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The largest compilation of beverage alcohol price and brand information.

HOW BEER, WINE
AND SPIRITS
GET TO THE
MARKETPLACE



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MARKETPOINT

This is the last issue of 2016. It's been a dynamic year of beverage business news, and you've been a big part of it. The local market remains fun and fascinating, and always in our focus. Cheers to you!

- "Back to Basics" with **Cognac** 101. It's brandy, yes, but arguably the world's finest brandy type. We will explain how and why.
- Get yourself into the **holiday** spirit, with on- and off-premise advice to make December sales sparkle.
- A colorful look at the market **forecast** for rosés, reds and browns — wines and spirits, that is.
- Time to explore **Austrian** wines. Meticulous methods, improved promotion and signature grapes are helping the country gain a deserved market foothold.
- Trends in **beer** for the New Year ahead; three pages brewing with new products, flavors and innovations.
- The **gift** that keeps on giving: your subscription. Shop and order your beer, wine and spirits from your wholesalers via the monthly print magazine and the trade-only secure website anytime (plus it's got a ton of cool site tools: current ratings and tasting notes, competitive set views and product save/share features). Let us help you connect any way you want to ... it's all included, no extra cost!
- Make a **resolution** to showcase your brands, faces, places and people in the year ahead. It's so easy. Be a part of it. Email dana@thebeveragejournal.com.



CALIFORNIA RELEASES 2016 WINE HARVEST REPORT

The 2016 California wine grape harvest arrived early this year with normal yield of quality fruit throughout the state, according to The Wine Institute’s harvest report. “It’s been a good season so far – the grapes are in great condition, showcasing spectacular flavors,” said Randy Ullom, wine master at Kendall-Jackson Wines, with vineyards in Sonoma County and statewide. Overall, the state crop as of August 2016 is estimated to be near the historical average of 3.9 million tons by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. “The 2016 harvest in Sonoma County looks a lot like the 2015 harvest,” said Ryan Decker, winegrower at Rodney Strong Vineyards. “We started early, we will finish early, and the winemakers are very excited with what they are seeing in the fermenters.”



REPORT SHOWS MORE THAN 1,300 ACTIVE SPIRITS PRODUCERS IN THE NATION

A study from the Craft Spirits Data Project revealed there are 1,315 craft distillers in the U.S. and the U.S. craft spirit industry reached 4.9 million cases and \$2.4 billion in retail sales in 2015. The study also revealed exports of U.S. craft spirits reaching 523,000 cases in 2015. It further projected there is potential for craft spirits to achieve the same market share as the craft beer industry. The data was presented during the inaugural Craft Spirits Economic Briefing at Nomad Hotel in New York from the American Craft Spirits Association (ASCA), the International Wine and Spirits Research (ISWR) and Park Street. The Craft Spirits Data Project is a research initiative to provide factual information for evaluating performance and trends in the U.S. craft spirits industry.



CONSTELLATION BRANDS ACQUIRES CHARLES SMITH WINES, HIGH WEST DISTILLERY

Constellation Brands announced transactions to focus on premium, high-margin and high-growth brands. The company said it was enhancing its U.S. wine portfolio with



the acquisition of the Charles Smith Wines collection, five ultra-premium wines for approximately \$120 million. The transaction includes Kung Fu Girl Riesling, Velvet Devil Merlot, Boom Boom! Syrah, Eve Chardonnay and Chateau Smith Cabernet Sauvignon. Within their spirit portfolio, Constellation has completed the High West acquisition, which includes all of High West’s operations and its portfolio of American straight whiskeys.

MICHTER’S AMERICAN WHISKEY ANNOUNCES COMPANY PROMOTIONS

Michter’s American Whiskeys has released a series of promotions. Pamela Heilmann (center) has been named the new Michter’s Master Distiller, which was previously held



by Willie Pratt. Pratt will now be transitioning to Michter’s Master Distiller Emeritus. Andrea Wilson (left), Vice President of Michter’s will add onto her role and be Master of Maturation and Distillery Manager, Dan McKee (right), will move up to the distiller position formerly held by Heilmann. “For some time we have been preparing for this transition,” said Michter’s President Joseph J. Magliocco. “At Michter’s, the quality of our whiskey is so, so important to us. I am excited that we have phenomenally talented people like Pam Heilmann, Andrea Wilson, and Dan McKee assuming greater leadership positions and carrying on the remarkable work done by Willie Pratt.”

HAIG CLUB CLUBMAN SCOTCH WHISKY PARTNERS WITH DAVID BECKHAM

Haig Club Clubman Single Grain Scotch Whisky released a new TV advertisement titled “Make Your Own Rules,” featuring brand partner David Beckham. The advertisement “redefines the stereotypical



expectations” of when, where and how people should enjoy whisky juxtaposed against montages of lively and stylish moments amongst friends. “Our first advert for Haig Club Clubman aims to disrupt people’s pre-conceived notions around whisky,” said Ronan Beirne, Global Marketing Director for Haig Club. “With Haig Club Clubman, we are purposefully and assertively inviting consumers to make their own rules on how to enjoy this versatile Scotch whisky.”



Season's Greetings

A special greeting to express
our sincere appreciation
for your confidence and
loyalty throughout
the year.

We thank you and
extend best wishes
for a happy, healthy
holiday season.



GREAT AMERICAN BEER FESTIVAL HONORS BREWS

2016 marks the 30th year of the Great American Beer Festival (GABF) where 286 medals were awarded to commercial brewers in the United States. The festival is held at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. Winners were chosen from 7,227 entries, which is nearly 9 percent more than 6,647 entries in 2015. Competition highlights include four medals won by Uberbrew from Billings, Montana; three medals were awarded to the following breweries: Karl Strauss Brewing Co. from San Diego, California; Brown Truck Brewery in High Point, North Carolina and Fat Head's Brewery and Saloon in North Olmsted, Ohio. For a complete list of GABF winners, visit www.greatamericanbeerfestival.com.



MOLSON COORS COMPLETES ACQUISITION, OWNERSHIP OF MILLERCOORS

Molson Coors Brewing Company completed the acquisition of SABMiller with a 58-percent stake in MillerCoors LLC., now making Molson Coors the third largest global brewer by enterprise value. Molson Coors gained full ownership of the Miller brand portfolio outside of the U.S. and Puerto Rico, as well as retained the rights to all brands currently in the MillerCoors portfolio in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, including Redd's, Peroni, Grolsch and Pilsner Urquell. "[This] represents a historic moment in the evolution of Molson Coors as we emerge as the world's third largest brewer by bringing together Molson Coors and MillerCoors into a bigger, better organization," stated Mark Hunter, President and Chief Executive Officer of Molson Coors.



BACARDI NAMED TO LIST OF 'MOST REPUTABLE COMPANIES'

For the third year in a row, Bacardi has been named as one of the "most reputable companies in the world" with a ranking of 92, according to the annual Global RepTrak® 100 list compiled by Reputation Institute and published in *Forbes*. The Global RepTrak rankings measure the public perception of 100 companies based on seven areas of dimension: product and service, innovation, workplace, governance, citizenship, leadership and performance. "Making this global list for the third time in a row is extremely satisfying as



it validates our brands and employees are continuing to connect with consumers in a positive way," said Bacardi Limited CEO Mike Dolan.

DISTILLED SPIRITS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES PROMOTIONS

The Distilled Spirits Council promoted Michele Famiglietti to Senior Vice President of Member Relations and appointed Kelly Pike Poulsen as Vice President of Federal Government Relations. Famiglietti will assume responsibility for member recruitment and services, grassroots advocacy and management of the association's events. She has been with the council for 15 years. Poulsen most recently served as Vice President of Government Affairs at the American Frozen Food Institute.



CAMPARI ANNOUNCES CAMPARI RED DIARIES CAMPAIGN

Campari has announced an addition to the late Campari Calendar, the Campari Red Diaries, which will "bring to life the powerful ethos that every cocktail tells a story" and will "celebrate cocktails as a powerful vehicle for expressions by shining a light on the influences that inspire bartenders to share their craft." The founding story, "Killer in Red," was written and directed by internationally-renowned Italian award winner, Paolo Sorrentino and stars acclaimed actor Clive Owen. When the Campari Red Diaries is complete, the collection will feature 12 cocktail stories from bartenders all over the globe.



UNIBROUE, MEGADETH JOIN FORCES TO LAUNCH NEW BEER

Unibroue released a new beer created in partnership between its brewmaster Jerry Vietz and Dave Mustaine, lead vocalist and founder of heavy metal group Megadeth. The beer, A Tout Le Monde, is named after one of the band's songs, known as one of their biggest hits in Quebec. The beer is launching in the U.S. and Quebec. A Tout Le Monde is a Belgian style dry hopped golden saison with hoppy and spicy notes. "Our shared passion for excellence produced a one-of-a-kind saison beer," said Mustaine. "I'm thrilled to present this new beer to my fans, and everyone who loves good beers with character."





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December's Holiday Spirit

BY LEN PANAGGIO

The end of the year is in sight, and for the restaurant community, the month of December is filled with both challenges and opportunities.

The weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas are typically slow, unless your business is in or near a busy mall or shopping center. This year, instead of counting on foot traffic for revenue, focus your efforts on booking holiday parties of all sizes.

After Christmas, however, can be one of the busiest times of the year. People are in a festive, spending mood and families get together, often choosing restaurants as the meeting place. Make sure your restaurant is ready for these guests!

Then there is New Year's Eve, the night of immense celebration. Are you prepared? As the economy has improved, people are returning to their favorite sparkling wines: those from Champagne. Rosé sparkling wines have also had a tremendous uptick, sparked by the rise in popularity of still rosé. Though consumers have previously associated still rosé with the summer months, they are beginning to realize that it is just as enjoyable during this time of year, too. As an operator, be ready for the high demand of both rosé and Champagne, and offer both varieties by the glass.

The consumer is always looking for guidance. For those that have special menus lined up for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, pairing wines with food courses is exactly the type of guidance they are looking for. Not to mention, it makes things easier on the staff. If you do not have prix fixe menus available with pairings, offer a selection of half bottles; we've

seen consumers are very receptive to ordering in that amount. I have also found that half bottles of sparkling wines, both in 375s and the single serve 187s, are also gaining in popularity.

Consider featuring new and unique wine and/or beer offerings in December. Working with your distributor, you will be able to find something that is appealing to your guests, yet financially friendly for your business. I also suggest taking on a manageable inventory of Christmas beer, which, being so niche, has a short window. Don't be caught with Christmas beers in April.

Don't neglect spirits! Again, working with your distributor, find one that is appropriate to the season and use it to create a drink feature. This time of year, consumers are more willing to purchase products they wouldn't normally buy during other times the year; whether it's a specialty drink or an indulgent single malt, bourbon, or Cognac, be sure to have them all available. They will sell.

With these recommendations, be sure to seek out the many bargains that will be available. For retailers and suppliers, it is a crucial month to sell product, and many suppliers will have great deals. If you can afford to take advantage of them, you should.

I hope that everyone had a prosperous 2016 and as we move into 2017, we are ready for the new and successful year ahead. Our industry is a shining star, keep it rolling. And as always, serve responsibly and drink responsibly.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Santé.



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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.



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FRIDAY, JANUARY 27TH

BOURBON TASTING

UNCAS BALLROOM | 6:00PM - 9:00PM

Taste a variety of fine bourbons and delicious hors d'oeuvres before sampling our selection of premium cigars.

MEXICAN NIGHT MARKET

UNCAS BALLROOM | 8:00PM - 11:00PM

Fiesta your way into the weekend at Sun Wine & Food Fest's Mexican Night Market with award-winning chef and TV personality, Aarón Sánchez.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH

ELITE CRU TASTING*

THE CABARET THEATRE | 3:00PM - 5:00PM

Taste the "best-of-the-best" vintages from around the world, as well as meet the winemakers and principals behind them.

***Includes a Saturday Grand Tasting ticket & \$50 iGourmet gift card.**

CELEBRITY CHEF DINE AROUND

UNCAS BALLROOM | 8:00PM - 10:30PM

Watch celebrity chefs prepare signature dishes at live cooking stations. Enjoy each dish with a complementary pairing of premium wine or beer.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH

BRUNCH WITH BATALI

UNCAS BALLROOM | 11:00AM - 2:00PM

Cap off the Sun Wine & Food Fest weekend with a meal of a lifetime at the "Brunch with Batali" event hosted by recognized and respected chef, Mario Batali.



Tickets on sale now at the Mohegan Sun Box Office and ticketmaster.com

Visit sunwineandfoodfest.com for more information.

