverage Journal

AUGUST 2022

PRIORITIZING SUSTAINABILITY

HOW THE WINE INDUSTRY IS MAKING THE
GLASS BOTTLE LESS CARBON-INTENSIVE

SPOTLIGHT ON
SUSTAINABLE
DRINKS PRODUCERS





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Photograph courtesy of
Saverglass

"IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID"

"The economy, stupid" is a phrase that James Carville coined in 1992. It is often quoted from a televised quip by Carville as "It's the economy, stupid." Carville was a strategist in Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. This focus on improving the fiscal viability of every American won Clinton the White House.

In contrast, Joe Biden hopes voters ignore reality and buy into the many distractions being thrown at us. Americans are suffering due to record-breaking inflation in almost all sectors of the economy. The on-premise beverage alcohol industry is not immune.

"While the 30,000-foot view remains generally positive, those with boots on the ground are not entirely convinced that the positive economic trajectory will continue in the months ahead. In fact, in each of the last four iterations of the National Restaurant Association's monthly Tracking Survey, restaurant operators had a net negative outlook for the economy six months out," writes Bruce Grindy, chief economist at the National Restaurant Association.

In the Association's most recent Tracking Survey, only 18% of restaurant oper-



ators said they expect economic conditions to improve in six months, 43% said they think conditions will worsen in six months, while the other 39% expect conditions to remain unchanged.

Grindy continued, "This is only the second period in the 20-year history of the Association's tracking survey that over 40% of operators said they expect economic conditions to worsen in six months. The first time was in 2007 during the run-up to the Great Recession.

Restaurant operators are on the front lines of the U.S. economy and are often the first to notice any changes in consumer behavior or economic conditions. While operators' growing economic pessimism does not guarantee that a recession is imminent, it has risen to a level that requires close monitoring in the months ahead."

STEPHEN PATTEN
PUBLISHER



The Breakthru Beverage Maryland retail sales teams recently toured Boordy Vineyards with owners Rob and Phineas DeFord. Attendees learned about Maryland's viticulture and the ecosystems housed within Boordy's 18-acre estate.

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CRAFTED CAREFULLY ENJOYED EFFORTLESSLY



NEW PRODUCTS



1



2



3



4



5



6

1. CÎROC ULTRA-PREMIUM VODKA

Tropical notes of pineapple, mango, citrus, and hibiscus mingle in love-inspired Passion, the latest flavor innovation from the French grape-distilled CÎROC. Sean "Diddy" Combs, working closely with the brand, led all aspects of CÎROC Passion's development, including the packaging, a purple and orange bottle emblazoned with gold lettering that calls to mind the sunset.

\$ SRP: \$29.99 per 750-ml bottle
ciroc.com

2. GREENALL'S GIN

For the first time ever, historic British brand Greenall's Gin has released ready-to-drink cocktails exclusively for the U.S. market. The four spritz gin and sodas—wild berry, blueberry, Sicilian lemon, and pink grapefruit—star a base of Greenall's Gin, spiked with botanicals such as Tuscan juniper and Moroccan coriander, and are packaged in fully recyclable cans.

\$ SRP: \$12.99 per four-pack of 355-ml cans
greenallsgin.com

3. THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT CO.

Developed by Mexico's Casa Lumbre innovation team, The Community Spirit Co. is committed to positive social change, directing its resources toward empowering communities. Its five times-distilled 100 percent American corn vodka is defined by notes of mellow corn, undertones of stone fruit, and a touch of coconut.

\$ SRP: \$29.99 per 750-ml bottle
thecommunityspirit.co

4. KEEPER'S HEART IRISH + BOURBON

Irish whiskey and bourbon combine in the 92-proof Keeper's Heart Irish + Bourbon from the O'Shaughnessy Distilling Company. Master distiller Brian Nation and collaborator David Perkins balanced the sweetness of bourbon with the earthiness of single pot Irish still whiskey and the butterscotch richness of Irish grain whiskey, conjuring pecan pie aromatics and a peppery herbal and cocoa palate.

\$ SRP: \$44.99 per 750-ml bottle
keepersheartwhiskey.com

5. OHZA

Joining ready-to-drink brand Ohza's roster of canned Mimosas and Bellinis is Fizzy Sangria, the first product line from actor, musician, and Ohza investor Joe Jonas. A blend of 100 percent real juice and sparkling wine, the bubbly canned cocktail comes in red and white versions, both boasting 60 percent fewer calories and 80 percent less sugar than traditional Sangria recipes.

\$ SRP: \$9.99 per four-pack of 12-oz cans
ohzamosas.com

6. PLANTATION RUM

Plantation Rum's fifth edition of the Extrême Collection centers on Barbados. The three limited-edition vintages—Barbados 2007 (SRP: \$200), Barbados 2000 (SRP: \$300), and Barbados 1986 (\$1,500)—encapsulate the terroir of the Caribbean island, which has long rum roots stretching back to the 17th century. Local artist Alex Mars brings the bottles to life with his vivid label illustrations.

\$ SRP: \$200 to \$1,500 per 750-ml bottle
plantationrum.com



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7. THE GLENDRONACH

Rachel Barrie, The GlenDronach Distillery's master blender, melded Highland single malt Scotch whiskies matured in Pedro Ximénez and Oloroso sherry casks to create the 117.2-proof GlenDronach Cask Strength Batch 10. The full-bodied spirit unearths spiced fruitcake, dark cherry, and ginger jam.

\$ SRP: \$99.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 glendronachdistillery.com

8. ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY

Robert Mondavi's Napa Valley Red Blend 2019 showcases Bordeaux varieties from vineyards across Napa Valley. Comprising 74 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 13 percent Cabernet Franc, nine percent Merlot, and four percent Petit Verdot, it was aged for 22 months in French oak barrels (74 percent of them new), eliciting blackberries, dried herbs, and dark chocolate.

