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WASHINGTON DC ONLY

1DC Wholesaler Directory & Brand Index

DELAWARE ONLY

1DE Supplier Brand Index
Poll Finds Consumers Prefer Distilled Spirits Over Beer, Wine

I came across a poll recently. A new Morning Consult survey, with a nationwide sample of more than 2,000 adults.

According to the poll, 39% of consumers prefer distilled spirits, either in a cocktail or straight, 32% prefer beer, 25% prefer wine. Instead of my translating and interpreting the findings for you; I’ll let them speak for themselves.

Morning Consult is a privately held technology and media company established in 2013 specializing in online survey and market research. They have offices in Washington, DC and New York City.

---

Morning Consult poll findings graphic showing:

- 32% prefer distilled spirits
- 28% prefer beer
- 25% prefer wine

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SPICE UP YOUR FALL

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY
Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits Partners with The Patrón Spirits Company

Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits is now representing The Patrón Spirits Company in the Maryland and Washington, DC markets. A reception was recently held at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront.

Local Mixologist Aaron Joseph provided hand-crafted cocktails including an Old Fashioned made with Roca Patrón Anejo and a Tiki cocktail made with the new Patrón Citrónge Pineapple served in a ceramic Agave Tiki mug. Also featured was Aaron’s Passion Fruit Margarita, which was one of seven drinks in Patrón’s International Margarita of the Year contest.
Guests enjoyed a VR experience of Patrón in Jalisco, Mexico and captured some fun shots in the photo booth. Then they departed with personalized lime squeezers and muddlers.
Hardened Watermen Enjoy the Smooth Touch of SeaGlass

by Teddy Durgin

On the evening of July 12, Town Center Market in Riverdale Park, Md., played host to a special wine tasting event in which customers came and sampled all of Trinchero Family Estates’ SeaGlass wines from the Central Coast in California’s Santa Barbara County. They included SeaGlass Rose, Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Noir, and Cabernet Sauvignon. For every bottle of SeaGlass that was sold that night, the Trinchero family donated a portion of the proceeds to the Maryland Waterman’s Association (MWA).

Among those in attendance was Nicole Crews, Trinchero Family Estates’ District Manager for Maryland and Washington, D.C. She remarked, “This was a featured event at Town Center Market to introduce their customers to SeaGlass Wines and how they could help out a great local nonprofit organization. The account really wanted to take it to the next level, so we decided it would be fun and educational to incorporate a seafood element.”

And did they ever! The event featured an oyster tasting complete with a local professional oyster shucker in attendance. “So you could have a few oysters, drink some great wine, and give back to our local watermen,” remarked Crews.

She noted that the proprietors of Town Center Market, formerly known as Dumm’s Corner Market, were eager to do their part in helping improve the health of Maryland’s waterways, which includes the Chesapeake Bay in its watershed. Founded in 1973, the MWA is a nonprofit organization that represents the interest of commercial fishermen, seafood processors, wholesalers, and ancillary businesses in the seafood industry across the Old Line State. For more than four decades, the as-
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Tawnya Falkner is the proprietor of the French sparkling wine company, Le Grand Courtâge. A few years ago she took the leap and moved to France to develop Le Grand Courtâge after seeing a gap in the category. “Food and wine are the great common denominator of all people and all cultures, and my goal was to create a wine that embodies the French spirit of Joie de Vivre, celebrates life’s simple moments and offer an affordable luxury to ‘elevate the everyday’.”

As we all struggle to maintain balance in life, we often forget to slow down to appreciate the journey. “Embrace Life. Dream Big. Accept All Invitations.” is on the back of every bottle with the hope of reminding people to never stop pursuing their passions, celebrating the every day, and appreciating life’s gifts. “For me, it’s about trying to maintain a ‘champagne state of mind’ and enjoying a glass of wine with family and friends, or while enjoying a warm bubble bath or reading a book in a hammock.

“Our name means ‘the Great Courtship’, and symbolizes the courtship between French and American wine culture, grapes from different regions, and the old and new world styles. The name, these wines and my story also symbolize the courtship and negotiations as we journey through life and love.

“I feel blessed that my passion allows me to create and be creative, and that I get to share my love of food, wine and people. Bubbles transition from breakfast through to dessert, and are the most versatile of all wines for food pairings and cocktails. I am grateful to be in a business that facilitates friendly exchanges, and laughter. ... Cheers!”

“Our philosophy is ‘Embrace Life. Dream Big. Accept all Invitations.’ and to that end our goal is to provide an affordable luxury that is perfect for “courting life” and celebrating its special occasions as well as all of the every day moments in between. We made Le Grand Courtâge to be the ultimate instrument in friendly exchanges of laughter and love.”

Tawnya Falkner,
Proprietor, Le Grand Courtâge
Sparkling or Still?

We’ve got you covered with award-winning Rosé from France: Le Grand Courtâge Brut Rosé and new Très Chic Rosé

92 POINTS

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PLATINUM

BEST IN SHOW

94 POINTS

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life + style
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After attending college at The Art Institute of Philadelphia for video production and graphic design, Shaun Stewart then began the journey that eventually led him to Edinburgh and back. The trip had nothing to do with film, but everything to do with his creative direction.

Shaun started off around food and beverage and continues today to find ways to stay interested. He’s worked up and down the I-95 corridor creating new cocktails and honing his skills.

Shaun came to Maryland from New Jersey looking for a new challenge and a new adventure. Initially it was a beer centric background that landed him a job helping to open up the Arundel Mills Buffalo Wild Wings, but he would come much further.

What Kind of Bartender Do You Want to Be?

Shaun first helped to open the House of Blues in Atlantic City where he was asked a question by his trainer that would shape his future. "The guy who trained me asked me what kind of a bartender I wanted to be. And I didn’t know the answer to that. It ended up being that I needed to know why I’m doing what I’m doing."

By that, Shaun wants to know why two particular spirits work well together or how come one style of beer is brewed a particular way. "If I’m doing cocktails I need to know why is this classic done this way? If we have a beer program let’s make it the best beer program it can be."

That’s when he began doing more research and learning to go into different style bars and restaurants and learn techniques and spirits and more that he hadn’t known of before. "I grew up going through beer and shot, just turn and burn, then slowly coming into this area now that I’m in."

That "area" is the world of craft cocktails, far from the kind you would see at your chain restaurant down the street. Looking up to bartenders who use the creativity, knowledge, and history of bartending, inspired him to answer that trainer’s question. He wants to have fun by sharing and learning constantly. "It went back to finding those cocktail bars that I wanted to go to and watching them have fun doing what they’re doing. I felt that to be a different kind of fun. Not just pouring beers and having good fun with friends. It was more of giving an education to someone. I can have a conversation with somebody and have them
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Continuing the Journey

One of Shaun’s current projects gives him the chance to take a step back and help a friend with an equally impressive knowledge of spirits at Gravitas in Washington, D.C. That friend, Mary Kelly, heads up the spirit program for the soon to open restaurant and bar.

Staying busy, and staying more local to Baltimore, Shaun now works behind the bar a few days a week at The Outpost in Federal Hill after friend and Executive Chef Jessie Sandlin reached out.

"When I go home to Philly all I want is a Kenzinger. That’s our local beer and that’s just all I want. Having something super approachable that you can get into, but also that you’ve found an appreciation for something that you’ve branched out to."

Shaun continued by explaining his way of staying knowledgeable and educated on the trends and direction of the beverage industry. Reading about and tasting, even what may not be applicable now, may be in the future.

"Even when someone tastes me on something and I know it’s not going to be something for the bar, I still want to taste it, because I may be able to use it for something else, or for an event."

The Perfect Hot Toddy

Last year Shaun won Glenfiddich’s Experimental Bartender of the Year and went to Edinburgh for ten days with ten other bartenders from around the world. His cocktail was, “The Great Gatsby meets Harry Potter.”

The competition involved the back story, presentation, and taste of the cocktail. The all-around competition requires knowledge and precision to create a perfectly executed and extraordinary experience.

The old school, pre-prohibition style cocktail consisted of a scotch base with a Japanese feel. This involved using a tea siphon where the heat of liquid in the bottom chamber infuses herbal ingredients in a separate upper chamber.

Ingredients:

- A tea siphon
- Glenfiddich 12 Year
- Hot Tea
- Bookers Bitters
- Vanilla Almond Syrup

learn something.”

What happens when someone doesn’t want the education? His answer is simple and nonchalant. Read the guest, if they’re curious, dive in. If not, it almost seems as if it’s his goal to make them curious without ever impeding on the guests experience. His approach is that of a professor rather than a showman.

"If you can get that one person to listen to you, or learn that one thing, or pronounce that word properly; little things like that are things I love when people get it."

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Craft Sake Starts Brewing
With Support From Japan, A Niche Within A Niche Gains Footing

By Jim Clarke

Craft breweries are popping up everywhere, but a dozen stand out for working with a special ingredient: rice. That's because they're brewing sake, not beer; the taproom conversation revolves around rice milling ratios and koji rather than hops and malt.

While large Japanese companies have been supplementing their import portfolios with cheaper U.S.-produced sake for years, the craft model is relatively new. The latest example is Brooklyn Kura, which sold its first bottle of sake this January. Their American predecessors include Moto-I in Minneapolis, SakeOne in Portland, Oregon, and Dovetail in Boston; sake breweries are not a regional phenomenon.

Premium Japanese producers see these new breweries as colleagues, not competitors. “Japan has just been so helpful and supportive and excited about what we’ve been doing,” says Brian Polen, one of Brooklyn Kura’s co-founders. Visiting brewers provided feedback during their development stages, and Brooklyn Kura is offering their taproom as a space for Japanese and other U.S.

