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MARKETPOINT

The April issue blooms with news to use from the floor or the bar. Bring greater value to your customers by sharing your knowledge on tastes and trends.

- It's the "Age of **Agave**." Neat, on the rocks, or as a cocktail base, American consumers are embracing tequila while suppliers continue to enhance category offerings.
- U.S. consumers are also enjoying more **mezcal**. Bartenders have long known the secret of its unique taste profile; with their help, the market is ready to take flight.
- It's back-to-basics with **Chardonnay** 101. The popularity of this white is unparalleled, so drink up its past and present, shifting styles and selling points.



- The category slump of **Port** is set to turn around. New marketing techniques, especially on-premise, are boosting the classic fortified wine.
- One of Spain's emerging regions, **Priorat**, is embracing terroir. New plantings amidst a Mediterranean climate, later harvests and slate soils make for unique wines.
- Closer to **home**, we visit Bristol for a look inside Bristol Liquors in "Retail Review," and sip a seasonal cocktail in East Greenwich with Eleven 49 for "Serving Up." Pages of events and launches are found in "Around Town."
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ON THE COVER

Felipe Mendez, owner of La Milagrosa Agave Bar and Listening Room, Brooklyn, New York. Photographed by Andrew Kist.

DOUBLE CANYON NAMES MICHAUD AS WINEMAKER

Kate Michaud joined Double Canyon as its winemaker. In this role, she will direct and oversee all winemaking operations from the vine to the bottle. Most recently, Michaud was the first Washington-based winemaker funded by Naked Wines, enabling her to produce 90+point cabernet sauvignons. She also served as a winemaker and assistant winemaker for Covey Run and Cone Ridge. Double Canyon, known for producing benchmark cabernet sauvignons, is currently constructing a new winemaking facility close to the brand's vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills appellation. Once construction is complete, Michaud will offer direction on the 50,000-case capacity facility.



WASHINGTON STATE ANNOUNCES RECORD WINE GRAPE HARVEST FOR 2016

Washington State's 2016 wine grape harvest totaled 270,000 tons, a 22-percent increase from 2015 and the biggest harvest in the state's history, according to the Washington State Wine Commission's Annual Grape Production Report. Red varieties produced more tons than white with 58 percent of the harvest. The largest share of this growth was cabernet sauvignon with an increase of 23,700 tons from the previous year. Cabernet sauvignon and merlot ranked the highest in tons of red varieties; chardonnay and riesling ranked highest in tons of white grapes. Washington also surpassed 900 winery licenses in 2016.



SCOTCH WHISKEY ASSOCIATION NAMES NEW CEO

Karen Betts has been named the Chief Executive Officer for the Scotch Whiskey Association (SWA). She is the first female and eighth CEO of SWA in its 105-year history. Most recently, she served for 16 years with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as the British Ambassador to Morocco and has held a variety of positions in London and overseas. Betts replaces David Frost, who stepped down from the role in November 2016. "It's an exciting and challenging time for the Scotch whisky industry, and I am looking forward immensely to helping ensure its success into the future. I am also delighted to be moving back to Edinburgh with my family," said Betts.



CASTLE BRANDS TO BUILD U.S. PRESENCE OF ISLE OF ARRAN DISTILLERS

Castle Brands announced a five-year exclusive agreement with Isle of Arran Distillers Limited. The exclusive distribution agreement includes The Arran Malt Single Malt Scotch Whisky and Robert Burns Single Malt Whisky and Blended Scotch Whiskey for the U.S. market. Richard J. Lampen, President and CEO of Castle Brands, said this agreement will "leverage our distribution platform and our successes with our Jefferson's bourbon portfolio and our expanding Irish whisky offerings." Euan Mitchell, Managing Director at Isle of Arran Distillers said, "We are delighted to be working with Castle Brands to build our profile in the U.S. market and introduce our award-winning brands to even more whisky aficionados. We have many exciting releases planned for the years ahead."



WINE INSTITUTE SURVEY REVEALS SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS

The Wine Institute and the California Sustainable Winemaking Association (CSWA) released its 2016 Trade Survey, which found the trade views sustainability as a product benefit to distinguish wines in the marketplace. Seventy-three percent of respondents in the wholesale and retail tier said "they frequently or occasionally consider sustainability when deciding what to sell." The survey also reveals the packaging of sustainable products is important as a way to identify organic wines. The study also reported the trade ranked "environmental attributes high, citing integrated pest management, water conservation and protection of natural resources as defining attributes of sustainability."



LUX WINES ADDS ICONIC ITALIAN BRANDS FOR U.S. MARKET

Lux Wines, wine importer and independent division of the E. & J. Gallo Winery, was granted exclusive U.S. rights to distribute Italy's Argiano wines and Jermann wines. Of Arigiano wines, Lux Wines will import the historic Brunello di Montalcino DOCG; Rosso di Montalcino DOC and two IGT wines - Solengo and Non Confunditur. The Jermann portfolio includes iconic brands Vintage Tunina, Vinnæ, Dreams, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc and Red Angel. Lux Wines sales force and marketing departments are "committed and well-positioned" to represent the latest portfolio additions, according to a news release.





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CRAFT + ESTATE EXPANDS PORTFOLIO WITH BURGUNDY OFFERINGS

Craft + Estate, a member of The Winebow Group, announced its appointment as exclusive U.S. importer of nine properties from Burgundy including Domaine Pierre Gelin, Domaine Jean Grivot, Domaine Tolleot-Beaut, Domaine Xavier Monnot, Domaine Alain Chavy, Domaine Gagnard-Delagrange, Domaine Blain-Gagnard, Domaine Laurent Cognard and Maison Joseph Burrier—Château de Beauregard. “The rich heritage of these domaines and the unrivaled quality of this collection are very compelling,” said Liz Mathews, Senior Vice President of Craft + Estate. “We are honored to carry this historic portfolio forward and represent these extraordinary growers.”



CONSTELLATION BRANDS RECOGNIZED AMONG “MOST ADMIRABLE” COMPANIES

Constellation Brands has been named among the 2017 “World’s Most Admired Companies” by *Fortune* magazine. The publication surveys executives, directors and analysts to rate companies with strong reputations within their industry and across other industries. The companies are measured on innovation, people management, use of corporate assets, social responsibility, quality of management, financial soundness, long-term investment value, quality of products/services and global competitiveness. Constellation Brands was ranked fourth in the beverage industry category and scored high in all categories, most notably in quality of products and service, innovation and social responsibility.



BROWN-FORMAN APPOINTS BARRIE AS WHISKY MAKER FOR SCOTCH PORTFOLIO

Brown-Forman appointed Rachel Barrie as whisky maker for its Scotch whisky portfolio that includes the BenRiach, The GlenDronach and Glenglassaugh Distilleries, effective March 1, 2017. Barrie succeeded Billy Walker, who will continue to support and share his expertise throughout the transition. For the past five years, Barrie served as the master blender of Morrison Bowmore Distillers and led whisky creation for Bowmore, Auchentoshan and Glen Garioch, and most recently Laphroaig and Ardmore. She also worked with the Glenmorangie Company for 16 years.



ANGOSTURA NAMES JODHAN AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Angostura Holdings Limited named Genevieve Jodhan as Chief Executive Officer; she has been acting in this position since September 2016. Jodhan previously served as the Executive Manager to the International Sales and Marketing division. She is now the first woman to head one of Trinidad and Tobago’s largest manufacturing companies, outside the energy sector. In her new role, she will lead Angostura’s executive management team and support the Board of Directors on growth strategies and key decisions. Jodhan spearheaded international sales growth in Europe, Asia and Australia and has directed the development of the brands in many emerging markets including Russia, Czech Republic and Armenia.



GRAND MAYAN TEQUILA ANNOUNCES M.S. WALKER AS U.S. IMPORTER

M.S. Walker will be the U.S. importer for Guadalajara, Mexico’s Grand Mayan Tequila, a premium 100-percent Blue Agave tequila brand. Grand Mayan Silver is distilled three times and is “crystal-clear tequila” with fresh agave aromas. Grand Mayan Ultra Aged is a blend of tequilas aged three, four and five years in American and French oak casks, producing a darker tequila with aromas of nuts, agave and chocolate. Grand Mayan Single Barrel is a limited release ultra aged tequila sourced from single barrels between five-and six-years-old.



BOSTON BEER COMPANY CEO SET TO RETIRE IN 2018

Martin Roper, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Boston Beer Company, who led the company for more than 17 years, announced plans to retire in 2018. The Board of Directors created a search committee to assist in “identifying and evaluating best candidates to succeed Roper.” Roper said he has advised the Board of Directors of his retirement plans a year in advance to ensure a “very smooth transition and full and thorough search process for my replacement.” Jim Koch, Founder and Chairman of The Boston Beer Company said, “With the strong leadership team he has built, we are set up for success, and I am confident we will find a very capable CEO to step into his big shoes and lead Boston Beer into the future.”





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Britain's Surprising Sparkling Wine Market Offers Great Promise

BY ELISA WYBRANIEC, DIPWSET, CERTIFIED SOMMELIER, WINE DIRECTOR

Something is bubbling in Britain and it is quite exciting: sparkling wine. Quality sparkling wine production, made in the traditional method, is the focus of many producers in the English countryside. England's history of sparkling wine production is in its infancy, but the energy and enthusiasm expressed during my recent travels through Sussex and Hampshire all point to exciting times ahead.

The cool growing environment, being between the 50-51 degrees latitude, does pose challenges; but chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier are producing quality wines from carefully selected vineyard sites. Vineyards with a south facing aspect and longer daylight hours during the summer months attribute to a long ripening period in this marginal climate.

The geology of the vineyards in the south of England is rooted in the Cretaceous Period, which was 75 to 90 million years ago. A sea once covered the region creating layers of marine deposits, which help form these chalky soils, this was a vast area stretching from North Kent to Surrey.

The last Ice Age molded the areas' hills, valleys and ridges that exist today and in some areas the erosion of the ancient seabed resulted in exposing greensand, a type of sandstone also containing marine sediment from the earlier Cretaceous Period. Both greensand and the chalk soils are desired soil types for the areas' wine producers.

Currently, there are two PDOs for Great

Britain: English Wine PDO and Welsh Wine PDO. The English PDO permits pinot noir, chardonnay, pinot noir precoce, meunier, pinot blanc and pinot gris in their sparkling wines. Wines made in the traditional method must also have minimum of 3.5 bars of pressure and nine months on the lees before disgorgement. The vineyards we visited averaged 15 months on the lees prior to disgorgement, with several at 18 months to several years, and used the more traditional grape varieties, chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier.

Sussex also submitted to Brussels in November 2016 for PDO status, which could take several years for implementation. The feelings seem mixed when discussing with different producers whether the creation of a Sussex PDO was a welcomed delineation, as some do source from more than one county, which helps spread the risk of weather through the region.

It is relatively easy to navigate to the different producers we visited directly from London. We chose, however, to stay in some of the very picturesque villages in the immediate area, as the traffic can pose an inevitable challenge.

With the population of London being quite close to the wine producing region and ironically Champagne's biggest export market being Great Britain, British sparkling wine has huge domestic potential that has not been realized.



↑ Dermot Sugrue, Winemaker for Wiston Estate and Sugrue Pierre, East Sussex and Elisa Wybraniec.

The youthfulness of this market and lost or small-yielding vintage due to weather currently limits the amount of reserve wines available to the winemakers. Non-vintage wines are produced, but sparkling wines with a vintage are widely available, but with a different reference than vintage Champagne. The vintners I was fortunate to meet are all committed to quality; some have even committed to do so via organic and sustainable practices, not an easy task. However, the availability of British sparkling wine has been trickling into the U.S. It seems that will change in the near future, with almost all of the six producers I met with making their way into the U.S. market within the next 12 months. I can hardly wait!

ABOUT

Court of Master Sommeliers Certified Elisa Wybraniec is an award-winning wine director and sommelier at The Coast Guard House Restaurant in Narragansett, Rhode Island.

NEW YEAR, NEW LOOKS

Like cars and candy and laundry detergent, established wine brands are wont to tweak their look to stay fresh in the marketplace. Two recent makeovers include **Beaulieu Vineyard** and **Sandeman Port**.