\$ SRP: \$45 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 robertmondaviwinery.com

9. BUSHMILLS IRISH WHISKEY

To commemorate the final season of *Peaky Blinders* on Netflix, Bushmills has partnered with Endemol Shine North America and Caryn Mandabach Productions on the limited-release Bushmills Prohibition Recipe Irish Whiskey. Evocative of the 1920s, the bottle is a recreation of a vintage prop that appeared in several episodes with a cork lid and blue-tinted glass. Inside, the 92-proof spirit, aged in former bourbon casks for three, four, and five years before blending, tastes of rye bread, orange marmalade, almond, and cinnamon.

\$ SRP: \$29.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 bushmills.com

10. PAMA POMEGRANATE LIQUEUR

PAMA Seltzer, PAMA's inaugural foray into the ready-to-drink market, is a versatile beverage ideal for summer gatherings made with real fruit juice and a vodka base accented with a hint of tequila, just like the liqueur. Available in pomegranate, blueberry-pomegranate, and mandarin orange-pomegranate, each 120-calorie can of effervescent PAMA Seltzer has a 4.5% ABV.

\$ SRP: \$12.99 per four-pack of 12-oz cans
🌐 pamaliqueur.com

11. COMPANY DISTILLING

In its two Tennessee distilleries, Company Distilling produces straight bourbon whiskey finished with maple wood and now also Ghost Rail Tennessee Dry Gin. A lineup of six botanicals are infused through maceration, and then the gin is distilled on a small, open-fired Alembic still.

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

12. BOOKER'S BOURBON

The first release in the Booker's Bourbon 2022 collection is 2022-01, dubbed "Ronnie's Batch." Named for Ronnie Land, a trusted longtime Jim Beam warehouse manager who oversaw the inventory of aging barrels in the Booker Noe era, the 124.3-proof spirit has been aged just shy of seven years and exhibits vanilla and brown spice.

\$ SRP: \$89.99 per 750-ml bottle
🌐 bookersbourbon.com

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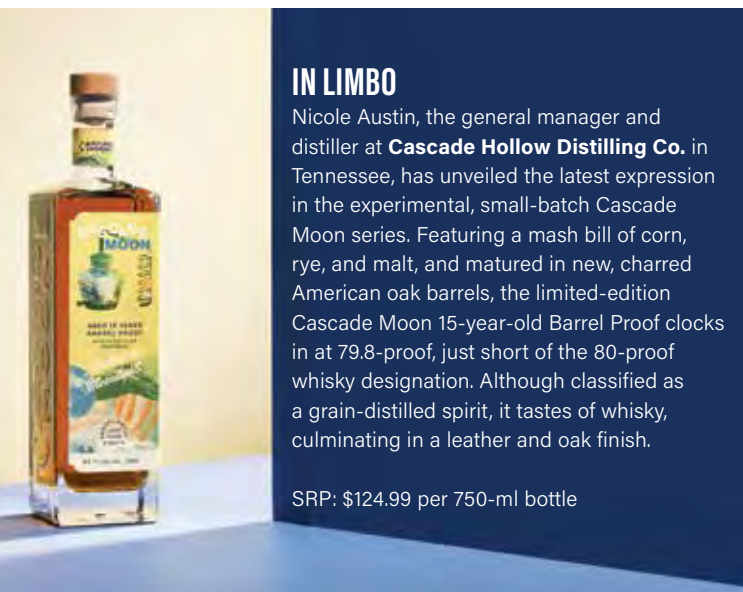
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JINRO



WHISKEY: WHAT'S NEW



IN LIMBO

Nicole Austin, the general manager and distiller at **Cascade Hollow Distilling Co.** in Tennessee, has unveiled the latest expression in the experimental, small-batch Cascade Moon series. Featuring a mash bill of corn, rye, and malt, and matured in new, charred American oak barrels, the limited-edition Cascade Moon 15-year-old Barrel Proof clocks in at 79.8-proof, just short of the 80-proof whisky designation. Although classified as a grain-distilled spirit, it tastes of whisky, culminating in a leather and oak finish.

SRP: \$124.99 per 750-ml bottle



DOUBLE PUNCH

Denver distillery **Laws Whiskey House** has debuted its fourth release of Bottled in Bond Centennial Straight Wheat Whiskey, crafted from a mash bill of 100 percent soft white Centennial wheat (50 percent raw and 50 percent malted) grown by the Cody Family Farm in southern Colorado's San Luis Valley. Bringing together 22 barrels of liquid aged for an average of five years and five months, Batch #4 is marked by notes of vanilla, caramel, and bergamot.

SRP: \$79.99 per 750-ml bottle



THE COMEBACK

Hotaling & Co.'s **Old Potrero Straight Rye Whiskey**, created by Fritz Maytag in the 1990s, now flaunts new packaging by the clamored-for design agency Stranger & Stranger. Old Potrero's six-year-old straight rye whiskey (SRP: \$64.99) and single barrel rye whiskey (SRP: \$89.99) are distilled in San Francisco, and the redesign is an ode to the city. The label's perforated edges and ticket-style treatment recall historic cable cars, while the images of a copper pot still—the one used at the distillery from the very beginning—and the Golden Gate Bridge are bolstered by the Fog City Gothic font, seen on signage throughout San Francisco.

SRP: \$64.99 to \$89.99 per 750-ml bottle

SENSORY OVERLOAD

Synesthesia, the ability to experience one sense through another, is explored in **Compass Box's** newest limited-edition creation, The Circle, No. 2. British bartender Mannie Monaghan won the brand's 2019 global bartender competition, entitling him to help blend a whisky that evokes the color coral. The result is a 92-proof spirit laden with pineapple, stewed peach, and honey that mixes tropical whisky from Glen Elgin Distillery with sherry-aged whiskies, dashes of peated whisky, and a small amount of malt whisky further matured in shaved, toasted, and re-charred wine casks.