Advantages Americans have over their Japanese peers: simpler labels and the ability to make unpasteurized, fresh sake.

Brooklyn Kura sold their first sake this January; returning the favor for support from others in the industry, the owners offer their taproom as a space for other brewers to showcase their own sakes.

Below: Pouring sake into a flute at Asahi Shuzo’s Dassai in Japan; they are planning to build a brewery at the Culinary Institute of America’s campus in Hyde Park, NY.

(continued)
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Hierba Loca Coming Soon!
Domestic saké breweries do face some regulatory challenges, operating as a brewery in some capacities and a winery in others. Polen says the city authorities visited because they thought a distilling permit was lacking (saké is not distilled). Another challenge is sourcing ingredients; for example, premium saké is often made with rice strains not used for cooking. “There’s decent rice growing out in California,” says John Gauntner, author of a number of books on saké including *Saké Confidential*. “But just like the best wine grapes are grown in significantly different ways from the grapes we find in the grocery store, proper saké rice is grown in significantly different ways as well.” Nonetheless, Gauntner is enthusiastic about the quality and potential of craft saké. “This happening here in the U.S. and in other countries as well is really going to help people’s familiarity with saké and that’s going to help the saké industry worldwide.”

Japanese producers are even bringing their premium game stateside. In December, the Culinary Institute of America announced a collaboration with Asahi Shuzo’s Dassai brand to create a brewery adjacent to their Hyde Park campus. The new saké will use all American ingredients, and come in at a lower price than most premium imported saké. “We really feel it’s important for Americans who are just discovering saké to experience a great saké for a reasonable price,” says Asahi Shuzo Chairman Hiroshi Sakurai.

The connection with the CIA also means hundreds of culinary students will experience saké in their formative years, hopefully connecting saké with dishes far beyond the usual sushi and ramen. “Until now, the Japanese have come up with dishes that paired with saké, but it’s difficult for them to think outside of the realm of the Japanese palate. We believe that we should be developing new dishes that are more in sync with the American palate.”

American saké with American food? Polen agrees. “Saké’s been trying to come to the U.S. for a long time, but it’s just been bottled imports. I think beer bars with hamburgers and things like that: that’s how we’re going to introduce people to saké.” America eats a lot of hamburgers; can our saké brewers keep up? If openings continue, maybe. Says Polen: “We get contacted by someone every week who is thinking of starting a brewery.”
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“We love working with our reps and value their expertise and friendship,” says Tom Geniesse, founder and owner of Bottlerocket Wine & Spirits in New York City, talking about the many wine distributors who regularly call on him. “They add a lot to our business, and we appreciate it. The rub is that we have very limited time and strive to be hyper-efficient.”

The relationship between the people who sell wine for importers and wineries and the people in retail stores who buy their bottles to sell to consumers can be as complicated as the relationships between married couples. Sometimes everything is happy; and at times the two wish the other would just disappear.

Today, wholesale reps have a modernized tool kit at their disposal to help them better communicate and share information seamlessly with accounts; but that in no way means reps should be ignoring that basics of their ongoing relationships with buyers. Here are seven things that wine shop buyers wish distributor sales reps would do—but may not always tell you.

1. Establish individual relationships (but don’t leverage friendships).

In short, customize your customers. What is endearing to one shop owner or buyer may be irritating to another. One will love to chat, while another has one eye on the clock.

“I’ve found out that reps who are successful with me and other owners I know establish individual relationships—they don’t see us as just another number,” says Jaclyn Stuart, owner of Vintage Elkhart Lake in greater Milwaukee, WI.

On the other hand, “Too often a rep may see you as a friend and lose sight that you are first of all their customer,” says Laurie Hellbusch, owner of Spirit World in Omaha, NE. This is not always an easy distinction to make, but think of a friend as someone who is happy to
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do you a favor and will ask you for one, while a customer is someone you’re asking to buy six cases of wine that they may have difficulty selling.

2  Don’t do drive-by sales calls.
Technologies such as email, texting and calendar apps make it incredibly easy for reps to communicate with their buyers. Geniesse asks that reps who call on him use email for updates on additions to a wholesaler’s offer sheet, price changes up or down, clearance sales and alerts as to portfolio tastings.

“Walk-ins or drive-bys are incredibly unhelpful to us, even if that is still part of the traditional model,” he says. “I’ve worked in other industries, and a business development manager would never dream of just dropping in on a prospect. To me, it demonstrates a profound lack of understanding of, and respect for, a customer, even if it sometimes works as a tactic.”

3  Learn to manage your time and your daily schedule.
Complaining about cross-town traffic just won’t cut it when you’re a half-hour late for an appointment. When was traffic ever easy or predictable? And know which customers will keep you waiting and factor in more time for them and less for those who are time-efficient, even ruthlessly so.

4  Consumers drive sales—so learn to think like one.
Many retailers are amazed that wholesale reps have little idea, or interest, in how wine consumers think and what their habits are in buying wine. In the corporate sales world, there is a helpful mantra for this: “Think like your customer’s customer.” Yes, price point is important, but it’s not the only selling point that catches a wine drinker’s attention. The more sales reps genuinely know about products and their distinct selling points, the more likely their accounts are going to be to trust them on a fresh scoop or deal.

5  Be available to participate in consumer events.
Granted some states limit what distributors reps are allowed to do, but in today’s market, in-store tastings have become crucial, and any distributor reps who are not proactively assisting in retail events to the extent local laws allow are handicapping their sales potential. “Being available to staff tastings for our customers with the items we currently stock is very valuable,” Geniesse says. Plus, it lets you see what it takes to convince a customer to walk out of the store with a case of one of your brands.

6  Guilt trips seldom work—and they are ugly sales tactics.
“Please understand that our focus is on pleasing our customers, and this is the driver for our purchase decisions,” says Geniesse. “Please never recite past numbers as a reason for us to buy today. Guilt is counterproductive.”

7  Be prepared when good luck and serendipity fall in your lap.
It’s not true that you make your own luck, as the saying close, but it is true that successful people are prepared when good luck happens. Know your customers, and know your stock. When an opportunity presents itself, be prepared to make it blossom.
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Brunch has become a legitimate American pastime. Chris Johnson of Bocce USQ compares our brunch culture to that of the Aperitivo hour: “Italians spend the day dedicated to drinking and relaxing, which carries over into the brunch mentality; it’s fun to sit and relax for the day.” Here are a few brunch drinks that go beyond the typical Bloody Mary or Mimosa.

**Absolut Grapefruit Easy Breeze ▼**

2 oz Absolut Grapefruit
2 oz Cranberry Juice
Orange Wedge

**Method:** Pour Absolut Grapefruit and cranberry juice into a rocks glass filled with ice cubes. Garnish with an orange wedge.

**Pick Your Potion**

*by Magic Hour Rooftop Bar & Lounge*

12 oz Vodka or Tequila
8 oz Aperol
40 oz Owen’s Grapefruit & Lime Mixer
20 oz Prosecco

**Method:** Fill oversized glass with ice. Place grapefruit, orange, and lime garnishes on the sides. Pour in ingredients and mix. Add straws. Garnish with grapefruit, orange and lime slices.

**Sunday Funday ▼**

3 oz Ruffino Lumina Pinot Grigio
1 Cinnamon Stick
3 oz Rooibos Tea
½ oz Lemon Juice
Lemon Peel

**Method:** Infuse the Ruffino Lumina Pinot Grigio with cinnamon overnight in the fridge. Brew the Rooibos tea and allow to chill. Add sugar to slightly sweeten the tea. Combine all ingredients into a highball glass, add ice, and stir. Add a lemon peel for garnish.

**St-Germain Spritz**

2 oz Martini & Rossi Prosecco
1½ oz St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur
2 oz Sparkling Water or Club Soda

**Method:** Fill a tall Collins glass with ice. Add Martini & Rossi first, then St-Germain, then Club Soda. Stir completely and then garnish with a lemon twist.

**Casa Bellini**

1 oz Casamigos Blanco
1 oz Peach Puree by Perfect Puree
2 Red Raspberries
Top off with Chilled Prosecco or Champagne

**Method:** Combine all ingredients into a tin shaker (except the Prosecco) and muddle fruit. Add ice and shake vigorously, then strain into flute. Top off with chilled Prosecco, and garnish with 1 raspberry through skewer.
CIAO MALFY!

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RICH RED GIN MADE WITH SICILIAN BLOOD ORANGES

AVAILABLE FROM REPUBLIC NATIONAL DISTRIBUTING
Prosecco Lemonade Punch

by Stephanie Day

1 oz granulated Sugar
9 oz Water, divided
1 Lemon, juiced
1 oz Vodka
187ml Riondo Prosecco Spago Nero
Fresh Strawberries, diced

Method: Add sugar and 4 oz water to a saucepan and heat over medium. Let mixture boil for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat to thicken. Combine the lemon juice, remaining water and vodka. Stir in desired amount of the simple syrup to taste. Add ice and strawberries to glass, fill halfway with lemonade punch and top off glass with Riondo Prosecco. Garnish with lemon.

Nino Franco Summer Kir

5 oz of Nino Franco Rustico NV Prosecco
½ oz Root 23 Cherry Almond syrup

Method: Pour the Cherry Almond syrup in a coupe or flute. Top slowly with Prosecco. Garnish with a cherry.