Rhode Island Distributing Company Hosts Annual “Whiskey Experience”

Rhode Island Distributing Company, in conjunction with Northeast Wines and Providence Beverage Co., held its 2016 Whiskey Experience on October 6. The event welcomed trade

professionals to the Grand Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick where whiskies, bourbons, brandies and spirits from around the world were among the featured selections.





1. Paul Canavan, CSS, Division Manager Empire East, Trincher Family Estates.
2. Edrington America's Jackie Connetti.
3. Carl Brown, CEO, Kra-ze LLC with Kevin Clang, President and Co-founder, Kra-ze LLC with Bower Hill Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey.
4. Christopher Wilkins of Copper and Kings American Brandy speaking with guests.
5. Kyle Grudzien, Marketing Services Manager, Rhode Island Distributing Co. with Tim Boynton, On-Premise Diageo, Rhode Island Distributing Co.
6. Ted Creighton, Sales, Weinbauer with Daniel J. Hogan, Regional Sales Manager New England, Weinbauer.
7. Nicole Cannella and Kayleigh Speck of Edrington Americas.
8. Melissa Covino, Area Manager New England, Proximo Spirits.
9. Joe Swanson, Northeastern Regional Sales Manager, Vision Wine and Spirits and Classic Imports.
10. George Kalliavas, Market Manager Rhode Island, Moët Hennessy USA.
11. Amy Ingraham and Ashley Harper of CK Promotions representing Sazerac.
12. Nicole Mercier, Promotions, Luxco Spirited Brands.
13. Brendan Simms, Area Manager MA and RI, William Grant and Sons with Kurt Knop, Regional Director New England, William Grant and Sons.
14. Amanda Soumelidis, Market Manager, Pernod Ricard; Jamie Roth, Brand Ambassador, Pernod Ricard; Candace Miller, Retail Account Specialist, Pernod Ricard.
15. Michael D'Angelo, Regional Key Account Manager New England, Deutsch Family Wine and Spirits with Redemption Rye.
16. Charlene Leinonen and Mike Stacy with Clyde May's Whiskey.
17. Vanessa DiPalma and Katy Church of Diageo.
18. Paul Silvestri, New England Regional Manager in MA and RI, Castle Brands.
19. Sons of Liberty Spirits Apple and Pumpkin Flavored Whiskey.
20. Glenmorangie Scotch Whisky on display.
21. Bruichladdich Scottish Barley.
22. Highland Park Scotch Whisky.
23. Old Camp Peach Pecan Whiskey, Virginia Black Whiskey and Bushmills Black Bush.
24. Ardbeg Scotch Whiskey.
25. Glenkinchie 12 Year Old; Dalwhinnie 15 Year Old; Cragganmore 12 Year Old.
26. Bulleit Bourbon and Crown Royal Whiskey.
27. Foley Family Wines' Whiskey Collier, McKeel Whiskey and Goodnight Bourbon.



SAGE CELLARS HOSTS BRAND BUILDING EVENTS FOR WINE PORTFOLIO

Sage Cellars hosted a series of in-store tastings and wine dinners to highlight the Howell Mountain AVA wines produced by women winemakers. The “Women of Howell Mountain” included Kara Dunn from Retro Cellars, Heather Griffin from Summit Lake Vineyards, Jacalyn Spence from Spence Vineyards and Desiree Altimus from Red Cap Vineyards. The featured wine dinners hosted by the women were sold out events. The appellation is located in California’s Napa Valley and offers a unique growing climate. Also in October, Sage Cellars hosted Ntsiki Biyela, South Africa’s first black female head winemaker through her role at Stellekaya Vineyard, and Jane Lello, owner of Stellekaya Vineyard. Biyela and Lello were also featured on *The Rhode Show* on October 4 to discuss the Stellekaya portfolio of wines.

1. The Women of Howell Mountain wine dinner at Besos Kitchen. Heather Griffin, Summit Lake Vineyards; Jacalyn Spence, Spence Vineyards; Kara Dunn, Retro Cellars and Desiree Altemus, Red Cap Vineyards.
2. Jesse Sgro, Co-owner, Sage Cellars with wine enthusiast Carolyn Corrente at the Women of Howell Mountain dinner.
3. Jessica Granatiero, Owner, The Savory Grape; Desiree Altemus, Red Cap Vineyards; Jacalyn Spence, Spence Vineyards; Tulay Lawton, Manager, The Savory Grape; Kara Dunn, Retro Cellars; Heather Griffin, Summit Lake Vineyards.
4. Simone’s Restaurant in Warren hosted one of many wine dinners featuring the Women of Howell Mountain. The menu pictured was paired with Summit Lake Rose; Red Cap Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc 2014; Summit Lake Vineyards Zinfandel 2012; Retro Cellars Petite Sirah 2011; Summit Lake Clair Riley’s Pirate Reserve Zin Port 2006.
5. Ntsiki Biyela, Winemaker, Stellekaya Wines with Anne Sage, Co-owner, Sage Cellars during a wine dinner hosted at the Providence Art Club in October.
6. Jane Lello, Owner, Stellekaya Vineyards; Michaela Johnson, Anchor, *The Rhode Show*; Ntsiki Biyela, Winemaker, Stellekaya Vineyards.

HOSPITALITY WORKERS JOIN FORCES FOR THE PROJECT BROKEN WHEEL FOUNDATION

The Project Broken Wheel Foundation hosted a workshop on October 12 to train volunteers and prepare bicycles for the upcoming holiday bike drive. During the workshop, people donated their time to help refurbish the bikes as well as sort them for donations. Project Broken Wheel has delivered more than 800 bicycles to underprivileged children through community programs and local police. The foundation’s efforts are headed by Twin River Casino’s General Manager of Beverage Operations, Frank Martucci.

Project Broken Wheel volunteers prepared bikes for the upcoming holiday drive.




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OCEANSTATE WINE & SPIRITS OFFERS FALL TRADE TASTING

Oceanstate Wines & Spirits of Rhode Island and Baystate Wines & Spirits of Massachusetts presented a fall trade tasting on September 27 at The Boston Marriot-Newton Hotel. Approximately 150 trade professionals had the opportunity to taste and discuss the featured wines and spirits from the companies' portfolios. Guests were also presented with seasonal cocktail samples featuring Kirk & Sweeny 12 Year Old Rum, Cleveland Apple Wood Bourbon, Vesica Coconut Vodka, Uncle Val's Peppered Gin, Bozal Ensemble Mezcal, Bone Snapper Rye Whiskey, Pasote Blanco Tequila, Duggan's Irish Cream and Cleveland "Black Reserve" Bourbon Whiskey. Wine and spirit brand ambassadors and representatives educated visiting accounts on portfolio offerings.

1. Trade guests gathered together for the Baystate and Oceanstate Wine & Spirits fall trade tasting on September 27.
2. Pre-mixed cocktails featured select spirit brands.



WILD MOON LIQUEURS NOW OFFERED IN NEW BOTTLE SIZES

Connecticut's Hartford Flavor Co., producers of the Wild Moon Liqueurs portfolio, released new 100 ml and 750 ml bottles sizes, in addition to the original bottle size of 375 ml. All six flavors of the all-natural, botanically-infused liqueurs, Cucumber, Rose, Cranberry, Lavender, Birch and Chai Spice, are now available in all three sizes. Along with the 100 ml bottles sold separately, the liqueurs are also available in a six-pack variety pack with a recipe booklet enclosed. Wild Moon Rose and Wild Moon Chai Spice flavors each won medals at the 2016 New York World Spirits Competition, while Wild Moon Birch was recently recognized by *Playboy* as "Connecticut's Most Unique Spirit." Hartford Flavor Co. products are distributed in the state via Rhode Island Distributing Co.

1. A full lineup of Wild Moon Liqueurs in 100 ml, 375 ml and 750 ml bottle formats.
2. The new Wild Moon Liqueurs 100 ml bottles.

READ NEWS, BE NEWS

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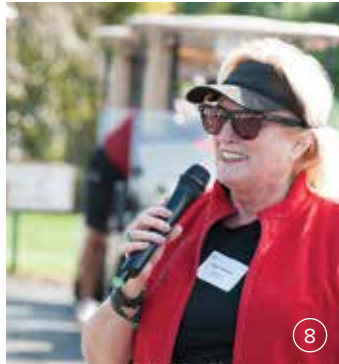
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RI HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION HOSTS CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

The RI Hospitality Association hosted its 27th Annual Charity Golf Tournament on October 3 at the Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown. Hospitality industry sponsors, beverage suppliers, restauranteurs, bar managers, food service workers and trade members participated. All proceeds benefit the RI Hospitality Association Education Foundation. This tournament is one the largest fundraisers for the RI Hospitality Association each year.

1. Dale Venturini, President and CEO of the RI Hospitality Association and Bill Murphy, Attorney and Former RI Speaker of the House.
2. Al Martin; Matthew Myers; Dale Venturini, President and CEO, RI Hospitality Association; Jim Pezzullo.
3. McLaughlin & Moran Sales Representatives Kevin Stromberg and David Mangiantine.
4. Evan Smith, President and CEO, Discover Newport; Len Panaggio, Board Member, RI Hospitality Association; Anant Joshi, Sales and Marketing Consultant, Joshi Associates.
5. Standing: Melanie Rich, Gordon Food Service; Ron D'Agostino, RI Hospitality Association; Amy Hathaway, United Health Care; Monika Zuluaga, RI Hospitality Association; Sitting: Karen Rezendes, RI Hospitality Association; Kristine Cox, Newport Harbor Hotel & Marina; Sarah Bratko, RI Hospitality Association.
6. Rick Fontaine and Joe Zacovic, both from Performance Foodservice.
7. Carolyn Panos from Regency Plaza.
8. Dale Venturini, President and CEO of the RI Hospitality Association.
9. Beer offerings included local brand, Narragansett.
10. Triple Eight Vodka and Four Roses Bourbon were among spirits showcased.



Photos by Richard Kizirian of Kizirian Photography.



MCLAUGHLIN & MORAN MATCHES RELIEF EFFORTS FOR LOUISIANA MUSICIANS

Rhythm & Roots Festival participants and sponsors, including McLaughlin & Moran, Inc. of Cranston, Rhode Island, which distributes featured festival beer products from Goose Island Beer Co., raised a total of \$21,500 to help Louisiana musicians impacted by flooding in August. The festival was held September 2-4 at Ninigret Park in Charlestown. McLaughlin & Moran matched the first \$10,000 raised. Terry Moran, President said he “couldn’t say yes fast enough” when presented with the opportunity to help.

The August 2016 Louisiana flood covered much of the Baton Rouge and Lafayette area, where known musicians lost everything they owned under more than two feet of water. The flood damaged more than 100,000 homes, many of which were uninsured. After Hurricane Katrina, local efforts via Rhythm & Roots along with McLaughlin & Moran together raised \$100,000. “I saw then how generous the Rhythm & Roots festival-goers are from this past experience, which made me confident that the \$10,000 [that] McLaughlin & Moran was prepared to contribute to this year’s cause would be matched,” Moran said.

Many of the musicians who have performed at annual weekend-long Rhythm & Roots Festivals come from the areas devastated by the most recent floods. The money raised will go directly to the musicians in need. Steve Riley of the Cajun band, Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys, and Cajun/zydeco music industry professional Cynthia Simien are working to identify the hardest-hit residents of Lafayette and surrounding parishes.

Rhythm & Roots Festival producer Chuck Wentworth receives a \$10,000 donation from Terry Moran, President of McLaughlin & Moran. The donation was a matching challenge made by McLaughlin & Moran at the annual Rhythm & Roots Festival sponsored by Goose Island Beer Co.

RI HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION NAMES MANAGER OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



The RI Hospitality Association (RIHA) promoted Nichole Jorel from Career Advisor to Manager of Workforce Development. In her new role, Jorel will be responsible for coordinating and executing the annual ProStart Competition in conjunction with local participating high school students and administrators. Jorel will also conduct job readiness and skills training for women at the RI Department of Corrections. “Nichole has been a huge asset to RIHA and I look forward to her enthusiasm and dedication in her new role,” said Dale J. Venturini, President and CEO of RIHA. “Her hard work will continue to strengthen the Rhode Island workforce and benefit members in our industry.” Jorel brings more than 10 years of hospitality experience from within RIHA, and from her roles at Boston Copley Marriott Downtown, Fairfield Inn and Suites/La Quinta Inn and Suites in Warwick, as well as the Providence Marriott Downtown.

Nichole Jorel, Manager of Workforce Development, the RI Hospitality Association.