SRP: \$130 per 750-ml bottle



THE ONLY ONE

ichter's sole 10-year-old bottling for 2022 (a 10-year-old bourbon is slated for 2023) is its 92.4-proof Kentucky-style rye. A single-barrel offering rounded out with plenty of corn and barley to play well with the spice, it unites citrus, chocolate, caramel, and fruit with a restrained jolt of oak.

SRP: \$185 per 750-ml bottle

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THE SHRINKING FOOTPRINT OF GLASS WINE BOTTLES

HOW THE WINE WORLD AND ITS SUPPLIERS ARE DEALING WITH THE
PROBLEMATIC CARBON EMISSIONS OF ITS FAVORED PACKAGING

BY BETSY ANDREWS

Before he cofounded Napa Valley's lauded Smith Devereux in 2012, vintner Ian Devereux White was a travel and wine writer. On trips abroad, he received a schooling in sustainability. "I kept asking Italians why their wine bottles were so light, and they'd say, 'It's so much better for the planet.'" When he returned to Napa, he was "shocked" at the relative heft of the bottles. Still, when his partners and he chose a vessel, they at first followed local custom of heavier molds.

That bottle lasted one vintage. "The energy and heat of the molds, shipping the glass, the larger cardboard to carry the weight, the glue—already there are massive environmental issues," says Devereux White. "Then you fill it with wine, use more resources at your facility, ship it to customers, use more airplane fuel—and then the customer finishes it, and puts it in recycling, and it requires more energy to process, or there's a good chance it's not recycled and it takes up space in a

landfill. Every milligram that glass gets heavier is exponentially worse for the planet. It didn't feel good."

Now, Devereux White bottles his 100-point wine in one of the lightest Bordeaux molds available from supplier M.A. Silva: the 550-gram Fuego, over 400 grams lighter than their initial choice. Most clientele accepted the switch. "Some said, 'These look really small in my wine cellar.' They liked heavy glass that feels substantial, powerful, and impressive," says Devereux White. "But I couldn't do it."

He's not alone. When it comes to packaging wine, glass is a miracle and a curse. As its manufacturers will tell you, it's sturdy, which enables shelf life; it's inert, so it doesn't react with the liquid to create off tastes; it doesn't have the health risks or pollutant problems of plastic; and it can be washed and reused multiple times. It is completely and endlessly recyclable.

But glass has downsides, admits James V. Nordmeyer, the vice president of global sustainability for the glass producer O-I: "It's heavier, and it is energy intensive." In a world in need of emissions reductions, therein lies the rub. As the wine industry struggles to shrink its carbon footprint, producers have discovered that more than half their greenhouse gasses (GHGs) are due to the shipping and manufacture of their glass bottles.

With governments now mandating climate goals for nations and businesses, however, suppliers and third-party entrepreneurs are working on new technologies and products to help make glass more sustainable. They're not only lightening the vessel; they're overhauling the furnaces, the material's composition, and the infrastructures to create a glass bottle industry that can make it to net zero.

LIGHTWEIGHTING

It's become a term of art nowadays among eco-minded winemakers: lightweighting. Simply put, it means choosing a light-

"We don't need quality wine in heavy bottles anymore. That's an outdated idea."

- Molly Sheppard, Spottswoode



er bottle. The issue of choice is key. The prevalence of Napa's Cabernet-filled two-pounders, with their thumb-snuggling punts and their Sasquatch-sized carbon footprints, comes from winemaker demand, says Erica Harrop, the president and CEO of Global Package LLC.

"Bottles can be made any way requested," she explains. "As bottles became more individualized, with deeper punts and broader shoulders, the glass became heavier over the past 30 years. Now the direction is to keep the nicer shapes but get a lighter bottle. It is possible. It has been the case forever in Europe. We may forgo the 60-millimeter punt, but we can have beautiful glass."

And, notably, without concern for its durability. "They have to be careful about



OPPOSITE: Production at Saverglass // ABOVE: Ian Devereux White // TOP RIGHT: O-I wine bottles



distribution of wall thickness in lighter glass," says Harrop. "But it's not necessarily stronger the thicker it is. If it's well-tempered and -annealed then glass is really strong."

Using technology such as the finite element method, a software-assisted microanalysis of a bottle's geometry, and the narrow-neck-press-and-blow process, in which a plunger is pressed into the molten glass in a mold to ensure thin, uniform walls, manufacturers like Switzerland's Vetropack Group can offer wine bottles as light as 350 grams, or roughly 12 ounces.

That's good news for wineries like Spottswoode. A member of the International Wineries for Climate Action (IWCA), the venerable Napa Cabernet house is required to measure and lower its carbon emissions annually. Using a GHG calculator, Spottswoode's winemaker Molly Sheppard found that product transport and packaging amounted to 50.4 percent of the winery's emissions. Her conclusion? "Our bottles are too heavy. We don't need quality wine in heavy bottles anymore. That's an outdated idea," says Sheppard.

Starting with the 2020 vintage, which will be released in 2023, the Spottswoode Estate Cabernet Sauvignon will lose its 798-gram vessel for one weighing 550 grams. Though that's still more than the global average of 500 grams, it's a departure from the norm among U.S. premium wines. It will make a small dent in the climate-friendly winery's already-low emissions, "but in the grand scope," says Shep-



pard, “the more we ask of our vendors, [the more] it pushes up the chain of larger companies to track their GHGs, too.”

For Spottswoode’s owner Beth Novak Milliken, the potential sticking point was customer perception. “We know 2020 is a great wine, but it is challenging in consumers’ minds because of the Glass Fire,” which caused smoke taint in many vineyards. “We thought, ‘Should we wait?’ And then it was like, ‘No, let’s just do it.’ This is what we believe in.”