MAKE WAY FOR TUSCANY'S NEW 'DARK KNIGHT'

Why should California have all the fun? Italy's historic Castello di Gabbiano has launched the Dark Knight, a Tuscan IGT that joins the surging Red Blend category, melding Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Sangiovese. At SRP \$17, the 2015 Dark Knight fills a valuable spot in the brand's portfolio. It also represents a bold step forward in packaging, which "over-indexed across all metrics, including likeability, purchase intent and uniqueness," says Sylvie Levesque, VP of Imports for Treasury Wine Estates. tweglobal.com | gabbiano.com

CALLIE COLLECTION UNCORKS WITH HELIX

Callie Collection, Constellation's new line of wines from California's Central Coast, is the first new wine brand to launch nationally in the U.S. with the innovative Helix closure. (Red Truck was the first.) Callie Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay and Red Blend each feature the closure's twist-to-open, twist-to-close technology. Helix was developed by Amorim and O-I, the world leaders in cork and glass packaging. The wines kicked off in NYC with Brand Ambassador Hillary Duff. SRP \$13.99. cbrands.com



The twist-to-open, twist-to-close Helix combines an ergonomically-designed stopper made from cork and a glass bottle with an internal thread in the neck.



The throwback Cabernet is available in 750ml and magnum

STE. MICHELLE CELEBRATES HALF A CENTURY

Fifty years ago—in 1967—a small winery called Ste. Michelle Vintners introduced its first vintage, a Cabernet Sauvignon from the Yakima Valley. This year, Chateau Ste. Michelle celebrates their 50th anniversary with a host of special events plus a commemorative Cabernet bottling, in both 750ml (SRP \$15) and magnum. And for extra fun: from April through September, inside every 50th Anniversary Special Bottling of Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is a chance to win one of 50 prizes. Four Grand Prize winners will be selected to win a trip for two to visit the winery. ste-michelle50th.com

MEROTTO ARRIVES, KICKING PROSECCO UP A NOTCH

A new line being introduced by Prestige Wine Imports is promising to nudge Prosecco upscale. The family-owned Merotto estate has strong ties to the land around Col San Martino, a DOCG zone cultivated for over 2000 years. Coming to the U.S. will be three DOCG Merotto Prosecco: "Colbello" (SRP \$16.99); "La Primavera di Barbara" (\$19.99); and "Cuvee del Fondatore" (\$34.99, winner of six straight Tre Bicchieri awards). "As the importance of quality in the trend develops, the natural tendency is that our consumers will look for more premium products," notes Steven Menter, PWI National Sales Manager. prestigewineimports.com





AN HISTORIC WINERY THAT WON'T STAY IN THE PAST

SOUTH AFRICA'S ICONIC 332-YEAR-OLD BOSCHENDAL ESTATE FINDS A NEW AUDIENCE IN THE U.S. MARKET

BY KRISTEN BIELER

Ancient wine estates aren't always the most experimental. South Africa's Boschendal is a proud exception. While South African imports continue to struggle in here, Boschendal's U.S. sales were up 135% last year, specializing in two of the fastest-growing categories: rosé and sparkling. "Our tremendous heritage and place in the history of South Africa's wine industry gives us the flexibility to be creative; we feel more freedom to try new things," says Lizelle Gerber, Boschendal's head winemaker.

Boschendal was founded in 1685 by French Huguenot Jean le Long who identified the Franschhoek region (French corner) as prime grape growing territory. The farm—a celebrated example of Cape Dutch architecture—has passed through a handful of owners (including a Prime Minister and the DeBeers Mining Company) and survived the phylloxera epidemic.

SUSTAINABLY CHARGED

Boschendal has been a pioneer in sustainable farming. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) named the estate a Conservation Champion for their clearing of alien vegetation, elimination of pesticides and water conservation.

Fast-forward to the 1970s. Boschendal was the first in South Africa to build a gravity-fed winery, and first to make a barrel-fermented Chenin Blanc. "At Boschendal we have always experimented," says Gerber. "We have a 'Playpen' range for our small batch projects." In an effort to move toward "an increased focus on texture and oak restraint," Gerber explains, her team has been trying out a range of new wine-making vessels like wooden eggs, amphoras and foudres.

Wines on Trend

Boschendal's "Rose Garden" Rosé—named for the estate's fairy tale-like Rose Garden, a heritage site in South Africa—hit the market a few years ago and quickly become one of the most beloved South African rosés in the U.S. market, crafted in a fruit-driven, fresh style. Not quite as pink, but another intriguing standout is the sophisticated crisp, pale blush Chardonnay (61%) and Pinot Noir (39%) blend.

Perhaps South Africa's best kept secret? It's Méthode Cap

Classique (MCC) wines, sparkling wines made like Champagne, and Boschendal has diligently championed this style. "We were the first South African winery to make a Blanc de Noirs in the 1980s, and we've been perfecting our MCCs ever since," shares Gerber. Four of Boschendal's sparklers are here, from the Brut NV and Brut Rosé (top sellers in the U.S.) to the Grande Cuvée and the prestige Boschendal Jean de Long, aged 60 months on its lees.

Perhaps the most significant evolution at Boschendal has been the discovery of their own terroir. "We are still learning so much here about our own vineyard sites," explains Gerber. Which has led to many plantings being relocated and varieties being better-matched to soil types.

Their terroir obsession also led Boschendal to recognize the potential of the cool-climate Elgin Valley—years before it developed the renown it has today. The winery bottles their Elgin Appellation range separately—tiny lots of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. ■



Boschendal's
Chardonnay
Pinot Noir 2016



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Boschendal's Sparkling
Methode Cap Classique (MCC)



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HOTEL VIKING DINNER SERIES FEATURES FINE WINES

The 2017 Hotel Viking Wine Festival began with its first wine dinner on February 4 and featured Paul Hobbs Winery, makers of single-vineyard reds and whites in Sebastopol, California. Winemaker Matt Hobbs gave guests insight into the vineyard, the winemaking process and answered questions. Paul Hobbs wines were paired with a four-course meal. The following week's dinner welcomed Giovanni Pasquero of Paitin Estate of Piedmont, Italy on February 11. Featured wines included 2013 Patin Barbera D'alba; 2013 Patin Langhe Nebbiolo; 2014 Patin Langhe Nebbiolo Starda; 2011 Patin Barbaresco Serra; and Paitin Barbaresco Vecchia Vigne.



1. Hotel Viking Executive Chef Barry Correia; Matt Hobbs, Winemaker, Paul Hobbs Winery, next to a consumer and guest during the Hotel Viking wine dinner. Photo by Meagan Emilia Photography.
2. A wine and dinner pairing. Photo by Meagan Emilia Photography.
3. Wine and dinner menu. Photo by Meagan Emilia Photography.
4. Guests gathered for the second wine dinner of the series on February 11, featuring selections from Paitin Estate in Piedmont, Italy. Photo by Dennis Rollins.
5. Executive Chef Barry Correia of Hotel Viking with Giovanni Pasquero of Paitin Estate. The two discussed their food and wine pairings and Pasquero spoke about the winemaking craft. Photo by Dennis Rollins.
6. The selection of Paitin Estate wines. Photo by Dennis Rollins.

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**NEWPORT COCKTAIL COMPETITION
FEATURES THOMAS TEW RUM**

The Revolving Door in Newport hosted area bartenders for the fourth annual Thomas Tew Rum Cocktail Competition on February 20. Competitors were Adrienne Nicole from the Vanderbilt Grace, Corey Hayes from Fluke Wine Bar, Megan Freitas and Caitlin Murphy, both from Statesman Tavern and Jonathan Edgell from the White Horse Tavern. Each created a unique recipe for their cocktail containing a minimum of 1.5 oz. of Thomas Tew Authentic Pot Still Rum. Jen Davis, Chapter President of the United States Bartenders' Guild Rhode Island (USBG RI) chapter; Ryan Belmore, Editor and Publisher of "What's Up Newp;," Brent Ryan, Co-founder and Master Distiller of Thomas Tew Rum; and Jason Kindness, Co-owner of Kai Bar served as the event judges. Each cocktail was scored on its name, simplicity, presentation, taste and aroma, and originality. The crowd also had the opportunity to declare its favorite. Freitas was named first place winner by the judges with her cocktail "Tew-'maro Never Dies," which contained Thomas Tew Single Barrel Rum, Rovero Bianco Vermouth di Torino, Cynar and chamomile-black pepper syrup. The crowd favorite was Corey Hayes' cocktail "The Coco Coolada" with Thomas Tew Rum, pineapple juice, coco lopez, lime, vanilla syrup and allspice. Event proceeds benefited The Maher Center.

1. Corey Hayes, Fluke Wine Bar; Adrienne Nicole, Vanderbilt Grace; Megan Freitas, Statesman Tavern; Jonathan Edgell, White Horse Tavern; Caitlin Murphy, Statesman Tavern.
2. **Back row:** Ryan Belmore, Event Judge and Editor and Publisher, "What's Up Newp;," John Begin, Coordinator of Newport Cocktail Wars and Bartender at Gas Lamp Grille and White Horse Tavern; Tristan Pinnock, Editor-in-Chief at "The Newport Blast;" **Front row:** Jen Davis, Event Judge and USBG RI President; Erin Cassese, Bartender, The Boat House; Jason Kindness, Event Judge and Co-owner, Kai Bar; Brent Ryan, Event Judge and Co-founder/Master Distiller, Newport Distilling Company.
3. Competitor Caitlin Murphy of Statesman Tavern speaking with judges Ryan Belmore, Jen Davis, Jason Kindness and Brent Ryan.

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COAST GUARD HOUSE HOSTS TRIMBACH WINE DINNER

The Coast Guard House welcomed Jean Trimbach, a 13th-generation family owner of the French wine producer's namesake line. The wine dinner on February 28 featured Trimbach Pinot Blanc 2014, Riesling 2013, Riesling Cuvee Frederic Emilee 2007, Pinot Gris Reserve Personelle 2011, Gewurztraminer 2013 and Vendage Tardive Gewurztraminer 2014. Each wine was paired with a culinary offering. The Trimbach family has been crafting wines in the Alsace region of France since 1626. During the dinner, Trimbach spoke about his family's history and winemaking, as well as the characteristics of each paired wine.



1. Wines from the Trimbach portfolio featured during the dinner.
2. Elisa Wybraniec, Sommelier, Coast Guard House and Jean Trimbach of Trimbach Wines.
3. The dinner menu featured a first course of pork belly with Brussels kraut, apple and slow-cooked onion. The second course featured crispy monkfish with leek and pomme maxim. Third course tasted foie gras torchon with chestnut, pear and veal jus. Fourth course showcased a whole roasted local fish and lastly, fruit and crème brulee for dessert.



RHODE ISLAND DISTRIBUTING CO. LAUNCHES RELATIVITY WHISKEY

Relativity Whiskey has launched in the Ocean State through Rhode Island Distributing Co. An Edrington Americas brand, Relativity Whiskey is a combination of small-batch distil toasted American Oak and four traditionally-distilled whiskeys from corn, wheat, barley and rye, crafted in partnership between Brain Brew Distilling, Edrington Distillers from Perthshire, Scotland and Eureka! Ranch of Ohio. The maturation process uses computer-controlled cycles of heat and pressure through a 40-minute process called Compression Aging™, a speed-aging technology that "mimics the seasons of nature and enhances the whiskey's secondary maturation process." Relativity Whiskey is amber honey in color with barley characters on the nose and aromas of toffee vanilla and warm caramel. The flavor features a combination of corn, wheat and rye with "hints of sugar and clove and oak and dried citrus on the finish." Relativity Whiskey is 40% ABV and bottled in an Erlenmeyer flask-shaped bottle.



OCEANSTATE WINES & SPIRITS OFFERS KANON ORGANIC VODKA

Kanon Organic Vodka of Sweden is now available in the Oceanstate Wine & Spirits portfolio. Kanon Vodka is made from 100-percent organic and locally-sourced wheat and pure spring water. The vodka is made at The Gripsholm Distillery, the only EU and U.S. certified organic distillery in Sweden. Kanon Vodka is made under a single-run distillation to “preserve the flavor and character of the wheat with zero burn.” The vodka contains no sugar and produces no waste as the by-products are recycled into eco-fuel.



NEWPORT STORM AND LOCAL COFFEE HOUSE COLLABORATE ON NEW STOUT

Newport Storm and Empire Tea & Coffee of Newport collaborated on a new brew offering, High Test Coffee Stout. The base of the beer is a combination of Black Patent malt, chocolate wheat and roasted barley for its “sweet and toasted flavors.” Magnum and Equinox hops are added to create a smooth and sweet finish. Cosecha coffee from Huehuetenango, Guatemala is then added in the aging process, where the whole batch is fermented and allowed to mature with “dry-beaned” coffee beans. Newport Storm reviewed four different types of coffee before choosing Cosecha. High Test Coffee Stout is 8% ABV and is available in 4-packs for a limited time. “CJ Barone, owner of Empire Tea & Coffee, has always supported Rhode Island craft breweries, and Newport Storm especially, with the Newport Craft Beer Festival,” said Derek Luke, Brewmaster, Newport Storm. “It was a no-brainer to collaborate with his local roaster, Kat, who is so passionate about helping us select the right coffee for our beer.”