BEST BEVERAGE LAUNCHES NEW DOMESTIC AND IMPORTED WINES

Best Beverage of Rhode Island added new wines to its portfolio: Ermisch Cellars Pinot Noir, Barnard Griffin Wines and Priorat Wines. Ermisch Cellars Pinot Noir, from the Willamette Valley AVA, received a 91-point rating from *Wine Spectator* and *Wine Enthusiast*. The winery's sustainably-farmed certified grapes are hand-harvested then fermented in open top bins, manually punched down two to three times daily, and aged 12 months in first and second use French Oak barrels. Barnard Griffin Wines of Washington State, which includes a Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Chardonnay, Riesling and Fume Blanc, offers small production fine wines and was founded in 1983 by Rob Griffin and Deborah Barnard. Spain's Priorat Wines includes Portal del Priorat Clos del Portal Negre de Negres, Gotes del Priorat and Gotes del Montsant. Priorat Wines are organically produced in the Catalan Denominació d'Origen Qualificada (DOQ).

1. Portal del Priorat Clos del Portal Negre de Negres 2014.
2. 2014 Gotes del Priorat.
3. 2013 Gotes del Montsant.
4. Ermisch Cellars Pinot Noir 2012, Willamette Valley.
5. Barnard Griffin Wines of Washington State.

NEWPORT STORM BREWING RELEASES HOT COCOA-INSPIRED BREW



Newport Storm Brewing Company announced the availability of its "annual beer," a practice the brewery began in 2000. Each annual brew showcases "unique flavors and extreme qualities, and features an ABV of 11% or higher." This year Brewmaster Derek Luke used hot cocoa as inspiration for the Annual Release 16. The beer features Canada Pale, Canada Munich and Baird's Chocolate, Flacked Oats, as well as German Tettnang and German Traditional hops. The Baird's Chocolate malts "build the base for this beer" and the "unique extraction process from cacao nibs from Ecuador and Ghana finish off the chocolaty flavor." Annual Release 16 is a limited release brew with an ABV of 11% and IBU 28.

MS WALKER ANNOUNCES LIMITED EDITION WEST CORK WHISKIES



West Cork's Black Reserve and Barrel Proof Irish Whiskey are available via MS Walker of Rhode Island for a limited time. The Barrel Proof is an oak brown color with aromas of malt, dried fruit and sweetness. The finish features dried fruit, almond and cracked nuts with lingering malts. The Black Reserve is dark mahogany brown in color with aromas of malt and vanilla. The finish consists of cracked pepper, vanilla and sweetness. West Cork Distillers was founded by John O'Connell, Denis McCarthy and Ger McCarthy in 2003.



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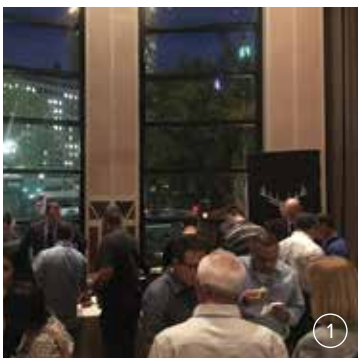
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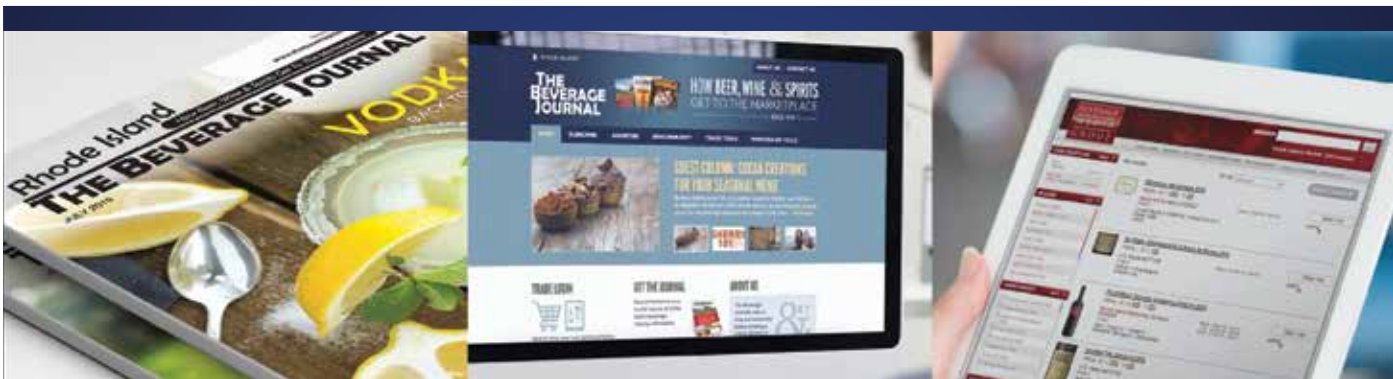
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JOHNSON BROTHERS HOSTS LUXURY SCOTCH, BOURBON SYMPOSIUM

Johnson Brothers of Rhode Island held a luxury Scotch and bourbon symposium and grand tasting event at Café Nuovo in Providence on October 19. Trade professionals had the chance to sample from selections within the Johnson Brothers' spirits portfolio while learning about the brands. The Dalmore Single Malt Scotches, Jura Single Malt Scotches, Glen Moray Single Malt Scotches, Tomatin Single Malt Scotches, Compass Box Artisan Crafted Scotches, Litchfield Distillers of Connecticut and Michter's Bourbon were among the featured brands during the tasting event.

1. Café Nuovo in Providence set the stage for the tasting event.
2. Ryan Sullivan, Prestige Wine & Spirits Group; Keith Miranda, President, Johnson Brothers of RI; and Kelly Tomek of Glen Moray.
3. John Gasbarro, Oaklawn Liquors in Cranston; Keith Miranda, President, Johnson Brothers of RI; and Bill Powers, E. & J. Gallo Winery/The Dalmore/Jura.
4. Kenny Ng of Chatham Imports with Michter's Bourbon.
5. David Baker of Connecticut's Litchfield Distillers discussing the brand launch in Rhode Island. The product line, called Batches' series, includes five spirits: Bourbon Whiskey, Double Barreled Bourbon Whiskey, Bourbon Whiskey Port Cask Finish, Vodka and Gin.
6. Mark Mazur, E. & J. Gallo Winery/The Dalmore/Jura.



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YOUR FAVORITE SAUVIGNON BLANC
wrapped for the holidays



Thorpe's Wine and Spirits

BY SAVANNAH MUL

"You want to go where everybody knows your name..." That feeling of community embodies Thorpe's Wine and Spirits, said employees, who describe the store as "very 'Cheers'-like," due to its connection to the local market it serves. Owner Patti McGreen purchased the store seven years ago, keeping the original name. "It had good brand recognition already in the town," she said.

McGreen said her staff of 16 is always willing to help, answering questions and giving counsel to shoppers looking for the best buy, and in a "social and bright" environment. Store Manager Jackie Forsythe said when it comes to recommending a product, "We just try to give the best advice on what we see what sells or what we know."

Since taking over ownership, McGreen has added improvements to the building including a new roof, new coolers, heating and air conditioning units and updates to the parking lot. She also implemented a new point of sales system and a delivery service organized by Customer Service Manager Tyler McLaughlin. The wide aisles offer room to roam and encourage



Mike Berry, Beer Manager; Tyler McLaughlin, Customer Service Manager; Patti McGreen, Owner; and Jackie Forsythe, Store Manager.



LOCATION

609 MAIN STREET
EAST GREENWICH, RI

FACTS

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 3,000
YEARS IN OPERATION: 7

learning between the staff and customers.

McGreen and her staff increased the product selection in the store to approximately 6,000 active SKUs to keep up with consumer demand on different craft beers, wines and spirits. Of particular interest are the bourbon and Scotch categories, where they carry at least 100 SKUs of each style.

"We really try and make this a destination for craft beer lovers, too," said Beer Manager Mike Berry. "We offer a wide variety of craft beers as well as domestic giants." Berry said they proudly stock local state brews such as Gray Sail Brewing of RI, Whaler's Brewing Company, Revival Brewing Company and Foolproof Brewing among many others.

As for "non-local" beers, he said they stock "anything from Maine, to Washington ... to California," or will special order to bring in for a customer. "We've also devoted a cooler door to

singles and seasonal arrivals for people to try and taste what they like."

In addition to floor purchases, an increase in popularity among the "behind the counter" purchases of 50 to 100 ml bottles helps the bottom line. McGreen said they sell about 300 of those items daily. Thorpe's Wine and Spirits offers in-store tastings on Fridays and Saturdays on beer, wine and spirits to promote new products or specials.

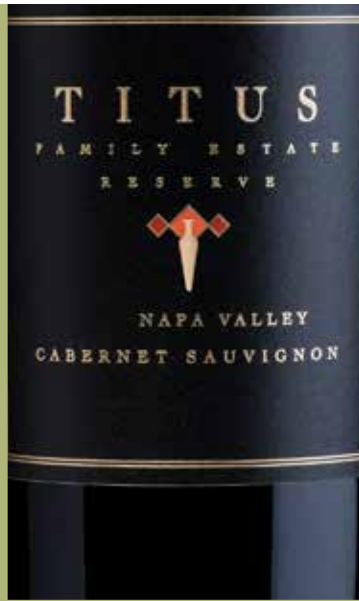
McGreen, along with her staff, calls the industry "trend driven" and their retail store is "under constant metamorphosis" anticipating the next hot item to stock. "We're not afraid to react," she explained.

"I really like the people who work here and our customers," McGreen said. "And I like the products, too. It's a fun industry to be in and maybe it's our location, but our customers are great. It's an enjoyable day coming from working in corporate America." ■

FEATURE YOUR STORE



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



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THE HOT GET HOTTER

LOOKING FOR TRENDS FOR 2017?
START BY CHECKING 2016'S GREATEST HITS...

BY W. R. TISH

December is lovably predictable: besides the holiday fanfare, it brings a raft of predictions for the coming year. Mercifully, pundits are rarely tied to their prognostications (people forget)—all the more reason to spout them before 2017 begins in earnest.

That said, we are not about to go out on a limb here for the imminent arrival of Riesling or the embrace of orange wine. Boring as it sounds, we believe several of the trendiest categories of 2017 are identical to those of 2016, namely rosé, red blends, whiskey and bubbly. Tellingly, these four categories have some common traits:

- There is still plenty of opportunity (and incentive) for current suppliers to extend product lines.
- Barriers to entry are relatively low, encouraging new suppliers and brands.

- These categories' growth trends have shown an ability to extend across price points.
- Usage has grown organically, with modest/minimal promotion and without critical ("96 points!") support.

PINK POWER

Is it any surprise that according to Nielsen, Château d'Esclans "Whispering Angel" is now the #1 French imported wine in value sales among French still wines? Provence continues to lead the market and set the standard for quality and prestige, but rosé is now a bona fide category, with SKUs emerging at a fast and furious pace from all over the map. Consider Wölffer Estate on Long Island; winemaker Roman Roth just added "Finca," a pink project from Ar-



At Wölffer Estate on Long Island, Roman Roth now crafts five rosés; the latest, "Finca," is a collaborative project made in Argentina. Above; premium single-serve wines like Steelhead have a bright future, especially in warm weather months.

gentina, to his set of four other rosés. In Israel, Yarden makes a Champagne-method Chardonnay-Pinot Noir bubbly that competes at the high end (SRP \$55).

With the robust performance of Whispering Angel, expect more still rosés to cross north of \$20 SRP. Look for more pink extensions to join established varietal lines (Rodney Strong will be coming out with a Pinot Noir rosé), and don't discount increased demand for sweet-ish bubbly rosés. Food for thought: Korbel's Sweet Rosé (which debuted in 2006 at a modest 3,165 cases) outsells their Brut, and has since 2010. That was the first year Korbel's two rosés combined to sell 100,000 cases; in 2016 they reached 147,000 cases

WILL THE REAL RED BLEND(S) PLEASE STAND UP?

Selling a lot of red blends lately? Of course you are! But what are you actually selling when you sell "Red Blends"? This category is becoming increas-



ingly difficult to define and organize—but the SKUs keep coming.

Once upon a time, “blends” fit into some relatively well-defined types (Bordeaux-style, Rhône-style, etc.). Now, with kitchen-sink blends proliferating, there is little guidance in terms of style, even when grapes are listed on the bottle. It has never been more important for wine-shop staffers to know how to describe these wines. There is a world of difference between the smooth, jammy \$9.99 Zin-driven blends and more “serious,” drier \$12+ wines; and even at the same price point, taste profiles can vary dramatically.