For those who think that premium wine drinkers won’t stand for premium wine in a less-than-behemoth bottle, Milliken quotes Steve Jobs: “Some people say, ‘Give the customers what they want.’ But that’s not my approach. Our job is to figure out what they’re going to want before they do.”

Many other wineries are coming to the same conclusion. Biodynamic Alto Adige producer Alois Lageder has created the 450-gram SUMMA design, which they’ve left unpatented in hopes that others in the region will adopt it. Crimson Wine Group has been transitioning its brands to lighter-weight domestic glass in the past three years, reducing their carbon output by 300 tons annually. The switch was easy, says Fintan du Fresne, the winemaker at Crimson’s Chamisal Vineyards. “There’s that assumption there’s going to be consumer pushback,” he says. “Even at the highest level of wine price, there’s been zero pushback.”

In 2016, Jackson Family Wines lowered the glass weight by five percent on its biggest molds, resulting in a two to three percent emissions decrease and a whopping \$1 million savings in glass costs.

When you produce the nation’s top-selling Chardonnay—Kendall Jackson Vintner’s Reserve—and tweak the bottle without repercussions, that’s proof of concept for lightweighting.

Even sparkling producers are lightweighting their bottles. It can be tricky because of the bubbles. “A sparkling bottle holds a six-bar internal pressure. If it’s flawed, it will explode. That’s why they’re so heavy,” explains Douglas Stewart, the winemaker and owner of the Anderson Valley’s Lichen Estate. Stewart turned to Saverglass’s 835-gram Champenoise Eco-Design, a bottle that’s more than 100 grams lighter than the average for sparkling wine. “The French engineered a lighter weight that’s still strong enough to hold that pressure,” he says. “But I pay the same amount for this as I would pay for a heavier bottle.”

Champagne Telmont is going even further, conducting six months of experiments in attempts to lower its packaging weight from 835 to 800 grams. “Once this final phase is complete, we will be able to communicate whether or not we will be able to commercialize the world’s lightest Champagne bottle for our entire range,” says Champagne Telmont’s president, Ludovic du Plessis. “Fingers crossed!”

FIXING THE FURNACE

Despite all the buzz, “We have to stop focusing on the lightening of bottles

as the only solution to the emissivity of bottles,” says Regis Maillet, the marketing director at Saverglass. “Our real objective is to transform our glassmaking process. Only this approach will enable us to reach our objective of -45 percent in 2035 on our direct emissions and carbon neutrality by 2050 in order to be in line with international objectives.”

Glass furnaces are monstrous carbon emitters. Using fossil fuels, they melt glass, sand, lime, and sodium carbonate to more than 2,700 degrees Fahrenheit. Most operate continuously. “Once you turn them on, they run for 15 years,” says O-I’s Nordmeyer. Shooting for an 85 percent reduction in the carbon footprint of its containers by 2026, O-I hopes to overhaul the way it melts glass with a new furnace dubbed MAGMA, for Modular Advanced Glass Manufacturing Asset. At a third the size of a conventional furnace, it’s energy efficient, adaptable to alternative fuels, and able to turn off and on. In the meantime, the company is working on a circular system, capturing heat from its furnace in Reims, France, to supply to surrounding homes.

Similar initiatives are happening in glass manufacturing across Europe. Encirc, which has bases in the U.K. and Italy, worked with nonprofit Glass Futures to pioneer the use of biofuel in furnaces. French glassmaker Verallia is investing in electric furnaces at its factory in Cognac. German manufacturer Wiegand-Glas has developed a line called Eco2Bottle, produced using climate-neutral hydropower. And

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Wines from Chamisal Vineyards, Spottswoode, and Lichen Estate. RIGHT: Alois Lageder Porer Pinot Grigio.



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.



“The hardest part here is that we have a very bad national recycling program... there’s not enough recycled glass.”

– Erica Harrop, Global Package LLC

glass producer Ardagh has created Europe’s largest behind-the-meter storage system, using Tesla batteries to store and then return energy to the grid when the furnace isn’t using it.

Many of the efforts around furnace sustainability are cooperative. Saverglass has teamed up with glass company Verescence to launch Vercane, a research and development project looking at low-carbon energy sources for furnaces, including biomethane and electric fusion. The Federal Association of the German Glass Industry is researching hydrogen as a substitute for fossil fuels in glass production. And, in the most ambitious scheme, FEVE, the European Container Glass Federation, dreamed up an electric-meets-hydrogen

model called the Furnace of the Future.

“Molten glass conducts electricity,” explains Fabrice Rivet, the technical director of FEVE. “You can place electrodes in molten glass so that electricity will flow through the glass and heat it up. This is a very efficient way for producing glass. Full electric melting exists already but is limited to small-scale furnaces producing only clear glass and with no, or limited, post-consumer glass.”

The Furnaces of the Future project, or F4F, has aimed to demonstrate that 80 percent electric is possible in a large-scale furnace producing glass of all kinds with high levels of recycled materials. “The industry will be able to reduce furnaces’ CO2 emissions up to 60 percent,” says Rivet. As furnaces need continual combustion to ensure proper temperatures and quality, F4F also aims to replace the remaining natural gas in the system with carbon-free hydrogen.

Yet, though 19 FEVE members were backing it, in a field of more than 300 grant applicants, the project failed to win the financial support of the EU Innovation Fund. “Without the EU grant, the project cannot be pursued as initially planned,” says Rivet. It nonetheless galvanized the industry toward “one common goal: the transition to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy.”

RECYCLED CONTENT

“The gassing-off from the fusion of turning sand into glass is inefficient and polluting,” says Harrop. “It takes 1.2 tons of raw material to make one ton of glass, and you lose 10 percent to the air.” The solution? Instead of sand, turn glass into glass. In other words, recycle. “But you don’t just take any bottle and throw it in there. You don’t want to contaminate the furnace. Where are we going to find good, clean recycled product?”



