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JANUARY 2017



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The largest compilation of beverage alcohol price and brand information.

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MARKETPOINT

It's a "brand" New Year! Ring in 2017 with new products and emerging trends, plus our comprehensive wine, beer and spirits listings.

- The cover story is **South Africa** and its wines. Opportunity abounds for consumers and trade alike.
- What better time to predict the "next big thing" than the first issue of the New Year! Read what a handful of local experts **forecast** from the bar and the floor.
- Explore craft **beer** stats and see if the data meshes with your retail and on-premise observations.

Happy
New Year

- Beaujolais is beginning to bloom and the **Gamay** grape is gaining followers.
- Calorie-watching never goes out of style, and bars are ready to play along. Low-cal **cocktails** are an expanding trend.
- The annual **ProWein** preview offers an inside view into "the greatest wine show on Earth."
- Explore **local** news, event recaps, product launches and association news, plus "Retail Review" and "Serving Up."
- It's a new year, try new tools. Get your **password**, free with your subscription, and log-in to our trade-only site and iOS app download. Search and order, share products and lists with your reps or staff, create tasting sheets and so much more. Access the only online companions to the print magazine that you will ever need!



ON THE COVER

Photograph courtesy
of Lismore Estate Vineyards.

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Each year, we strive to present more relevant and local content — news you can use to sell your brands, stay informed and connect locally. It's news you can be a part of, too. We also deliver the market's most comprehensive product and pricing resource each month in print and anytime online, where you are linked to a rich product content resource that goes beyond pricing into current ratings, tasting notes, and even bottle shots and spins.

For more than 10 years, the companion, trade-only website provides a real-time link between on- and off-premise customers and wholesalers' sales teams in distributorships of all sizes. Along the way, we've evolved and enhanced our tech tools to serve today's market needs. This year, we unveiled the iOS ordering app, putting your business right in the palm of your hand.

INNOVATING FOR YOU

Each year we invest in creating more ways to help your business, no matter the size. We are here to support your unique work, whether you are part of a wholesaler team, importer, brand supplier, a retailer or an on-premise venue.

Your subscription includes your password and access to these invaluable online resources; call us to get activated and get more from our provided suite of beverage business tools. These include features to search easily from thousands of products 24/7; place orders to multiple distributors; explore the best deals available; view “Up” and “Down” price indicators to help determine which month is best to buy; create custom portfolios; communicate with your sales reps; access labels, bottle shots and tasting notes; and create custom shelf talkers or tasting sheets and more.

We've done this as a natural response to serving all of our subscribers' (and their staffs') needs, offering multiple platforms to keep your bars and shelves stocked, to help make sales communication and pipeline access easier, and to help create effective and innovative ways for licensed sellers and buyers to interact.

GOALS THAT SERVE OUR MARKET

Through our 75 years (and three generations) of doing local business, our goal remains steadfast: to provide and connect you with the market's most comprehensive resource for accurate pricing information, alongside industry news and insight:

We are a small but mighty team, ready to answer your questions about how to use all of our wholesaler, retailer or on-premise tools, and to help you maximize your relationship with us. The cleaner print design layout in our pages, scan and order technology, custom tasting or sell sheet creation, competitive set info, and optimized search facets on our site and app, are all examples of items we've added to meet your needs.

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Sincerely,



Dana Slone

Editor and Associate Publisher, The Connecticut Beverage Journal



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SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH

BRUNCH WITH BATALI

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

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G.H. MUMM CHAMPAGNE NAMES BOLT CHIEF ENTERTAINMENT OFFICER

Maison Mumm appointed Usain Bolt as the company's Chief Entertainment Officer. Bolt, who made history at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio when he achieved the "Triple Triple," three gold medals at three consecutive games, is a Jamaican-born sprinter and decorated athlete known to be the "fastest human ever timed." Bolt, in his new role with Mumm, will create "new and daring ways to bring celebrations to consumers," with the long-term goal of aiding the company's U.S. brand growth efforts.



KAVALAN NAMED BEST WORLDWIDE WHISKEY PRODUCER AT IWSC

Kavalan of Taiwan was named the Worldwide Whiskey Producer of the Year during the International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC). Since 2006, Kavalan Distillery has been dedicated to producing single malt whiskeys and has received more than 210 gold awards or above. YT Lee, CEO of Kavalan Distillery said, "Winning this new award is humbling and only makes us more determined to produce even better whiskey." This year the IWSC created seven new spirit "Producer of the Year" categories for titles such as brandy, gin, liqueur, rum, Scotch and vodka, as well as whiskey.



THORPE JOINS PABST BREWING COMPANY AS CEO

Pabst Brewing Company (PBC) announced that it has named Simon Thorpe as Chief Executive Officer, effective December 1, 2016. Eugene Kashper, current Chairman and CEO, will remain full-time Chairman of the Board and continue to play an active role in the business. There will be a 60-day transition period between Kashper and Thorpe to ensure a smooth handover. "He is both a true beer industry visionary and a highly respected operator. I have no doubt that Simon's breadth of experience and proven leadership capabilities will enable us to realize our ambition to become a best-in-class beer supplier and a truly great American brewing company." Thorpe was previously President and CEO of Duvel Moortgat USA.



CONSTELLATION BRANDS FIGHTS HUNGER THROUGH LOCAL INITIATIVES

Employees at Constellation Brands led the third annual Nourishing Neighbors initiative to help fight hunger in local communities. The initiative ran from October 24-28 and more than 1,040 employees from the U.S., Canada, Mexico and New Zealand took paid time off to volunteer at local food banks. Volunteer participation increased by 42 percent compared to 2015. Company and employee monetary donations totaled \$100,000, also an increase of 42 percent from the previous year. The company collected more than 84,000 pounds of food to distribute to local food banks as well.



ACKLEY BEVERAGE GROUP PURCHASES MERRIMAN VINEYARDS

Ackley Beverage Group, a private equity company in Seattle, purchased Merriman Vineyards in November. The vineyard is located in the foothills of the Oregon Coastal Range in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA. The 44-acre vineyard is comprised mostly of pinot noir and chardonnay grapes. Under the ownership of Ackley Beverage Group, Merriman Vineyards will expand fruit sourcing for Montinore Estate, which Ackley Beverage Group partnered with in 2016. "I'm looking forward to working with this vineyard and using its high-quality fruit for our wines," said Rudy Marchesi, President of Montinore Estate.



ON-PREMISE SPIRITS SALES TO GROW, RETAIL TO STAY THE COURSE

The outlook for drink sales in restaurants and bars calls for "more intense competition among on-premise venues and alcohol brands in 2017." The "On-Premise Intelligence Report" developed by Technomic and Beverage Marketing Corporation, said that "consumer occasions" fueling retail alcohol sales will remain flat in total adult beverage volume growth. However, dollar sales continue to increase on-premise as consumers gravitate towards more premium spirits, wine and beer products. The report stated that spirits is the only adult beverage category achieving volume gains in restaurants and bars. Cocktail prices and consumer willingness to pay are factors in that growth. Beer remains the most consumed type of alcohol in restaurants and bars, with wine second, and both are set to grow.





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BACARDI CUTS GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Bacardi recently reported cutting its greenhouse gas emissions in half, a year earlier than its December 2017 target date. The 50-percent reduction in greenhouse gases can be attributed to improved energy efficiencies including lighting, motors, HVAC and compressed air systems. “We set an ambitious corporate responsibility goal, and we reached it nearly 15 months early,” said Mike Dolan, Chief Executive Officer of Bacardi Limited. “We not only achieved it, we surpassed it with outside-the-box thinking, hard work and the passion of Bacardi employees.” Bacardi is now setting new goals and targets to align with those determined at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris last year. The spirit company is also supporting the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals.



VINEYARDS TAKE ACCOLADES AND RANKINGS INTO THE NEW YEAR

Bonterra Organic Vineyards was named American Winery of the Year by *Wine Enthusiast*, making this the first-ever vintner dedicated to organic farming to receive this recognition. The award will be accepted by Fetzer Vineyards’ CEO Giancarlo Bianchetti during the *Wine Enthusiast*’s Star Awards ceremony in Florida on January 20, 2017. The publication also named Oregon’s Willamette Valley as the 2016 Wine Region of the Year during its annual Wine Star Awards. *Wine Spectator* also released their Top 10 Wines of 2016 and ranked Lewis 2013 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon in first place. The list continues with second, Domaine Serene 2014 Chardonnay Reserve; third, Beaux Freres 2014 Pinot Noir Ribbon Ridge; fourth, Chateau 2013 Climens; fifth, 2011 Produttori del Barbaresco; sixth, Orin Swift 2014 Machete; seventh, Ridge 2012 Monte Bello Santa Cruz Mountains; eighth, Antinori 2013 Toscano Tignanello; ninth, Chateau Smith-Haut-Lafitte 2013 Pessac-Leognon White; and tenth, Hartford Family 2014 Old Vine Zinfandel.



CONSTELLATION BRANDS ANNOUNCES PURCHASE OF GRUPO MODELO

Constellation Brands plans to purchase Grupo Modelo, a subsidiary of Anheuser-Busch, for \$600 million. The brewery is located in Obregon, Mexico and is estimated



to have four million hectoliters of production capacity. The acquisition allows Constellation Brands to obtain a functioning brewery to support its fast-growing, high-end Mexican beer portfolio, as well as give the brand flexibility for innovation. “We look forward to welcoming Obregon’s talented employees to our Constellation family and working together to continue to capture the ongoing growth we see in the high-end segment of the U.S. beer market,” said Rob Sands, President and CEO of Constellation Brands.

REPORT SITES TRENDS IMPACTING GLOBAL AMERICAN WHISKEY MARKET

Marketing strategy and promotions, new product launches and rising exports are sited as emerging trends impacting the global American whiskey



market from 2016 through 2020, according to a report from Technavio. “U.S. whiskey has a large market share in the U.S. and is driven by the growing interest for unique brands such as WhistlePig, which is a small batch, rye whiskey brand,” said lead analyst, Arushi Thakur from Technavio. “There is consumer demand for authentic products that have a high product value, such as rye whiskeys and small batch bourbons. The industry is also introducing new flavors such as maple, spiced and honey to target young consumers.”

DIAGEO RELEASES VIRTUAL REALITY CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT DRUNK DRIVING

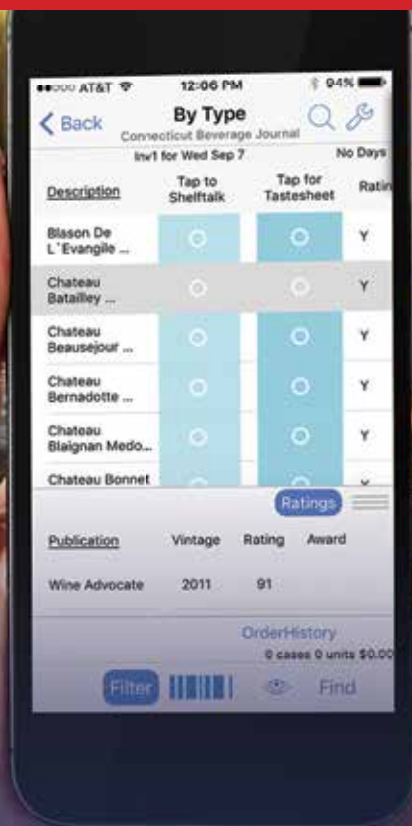
Diageo introduced “Decisions,” a virtual reality experience that puts consumers of legal drinking age in the middle of a fatal drunk driving crash, the latest approach to educate consumers about the “importance of responsible decision making when drinking.” Diageo partnered with Johnnie Walker Scotch Whiskey on the rollout of this campaign, building on the brand’s “Join the Pact” program to end drunk driving. The “Decisions” campaign follows stories of three different vehicles and passengers, highlighting how a single decision can affect multiple lives. “These days, it’s easy for us to be desensitized to certain issues unless we live them out firsthand,” said James Thompson, Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer, Diageo North America. “Our hope is that this will be truly jarring for people and will help inform responsible decision-making while enlisting their advocacy in the ongoing fight against repeat, hardcore drunk drivers.”