This lesson jumped out recently when we sampled three blends in the \$20-\$24 range; all were excellent examples of their styles, but as distinct as Larry, Curly and Moe. Gundlach-Bundschu Mountain Cuvée is a classic Cali Bordeaux-style blend (80% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Malbec), with lipsmacking fruit and a slap of oak. The Cleaver California Red Blend (74% Zinfandel, 21% Petite Sirah, 5% Syrah) is like a big brother of the soft jammy \$10 Zin-led blends; ultra-ripe and rich. And Ouled Thaleb 2013 “Signature” (50% Marselan, 35% Petit Verdot, 15% Carmener) is a strapping, leathery, old-world revelation.

We expect savvy merchants to apply closer attention to merchandising, organizing and presenting their red blends, to improve



the odds of customers finding one that fits their taste preferences.

50 SHADES OF BROWN

Granted, it's not nearly as simple to craft a new bourbon or rye as it is a rosé or red blend, but that is not stopping the innovation. Suppliers will continue to “discover” new bottlings about as fast as they can scare up liquid and come up with new names and stories. We will also be treated to a continuing parade of wood treatments. Importer M.S. Walker recently launched three new limited-release Irish whiskies under the West Cork Distillers brand. The new Sherry Cask, Rum Cask and Port Cask finished whiskies (all 12 years old, 86 proof and SRP \$66) join the line which already has a Bourbon Cask.

Another trending marketing technique: releasing a tiny amount of very high-end liquid that casts a halo over the distiller's mainstream bottling. Glencadam distillery bottled 8 casks total of their 25 Year Old Single Malt, and only 400 of the \$499 bottles make it to the U.S. By contrast, 6,000 bottles of the everyday “Origin 1825” were shipped, at the relative-steal SRP of \$40-\$45.

Of course, the current whiskey boom is partly driven by flavored entries. Don't expect the actual range of flavors to keep widening (à la vodka); but you may want to test our how whiskey rolls in another direction: creams. Luxco is aiming to do for whiskey what Bailey's did for Irish Whiskey. Ezra Brooks Bourbon Cream (SRP \$14.99; 25 proof) offers buttery, caramel and toffee notes with a touch of cinnamon and nutmeg. It was released as a limited edition for fall and winter; but Brand Manager Fletcher Buchman notes that the creamy sibling has already been slated for seasonal release again next fall.

BUBBLES RISING

Prosecco, Prosecco, Prosecco. Is that all there is? This

may be the year we find out. Keep your eye on Prosecco, but also consider these questions:

- Will consumers continue to absorb higher-creeping Prosecco prices, and/or upscale bottlings above \$20? (Jury is out on this.)
- Can other sparkling wines gain market share based on competitive pricing and comparable style (Cava to chip away at the budget end, Crémant d'Alsace challenging Champagne)?
- Will mini bottles gain traction? (Two of note: Maschio's \$4 Prosecco and Moët's \$12 Champagne with detachable flute.)
- Will sweet bubbly grab palates and wallets? (Will Veuve Clicquot's market-tested “Rich” demi-sec go national?)



More Predictions...

OK, we can't resist inching out on a few limbs....

Packaging Trend: We expect extra bells and whistles, in the form of tags, wrappers, trinkets—not to mention more canned wines and more single-serve wines.

Portugal is knocking on the door: Blanche Orbe, Managing Director of importer/distributor Wine in Motion, believes Touriga Nacional and Vinho Verdes are now in the consumer's vernacular, adding, “We can't keep Vinho Verde in stock in winter months!”

Australia: “After years of declining sales, many are realizing the wines are a great value,” notes Katy Leese, GM at V2 Wine Group, importer of Torbreck. “We see increased consumer interest in the premium (\$15 and above) and super-premium (\$30 and above) categories.

South Africa: A new generation and attitude is achieving unprecedented quality and diversity, and America is ready to benefit; we will have more on this in January 2017. ■

A SOBERING YEAR FOR CRAFT BEER

BY JACK KENNY

Trying to visualize 4,600 breweries and all the different beers they produce is a dizzying effort, and also impossible. But that's how many breweries we have in the United States. That reality is celebrated daily and nightly by consumers who can't get enough craft beer. If ever there was a beer heaven, it is here now.

But we are retailers and our views differ from those of consumers. We are up against the shelf-space wall, the tap handle wall, and for some time now we have been letting our industry partners – the distributors and the brewers – hear about it. It isn't beer heaven. Benj Steinman, publisher of *Beer Marketers Insights*, coined the perfect word to describe it: “SKUmageddon.”

Pundits and prophets have been waiting for 2016: For the first time in many years, sales of craft beer have slowed. For the first six months, growth was at 6.5%, last year it was 17%. We won't have big-picture numbers for a few more months, but we know this much – it's not the little guys who are feeling the downturn. It's the big ones.

Anna Brigham blogs for San Diego's Thorn Street Brewery and she summed it up in a recent post: “When was the last time you were in a craft beer bar in San Diego and ordered a Sierra Nevada Pale Ale or a Sam Adams? The answer to this question has a direct impact on the lag in craft beer sales.” (There are 130 breweries in the greater San Diego area.)

Sam Adams, Sierra Nevada and New Belgium each have reported drops in sales performance. So have Shock Top (AB-Inbev) and Blue Moon (Coors). It's been calculated that if you remove the latter two from the equation, the 6.5% growth would rise to 8.9%. In its third quarter report, Boston Beer reported declines over nine months for its Samuel Adams, Angry Orchard, Coney Island and Traveler brands. Twisted Tea and the new Truly Spiked & Sparkling saw increases. Angry Orchard Crisp Apple, which was on a tear in recent years, dropped 16.4% in volume, while Sam Adams seasonal brews declined 16.4%. Boston Lager, the flagship beer, is down 8.8 percent.

Jim Koch, the company's founder and chairman, said, “We saw a further slowdown in growth across the craft brewing industry.”

Change is inevitable. Cool heads understand what's happening in 2016 because slower growth is a natural part of category maturation.

“With more breweries comes more competition as craft beer takes hold of mainstream retail channels,” said Brigham. “Yes, we had a few years of double digit growth, but as an industry matures it's normal for that extreme growth to slow down.”

Craft beer isn't the only segment with drooping numbers. The big ones – AB-Inbev, Coors, Miller – all are watching the markets change as consumer tastes shift. Quite a few people in the beer business, along with millions of craft beer fans, are voicing discomfort at the recent surge in acquisitions of small regional breweries by the giants. But hey, that's called capitalism. The big guys might be upsetting the so-called purity of the craft movement, but they are trying to maintain profit and share in a wobbly marketplace. Those who are troubled by it are free to patronize the other 4,597 brewers.

Carlos Brito, the CEO of AB-Inbev, made a comment last month that caused a lot of folks in the craft world to set dumpsters on fire. During an earnings call he speculated that consumers might one day “get a bit tired of so much choice.” That prompted Brewers Association CEO Bob Pease to wonder, in print, what Brito was drinking. Pease called the comment “a hypothesis being willed into existence for the greater good of one brewery.”

I can appreciate the umbrage, but Brito's comment was just one phrase in a two-minute response to a question in which he addressed wholesaler and retailer pushback on the amount of craft SKUs they are able to carry, according to a report in *Brewbound*. “Customers began to realize some time ago that there's a large assortment,” Brito said. “There is only so much shelf space that you can share and cold box that you can split.”

He's right about that. Whether consumers will tire of the endless choices among beers, perhaps we'll get a sense of that in 2017.



ABOUT JACK KENNY

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



WRITE TO HIM: thebeercolumn@gmail.com

OVER THE TOP? MOUNT GAY AND PLANTATION RELEASE OVERPROOF RUMS

Maison Ferrand proprietor Alexandre Gabriel has introduced Plantation O.F.T.D. The acronym stands for “Old Fashioned Traditional Dark,” but barely hints at the spirit’s unique origin. A blend of rums from Guyana, Jamaica and Barbados offered at an overproof 69% alcohol by volume, this rum was created by an unprecedented collaboration.

It began when Gabriel called a secret meeting in New Orleans in 2015 with six of the world’s top rum experts, including spirits historian David Wondrich. Their mission: to create the ultimate overproof rum. They tasted and discussed; Gabriel took their comments back to the Maison Ferrand estate in Cognac, where he created several samples. The group gathered again in December 2015 and agreed, unanimously, on the final version. 138 proof; SRP \$31.99/1L.

plantationrum.com



Meanwhile, Mount Gay Rum released 3,000 bottles of their first-ever cask-strength product—XO Cask Strength. At 63% ABV, XO Cask Strength features a blend of spirits matured for eight to 15 years and the rich, rum is rounded out by notes of ripe banana and toasted almond, followed by vanilla and spice in a long finish.

The release celebrates the 50th anniversary of Barbadian Independence; Mount Gay Distilleries has distilled, blended and bottled in Barbados since 1703. Each bottle will come in a keepsake wooden box with a booklet on the rum’s history in Barbados. (A portion of the sales will benefit the Barbados Museum and Historical Society.) 126 proof; SRP \$185.

mountgayrum.com



PACKAGE RE-BOOT FOR JÄGERMEISTER

Introduced 80 years ago, Jägermeister, German for “Master Hunter,” is the #1 selling imported liqueur in the United States. The latest chapter in the brand story is a new package—taller and bolder—with a number of elevated changes, including: a more defined shape; higher, more squared-off shoulders; a more mature and realistic stag; and new text. This is the fifth time the bottle has been redesigned over the course of the brand’s history. One caveat: on-premise accounts that use a Jägermeister Speed Pour machine need to use a new bottle stopper, available through distributors; for details call 800-713-8881 or visit tapmachine.com.

sidneyfrank.com

150 YEARS ON, AMARO SILANO SHIFTS INTO HIGH GEAR

Established just three years after the unification of Italy, the Bosco Liquori company is using the firm’s 150th anniversary as a springboard to revitalize Amaro Silano, their flagship spirit. With amaro’s recent resurgence in American cocktail culture and the brand’s updated packaging, the time is ideal.

Amaro Silano was the first commercial Amaro ever produced in the Calabrian region and is still made according to the original recipe from noble digestive herbs of Calabria, particularly licorice. Silano refers to the Sila Mountains, a protected natural habitat to the Silanian Wolf indigenous to this region. The bitter-sweet style of Amaro Silano had made this the fastest growing amaro in Southern Italy. Its elegant 1.0 liter package and shipper graced with the Silanian Wolf marry 150 years of traditions to today’s visual consumer. 60 proof; SRP \$29.99/1L.

fxmagner.com



TRINCHERO FAMILY ESTATES GOES FOR THE GOLD...

The wine brand widely credited with defining the premium red blend category is making a serious play in Chardonnay. Ménage à Trois “Gold” (\$12 SRP), coming on the heels of success with Midnight and Silk in 2014 and 2015, is all about the fruit. Mostly Chardonnay, but boosted with Viognier and Verdelho, Ménage à Trois Gold lives up to its front label promise of “rich, indulgent, lavish,” with gobs of melon and touches of vanilla, with no wood to distract.

menageatriswines.com

THE METALLIC GOLD LABEL PROMISES “EXTRAVAGENCE IN EVERY SIP”



BELL'AGIO MAKES A CASE FOR SWEET RED FIZZ

From Banfi Vintners (folks who know their way around sweet red bubbly), Bell'Agio is a sparkling rosso dolce wine with sweet ripe-raspberry and cherry flavors, made from a blend of grapes grown mainly in Emilia-Romagna. The launch includes the “Belles” campaign with regional events and signature cocktails created by certified Advanced Sommelier Sarah Brownell. Target audience is Millennial females, and, of course, people who are looking for their bubbles on the sweet and fruity side—or their red blend on the bubbly side. bellagiowine.com



Bell' Twist

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 2 oz. Sugar | 1½ oz. Bourbon |
| 2 tsp. Cinnamon (ground) | 1 cup Ice |
| 2 oz. Bell'Agio | 2 Orange wedges |
| 3 oz. Orangina soda | |

Directions:

Mix sugar and cinnamon and spread on a plate. In glass, combine Bell'agio, Orangina and Bourbon. Rub orange wedge around rim of a low-ball glass, then dip rim of glass in cinnamon-sugar mixture to coat. Fill with ice, add cocktail mixture, garnish with orange wedge.



FLOUR SACK VERSION

COPPERTOPS: NOW THAT'S A WRAP!

In the spirit of the proverbial better mousetrap, a small startup in Seattle may well have created a better bottle wrap. Born from a customer request for better gifting options, Coppertops Paperie has turned paper and fabric into two patent-pending designs that are both foolproof and attractive. Paper wraps come in a variety of designs; SRP \$14/set of 6. The flour sack version (SRP \$12) can accommodate one or two bottles, and is the gift-wrap that keeps giving—it's also a kitchen towel. Wholesale pricing available. coppertopspaperie.com



CHANDON TAPS CHIC DESIGNER FOR LIMITED EDITION DUO

Fashion designer Rebecca Minkoff has applied her talents to Chandon Brut, designing two new stylish limited-edition expressions this holiday season: Casually Chic in White and Fashionably Bold in Black. Minkoff calls the bottles “a little bit chic, a little bit rock and roll.” Both feature her signature stud pattern, so the classic California bubbly is dressed and ready for partying or gifting. Available through January 2017 at SRP of \$24.