The answer is easy in Europe, where the infrastructure supports the recycling of 80 percent of post-consumer glass. “Every ton of recycled glass saves 1.2 ton of virgin raw materials, with a three percent energy reduction and a five percent GHG emissions reduction for each 10 percent of glass recycled in the furnace,” notes Rivet. European bottles contain, on average, 52 percent recycled content, called cullet. To increase that percentage, manufacturers launched Close the Glass Loop, a campaign to bring government authorities, glass producers, and recyclers together to achieve a 90 percent collection rate by 2030. Comité Européen de Entreprises Vins, the association representing Europe’s wine producers, is among the stakeholders.

Many European wineries are aiming for carbon reductions through recycled materials. Sacrificing their rosés’ visual impact, both Spain’s Bodegues Sumarroca and Champagne Telmont have pivoted to using only dark bottles, which can contain up to 86 percent cullet, compared to conventional clear glass, which has none.

Even better is Wild Glass. The two-year-old brand is 100-percent recycled. Uncorrected for blemishes that don’t affect functionality, Wild Glass sports a sea foam hue from its mix of cullet. It has, says Harrop, the “organic and authentic” feel of hand-blown glass, with a reduced footprint over other commercial bottles.

The founder and winemaker of Napa’s Tarpon Cellars, Jeremy Carter, has adopted Wild Glass as a duty and a selling point. If



LEFT: Champagne Telmont’s dark bottles.
ABOVE: Glass inspection at Ardagh.

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a supply of the glass is available in time for bottling, they're even planning to use it for their \$150 Cabernet Sauvignon. "Being a younger winemaker with a younger brand, it's important to lead by example. Sustainability isn't a feature. It's a matter of course," he says. "When you show other people what you're doing, you not only encourage other brands to follow suit but also create a connection to buyers who share your values."

Carter and other winemakers like him don't currently have an American-made option for recycled-glass packaging. Alas, U.S. recycling rates are only 30 percent. "The hardest part here is that we have a very bad national recycling program. It's run by counties, and there's not enough recycled glass," says Harrop. In states like California, which mandates 35 percent recycled content in glass production, manufacturers have difficulty procuring cullet. To drive higher recycling rates and shore up supplies, O-I has bought recycling facilities in Colorado and Oregon and is partnering with communities through its Glass4Good initiative. With every ton of glass it collects, the company donates to the American Red Cross or United Way for projects in that community.

B2B REUSABLES

One solution avoids the furnace altogether: returnable wine bottles. Outfits like The Gotham Project and Good Goods attempt to create a circular glass economy based on consumer buy-in. But wine drinkers have proven unreliable with returnables. New initiatives use a business-to-business model instead. Six percent of O-I's global volume of glass goes into returnable systems, particularly in South America and Europe. In North America, the company is piloting returnable programs with partners in Oregon, Kentucky, and Quebec. "But you need an ecosystem," says Nordmeyer. "You need government regulation, a producer, and an interested partner to get the B2B."



Also, for refillable schemes to be effective, producers must agree on standard shapes and sizes. Since the look of the vessel is integral to winery branding, such standardization is difficult. Some are still trying. Caren McNamara founded Conscious Container on a mission to create a reusable bottle economy for the California wine industry. With the support of a Cal Recycling GHG reuse grant, Conscious Container is now set to sort and wash glass collected at recycling centers or left over from big producers like Jackson Family Wineries to resell to small and medium wineries.

To Nordmeyer's point, McNamara is working on creating an ecosystem for her endeavor. She lobbied successfully for California's AB 962, the California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act, a bill to facilitate reusable beverage containers, which passed in October 2021. It recognizes glass bottles as refillable and,



therefore, able to be separated from the recycling stream by vendors. She's pushing for wine bottle standardization and a law that will allow wine and spirits bottles into the state's bottle redemption plan, to ensure consistent supplies for washing and reuse. With a new bottle washing machine coming from Europe, McNamara anticipates beginning to wash bottles in August. "We're just getting the wheels turning," she says.

Of course, all these efforts are for naught if winemakers can't get their hands on enough glass at a price they can afford. "We have consciously avoided using heavier molds because we believe in trying to be as sustainable as possible," says Brad Jonas, co-owner and winemaker of Mendocino's Minus Tide Wines. "But as a growing, scrappy winery, we have to pay attention to our costs, and packaging is one area where we can't spend too much."

A true infrastructure around recycling and returnables might alleviate the financial and supply pressures for winemakers seeking sustainable alternatives. "A multi-faceted approach will take collaboration in industry and policy," says McNamara. "All I can say is that everybody wants to figure out how to do this." ■



ABOVE FROM TOP: Bottle inspection at Conscious Container
// Caren McNamara // Tarpon Cellars

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BAR-QUALITY COCKTAILS IN A CAN

PERNOD RICARD'S NEW SERIES OF READY-TO-DRINK COCKTAILS FROM JAMESON, ABSOLUT, AND MALIBU OFFER CONSUMERS A CONVENIENT AND DELICIOUS NEW WAY TO SIP THEIR FAVORITE SPIRITS

In recent years, consumers have increasingly reached for ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails as their beverages of choice. In many cases, it's hard to beat a drink that has the convenience of a can with the taste of a bar-quality cocktail. And the numbers prove just how popular RTDs have become: In 2020, the RTD segment grew by 102 percent, according to Nielsen, and spirits-based RTDs are predicted to grow 41 percent in volume by 2024, according to the IWSR.

A series of new, premium RTDs from three of Pernod Ricard's most in-demand brands—Jameson Irish Whiskey, Absolut, and Malibu—position the company as a leader in this rapidly growing category.

Whiskey is among the fastest-growing RTD spirit bases. Nielsen predicts a 347 percent growth in whiskey-based RTDs by 2024. Jameson, one of the most iconic, recognizable Irish whiskeys, recently released its first RTD, Jameson Ginger & Lime, in March 2022. It's made with natural ginger and lime flavors that pair perfectly with smooth Irish whiskey. The cocktail is an easy-drinking and convenient choice that can be enjoyed

chilled straight from the can.