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Varietal Wines, Emerging Spirits and Low-alcohol Cocktails

Local Experts Weigh-In on 2017 Trends

BY LAUREN DALEY



It's time to look ahead to what's coming up for the beverage industry in 2017. The past few years have seen waves of growth in craft brews, rosé wines, classic cocktails and the farm-to-bottle movement. We asked a handful of local industry professionals to look into their crystal balls and forecast what trends will emerge, pick up, or slow down in Connecticut. Here are their expectations. "In 2017, spirits will see an even more intense focus on barrel-aging," predicts Renée B. Allen, Director of the Wine Institute of New England. "Special bottlings of traditionally aged spirits, such as whisky, will be cocooned in every type of cooperage out there, from cognac to cabernet barrels. Using traditional barrels and then a second style of barrel for 'finishing' will become more common," she said.

"Secondly, spirits that are not typically aged — such as vodka and gin — may find themselves spending time in oak for flavor, color or just the novelty of it," Allen said. She also predicts an increased interest in liqueurs, especially amaro. The "craft liqueur movement will expand to include ever more creative components, including locally foraged botanicals. Infusions will also get more creative — if you can stick it in a jar, you can use it to infuse," she continued. Lastly, she expects a trend of Eastern-themed cocktails made

with tea bases and Asian spirits, such as shōchū and baijiu.

As for wines, Allen said, "We'll see more single varietal wines, highlighting grapes we've never heard of, from some of the hundreds of indigenous grapes in Old World countries." She also predicts the trend of "healthy," low-calorie, low-alcohol wine will continue — and possibly that colored wines, like blue, will hit the shelves, "followed by the entire rainbow of possibilities," she said. "Sparkling wines will continue to gain ground ... look for England to become a more significant performer when it comes to bubble ballet."

Mark Moeller, Founder of Recipe of Success in Shelton, has similar predictions. "Wines will continue their turn to natural and clean while we should see more wines in kegs, too. Beer will continue to focus on local with more and more unique ingredients being used. Old-school cocktails will be reinvented and become the drinks of choice for many," he said.

Brian Mitchell, Beverage Director, Max Restaurant Group said, "Beaujolais will continue to make a strong comeback on wine lists. The strength of the wines from smaller domaine producers who own and farm older vines and make serious wine will continue to resonate with buyers and consumers alike; plus the food pairing ability of Gamay will reach more people

as they experience these fabulous wines. Wine lists will focus on regional styles and be tailored to work with the cuisine of the restaurant rather than trying to be formulaic and have something for everyone."

Mitchell also predicts, "Academic wine writing will continue to displace ratings as the preferred manner to buy and sell wine. What the wine tastes like to you is all that matters and scores are simply a snapshot in time of one person's opinion." He says to look for a slow-down in craft breweries as the market continues to be "flooded;" gin will gain more prominence and preference in cocktails; and the term "craft" will "continue to be overused on more and more bar programs."

Ashley Lurie, Bartender at the Ch'i Public House in South Norwalk, predicts a back-to-basics cocktail movement. "I'd love to see more bartenders keeping it simple — using their creativity to deliver straightforward cocktails and flavors that can be duplicated and picked apart. I absolutely love the 'Farm-To-Shaker' initiative because of the unadulterated, simplistic nature of the cocktails they produce," said Lurie. She hopes getting back to basics will also "allow for more face time with guests ... We've all been through the

LOCAL TRENDS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

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Annual “Salute to Excellence” Honors Restaurant Industry

The Connecticut Restaurant Association (CRA) held its annual meeting and “Salute to Excellence” awards dinner on November 29, 2016 at the Mohegan Sun Ballroom. The event honored many of Connecticut’s restaurants, caterers, chefs and bartenders with more than 400 people attending.

Dan Meiser, proprietor of both Oyster Club and Engine Room, was recognized as the Restaurateur of the Year. Rogo Distributors of East Hartford was awarded Vendor of the Year, and State Senator Len Fasano was named CRA’s Friend of the Industry. Saybrook Point Inn Marina and Spa and Max Restaurant Group were both inducted into the Connecticut Hospitality Hall of Fame.

Awards from CRA’s online public voting efforts included Server of the Year, Julie Francini of Restaurant Bricco; Casual Restaurant of the Year, Plan B Burger Bar; Upscale Restaurant of the Year, The Capital Grille Hartford; Caterer of the Year, Coastal Gourmet Catering; Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI) Mixologist of the Year, Mike Knudsen of the Hartford Restaurant Group; and Chef

of the Year, which was a tie between Nicola Mancini of La Tavola and James Wayman of Oyster Club. Red 36 of Mystic was awarded Restaurant Newcomer of the Year. Larry Cafero, Executive Director of the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of Connecticut (WSWC), served as event emcee.

“As I wrap up my first year as Executive Director, I am thrilled and proud of the CRA’s growth in just one short year. With a dedicated Board of Directors and hardworking staff, we have been able to achieve above and beyond the goals set forth earlier this year,” said Sarah Maloney, Executive Director. “It’s an unbelievable honor to be in the same room with such talent and passion for our industry.”

The Connecticut Restaurant Association’s mission is to serve as the voice of Connecticut’s restaurants in advocacy, education and awareness. It is affiliated with the National Restaurant Association, and is Connecticut’s only not-for-profit representing the state’s restaurant industry. ■





1. Phil Barnett, Immediate Past Chairman, CRA and Sarah Maloney, Executive Director, CRA. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
2. Dan Meiser, 2017 CRA Vice Chairman, Proprietor of Oyster Club and Engine Room and Restaurateur of the Year; Anthony Sullo of Joey Garlic's and 2017 CRA Chairman of the Board; and Sarah Maloney, Executive Director, CRA. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
3. Larry Cafero, Executive Director of the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of Connecticut, served as the Master of Ceremonies during the 2016 Salute to Excellence Awards Dinner and Nicole Griffin, Partner, Powers, Brennan & Griffin. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
4. Finalists for Mixologist of the Year included Aaron Stepka, Millwrights Restaurant and Tavern; Mike Knudsen, Hartford Restaurant Group; and Chris Parrott, Little River Restoratives. Knudsen was named the winner by public vote.
5. All with CRA's Vendor of the Year, Rogo Distributors: Clem Sayers, General Manager; Steve Hayes, Sales Representative; and Bill Hannon, Sales Manager.
6. Jude Malone, Executive Director, Connecticut Beer Wholesalers Association and Clem Sayers, General Manager, Rogo Distributors.
7. All of Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI): Mike Evans, Division Manager; Pete Kawulicz, Business Manager; Sandra Terenzio, Portfolio Manager Moet Hennessy; and Paul Mazurek, Manager.
8. All from Brescome Barton: Brian Federman, Cara Passarelli and Ed Dunn.
9. Darren Hongo, Field Sales Manager, CDI; Michael Copeland, Manager, CDI; Mike Evans, Division Manager, CDI; Rep. David J. Rutigliano, Connecticut General Assembly; Peter Apotrias, Field Sales Manager, CDI; Tamara Ferrara, Sales, CDI; Alyssa Esber, Sales, E. & J. Gallo Winery
10. Michael Marchetti, Columbus Park Trattoria; Jennifer Marchetti, Columbus Park Trattoria; Crissy Peterson, Select Brands Manager, Hartley & Parker, Ltd.; Telmo Penalzoa, Columbus Park Trattoria; Cecilia Cabrera, Columbus Park Trattoria. Photo by Brian Ambrose.

11. Northeast Director Abbi Miller and Ed Goll, both of Real McCoy Rum, offered guests sample cocktails with an original recipe crafted by Dan Meiser of Oyster Club and Engine Room, who was recognized as the Restaurateur of the Year.
12. Max Moss of Keel Vodka.
13. Mike Knudsen, Hartford Restaurant Group, 2016 Bartender of the Year. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
14. Julie Francini, Restaurant Bricco, Server of the Year. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
15. Richard Rosenthal, Founder and President, Max Restaurant Group. The Max Restaurant Group was inducted into the Connecticut Hospitality Hall of Fame during the 2016 Salute to Excellence Awards Dinner. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
16. Len Fasano, Connecticut General Assembly State Senator, was named a CRA Friend of the Industry, pictured with award presenter Connecticut General Assembly Representative David J. Rutigliano. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
17. James Wayman, Chef, Oyster Club and Nicola Mancini, Chef, La Tavola. Wayman and Mancini shared the honor of 2016 Chef of the Year. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
18. Shawn Skehan and Al Gamble of Plan B Burger Bar, which was named 2016 Casual Restaurant of the Year. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
19. All from the Saybrook Point Inn Marina and Spa: Peter Marshall, Beverage Manager; Gese Rodriguez, Chef de Cuisine; Tim McDonough, Assistant Restaurant Manager; Jaime Jones, Lead Server/Trainer; John Lombardo, General Manager; Viola Tagliatela; Stephen Tagliatela, Owner; Anna Lacoletti, Fresh Salt Manager; Donna Michaud, Catering Director; Nancy Tighe, Server. Saybrook Point Inn Marina and Spa was inducted into the Connecticut Hospitality Hall of Fame. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
20. Rogo Distributors was named Vendor of the Year. Rogo Distributors is a division of Allan S. Goodman, Inc. Shown are: Scott LaBelle, Kevin Byrnes, Steve Hayes, Paul Githmark, Steve Ogren, Clem Sayers, Bill Hannon, Dave Heller and Eric Lemieux. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
21. Red 36 of Mystic was named the 2016 Restaurant Newcomer of the Year. Owner Angela Kanabis holds the award. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
22. The Capital Grille was named 2016 Upscale Restaurant of the Year. The Capital Grille's Nick Santangelo, Dining Room Manager; Nick Gianfredi, Executive Chef and Partner; Kathy Rice, Sales Manager; David Contino, Managing Partner. Photo by Brian Ambrose.
23. Coastal Gourmet Catering, Caterer of the Year: Kimberly Aubin, Sales and Event Manager; Jenna Landon, Sales and Event Manager; Andrew Fine, Executive Catering Chef; Michael Ferriera, Director of Sales and Catering. Photo by Brian Ambrose.



SLOCUM & SONS LAUNCHES IRON SMOKE WHISKEY

Slocum & Sons added products from New York's Iron Smoke Distillery to its spirit portfolio in November. Iron Smoke Apple Wood Smoked Whiskey and Rattlesnake Rosie's Apple Pie Whiskey are small batch, handcrafted spirits made with locally-sourced ingredients, distilled in upstate New York. Representatives from Iron Smoke Distillery visited Slocum & Sons headquarters to educate the salesforce about its products. Rattlesnake Rosie's Apple Pie Whiskey was awarded bronze medals in its category and for packaging and design at the 2016 San Francisco World Spirits Competition

Iron Smoke Apple Wood Smoked Whiskey and Rattlesnake Rosie's Apple Pie Whiskey.



PIU FACILE POURS TASTES FOR LOCAL NON-PROFITS

Bruno Ceniccola, owner of Piu Facile Imports, conducted a wine tasting to benefit the Opportunity House, a nonprofit 501(c)3 to help adults within the autism spectrum. The tasting was held in conjunction with East Haven Discount Liquors in November. The Branford-based distributor featured selections from its fine Italian red and white wines from La Guardinese Winery, located in a small village in Guardia Sanframondi in Province of Benevento, Campania region. Also in November, Ceniccola showcased Guardia 33 wines at Branford's Chowder Pot for an evening, which are now included on the restaurant's wine list. Ceniccola also hosted a charitable wine tasting to benefit the Caroline House, an educational center for women and children. The tasting was held at the Fairfield Museum and History Center in November.