BUYING LOCAL FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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



The holiday season is fast approaching. From a retail perspective, it seems to come earlier and earlier each year. While I was shopping for Halloween candy this year, I was sidestepping Christmas trees, holiday decorations and specialty chocolates. Big box shops and regional retailers alike enjoy getting far ahead of this lucrative holiday. And, that's okay, I get it. The holidays are a festive time during which the spirit of giving grows exponentially and is a true boost to the retail economy.

In hospitality, we talk a lot about buying local and farm-to-table cuisine. As a community and an organization, we do our best to support our local farmers, fisherman and meat purveyors. I am a huge proponent of buying locally, that goes for food items as well as goods and services. As we start to look toward the holiday season and make our naughty or nice lists, let's make a pledge to support our own communities.

BUY LOCAL



While consumers can find almost every type of restaurant gift card in supermarkets and drug stores, before reaching for one, why not consider some of the fabulous restaurants in Rhode Island? Many of our restaurant members are running promotions that offer a perk to the purchaser, as well. Perks include everything from a \$100 gift card bonus, to use for yourself or as another gift, with the purchase of \$500 in gift cards; to even a \$25 card when you purchase \$100 in gift cards. Local cooking classes are also a wonderful treat to help the foodie couple on your list further hone their skills and cooking experiences. A number of fantastic restaurants throughout the state are offering classes.

Beyond restaurants, local hotels offer enticing getaway packages after the holidays, and often at special pricing. Or, how about a hotel spa experience as a gift? I don't know anyone on my shopping list who would turn down a relaxing massage or facial to destress after the holidays. From Providence, to Newport to Westerly, there are so many incredible spas in Rhode Island!

Experiential gifts can transcend beyond the kitchen or hotel - tickets to an upcoming musical, play, show, or even tickets to the local skating center are wonderful ways

to provide the gift of enjoyment at the holidays.

Look around our state, you will find a wealth of potential gift ideas that will not only brighten the holidays for those on your list, but will help keep money flowing in the local economy. Many hospitality businesses depend on holiday sales to make up to 50% of their yearly revenue. It is an incredibly important time for local businesses. According to the National Retail Federation, consumers plan to spend an average of \$935.58 during the holiday shopping season. Total planned spending this season is second only to the record total spending in 2015, at \$952.58.

With reports like this, local businesses will ramp up their seasonal hiring, bringing in more people or giving those already employed additional hours to compensate for the anticipated uptick in sales. This is also good news for the local economy.

The holidays are a time for giving, sharing and caring. Please care about your community and the local economy by buying local for the holidays.

Wishing you a happy holiday season!



LEARN MORE

For anyone interested in learning more, 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.



LIQUID DEMOCRACY

LAUREN BLAKE, WINE CURATOR,
CRAVEABLE HOSPITALITY GROUP

BY ALIA AKKAM

As Wine Curator of Craveable Hospitality Group, with concepts in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, Lauren Blake assembles a collection of colorful, inspired beverage programs for restaurants like David Burke Kitchen at the James New York hotel.

BEVERAGE MEDIA GROUP: When developing a beverage program, what is your aim?

LAUREN BLAKE: To balance innovation and accessibility. I believe in offering wines that are familiar and building a relationship of trust that helps us push boundaries. Perhaps a guest comes in regularly and drinks our Domaine de la Chezatte Sancerre. Maybe one day we have the opportunity to expose them to something like Sauvignon Saint-Bris because they trust our expertise.

BMG: You talk to the entire team for input on your selections. How does this work for you?

LB: If I can get servers tasting as often as possible, they are going to feel more confident and sell more wine as a result. Some of our front-of-house staff were a little hesitant to speak up about a wine they didn't like. I like to drive home the point that wine is a democracy: it's okay to not like a wine that a so-called 'expert' likes. Another advantage is getting a genuine sense of whether the wine is something that's maybe more geeky and going

“If they're ‘just’ having cocktails or beer, I like to say, ‘I don't discriminate. Let's talk about beer.’”

to put the average guest off, or whether it gets an overwhelmingly positive response. I can get too inside my own head and this method helps me think about wine from a guest's perspective.

BMG: How strong is the interplay of wine, beer and spirits at your restaurants?

LB: When I approach a table and tell them that I'm the somm or wine curator and they respond that they're 'just' having cocktails or beer, I like to say, 'I don't discriminate. Let's talk about beer,' and guide them through their non-wine options. In our training we utilize all aspects of beverage in recommended pairings.

BMG: Is there a trend currently exciting you that makes an impact on your lists?

LB: One of my favorite things going on in wine right now is the effort being made to offer stellar wine at accessible prices. It's not necessary to spend \$150 on a bottle to

get insane juice. For half that you can get something way more than just decent. I'll say it again: wine is a democracy.

BMG: A big part of your career was spent in Aspen, including working for Jimmy Yeager, a bar owner who embodies hospitality. How did that era influence you?

LB: I evolved so much as a restaurant professional. I must attribute much of this to Samantha and Craig Cordts-Pearce, who gave me my first job in Aspen, tending bar at the Wild Fig. I truly learned about every point of fine-dining service there. I was in the unique position of being both a bartender and a somm at Jimmy's. Some nights I was behind the busiest bar I've ever worked, cranking out cocktails at one of the best parties Aspen offers, and some nights I was a little bit more buttoned-up, working the floor according to the service standards of the Court of Masters. It was absolutely wonderful never doing the same thing twice.

BMG: You act as mentor to various service teams. What do you teach them?

LB: I had someone once tell me that my favorite domestic Pinot Noir was 'the wrong one.' He was joking around, but it stayed with me. The main thing I hope my co-workers take away from spending time with me talking and tasting is that wine is subjective. I don't ever want anyone to feel they like the 'wrong' wine. I want that to be the experience they give our guests. ■



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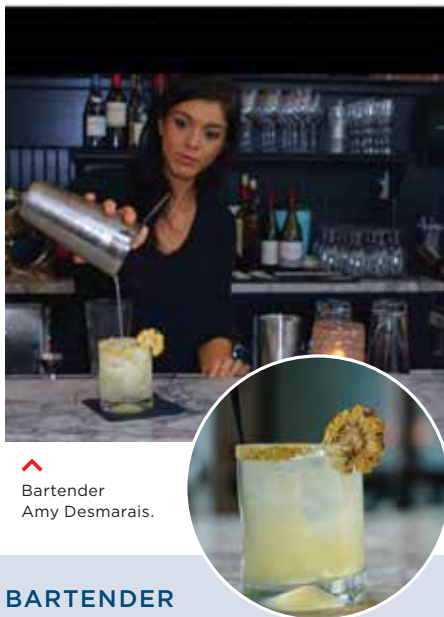
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GARDE, @ THE PROVIDENCE G

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With a seasonal menu of chiefly local and artisan fare, Garde's French-inspired menu is designed to encourage "gathering and revelry," as is their curated beer, cider and wine list and thoughtfully-crafted house cocktails.



Bartender
Amy Desmarais.

BARTENDER

Amy Desmarais

COCKTAIL

Down on the CORNER

RECIPE

Add to shaker:

- » 2 oz. Don Julio Blanco Tequila infused with five-pepper blend and oven-roasted corn
- » 1/2 oz. Licor 43
- » 1/2 oz. Cointreau
- » 1/2 oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
- » 1/4 oz. simple syrup

Fill with ice, shake. Strain mixture into glass rimmed with dehydrated corn powder and peppercorn blend. Garnish with roasted corn slice.

"It's similar to a margarita [with] a sweetness from the oven-roasted corn and some heat from the five-pepper blend," said Director of Operations Jeffrey Mancinho. "It's very approachable, and pairs well with ... our charcuterie."

11TH HOUR BOOSTS

WITHOUT HUGE CHANGES,
SEVERAL OPTIONS TO INCREASE TRAFFIC

BY JAMES LAURENTI

For businesses keen on making adjustments to impact their online sales this holiday season, there are a number of product marketing services (often referred to as "product feeds") that can be implemented quickly to create immediate impacts.

Wine-Searcher

If you have an eCommerce website, you're likely already submitting a product feed to Wine-Searcher as they have a free listing service. However, it's only with a sponsorship that you can gain traffic and sales that will actually impact your bottom line. In the last couple years, however, the sponsorship program's costs have become very complex where stores pay a fixed rate at first, and then pay \$50/month + \$0.32/referral. What's even less clear is that the "referrals" don't only include traffic to your website but also include anyone that simply visits your Wine-Searcher.com merchant profile page. We estimate that stores actually end up paying about \$0.47 for each click-through to their website.

All in all, the costs have become substantially higher to run the sponsorship program, and the lack of tools for limiting ads by geography make this an impossible service for stores that cannot offer interstate shipping. Still, despite this, there's no denying the traffic and sales from the service. The average store on our network finds the costs of the service are about 8% of the sales they obtain from it.

Vivino

After securing \$25M in funding in January 2016, Vivino has quickly emerged as another service where online retailers can submit and list products. Like

Wine-Searcher, they have a free listing service, but paid sponsors get deeper exposure as they're incorporated into in-app purchases. Vivino has adjusted their pricing model during the course of the year, but in its current iteration, they take 10% of each sale (initially 5% during a 3-month introductory period) and, for in-app purchases, they want the store to honor a \$15 flat shipping rate. The in-app purchase "\$15 shipping" is a bit of a sticking point but Vivino offers their sponsors a simple tool that lets them "turn off" specific states and limit the ad targeting to specific regions.

Google Adwords

Google Adwords, a search engine marketing service, has an "ad type" called "Product Listing Ads" (PLA) which allow stores to upload a product list and populate "ads" under the Shopping section of Google.com. A store can set bids on the different items, and pay those bid amounts per click (the higher the bid, the more exposure). The return on investment (ROI) for this service can vary considerably based on how a store sets up their bids and ad targeting (ads can be limited by geography, bids can be adjusted by product category, price, etc.). That said, stores that experiment and continue to optimize their ad settings often tend to get profits as good as any of these services.

While these three services are perhaps the best options to impact your online sales immediately, other product advertising options have started to emerge, notably via Drync (product listings on eBay.com) and Facebook, which has quietly released a set of tools to set up dynamic product-based ads. ■

To learn more about how Beverage Media can help with a website for your store visit BevSites.com, or contact James Laurenti at 617-864-1677. Follow us on twitter at twitter.com/bevsites.

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COGNAC

101

BACK TO BASICS

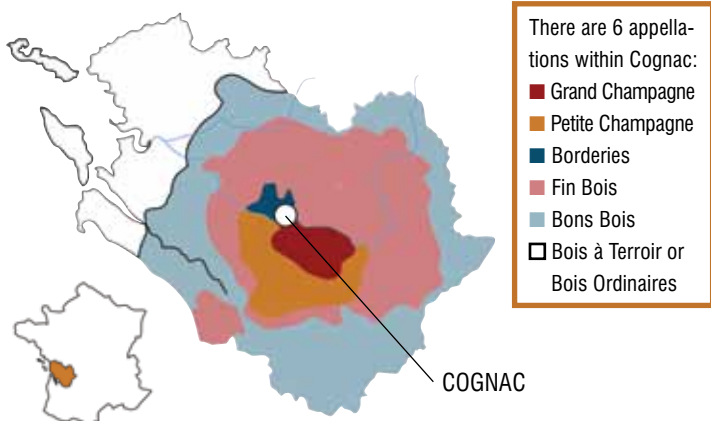
BY JEFF CIOLETTI

Brandy is the oldest of the distilled liquors; and Cognac is considered brandy's highest expression. There's probably no other spirit that is so tightly linked with France as Cognac—which is odd when you consider very few French people actually drink the stuff. The hugely popular brandy is popular just about everywhere

but France, as only about 3% of all of the Cognac in the world is consumed in its home country. But that just means there's more for everybody else, and it's enjoying some impressive gains in the United States these days. Shipments of Cognac to the U.S. grew a solid 13.6% in 2015, with gains being led by the largest suppliers.

WHERE IS IT PRODUCED?

For a spirit to be called Cognac, it must be produced in the Cognac region, near the central-southwestern coast of France, covering only about 300 square miles. It's an Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC), just as Champagne is an AOC for its namesake region.