FLAMING LEPRECHAUN SPIRITS JOINS RIDC OFFERINGS

Ireland’s Flaming Leprechaun spirits line is now available in state via Rhode Island Distributing. The premium distilled spirit line, owned by 3 Hearts Ireland and Malcom Brown Ltd., includes Special Reserve Blended Irish Whiskey (92 proof), Limestone Filtered Celtic Gin (88 proof), Limestone Filtered Vodka (80 proof), Triple Distilled Rum (80 proof) and Fiery Irish Cinnamon Spirit (70 proof). The 2016 San Francisco World Spirits Competition awarded Flaming Leprechaun medals for each of their product entries, including a pair of Double Gold medals in the Vodka and Gin categories. “We can’t think of a better partner in the Ocean State than Rhode Island Distributing. Their knowledge and experience in the state is second to none, and we’re excited to be partnering with them as they’ll help us grow the Flaming Leprechaun brand name throughout Rhode Island and across New England,” said Jack Walsh, Managing General Partner of 3 Hearts of Ireland.



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SAGE CELLARS WELCOME WINEMAKERS AND TASTING AT BASTA

Basta Restaurant in Cranston hosted the Sage Cellars team, visiting winemakers and trade professionals for an intimate wine tasting on March 1. Winemakers Jacopo Di Battista of Querceto Di Castellina in Tuscany and Marcello Miali of Cantine Miali in Puglia and Salento poured selections from their respective wine lines, which are available in Rhode Island via Sage Cellars. Owners of Sage Cellars, Jesse Sgro and Anne Sage, poured Italian wine selections, while Sales Associates Andrew Doolan and Nick Sampson featured California wines and Italian beers from the Sage Cellars portfolio.

1. Jesse Sgro and Anne Sage, Owners, Sage Cellars.
2. Winemaker Marcello Miali, Cantine Miali.
3. Cantine Miali wines are produced by Miali's fourth-generation of winemaking family members.
4. Winemaker Jacopo Di Battista, Querceto Di Castellina.
5. Wines of Querceto Di Castellina.
6. Sales Associate Andrew Doolan featuring California wines including Volker Eisele Family Estate in Napa, Summit Lake Vineyards and Retro Cellars from the Howell Mountain AVA.
7. Nick Sampson, Sales Associate, pouring Italian beers from Birrificio Rurale and Birrificio Maiella breweries.
8. Birrificio Rurale and Birrificio Maiella Italian beers.
9. Guests during the Sage Cellars tasting at Basta Restaurant.



**RHODE ISLAND DISTRIBUTING HOSTS
ESPRIT DU VIN PORTFOLIO TASTING**

Rhode Island Distributing Co. and Red Stripe in Providence welcomed trade guests for an Esprit du Vin wine portfolio tasting on March 1. Trade professionals had the opportunity to speak with winery representatives and account managers. Later that same day, the Rhode Island Distributing Co. sales team attended an Esprit du Vin tasting for a brand training and education session.

1. Jim Kowalyszyn, Northeast Regional Field Manager, Esprit du Vin with Tom Becker, General Manager Fine Wine, Rhode Island Distributing Co.
2. Jean Trimbach of Maison Trimbach Wines produced in Ribeauvillé, Alsace, France.
3. Guillaume Virsolvy, American Sales and Marketing Manager, Domaines Paul Mas.
4. Domaines Paul Mas wines from Languedoc, France.
5. Los Vascos estate wines from the Colchagua Valley, Chile.
6. Timothy Gardella, New England Area Manager, Esprit du Vin; Amy Monks of Chow Fun Food Group and Jacob Dushuttle, Sous Chef, Red Stripe.
7. Mike McCann, Northeast Regional Manager, Esprit du Vin.
8. Jean Trimbach of Maison Trimbach and Amber Tomlinson of Cork and Brew in Cranston.
9. Jim Kowalyszyn, Northeast Regional Field Manager, Esprit du Vin.
10. Sparkling selections on display.



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SONS OF LIBERTY SPIRITS RECEIVES AWARD, LAUNCHES CRAFT BEERS

Sons of Liberty Spirits Company of South Kingstown was recently named “American Craft Producer of the Year” at *Whisky Magazine’s* 2017 Icons of Whisky awards at Brandy Library in New York City. The company also received awards in “America’s Best Flavored Whiskey” for its Gala Apple Seasonal and two Gold Medals in the “American Single Malt” category for its Uprising and Battle Cry whiskies. “To say we’re ecstatic is an understatement. With more than 1,200 distilleries currently operating in the U.S. it is an incredible honor to be named an Icon of Whisky for 2017,” said Sons of Liberty Founder, Mike Reppucci. “Since day one, we have strived to redefine American spirits and the support we have received from the local community over the years has been invaluable in putting Sons of Liberty in the conversation with the world’s finest distilleries.”

The company also expanded their offerings to include craft beer and its new name will reflect that: Sons of Liberty Beer & Spirits Company. Barrel Aged Battle Cry Belgian Tripel Ale, Barrel Aged Uprising Stout Ale and Wild Fermented Oatmeal Stout officially launched during a release party at the distillery on March 3. Guests had the opportunity to purchase the 22-oz. bottle beers, speak with company representatives, sample food by Eddie’s BBQ and enjoy music from FrankenPhil.

1. Mike Reppucci, Owner, Sons of Liberty Beer & Spirits Company and Chris Guillette, Partner, Sons of Liberty.
2. Barrel Aged Battle Cry Belgian Tripel Ale is aged in Battle Cry Single Malt Whiskey oak barrels. The beer is not carbonated and “drinks like a brandy with heavy barrel influence,” 15.85% ABV.
3. The Barrel Aged Uprising Stout Ale is aged in Uprising Single Malt Whiskey oak barrels, 9.97% ABV.
4. Chris Wild Fermented Oatmeal Stout is the first in the Chris Coolship Beer Series and uses the same mash bill from Uprising Stout Ale and the Uprising Single Malt Whiskey.



OCEANSTATE WINE AND SPIRITS HOSTS SPRING PORTFOLIO TASTING

Oceanstate Wine and Spirits invites trade professionals to its Spring Portfolio Tasting on Wednesday, April 5 from 3-7 p.m. at The Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Crossings in Warwick. Guests will have the opportunity to speak with winery and brand representatives alongside the Oceanstate team while sampling from domestic and imported beer, wine and spirits. The Crowne Plaza Hotel is located at 801 Greenwich Avenue.

ABSOLUT LIME CELEBRATES ARRIVAL IN THE OCEAN STATE

Rhode Island Distributing Co. launched Absolut Lime, the latest portfolio offering from Absolut. The High Rollers Club at Twin River Casino welcomed the Rhode Island Distributing sales team on March 6 where Beau Hodges, Region Manager at Pernod Ricard and Mike Dooley, Pernod Ricard Portfolio Manager at Rhode Island Distributing Co., led a brand presentation. Featured cocktails during the event included an Absolut Lime Drop, Absolut Lime and soda with a lime wedge and Absolut Lime N' Coconut Martini. All Absolut products are produced in Ahus, a small village in Southern Sweden, which serves as Absolut's "one source" for all ingredients.

1. Absolut Lime.
2. Beau Hodges, Region Manager MA/RI, Pernod Ricard; Kevin McCann, Vice President Pernod Ricard Portfolio MA/RI United Division, Martignetti Companies; Joe Morenzi, General Manager, Rhode Island Distributing Co.; Chris Woods, Vice President Sales, Rhode Island Distributing Co.
3. Al Zannella, Vice President Sales and Marketing, Rhode Island Distributing Co., and David Aiello, Sales, Rhode Island Distributing Co.
4. Arthur Chamberland, New England Market Manager, Pernod Ricard and Mike Dooley, Pernod Ricard Portfolio Manager, Rhode Island Distributing Co.
5. The Absolut Lime N' Coconut Martini.
6. Lime cupcakes were served.
7. David Aiello, Sales, Rhode Island Distributing Co. and Karen Richer, On-Premise Sales, Rhode Island Distributing Co.
8. All from Rhode Island Distributing sales team: Jody Vento, Chris Carmone, Ron Bernier and Karen Richer.
9. Mike Dooley, Pernod Ricard Portfolio Manager, Rhode Island Distributing Co. with Beau Hodges, Region Manager of Pernod Ricard introducing Absolut Lime.
10. Absolut Lime decorated the back bar at the High Rollers Club in Twin River Casino.
11. Sales team members during the Absolut Lime brand education session.





**RI HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION, MATTIELLO
HOST FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST**

The RI Hospitality Association (RIHA) and Rhode Island Speaker of the House Nicholas Mattiello hosted “Get Served by the Speaker,” a fundraiser for the Cranston Animal Shelter and the RI Hospitality Education Foundation on March 2 at Gregg’s Restaurant. Speaker Mattiello, House Majority Leader Joseph Shekarchi and students from the ProStart® High School Culinary Arts and Foodservice Management Program at Cranston Area Career and Technical Center served more than 75 guests and raised \$8,000 during the event, with \$4,000 going to each charity. “I am so honored that Speaker Mattiello and Leader Shekarchi took time out of their busy schedules to truly ‘serve’ the public and help raise money for some great causes,” said Dale J. Venturini, President and CEO of RIHA. “Raising eight-thousand dollars for the Cranston Animal Shelter and our own Education Foundation is a wonderful accomplishment.”

Nicholas Mattiello, Rhode Island Speaker of the House; ProStart students from the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center; David DePetrillo, Chairman, RI Hospitality Education Foundation; Pat Maxwell, Cranston Animal Shelter Control Officer; Lietutenant Mark Freeborn, Cranston Police Department; and Dale Venturini, President and CEO, RIHA.

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Storm Clouds are Brewing

BY LEN PANAGGIO



I am writing this column in early March and the forecast is for a very cold weekend. I really can't complain, this past winter was pretty mild compared to a few years ago and the change of season is ahead.

As I travel throughout the state from venue to venue, I am encouraged by the positive feedback I'm hearing from staff about business; there certainly is an air of optimism! One bartender in a busy Newport restaurant said to me last week, "it hasn't stopped!" Well, we are all looking forward to spring and summer and the opportunities that come with those busy seasons. The resort communities will enjoy their usual May-October burst; the cities will be busy through mid-June, picking up again in September.

Now is time to take stock of everything going on inside and outside of your property. Besides your physical operations, is your staff ready? Are they trained? Have they all taken all of the mandated courses? Is your management team in place and ready to roll? By far, the most important resource in your business is the human resource; it needs to be taken care of, nurtured and allowed to flourish. If you don't heed the needs of your staff, it could spell disaster when you least expect it.

In my time running restaurants and now consulting, I put a premium on two-way staff meetings to hear the thoughts and concerns of personnel and improve day-to-day operations to create a workplace that is conducive to maximizing their earnings and thus your earnings! Buy-in from staff is key, especially with today's millennials. They want to be heard and quite frankly they should be. They are in the trenches, they know what is broken and they expect management/ownership to fix it.

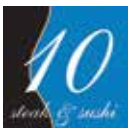
Outside of your business, there are some storm clouds brewing. While the State's Commerce Department touts the virtues of the

hospitality industry, there are some legislators in the state house that seem hell-bent on destroying it, perhaps unwittingly. Some of the legislation being submitted is frightening and if I was a business owner right now, I'd consider doing something else. From the wage bills, to predictive scheduling and everything in between, it is a frightening time to own a business. I fear for the well-being of our industry.

If you are reading this and are not a member of the RI Hospitality Association, you should be; they need your help. Whether it is financial support, testifying for or against bills at the state house, or attending fundraisers, membership participation is critical. All too often, too many of us take the efforts of the Association for granted and each legislative session, believe that everything will work out. Well, how would you deal with a \$15.00/hour minimum wage and no tip credit? Changes to the overtime law and mandated scheduling are looming as well.

Outside your building, the business that you have worked so long and hard for, there are storm clouds gathering on the not-too-distant horizon. And your staff's jobs will change and not for the better, but for the worse. The proponents of these bills simply do not understand our business and seem blind to the fact that artificially legislating the economy will not work. If you are not involved in this fight, it's time to get involved. Join the RI Hospitality Association and see how you can help. At the very least, email your representatives in the house and senate and let them know what these onerous bills will do to your business.

After all, your loyal guests want you to continue providing a nationally-ranked hospitality experience for years to come. Be part of the solution this year; your livelihood and the livelihoods of your staff depend on it.