1. The Piu Facile wine portfolio.
2. Ralph Carrano, Beverage Manager, Chowder Pot in Branford featuring Guardia 33 Italian Wines.
3. Michael Fino, Owner, Twisted Vine Fine Wine & Spirits in Fairfield during the charitable tasting for the Caroline House.





DIAGEO AND NORWALK MAYOR HONOR MILITARY WITH APPRECIATION DAY

Diageo staff, veterans, town dignitaries and charitable organizations gathered at Diageo North America headquarters in Norwalk on November 9 to commemorate Veterans Day, with their first Military Service Appreciation Day celebration. The event is part of Diageo's ongoing "Salute the Troops" initiative. During the opening ceremony, a U.S. Marine Corps Honor Guard led a presentation of the colors escorted by The Hampton Pipes and Drums. Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling proclaimed the day Diageo Military Service Appreciation Day. "Together we forget why we have this freedom and don't always remember that part of our freedom to live and freedom to enjoy is because [of] someone else putting their freedom on the line," said Marc S. Strachan, Vice President of Corporate Relations and Constituent Affairs. Diageo also works with charitable partners such as iPads for Soldiers, Packages From Home and Brides Across America, among others, to provide "assistance, care and kindness" to military families and soldiers. After the opening ceremony, a keynote address was given by Lt. Col. Michael Zacchea, USMC, Ret., followed by a panel discussion. The day wrapped up with a seminar led by Packages From Home, where volunteers created care packages to send to troops abroad.

1. The entrance to Diageo headquarters on November 9.
2. Marc S. Strachan, Vice President of Corporate Relations and Constituent Affairs, Diageo, addressing staff and guests.
3. The U.S. Marine Corps Honor Guard led a presentation of the colors escorted by The Hampton Pipes and Drums.
4. Kimberly Wilson, actress and singer, The Wilson Production, sang the "Star-Spangled Banner" during the opening ceremony.
5. Mark Schulte, Senior Vice President of Customer Marketing and Education, Diageo, during the opening ceremony.
6. U.S. Marine Corps Honor Guard beside Harry Rilling, Mayor, City of Norwalk at the podium; Jakob Ripshtein, CFO, Diageo North America and President of Diageo Canada; Marc S. Strachan, Vice President of Corporate Relations and Constituent Affairs, Diageo; Mark Schulte, Senior Vice President of Customer Marketing and Education, Diageo.
7. The crowd during the opening ceremony.
8. Volunteers and employees were able to create care packages to send to deployed troops with the help from Packages From Home.



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AVENTINE HILL, WESTPORT'S LIQUOR LOCKER HOST WINE DINNER

Aventine Hill Importers, in partnership with Liquor Locker of Westport, hosted a wine dinner at Paci Restaurant in Southport on November 3. The sold-out event featured a six-course dinner prepared by Bob Patchen, owner of Paci Restaurant, and his culinary staff, and was paired with Italian wines spanning from Alto Adige to Puglia. Featured wines included 2015 Pinot Bianco from Castel Sallegg, 2014 Chardonnay Collio from Isidoro Polencic, 2014 Primolupo Merlot from Cantine Lupo, 2014 Qvis Negroamaro from Tenuta Giustini and 2012 Vignaparco Chianti Classico from Casa Emma. To commemorate the 10th anniversary of Aventine Hill Importers, Owner S. Garrett Stonehouse featured a 2010 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva from Croce di Mezzo for a “grand finale” to the evening, he said. Aventine Hill Importers’ next wine dinner is scheduled in February.

1. Featured selection of Italian wines.
2. Guests gathered together for the wine dinner featuring Italian selections from Aventine Hill Importers at Paci Restaurant.
3. Garrett Stonehouse, Owner, Aventine Hill Importers; Jodi Stonehouse, President, Aventine Hill Importers; David Squires, Sales Director, Aventine Hill Importers; Bob Patchen, Owner, Paci Restaurant.
4. Bob Patchen, Owner, Paci Restaurant; Lazaro Alvarado, Sous Chef, Paci Restaurant; Gabriel Calle, Executive Chef, Paci Restaurant; Garrett Stonehouse, Owner, Aventine Hill Importers.
5. Guests during the wine dinner.



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TWO ROADS BREWING COMPANY BEGINS EXPANSION PLANS

Two Roads Brewing Company announced plans to build a 25,000-square-foot building dedicated to sour and barrel aging. The \$12 million facility will feature a 50 barrel ROLEC brewhouse, foudres, a coolship and storage for 2,000 wood barrels. The new addition will also feature a tasting room to accommodate 120 visitors overlooking preserved wetlands. This expansion will allow the brewery to increase production on its tropical Lambic Hexotic, Framboise Noir Black Raspberry Lambic, Urban Funk Wild Ale, Worker's Stomp White Wine Barrel Aged Saison, and new styles. The company will break ground in 2017 and the new facility will open by 2018.

Two Roads Brewing Company took home eight medals during the 20th Annual Great International Beer & Cider Competition in Providence, Rhode Island in November. The competition featured 814 entries across 58 categories. The brewery won six gold medals for its Philsamic, an oak-aged beer with balsamic vinegar in the Flanders Red Ale category; Kriek in the Fruit Lambic category; Worker's Comp Farmhouse Ale in the Saison category; Holiday Ale in the Biere de Garde competition; Bergamonster Imperial Wheat Belgian in the Fruit category, and Geyser Gose, a collaboration with Evil Twin Brewing, in the German Wheat category. Hexotic, a Lambic-style beer with six tropical fruits, took a silver in the Fruit Lambic category and its Passion Fruit Gose also won silver in the Fruit Ale category.

1. A projected drawing of the expansion of Two Roads Brewing Company in Stratford.
2. Two Roads took home eight medals at the Great International Beer & Cider Competition in Providence. Their wins spanned over a variety of categories from Fruit Lambic style beer to Red Ales.



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THE BIG TASTE FEATURES ON-PREMISE OFFERINGS AT THE OAKDALE

The Big Taste, part of the 2016 Big Connect community effort in conjunction with the New Haven County Chamber of Commerce, featured local restaurants on November 17 at the Toyota Oakdale Theater in Wallingford. Shell & Bones, Geronimo Tequila Bar, The Library Wine Bar and Bistro, Elm City Social, Ripe Bar Juice and many other vendors showcased menu offerings during the event geared toward business professionals.

1. All of The Library Wine Bar and Bistro: Angelina Mancarella, General Manager; Filomena Zuba, Pastry Chef; Christopher Barone, Server and Bartender; Gressa Quinn, Server.
2. The Library Wine Bar and Bistro's Crab Cakes.
3. The Library Wine Bar and Bistro's Vegetable Paella.



FORDS GIN COCKTAIL COMPETITION HELD IN NEW HAVEN

Oak Haven Table & Bar in New Haven set the stage for the Fords Gin Cocktail Competition on November 7. Local bartenders had eight minutes to create a cocktail featuring the gin as the primary spirit. The judges for the evening included Martim Ake Smith-Mattsson, Brand Ambassador of Fords Gin, Veronica Saurett and Dee Blackmer, both Account Development Managers for Brescome Barton. Juan Meyer came in first place with his cocktail creation, followed by Roger Gross and Jeff Laude. Smith-Mattsson gave an educational presentation about the spirit and the history of the brand. Fords Gin is distilled at Thames Distillers in London in collaboration with the eighth generation Master Distiller Charles Maxwell and Simon Ford of The 86 Co.

1. Martim Ake Smith-Mattsson, Brand Ambassador of Fords Gin presenting to the crowd.
2. Fords Gin was the featured spirit during the competition. Fords Gin is a mix of nine botanicals including juniper and coriander seeds, citrus offerings like bitter orange, lemon and grapefruit peel, as well as jasmine flower, orris, angelica and cassia spices. The botanicals are steeped for 15 hours.
3. A selection of cocktails from the competition.



OLD FORESTER BOURBON FEATURED IN USBG CT COCKTAIL COMPETITION

The Atrium Bar in Foxwoods Resort Casino set the stage for United States Bartenders Guild Connecticut (USBG CT) chapter members to hold an Old Forester Bourbon cocktail competition on November 15. Each competitor created an original cocktail featuring Old Forester 100 proof bourbon. Jackie Zykan, Master Bourbon Specialist and Spokeswoman for Old Forester, educated guests about the bourbon, its history and use of bourbon in cocktails. Bartender Rachel Markoja was named the winner and Eric Karadimas was runner-up. The competition was judged by Ashlee Smith, Foxwoods Manager; Nick Kabesto, Foxwoods Beverage Director and Zykan.

1. **Standing:** Ashlee Smith, Manager, Foxwoods Resort Casino; Judith Alberghini, Competitor; Laurel Strong, Competitor; Kahlid Williams, Competitor; Lauren Hansen, Competitor; Rachel Markoja, Winner; Chris Munk, Eder Bros.; Jeff Conelius, Allan S. Goodman; **Kneeling:** Nick Kabetso, Beverage Director, Foxwoods Resort Casino; Jackie Zykan, Master Bourbon Specialist; Old Forester.
2. Eric Karadimas, Runner-up with Zykan and Rachel Markoja, Winner.
3. Zykan holding the winning cocktail.

CONNECTICUT DISTRIBUTORS, INC. HOSTS WIDOW JANE BOURBON DINNER

Artisanal Burger Company of Manchester, along with Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI) hosted a Widow Jane Bourbon dinner on November 17. Widow Jane Bourbon, founded by Daniel Preston, is distilled in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Widow Jane Bourbon, Widow Jane Whiskey Rye Mash in American Oak, Widow Jane Whiskey Rye Mash Oak and Applewood Aged, as well as Don Esteban Cocoa Rum, were paired with culinary creations prepared by Executive Chef Anthony Phenis. Nadine Gengras, Spirit Account Development Manager, along with Callie Bak, Spirit Account Development Specialist, led guests through the history of the spirit and the production process, as well as tasting notes.

1. Widow Jane Bourbon Whiskey samples.
2. Nadine Gengras, Spirit Account Development Manager and Callie Bak, Spirit Account Development Specialist, CDI.
3. Cocktail featuring Widow Jane Bourbon.
4. Culinary samples paired with Widow Jane.
5. Widow Jane tasting menu.
6. Callie Bak, Spirit Account Development Specialist presenting Widow Jane Bourbon to guests.
7. A pairing.
8. Executive Chef Anthony Phenis of Artisanal Burger Company.



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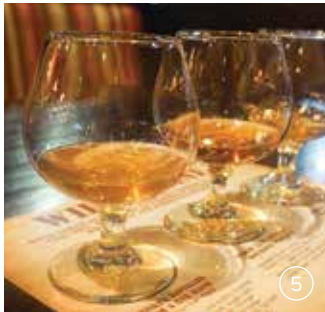
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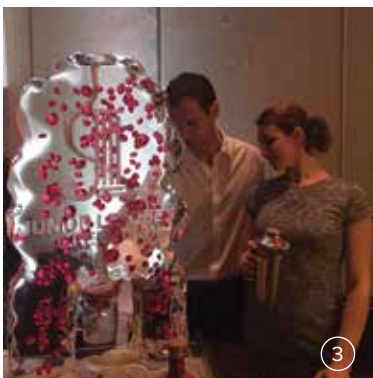
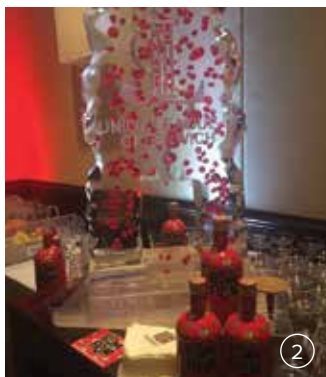


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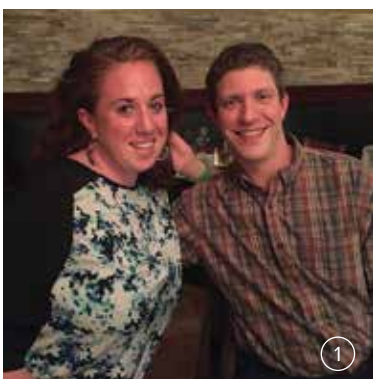
Photos by Katharine Ortiz.