Green Market Spritz

by Chris Johnson, Bocce USQ

1 oz Espolon Blanco Tequila
½ oz Carpano Dry Vermouth
½ oz St-Germain Liqueur
¼ oz Agave Syrup (1:1)
1 oz fresh Cucumber Juice
½ oz fresh Lime Juice
1 dash Bitter Truth Celery Bitters
1 dash Saline

Infused Tequila: 1 L Espolon Blanco Tequila, 1 Tbsp ground oregano
2 sprigs rosemary, 2 sprigs thyme. Combine a bottle of Espolon Blanco with herbs and let macerate for 24 hours at room temperature. Strain and discard the herbs.

Method: Combine all ingredients with ice in a 16 oz glass and stir. Garnish with strips of cucumber and herb of your choice.

Sparkling Basil Babe

3 oz Lemon Juice
2½ oz American Harvest Organic Vodka
1½ oz Basil Simple Syrup
Sparkling Water

Basil Simple Syrup: In a small saucepan bring 1 cup of water to boil, add in 8 oz of sugar and stir until dissolved. Add in 8-10 large basil leaves torn into pieces. Let cool and strain.

Method: In a shaker with ice, shake vodka and lemon juice until well chilled. Add in the basil simple syrup and shake again. Strain into a Champagne flute, top with sparkling water and garnish with fresh basil sprig.

Bloody Maria

2 oz Avión Silver
2 oz Tomato Juice
½ oz Worcestershire Sauce
Squeeze of Lime
Salt and Pepper
1 tsp Horseradish
2 dashes Tabasco sauce

Method: Combine all ingredients in a tall glass with ice and stir until chilled. Garnish as desired.
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WINE BUZZ

WINE IN CANS TAKES ON THE REAL WORLD

Where do cans fit in the big wine picture? Festivals seem to be one place. Cupcake Vineyards returned to Lollapalooza as the official wine of the 2018 music festival, held this year in Chicago. This marks the third time Cupcake Vineyards has sponsored Lollapalooza, but the first time festival attendees could sip their California rosé and New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc from new limited-edition cans. And on the heels of their Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc launching in aluminum this spring, Francis Ford Coppola Pinot Noir in cans made its debut at the Newport Folk Festival.

NEW/OLD FAMILY AFFAIR IN WASHINGTON

Two fourth-generation winegrowing families are tying a knot of sorts. Delicato Family Vineyards and Mercer Wine Estates announced a collaborative new wine from Washington. The first vintages of Mercer Family Vineyards, 2016-17, will include a Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Blend and a Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon available nationally (additional wines will be launched in the Pacific Northwest). The line is positioned in the $15-$19.99 ultra-premium segment where Washington State wine is experiencing growth of 40%.

BUBBLING UP IN ALL SHAPES & GUISES...

Prosecco may deserve most of the credit for the resurgence of bubbly popularity, but that success seems to have opened the door for all sorts of fizz:

Vineyard Brands has added Rosé and Blanc de Blancs sparklers to the popular La Vieille Ferme line—after five years in development. Both are labeled Réserve (and priced higher than the label’s table wines at $16.99). Winemaker Marc Perrin asserts the wines are made using a new process, “Méthode Contemporaine,” which involves introducing CO₂ into the wine just before bottling.

August Wine Group has released a trio of Sprizzeri cans—Secco Rosé, Orange with Bitters, and Elderflower & Lime in ready-to-chill cans. The spritzers are based on Glera grapes (same as in Prosecco) infused with botanicals and fruit juice; all are tasty (even over ice) and under 6% ABV.

Champagne purists, fear not: Pommery has added Apanage Blanc de Blancs (SRP $67), made from 100% Chardonnay grapes from Montagne de Reims and the hills of Nogent l’Abbesse.

Meanwhile, Riondo, a producer of authentic Proseccos (featuring a signature string closure) has gone rogue—er, rosé. Officially, consortium regulations do not allow for Rosé Prosecco, but who can blame Riondo and their Veneto peers for thinking pink? SRP $14.99.

Chandon California has introduced 187ml aluminum bottles of their lush, semi-sweet sparkler of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir called Sweet Star, designed to go places glass can’t go—alfresco dining, sporting events, beach, etc.
O...OLD
FASHIONED
NEW
FASHIONED

DANDY-DUBONNET-THE TWIST

Limitless
COCKTAIL POSSIBILITIES

IN 1846, SIR JOSEPH DUBONNET, A PARIS WINE MERCHANT AND CHEMIST, CREATED DUBONNET ROUGE APERITIF. NOW THIS FAMED PRODUCT HAS RETURNED TO A HISTORIC PACKAGE WITH A NEW RECIPE, MORE LIKE THE ORIGINAL TONIC CREATED BY SIR DUBONNET OVER 170 YEARS AGO.

DOYOU.DUBONNET.COM
Under The Influence?

More & More Brands Embrace Image-Driven Marketing. But How Influential are ‘Influencers,’ Really?

By Vicki Denig

SEPTEMBER 2018
They’ve upended the fashion world. Their impact has transformed the health, fitness and beauty industries as well. And today, we are increasingly feeling their impact in the wine business.

We’re talking about Social Media Influencers. The Cambridge English Dictionary defines “influencers” as “individuals whose effect on the purchase decision is in some way significant or authoritative.” By establishing some credibility in a specific industry, or merely accruing a large audience (Kim Kardashian has 115 million followers!), Social Media Influencers have access to a coveted—largely Millennial—demographic.

For companies of any size, the appeal of harnessing Influencer power to promote brands is obvious: According to online publication Social Media Today, Influencer marketing delivers 11 times higher return on investment than traditional forms of digital marketing and 94% of marketers who’ve used Influencers to market their products believe the tactic was effective.

But how does this translate in the wine world? What does it mean to market and sell wine in a culture where communication is conducted in snaps and posts? As more and more suppliers, retailers and wine professionals invest significant time and resources into social media marketing and engaging Influencers, one has to wonder: Just how many additional cases are moving as a result?

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Whose Opinion Matters?

There is no shortage of voices out there, and suppliers are eager to align their brands with the most powerful—not necessarily the most wine knowledgeable. It’s becoming more and more common to scroll through Instagram and see posts of self-declared “lifestyle experts” extolling the virtues of various wine brands. These “sponsored content ambassadorships” are sometimes paid for, but trips, meals, free product and VIP treatment at events are also common currency.

Suppliers view Influencer investment as the latest form of digital advertising and a critical tool for reaching younger audiences. While non-expert product pitches are nothing new, social media enables individuals with dubious wine knowledge to generate content on behalf of specific brands on the same platform as genuine wine professionals. In this, the competition for American wine drinkers’ palates and pocketbooks is fundamentally changing: expertise competes with image, and the clout of the tastemaker may take precedence over the quality of content.

Paul Chevalier, National Fine Wine Director of Shaw-Ross International Importers, states that Château d’Esclans, producer of rosé star Whispering Angel, doesn’t employ, pay or “fill cellars” of Influencers, but rather, invites them to events hosted by the brand. And once they are there, the presence of a lifesize pink camel practically guarantees Instagrammable moments with The Palm by Whispering Angel, their latest social-media-friendly label.

Chevalier notes that Influencers’ level of wine knowledge is not imperative to their marketing of the Whispering Angel brand, though the producer must maintain a balance, so as to still be perceived as a serious wine company. “You don’t want to look like you’re trying too hard,” he explains.” And we don’t want
it to become too fictional.” Whispering Angel’s Instagram is run by a PR team that Chevalier keeps an eye on. When asked if he believes that working with Influencers has boosted product sales, he answers without hesitation: “For sure.”

Stuart Kirby, Director of Media and Promotions at E. & J. Gallo, reveals that the company has relationships with a select group of Influencers, but does not confirm or deny whether or how they are compensated. “Our Influencers undergo an extensive evaluation process ensuring the brand’s objectives and priorities are met,” he says, adding that wine knowledge level is dependent on the specific campaign. “For some of our popular brands, like Liberty Creek, it may be irrelevant whether the Influencer knows much about wine,” he says, “whereas for a brand like William Hill Estate, Influencers need to a higher level of wine knowledge to communicate the nuances of the brand authentically.”

Chevalier is quick to credit the overall success of Whispering Angel to a mixture of marketing techniques, including social media, partnerships, print ads and write-ups. “I don’t think you could just count on social media; I think that a good mix is healthier,” he says, noting that the brand’s clientele isn’t just Millennials. “[People] in their forties and fifties are probably not all over Instagram.”

DEEP DIVE

Morgan Harris, a San Francisco-based sommelier, uses his social media accounts to provide a window into the sommelier/wine enthusiast lifestyle. Patrick Cappiello also found that he was able to transfer social media success to some of the small producers in his distribution company, Renégat.

Lindsay Berg, Marketing Director at Tower Beer, Wine & Spirits in Atlanta, GA, believes authenticity will always have a stronger pull than that of an Influencer-based promotion. “I think wine consumers’ decisions are influenced by social media posts only if they trust and know the person or company posting, even if just by reputation,” says Berg, adding that Tower uses social media to only promote wines that staff members enjoy and believe in.

“I’ve been involved with a few campaigns with social media Influencers and I can’t say if it’s had an impact,” says Jeff Harding, Beverage Director at New York City’s Waverly Inn. “I think it’s basically a new form of advertising and people are trying it out as a way to reach a generation of people attached to their phones. I think the verdict is still out.”

Competition for American wine drinkers’ palates and pocketbooks is fundamentally changing: expertise competes with image.
Influencers with Pedigree

Many wine professionals bemoan the rise of digital Influencers, but more than a few have realized the value of cultivating their own social media audiences. They combine large reach with highly-trained palate: call them “qualified Influencers” if you will.