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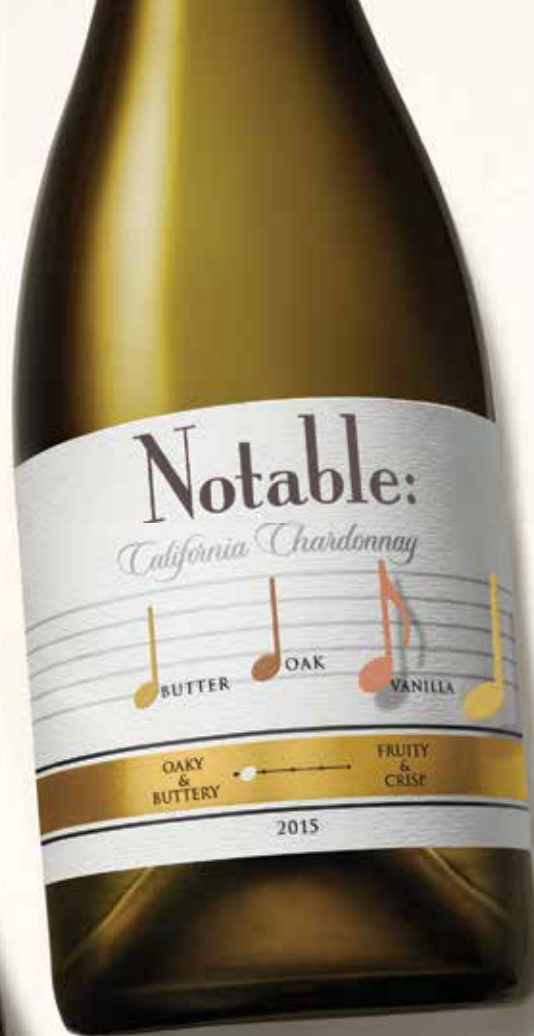


ABOUT LEN PANAGGIO

BEVERAGE CONSULTANT

Len Panaggio's career in food and wine spans more than three decades as an owner and as a beverage director at some of the top restaurants in Rhode Island. Currently a hospitality consultant, Len is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island and has attended the Culinary Institute of America Master Sommelier program and the Sterling School of Service and Hospitality.

NEW!



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BUTTERY



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LEGISLATING THE ECONOMY DOES NOT WORK



BY DALE J. VENTURINI, PRESIDENT & CEO, RI HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

The political climate of our nation has never been more divisive. And, long before we felt this overwhelming divide that has rippled into creating distinct factions throughout the country, we have been in our own divisive fight locally. Our battle is much more focused thematically, but politics still play a prevalent role.

For several years, the hospitality industry has been at odds with out-of-state, well-organized factions whose sole mission is to lobby local legislators into fundamentally changing the hospitality business model through prohibitive wage structures, scheduling mandates and other employee benefits that should be determined at the employer's discretion.

While we have been successful in the past and have compromised on some issues, we were told that there are literally dozens of new pieces of legislation being introduced that target our industry. I'm not sure when



government and special interests began thinking that the hospitality industry is a giant, sacrificial cash cow, but nothing could be further from the truth. It is incredibly disheartening not only to RIHA, but to every business owner who does his or her level best to provide good-paying jobs, a career path to the more than 70,000 employees who work in the hospitality industry, and millions of dollars in food and beverage and sales taxes.

In a time when Rhode Island is continually celebrating and investing in tourism and the uniqueness of RI's food scene, the organized attack on our industry by these out-of-state groups serves to undercut the very same businesses that are providing the uniqueness that brings people to RI. I do not understand how our industry can be venerated and microplaned at the very same time.

Wage issues – minimum wage and tipped wage – continue to be an ongoing battle. There are new pieces of legislation that have just been introduced that seek to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2022 and the tipped minimum wage by 47% in 2018, and to \$15/hour by 2026. These campaigns mirror well-funded activities that are happening around the nation.

Legislating the economy simply does not work. We cannot legislate profitability, so trying to artificially force wages up in an economy that cannot possibly support the increase is a recipe for disaster and job loss.

Business owners are still adjusting to the last minimum-wage increase, which took place in January of this year. As owners are forced to pay more, they will raise prices, cut jobs in many cases and also will hire more selectively, choosing employees with previous experience. A hallmark of our industry has always been that we are a great place for the next generation of workers to get practical, hands-on training, while also making good wages and enjoying a flexible schedule.

Wage increases, coupled with legislation on mandated scheduling and sick time might seem compelling on paper, but in reality, these are incredibly aggressive and far-reaching measures that a hospitality business model fundamentally cannot adjust to.



LEARN MORE

To learn how you can help keep our industry strong and able to employ more than 70,000 folks in the state, please visit www.restaurant.org



ABOUT DALE J. VENTURINI PRESIDENT & CEO, RI HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

A veteran of more than 25 years in the hospitality industry, Venturini is considered by many to be the voice of the industry in the state of Rhode Island. She has been instrumental in improving the industry's educational and training programs in the state, as well as enhancing the bottom line of the business she represents. Venturini splits her time between the office and the State House, a constant presence for her membership.



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BEER FORECAST

HAZY

BY JACK KENNY

In centuries past, beer was cloudy. Hazy and murky are other apt descriptors. Beer in those days was unfiltered, and nobody cared, because there was no other kind of beer. The liquid was poured into an opaque vessel of earth, bone, horn or metal. Glass was rare and affordable only by the aristocracy.

When commercial glass took off in the mid-1800s, folks could see into their beer, sort of. Around the same time, clear lagers became the thing, and since then clear beer has been the standard. Wheat beers, of course, are allowed to be hazy, but any other brew that isn't clear has something wrong with it. So we believe.

During the reign of clear beer, a cloudy lager or ale was given the jaundiced eye because it might have become infected with unwanted bacteria; the yeast might have suffered some issues, or was the wrong strain; certain adjuncts were problematic, or the filtration system wasn't performing as it should. Maybe the brewer cooled the beer too quickly, or perhaps it was overly dry-hopped. Any of those could apply.

In the past few years, the American craft beer palate began to experience a change, thanks in large part to the brewers of New England. It's a small evolution, to be sure, but it has captured the attention of deeply serious beer lovers (and beer snobs, to be sure) and it's growing at a fairly good clip. The subject is hazy beer, aka New England IPA.

The trend is believed to have started in Vermont with Alchemy Brewing's creation of Heady Topper, a double IPA. Joining it are the beers of Hill Farms, also in Vermont, Tree House in Massachusetts, and Connecticut's own New England Brewing. It has since spread across the continent and the internet, spawning fans and furor, delight and snark.

The cloudiness can range from a gentle nimbus to a full-on cumulus. Suspended yeast cells are a contributor, as are particles from barley and oats (if used). Water chemistry plays a role, too, as does the dry-hopping process. Dry-hopping is the addition of significant quantities of hops at the end of the boil, or just afterward during fermentation. Its purpose is to add aromatic characteristics to the batch. Compounds in the hops known as polyphenols contribute to the turbidity. (Turbidity, the word, makes some beer people uncomfortable, even though it is accurate. Brewers use it mostly to identify beers that are murky as the result of infection.)

Those who are presented with a hazy beer for the first time might regard it with furrowed brow, but consumption will dispel the doubt. These are beers with pronounced flavors, redolent of such fruits as mango, papaya, pineapple and others; they are majestic for good reasons.

First, they are fresh. They must be, because hops have a short shelf life in a bottle or can, and a very short life on tap. Hop character is volatile and breaks down, so a bold hoppiness is difficult to maintain. Most cloudy beers, if left in the bottle or growler, will clear as the suspended solids settle.

Second, they are not filtered. Making a clear beer involves conditioning at cold temperatures. It also makes use of clarifying agents to reduce haze. Finally, it is filtered. These can diminish the aroma and flavor of hoppy beers. Eliminating those steps yields a hazy beer that possesses a higher concentration of hop oils and other aroma/flavor compounds. The appearance might startle, but the reward for the senses can override that minor discomfort.

Over time, those desirable flavors and aromas will change. Put a fresh bottle of hazy beer in the fridge for four weeks and the change will be noticeable. The haze will have diminished or settled completely; the hop character will have degraded – not necessarily in a bad way – and the experience will not compare to that of the previous month.

New things are objects of praise and scorn, and especially in scientific fields do the critics find fault at a high pitch. It pays off, however, to give a creation time to develop some sophistication rather than attack it at inception. It's the same with beer. A few years from now, turbid beer will be met with benign smiles, just around the time that something newer comes along to get jumpy about.



ABOUT JACK KENNY

Jack Kenny has been writing the Beer Column for *The Beverage Journal* since 1995.



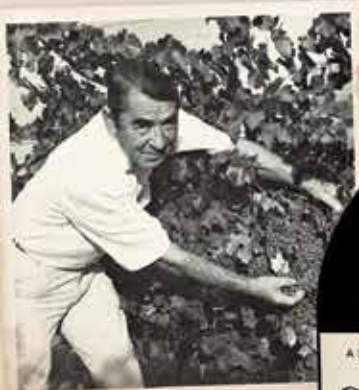
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The legendary André Tchelistcheff helped bring our first vintage to life in 1967.



In 1967, Ste. Michelle Vintners produced its first Cabernet Sauvignon, with guidance and support from the legendary international winemaker André Tchelistcheff.

It was the release that put the Washington state wine industry on the map. Still, there were skeptics in those days. "Wine from Washington?" sniffed one sarcastic critic. "What side of the Potomac do the grapes grow on?"

Undeterred, the early pioneers of Washington wine understood the state's potential—with growing regions that share the same latitude and similar terroir as the great French Bordeaux vineyards. Fifty years later, Washington is the nation's No. 2 producer of premium wine with more than 50,000 acres planted, nearly 1,000 wineries in operation and 14 designated appellations.



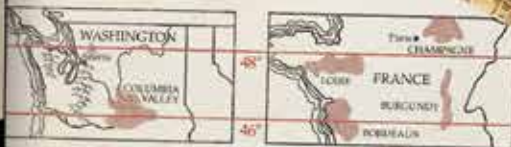
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We're flattered, but we don't spend a lot of time polishing our medals. Our goal is to blend craftsmanship with innovation to create exceptional wine experiences. Whether it's a connoisseur opening a bottle of 93-point* Cabernet Sauvignon from our Canoe Ridge Estate at a dinner party, or a newbie discovering a Columbia Valley Riesling at our Summer Concert Series.



Washington state's terroir shares similarities with the great wine-producing areas of France.

So let's toast our first 50 years. But only as motivation to produce even more remarkable Chateau Ste. Michelle wines, moments and memories in the next 50.

Cheers. The best is yet to come.

*June 2016, *The Wine Advocate*

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Bristol Liquors

BY SAVANNAH MUL

At 10 years in, Mario and Irene Alves were restaurant industry veterans, owning and operating Bristol Sunset Café. They enjoyed the restaurant business, and loved even more the many aspects of serving the community. When the opportunity to purchase Bristol Liquors came up, the Alveses decided to expand into alcohol retail, keeping in mind their penchant for hospitality.

For the first five years owning Bristol Liquors, they were still managing Bristol Sunset Café. Mario Alves recalled the long hours operating both businesses and knew they had to let go of one. “We were weighing the options and this [Bristol Liquors] was the better fit. We thought ‘we can build a life here,’” said Irene Alves. The Alveses didn’t let go of Bristol Sunset Café completely; a family member took over the breakfast and lunch spot.

Ready to dive into a new and different industry with full attention, attending trade and consumer tastings to expand their knowledge was a strategy from the



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FACTS
 SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1,250
 YEARS IN OPERATION: 10

beginning, Irene Alves said. “I don’t believe in having a wine and not being able to talk about it and recommend something, it’s not right. We are always learning every day; no one can know everything.”

The Alveses taste and select products, keeping customers’ preferences in mind, and are happy to bring in new products brought to their attention. “If a customer asks for it, we’ll bring it in,” said Mario Alves. Irene added, “We have substantially increased our wine sales and inventory selections.”

Product displays, a walk-in beer cooler and high shelves for spirits help make the most of their 1,250-square-foot space. “We do the best we can with the space we have,” said Mario Alves.

Trends over time that the Alveses report include an increase in female shoppers purchasing finer

wines, brown spirits gaining popularity across all age demographics, consumers looking for the latest craft beer and ready-to-serve drinks replacing mixers. “The industry has been in a constant change,” Irene Alves said.

The husband-and-wife team, along with a couple of part-time employees, operate the store. “We have a lot of date nights on Fridays here; we’ll bring a pizza,” Irene Alves laughed, “But I’m a people person and we’re here to do a service. It’s a great community and a nice, small town.”

Coming from operating a restaurant to now owning Bristol Liquors, the Alveses have always stuck with the same motto in business and everyday life. “Treat customers the way you would like to be treated and the value you deserve,” Irene Alves said. Bristol Liquors also contributes to local charitable organizations, from sponsoring wine tastings to donations. ■



▲
 Bristol Liquors Owners Mario and Irene Alves.