BOM BOM SHOWCASES BRAND DURING CHARITY EVENT, RESTAURANT WEEK

Bom Bom Coco Mochanut was featured during a charity event for the Junior League of Greenwich Ruby Ball on November 19. Eva Maria Janerus, CEO, alongside Abbie Kundishora, Sales and Promotions Manager for Bom Bom, served up chilled samples of the chocolate rum liqueur and Espresso Bomtinis, featuring Bom Bom Coco Mochanut. Also in November, Bom Bom Brands was featured at the J House Hotel and Restaurant in Greenwich during the Greenwich Restaurant Week Opening Party, where guests sampled Espresso Bomtinis and Coco Mocha Lattes.

1. Bom Bom Coco Mochanut display during the Junior League Greenwich Ruby Ball.
2. Guests were able to enjoy chilled liqueur from the Bom Bom sponsored ice luge.
3. Abbie Kundishora, Sales and Promotions Manager, Bom Bom Brands, with a guest using the Bom Bom Brands ice luge.
4. Eva Maria Janerus, CEO, Bom Bom Brands with Sarah Friedson, Promotions Specialist.



CELLAR FINE WINES PRESENTS SPANISH WINE DINNER

Cellar Fine Wines, along with Bistro Mediterranean with locations in Norwalk, East Haven and Westbrook, hosted a dinner highlighting Spanish wines. The wine event was held at the Norwalk location in partnership with Black Bear Wines & Spirits on November 16. Juan Carlos Rodriguez, National Sales Director at Grupo Bodegas Olarra, along with Cellar Fine Wines Fairfield County Sales Rep Jacey Haskell, and Black Bear Wines & Spirits hosted the full-house of guests, who tasted selections from Bodegas Ondarre, a producer with a 30-year history in the Rioja designation. The wines were paired alongside cuisine including oxtail ravioli and rack of lamb. Featured wines included Ondarre Cava Brut Millennium, Ondarre Creator and Ondarre Reserva, along with Vanidades Albarino and Orquestal Tempranillo Reserva, all available from the Cellar Fine Wines portfolio.

1. Black Bear Wines & Spirits Manager Ethan Epstein and Cellar Fine Wines Representative Jacey Haskell prepare for the evening's wine tasting program at Bistro Mediterranean in Norwalk.
2. Bistro Mediterranean Norwalk staff puts the finishing touches on slow-poached red snapper over white rice with cherry tomato, pearl onion, and oregano. This dish was paired with Vanidade Albariño, a white varietal native to Galicia.
3. A view of the guest table.





Photo courtesy of J. Timothy's Taverne.

J. TIMOTHY'S HOSTS OLD FORESTER BOURBON SINGLE BARREL CELEBRATION

J. Timothy's Taverne in Plainville welcomed guests and trade professionals to its "Single Barrel Celebration" highlighting the venue's hand-selected Old Forester Bourbon on November 18. Guests sampled the spirit neat and in cocktails while enjoying bourbon-inspired pub menu creations. Early in November, J. Timothy's staff traveled to Louisville, Kentucky to select a barrel at the Old Forester distillery. The bourbon features tasting notes of "cocoa, vanilla and hot chocolate with a smooth flavor, yet spicy," with flavors of vanilla, cardamom, cocoa and caramel on the finish. Leading up to the celebration dinner, Master Bourbon Specialist Jackie Zykan visited J. Timothy's to take guests through an educational tasting of the spirit.

1. All of J. Timothy's Taverne unless noted: Marrit Budny; Jackie Zykan, Master Bourbon Specialist, Old Forester; Tim Adams and Lauren Hansen. Zykan visited J. Timothy's prior to the Old Forester Bourbon celebration dinner to provide an educational tasting of Old Forester Bourbon. Photo courtesy of Rosie Hin.
2. J. Timothy's Barrel Select Old Forester Bourbon.
3. J. Timothy's Old Forester Bourbon was used to create the "Burnt Sugar Old Fashioned" cocktail.
4. Guests during the Old Forester Bourbon dinner.
5. John Stack of Hartford Distributors, Inc., with Tim Adams, Co-Owner, J. Timothy's Taverne.
6. Morgan Marshall of Allan S. Goodman with Lauren Hansen, J. Timothy's Taverne.
7. Keven Anderson, Server, J. Timothy's with samples of J. Timothy's Old Forester Single Barrel neat.

THE *Connecticut*
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JOURNAL

**ONLINE ORDERING EASE
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IT'S PART OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION**



HARTFORD FLAVOR COMPANY RAISES FUNDS, HOSTS DINNER

Hartford Flavor Company, creators of Wild Moon Liqueurs, an all-natural, botanical-infused spirit line, along with Mermaid Liquors of Niantic, took part in a charitable tasting at Niantic's Smith's Acres Greenhouse on November 12. Local craft beers and spirits were featured during the charitable event to raise money for community beautification projects. In December, Hartford Flavor Company and Grant's Restaurant of West Hartford hosted a holiday dinner at the distillery featuring culinary creations by Executive Chef Billy Grant. The dinner was paired with cocktails using Wild Moon Liqueurs. Proceeds from the event benefited My Sisters' Place, a non-profit women's shelter in the Greater Hartford area. John Tsipouras, Sales Representative at Slocum & Sons, and former bartender of Grant's and Bricco Restaurants, created cocktails for guests.

1. Hilary Brooks of Hartford Flavor Company during the charitable tasting at Smith's Acres in Niantic.
2. Guests enjoying Wild Moon Liqueur cocktails before the holiday dinner.
3. Lelaneia Dubai, Co-owner, Hartford Flavor Company next to Executive Chef Billy Grant introducing the evening's food and beverage offerings.
4. Slocum & Sons' John Tsipouras and David Rudman, Director of Education and Account Development, Brescome Barton. Hartford Flavor Company products are distributed in state via Brescome Barton.
5. Executive Chef Billy Grant's menu offerings.
6. Guests sampling hors d'oeuvres.



OPICI FAMILY DISTRIBUTING CELEBRATES REPEAL DAY IN NEW HAVEN

Industry professionals around the nation celebrated the 83rd anniversary of the Repeal of Prohibition on December 3, 2016. In New Haven, area bars and restaurants served vintage cocktails. Staff from Opici Family Distributing celebrated by visiting accounts that featured selections from their portfolio including Rebellion Bourbon; Melleti Cordials, Uncle Val's Gin; Angostura Rum, Bone Snapper Rye; Back Bone Bourbon, Don Pancho Rum, Tempus Fugit Spirits, Kirk & Sweeny Rum and James Oliver Whiskey. Guests came dressed as bootleggers and flappers in keeping with the theme.

1. Opici Family Distributing of Connecticut celebrated Repeal Day in New Haven on December 3. Opici managers, representatives and friends of the distributorship gathered at Ordinary.
2. Opici Family Distributing managers and sales representatives at Roia Restaurant and Café in New Haven for Repeal Day celebrations.



USBG CONNECTICUT CHAPTER ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

The United States Bartenders Guild Connecticut (USBG CT) chapter announced its 2017-2018 leadership team: Adam Patrick, Chapter President; Dimitrios Zahariadis, Vice President; Daniel Rek, Secretary and Craig Ventrice, Treasurer. The USBG CT chapter hosts an array of beverage industry events and educational sessions with beverage suppliers, as well as participates in regional, national and international industry events to further the profession and the craft of bartending. Connecticut bar and industry professionals interested in joining the local chapter can visit usbg.org to learn more.

The newly-elected 2017-2018 USBG CT chapter council: Treasurer Craig Ventrice, Secretary Daniel Rek, President Adam Patrick and Vice President Dimitrios Zahariadis.



BALVENIE SCOTCH WHISKEY DINNER EDUCATES GUESTS IN HAMDEN

Brescome Barton and William Grant & Sons featured Balvenie Single Malt Scotch Whisky at a pairing dinner at Park Central Tavern in Hamden. Four Balvenie Scotches were paired with the tavern’s culinary creations by Chef Jonathan Harris. Brand Ambassador Gemma Paterson presented Balvenie 12 Year Old Doublewood, 14 Year Old Rum Caribbean Case, 17 Year Old Doublewood and 21 Year Old Portwood during the course of evening. Paterson, who was born and raised in the Highlands of Scotland, has spent the past few years with the distillery studying the art of making whiskey. She led the four-course tasting menu with select spirits, providing guests with the brand’s history, techniques and tasting insight.



1. Balvenie Doublewood 12 Year Old, Balvenie Doublewood 17 Year Old, Balvenie Caribbean Cask 14 Year Old and The Balvenie Portwood 21 Year Old.
2. The Balvenie Single Malt Scotch Whisky dinner was held at Park Central Tavern in Hamden.
3. Balvenie Brand Ambassador Gemma Paterson led the tasting event.
4. Veronica Saurett, Wine and Spirits Manager, Brescome Barton; Jamie Montesi, William Grant & Sons; and Gemma Paterson, Balvenie Brand Ambassador.
5. Gemma Paterson, Balvenie Brand Ambassador; Chef Jonathan Harris, Park Central Tavern; and Veronica Saurett, Wine and Spirits Manager, Brescome Barton.

CRAFT BEER: ATTITUDES AND CONSUMPTION

BY JACK KENNY



About 85% of craft brew aficionados consume their beer mainly at home. The most common method of learning about craft beers and breweries is from friends and family members. About half of craft beer consumers have consumed all three main types of beer – domestic commercial, imported and craft – in the past two weeks. These are among the findings in a newly published report by GutCheck, a Denver-based market research company.

GutCheck specializes in new product introductions, advertising and marketing, and consumer research. The study of craft beer consumption, published November 2016, surveyed 300 consumers in the USA. Respondents, 32% of whom were female, were 21 years of age or older, the majority of whom ranged from 30 to 39, with a strong showing (19%) in the 55-64 bracket. The sampling covered all regions of the lower 48 states.

The purpose of the research was to understand how craft beer drinkers think about and consume craft beer. A stated goal was that larger beverage companies might “leverage the insights toward attracting the craft beer consumer segment.” As we know well, that’s something that the large beverage companies, particularly brewers, have been attempting to do through an increasing number of acquisitions over the past several years.

Here are some of the key findings of the GutCheck study (some of the top findings might appear to be obvious, but in context with all options surveyed they become clear):

- » No single craft beer brand dominates the market. Instead, highest awareness and purchase scores are for brands that are available nationwide. Here are the top 10 brands with their awareness scores: Blue Moon (Coors), 81%; Sam Adams, 63%; Yuengling, 59%; Sierra Nevada, 57%; Goose Island (AB-InBev), 52%; Dogfish Head, 48%; New Belgium, 48%; Lagunitas, 39%; Stone, 29%; Ballast Point, 27%.
- » Grocery stores and package stores are the main source of craft beer purchases for about two-thirds of respondents. In third place were restaurants and bars, followed in order by breweries (a strong showing there), mass merchandisers, convenience stores, and club and warehouse stores.
- » Nearly 80% of consumers ranked taste and flavor in their top three decision factors for purchase of craft beers. Again, another obvious choice, but one that major beverage companies might want to weigh more heavily against the other survey choices, which all ranked below 40% in the following descending order:

brewery/brand, cost, mood, style, season/weather, alcohol content, occasion, recommendation, promotion/sale, rating, and packaging appearance.