COGNAC VS. OTHER BRANDY

- ◆ In the same way that all Champagne is sparkling wine, but not vice versa, **all Cognac is brandy but not all brandy is Cognac**. Both are considered eau-de-vie.
- ◆ For many brandies, authorities don't stipulate which parts of the grape must be used for their production (grappa, for instance, is made from pomace, the leftover pressed skins and seeds). **Only the prime parts of the grape may be used in Cognac**.
- ◆ The vast majority of Cognacs are made from **Ugni Blanc**. By comparison, another region-specific French brandy, Armagnac, has 10 grapes at its disposal.



HOW IS IT MADE?

- White wine (predominantly Ugni Blanc) is **double distilled in copper pot stills** and comes off the still at around 130 to 140 proof.
- It's then **aged in French Limousin oak casks** for varying periods of time, depending on the grade.
- Older casks are blended with younger ones** to produce the desired flavor profile.



AND WHAT ARE THOSE GRADES?

Label-wise, Cognac is divided into various types based on a grading system. These “grades,” expressed as abbreviations, correlate directly to the aging process, designating how long the spirit was aged before bottling.

TYPE	STANDS FOR	AGE	TASTE
VS	VERY SPECIAL	2 YEARS MINIMUM	Fruity aroma and lighter, citrus-like flavor. VS is the one that's most commonly mixed in cocktails.
VSOP	VERY SPECIAL OLD PALE	4 YEARS MINIMUM	More dried fruit characteristics, sometimes candied, as well as notes of toffee and its ilk.
XO	EXTRA OLD	6 YEARS MINIMUM	Flavors and aromas get more complex and pronounced, with hints of dry nuts and even cigar-like qualities.
HORS D'AGE	BEYOND	TRANSCENDS THE USUAL MATURITY DESIGNATIONS	As to be expected, the added age should bring even more depth and complexity, with a lingering finish

EYE ON EXPERIMENTATION

Consistency is everything with Cognac. **Blending is an extremely precise art**, where the blender might combine 3% from one barrel, 8% from another, 13% from another and so on just to achieve a flavor profile consistent with previous bottlings.

Many Cognac houses, however, have been experimenting a bit and offering **expressions beyond the traditional** VS, VSOP and XO labels with characteristics unique to that bottling—not unlike the “small batch” or “single barrel” concept in bourbon.



FEATURED BRAND CAMUS



CRAFT COGNAC: CAMUS' ARTISANAL APPROACH

In a category heavily dominated by major houses, Camus stands out as a family-owned, independent producer focused on the high-end. But it's not just their smaller size that sets them apart. Here's why they are making their mark:

Estate Vineyards

Having started as winegrowers (not merchants), Camus is the only producer in Cognac to own a large percentage of their own vineyards. “We're the only house that can tell you where every grape came from,” shares president Cyril Camus.

Site Specific Cognac

With newly acquired vineyard holdings in Cognac's prized Borderies subregion, Camus has helped pioneer the concept of Cognac terroir. Their Borderies expressions—VSOP (\$55) and XO (\$180)—highlight the region's hallmark floral and mineral character.



Skewed Super-Premium

Camus sells more of their XO (\$160) than their VS (\$30)—unheard of in the Cognac world. Their much-awarded super-premium Borderies VSOP is their focus brand in the U.S.



Lost Art, Rediscovered

In the 1970s, many traditional production methods were abandoned in Cognac. Camus has reintroduced ancient techniques like distilling grapes on their lees which adds creaminess and texture, as well as extracting heads (portion of Cognac to discard) liter by liter.

Growth by Cocktail

On-premise is a growth-driver, as the brand helps reclaim Cognac's rightful place at the bar. “Around one-third of classic cocktails were based on Cognac, and the cocktail craze is helping bring it back,” says Camus.

COCKTAIL CLASSIC

Cognac as a cocktail driver may seem like a new phenomenon, but the spirit has been a player in cocktail manuals as long as recipes have been compiled and shared. Cognac is a very versatile cocktail base and there

are many classics that wouldn't be the same without it. In character, it also is being rediscovered by a new generation of mixologists for its ability to stand in for other spirits, particularly bourbon and amber rum.

VIEUX CARRÉ

The New Orleans-born cocktail combines Cognac, rye whiskey, sweet vermouth and bitters



FRENCH 75

These days people are more familiar with the gin-based version, but the original used Cognac in the mix that also includes Champagne, lemon juice and simple syrup.



BRANDY ALEXANDER

While any aged brandy would suffice, many bartenders prefer to use cognac in the drink that combines the spirit with crème de cacao, heavy cream and ice.



SIDECAR

The one most classic cocktail enthusiasts likely know best: Cognac, lemon juice, orange liqueur and sugar.



OLD FASHIONED

You're probably thinking, "Wait, you've got the wrong spirit! Bourbon or rye whiskey is the proper base for an Old Fashioned!" Well, yes and no.

Back in the 19th century, folks were mixing cocktails with whatever they had; and in a lot of cases—especially in the French Quarter of New Orleans—they were very often mixing their cocktails with French brandy, which, more often than not, was the much-exported Cognac.



MEET THE NEW NEAT

When sipping fine Cognac, many professionals recommend **avoiding those big balloon sniffers**. Warming Cognac (or any brandy) by cradling a snifter beside a roaring fire is little more than a cliché now. For optimal tasting, **you are better off using an eight-ounce tulip glass**; there's less distance between your nose and the spirit, so the smaller glasses are much more conducive to appreciating all of the complexity of Cognac.

Are sniffers history? Not quite yet. If you are look to industry pacesetters for clues, Riedel makes Cognac glasses in both the tulip and balloon shapes; Ravenscroft and Schott Zwiesel opt for the snifter, albeit not fully bulbous.



FUN FACTS

NOW IS THE TIME

The biggest month of the year in the U.S. for selling Cognac is December, when 12.5% of the annual Cognac purchases are made. In fact, a third of the Cognac we buy is sold in O-N-D. (Source: IWSR)

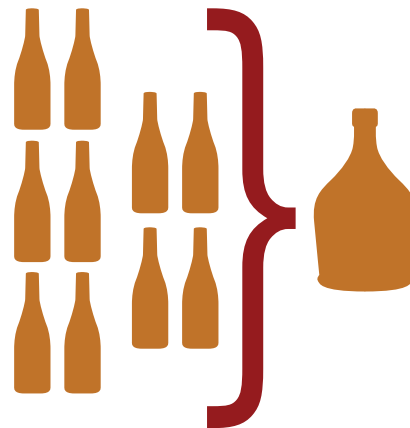
GOOD WOOD

All Cognac must be aged for at least 30 months in French oak; although barrels from the Limousin and Tronçais forests in central France are both allowed, Limousin is the wood of choice, prized for its generous tannins.



THE BIG SQUEEZE

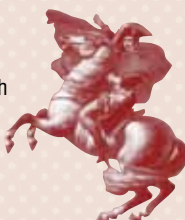
It takes 10 liters of white wine to distill 1 liter of Cognac.



HISTORY CHEAT SHEET

NAPOLEON'S LEGACY?

Napoleon Bonaparte, the famed French emperor and military leader, was said to have wanted Cognac rations for his artillery, and he later brought barrels of it with him into exile on St. Helena. Today the term "Napoléon" is sometimes seen on Cognac labels; technically these bottlings have aged as long as XO, but they are effectively being marketed as being somewhere between a VSOP and an XO.



GRAPE SWAP

Prior to the Phylloxera scourge of the 1870s, Folle Blanche was the dominant grape variety for Cognac. After the crisis, the vineyards were replanted with Ugni Blanc, favored for its high acidity levels and resistance to infection.



COGNAC WEB RESOURCES

COGNAC.FR

The official website of the Cognac Bureau, has a selection of detailed interactive presentations on Cognac history, production and usage.

COGNACFANS.COM

Aptly name site is all about enjoying the drink. Established in 2009; updated in 2011 with an extensive database of Cognacs; features forums as well.

COGNAC-EXPERT.COM

Blog, reference, marketplace; this is a labor of love by a brother and sister, based in Cognac.

SELLING POINTS

- ◆ **The whiskey renaissance** has opened the door for other brown spirits. Consumers are seeking out new flavor experiences in that realm and Cognac has been one of the prime beneficiaries.



- ◆ Drinkers increasingly have become savvy about **different types of oak treatments**. Barrel type and aging length are key facets of Cognac's flavor profile and an opportunity to attract new fans.
- ◆ There has also been a rise in interest in **aperitifs and digestifs**. Few classic after-dinner sips have as much history as Cognac.

FEATURED BRAND CAMUS

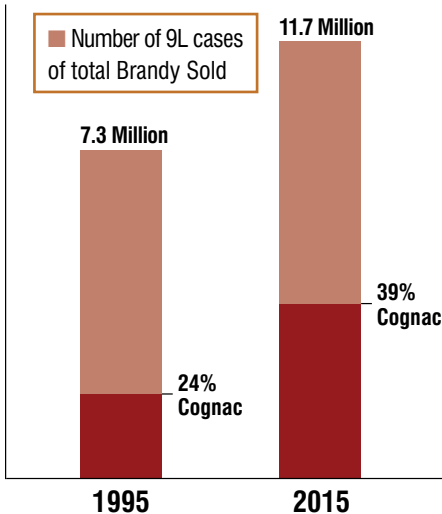


EXTRA INNOVATOR

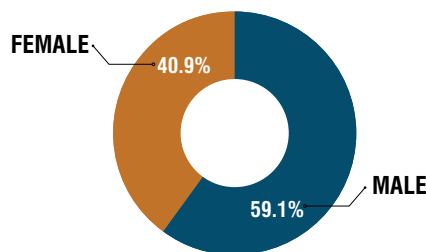
Camus sells more Extra than all other producers combined. For the latest expression coming out this spring, Extra Dark & Intense (\$500), Camus developed a new proprietary method to recover some of the "angel's share" Cognac that is trapped in the actual wood of the barrel, which adds aromatic intensity.

COGNAC BY THE NUMBERS

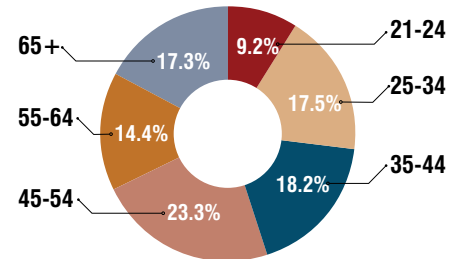
Over the past two decades, Cognac consumption in the U.S. has grown even faster than the overall brandy market, increasing its share significantly.



BY GENDER



BY AGE



PER CAPITA

The average per capita consumption of Cognac in the U.S. is 21.5 9L cases per 1,000 adults. The District of Columbia, projected to be 115.3 9L cases/year in 2016, is up from 99.7 just two years earlier and leads all states. The next nine are:

New Hampshire	90.7	New York	40.8	New Jersey	32.3
Maryland	46.0	Illinois	35.6	Mississippi	29.8
Michigan	45.7	Delaware	33.4	Massachusetts	29.6

SOURCE: IWSR U.S. BEVERAGE ALCOHOL REVIEW

SALTY ORIGIN?

In the 13th century, the Cognac region was a strategic point for the international salt trade, leading foreign traders, (largely the Dutch), discovered the wines of the region. In the 16th & 17th Century, Dutch traders built stills in the region, turning the wines—which often didn't survive the long voyages north—into the eau de vie that would come to be known as Cognac.



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AUSTRIA

THE FUTURE IS NOW

FULLY REINVENTED, AUSTRIAN WHITES AND REDS ARE READY TO CAPTIVATE AMERICANS

BY JASON WILSON

Please know that the Austrians are sick and tired of talking and hearing about the 1985 wine scandal—in which a lousy bunch of unscrupulous wine merchants added a chemical used in manufacturing antifreeze to their wines, in a ham-handed, criminal attempt to increase sweetness levels. That was over 30 years ago, and Austria long ago reinvented its wine industry with some of Europe's strictest wine laws and quality-control procedures.

"I'm younger than the wine scandal, and we have this heavy baggage," says Marie-Sophie Hartl, head of export west for the Austrian Wine Marketing Board. "I'd say it helped in the end, since we now have these strict wine laws. So yes, there some phoenix-out-of-the-ashes aspect to the story." But she adds: "We hope the phoenix flies away at some point."

The phoenix has undeniably flown, and anyone who isn't carrying a wide selection of Austrian wines on their shelves or list has fallen behind. The quality of

Austrian wines these days—at all price points—is simply amazing. With a cool climate and low alcohol levels, both the whites and reds are so incredibly food-friendly.