For tropical, rum-based cocktails, Malibu Cocktails in a Can now come in four flavors: Piña Colada and Strawberry Daiquiri, introduced in 2021, as well as the newly released Pineapple Bay Breeze and Watermelon Mojito. All options combine Malibu's signature Caribbean rum with natural flavors, demonstrating Pernod Ricard's commitment to high-quality products. The 7%-ABV, 12-ounce cans easily conjure the summertime mindset that Malibu cocktails embody.

Finally, there's Absolut, which launched its first RTDs in 2020. Absolut has long



been a go-to vodka for premium, classic cocktails, and Absolut's RTD cocktail line puts original Absolut Vodka into a can with refreshing natural flavors. Sparkling options, which launched in 2020, include Mango Mule, Berry Vodka, and Grapefruit Paloma. Each flavor is well balanced with a touch of fruity sweetness and just the right amount of fizz. The new Pineapple Martini, released in the spring of 2022, is a refreshing, smooth, non-carbonated cocktail that delivers on consumer expectations of a classic Martini. The flavors are currently sold in four-packs and range from seven to 10% ABV. Regardless of the flavor, all of Absolut's RTDs offer bar-quality cocktails with an innovative flavor twist.



Led by new options from these three core, consumer-favorite brands, Pernod Ricard is meeting the demand for creative and high-quality RTDs head-on now and into the future. ■

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BAGLIO DI PIANETTO'S TERROIR-DRIVEN PORTFOLIO PRIORITIZES SUSTAINABILITY

THE ESTATE HAS BEEN CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE SINCE ITS INCEPTION, AND NOW LEADS THE WAY IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

Count Paolo Marzotto's search to find the perfect vineyard took him from northern Italy, across the globe, and finally to Sicily. It was there that he found the ideal combination of physical beauty, expressive terroir, and the opportunity to execute his vision of sustainable Italian wine. His journey culminated in Baglio di Pianetto, a family-owned estate that prides itself on stewarding Sicily's indigenous grape varieties and natural assets. The Count, however, added his own twist: an interpretation of classic French grapes that would add finesse and elegance.

Originally founded in 1997 with the Pianetto Estate near Palermo, the portfolio also includes the Baroni Estate in Val di Noto, fusing two styles under a unified umbrella that places a premium on environmental stewardship. The northern estate, Pianetto, lies 650 meters above sea level in a mountainous region that leverages diurnal temperature shifts and diverse microclimates to produce elegant wines with complexity and character. Bordeaux varieties such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Petit Verdot coexist with native Sicilian grapes such as Catarratto and Grillo. The southern estate, Baroni,

enjoys a mild climate and lies only 50 meters above sea level. Here, Sicily's indigenous grape varieties shine. The limestone soils contribute minerality and freshness, the hallmark of Baroni's signature regional reds, Nero d'Avola and Frappato.

Baglio di Pianetto's founding principle is respect for the environment and the estate has been certified sustainable since its inception. Now run by the second and third generations, the estate has continued this mission; since 2016, all 160 hectares are certified organic. It's not only in the vineyards that such care is demonstrated: The naturally insulated, gravity-fed winery significantly reduces the use of pumps and water, and uses solar power to produce renewable energy, lowering its CO2 emissions.

Baglio di Pianetto produces wines that showcase the family's Sicily-meets-France winemaking philosophy. The Monovarietali line offers fresh, approachable, fruit-driven wines that are convivial and



food friendly. The Classici line famously combines Sicily's character with French finesse, blending grapes from both the high- and low-altitude estates.

The portfolio carries out the Count's vision of tradition and innovation in such wines as Insolita, a high-elevation white from the Pianetto vineyard made entirely from this ancient variety; Timeo, a 100-percent Grillo also sourced from the mountains, which undergoes cryomaceration on the skins before aging in oak for five months and another month in bottle; and Ramione, which equally blends Merlot from Pianetto and Nero d'Avola from Baroni, and ages for 12 months in French oak and another two years in bottle before release.

Further leveraging Sicily's unique heritage, the Pianetto estate includes a villa amid vineyards and olive trees offering an integrated experience of hospitality, authentic regional cuisine, and custom wine tastings, bringing the Count's vision full circle. ■

This advertising content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Opici Wines & Spirits.



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Champagne Telmont



Villa Maria



O'Neill Vintners & Distillers

SUSTAINABLE MINDSET

These producers are making sustainability a top priority

BY ALIA AKKAM

With the ramifications of climate change mounting, stewardship of the planet has acquired even greater importance. Many wineries and distilleries have made sustainability de rigueur, conserving water and energy, preserving wildlife habitats, and even strengthening relationships with their employees and local communities. Here are 12 companies that have implemented such impressive measures.

● Bouchard Père & Fils

By 2026, historic Burgundian grower, négociant, and producer Bouchard Père & Fils plans for all 130 hectares of estate-owned vineyards to be completely organic. Bouchard Père & Fils has been farming its Le Corton and Corton-Charlemagne Grand Crus in this manner since 2019. The two wines Grand Cru wines produced there originate



from parcels atop a hill with windy conditions that help prevent the vines from developing disease and tame the effects of global warming.

● Champagne Telmont

Determined to reduce its carbon footprint, Champagne Telmont debuted its In the Name of Mother Nature project in 2021. Over the course of a year, the company has made notable leaps, including converting another 10 percent of its hectares to certified organic farming (totaling 83 percent), switching from transparent bottles to 86 percent recycled green glass, and purchasing 100 percent of its electricity for the site from renewable sources.

● O'Neill Vintners & Distillers

O'Neill Vintners & Distillers, behind such California brands as Accomplish, Harken, and Robert Hall, is the largest North American wine company to become B Corp certified.