Sommelier and restaurateur Patrick Cappiello (29,400 followers) is a prime example: “Social media is not a traditional thing that I’ve done,” says Cappiello. “I’m 45 years old. When I came into the industry, there was no social media; things evolved quickly.” He initially joined Instagram because his ex-girlfriend was an artist and all of their friends were using it. Then he followed the advice of a peer. “When I joined, no wine people were on Instagram,” he recalls. “Raj Parr [sommelier turned winemaker] got into it next, but told me I needed to get on Twitter. He told me, ‘You’ve got a great wine list, but you’re never going to get people to drink the wines unless they know they’re there.’”

Cappiello followed Parr’s lead and, almost instantly, the results came in. “I’d post a picture of a bottle and get a lot of feedback. People were coming into the industry saying ‘I saw the wines you were pouring by the glass.’ I thought: Wow, this is an unbelievably powerful tool.” Cappiello’s also reminds that chatter on social media is still tethered to reality: “We need to remember that there’s an end to the transaction, people are going to buy the wine and taste it, and if consumers are smart enough to realize that they were falsely led, hopefully the reaction is that it doesn’t last.”

What everyone seems to agree on is that only qualified Influencers, like Parr and Capiello, will ever have relevance in the fine wine space. “The fine wine industry is a pretty small place, with products that don’t scale well and don’t want to engage with their customers that way,” says Morgan Harris, a San Francisco-based sommelier. Influencers are relevant to more mass-market wines because it’s a different audience, he believes: “We’re living in this attention economy, so brands and businesses that want to do volume will engage with Influencers, because they are really looking for that blue ocean audience so that they can grow.”

Chances are that by the time we can actually measure the value of social media Influencers—wine savvy or not—digital marketing will have moved on. “The word on the street is that there is a lifeline to this whole thing,” says Chevalier. “I do like the idea of going more towards video; you can tell a story instead of just a cute picture, and add value to things.”

ABOVE: Essentially, all social media platforms are varying forms of digital word of mouth. Twitter is less image-driven than Instagram, but tweets, like Facebook and Instagram posts, can be “liked,” replied to or retweeted. It is often in such sharing that the true power of social media is really seen. Above is an example of a tweet replied to and shared by Rajat Parr.

WILL THE REAL AD PLEASE STAND UP?
The trickiest aspect of brands being flaunted on social media is that viewers do not always know if a particular post is sponsored. In the case of the Influencer above, the hashtag #Ad makes the sponsorship clear. In the post below, not as clear.
GOLD MEDAL WINNER

GOLD MEDAL WINNER

BEST Small Batch BOURBON

DOUBLE GOLD WINNER

*2018 San Francisco World Spirits Competition
When You Focus on Quality, the Awards Pour In.

Here at Heaven Hill Distillery, we’ve been Lifting America’s Spirit Since 1935®. And one thing that never gets old is winning awards for whiskeys of exceptional quality. In 2017, Elijah Craig® Barrel Proof was named Whisky Advocate’s Whisky of the Year. This year, our whiskeys won Best Bourbon, Best Single Barrel Bourbon, and Best Small Batch Bourbon at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. And while awards are great, we never forget our true mission: Preserving the rich traditions of American whiskey-making, guiding its exciting evolution and championing its exciting future.

Heaven Hill®
EST 1935

Master Distiller
Denny Potter

HeavenHillDistillery.com
For the first time in years, blended Scotch is on the rise, says Kevin Doherty, Beverage Director at Tanner Smith’s, a bar and restaurant located near Broadway in New York. “Sales of pure malts or vatted malts are on the up and up. They fill a gap in cocktail bars where you want a single malt flavor without paying a higher price.” Tanner Smith’s features Pig’s Nose and Monkey Shoulder, both at $15.

Merchants, too, see gains for premium and above Scotch blends and pure malts. Calling attention to pure blends is key to generating sales, says Hudson Funk, Manager of Hokus Pokus Liquors, Alexandria, LA: “I promote blended malt Scotch whenever possible; they’re maltier, more approachable and more affordable than many single malt Scotches.”
Yet there remain real challenges. When total Scotch whisky imports in the U.S. dipped from 7.4 million cases in 2016 to 7.1 million in 2017, according to the Distilled Spirits Council, single malts held tight at 2.1 million cases; the decline came from blends. Yet within that dark cloud, a silver lining is emerging: an uptick in the premium and super-premium sub-categories, says Shefali Murdia, Brand Director for Chivas Regal, Pernod Ricard USA. "It is promising to see the 'Premium and Above' price tier growing [+1.5%], which clearly represents a growth opportunity for Chivas."

Scotch marketers add that blends at all price points are well positioned to capitalize on broader whisky trends. Brian Cox, Bacardi's Vice President, Dewar's, observes: “When you take this premiumization dynamic and combine it with the current continued brown spirits renaissance across all whiskies—North American Whiskey, Scotch, Irish, others—-it is abundantly clear that blended Scotch is well positioned to grow through numerous bright spots of untapped opportunity.”

Diageo USA’s Johnnie Walker Senior Brand Manager Sandhya Padmanabhan, also sees evidence of greater consumer interest in Scotch blends, which has revealed the strength of name brands in the category: “While the blended Scotch category has lagged in industry growth, Johnnie Walker remains leader of the pack, maintaining consistent growth and a steady performance.”

And when one looks at the growing importance of Latin/Hispanic demographic, Buchanan’s Senior Brand Manager Tara King, also of Diageo USA, is likewise upbeat: “Buchanan’s has experienced continuous growth in the past 10+ years. More recently, since the launch and continued momentum against its powerful campaign

Buchanan’s has developed a loyal following in the Hispanic market; a 15 Year Old is the newest release. // Wemyss utilizes a "Nosing Panel" chaired by industry veteran Charlie Maclean, author of eight books on the subject; then each whisky is labeled with a nickname that helps communicate its character.

Viewed from a global perspective, blended Scotch sales are poised for a welcome worldwide rebound. Eileen Livingston, Senior Director Scotch, Interna-
The recovery is on clear display: A growing array of pure, vatted, aged, malt and traditional whisky blends crowd merchants' shelves and trendy back bars. Here are a few that have attracted consumer interest.

Edrington launched a re-packaged Naked Grouse Blended Malt (SRP $36) in 2017, aimed at “older Millennials.” Naked Grouse is matured in Oloroso sherry oak casks.

Since 2015 Frederick Wildman and Sons has beefed up its blend and pure malt offerings with Pig’s Nose ($26), Sheep Dip ($38) and The Feathery ($52).

William Grant & Sons’ Monkey Shoulder ($32) has also scored gains within the blended malt segment since its launch in 2012.

Johnnie Walker Double Black ($35) has energized Diageo’s brisk “Keep Walking” march of innovation; it joined the label’s expanded line of Red, Black, Gold, Green and Blue brands in 2011.

Launched in 2000, Compass Box Peat Monster ($56) has also developed a growing following. This pure malt is from the village of Port Askaig in Islay, with some south coast Islay whisky too, and vatted with Ardmore; matured in American oak casks.

Wemyss (pronounced Weemz) uses the taste and aromas of the individual whiskies to identify each bottling, almost like nicknames, so consumers can more easily understand the style being purchased. Wemyss produces both single malts and blended malts; blends include “The Hive,” “Spice King” and “Peat Chimney.”

Bacardi Limited is investing $250 million in Dewar’s to meet growing demand. Redevelopment of an existing site in Parkhead, Glasgow, includes five new maturation warehouses, a new blend center, new bottling lines and new packing equipment.

The company also purchased more than 100 acres in central Scotland to develop a second maturation facility, complemented by the planting of 100,000 indigenous trees.

Buchanan’s recently added Buchanan’s Select 15-Year-Old as a permanent addition to the portfolio, joining 12-Year-Old Deluxe, 18-Year-Old Special Reserve, Buchanan’s Master and Buchanan’s Red Seal. The new 15YO took home Double Gold medal at the 2018 San Francisco World Spirits Competition.

Chivas Regal “Ultras” pays tribute to its past, present and tradition, using five of the brand’s most precious signature single malts from Speyside, a region famed for its microclimate ideal for whisky-making.

Scotch Whisky tourism broke records in 2017, registering 1.9 million distillery visits, led by whisky lovers from Germany and the U.S. Seen here, Wemyss, which opened their Kingsbarns Distillery and Visitor Centre in 2014.

As Millennials represent the largest drinking demographic segment, courting them seems natural, although they are notoriously resistant to overt marketing. Pricing comparisons help, notes Steven Rubin, owner of Boston’s Huntington Wine & Spirits. “Millennials are drinking less, consumption is down and bourbon has definitely cut into blended Scotch,” says Rubin. “While it’s hard to promote to Millennials, [we] put vatted, pure and blended malt Scotch brands right next to the store’s single malt shelves, so customers can see the price advantage.”

Smart merchants also recognize the importance of staff training and tasting. At Pop’s Wine & Spirits, Island Park, NY, Manager Victor Doyle applauds the Diageo team and its distributor, Empire Merchants’ United division, for hosting a session in which the staff tasted through the entire Johnnie Walker range. Doyle adds that even though blended malts may cost a bit more than a standard blend, “pure blended malts fit in nicely to the store’s Scotch section and most Millennials are willing to spend a little more.”