With indigenous varieties such as Grüner Veltliner and Blaufränkisch, and even more obscure varieties such as Neuburger, Zierfandler, or Welschriesling, Austrian wines meet a growing consumer demand for interesting, off-the-beaten-path grapes. "Austria is like the garden of Eden," says avant-garde winemaker Christian Ts-



Austria's signature wine, Grüner Veltliner, offers great appeal for consumers who already like Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc. / Dormant vines in Traisental, the most recent addition to the viticultural map of Austria, introduced from the 2006 vintage; it is known for fruity and spicy Grüner Veltliners and Rieslings with mineral notes. / Alex Zahel is one of Vienna's best-known producers; shown here, a field-blend harvest, destined for his Gemischter Satz.



chida. “You have so many different grapes. You can do whatever you feel like.”

Austria is one of the world's oldest wine cultures. The Habsburg monarchs certainly loved wine, but it is the tradition of the *heuriger*, the humble neighborhood wine tavern, that is essential. *Heuriger*, meaning “this year's wine,” dates back to an 18th century imperial decree, which allowed winemakers to open rustic restaurants to sell their new wine. Many *heuriger*, even now, are only open several weeks per year. Besides being a quaint story, what the *heuriger* represents is a wine culture that prides itself on drinkable, everyday wines that offer value at all price points—precisely the kinds of wines consumers demand.

While Austrian winemakers keep true to Old World ideals, they've also embraced a younger, new-world mindset, evident in creative labels, new technologies—for instance, they were among the first Europe-

ans to embrace screwcaps over cork.

However, few wine regions have as many producers with a commitment to Biodynamic—befitting the country where the philosophy of Biodynamic farming began with Rudolf Steiner. Historic producers like Nikolaihof have practiced Steiner's methods for decades. But there are also newer groups, like Respekt-Biodyn, a collective of about 20 biodynamic producers including Fritz Wieninger in Vienna, Fred Loimer and Johannes Hirsch in Kamptal, and Anita and Hans Nittnaus in Burgenland.

Forget Fashion: Grüner Veltliner Is A Classic

It's currently fashionable in the wine world to once again profess one's admiration for Grüner Veltliner—just as six or seven years ago, it was de rigeur to dismiss Grüner Veltliner as a passing fad.

I remember fondly the late 1990s and early aughts, when Grüner Veltliner was

becoming trendy and popping up on all the hip wine lists. “If Viognier and Sauvignon Blanc had a baby,” we were told, “it would be Grüner Veltliner.” Then, sometime around 2007, Grüner Veltliner ceased to be cool.

This is a shame, and more than a little ridiculous. As the famed wine importer Terry Theise has said: “Not one single thing that's been discovered, trumped, lionized, promulgated, put on wine lists and talked about with giddy delight, not ONE. DAMN. THING. has been nearly as excellent as Grüner Veltliner.”

Thankfully, in recent years, Grüner Veltliner has recovered its reputation, and is now considered one of the classic, must-have varieties. Grüner Veltliner is so site-specific that it's hard to sum up — from the Wachau it can be rich and complex, from Kamptal or Kremstal it can be elegant and austere, from Weinviertl it can be refreshingly peppery and gulpable. There is value at all price points, from bright and cheerful \$14 to great value \$20 bottles to single-vineyard offerings \$40+ that will age beautifully for decades.

GRÜNER STARS

- Kamptal:** Hirsch, Loimer, Bründlmayer
- Kremstal:** Nigl, Sepp Moser
- Traisental:** Markus Huber, Ludwig Neumayer
- Weinviertl:** Pfaffl, Ebner-Ebenauer
- Wachau:** Knoll, Nikolaihof, Rudi Pichler

TOP VALUES (< SRP \$18)

- Gobelsburg; Loimer; Hirsch “#1”;
- Huber “Hugo”; Nigl “Freiheit” Trocken



ABOVE: Harvest at Weingut Zahel in Vienna; with about 1,700 acres of vineyards inside its city limits, Vienna is perhaps the world's only major capital city that produces wine. / Windmill in the wine region Weinviertel in Niederösterreich (Lower Austria) BELOW: Markus Huber crafts his Grüner Veltliner in Traisental.

Rising Reds

Even 10 years ago, Austrian reds represented the height of obscurity to the American wine drinker scared off by an umlaut. To be fair, until the late 1990s, most Austrian reds were not exactly ready for prime time. But times have quickly changed. Now, there are few top wine lists that don't have at least a few Blaufränkisch and Zweigelt on offer.

Zweigelt (created in 1922 by a cross between Blaufränkisch and St. Laurent) is just what a new generation of wine lovers looks for: it's fresh, both fruity and savory, and pairs well with popular foods like grilled pork and burgers. And it's affordable, almost always selling for under \$20. If you like Dolcetto or Beaujolais, you'll love peppery, easy-drinking Zweigelt.

Grown all over Austria, Zweigelt's best expressions are found in Burgenland and in Carnuntum. In fact, Carnuntum

has a special designation called Rubin Carnuntum, which must be 100 percent Zweigelt and pass muster with a jury tasting. Look for producers such as Grassl, Markowitch and Glatzer.

Blaufränkisch, which can be like Nebbiolo or Pinot Noir, is the Austrian red grape with the most aging potential. At a recent tasting, I was stunned by bottles dating back to the early 1990s, some reminiscent of Barolo. Burgenland is where Blaufränkisch reaches its highest expression. Look for producers such as Moric, Erwin Tinhof and Paul Lehrner.

Vienna Mixes It Up

Vienna, with about 1,700 acres of vineyards inside its city limits, is perhaps the only major capital city that produces wine. "Sometimes when we talk about winemaking in Vienna, people don't believe how close to the city we are," says Alex Zahel, of Weingut Zahel, one of Vienna's best-known producers. "Ninety percent of the people who visit think,



'OK, so you bring the grapes in from elsewhere and press them in Vienna?' But no. The vineyards are right here."

The most famous wine of Vienna isn't made from one grape, but instead is a white field blend called Gemischter Satz—literally "mixed set"—of well-known grapes such as Riesling, Grüner Veltliner, or Pinot Blanc as well as obscure ones like Welshriesling, Rotgipfler, Zierfandler, or Neuburger. Wiener Gemischter Satz achieved DAC status in 2013. The wines must have at least three grapes in the mix, with none comprising more than 50% and third highest portion being at least 10%.

"Gemischter Satz is not an experiment. These are grapes that are perfectly situated in this area," says Rainer Christ of Weingut Christ, another go-to Vienna producer. "One hundred years ago there were only field blends. I really believe in this style of winemaking. Since 2006, I've been replanting vineyards with field blends."

Gemischter Satz wines are very drinkable and offer excellent value in the \$15 to \$20 range. Look for producers such as Zahel, Christ and Wieneringer. ■



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P

new
products

1. MYX FUSIONS IN 750ML

Just in time for the holidays, MYX Fusions—launched by Nicki Minaj in 2013—is being offered in 750ml bottles, in addition to the original 187mls. The idea is to bring the brand from laid-back barbecues to holiday entertaining. The 750mls will be offered in the three most popular flavors: Original Moscato, Peach Moscato and Classico Sangria. Available first in FL, GA, MI, IL, CA, NY, TX, MD, MO, AR; national launch by March 2017.

\$ SRP: \$8.99
myxfusions.com

4. CLYDE MAY'S CASK STRENGTH WHISKEY

Complementing their non-chill filtered 92-proof Straight Bourbon, Clyde May's Whiskey has introduced a 117-proof, 8-year-old Cask Strength Whiskey. Rooted in Clyde May's moonshine heritage, the Cask Strength is bottled at 117-proof to release a full nose of citrus, peach and cedar. Given the level of craftsmanship involved in creating Clyde May's Cask Strength, only 3,000 bottles were produced.

\$ SRP: \$89.99
mayswhiskey.com

2. RON BARCELÓ GRAN AÑEJO

Ron Barceló, the renowned rum made in the Dominican Republic and imported by Shaw-Ross International, has revamped Barceló Gran Añejo Rum. The custom shape of the new 750ml stands taller and sleeker; modern features include a higher-quality closure, greater prominence for the brand's embossed lion crest and a refreshed Barceló brand logo. Rolling out first in NY, NJ, and FL; nationally in early 2017.

\$ SRP: \$19.99
ronbarcelo.com

5. 2014 QUILT NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Copper Cane Wines & Provisions—creator of Meomi Pinot Noir—has released the 2014 Quilt Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. Fifth-generation winemaker Joe Wagner drew from a patchwork of six prime Napa Valley AVAs to create a full-bodied, rich and decadent wine. The blending of fruit from a variety of vineyards helps the wine to achieve more complexity as well as consistency from vintage to vintage.

\$ SRP: \$44.99
coppercane.com

3. RED TRUCK WINERY

Red Truck is America's first winery using innovative twist-open-and-reclose Helix packaging, which combines a stopper made from cork and a glass bottle with an internal thread. Consumers can still enjoy the satisfying "pop," but without the need for a corkscrew. The Helix will be used on the entire Red Truck line; pictured here, the flagship Red Blend, with aromas of eucalyptus and black tea leading into jammy, blackberry fruit on the smooth palate. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

\$ SRP: \$10.99
bruncowine.com

6. LORD CALVERT 'DUCKS UNLIMITED' DECANTER

Lord Calvert Canadian Whisky has announced a partnership with Ducks Unlimited, aiming to showcase the Canadian heritage of both entities, as well as their passion for the outdoors. Lord Calvert will be releasing a limited edition Ducks Unlimited decanter, available nationwide, with proceeds going to support Ducks Unlimited's wetlands programs. Each 750ml decanter is hand-painted, hand-labeled and hand-filled.

\$ SRP: \$99.99
luxco.com



7



8



9



10



11



12

7. CROWN ROYAL VANILLA

Crown Royal's newest offering, Crown Royal Vanilla Flavored Whisky, is a blend of hand-selected Crown Royal whiskies infused with the rich flavor of Madagascar Bourbon Vanilla. The result is whisky bursting with vanilla flavor and Crown Royal's superior smoothness. The versatile spirit tastes great when mixed with sodas, used to create a vanilla twist on classic cocktails, or simply sipped on the rocks. 70 proof.

\$ SRP: \$24.99
globe crownroyal.com

10. CARMENET RESERVE CHARDONNAY BRUT

Carmenet Winery embodies the art of blending and an ability to achieve top-quality results in California wine. The newest release, a Chardonnay Méthode Champenoise Sparkling Wine, offers distinctive mouth-filling flavors. This dry sparkling wine has a crisp balance; coupled with a refreshing stream of bubbles, Carmenet Brut is impressively food-friendly. Of course, the Chardonnay character makes it rewarding on its own as well. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

\$ SRP: \$16.00
globe broncowine.com

8. CHARLES KRUG WINERY

Charles Krug Winery recently unveiled new packaging to better communicate their position as Napa Valley's oldest and most experienced winery. Historic cues include an embossed cider press; and a call-out box offers facts pertaining to the winery's relevance in Napa, placing Charles Krug within the larger context of winemaking innovation. The new packaging will roll out through the entire portfolio starting with the release of the 2015 Chardonnay and the 2013 Merlot.

\$ SRP: \$25/2013 Napa Valley Merlot
globe charleskrug.com

11. OAKHEART SPICED RUM

Oakheart Genuine Spiced Rum has new packaging to help it stand out on shelves and back bars. While designed to provide familiarity to the existing product, the new direction is more classic and masculine in its style. In addition, to support the brand, Bacardi is launching an ad campaign focused around sporting events and Millennial males. A giant American oak barrel will travel to events, giving consumers a chance to carve their names into it.

\$ SRP: \$14.99
globe oakheart.com

9. HENNESSY 'MASTER BLENDER'S SELECTION N°1'

"Master Blender's Selection N°1" is a very personal signature Cognac, produced in a single batch from Hennessy's extraordinary reserves of eau-de-vie. Master Blender Yann Fillieux was empowered to use his unbridled creativity. His selection of 80 to 100 eaux-de-vie was then aged in both young and old French oak casks, and bottled at "cask strength"—to release aromatic tones as well as delicate spicy notes. Recommended neat or with three ice cubes. Exclusive to the U.S.