Under CEO Jeff O'Neill, various actions were taken, including investments in solar power, the creation of four-year college scholarships for BIPOC students, and the building of a BioFiltro worm wastewater system.

● Villa Maria

With the launch last fall of EarthGarden, its range of sustainable-driven wines, New Zealand winery Villa Maria struck up a partnership with The Bee Conservancy, and most recently, Billion Oyster Project, dedicated to restoring New York Harbor oyster reefs.

● Domaine Bousquet

Wines from Argentina's Domaine Bousquet are made exclusively from certified organic fruit. Now, that commitment has earned the winery Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC) status from the California-based Regenerative Organic Alliance. One of only four wineries to achieve this distinction, Domaine Bousquet joins Fetzer Vineyards and Tablas Creek Vineyard in California as well as Troon Vineyard in Oregon, all singled out for good practices regarding soil health, land management, animal welfare, and fair treatment of farmers and workers.



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Bodega Argento



Graham Beck



Greenbar Distillery

● Bodega Argento

When businessman Alejandro Bulgheroni was installed as the new proprietor of Bodega Argento in 2012, the Argentinean grower and producer turned its attention to sustainability, focusing on healthy soil structure in particular. This is reflected in the brand's estate, reserva, single vineyard, and single block wines, all sprung from organic grapes grown in quality Mendoza vineyards. Additionally, Bodega Argento's VIVA program explores environmental impact holistically, facilitating connections between plants, animals, and humans.

● Mijenta Tequila



Mijenta's three expressions of tequila—blanco, reposado, and añejo gran reserva—are all produced with the intent to stay true to the land. Bottles are crafted from locally sourced glass, and agave-waste labels are hand-applied by Jalisco residents. In 2021, Mijenta also joined forces with Whales of Guerrero, a nonprofit that spearheads conservation projects in the fishing village of Barra de Potosi in Guerrero, Mexico, to assist with monitoring, researching, and protecting whales while educating locals.

● Graham Beck

Back in 2004, the World Wildlife Fund identified South African winery Graham Beck as a Conservation Champion. Nearly

20 years later, the brand, known for its portfolio of Cap Classique sparkling wines, continues to make biodiversity and regenerative agriculture a priority. For every acre farmed, a minimum of four acres of natural vegetation are preserved. Likewise, through a collaboration with local farms, Graham Beck has saved more than 35,000 acres of fauna and flora in the Cape Floral Region from harm.

● Feudi di San Gregorio



Campania winery Feudi di San Gregorio, a founding member of the carbon neutral-committed Co2alizione Italia, is now B Corp certified. To bolster its low-impact cultivation methods and exclusive use of energy from renewable resources, soon Feudi di San Gregorio will shun wood packaging for FSC-certified paper and transform the vegetable garden at its onsite restaurant Marennà into a tourism destination.

● Ehlers Estate

When Laura Díaz Muñoz, winemaker and general manager at Ehlers Estate in St. Helena, joined the Napa Valley winery in 2018, she put sustainability in the spotlight. In addition to the certified-organic farming that began in 2008, Ehlers is now experimenting with biochar, a carbon-



rich, charcoal-like substance, to suppress CO2 emissions from soil.

● Greenbar Distillery

Upon founding Greenbar Distillery in Los Angeles in 2004, Litty Mathew and Melkon Khosrovian planted a tree to celebrate their first batch of spirits. Greenbar, which turns out gin, single-malt whiskey, and ready-to-drink beverages, then teamed up with Sustainable Harvest International to plant one tree in a Central American rainforest for every bottle or flat of canned cocktails sold. This year, Greenbar reached the milestone of planting one million trees.

● Nicolas-Jay



Willamette Valley's Nicolas-Jay, founded by Burgundian winemaker Jean-Nicolas Méo and music entrepreneur Jay Boberg, makes wines that honor the vineyards. Beginning with the purchase of Bishop Creek Vineyard in 2014, Nicolas-Jay embraces all-organic farming methods. Its latest eco-friendly initiative is the soon-to-be addition of Oregon's first self-driving electric tractor. The savvy autonomous vehicle from Monarch both eliminates diesel pollution and taps into technology to garner precise analysis and measurements. ■

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Bobby McKey's

Dueling Piano Bar Has Fought the Good Fight and Stayed Open

WRITTEN BY TEDDY DURGIN

There's a great scene in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" where gumshoe detective Eddie Valiant (Bob Hoskins) walks into a private nightclub in 1940s Los Angeles and quickly learns that it is a dueling piano bar. And the two musicians tickling the ivories are hurling insults at each other on stage? Rival animated fowl Daffy Duck of Warner Bros. cartoon fame and Disney's legendary Donald Duck.

"This is the last time I work with someone with a speech impediment!" Daffy famously cracked wise.

Bobby McKey's Dueling Piano Bar at the National Harbor in Oxon Hill, MD, isn't quite that kooky. But the entertainment value is certainly just as high. Marketing

Manager Beth Ketchum remarked during a recent interview with the *Beverage Journal*, "This is a really unique concept. The name is just a little misleading. Our piano players don't really duel back and forth. It's more of an 'in synch' performance. We have at least two musicians on the stage

every night . . . two to four. And they are adept at all sorts of genres and decades of music. The repertoire is incredible. The show is all requests. There are napkins and pens on each table. So, throughout the night, people are writing up song requests that they want to hear. If our musicians

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Bob and Kate Hansan

Owners

Bobby McKey's

don't know the tune, they'll try to play something from the same artist or in the same realm of music or ask for a different song. They get a lot of '80s hits. A lot of Elton John and Billy Joel. But they also know hip-hop, country, and most everything that is requested."