Blended Scotch cocktails remain “very popular with our customers,” says Sharif Nagaiya, bartender at Bemelmans Bar at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. He adds the best-seller is the house Whiskey Sour, which features Johnnie Walker Black, simple syrup and fresh-squeezed lemon juice ($24). The bar also stocks Dewar’s ($17) and Red Label ($16).

With classic cocktails humming along and premiumization and innovation enlivening the category, Scotch blends and pure malts are far from “on the rocks” these days, and savvy retailers and beverage pros should look forward to profiting from these brands, especially during the upcoming holidays.
Glenfiddich has long pushed boundaries and challenged traditions. Never has this been more evident than with Fire & Cane. It’s a bold fusion of campfire smokiness with oak and peaty notes, finished in Latin rum casks to produce a surprising toffee sweetness.

Rum is a slippery liquid behind the bar. Its style spectrum stretches from super simple white rum through ultra complex aged sipping rums. For cocktail crafting, though, the sipping rums are off the table, and white/silver rum seems bolted to the most basic of well drinks or frozen favorites.

It is the rums in between that offer the most flavor and flexibility for attention-grabbing cocktails. In this regard, Goslings is especially valuable thanks to not one but two flavorful middle options: Goslings Gold Seal and Goslings Black Seal.

That flexibility is on display at Grey Lady in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, where the brand assumes several roles on the cocktail destination’s menu. Their Voodoo Child, for example, uses both the gold and dark Goslings expressions, along with blood orange, lemon, demerara syrup and plum bitters. The drink could work with just dark rum, says Senior Bartender DJ Montalbano, but including the Gold Seal gives it a little more balance.

Gold Seal, noteworthy for its butterscotch notes, is the driver of Grey Lady’s Goombay Smash punch, served in a fishbowl. Black Seal makes a dramatic cameo as a float for the bar’s adaptation of the Painkiller. And of course Black Seal gets served frequently in the Dark ‘n Stormy, the cocktail Goslings actually trademarked.

When changing the cocktail menu seasonally, Timothy tends to keep branded spirits in place, rejiggering them with new housemade syrups and shrubs, plus new names. One of the prospects for Grey Lady’s fall menu is Divided Sky. The cocktail’s name has a dual meaning; it is the title of a Phish song, but it also highlights the juxtaposition of mezcal and rum. Timothy describes it as “Tiki but not extreme—a being-on-the-beach feeling, but you’re in the city.”

Mezcal is trending right now, so he is happy to work that on to the menu. “Rum is a bit of the redhead stepchild,” he notes. “Someone may pick this cocktail for the mezcal, but it might make them think differently about rum.”
A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but a Dark 'n Stormy by any other rum would not taste as great. In truth, it wouldn’t even be a Dark ‘n Stormy.

This is one of very few cocktails to earn a US Government trademark. Not to protect us, to protect the drink. Because there’s a huge difference between Black Seal Rum and any other.

It’s a deep, luscious rum made from a 168-year old family recipe using three individually aged distillates.

And don’t even get us started on ginger beers! We crafted Stormy Ginger Beer to harmonize perfectly with Black Seal into the ultimate Dark ‘n Stormy.

**DARK ‘N STORMY® RECIPE**

Into a tall glass filled with ice, put 6 oz of ginger beer, and float 2 oz of Black Seal Rum on top. Stir (until it looks like a storm cloud). Lime optional, enjoyment mandatory.

For the ultimate Dark ‘n Stormy, use Goslings Stormy Ginger Beer. The #1 selling ginger beer in the U.S. Try the delicious diet version for a Diet Dark ‘n Stormy.
Everything related to Ultimate Wine Challenge® (UWC) is extraordinary from its famously rigorous methodology, to its world-class judges, to the Ultimate Beverage Challenge Evaluation Center in Hawthorne, NY and, finally, to the stellar list of 33 Chairman’s Trophy winners for 2018.

Led by Founder and Judging Chairman F. Paul Pacult, fourteen of the world’s foremost wine experts, buyers, educators, and journalists convened in May to evaluate more than 1,300+ still, sparkling and fortified wines, ciders and sakes from around the world.

This extraordinary group of world-class judges included Kristen Wolfe Bieler, journalist; James Conley, wine buyer; Vitalii Dascaluic, sommelier and wine educator; Doug Frost, Master Sommelier, Master of Wine, journalist and consultant; Tim Gagnon, writer and consultant; Jason Hedges, beverage manager; Danny Klein, consultant, educator; Tess Rose Lampert, wine educator; John Rankin, consultant and writer; Mike Reilly, CSW; Patricia Savoie, wine journalist; Rick Schofield, CWE, consultant; Paul Tanguay, buyer and consultant, and F. Paul Pacult.

Under the strict tenets of UWC’s rules of service, all entries are served without the judges knowing anything about the wines except for their category. In order to insure complete fairness, no labels are seen, no producer identities are revealed, and no prices are divulged to the judges. All wines are judged in appropriate glassware at the proper temperature and are grouped for the judges into small flights of 2-8 wines matching like-with-like in terms of grape type, region and price.

Said Judging Chairman F. Paul Pacult, “Assessing with care and precision an international field of 1,300+ wine, cider, and sake submissions takes a herculean effort of total dedication from UWC’s exemplary teams of judges and back-of-house. Each succeeding year’s growth in entries from producers making wine, cider and sake on five continents points to their belief in UWC’s complete commitment to impartial methodology and uncompromising integrity. Everything we do, each system we’ve installed, is geared to a sole purpose: to showcase every entry’s virtues in its peer group.” Full results can be found at: ultimate-beverage.com/uwc2018results.

The names of top scoring wines, ciders, and sakes will be published in the Ultimate Beverage Challenge 2018 Guide to the World’s Best Wines & Spirits in the October 2018 issue of selected Beverage Network Publications. Over 73,000 licensed buyers in the top beverage alcohol markets in the U.S. receive this Guide.
2018 CHAIRMAN’S TROPHY WINNERS

CHAMPAGNE/SPARKLING/FRIZZANTE WINE

Asti/Moscato d’Asti
Italy Villa Rosa 2017
Moscato d’Asti (Italy)

Cava—Spain
Anna de Codorniu Brut Rose Cava
(Spain)

Champagne—France
Moët & Chandon Grand Vintage 2009
Champagne (France)

Prosecco—Italy
La Marca Prosecco Veneto (Italy)

Sparkling Wine—USA
Domaine Carneros by Taittinger Le Reve
2011 Carneros (United States)

Sparkling Wine—World
Chapel Down Classic Brut Tenterden
(England)

WHITE WINE

Chardonnay—World
Rodney Strong Estate Vineyards Chardonnay
2015 Chalk Hill (United States)

Pinot Gris—World
Balletto Vineyards Pinot Gris 2017
Russian River Valley (United States)

Riesling—World
Wagner Vineyards Semi Dry Riesling 2016

Sauvignon Blanc—World
Frei Brothers Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2016
Russian River Valley (United States)

White Wine—Central/Southeastern Europe
Lenkey Dulohazassag 2007 Tokaj (Hungary)

White Wine—Italy
San Felio Le Stoppie Vermentino 2017
Maremma Toscana (Italy)

White Wine—Portugal
Beyra 2017 Beira Interior (Portugal)

White Wine—Spain
Valdepenas Cuvee Verdejo 2016 Rueda Superior (Spain)

RED WINE

Cabernet Sauvignon—World
Backstage Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon
2014 Oakville (United States)

Malbec—World
Alamos Malbec 2016 Mendoza (Argentina)

Pinot Noir—World
J. Lohr Highlands Bench Pinot Noir 2015
Santa Lucia Highlands (United States)

Red Blends—North America
J. Lohr Cuvée St. E 2014 Paso Robles
(United States)

Red Wine—Central/Southeastern Europe
Stone Castle Vineyards and Winery Selection
Merlot 2014 Rahovec (Kosovo)

Red Wine—Eastern Mediterranean
Zacharias Cabernet Sauvignon 2016
Peloponnese (Greece)

Red Wine—France
Chateau Bellevue-Cardon Cabernet Sauvignon 2015
Pauillac (France)

Red Wine—Italy
San Felio Balla la Vecchia 2016 Maremma Toscana (Italy)

Red Wine—Portugal
Quinta da Alorna Reserva Touriga Nacional - Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 Tejo (Portugal)

Red Wine—Spain
Baron De Ley Museum Reserva Tempranillo
2012 Cigales (Spain)

Sweet Red Wine—World
Quady Winery Red

ROSÉ WINE

Rosé—Europe
Cara Viva Rosé 2017 Vinho Regional
(Portugal)

Rosé—North America
Sonoma-Cutrer Rosé of Pinot Noir 2017
Sonoma County (United States)

DESSERT WINE

Dessert Wine—World
Elysium Red Dessert Wine 2016 California
(United States)

SAKE

Junmai Ginjo—World
Joto Sake “The Pink One” Junmai Ginjo Ibaraki (Japan)

Junmai—World
Joto Sake “The Green One” Junmai Yamagata (Japan)

CIDER

Cider—World
Angry Orchard Iceman Hard Cider Hudson Valley (United States)

For a complete list of 2018 results, go to ultimate-beverage.com/uwc2018results
Mendoza and Malbec are Argentina’s indisputable wine calling cards—and with so many labels cropping up in the last decade, it becomes a challenge for suppliers to stand out. Ruca Malen—an established brand coming off a significant reinvestment—is distinguishing itself in multiple ways.