\$ SRP: \$45/375ml \$80/750ml
globe hennessy.com

12. MOTTURA & LE PITRE WINES FROM PUGLIA

Puglia-based Mottura wines have joined the Prestige Wine Imports (PWI) portfolio. Known for striking a balance of New World taste and Old World tradition, Mottura is a benchmark producer of Southern Italy's indigenous varieties, notably red grapes Negroamaro and Primitivo. PWI will be importing four wines—two from the classic Mottura line (SRP \$14.99); and two from the Le Pitre Selections (SRP \$24.99)

\$ SRP: \$24.99
globe motturavini.com



BEERWATCH 2017

HUGE, FRAGMENTED AND PEPPERED WITH NEW PROJECTS, THE BEER MARKET CONTINUES TO CHURN

BY ETHAN FIXELL

Beer has had an incredibly turbulent year, from the Big Guys down to the little ones. Buyouts, mergers and unprecedented growth in both breweries and SKUs have made the marketplace a confusing one for beer consumers and producers alike. In the process, the oft-abused term “craft” inches closer and closer to the brink of losing all meaning with respect to beer—even as wine-centric glassmaker Riedel delivered a stamp of approval to the beer biz by designing a special Riedel beer glass.

Perhaps the signature news event was the official approval of AB-InBev buying SAB Miller for a cool \$101 billion. But don't let that fool you into thinking the Goliaths are counting on size alone. For instance, aside from gobbling up a huge peer this year, Anheuser-Busch also launched an incubator for 10 start-ups; they experimented with the first driverless delivery truck; and they went full chutzpah, renaming their flagship beer “America.” Heineken, the leader on the import side, made some bold moves of their own: forming a new division, Five Points Trading Company, to incubate emerging

brands; relaunching the Most Interesting Man in the World on behalf of Dos Equis; even collaborating with Tumi on a custom #Heineken100 carry-on suitcase.

Perhaps the only certainty in 2016 was change. But amidst all of the tumult, a few undeniable trends have arisen that promise to carry over into 2017.

Fruit Beers

The modern surge of American fruit beers was inspired by a modest attempt to

Cleverness has always been an effective tool in the beer marketer's book. Dos Equis has re-launched their Most Interesting Man character and campaign. Heineken's multi-faceted efforts include a collaboration with Tumi bags. Rogue continues to in their playful beer-name tradition with Yellow Snow IPA.

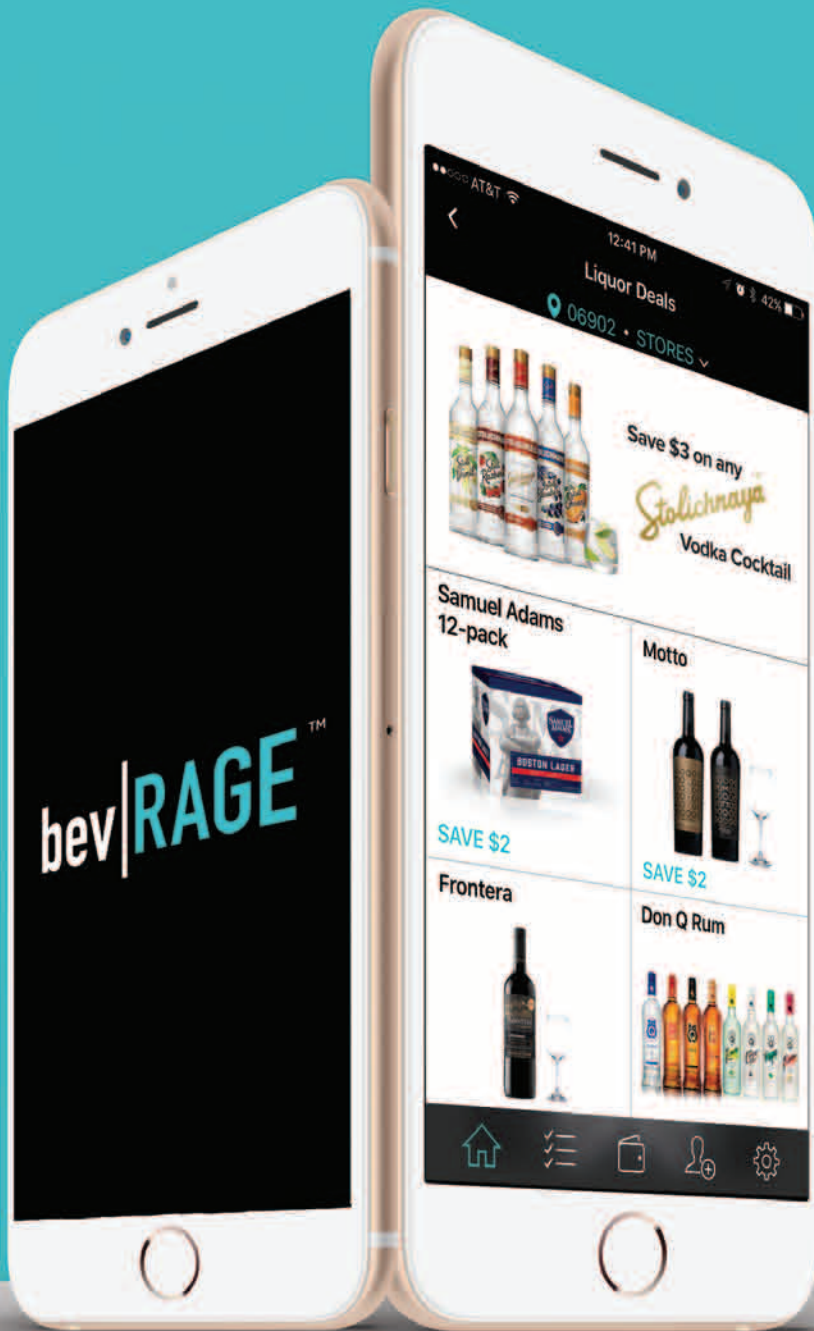
complement the wide array of citrusy hops (such as Citra, Cascade and Amarillo, to name a few) that so many West Coast breweries have come to embrace. Now, brewers are infusing all kinds of fruit into their beers—from Meyer lemon to mango.

Unlike in the 1990s or early 2000s when cloyingly sweet radlers and ciders were the rage, consumers are now increasingly seeking more subtle flavors from real fruit juice or extract that elevate the existing fruit notes naturally generated by hops and yeast. This trend is sure to continue to develop in more nuanced forms as consumer palates broaden and mature further, so look out for an even greater influx of quality beers that emphasize fruit over sugar in the coming year.



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Session Beer

The refined beer consumer of today is looking for more variety with less of a chance of a hangover, while trendsetting brewers naturally want people to drink as much as they can without getting hammered. Enter the “session” beer: a low-alcohol-by-volume brew of which multiple servings can be consumed during a drinking “session” without causing debilitating inebriation.

Despite facing near extinction (as in the case of the 4.5% ABV Gose and 3.5% ABV Berliner Weiss, two tart, historical German styles) or never existing before (as with the sub-5% ABV session IPA), easy-drinking beer is now seemingly omnipresent. The net result is that the overall average alcohol content of beers is dropping lower and lower.

Next year, look out for the malty, British take on this trend in the form of traditional milds, bitters and ESBs (Extra Strong/Bitter).

Nitro

Draught beer can be delivered to a frosty mug via a line carrying CO₂ or nitrogen gas blends. Traditionally, nitrogen has been



NITRO
Canned nitro brews use a special widget that comes in the container.

As we approach market saturation, some sellers and consumers alike are responding in 180-degree fashion, gravitating to more local labels.

reserved for dark, roasty brews such as Guinness and Left Hand’s Milk Stout, but breweries have begun experimenting with nitro versions of other styles this year—as in the case of Boston Beer Company’s “Samuel Adams Nitro Project.” Nitro stouts continue to thrive while nitro Black IPAs and Scotch Ales have been picking up steam at bars, restaurants, and brewpubs willing to serve them. Canned versions of the nitro delivery system have yet to truly pop in the same way, but they could take off once the draught craze hits critical mass.

Kölsch

Once a rare hybrid style specific to Koln, Germany, Kölsch—top fermented with an ale-like yeast, but conditioned at a colder temperature like a lager—is now in high demand. First introduced

to American consumers in the early 2000s by breweries such as Goose Island, Ballast Point and Harpoon as “German-style pale ales” or “summer beer,” the style has since been produced by plenty of major American brands, including Samuel Adams, Sierra Nevada and Rogue Ales. Kölsch satisfies those desiring the body of a lager and the flavors of an ale, and should only continue to increase in popularity due to its versatility and wide appeal.



KEEP IT GLASSY

Riedel’s ultra-thin Veritas Beer Glass (SRP \$69/pair) purports to keep beer “colder than any pint glass.”



Southern Hemisphere Hops

With American breweries pumping out IPAs like there’s no tomorrow, brewers have begun seeking out flowers from around the world to satisfy an insatiable consumer craving for new and exotic hop flavors. The uniquely minty, herbal, fruity hops of Australia and New Zealand have become particularly popular in California, where American hops have long been front and center in West Coast-style IPAs.

Craft brewing leaders such as Sierra Nevada, Green Flash and Stone

now all work with hops from Down Under, despite the elevated production cost. In the coming year, expect to hear more about varieties such as Nelson Sauvin (named for its flavor similarities to Sauvignon Blanc wine), Southern

Cross (spicy and lemony, but used more for bittering rather than aroma) and Galaxy (an Australian hop with passion fruit and citrus characteristics especially popular with American brewers).

Localization

Beer store shelves are already jam-packed with an expanding number of products from around the globe. As we approach market saturation, some sellers and consumers alike are frequently responding in 180-degree fashion, gravitat-

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TOGETHER IN
LOWBALL GLASS.
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AGAIN. GARNISH
WITH ORANGE
TWIST AND CHERRY.





Threes Brewing in Brooklyn represents the growing trend of craft brewers cultivating a local following—anchored by a pub on-site. Few of their brews even make it into cans; and those that do are prized as collectibles.

ing toward more local labels. Of the more than 4,500 breweries that now exist in the United States, a growing few are even bypassing packaging altogether, opting to open taprooms that serve draught beer intended only for folks and passers-by in the immediate neighborhood. Since launching in late 2014, for example, Brooklyn's Threes Brewing has made over 60 styles of beer, putting precious few into bottles & cans...

Local-focus is of course not new to craft beer, but the degree to which it is being celebrated is. Grand Rapids, MI-based retailer Meijer recently put out a press release touting that their commitment to local craft breweries represents an annual economic impact of more than \$100 million across the Midwest. And with respect to Michigan-based craft beer alone, Meijer has seen a 20% increase across its six-state footprint so far this year; no wonder they are publicizing their local support.

Given this palpable locavore mindset, retailers can and should confidently highlight local selections. But of course, no sub-par local beer will outsell a world-class import in the long run; quality will eventually trump all else.

Marketing

Beer is no stranger to bells and whistles. In fact, the bag of tricks being dipped into has never been deeper. Among the most prevalent and flexible of au courant techniques: collaborations.



Diageo partnered with local radio celebs Boomer Esiason and Craig Carton on a Smithwick's Ale for charity. Jameson Irish Whiskey has its Caskmates. Highland Park teamed up with Brooklyn's Sixpoint Brewery on a pair of new beers.

On the less conventional side, Red Robin collaborated with New Belgium Brewing to create Grilled Pineapple Golden Ale, the first-ever "burger-inspired" beer. And Quebec-based Unibroue parlayed a friendship with the heavy metal band Megadeth into a new brew: Á Tout Le Monde.

Then there's good ol' shocks and laughs. Craft brewers have long been known for wacky names and labels, and the trend has only intensified along with the market's expansion. Another accelerating trend: wacky flavors. Witness two recent releases by the aptly named Rogue Ale's Yellow Snow IPA; and Paradise Pucker, a Hawaiian-



Highland Park's project with Sixpoint Brewery is one of a growing number of unconventional collaborations. Ditto Unibroue teaming with heavy metal band Megadeth.

inspired sour ale brewed with passion fruit, orange and guava—better known as simply "POG."

And we should not be surprised to see beer marketers tapping brand new techniques—even technologies. Deschutes Brewery has brought two of its beers to life with virtual reality films that provide viewers with an immersive, 360-degree experience of Oregon landmarks Black Butte and Mirror Pond—inspiration for the two flagship beers, Black Butte Porter and Mirror Pond Pale Ale. ■

VIRTUOSITY
Is it real or is it virtual? Deschutes blurs the line.



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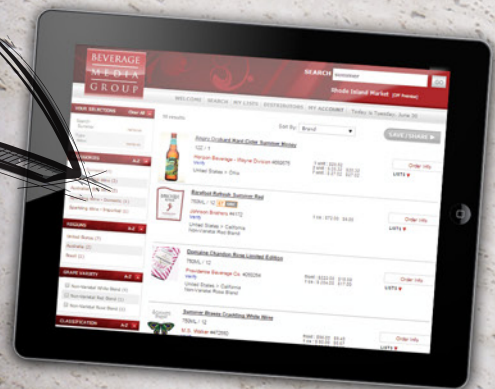
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