- » 83% of respondents named family and friends among the top three ways they learn about craft brands and brewers. The next two, at 64% and 58% respectively, were menus in restaurants/bars and seeing new beers on store shelves. The rest of the group included advertisements, brewery tours, recommendations from package store employees (at 39%, not a bad showing), brewery websites, and online forums and articles.
- » Craft beer attitudes (% = agreement with statement):
 - » Craft beers are more distinctive than domestic or imported commercial beers: 89%
 - » A wider variety of flavors are available from craft brewers: 86%
 - » I support local businesses when I buy craft beer: 82%
 - » Craft beer tastes better than commercial beer: 81%
 - » I will travel or wait in line to buy exclusive craft beer brands: 53%
 - » I drink craft beer because it is higher in alcohol: 43%
 - » Craft beer brands that get acquired by large/corporate beer brands are sell-outs: 38%
 - » Craft beer has more health benefits than domestic and imported beer: 32%

GutCheck classified its respondents in two groups: light beer drinkers and heavy beer drinkers. The light beer drinkers (69%) consume 10 or fewer 12-ounce servings of beer over two weeks. The rest are considered heavy drinkers, who indicated that higher alcohol content is a main reason for buying craft beer.

Craft beer devotees sample more than three styles of beer during an average two week period. These include, in order of preference, lager, pale ale, wheat, Belgian, IPA, pilsner, brown ale, stout, red ale, cream ale, sour, porter, and kolsch.

Worth noting in the study is that only 17% of respondents drank craft beer exclusively during the two weeks prior to taking the survey. 10% drank craft and imports, 27% consumed craft and domestic commercial beer, and 47% divided their consumption among all three types.

A summary of the GutCheck study, titled “Craft Beer Agile Attitudes and Usage,” is available for download at www.gutcheckit.com/resources/craft-beer-agile-attitudes-usage-study/



The Voice of the Retail Liquor Industry in Connecticut



CPSA fights for you in the halls of the Capitol by communicating the great benefit small businesses such as yours offer to the framework of the CT economy and the service and products you provide to your customers. In the past few legislative sessions we have had to turn back several legislative initiatives that could have decimated your business and the product selection you offer your customers.

The Connecticut Package Stores Association (CPSA) is YOUR trade organization that promotes retailer interests across the state. We will always fight legislation that negatively affects your business and advocate for legislation that makes your business better. We are the only entity at the capitol that advocates 100% for package stores.

We need you to join!

For \$350 you can help us continue to fight.

WHAT VICTORIES HAVE WE HAD?

Fought against wine in food stores, against repeal of minimum bottle, against increasing the permit limit from three to nine, against grocery stores owning package stores and beer permits, against quantity discounting, against increased hours, etc..

Now is the time to send in your membership dues which we use to support these efforts. CPSA has a team of lobbyists that communicate every day to legislators from both parties when the legislature is in session. This takes a tremendous amount of work and we need you to help support that effort.

APPLICATION FORM

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Business Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Store Contact Name _____

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

CALL us at
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FAX this page to
860.346.7978

OR

PRINT an application from our website: www.ctpsa.com
and mail your check to: 700 Plaza Middlesex,
Middletown, CT 06457

P**new products**

1. THE MACALLAN EDITION NO. 2

Edrington has launched The Macallan Edition No. 2, the second offering in an annual single malt limited series. Made with seven cask types sourced in Spain, The Macallan Edition No. 2 marks a collaboration between The Macallan Master Whisky Maker Bob Dalgarno and brothers Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca, co-founders of Catalonia-based El Celler de Can Roca, twice named best restaurant in the world.

\$ SRP: \$90
themacallan.com

4. GEMMA DI LUNA MOSCATO

Enovation Brands has added Gemma di Luna Moscato to its product line-up. Made from premium Moscato grapes grown in Italy's Piemonte region, it boasts a fuller effervescence than the gentle frizzante style typical of Moscato for a fully sparkling or "spumante" quality. The persistent perlage carries luscious fresh fruit flavors of nectarine, peach and apple balanced by vibrant acidity. And at 7.5% ABV, Gemma di Luna also taps into growing consumer interest in lower alcohol.

\$ SRP: \$16.99
enovationbrands.com

2. ANIMUS 2015 VINHO VERDE

Vinho Verde (which translates as "green wine") is Portugal's best-kept secret; fizzy and fresh, it is the most popular white wine from Portugal. "Verde" meaning "green" refers to the fact that these are young wines meant for drinking early. Light, crisp and delicious, Animus is a welcome surprise for white wine lovers. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

\$ SRP: \$14
bruncowine.com

5. JAMESON BLACK BARREL

Bold new look, same bold taste. Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey has a newly redesigned bottle. Matured in a combination of American oak, Sherry casks and double-charred bourbon barrels, Jameson Black Barrel is a blend of "small batch" grain and traditional Irish pot still whiskeys. Rich flavors of fruit, toasted wood, warm spice and vanilla are framed by the smoky character imparted by the double-charred barrels.

\$ SRP: \$36.99
jamesonwhiskey.com

3. REVEL STROKE ROOT BEER FLAVORED WHISKY

Phillips Distilling has launched Revel Stoke Root Beer Flavored Whisky. Based on a blend of 3-year and 8-year Canadian whiskies, Revel Stoke aims to attract fans of surging hard sodas and traditional whisky cocktails. Phillips is no stranger to root beer, having introduced the first root beer schnapps in 1984. Revel Stoke joins a portfolio of six offerings. Smooth enough to sip neat; served chilled.

\$ SRP: \$13.99/750ml | \$15.99/1L
phillipsdistilling.com

6. THE DROP RED WINE

Now in 13 states, The Drop—which began with a canned rosé—is adding a red wine. Like the rosé, The Drop red is "crafted in California" and sold in four-packs of 250ml aluminum cans. Designed to be both easy and irreverent, The Drop cans feature the slogan "Quality grapeage. No breakage." as well as a stylized bear breaking a corkscrew. And of course a big selling point is its portability.

\$ SRP: \$14.99/four-pack
thedropwine.com



7. PATRÓN SILVER LIMITED EDITION TEQUILA

The 2016 year-end limited edition of Patrón Silver Tequila is carrying over to early 2017. This, the second annual special release, features a black and silver pewter label, intricately adorned with geometric lines and the iconic Patrón bee. The cork closure mirrors the black and silver aesthetic of the label, and the entire bottle is packaged in an attractive and easy-to-carry gift bag.

\$ SRP: \$59.99/1L
patrontequila.com

10. OWL'S BREW RADLERS

Owl's Brew, maker of tea-based cocktail mixers, is launching a line of Radlers. Similar to a Shandy, traditionally a Radler is a 50-50 mix of beer and citrus; Owl's Brew Radlers feature 60% beer, 40% tea, in four flavors: The Blondie (wheat beer, English breakfast tea, lemon); That's My Jam (with strawberry and pomegranate); Wicked Watermelon; and Short and Stout. Alcohol is 3.8%, except Short and Stout is 5%.

\$ SRP: \$12.99/6-pack
theowlsbrew.com

8. GLORIA 2014 RESERVA DOURO RED BLEND

Gloria by Vincent Faria is a dream come true for blend fans. A perfect combination of three Portuguese grape varieties (40% Tinta Roriz, 30% Touriga Franca, 30% Touriga Nacional), this wine offers rich fruit met by round tannins—enough to give the wine a strong presence but still make for easy-drinking. Wine Enthusiast 91Pts / Editor's Choice. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

\$ SRP: \$18
broncowine.com

11. TWO NEW SEAGRAM'S FLAVORED VODKAS

Seagram's is launching two portfolio additions: the first-ever Golden Apricot Vodka as well as Seagram's Ruby Red Grapefruit Flavored Vodka. Seagram's Vodka is five-times distilled. Made with all natural flavors, Seagram's Golden Apricot boasts a fresh apricot taste with a smooth finish. Seagram's Ruby Red Grapefruit strikes a balance of sweet and tart with a clean finish. Both innovations are highly mixable.

\$ SRP: \$11.99
seagramsvodka.com

9. TEMPLETON RYE 10 YEAR SPECIAL RESERVE

Templeton Rye, born during Prohibition, was reportedly favored by mobster Al Capone. Updating that tradition, Templeton Rye was revived in 2006, using a mash of 95% rye from MGP; in Templeton, Iowa, it is combined with local water via a proprietary formula. Celebrating 10 years of *legally* selling whiskey, Templeton 10 Year is made from 34 barrels, sold in a commemorative box; only 6,080 hand-numbered bottles available!

\$ SRP: \$149.99
templetonrye.com

12. THE SINGLETON SINGLE MALT WHISKY

Diageo is bringing The Singleton of Glendullan to the U.S. The portfolio includes a 12-, 15- and 18-Year-Old single malt whiskies. Aged primarily in Bourbon casks offering a rich, smooth character, the malts draw pure water from the high, wooded hills of Speyside. Besides being approachable, the brand is quite affordable among its single malt peers; packaged in a sleek canisters inspired by 19th century hip flasks. Currently in CA, FL, NY, CO, TX, PA, WA, NJ.

\$ SRP: 12YO \$34.99 | 15YO \$49.99 | 18YO \$79.99
thebar.com | malts.com

The Pit Stop Spirit Shop

BY SAVANNAH MUL

Mihir Shah wants his customers to know when they shop at The Pit Stop Spirit Shop, they will find variety coupled with good service. With over 9,000 SKUs of product, customers can peruse and choose from a careful collection ranging from the accessible to exotic, local and national craft beers or high-end whiskies including Dalmore 25 Year Old and Glenmorangie's Pride of 1978.

"It's all about the variety," said Shah. When he purchased the store in 2011 with his wife Krupa, inventory was low. He expanded the offerings and created tall, floor-to-ceiling wooden shelves on two walls to house them. "It's a constant shuffle," he said. "I try to rotate the product displays as much as I can. There are new items coming out every other week and there is so much to try," he said.

The feedback he receives from his customers affirms his model. "Our main goal is to keep our customers happy,"




LOCATION

712 NORWICH ROAD
PLAINFIELD, CT

FACTS

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 3,000
YEARS IN OPERATION: 5 1/2



▲
Mihir and Krupa Shah, with their son, and store employees Taylor Jackola and James Medley.

Shah said. Store employee Taylor Jackola said another way they accommodate their customers is by offering mix-a-six packs. "It opens up a lot of avenues for them to try a variety of beers," said Jackola.

The store's beer selection can also be seen on Untappd, the app that allows consumers to view their selection, and leave tasting notes and reviews on products and places. With the upsurge of products in the market, social media apps build another level of marketing and product awareness to help sell, Jackola said, adding that the data helps them properly stock the store.

The Pit Stop Spirit Shop also hosts in-store tastings

on the weekends to introduce new products. Jackola said they use social media, such as Facebook, to promote in-store tastings, featured products and promotions.

Store employee James Medley said he sees more customers viewing the store as "not just a liquor store," but a place to learn about the production, history and story behind the products. Krupa Shah said, "We're a friendly store in a small town and treat our customers and employees like family."