Setting the progress in motion, in 2015 Molinos Río de la Plata, Argentina’s most prominent food and beverage business, acquired Ruca Malen with a goal to make the country’s most inspired food-friendly wines—and to make their reach global. As part of the rejuvenation, the winery brought on a new head winemaker, Noelia Torres, a longtime protégé of legendary winemaker Paul Hobbs.

Her mission has been to capture the true expression of Argentina wines via distinct tiers within the portfolio. The flagship Ruca Malen Classics offer refined, modern styles of Malbec, Cabernet, a Red Blend and Sauvignon Blanc; they are balanced, elegant, varietally true—and attractively priced at $11.99-$12.99 SRP.

With the Terroir Series, Torres explores the unique personalities rooted in the Mendoza sub-zones of Luján de Cuyo and particularly Uco Valley, at an altitude of 1,000 meters above sea level, taking full advantage of estate vineyards dating back to 1996. At SRP $18-$20, this range offers a trio of sophisticated reds—Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot—with clear fruit expression with complexity and elegance; ideal for premium by-the-glass pours.

On-Premise Accolades
Emphasizing the delineation, Ruca Malen created bold new packaging for both the Classics and Terroir Series. Fortuitously, the makeover coincides with some especially positive media recognition: Wine & Spirits magazine singled out Ruca Malen as a “Most Popular Argentine Wine in America” in the 29th Annual Wine & Spirits Restaurant Poll.

The survey of on-premise trade professionals named 93 wineries in 2018, but only four from Argentina. This recognition dovetails naturally with the brand’s mission. “Our winemaking strategy begins with respecting the expression of the varietals. The style of wines that pair well with fine foods is one of the main pillars of Ruca Malen,” says Torres. Moreover, Ruca Malen was the first winery in Argentina to adopt the “tasting menu” concept. Today, the restaurant on-site at Ruca Malen in Lujan de Cuyo is the most successful in the country, drawing wine lovers from around the world and generating stellar reviews on Trip Advisor and other platforms.

Perfect Positive Storm
Gathering momentum from the new packaging, new winemaker and freshly minted critical acclaim, U.S. importer Opici Wines and Ruca Malen have embarked a 360-degree promotional push. “The pedigree and potential of Ruca Malen belongs at the forefront of the Argentine wine industry and this new look and the Terroir Series wines puts our audacious character front and center,” notes Federico Ruiz, Export Director.

At Opici Wines, VP of Marketing Mike Wolff calls the brand “reignited,” adding, “It is exciting to see the reaction on the street to both the package and the wine. Noelia Torres is making brilliant wines that people are going to remember.”
LIVE CURIOUS. DRINK BOLD.

RUCA MALEN
MENDOZA ARGENTINA

Named A “Most Popular Argentine Wine”
Wine & Spirits Restaurant Poll - April, 2018

www.rucamalen.com
For instance, at the 2018 San Francisco World Spirits, Elijah Craig Small Batch was named “Best Small Batch Bourbon,” placing second overall only to portfolio-mate Henry McKenna Single Barrel, named “Best Bourbon” across all categories. In that same competition, Heaven Hill’s Pikesville Straight Rye received a Double Gold designation. Pikesville also took home “Best of Show American Rye” at the 2018 WSWA Spirits Tasting Competition, where Elijah Craig Small Batch was named “Best of Show Bourbon.” And Elijah Craig Barrel Proof was named the 2017 Whisky Advocate “Whisky of the Year.”

The accolades have certainly been coming in bunches—and that is no accident. “Heaven Hill Distillery’s pedigree of producing bourbons and whiskeys with award-winning flavor is a tale of more than 80 years of family passion,” notes Heaven Hill President Max L. Shapira. “We don’t make whiskey to win awards, but it certainly helps validate all that we do here to make our American Whiskey the best way that we know how.”

The success of Elijah Craig—one of the fastest-growing super-premium whiskey brands in the country—is a special point of pride for Heaven Hill as the U.S. market has suddenly become saturated with new labels touting their special selection and/or limited production. Heaven Hill distillers were singling out a small number of barrels of the finest bourbon to make Elijah Craig long before the term “small batch” even existed.

Stronger than ever, Elijah Craig Small Batch is enjoying a leadership role within a dynamic portfolio. “Heaven Hill Distillery prides itself in nurturing storied brands and Elijah Craig is an example of one that has seen tremendous growth and popularity, as a result,” states Elijah Craig Brand Manager Max Stefka.

Tapping this name recognition in a novel way, Heaven Hill recently implemented the Elijah Craig Firestarter program, which celebrates “entrepreneurs who are torching the status quo” in areas like fashion, food and charity. The name is a double-entendre because it is only fitting that the spirit of Elijah Craig, “The Father of Bourbon,” is right in the thick of America’s current whiskey boom. Rev. Craig’s namesake bourbon continues to set the pace for a Heaven Hill Distillery portfolio that is loaded with up-and-coming labels.

© Robert Blackwell

Reverend Elijah Craig is credited with being the first person to age Kentucky whiskey in charred oak barrels.
it not only refers to the creative impresarios featured in the program, but to Rev. Craig himself, who was the first person to age Kentucky whiskey in charred oak barrels. Currently Firestarter spotlights Chef Alan Jackson of LA’s Lemonade and Peyton Jenkins and Colin Hunter of Alton Lane menswear. “By partnering with entrepreneurs through the Firestarter program, consumers can connect with a modern idea of who Rev. Elijah Craig was,” explains Stefka.

**Extended Whiskey Family**

Small Batch is just one of the Elijah Craig expressions produced by Heaven Hill. The even smaller single-barrel offerings include two age statements—18 Year Old and 23 Year Old—and Barrel Proof, which is uncut 12-year-old bourbon bottled straight from the barrel. The roster of whiskey complementing Elijah Craig includes bourbons Evan Williams, Larceny, Old Fitzgerald, Henry McKenna and Fighting Cock; plus Pikesville and Rittenhouse ryes and Bernheim Wheat Whiskey. “We protect brands that epitomize the time-honored traditions of American-whiskey making,” says Master Distiller Denny Potter. “Whether it’s distilling the classics in our portfolio like Elijah Craig or preserving storied brands like Pikesville [added in 2015], I see it as my responsibility to continue the legacy of quality and history.”

Creating or relaunching a whiskey brand can be a bit of a chess game. Potter recalls the story of Larceny, which was named for Old Fitzgerald distillery owner John Fitzgerald. He was also a treasury agent, and according to legend, had exclusive keys to the bonded warehouse, where he was said to help himself to his favorite barrels: “As we launched it, we only had enough wheated bourbon inventory to go into around 10 markets. Five years later, we finally got our stocks in a place for us to launch nationally.”

With so many bourbon and other whiskey expressions from Heaven Hill, consumers certainly have a choice of styles and how to serve them. Countless internet threads argue about the best way to serve it, but is there really a definitive answer? “Bourbon is personal,” says Potter. “I always like to say, ‘whatever way you like to enjoy bourbon is the best way,’ so the same goes for a good time.”

**BOULEVARDIER**

Bourbon lovers continue to sip Elijah Craig Small Batch neat and on the rocks, but the lack of a “12” on the label has actually made it more cocktail-friendly. Here it elevates the Boulevardier, a whiskey take on the Negroni, substituting bourbon for gin.

1 oz Elijah Craig Small Batch Bourbon  
1 oz Campari  
1 oz Sweet Vermouth

**Method:** Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass, add ice and stir until well chilled. Strain into either a coupe or cocktail glass. Garnish with an orange twist.

While the whiskey world seems awash in limited editions, three from Heaven Hill stand out for their combination of rarity and quality.

- **Heaven Hill 27-Year-Old Barrel Proof Small Batch Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whisky** was produced at Old Heaven Hill Springs Distillery before it was destroyed by fire in 1996. Only 41 barrels passed taste-testing for inclusion. Housed in a custom wooden box bearing two H’s on each side signifying the Heaven Hill, the one-time release, shipping late fall 2018, will be available in limited markets for SRP $399.

- The annual release of **Parker’s Heritage Collection**, in memory of Master Distiller Parker Beam who was diagnosed with ALS in 2010, is highly anticipated worldwide. Originally conceived to showcase the quality and broad range of Heaven Hill’s whiskey holdings, the past five editions from 2013-2017 have raised over $1 million for ALS research and care. The 2018 edition (110 proof; $89.99), finished in orange Curaçao barrels, begins shipping in September.

- The fall 2018 edition of **Old Fitzgerald Bottled-in-Bond Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whisky**—the second of its kind—comprising barrels produced in October of 2008, and bottled in August of 2018, ushers in the latest hallmark series to the bottled-in-bond legacy. It meets the strict requirements of a bottled-in-bond: the product of a single distillery from a single distilling season, aged a minimum of four years, and bottled at 100 proof. SRP $90.
1. **O’NEILL ‘EXITUS’ RED BLEND**

O’Neill Vintners & Distillers has launched Exitus, a bourbon-barrel-aged red blend composed of Zinfandel, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah and Merlot. Fermented in stainless steel and then aged for 3 months in Kentucky bourbon barrels, Exitus is a bold blend with a deep ruby color and aromas of blackberry, leather and dark chocolate. Bourbon barrel aging offers aromas of fire toasted oak, baking spice, caramel and tobacco. Available nationwide.

SRP: $25.99
exituswines.com

2. **APPALACHIAN SIPPIN’ CREAM**

Sugarlands Distilling Company is adding two seasonal flavors to their Appalachian Sippin’ Creams—a line of rum-based cream liqueurs that can be sipped over ice, added to coffee or used to create cocktails. First, in August, came a re-release of Pumpkin Spice Latte Sippin’ Cream, which includes touches of ginger, cinnamon and clove. Coming in October: Eggnog Sippin’ Cream. Both are 40 proof and packaged in amber mason jars; in 24 states.