FEATURE YOUR STORE



If you own a small, medium or megastore and would like to be featured, email: dana@thebeveragejournal.com

Never Stop Discovering.



We searched the world to find the most exotic ingredients— and our discovery of more than 10 unique botanicals led to an exceptional new gin with notes of citrus and spice. To round out the bold taste experience, a rare coastal botanical— the inspiration for our name— delivers a subtle hint of sea salt. Enjoy Nautical™ on the rocks, with tonic, or in your favorite classic gin cocktail. May every glass you raise salute your never-ending spirit of exploration.

WHISKEY A-GO-GO

Whiskey, by its very nature, needs to be distilled, aged and bottled. That takes time. And so it is rather impressive brand new ones are cropping up. Credit to the marketers? In any event, new bottlings present a great opportunity for merchants to encourage trial; research suggests that today's brown spirits sippers are more open to experimentation than those of yesteryear. Here are a few fresh to market.

The latest release in Glenmorangie Single Malt Whisky's Private Edition series, **Bacalta**, takes its name from Scots Gaelic for baked. Overseen by Dr Bill Lumsden, heavily toasted American oak casks seasoned by Malmsey wine—the sweetest and most prized of the Madeira wines—lend layers of sun-baked sweetness to Glenmorangie Bacalta. Non chill-filtered; 92 proof; SRP \$99.99. glenmorangie.com



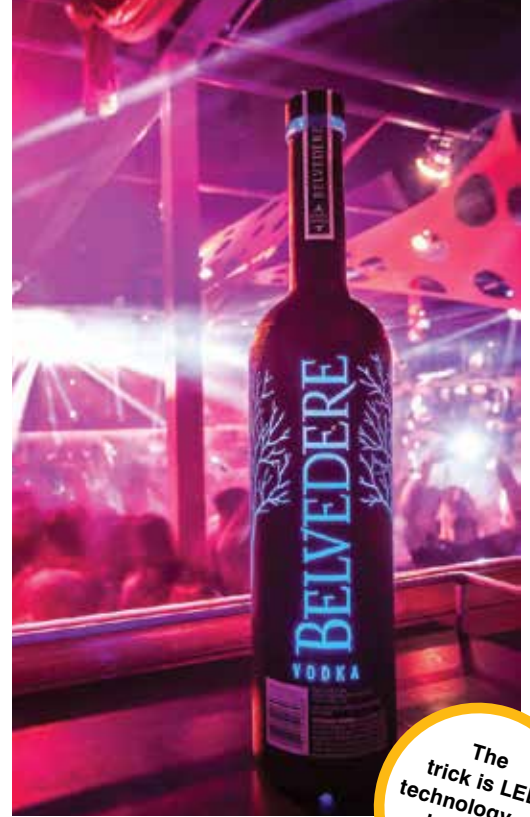
White whiskey—aka moonshine or white lightning—gets coddled by 3 Badge Beverage Corporation's Mixology division. The result is **Bib & Tucker Small Batch White Whiskey**, double distilled using a column still followed by an old-fashioned pot still. Minimal oak contact (24 hours) allows the whiskey to gain structure, body and faint coloring. SRP \$40; 92 proof. 3badge.com



Craft + Estate, a member of The Winebow Group, is bringing in two new whiskeys. New to the Wolfburn range, **The Aurora** Single Malt was aged in a combination of American oak and Oloroso Sherry casks, yielding an intriguing balance of sweet and savory notes. SRP \$63; 92 proof. The first release of the Marquess Series from Tullibardine, **The Murray**, pays homage to an historic Scot, Sir William Murray; the whisky has been laid down in first-use bourbon barrels; bottled at cask strength. SRP \$75; 112 proof. craftandestate.com



Anchor Distilling is bringing the sought-after New Zealand Whisky Collection to the U.S. Founder Greg Ramsay discovered hundreds of barrels of cask strength whiskeys that had been distilled in the world's most southern distillery in Dunedin, by Canada's Seagram's. The distillery had been mothballed at the end of the 20th century, the quietly maturing barrels are now being bottled. Anchor will import four expressions, each 375ml; SRPs \$84.99-\$229.99. anchorsf.com



The trick is LED technology and laser-cut glass

BELVEDERE VODKA LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT (CLUB)

Via LED technology and laser-cut glass, Belvedere Vodka is again turning heads in Miami, Las Vegas and NYC. Their Midnight Saber follows the path "blazed" by previous limited releases of the Night Saber (2012) and Silver Saber (2014). The electrified, luminous 1.75L bottles really grab attention from across a dark room, which, of course, is why it's tailored for clubs with bottle-service menus. The bottle stays lit for hours and is also waterproof, so ice buckets are fine. belvederevodka.com

BAILEYS BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH ALMANDE

Fermentation and distillation are ancient, so it is rare to find something actually new under the beverage alcohol sun, but Baileys Almande definitely brings a fresh take on a traditional liqueur. This dairy- and gluten-free spirit blends the nutty flavors of real almond milk with vanilla. Serve alone over crushed ice or mixed into a cocktail; the signature Baileys Almande Refresh calls for 3 ounces each of Almande and coconut water over ice... perfect for the post-yoga crowd. SRP \$21; 26 proof. baileys.com



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SERVING UP

ELEVEN 49

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Eleven 49 is recognized in *Rhode Island Monthly* magazine for “Best Brunch,” “Best Lunch,” “Best Neighborhood Bar” and “Best New Restaurant.” From an intimate dinner to a business lunch, and of course brunch, drink offerings complement the contemporary American cuisine. Its menu features craft beers, wines by-the-glass and bottle, and seasonal specialty cocktails.



Bartender Samantha LaPoint with Flower Power cocktail.

BARTENDER

Samantha LaPoint

COCKTAIL

Flower Power

RECIPE

- » 1/2 oz. house made lemongrass simple syrup
- » 1 orange slice
- » 1.5 oz Smirnoff Citrus Vodka
- » 1 oz. Absolut Hibiscus
- » 3/4 oz. Hiram Walker Pomegranate Liqueur
- » 1 oz. POM juice
- » Sparkling rosé

Muddle the orange slice and lemongrass simple syrup in a shaker. Fill with ice; add citrus vodka, Absolut Hibiscus, pomegranate liqueur and POM juice. Shake vigorously. Strain cocktail into martini glass and top with sparkling rosé. Garnish with a fresh orange twist.

“When I think spring ... cool, crisp air and budding flowers come to mind. I love the floral hibiscus note and clean flavor of the fresh citrus and lemongrass. Flower Power tastes just like spring,” said LaPoint.



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AGE OF AGAVE

TEQUILA CONNOISSEURSHIP EMERGES, TRANSFORMING IT INTO A SIPPING SPIRIT

BY JEFF CIOLETTI





Agave-based spirits have found themselves in a bit of a best-of-both-worlds sweet spot previously reserved for the likes of whiskey and Cognac. Not only are they among bartenders' favorite cocktail bases of late, but the Mexican distilled beverages—especially tequila—are enjoying increasing prominence as sipping spirits.

“There’s definitely a trend toward consumers enjoying tequila neat or on the rocks, driven by pure curiosity and the knowledge they’ve gained, especially with our aged expressions,” says Christine Moll, Category Marketing Director, Tequila for Campari USA, which markets Espolón Blanco and Reposado, among other limited releases.

It’s been a movement that gradually has been building since the early 2000s, when marketers wagered that the same premiumization phenomenon that had been driving vodka sales had a place in the tequila category as well.

Last year, total U.S. tequila volume was up just over 7% to 15.9 million cases, according to the Distilled Spirits Council, with the high-end and super-

premium price tiers growing 16% and 7.3%, respectively.

LOOKING UP(SCALE)

Patrón usually is credited as the most high-profile pioneer in the superpremium space and both boutique and mass-market brands have a presence in the above-premium tiers.

But it’s not all about putting a fancy label on an even-fancier bottle. There’s genuine connoisseurship happening as consumers have become far better-versed on everything from flavor nuances to production processes to maturation grades.

“The true tequila connoisseur, a growing group, is as informed as their counterparts in whiskey or wine these days,” observes Ken Austin, founder of Tequila Aviión. Austin notes that much of the “sipping” consumption is happening on the rocks, something that Lee Applbaum, Chief Marketing Officer at Patrón Spirits International, has witnessed as well.

ABOVE: Agave fields, like this one supplying Casamigos, provide the distinctive raw material, which is then cooked, fermented and distilled. Alex Gabriel Mendoza competes in the 2017 Road to the Hacienda Challenge, sponsored by Tequila Herradura; participants were tasked with creating a twist on a classic cocktail.

“Consumers in the tequila category have matured in their understanding, not just of the nomenclature around it—what makes a reposado and an añejo and what’s a tahona, for the more advanced,” Applbaum says, “And even one step further from that, consumer skepticism around claims of ‘authenticity,’ ‘hand-crafted,’ ‘artisanal,’ has trickled down to tequila—which is a good thing.”

It’s apropos that Applbaum mentioned the tahona, the colossal two-ton stone wheel that only the most traditional of traditional producers use to crush agave and release its juices. A few years back his company launched the Roca Patrón line of tequila whose agave was milled through the tahona process (‘Roca’ refers to the volcanic rock from which the tahona is carved).

Patrón also plays in the luxury space with its Gran Patrón line, whose retail prices tend to be well into the triple digits. The jewel in that crown is Gran Patrón Burdeos which is aged in American and French oak barrels and finished in vintage Bordeaux barrels. You won’t be finding that one in a strawberry margarita.

Similarly, Tequila Aviión markets Reserva 44, a limited, small-batch extra añejo that’s aged for nearly four years in

OPPOSITE: Casamigos creators George Clooney and Randy Gerber are among the young-brand owners who are successfully positioning their tequilas as both mixable and sippable. Blue Weber agave fields of and bottles by Patrón.

RIGHT: Like tequila, mezcal production—seen here at Mezcales de Leyenda—involves cooking agave piñas before fermenting and distilling. Critical differences: for mezcal, agave is sourced from anywhere, not just Jalisco; and many types of agave are permitted.



oak—43 months and then an additional month in petite barrels, to be exact. Austin recommends that consumers enjoy it neat or with a single ice sphere. He says the trade has dubbed Reserva 44 the “Pappy van Winkle of the tequila category.”

That power of celebrity certainly isn’t lost on the Casamigos brand, as partners in the business are high-profile entertainment and nightlife industry entrepreneur Rande Gerber and George Clooney. They play up the artisanal production process, particularly the 72 hours that the agave piñas spend baking in traditional stone ovens, the 80-hour fermentation process and the use of a proprietary house yeast. Its marketing positions it as a sipping tequila, especially its reposado and añejo varieties, and yet it is also becoming a mixologists’ favorite.



SIPPING SPECTRUM

Of course, there’s a continuum to connoisseurship. But most curious tequila consumers looking to trade up have, at the very least, been seeking out 100 percent agave products.

Some brands are positioned to enable that trade-up from right within their own portfolios. Sauza is a good example. The Beam Suntory brand has the more mass-market-friendly Sauza Silver and Sauza Gold, but then offers its Sauza Signature Blue line of 100 percent agave options. And their sibling brand Hornitos Black Barrel beckons with more complexity yet, gained from a special aging regimen that uses traditional, charred and toasted barrels.

Don Julio has three sipping tequilas, each with a point of distinction. Don Julio 1942 is an añejo created for the 60th anniversary; Don Julio 70 Clear Añejo (created for the 70th anniversary) is given a charcoal filtration that restores the crisp agave notes found in the Blanco while also stripping its color. And Don Julio REAL, their extra añejo, is produced only from the best estate-grown agave and is pot-distilled, yielding only three barrels per cycle.



Casa Noble, bought in 2014 by Constellation, features a solid ultrapremium lineup of Crystal, Reposado and Añejo tequilas. Named “Tequila Producer of the Year” at the 2016 International Spirits Challenge, Casa Noble is one of the few certified organic and kosher tequilas on the market today. But as with other well-distributed brands, it is important to have a crown jewel atop the portfolio. In Casa Noble’s case, the brand has a rare, limited release luxury line called Colección del Fundador. The first edition, Alta Belleza, launched in 2016.

It is a single-barrel Extra Añejo finished in ex-barrels of Robert Mondavi To Kalon Cabernet Sauvignon; only 563 bottles were available to the world.

Cuervo has excelled in special editions. Jose Cuervo Reserva de la Familia has been released every year since 1995. Self-dubbed “the world’s first extra-añejo tequila,” it is aged in both French and American oak, and each annual release is enhanced by an special artist-decorated

AGAVE: HERE’S LOOKIN’ AT YOU

With both the tequila and mezcal categories growing, SKUs are multiplying, both in terms of brands and expressions, and the marketing is becoming more evocative. Graphically, the distinctive, spiky Blue Weber Agave plant still rules on many labels; El Jimador, Tres Agaves and Corazón are just a few examples. But brands are getting bolder, tapping into agave’s wild and exotic persona, as well as iconic Mexican imagery beyond agave.