About three months ago, Shah was looking to expand and purchased his second liquor store, Putnam Wine and Spirits, a 2,500 square foot store about 20 miles away. When speaking about the industry as a whole, he said, "It's not the same old boring routine." ■

FEATURE YOUR STORE



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

Second Mobile Platform Delivery Service Enters State

Drizly brings home delivery to its newest market

BY LAUREN DALEY

A second retail “on-demand” delivery site and app has entered the Connecticut market. Boston-based Drizly joins local company, Porter21, as an on-demand liquor delivery service platform provider.

Drizly is now available in New Haven, Hartford, Farmington, Greenwich, Darien, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport and Fairfield through partnerships with Beverage Boss, Capital Spirits, Wine Cellars 4, BevMax and LQR MKT, according to a release. Drizly has entered dozens of markets in the U.S. and Canada since its founding in 2013.

“Connecticut marks a milestone for Drizly,

in bringing us to nearly 40 cities across the U.S. and Canada,” Nick Rellas, CEO and Co-founder of Drizly said in a statement. “We’ve assembled a network of top-tier retailers who are enthusiastic about partnering with us.”

Consumers of legal drinking age can download the Drizly app or visit Drizly online to shop for adult beverages. Drizly partners with local Connecticut retailers, who deliver the orders. “Drizly never touches a bottle of alcohol or a cent from the transaction; the Drizly retail partner is the one who fulfills the order and executes delivery,” its website explains.

Drizly is the second mobile alcohol-buying

app to enter the Connecticut market. Porter21, a Connecticut-based web start-up launched in 2015, provides access for consumers to instantly buy a participating store’s beer, wine and spirits locally. Like Drizly, Porter21 provides the platform and access.

Porter21 currently serves Avon, Bristol, Bloomfield, Burlington, Canton, Farmington, Hartford, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, Newington, Plainville, Simsbury, Southington, Terryville, West Hartford and Unionville.

Porter21 and Drizly are examples of similar third-party mobile alcohol delivery services growing across the globe – others include Minibar, Thirstie, Drync, Saucey, Tipsy, Refill, Buttery, BeerRightNow, TopShelf, Klink and Banquet to name a handful.

“Times are changing. People are using technology to get what they want. We’re helping store owners keep up with the times,” Porter21 Owner and Founder Ankit Harpaldas told *The Beverage Journal* in 2015. “All we’re doing is providing a platform.” ■

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CPSA UPDATE: GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION OUTLOOK



BY CARROLL J. HUGHES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CPSA

UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR UPCOMING CGA SESSION

The next session of the Connecticut General Assembly is certain to be unique.

Thirty-five of the 187 members of the legislature are new. That is almost a 20 percent change, mostly in the House of Representatives. There will now be a closer balance in the House, with 79 Democrats and 72 Republicans; only four votes separating the majority. On many issues, someone or several persons can be absent for any given reason, which would narrow the gap between majority and minority votes even further.

The Senate is now tied at 18 votes each for Republicans and Democrats. In the case of a tie, Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, a Democrat, would be the tiebreaker. Again, this is likely to happen on days when Senators on either or both sides are not in attendance for the vote.

On many bills, even a caucus can be split with dissenting members. What's more significant is that membership on all General Assembly Committees, if appointed as they were in the past, just became more evenly split. The percentage of members allocated to committees is

usually based on the percentage of the total elected votes in the House or Senate.

The traditional allocation of votes would result in the majority party having a 1 to 3 vote advantage on committees depending on the size of the committee. On some votes it may come down to who is absent when a vote occurs.

LAWSUIT UPDATE

The lawsuit by Total Wine and More against the State of Connecticut continues through court proceedings.

Retail package stores, restaurants, beer wholesalers and wine and spirits wholesalers continue to fight for dismissal of the suit and are making strong arguments for this. No one is predicting when conclusions will be made by the federal court, which could be well into 2017.

CPSA continues to urge member stores to pay their dues and donate to the legal fund. In other states, stores have lost because they failed to unite and contribute to one legal fund. We could lose if you don't help.

LEGISLATURE BEGINS JAN 4TH, ENDS JUNE 7TH

The General Assembly starts January 4th. Chairpersons are expected to

be appointed and in place before the opening, and membership of committees will be appointed near opening day.

CPSA lobbyists have been active at the legislature at the two events arranged for new legislators. At the present time, CPSA lobbyists have met all new legislators. Many of the legislators have been in a small business, or even own one, and understand their issues. Having legislators who understand what small business owners do is always a plus for retail stores.



LEARN MORE

For more information on any of these topics and more, visit www.CTPSA.com.



CARROLL J. HUGHES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CPSA





MOUNT VEEDER WINERY

WINES WITH ALTITUDE



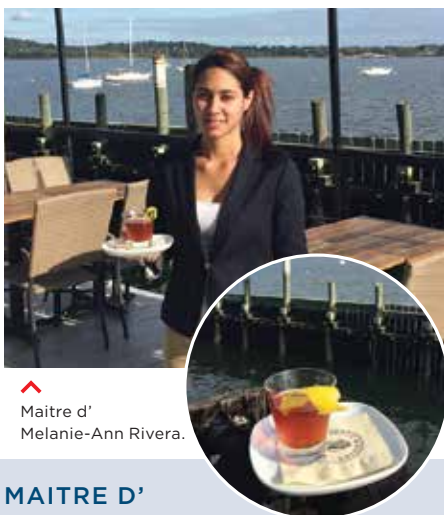
“A SIP OF A MOUNT VEEDER WINE instantly transports you to the mountain—a rare and beautiful place where wines are most definitely *made* in the vineyards.” —JANET MYERS, WINEMAKER

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SHELL & BONES OYSTER BAR AND GRILL

100 SOUTH WATER STREET
NEW HAVEN, CT

Shell & Bones, located on the historic City Point waterfront, sources fresh and sustainable ingredients for its seafood-and-steaks staple menu. An extensive wine list and a mix of classic and creative cocktails accompany its award-winning culinary offerings.



↑
Maitre d'
Melanie-Ann Rivera.

MAITRE D'

Melanie-Ann Rivera

COCKTAIL

The Arrogant Stevedore

RECIPE

Combine:

- » 2 oz. Zaya Rum
- » 1 oz. house ginger syrup
- » 2-3 dashes Fee Brother's Bitters
- » 4-5 dashes Bitter Truth Xocolatl Mole Bitters

Stir until the ice begins to dilute the cocktail. Apply 1-2 tsp. Yellow Chartreuse Liqueur to chilled lowball glass. Swirl to coat evenly and then discard. Strain the chilled, completed mixture into the lowball glass. Garnish with a freshly-zested twist of lemon.

Ring in 2017 with this bold cocktail that is "sure to warm even the darkest of sailors' hearts," said General Manager Steve Bayusik. "The cocktail incorporates the rich, bold flavors of the Zaya Rum, drawing on black strap molasses and sweet, earthy spices, with the sweet and spicy note of fresh ginger. Fee Brother's Bitters lends flavors of cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice, while the Bitter Truth Xocolatl Mole Bitters adds earthy and smoky notes."

LOCAL TRENDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

'mixology' phase. Now it's time to be a bartender again. Good hospitality and relationship-building are, and always will be, the cornerstone of a good bar."

Dimitrios Zahariadis, newly elected Vice-President of the United States Bartenders Guild Connecticut (USBG CT) chapter, had similar sentiments. Zahariadis said in 2017 he would "like to see bartenders educating themselves more and focusing on hospitality. Making good drinks can only take you so far; you have to be about hospitality, not ego."

He also hopes to see an increased camaraderie among Connecticut industry members. "With more and more breweries opening in Connecticut, I see a lot more people supporting each other on the local beer scene, and the local spirits scene, as well ... As we see more of these places open up here in Connecticut, I'd like to see more support for each other," Zahariadis said.

Nick Kabetso, Director of Beverage at Foxwoods Resort Casino, expects an old-school cocktail movement. "You'll see a continued movement towards hand-crafted retakes on classic cocktails, focusing on fresh ingredients and small-batch spirits. As we all try and capture the Millennial demographic, I think Tiki-style cocktails will see resurgence as we move into a fruitier taste profile ... Also, we'll see more done with coffee, cold-brew especially."

Kabetso also predicts more interest in foreign-brand whiskeys, such as Kavalan, Nikka and Amrut. As for beer, he said, "I'm going out on a limb for this one, but we will finally see a slowdown in IPAs ... The consumer is going to shift from aggressive high ABV and IBU IPAs to sessionable porters and stouts."

Nikki Simches, Bar Manager at Cure

Restaurant in Unionville, predicts more growth in the craft beer trend, a return to "classics restored and modernized" for cocktails, and more "of science and chemistry brought behind the bar ... You'll see cocktails on tap, locally sourced ingredients in beers and drinks, mixologists working hand-in-hand with chefs for collaborative pairings and exchanges of ingredients. You're going to see more house-made syrups, bitters, shrubs, cordials, infusions ... Artificially flavored vodkas and rums are going to begin taking a back seat for more naturally flavored and handcrafted spirits."

Peter Clayton, Owner of the Bartenders Academy, predicts 2017 "will be the year of technology for the hospitality industry, particularly in the social space. We're seeing a greater use of technology among hospitality professionals and their guests, brands and service professionals," he said. "There are more apps geared towards everything from [ordering] and inventory management, provided by *The Beverage Journal*, to capturing cocktail art with Trophy Cocktail, event management and social media platforms for news, events and jobs, such as Syver.com. [New apps] are seeking to streamline and make everything easier – to do our jobs as service professionals, to celebrate our craft, and to connect with one another."

Edward M. Korry, Department Chairman of Dining and Beverage Services at the Center for Culinary Excellence at Johnson & Wales University's College of Culinary Arts, predicts more "small-production wine, beer and spirits" and "greater interest in the 'natural wine' movement." The rosé craze will continue, he said, expecting to "see more amaras, bitters and digestivos being served both on their own and [in] cocktails." ■

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COOL CLIMATE SOUTH AFRICA

**CAPE SOUTH COAST, AN EMERGING COLLECTION
OF MARITIME REGIONS, REPRESENTS THE
COUNTRY'S NEW WINEMAKING FRONTIER**

BY KRISTEN BIELER



LEFT: Paul Cluver Estate in Elgin Valley.
ABOVE: Lismore Estate in Greyton.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Snowcapped mountains behind Gabriëlskloof estate in Bot River, where Peter-Allan Finlayson now serves as winemaker.

As wine regions go, South Africa intuitively seems like a warm one. Indeed, many of the country's established regions—like Stellenbosch or Franschhoek—are sunbaked and Mediterranean. Even the more recently celebrated Swartland region features warm daytime temperatures and little rainfall, ideal for sun-loving grapes like Cabernet, Grenache and Cinsault.

But in September, as I stood in a windswept vineyard in Hemel-en-Aarde watching whales crest in the frigid Walker Bay, or drove up a mountain pass shrouded in thick, chilly fog to get to the isolated Elgin Valley, I was struck by just how cool-climate some of South Africa's wine regions in fact are. "Americans have a perception of the continent of Africa as quite hot; they assume South Africa's

wine country must be as well," says Sam Timberg of Meridian Prime, one of a handful of boutique U.S. importers that have sprung up in recent years specializing in South African wine. "But the country has tremendous diversity in climate and the cool climate zones are making some of the most exciting wines right now."

Not unlike the recent ascension of cooler regions around the globe (Tasmania and Victoria in Australia, Leyda in Chile) championed by high-acid-wine-loving sommeliers, South Africa's cool-climate zones have become hotbeds of innovation. While there's cause for excitement across the entire Western Cape (including historic Stellenbosch, still responsible for one third of the country's wine), the cool climate regions are generating an outsized proportion of buzz.