SRP: $24.99
sugarlands.com

3. **O.R.E. 118 GIN**

O.R.E. 118 is the first spirit in the U.S. to be allowed a Raw Vegan claim on its Certificate of Label Approval. While there are other vegan gins, O.R.E. 118 is “raw” because throughout its production it is kept below 118 degrees Fahrenheit, the temperature above which many enzymes break down and foods and beverages are no longer considered raw. O.R.E. stands for “Original Raw Essence” and the letters are the initials of brand founder Robert Elder’s father. 80 proof.

SRP: $34.99
118and1st.com

4. **RED HORSE BEER**

A deeply-hued lager with distinctive hoppy impressions, Red Horse Beer offers an easy-drinking combination of flavors with an interesting Philippine beer profile. Its smooth bitterness drives the refreshingly zesty taste, complemented by a full, slightly warm, well-rounded mouthfeel. With brewer San Miguel having garnered 40 awards from Monde Selection, Red Horse Beer has global pedigree as well. Perfect for those looking for a more accessible specialty beer. Available in 330ml bottle and a 1 pint can; ABV 8%.

SRP: $8.99 (bottle or can)
redhorsebeer.com

5. **ROSA 22 APERITIVO**

The Riboli family has expanded the Stella Rosa line with Rosa 22, an aromatic aperitivo made in Italy’s Piedmont region. Balancing bitter and sweet, Rosa 22 comprises 22 natural ingredients of fruits, spices and herbs, yielding characteristics of an amaro with slightly sweet floral notes. The mixture steeps in stainless steel tanks for 60 days before undergoing cold stabilization and filtration. The end result creates a unique cross between a spirit and an aperitivo, best enjoyed neat, on the rocks, or mixed in a cocktail. 15% ABV (30 proof).

SRP: $25.99
rosa22.com

6. **SMIRNOFF MOSCOW MULE**

Smirnoff Vodka claims to have invented the Original Moscow Mule back in 1941; now they have released it as a bottled cocktail. Well, most of the cocktail, that is. The product is vodka infused with ginger and lime flavors, making it easy to make a Moscow Mule at home—just add ginger ale/beer and ice. A vivid copper-colored bottle wrap references the cocktail’s traditional copper mug. 60 proof; also in 50ml. Available only through September 30th.

SRP: $14.99
smirnoff.com
7. DUBONNET ROUGE
The iconic aperitif Dubonnet Rouge has been repackaged and reformulated. The fortified wine keys on Cinchona bark, combined with a wine base of Muscat of Alexandria, plus herbs and spices including black currant, tea and a dollop of 100% cane sugar. It is vibrant, both in color and flavor, at once complex and refreshingly light. Inspired by a 1940s bottle, the updated packaging features the cat of Sir Dubonnet’s wife. In both 750ml and 1L; 38 proof.

7. DUBONNET ROUGE
SRP: $17.99/750ml
doyoudubonnet.com

8. MALFY GIN ROSA & GIN CON ARANCIA
Two new gins—Gin Con Arancia (Sicilian Blood Orange) and Gin Rosa (Sicilian Pink Grapefruit)—are joining Gin Con Limone (Amalfi Coast Lemon Peel) and Gin Originale (distilled with all Italian botanicals) in the Malfy range. Distilled in a family-run distillery in Moncalieri, using a stainless steel vacuum still, ideal for capturing citrus aromas and flavors. Malfy Gin is sold in over 50 countries. 82 proof. Imported and distributed by Infinium Spirits.

8. MALFY GIN ROSA & GIN CON ARANCIA
SRP: $30
malfygin.com | infiniumspirits.com

9. EMPERADOR SOLERA BRANDY
From the Philippines’ largest liquor company and the world’s largest brandy maker, Emperador Solera Brandy has multi-faceted appeal. Resonant aromatics include caramelized nuts, tiramisu, honey, butter and mocha. Flavors complement, with notes of latte, tres leche cake, milk chocolate, delicate spices and cola, finishing with subtle almond. Smooth on its own, Emperador can be enjoyed neat or on the rocks; its flavor complexity works well in brandy-based cocktails as well. 80 proof.

9. EMPERADOR SOLERA BRANDY
SRP: $12.99
emperadorbrandy.com

10. OWNEY’S RUM
Think of it as a taste of history via Brooklyn: Owney’s Rum pays homage to a Prohibition rum runner, Owen “Owney” Madden, and is made in the style commonly enjoyed in NYC speakeasies. Comprised of Owney’s Distiller’s Reserve (the first NYC-made rum that came out in 2012) and two-year-old cask-aged Dominican rum, Owney’s is the latest from The Nobel Experiment, whose founder and distiller, Bridget Firtle, who left Wall Street to open NYC’s first exclusive rum distillery since Prohibition. 80 proof.

10. OWNEY’S RUM
SRP: $28
owneys.com

11. SANTI ‘VENTALE’ VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO SUPERIORE DOC
The Santi winery, under the direction of Cristian Ridolfi, has launched “Ventale,” a Valpolicella Classico Superiore DOC named as a tribute to the local winds. Mostly Corvina, plus 10% each of Corvinone and Rondinella, the wine spends 18 months in 500L casks made of 70% oak plus native chestnut and cherry. The 2016 Ventale is aromatic with cherry, currant, blackberry and green pepper; juicy on the palate, with velvety tannins and a tangy aftertaste.

11. SANTI ‘VENTALE’ VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO SUPERIORE DOC
SRP: $14.99
frederickwildman.com

12. JÄGERMEISTER ‘MINI MEISTER’ SHOTS-TO-GO
Jägermeister is already ahead of the pack in terms of stocking stuffers, having released the new “Mini Meister,” a 20ml bottle, sold in a ten-pack. The single-serve glass bottle is designed to appeal with convenience and an “on-the-go” mentality, allowing fans to still seize the moment. As a selling point, the miniature glass bottle allows the Jägermeister to quickly chill to its optimal -18°C, making for 10 “ice kühl” serves.

12. JÄGERMEISTER ‘MINI MEISTER’ SHOTS-TO-GO
SRP: $10/ten-pack
jagermeister.com
When Maeve Pesquera, then in charge of the beverage program at the fine dining chain Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar, originally visited Paso Robles, she arrived with no expectations. But that week changed her future.

“What was happening in Paso really rekindled my passion in wine,” says the now-Senior VP for Paso Robles Bordeaux-blend specialist Daou Vineyards and Winery. “It was so thrilling to see that there was still a wine region with amazing land available for reasonable prices, so that winemakers could do what they were driven to do, as opposed to regions where the costs were too prohibitive to really let things fly.”

While Paso Robles (pronounced by locals as “ROW-bulls” rather than “ROW-blaze”) is best known for deep, rich Bordeaux and Rhône blends (Cabernet accounts for nearly 40% of the region’s output), that sense of adventure and possibilities, as well as the relatively inexpensive cost of acreage, comprehensive range of soil types, topography and micro-climates among the 11 sub-AVAs, translates into a sort of Wild West of wine.

“There’s such a variety of soil and climate here—growers and winemakers have a huge palate from which to choose,” says Steve Lohr, CEO and co-owner of J. Lohr, perhaps the best-known Paso producer. “Because of the openness to try different things, it’s one of the most dynamic wine growing regions anywhere on the west coast.”

J. Lohr has been making wine in the region for about 30 years, and as the company replants vines, there are adjustments based on what’s been learned along the way. “There’s a huge expanse from relatively warm to somewhat cool,
from little rain to quite a bit, from clay to sandy—a lot to work with,” says Lohry. “In Paso we’re still relatively young enough and there are many people coming in with different ideas about what they’d like to do, so we’re not locked in to Cab.” It’s also the largest in acreage, and it’s not uncommon to encounter blends including Grenache Blanc, Picpoul, Cinsault, Counoise and many others.

Playing Around
Winemakers, especially smaller garagistes and boutique producers have the advantage of working in a region cordial to many varieties, says Clarence Chia, Vice President of Marketing at Justin Vineyards, best known for the Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot blend Isocoles.

“One reason is the dramatic diurnal swings we have, which allow the vines to cool off each night even when daytime temperatures reach into the triple digits. Although thinner-skinned varieties tend to be more delicate, there are sub-regions within Paso Robles that allow these grapes to thrive,” he says.

For Chronic Cellars, playing around with different vineyard lots and varieties has made the most sense as a way to take advantage of the region’s qualities. “We didn’t want to be beholden to traditional single varietal wines or historic blending model,” says Josh Beckett, co-founder and winemaker. “Because the winemaking tradition here in Paso Robles is relatively young in a commercial sense, there is just more freedom to explore and carve out a defined space for the winery.”

Sales Appeal
The same qualities that make Paso Robles intriguing may limit its appeal to the average wine consumer says Kat Kaliski, owner of Blends Wine Bar in Belton, TX. “Paso doesn’t in-and-of itself help me sell wine. It’s certainly a pro that I carry Paso wines for those who have been, or lived in that area. What does help is that I have been to Paso, experienced the wines, seen the landscape, and heard the stories. My customers look to me for suggestions. It also helps that Paso has some outstanding winemakers that I enjoy supporting.”

That’s a hook savvy winesellers can use. “There’s nothing better than Paso’s plentiful supply of quality grapes at relative bargain prices has drawn suppliers like Josh Cellars to add a Paso Robles bottling to their portfolio. Above, right: Justin Vineyards, whose Isocoles blend was among the region’s first to draw wide critical acclaim. Right, brothers Jake and Josh Beckett specialize in unorthodox blends and edgy labels at Chronic Cellars.