Agave Loco playfully calls itself crazy, which fits the product well as it is aged in used bourbon barrels and then cured in a formula of six peppers.



Eyecatching and as utterly simple as “Uno, Dos, Tres,” **123 Organic Tequila** distinguishes the three main levels of tequila, and the bottles are handblown from recycled glass.

New from Palm Bay International, partnering with top three tequila producer Casa Don Roberto, **Tequila Bribón** is named for the legendary and wildly charismatic Mexican figure on the label.



Inspired by the famed masked wrestlers of Mexico, **El Luchador** is organic and at 110-proof is fast becoming a mixologist favorite (and standout on the back bar).



M.S. Walker is importing **Grand Mayan** Tequila in three expressions—Silver, Ultra Aged and Single Barrel—in beautiful hand-made Talavera clay bottles. Also available in 100ml and 1.75L.



A new trio from Don Sebastiani & Sons plays with Spanish language: **Contigo** (meaning “with you”) **Silver**; **El Fumador** (The Smoker) **Reposado**; and **El Macho Añejo**.



Jose Cuervo celebrates 222 years with a limited-edition series, muralist and artist Ricardo Cavolo visually narrates the history of Jose Cuervo across the Especial Gold and Silver bottles.



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La Milagrosa Agave Bar and Listening Room in Williamsburg, Brooklyn

MEZCAL MATURITY

While mezcal—tequila’s smoky, mostly Oaxacan cousin—is also an ancient craft, its toehold in the U.S. is young indeed. The granddaddy of our mezcal market is arguably Del Maguey, a brand founded way back in 1995. Visionary Ron Cooper put single-village mezcal on the map, unapologetically importing multiple SKUs, demonstrating how ancient processes combine with varying micro-climates and terroir to give each creation its own unique, rich character. Striking green Del Maguey bottles were the first mezcals to reach the back bar of many U.S. establishments.

In the 21st century, mezcal’s natural connection with tequila has made trial much easier for agave aficionados. And the market now has a range of options, many with evocative names (Scorpion, Ilegal, Sombra, Montelobos, El Buho). It’s notable that the hip SXSW Festival in Austin has an official mezcal this year (Kimo Sabe); and the category has its own celebrity brand in Cheech Marin’s Tres Papalote. Perhaps the most mainstream sign of all: Ilegal, after taking on investment by Bacardi, recently entered a national distribution agreement with Southern Glazer’s. And new entrants continue to illustrate the natural variety of mezcals; Mezcales de Leyenda currently offers five different organic mezcals, from five different regions using five different agave plants.

Megan Barnes, Beverage Director of the mezcal-centric Washington, DC watering hole Espita Mezcaleria, has encountered a broad spectrum of consumers, and she’s got quite an arsenal at her disposal, with some 135 different mezcal bottles. “The level of knowledge ranges in our guests,” Barnes observes. “Our regulars tend to take notes, keep journals and even photograph the bottles they enjoy. I’d say more newcomers are likely to ask for a ‘smoky mezcal.’ Offering flights is a lot of fun because it allows us to tell a story.”

One of those flights is designed to demonstrate how terroir influences the agave from region to region, just as it does with wine grapes. It includes three mezcals made from the Espadín variety—there are some 30 agave varieties that can be used in mezcal, versus only one, Weber Blue, for tequila—all made in a similar manner but with vastly different flavor profiles.

A brand new destination for mezcal enthusiasts in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, is La Milagrosa (The Miraculous). From the outside, it looks like (and is) a Mexican deli. But behind the dried chiles, prickly pears, chorizo, sauces and the like—staples used in owner Felipe Mendez’s Cerveceria Havemeyer restaurant next door as well as at his well-known La Superior—is a freezer door that leads to a reservations-only “agave bar and listening room.” With curved wood walls and ceiling optimizing the acoustics, Mendez is able to unleash his dual passions—15,000 vinyl records and dozens of tequilas and mezcals. ■

box. Cuervo has also done limited editions honoring the Rolling Stones, who in 1972 famously brought Jose Cuervo along for their North American “Tequila Sunrise” concert tour.

ROOM TO GROW

Many automatically associate “sipping” with “aged,” but, as Patrón’s Applbaum points out, there’s been a definite trend toward drinking blanco/silver tequilas on their own: “Enjoying blanco tequila on the rocks, you really taste the agave and the citrus notes coming out from it.”

That’s not to say tequila sipping is exactly where it is with whiskey, but that means there’s plenty of untapped potential. “There is still a lot of room for increased knowledge when it comes to people who consume tequila only in a margarita—the number-one cocktail in the U.S.,” says Avion’s Austin. “This bodes well for the tequila category, especially in the ultra-premium segment.” ■

TEQUILA AGE DESIGNATIONS

- **BLANCO** (aka silver) is clear and unaged.
- **JOVEN** (aka gold or abocado) spends several months in tanks before bottling.
- **REPOSADO** (meaning rested) is the first definitive level of aging; these tequilas rest in wood (usually oak) barrels for two to 12 months.
- **AÑEJO** (meaning “old” or “mature”) applies to tequilas aged at least one year in oak barrels; these tend to be darker, smoother and more complex.
- **EXTRA AÑEJO** tequila has rested at least three years in barrel.

Mezcal bottlings in the U.S. have their fair share of creative packages—and because there are more variables in production (types of agave and techniques), mezcal brands often have distinct selling points.



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Rooted in innovation, SKYY Infusions® California Apricot will be the first to hit the market!



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THE 2ND LARGEST
FLAVOR TREND IN
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69% OF
MILLENNIALS
CHOOSE
AUTHENTIC AND
LOCALLY SOURCED
FLAVORS³



UNIQUE
FLAVORS AND
PROVENANCE
= ATTRIBUTES
FOR MILLENNIAL
PURCHASE
DECISIONS⁴



NEW SIGNATURE DRINK

SKYY CALIFORNIA BREEZE

1 PART SKYY Infusions® California Apricot

2 PARTS Lemon Lime Soda

SPLASH of Cranberry Juice

Glass: Collins with Cubed Ice

Garnish: Apricot Wedge



CALIFORNIA APRICOT
VODKA INFUSED WITH NATURAL
CALIFORNIA APRICOT FLAVORS
35% ALC./VOL. (70 PROOF)

Sources:

- ¹ Lightspeed GMI/Mintel, February 2014
- ² IFF/Technomic Flavored Beverage Trends, September 2016
- ³ Mintel, 2016
- ⁴ Sensient, 2016



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA WINE INSTITUTE.

CHARDONNAY

{ NEED TO KNOW }



BY W. BLAKE GRAY



While there is some debate over what is the king of red winegrapes (Cabernet? Nebbiolo?), Chardonnay is the undisputed queen of whites. The most widely planted winegrape in California, it is also clearly the most popular wine in the U.S., with sales increasing every year.

People love Chardonnay because it is generous—full of fruit and then some. It is sometimes called a wine-maker's grape because it is so moldable; treatment in the vineyard, during fermentation and barrel-aging can dramatically impact style. Which is all the more reason to take a look at what makes this popular wine tick.

CHARDO-HISTORY

1680s

The first mention of Chardonnay was in the Mâconnais, where “Chardonnay” was said to make the best wine. It takes its modern spelling from a Mâconnais village named Chardonnay (population 162) near Uchizy.

1936

The first varietally labeled Chardonnay in the U.S. was released. This shift represented a fundamental distinction, affirming that New World wines were based on the *grape*, while Old World wines still defined themselves as a product of *place* first.

1976

Chateau Montelena becomes the most famous Chardonnay in American history by besting a field of French and California Chardonnays in the “Judgment of Paris” tasting.

STYLE POINTS

Chardonnay is both flexible and generous; indeed, one of its strengths is its recognizable, embraceable flavors, which can manifest in distinct ways.

Fruit can fall into several camps; depending on ripeness when picked and type of fermentation, flavors can be:

CRISP AND TART

[Green Apple, Lemon, Grapefruit]



STONE/TREE-FRUITY

[Peach, Red Apple, Pear]



TROPICAL

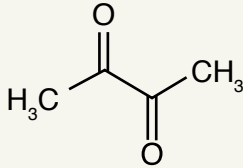
[Banana, Coconut, Guava]



Then if the wine has been put through malolactic fermentation and aged in oak barrels, a whole other layer of aromatics and flavor elements come into play; think butter, oak, yeast, vanilla, caramel, toasted marshmallow...

WHAT MAKES A WINE TASTE BUTTERY?

If a Chardonnay smells and tastes like butter, it's no wonder. Diacetyl, a chemical that gives butter its flavor, is a natural wine byproduct resulting from a technique called "malolactic fermentation," or "malo" for short. This technique can be applied to both white and red wines, but you don't notice it in the reds, and it is expressed vividly in Chardonnay.



WHAT MAKES A WINE TASTE OAKY?

Just as with whiskey and Cognac, some flavors in wine come from the wooden barrels it ages in. Vanilla, coconut, toast—these are all flavors of wood. A generation ago the only way to add those flavors was to use new wooden barrels, but those are expensive. Today, for cheap wines many big wineries soak a teabag of oak chips, or use wooden staves in stainless steel tanks. It does the trick for less.



TABLE TALK

Chardonnay is about the best wine on the shelf to go with roast chicken. Consider that as a shelf talker. In fact, whatever it is going on the family table at night, chances are Chardonnay can make it better.

Other Chardo-partners:

LOBSTER & SHELLFISH

This classic combo works especially well with a big buttery Chard.



CHEESE

Mais oui, notably Camembert, Gouda, Gruyere... even mac & cheese.



FISH

Lighter wines go with medium-textured fish like trout, snapper, Chilean seabass; heftier, oaked wines with meatier fish like salmon, tuna, monkfish.



PASTA

Chardonnay is right at home with creamy and cheesy pasta dishes, as well as with primavera.

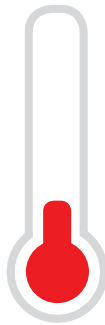


NOTHING

Lest we get too caught up in the food pairing game, it's worth noting that Chardonnay remains one of America's most popular sipping aperitif wines—its flavors are widely appealing.

KEY TO QUALITY: 'CHILL'

Not surprisingly, given Burgundy's marginal climate, it is widely agreed that the best **Chardonnays come from cool climates**, so it's worth knowing the locations of cool regions in generally warm countries. For example, Monterey and the Sonoma Coast are cooler than Napa Valley and yield excellent Chardonnay.



FUN FACT: NATIONAL CHARDONNAY DAY IS



1980s

It was not until the '80s that Chardonnay overtook Chenin Blanc as America's most popular wine—not just white wine—from California. Chardonnay has been No. 1 ever since.

1990s

Chardonnay wasn't necessarily considered a luxury wine until the 1990s. A turning point was the film *Disclosure*, in which Demi Moore seduces Michael Douglas with a bottle of high end Napa Valley Chardonnay (1991 Pahlmeyer).



LABEL LOGIC

Chardonnay, being both flexible and expressive, lends itself well to clues on the back label about how it tastes.

- If it's "**toasty**," it's likely oaky. Wines that taste buttery will often just come out and say "buttery." Nothing wrong with transparency like that.
- If you read "**rich**," it went through malolactic fermentation. Words like "**crisp**" or "**fresh**" suggest it probably didn't go through malolactic; and some labels will get more technical, describing how part of the wine went through malo and part did not, implying balance.
- Among the most important label trends of all: **Unoaked Chardonnays** are still certainly less common than barrel-aged ones, but they are **definitely gaining attention** because they usually announce it right on the label, often with catchy, "steely" monikers.



SELLING POINTS

Chardonnay is both super-cool and super-uncool at the same time. Here's how to sell to both the younger crowd and the classic oak fans.

- Consider two different Chardonnay sections, "**Classic**" and "**Cool**."

Under **Classic** you can put Napa Valley Chardonnays, and staples in the \$12-and-under arena. In short, this is your Chardonnay "establishment," built on trusted brands. And those brands can and should span price ranges.

For **Cool**, think modern Sonoma Coast Chardonnays, cooler South African Chards, New Zealand (NZ is very underrated Chardonnay country) and Chablis. Depending on your clientele, all your white Burgundy might go here.

- Even today, not everyone realizes Chardonnay is the **white grape of Burgundy**; it never hurts to point it out.
- Remember that stylistic distinctions among Chardonnays cut across price points; don't be afraid to cross-reference wines of similar primary character. "**If you like that, try this!**"
- Shelf talkers and bottle neckers are important. Use phrases like "Big & Buttery" or "Yeasty/Toasty" when the style merits; ditto "Fresh & Mouthwatering." Don't be afraid to write "This is not your grandma's Chardonnay" or "Great Gift."