'Cape South Coast' is Born

One might question why some of the most premier grape-growing sites are just now being explored in a country that has been producing wine for 357 years? "Until 1992, the KWV wine cooperative had regulatory powers and limited planting in cool-climate zones in favor of warmer areas that were easier to farm and that produced higher yields," explains Jim Clarke, Marketing Manager for Wines of South Africa.

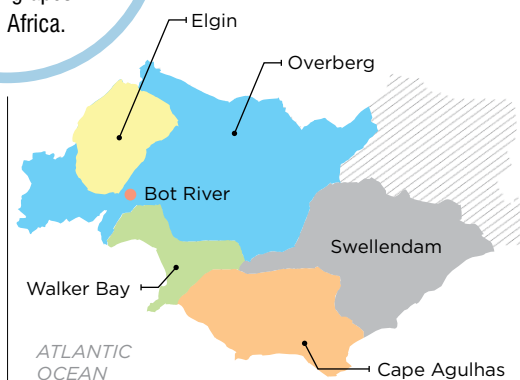
They're on the map today, known collectively as Cape South Coast. Officially defined in 2010 from a group of previously stand-alone districts located southeast of Stellenbosch, Cape South Coast is characterized by cooler temperatures and proximity to the Atlantic. "The most significant

role of Cape South Coast was to help indicate that the regions of Elgin, Bot River, Walker Bay and Elim are all influenced by the ocean," explains Paul Cluver, whose family pioneered Elgin Valley decades ago. "The biggest advantage is allowing producers to blend grapes from various sub-regions and not have to list the origin as Western Cape."

Cape South Coast producers—about 60—have more than climate in common: They are overwhelmingly small, independent and quality-focused. They are a diverse bunch, but almost uniformly they are aiming for balanced wines that emphasize freshness over fruit, oak or alcohol. There are advantages to being a new region in an old wine producing country—particularly one with a rocky past. Cape South Coast has no bulk-production cooperative culture to overthrow, and no vines carelessly planted in the wrong places that need ripping out. It also doesn't have the shameful social justice issues which still haunt South Africa's more historic regions. "It can be hard for

Cape South Coast features the highest concentration of premium wineries and the highest overall prices for grapes in South Africa.

CAPE SOUTH COAST South Africa





Koen Roose of Spioenkop in his Elgin vineyards.

established regions to change the game,” says Pascal Schildt, who founded Pascal Schildt Selections in 2011 to import South African wines. “They grow lots of grapes, traditions are in place and large estates dominate.” In other words, as South Africa’s wine industry continues to be reimagined in a post-Apartheid landscape, it could be the newer, less-explored regions that are best positioned to lead the way.

Elgin: From Apples to Wine

“In my opinion, Elgin is the most exciting region for Chardonnay,” says Schildt, who represents Paul Cluver, the region’s original winery. Topographically, Elgin (in the Overberg region) is shaped like a crater, an elevated basin isolated by mountains. It’s only an hour’s drive from Stellenbosch yet couldn’t be more different: ocean proximity and a unique cloud pattern means it is frequently covered in thick fog, and it gets twice as much rain. Apples and pears have reigned here for over a century, but a growing number of farmers are planting vines.

“It’s windy and cool in Elgin, even in the summer, which means we have a late ripening season and our grapes retain lots of acidity,” says fourth-generation Paul Cluver. His family has farmed orchards in Elgin since 1896 and his father, Paul Sr., was the first to grow grapes in the 1980s. “Even a decade ago there were only a handful of wineries; today there are over 20,” he adds. “We are still such a young area—the average vine is only ten years old—and have so much to learn about

our terroir, but we know that cool climate varietals, namely Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling, thrive here.”

British-born Richard Kershaw—South Africa’s only Master of Wine—made wine all over the world before choosing Elgin to start his own project in 2012 focusing on clonally selected, site-specific wines. “A lot of regions describe themselves as cool climate, but it’s a relative term at best,” says Kershaw. “Elgin is without a doubt the coolest region in South Africa and comparable to Southern Burgundy and the Northern Rhône, which explains why Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah do so well here.”

Making the most of Elgin’s long growing season and shale soils, Kershaw works with low-yielding Burgundian clones and employs artisan practices—hand-picking, indigenous yeasts, whole bunch pressing, a gravity-fed winery—to craft his refined, mineral-driven wines.

“Richard’s wines at \$50 a bottle compete with far more expensive wines made elsewhere,” says Timberg, who imports Kershaw. “Richard’s MW accreditation gives him great

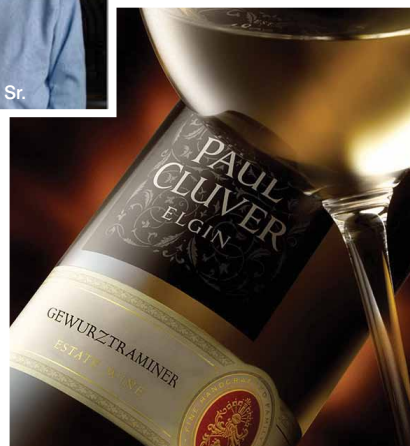
credibility and is often our foot in the door, but it’s ultimately the wines that get people talking.”

Others in the valley are finding a similar boutique, minimal-intervention winemaking philosophy coaxes the best from Elgin terroir. Spioenkop (first vintage 2010) was founded by a Belgian couple, Koen and Lore Roose. “Terroir is important to us; we believe in ‘appellation’ or ‘wine of origin’ in its purest form,” says Koen Roose, who rejects industrial yeasts and practices biodynamics in the vineyard, to stunning effect in his Sauvignon Blancs, Chenins and Rieslings. Iona, created in the late ’90s by Andrew Gunn is another biodynamic producer that has quickly built a reputation for outstanding white wines.

Well-known producers from elsewhere—including the historic Franschhoek-based Boschendal and Thelema in Stellenbosch—have both launched an “Elgin Series” within their portfolios, proving that Elgin has built brand equity. “Elgin is becoming known as a region to watch and grape prices are increasing,” says Cluver. “I really believe Elgin will rise as one of the truly unique and super-premium wine growing regions of the world.”



Paul Cluver Sr.



Names to look for:

Iona, Paul Cluver, Kershaw, Shannon, Spioenkop

Hemel-en-Aarde: Pinot’s Promised Land

Walker Bay’s most famous subregion, Hemel-en-Aarde, translates as “Heaven and Earth” and it more than lives up to the name. Lack of a paved road into the high-lying, mountain-ringed valley kept



TOP: Creation winery in Hemel-en-Aarde
RIGHT: Hannes Storm of Storm Wines



it undeveloped for decades, but today it's no longer a secret that the maritime climate combined with shale and clay soils makes it prime Pinot Noir territory.

Timothy Hamilton Russell made the bold and prescient move to plant Burgundian varieties here in 1975. His eponymous winery, run today by son Anthony, still makes some of the region's finest examples. "Tim was stubborn—he insisted on planting vines where they were not meant to be planted," says Peter Finlayson, who was the winemaker at Hamilton Russell from 1979 to 1990. He started the Bouchard Finlayson label in 1989, and today his son, Peter Allen Finlayson, has garnered international acclaim for his boutique Pinot label, Crystallum.

"Developments in Hemel-en-Aarde over the last decade have been extraordinary," explains Hannes Storm, who made wine at Hamilton Russell before launching Storm in 2012. "When I started in 2000, we were only three producers. Today there are 35." Storm has made wine around the world and his brother makes Pinot in Santa Barbara under the same label. What makes Walker Bay Pinot so unique is "the higher clay content in our soils," he says. "Hemel-en-Aarde wines have less alcohol concentration, roundness and sweetness than many California examples, but more texture and structure."

The last decade has seen an influx of newcomers, including Kevin Grant's acclaimed Ataraxia winery, and Jean-Claude and Carolyn Martin's Creation Estate. Stellenbosch-based Bruwer Raats of Raats Family Wines teamed up with his cousin, Gavin Bruwer to launch B

Vintners. "The purity of fruit one finds in Walker Bay Pinot Noir is balanced with a distinct savory, saline element which is the signature of this area," says Gavin Bruwer. "The energy that currently grabs our whole industry, gives South Africa much of a New World feel, but resulting wines are often more Old World in character—restrained, food friendly—which is what this terroir gives us."

Chris and Suzaan Alheit of the much-celebrated Alheit Vineyards are illustrating the region's potential with white grapes: Their signature Hemelrand Vine Garden bottling is a field blend Roussanne, Chardonnay, Chenin, Verdelho, Viognier and Muscat. Chris believes the potential in Hemel-en-Aarde, as well as the Overberg where the Alheits also source grapes "is still mostly unrealized." In his mind, a critical point of difference: "The majority of the wineries here are artisan producers here are trying their best to make top stuff; what makes us unique is a virtual absence of huge commodity producers." Storm agrees this is a defining aspect of the region's winemaking culture: "We are a small region that has only ever produced premium, site-specific wine; and we all share a passionate drive to better understand our terroir."

▲ Names to look for:

Hamilton Russell, Newton Johnson, Storm Wines, Ataraxia, Crystallum, Bouchard Finlayson, Alheit, B Vintners

Bot River & Greyton: The Rhône of South Africa

Just west of Hemel-en-Aarde lies the Bot River, home to a mere 10 small, family-run wineries. A wine-producing region



ABOVE: Gavin Bruwer and Bruwer Raats of B Vintners



RIGHT: Peter Allan Finlayson of Crystallum & winemaker at Gabriëlskloof





since the 1940s (for decades mostly fortified), Bot River benefits from Walker Bay's signature cool ocean breezes and summer rain.

Sebastian Beaumont runs the wine farm his parents founded in 1974, one of the first quality still wine producers. Beaumont and winemaker Niels Verburg (who has since left to start his own brand) spent decades testing various vines to see which had the greatest potential, and determined Chenin Blanc was what Bot could excel at. "We are trying to show Chenin in a fresh, dry, light style, unlike the big, voluptuous examples you get from Stellenbosch," says Beaumont. With old vines from some of the original plantings in the '70s and '80s, he picks earlier and ferments on skins with only native yeasts.

"It's easy for us to get ripeness, but more interesting to aim for restraint," says Niels Verburg, whose wines—labeled Luddite—often clock in at a mere 12% alcohol. Verburg planted his vines on the eastern slopes of the Houw Hoek Mountains, and has been crafting spicy, high-toned Syrahs and refined Chenin Blancs since 2000.

"Aromatics are a dime a dozen: We are all trying to make chewy wines that are all about texture," says Samantha O'Keefe of Lismore Estate. A California native, O'Keefe bought an old dairy farm at the base of the stunningly beautiful and isolated Rivieronderend Mountains in 2003, becoming the first and only producer in the remote Greyton region (officially in the Overberg district). Inland from Bot



LEFT: Suzaan & Chris Alheit of Alheit Vineyards
ABOVE: Samantha O'Keefe of Lismore, the only producer in the remote Greyton region

"Aromatics are a dime a dozen: We are all trying to make chewy wines that are all about texture."

—Samantha O'Keefe

River, Greyton gets its cool climate status from elevation and mountain snow.

Extensive soil surveys convinced O'Keefe she had found the ideal spot for Rhône stars Syrah and Viognier: "Greyton looks very much like the Northern Rhône with shale soils, veins of granite, low temperatures and significant summer rainfall." Her wines—first produced in 2006—have proved her hunch correct, and developed a cult following (Robert Parker called Lismore's Syrah one of the best he's tasted from South Africa). She's now planting other Rhône grapes, Roussanne and Marsanne.