With vineyards sprawling roughly 42 miles east to west and 32 miles north to south, soil type, elevation, even rainfall can vary significantly across Paso Robles. To encourage the distinction of sub-AVAs while preserving overall regional identity, a conjunctive labeling law requires that on labels “Paso Robles” is of equal or greater size with any sub-AVA, and they have to be positioned together.
introducing a guest to their next favorite wine or wine region," says Pesquera. "From that perspective, Paso is incredibly attractive because of the overdelivery of quality at the price point, and that allows buyers to bring wines onto their list or stores that their guests or clients are going to be thrilled with."

Lohr points out that the qualities that have long made Paso attractive are more sought after today than ever, as prices up north grow less affordable and winemakers looking to chart a new course take a closer look.

Pesquera echoes that thought: "Wines made here are competing with many other regions in the U.S. because they are delivering, and over-delivering in many cases, on the promise in the bottle. We have only just begun in Paso, and even though there is a long tradition here, the best is yet to come."

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**Paso is incredibly attractive because of the overdelivery of quality at the price point.**

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J. Lohr is perhaps the AVA's best-known producer; while their white wine production is centered in Monterey, Paso Robles is the source of their well-distributed Cabernet bottlings: Seven Oaks and Hilltop.

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**Paso Power**

- Centrally located halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles along California's Central Coast, the Paso Robles American Viticultural Area (AVA) was established in 1983 with 17 wineries and 5,000 vineyard acres. Today there are 32,000 acres under vine and more than 200 bonded wineries.
- Paso is the largest and most diverse wine region in California, with 30 distinct soil types, many microclimates and varying topography within 612,000 total acres. It also experiences the greatest day-to-night temperature swing of any California AVA, typically 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit during the growing season.
- Zinfandel is the region’s heritage wine grape variety, first planted in the late 1880s, but Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varieties now represent the AVA’s largest planted wine grape varieties, covering 55% of the region’s vineyard acres.
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SANTERO
Dragon Distillery is Breathing Fire into Canned Cocktails

by Teddy Durgin

In Frederick, Md., here be dragons! Well, actually, here be the Dragon Distillery. It's the brainchild of founder Mark Lambert, a huge Dungeons & Dragons fan who wanted a beverage business that would specialize in small batch artisan spirits made from the finest locally sourced ingredients. He and his staff have breathed fire into this niche with such colorfully named products as Medieval Mint Flavored Vodka, Basilisk Bourbon, and Joust Gin.

Dragon Distillery's latest line is a series of canned cocktails that are appealing to a wide range of drinkers. Lambert, in a recent interview with the Beverage Journal, explained why: "The product is easy. You just grab it, you go! It's easy to take to parties, or when you're going out on your boat, or at the pool. It's a can, so there's no glass that can break. It's quick to chill, and it's ready to drink."

There are three canned cocktails in the current line-up, all lightly carbonated. The first is Dragon's Draft, a bourbon and cream soda. "At 38 proof, it's a little strong," Lambert conceded. "But it's delicious." The second is the Dragon Mule, which is Dragon Distillery's take on the classic Moscow Mule. It's vodka with Barritt's ginger beer and lime in a faux copper can. Third, there is the Golden Dragon, which is based on Dragon Distillery's Longbow Lemon Citrus Flavored Vodka. "We take that and add in a small-
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batch tonic made in Washington, D.C., by [True Syrups & Garnishes], along with a lemon-lime soda,” noted Lambert. “Both the Dragon Mule and Golden Dragon are 20 proof.”

As with all the company's bottled spirits, each canned cocktail features a dragon drinking in some way. Lambert remarked, “We don’t take ourselves too seriously, and our can designs reflect that. Like our Dragon Mule has a dragon holding a copper mug drinking a Moscow Mule. One of the reasons we’re doing the canned cocktails is because we're trying to push the envelope of what people can get here locally. We have a pretty large product portfolio, in general. But we're always looking to add to it.”

One example of that envelope pushing is the Dragon Dog Frederick Rye. “We love our collaborations, in particular,” Lambert said. “Dragon Dog Frederick Rye is a rye whiskey we do with Flying Dog. Flying Dog brews the rye mash, sends it over, and we ferment it, distill it, and barrel it.”

In addition to such collaborations, Lambert's business has benefited from being a member of the Maryland Distillers Guild. "The Guild is fantastic!” he beamed. "It's a very collaborative group of peers. In other industries, there's a lot of competition. But I find in the distillery business, especially through the Guild, everybody's willing to help and everybody's willing to share when you have a problem or need information."

As far as the secret of Dragon Distillery's success, Lambert acknowledged that the answer isn’t anything revelatory. “We just listen to our customers,” he replied, “and we generally create products based on their feedback. A lot of distilleries vow only to make one product. I’m going to do whiskey, and that’s all I’m going to do!” Well, that's great. But as a small craft distillery, we find that many people come in who have a wide range in interests. They'll say, ‘Oh, I don’t drink whiskey' or 'I don’t drink vodka.' We try to have something for everybody.”

He continued, "The canned cocktails grew out of that. We get a lot of people who come in with their significant other, and one is a spirits drinker and the other is not. With the canned cocktails, we can say, ‘Why don’t you try this bourbon and cream soda?’ They've been amazingly popular.”

To date, Dragon Distillery hasn't pushed its canned cocktails out to a lot of liquor stores, because Lambert didn't want to get ahead of production. “We're addressing those concerns and slowly offering them up to more liquor stores around the state,” he concluded. “A year from now, I'd like to have six to eight canned cocktails, and I'd like to be in the majority of liquor stores in Maryland.”

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52 BEVERAGE JOURNAL September 2018

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A significant result of the growth of Prosecco and Cava in the U.S. is that American consumers are starting to relax and enjoy sparkling wine at many different occasions. Not surprisingly, American producers are seeing the value in promoting their wares as part of a regular wine drinking lifestyle.

“People now have a new choice they can enjoy, at a price point that is more accessible.”

“We know our iconic J brushstroke stands for high-quality, traditional-method sparkling wines,” says Hitchcock. “With California Cuvée, people now have a new choice they can enjoy, at a price point that is more accessible for a casual midweek dinner or get-together with friends.”

The J California Cuvée is an assemblage from cool-climate California vineyards, notably from the Russian River Valley, but also from Santa Lucia Highlands and Mendocino County. Like the other J sparkling wines, the Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes for the California Cuvée are hand-picked and pressed in Coquard machines—designed in France, the presses keep grape clusters stationary during press, unlike the more common rotating and tumbling bladder press. The juice has less skin contact, thus retaining more of the delicate fruit characters, and avoids harsh stem and seed extraction. Fermented and aged lot by lot, the final result can include as many as 80 different lots, and after blending rests in bottles on lees for at least two years.

Hitchcock describes the wine as possessing a fruit and floral quality, “with a pop of tart pineapple, orange blossom, Asian pear and honeysuckle. Deeper in the palate, you’ll find hints of marzipan and toast. But it still has great, lively, food-friendly acidity, that zest of crisp green apple. It’s very much made in the Brut style.”

Launching in September with a SRP of $23.99, the wine will be targeted to fine wine retailers and select on-premise locations throughout the country.
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REYKA VODKA AT ARTSCAPE

Reyka Vodka was proud to be a part of the 2018 Artscape Festival in Baltimore. Artscape is one of the largest free art festivals in the country, highlighting art, music, film, and more. Reyka Vodka brought Iceland to Baltimore with Reyka signature cocktails and Icelandic snowballs.
INTRODUCING

DARK HORSE

SPARKLING BRUT & SPARKLING BRUT ROSÉ
THE CAPTAIN AND THE BIG FISH CLASSIC
Captain Morgan recently sponsored the Big Fish Classic in Ocean City. The Captain and his crew engaged with numerous accounts sampling Captain Morgan cocktails and taking pictures with guests. The Captain and the Big Fish Classic spectators cheered on the boats as they docked for weigh-in at MR Ducks.

DON JULIO 1942 BOTTLE CLUB LAUNCH PARTY
Don Julio recently hosted a 1942 Bottle Club Launch Party at La Palapa Grill & Cantina on National Tequila Day. Guests enjoyed cocktails featuring Don Julio 1942. The Don Julio Bottle Club initiative allows guests to purchase their own personal bottle of Don Julio 1942 and La Palapa will keep it safe to enjoy whenever they visit La Palapa.
A blend of Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Syrah and small percentages of other red varietals.

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Brewers Association of Maryland

The Brewer’s Association recently held their annual Craft Beer Competition in mid-August. Results from this year’s competition will be announced at an inaugural event, REVIVE!, in Ellicott City. More information can be found at MarylandBeer.org.

Maryland Distillers Guild

The summer saw both National Piña Colada and National Daiquiri Days - rums from Maryland distilleries were showcased in these classic frozen cocktails throughout the state.

Tenth Ward Distilling Company, located in Frederick, recently released Maryland’s first Absinthe.

Maryland Wineries Association

The Maryland Wineries Association recently announced the best-in-class and best-in-show winners of the 2018 Comptroller’s Cup competition. Catoctin Breeze Vineyard’s Cabernet Franc 2016 was awarded Best In Show.

Comptroller Peter Franchot presenting the 2018 Comptroller’s Cup Best In Show award to Catoctin Breeze Vineyard for their Cabernet Franc 2016.