CALIFORNIA: CHARDONNAY CENTRAL

IN 2015, CHARDONNAY
REPRESENTED IN CALIFORNIA:

16.4% | **633,572**
OF ALL GRAPES & TONS CRUSHED

{ THE NEXT-MOST-POPULAR WAS
CABERNET SAUVIGNON, AT 14% }

THERE ARE NOW ABOUT **100,000**
ACRES OF CHARDONNAY PLANTED IN
CALIFORNIA; IN 1941 THE OFFICIAL
TOTAL WAS 100 ACRES.

TOP CALIFORNIA COUNTIES,
BY CHARDONNAY VOLUME:



GEEK SPEAK

People talk about "Wente clone" Chardonnay, after Ernest Wente took cuttings from France's University of Montpellier viticultural nursery in 1912. But in fact, Wente's original cuttings probably included multiple clones and in the 100+ years since, they have mutated, so the meaning of "Wente clone" is quite fluid.

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SPIKE YOUR COCKTAIL

NATURAL ELDERFLOWER LIQUEUR

ST. ELDER RITA

2 OZ SILVER TEQUILA

1 OZ ST. ELDER

.5 OZ FRESH
LIME JUICE

SHAKE ALL
INGREDIENTS WITH
ICE & POUR INTO A
CHILLED GLASS AND
GARNISH WITH LIME.





ANY PORT IN A STORM

**FACING SLUGGISH SALES STATESIDE,
PORT SUPPLIERS ARE GETTING CREATIVE**

BY JACK ROBERTIELLO

Since sampling is still arguably the best form of promotion possible, Port marketers have been emphasizing consumer exposure; above, an event featuring Fonseca. Below: Port's flavor intensity and range of sweetness levels make it an excellent ingredient for cocktails.

Fourth-generation Port producer Rupert Symington, currently joint managing director of Symington Family Estates, was distressed by what had awaited him in New York City last fall. At one of the country's major annual wine events, his brands—Graham's, Cockburn's, Dow's and Warre's, along with other ports—had been shunted off to a small and sideline area.

It was perhaps emblematic of the American wine business trending away from the classiest of fortified wines even at a time when others with some sweetness—sweet red blends and fruity Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignons—have been gaining popularity. No wonder he seemed unhappy.

The story of Port's declining fortune's in the U.S. is laid bare in the figures. Data from the IDVP (Port and Douro

Wines Institute) from January through November 2016 indicates that Port imports to the U.S. were down—5.7% altogether although the drop was smaller (4.3%) among premium Ports. That's



bad news from the sixth-largest Port imbibing market.

But there are moves afoot to change that trend.

For folks like Symington, making sure their single-varietal Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca wines from Quinta do Bomfim and Quinta Senhora de Ribeira get attention among the fine-wine-buying community is important, he said last fall. Also, getting younger consumers to understand that Port producers make wines—ruby, tawny, late bottled vintage, rosé, white—suitable for many drinking occasions is essential. Cockburn's Special Reserve, which fundamentally changed the Port game in 1969 by bridging the quality gap between everyday Ruby Ports and expensive Vintage Ports, recently underwent a reinvigorating package design.



LEFT: Cockburn's Special Reserve broke new ground in 1969 and recently got a stylish and modernizing makeover. RIGHT: Bartender Jenn Knott at 312 Chicago created her award-winning "Mama I'm Coming Home" using cider, pecan-infused Scotch, Fonseca Bin 27, honey syrup, cinnamon sticks and cloves.



Mixing Things Up

Another Port house, the Fladgate Partnership (TFP), which includes Taylor Fladgate, Croft and Fonseca, has taken another approach, angling into the cocktail world via a bartender education tour last year, with more set for 2017.

"There are really several lines of attack, the most obvious being Port paired with desserts in top-end restaurants," says Adrien Bridge, chief executive officer of TFP. "But in 2009 when we launched Croft Pink, we recognized the way to the market was very much through the bartender rather than through the sommelier when trying to sell something different. That was successful among bartenders precisely because they are people who can understand flavor profiles and have ways to use them that can expose our Ports to new customers."

That doesn't mean a house like TFP won't continue to work with sommeliers and retail accounts, and to organize restaurant training and sampling events. But they see cocktails as a growth opportunity. So far, so good; their on-premise cocktail-focused brands were up, including Croft Reserve Tawny (up 384%), Fonseca Siroco White (up 29%) and Croft Pink Rosé (up 43%).

Andy Seymour has been leading the bartender training for TFP, and says for many, Port is an entirely undiscovered category. "Some may know the names



of the various types, but for the layman bartenders who haven't had a lot of education, most of them haven't done much with Port." The hope is that, like with amaros, vermouths and Sherry, bartenders will embrace the category "and add new colors to their palettes," he says.

Education Meets Innovation

Bartender Jenn Knott at the Kimpton Hotel restaurant 312 Chicago (where ten Ports are sold by the glass) says Port needs more exposure to staff and customers. "Both Sherry and Port offer

interesting flavor and balance that I might otherwise get from syrups, shrubs juices or the like," she says. "Port has a fair amount of sweetness so you don't need other sweeteners, but you can also go from a very sweet Ruby to the more structured and drying types." Her New York Sour variant uses Amaro Montenegro, Cognac, lemon and a float of late bottled vintage tawny, a twist that she says adds a flavor dimension hard to find otherwise.

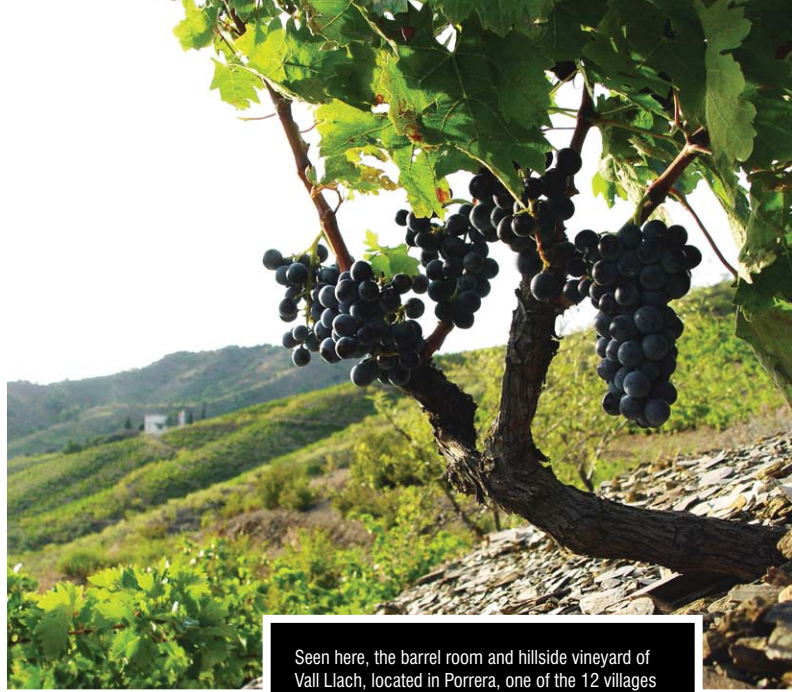
Charlie Schott of Chicago's Chicken and Fish has had a hit with his sangria-esque Purple Drink, made with red wine, Port and orange blossom water. He, too, has served a New York Sour version using Port. "A splash can add sweetness and well as tannins and it's the perfect application in the New York Sour much better than pinot noir for example," he says.

Seymour says Ruby Port is a great start for cocktail experimentation, a natural match with whiskey, while he's been presenting white Port with cucumber, cilantro and tonic, similar to a version served at New York City's Dante. Tawny works well with reposado tequila, rum agricole and the like, adding sweetness backed by flavors of dried fruits and nuts.

However Port gets served today, the American market is a lesson for producers, says Bridge. One Croft Pink customer bought 1,000 bottles and put it in a slushie machine to make an adult sorbet. It taught us, among other things, that sometimes Port is not just for dessert," recalls TFP's Bridge. "It can serve many purposes." ■

Croft Pink has found more success among bartenders than sommeliers.





Seen here, the barrel room and hillside vineyard of Vall Llach, located in Porrera, one of the 12 villages of Priorat recognized as distinct terroirs.

PRIORAT ON THE SPOT

THIS RUGGED SPANISH REGION IS PROVING POWER CAN COME WITH TERROIR

BY JIM CLARKE

By many accounts the days of 15° alcohol wines are waning, but word has yet to reach Priorat. Nonetheless, this small corner of Spain is striving harder for balance and living up to its reputation for quality: Priorat, together with Rioja, four hours drive to the northwest, are the only appellations within Spain to received the vaunted Denominación de Origen Calificada (DOCa) designation, setting them above the rest of Spain's booming and diverse wine scene.

Largely abandoned in the late 1800s thanks to urbanization and phylloxera,

Priorat came back to life as a modern winemaking region with the 1989 vintage, when five producers—Alvaro Palacios (Clos, now Finca, Dofí), René Barbier (Clos Mogador), Clos Erasmus, Clos Martinet and Clos de l'Obac— banded together to produce wines there, drawn by the ancient Garnacha and Cariñena vines they found clinging to steep mountainsides.

New plantings included international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah, and for a time the wines leaned toward an “international style” that spoke of quality, but not necessarily of Priorat's terroir.

“They started pulling back from the excesses of the '90s, making wines more terroir and limiting the use of oak.”

— Oscar Garcia, 67 Wine & Spirits

The nature of Garnacha and Cariñena, as well as the hot, dry growing conditions, means Priorat will always produce strong wines, but Oscar Garcia, Spanish Wine Buyer at 67 Wine & Spirits in Manhattan, says he saw a change in style starting about three years ago. “They started pulling back from the excesses of the '90s, making wines with more terroir and limiting the use of oak. The growth of white wines has also played an important role; Garnacha

Priorat is one of only two regions in Spain to qualify as DOCa.





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From left: Salus Alvarez, President of the Consejo Regulador of Priorat; Jaleo in Washington, DC, is one restaurant that is consciously exploring stylistic variations among the subzones of Priorat; Priorat is known for precipitously steep, rocky hills.

Blanca definitely jumped into the lead as the basis for those wines. They've always been among my favorite white wines of Spain, with lots of character and quality."

Enter a New Era

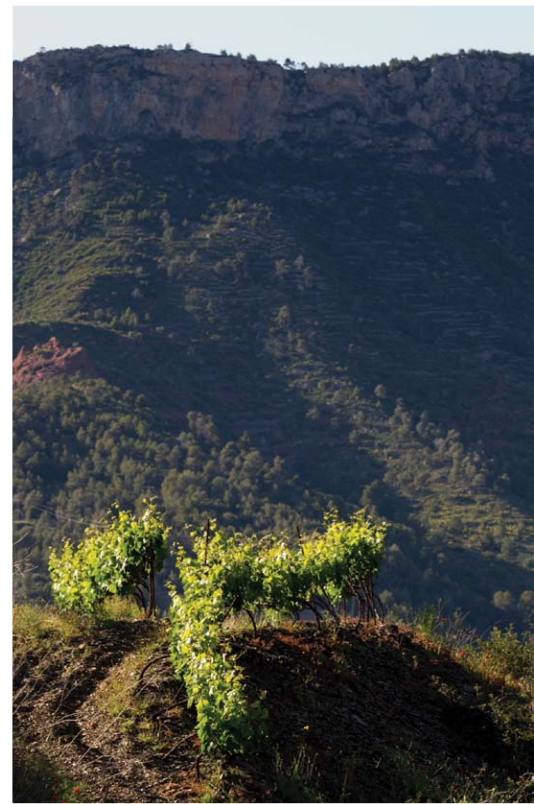
In 2009 the Priorat Consejo rolled out the Vi de la Vila designation, which recognized the 12 villages of Priorat as distinct terroirs. "I'm a big supporter of the Vi de la Vila," says Nicole Andrus, Spanish Imports Specialist for Folio Fine Wine Partners. "It makes sense; Priorat has an undulating topography, unlike, say, Napa. Porrera, where Vall Llach is, is closer to the Mediterranean than say Gratallops or Scala Dei, so it's cooler in the morning and evenings. That delays harvest close to a full month compared to those other villages. The *llicorella* [Priorat's distinctive slate soils] in Porrera is different; on the right

RELIABLE PRIORAT PRODUCERS

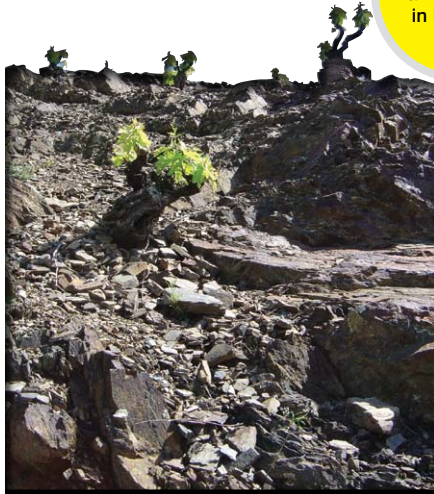
- Mas d'En Gil - Bellmunt del Priorat
- Vall Llach - Porrera
- Clos Mogador
- Alvaro Palacios - Gratallops
- Terroir Al Limit - Torroja
- Ardèvol - Porrera
- Mas Doix
- Mas Martinet - Gratallops
- Scala Dei
- Clos Figueras

side the soils are harder and colder, with larger chunks of stone, which are harder for the vines to burrow into." Pulling back on oak and extraction has allowed differences to express themselves more clearly.