She continued, "The other cool thing is our shows have an ele-

ment of comedy. There's a lot of improvisational humor thrown in. They'll make jokes about the artist, about the time. We try to stay away from politics. Since we're in the D.C. suburbs, it can get really charged especially these last few years. We want to keep the atmosphere light."

The latest featured venue in our series of theme bars and restaurants, Bobby McKey's, accomplishes that mission night in and night out. Owner Robert "Bob" Hansan got the idea for Bobby McKey's after visiting Crocodile Rocks, a popular dueling piano bar in Myrtle Beach, S.C. He fell in love with the concept and was pretty sure nothing like it existed back in his home base of Maryland-D.C.-Northern Virginia.

"He knew our area could sustain it," Ketchum said. "And when National Harbor was coming about, the opportunity presented itself to open it there. He loves marketing, so there is definitely a lot of collaboration with him."

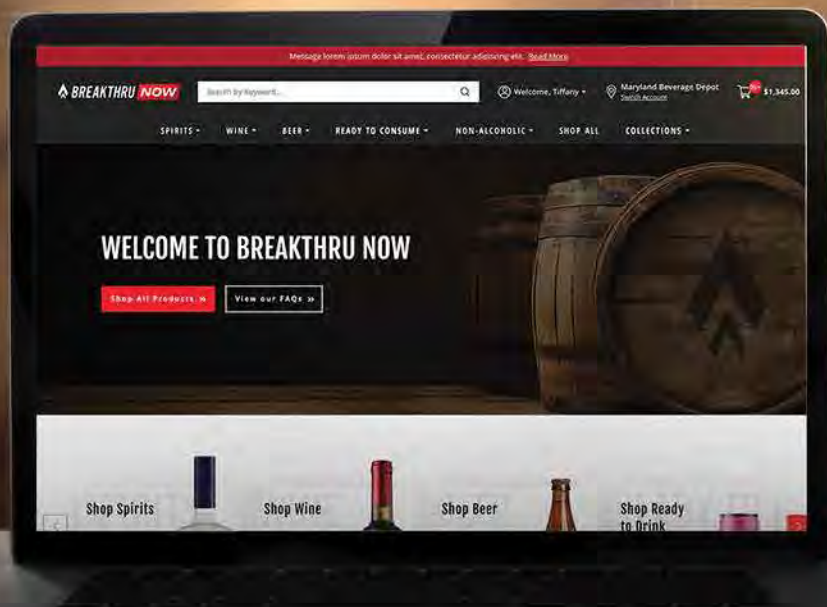
The name is a combination of two different inspirations. One, Hansan was called "Bobby" in high school. And, two, he loved the old Janis Joplin song, "Me and Bobby McGee," which has been a



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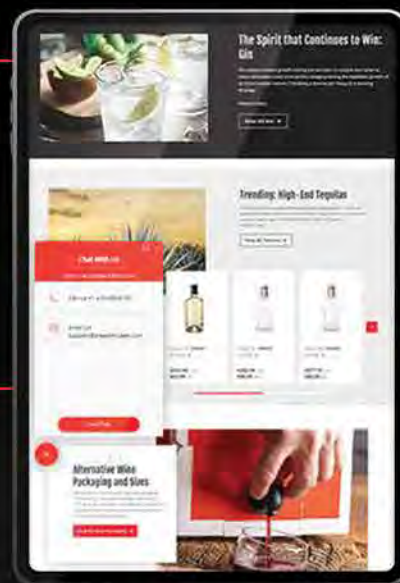
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great piano bar song for years and years.

The fun extends to Bobby McKey's drink menu where the selections include such fun concoctions as the Almost Famous. Ketchum said, "The Almost Famous is a popular drink that's made with Stolichnaya vodka, ginger ale, cranberry, and lemon. This one can also be bought as a tower in a 100-ounce shareable portion. Other popular drinks include the Bar Dancer and McKey's Tea made up of Sweet Tea Vodka, water and lemon squeeze. The trendy cocktails of the moment are our moonshine drinks. We use Ole Smoky Blackberry moonshine and have three unique cocktails. We also have a full bar that includes beer and wine. In terms of local Maryland brews, one of our drafts is Flying Dog and we have Loose Cannon IPA in bottles."

As for the clientele? Bobby McKey's draws both locals and guests who stay at the National Harbor for either leisure travel or conventions and trade shows. According to Ketchum, "We're trying to reach both locals and visitors. The convention traffic is actually more of a private event aspect of ours. In terms of local traffic, Maryland and Virginia are more our crowd than DC. Washington has so much more that is walkable and Metro-accessible. We get people everywhere from Fredericksburg to Woodbridge to Southern Maryland. People travel for us. We're a destination. And they come to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and bachelor and bachelorette parties. You can get the celebrant on stage and kind of embarrass him or her. But we'll

take care of you."

And Hansan takes care of his staff very well. Many of the musicians he employs fly in from other parts of the country to perform, and he has a condo at National Harbor that he puts them up in. Ketchum herself was a server at Bobby McKey's, but has a degree in Marketing and Business. Eventually, she worked up the courage to tell Hansan she was capable of much more. What she wanted was a sales and marketing position. "They had just filled a sales position, but Bob said, 'I have created a small business, so I can also create jobs. I want to keep you on!' And he did. That was 2013."

Nine years later, she and Hansan and the rest of the staff have been through a lot together. But being battle tested has left her with a positive view of the future, specifically 2022's second half. "I'm definitely optimistic," she concluded, "and it's because of all the hurdles we've gone through in the past two years. We were shut down so many times. We fought hard for the Save Our Stages grant money. We really needed it, but it was very hard to prove we were a live music venue. Fortunately, it ended up working out for us. I think we are on an upturn. People are wanting to get out again and have that human connection, which is what our venue is all about. We sit guests at tables of 10 to 15 people. So, you're not just sitting with the two or three friends or family you came with. By the end of the night, it's not uncommon to see people singing together with their arms around each other. People are craving that now!" ■





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