For example, Jordi Paronella, Sommelier at Jaleo in Washington DC, says the wines of Gratallops may be "bigger wines with higher concentration and more earthy notes," compared to those of Porrera, which are marked by "more freshness and acidity." For Paronella, that means the wines are more flexible at the table than they once were. In addition to the red meats so suited to the more powerful wines, "you can now pair Priorat wines with all kinds of vegetables," as well as pork dishes and even cod.



With over 100 producers working in the region today, there are also wines suited to most every price point. "Entry-level Priorats," says Andrus, "made with international varieties in the blend and/or younger vines (under 30 years old), can be great values, affordable enough to pour by-the-glass. Young vine Priorat tastes like old vine Cabernet." But the top wines, made from scrawny, 100-year-old vines clinging to an 80° slope, as in Vall Llach's Mas de la Rosa, may need seven vines just to produce one bottle of the wine, and are often priced accordingly. Are they worth it? Says Andrus: "Old Vine Priorats hold up to the Grand Crus of the world." ■



Noble struggle:
Vall Llach vine in llicorella soil



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CHECKLIST FOR SURVIVING DISASTERS

BOTH NATURAL AND CIVIL CATASTROPHES CAN STRIKE YOUR BUSINESS. BE PREPARED.

BY ROGER MORRIS

What could go wrong? It's a simple question, but one with many complicated answers—and now more than ever it's a question retail store owners and managers should ask themselves as a first step in formulating disaster preparedness plans. A short list of potential catastrophes would include both natural disasters—floods, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires—and manmade disasters such as arson, rioting, even terrorism.

Realize that some potential disasters, such as hurricanes, may allow you a few days to react and to enact final preparations, while other catastrophes strike without warning. A starting point

for preparing a disaster plan, is to establish a preparedness checklist that will help lessen the impact of a disaster while helping steer the business

through a period of crisis, allowing you a speedy restart with minimal lost time and revenue.

This is not as ominous as it sounds. It starts by considering the types of disasters that your business might face, unlikely as they might be. Nobody knows this better than you—it's a byproduct of “location, location, location.” Consider your climate—if you are in Boston, snow/ice-related disasters merit attention, but earthquakes, not so much; in Los Angeles, it's the opposite.



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Also consider local infrastructure, and the specific utilities you rely on. Would your store benefit from a backup generator?

As you begin to clarify areas in need of attention—specific to your business—you will naturally be in a position to plan, prepare and, if needed, execute. As you review the points below, you can ask yourself: How do I prepare to meet each possibility? And what do I need to be doing during the emergency in order to re-start quickly? The only good way to manage these vital questions is to make sure you have answers in place before you really need them.

Here is a checklist of considerations:

Have the right insurance. Concentrate on the two largest needs: First, insurance for property damage and potential injuries to employees and customers, with acceptable deductibles; and, second, insurance to cover revenue losses during business disruption, which will be more expensive. The Insurance Information Institute says the latter should cover revenue lost during closure, fixed expenses that will still need to be met, plus expenses incurred if/when operating from a temporary business location.



Comply with all fire safety measures. Knowing and observing your local fire codes is a legal requirement as well as a first step in planning. You should



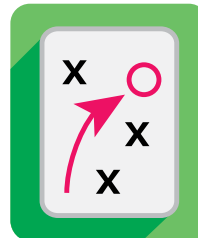
Having fire extinguishers does little good if every member of your staff doesn't know where they are and how to use them.

also perform regularly scheduled audits, not only to keep things updated, but to constantly familiarize yourself with these safety measures and how to enact them during an emergency.

Drill your staff on details. For example, having fire extinguishers does little good if every member of your staff doesn't know where they are and how to use them. Based on the location and layout of your store, be sure staff knows what is expected of them if there is a sudden civil disturbance or act of terrorism.



Have an emergency evacuation plan. The Hartford insurance group recommends that businesses “make sure that routes and exits are well lit, clearly marked and easily accessible.” Blocked evacuation routes is a major cause of deaths during fires. Also determine an outside meeting point so that all staff members can quickly be accounted for.



Secure offsite records storage. All electronic records—store inventory, employee, business, government, tax—

should be backed up regularly and stored offsite. Paper records not in current use, but which must be retained, should be kept somewhere away from the business. These storage sites may include home offices, bank safety deposit boxes and commercial storage facilities.



Put together an emergency contact list. And keep copies in various places. Include among these contacts emergency personnel (fire, police, ambulance), insurance agents, employee home numbers, even tradesmen who can help you clean up and secure your site.

Plan your re-opening before the need ever arises. The most immediate questions are: “If my business is almost or totally destroyed, would I stay here, or relocate elsewhere? If I stay here, where would I temporarily do business? If I leave, where would I look to relocate?” Those answers may dictate whether you should arrange in advance lines of credit or seek additional insurance coverage.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it is a start toward getting you prepared for a disaster you hope will never happen. ■



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3



4



5



6

1. MEZZA DI MEZZACORONA 'ITALIAN GLACIAL BUBBLY'

Leading Italian producer Mezzacorona goes in a fresh new direction with launch of Mezza di Mezzacorona, a crisp "Italian Glacial Bubbly." Appealing to the Instagram-generation with its dynamic packaging and wallet-friendly SRP, the bubbly has a crisp, friendly flavor profile that takes aim at occasions from brunch to pre-party to poolside, on its own or in a cocktail. And for authentic Italian terroir: estate-grown grapes (60% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Bianco, 10% Müller-Thurgau) hail from the foothills of the Italian Alps.

\$ SRP: \$14.99
worldofmezza.com

4. CICCIO & FIGLI 'C3' CARCIOFO LIQUEUR

Just as their entire line of liqueurs and amaros is going national, Washington, DC-based Ciccio & Figli also launched C3, a bitter aperitivo. Based on an infusion of three types of artichokes, cardoons, grapefruit and 18 more botanicals, C3 is barrel-aged for 12 months; 46 proof. With medium-to-high bitterness, C3 was designed for fans of cocktails like the Negroni and Americano in mind.

\$ SRP: \$35.99
domaineselect.com

2. SKYY INFUSIONS CALIFORNIA APRICOT

Skyy Infusions has added California Apricot to their line of flavored vodkas. The first premium apricot-infused vodka made with real fruit, it can be enjoyed on the rocks, in cocktails, or paired with two parts IPA for a twist on the summer Shandy. Campari America believes authentic fruit flavors will continue to grow in vodka as confectionary expressions decline. Available in 50ml, 750ml, 1L and 1.75L; 70 proof.

\$ SRP: \$13.99/750ml
skyy.com

5. VIÑA ARDANZA RESERVA 2000 RIOJA

It is not often a 17-year-old new release in its prime comes along, but La Rioja Alta is offering a decade-later re-release of their critically acclaimed Viña Ardanza Rioja Reserva from the 2000 vintage. The wine is 80% Tempranillo and 20% Garnacha. Following stainless steel fermentation, it spent 36 months aging in American oak barrels that averaged four years of age, developing classic Rioja character.

\$ SRP: \$125 | \$750/6-bottle wood case
riojalta.com/en/

3. KOMODO DRAGON 2014 RED BLEND, COLUMBIA VALLEY

When glaciers covering what is now the Pacific Rim melted, they sculpted eastern Washington's Columbia Valley, leaving deep sandy, rocky, alluvial soils—ideal for winegrowing. Komodo Dragon takes its name from the other side of the Pacific Rim, the mysterious jungles of eastern Asia. No mystery to the wine, though, a blend of Merlot, Cabernet and Syrah with rich flavors of ripe plum, blackberries, spice and black tea. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

\$ SRP: \$18.99
broncowine.com

6. HELLBOY HELL WATER CINNAMON WHISKEY

Dark Horse Comics and Prestige Imports have launched Hellboy Hell Water, a cinnamon-infused whiskey based on the bestselling comic book character, who protects America from the occult, paranormal and supernatural. Hellboy Hell Water is micro-distilled in the Smokey Mountains using a proprietary mashbill of corn, wheat and barley; bottled at 66.6 proof, with tamper-proof caps and labels. Marketing plans include life-size Hellboy cutouts and partnering with local comic book stores.

\$ SRP: \$19.99
prestigeimportsllc.com

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11



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7. TOM GORE VINEYARDS RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Tom Gore, second-generation grape farmer from Sonoma County, has released a Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon from the 2014 vintage. Grapes (99% Cabernet, 1% Petit Verdot) come from Alexander Valley. Complex aromas include blackberry, cigar box and and caramel; more berries and plum on the full-bodied palate. Tannins are firm and supple, supporting the long finish.

\$ SRP: \$40
tomgorevineyards.com

10. MICTHER'S 10 YEAR RYE

The release of Michter's 10 Year Single Barrel Kentucky Straight Rye marks the first by Pamela Heilmann, who in 2016 became the first woman since Prohibition to serve as Master Distiller at a Kentucky Distillers' Association member distillery. After aging in fire-charred, new American white oak barrels, the rye was bottled at 84.8 proof. Spice, pepper, citrus, butterscotch and oak all play a part in the rye's complex character.

\$ SRP: \$150
michters.com

8. BLUE CHAIR BAY KEY LIME RUM CREAM

The latest from Blue Chair Bay will take drinkers right to the Florida Keys. Both luscious and tangy, Blue Chair Bay Key Lime Rum Cream starts with classic key lime zest, then leads to a rich, buttery middle and a graham cracker crust finish. Like the other Blue Chair Bay expressions, this rum cream is inspired by country music star Kenny Chesney's love of the island lifestyle. Available in 50ml, 750ml and 1L; 30 proof.

\$ SRP: \$18.99/750ml
bluechairbayrum.com

11. SVEDKA BLUE RASPBERRY VODKA

Blue Raspberry is the latest addition to the Svedka portfolio, continuing Svedka's focus on flavor innovation. Blue Raspberry delivers on the extreme flavor trend with an explosive sweet berry and tart lemon profile. Two-tone packaging further communicates a message of boldness, with vibrant fuchsia tones transitioning to an electric blue hue. Available in 50ml, 375ml, 750ml, 1L and 1.75L; 70 proof.

\$ SRP: \$12.99/750ml
svedka.com

9. STONE CELLARS NEW PACKAGE RELEASE

Founded in 1893, Stone Cellars crafts a portfolio of smooth, classically structured varietal wines. Grapes come from family-owned vineyards through California. In the winery, Stone Cellars uses traditional winemaking techniques to achieve optimal flavors, depth and balance. The 2015 vintage is layered with rich berry fruit and smoky oak notes. Ideal with red meats and grilled vegetables. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

\$ SRP: \$8.99/750ml | \$14.99/1.5L
broncowine.com

12. CUSTARD CHARDONNAY

Don Sebastiani & Sons has launched Custard, with a North Coast Chardonnay designed to be "comfort wine." The idea: it is a silky sipper with flavors of pear citrus and vanilla; but at 14.5% alcohol, the wine is also sturdy enough to pair with rich dishes, like butternut squash ravioli. After fermenting in stainless steel on the lees, the wine then undergoes malolactic to add creaminess before aging in new French oak.

\$ SRP: \$21.99
custardwines.com

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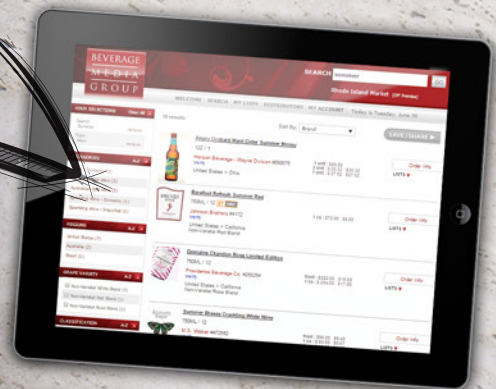
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