"In retrospect, I was very naive," O'Keefe shares. "I've learned a lot of hard

lessons in the process"—like the time baboons devastated her Syrah crop. But her timing was fortunate, she believes: "When I began, South Africa was just starting to embrace terroir-driven wines that were not made in a cookie-cutter, commercial style. My farm developed as a thriving sommelier culture developed here; they were the first to believe in my wines. Now the general market is increasingly looking for unique wines."

Names to look for:

Lismore, Beaumont, Luddite, Gabriëlskloof

The Cool Future

The hunt for additional cool climate zones is far from over. Stellenbosch's acclaimed de Trafford family is currently pioneering the remote Malgas region farther east than even Cape Agulhas with their Sijnn winery (debut vintage 2007) where they are experimenting with Portuguese varieties. And the small, sea-sprayed Elim peninsula is attracting more attention and producers.

Timberg believes that while basic understanding of South African wines in general may still be lacking in the U.S., the entire category will benefit by promoting "stylistic and regional diversity," which cool climate regions exemplify: "A decade ago, I often had to explain that South Africa was a country on the continent of Africa, but today there has been a shift, and there is more interest in these wines. Some of the newer regions have helped open doors for our small but powerful category." ■

ULTIMATE BEVERAGE CHALLENGE

PRESENTS

ULTIMATE SPIRITS CHALLENGE 2017

Each year in March, the world's foremost spirits authors, educators, buyers, and journalists, led by F. Paul Pacult, convene to judge spirits entries from all over the world. The coveted USC Chairman's Trophy is awarded to the top scoring spirit in major categories. Brands are also recognized with the accolades Finalist, Great Value and Tried & True Award. (See 2016 results at ultimatebeverage.com.) Spirits in categories appropriate for cocktails receive not only an evaluation for the neat product but also a **cocktail evaluation**, thus providing more complete results. This in-depth evaluation is unique to Ultimate Spirits Challenge.

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 17, 2017

ENTRY DETAILS: ultimate-beverage.com/usc2017info

QUESTIONS: info@ultimate-beverage.com or 1-347-878-6551



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March 19th - 21st

PROWEIN 2017: ON TOP OF THE {WINE} WORLD

EVERY MARCH, DÜSSELDORF BECOMES THE EPICENTER OF THE WINE INDUSTRY

BY W. R. TISH

Now, with more than two decades under its belt, there is no more debate about whether ProWein is the wine industry's most important trade show. Its size, scope, calendar primacy and organization have combined to make it an annual epicenter for ongoing business; a springboard for market development; a petri dish for networking; and the launch pad for new products and ventures. For three days every March (19th-21st this year), Düsseldorf becomes the epicenter of the wine industry.

Last year the show attracted 6,200 exhibitors and over 55,000 visitors—*trade only*—with more than half from countries

outside Germany. The numbers were up about 6% from 2015. With such sheer size—a large stadium's worth of people—one might fear it being overwhelming. On the contrary, ProWein's parent company is in the business of managing global-minded trade shows. "Messe Düsseldorf is one of the world's major trade fair locations," notes Marius Berlemann, Global Head Wine & Spirits, Director ProWein. "We organize over 50 trade fairs. Most of them are leading industrial fairs with huge stands and exhibits. ProWein is unique. While the stands might be smaller, no other trade fair in Düsseldorf has more exhibitors than ProWein."

ProWein 2017 will be organized in nine interconnected halls; Berlemann explains, "Halls 9 to 17 form a distinct route, avoiding unnecessary detours for visitors." The layout—enhanced by a comprehensive website and dedicated app—ensure optimal efficiency for exhibitors and attendees. And the special challenges of the wine industry are no problem for the organizers: a service team of about 200 collects and delivers over 1.5 million tasting glasses each day of the show.

With more than 6,000 exhibitors from 60+ countries, all major wine nations and regions are represented at ProWein—the "classics" from Europe and the New World as well as the more "exotic." There are also more than 400 spirits exhibitors from 30 countries.

Progressive Programming

Exhibitors comprise the backbone of the show; while Italy, Germany and France traditionally lead this participation, dedicated sections of the halls feature Spain, Portugal, Austria, Australia, New Zea-

AND WORLDWIDE, TOO....

The ProWein portfolio also includes ProWine Asia (May 8 – 11, 2017 in Hong Kong) and ProWine China (November 14 - 16, 2017 in Shanghai). These events offer the international wineries, producers and exporters taking part in ProWein in Germany the opportunity to explore the markets in Mainland China and South East Asia—both regions experiencing higher demand for a wide ranging variety of wines and spirits.



Marius Berlemann,
Global Head Wine & Spirits, Director ProWein



ProWein is ultra-efficient and all-business. Over 500 tastings, seminars and workshops take place either in the ProWein Forum or directly at the exhibitors' stands. Topics receiving special attention this year include innovative packaging, unusual marketing concepts and cocktails using coffee, wine and craft beer.

land and South Africa, as well as the U.S., Canada, China, Brazil and Lebanon—and even such burgeoning regions as Tunisia, England and Bolivia.

In addition, ancillary programs feature more than 500 tasting areas, guided sessions and seminars. These provide ample opportunity for ProWein to be at the leading edge of industry trends—from environmental issues to packaging innovation and category-specific developments. One tasting zone will showcase multi-provenance winners from the Mundus Vini competition. The ProWein Forum will offer a blend of themed tastings and lectures. “Same But

Different” is a returning seminar focused on extraordinary marketing concepts. At the FIZZZ Lounge, an annual area highlighting bar trends, presentations will take on “Spirits & More: Exclusive Cocktails with Coffee, Wine and Craft Beer.”

Of special interest to Americans in the business: “Route USA,” tailored specifically to our three-tier system. A joint effort of ProWein and *Wine Enthusiast* magazine, “Route USA” guides American visitors to producers with special signage on their booth indicating their interest in finding importing and distribution partners in the United States. In addition, Berlemann notes there is a special link on their website to “Route USA” (prowein.com/RouteUSA2), listing the names and booth numbers of all participating exhibitors.

This conscious effort to stay ahead of the market comes across loud and clear in the variety of topical seminars. Similarly, exhibitors naturally choose ProWein as the ideal place and time to launch new projects. Berlemann explains, “The timing of ProWein is not fortuitous. One of the success factors of ProWein since its launch in 1994 is that March is an ideal time for suppliers to present the new vintage, and it precedes all the other major wine shows.”

Satisfaction Situation

Annual exit surveys help the Messe Düsseldorf organizers fine-tune their programming, infrastructure and attendee and exhibitor mix. “The survey gives us a good indication where we and the market



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- For general information, visit prowein.com or mdna.com
- For details regarding tickets or exhibiting, contact Messe Düsseldorf North America: (312) 781-5180; Fax (312) 781-5188; email: info@mdna.com
- For hotel and travel information, contact TTI Travel: (866) 674-3476; email: info@tititravel.net; traveltradeint.com

stand. Figures clearly show that ProWein is the world's most important business platform for the entire sector,” says Berlemann. “The highest increase from outside Europe was posted by visitors from overseas, mainly from Asia. Overall, we are seeing a trend where ProWein is primarily attracting decision-makers with great purchasing authority: over 70% of the attendees were from top or middle management.”

Perhaps most important of all, attendees have registered their success: one in two visitors confirmed that they found new suppliers at ProWein; two-thirds were able to get useful information on trends and innovations; and almost 96% stated they had entirely reached their goals of their trade fair visit. No surprise: more than half the visitors in 2016 planned their visit for ProWein 2017 before they even left Düsseldorf last March. ■



The Messe Düsseldorf fairgrounds, designed expressly to house trade shows, is like a huge campus. ProWein exhibitors are grouped sensibly by country of origin, in nine connected but distinct “halls” that are easy to navigate, with great ventilation and signage.

LOW ALCOHOL COCKTAILS

THE 'SESSIONABLE' CONCEPT FINDS
FOOTING IN THE COCKTAIL WORLD,
NOT JUST BEER

BY JACK ROBERTIELLO



GREEN
ARROW

*Dolin blanc vermouth,
muddled mint, Kyoto cold
brew coffee, topped with
honey cream*

Demitasse,
Hollywood, CA

International travelers have long marveled at America's plate-sized steaks, endless buffets and schooners of soda. Recently, add to portion shock a general surprise at the potency of many en vogue cocktails. It's not only tourists who struggle with some of the more impactful contemporary creations.

But high-octane tide has begun to turn a bit, with more and more cocktail menus including lower-alcohol options. Many factors have contributed to the move: concerns about over-serving customers, the sense that strong and stirred drinks can dull the palate and appetite, a general trend to include a range of potencies and flavors in all beverages, and the slew of lower alcohol ingredients now available for the bartender's tool kit. What's become known as sessionable in the craft beer world—meaning beverages

moderate in flavor and potency—is now having an impact on cocktail menus.

What counts as lower-proof? The average properly-made cocktail in a standard portion size can range anywhere from about 20% alcohol by volume up to about 25-30% for those strong and stirred. A drink based on vermouth, Sherry, amaro or other lower-alcohol ingredients rather than stronger spirits, as in those basic aperitivo cocktails the Americano or the Aperol Spritz, will instead be served, depending on the recipe, at between 8% and 13% alcohol.

The attractions for operators to include these sorts of drinks are obvious. Comparably less expensive ingredients likely make for more profitable drinks; and given a customer used to stronger drinks might safely consume two aperitivo cocktails, the number of drinks served may increase as well. Variations of the Aperol Spritz, especially during brunch service, have definitely benefitted from the lighter proof trend.

Mother of Invention

Restaurants limited to beer and wine tend to really push the boundaries in the lower-alcohol arena. At Demitasse Roastery & Kitchen in Hollywood, in addition to espresso and tea beverages, wine, saké, vermouth, and coffee are the bases for a number of drinks, including the Blood Orange Saké Swizzle (saké, lime, and a

rosemary and black pepper garnish), the Adult Spice Latte (the cardoon-based amaro Cardamaro and cinnamon syrup) and the Green Arrow (Dolin blanc vermouth, muddled mint, Kyoto cold brew coffee topped with honey cream).

The range of currently available vermouths now helped form the menu at Washington, D.C.'s Nido, where the happy hour is known as the "vermoutherie." Vermouth highballs, locally produced rosé vermouth on tap and many other vermouths by the bottle set the stage of a cocktail program broadly based on twists on the classics. "There is so much variation and depth of flavor in vermouth, and it's a lot of fun to play with," says owner Erin Lindle.

In San Francisco, Octavia launched with a vermouth program in place and carries nine or so, each listed on the menu to be served straight, on the rocks with bitters and orange, or with tonic, bitters and orange. The house cocktail includes two types of vermouth and Lillet mixed with yuzu juice. "We wanted to create a unique offering that would attract attention and be exciting for our diners," says Beverage Director Paul Einbund.

In another part of town, the drink programs at Plumpjack Group-owned Forgery and Wildhawk, includes numerous low-alcohol drinks; at Forgery, about half feature sherries and vermouth—for example, the Gran Cobbler, made with Gran Lusso Vermouth, raspberries, absinthe and lime. With a small bar and



One means of dialing back potency is using flavorful lower-alcohol products as a base. In San Francisco, Hip Hops is one of the many vermouth-driven cocktails at Nighthawk. BELOW, LEFT: Forgery's Gran Cobbler, based on Gran Lusso Vermouth, raspberries, absinthe and lime. BELOW, RIGHT: "The House Cocktail" at Octavia, prominently features Lillet Blanc.

limited spirits selection at Wildhawk, beverage honcho Jacques Bezuidenhout boasts an entire menu page dedicated to vermouth cocktails. "We have one [Hip Hops, made with Martini Ambrato, grapefruit, pineapple gum and hops] that customers love especially because they can have two or three without worrying about too much alcohol."

Fine dining destinations are especially welcoming to the low-alcohol approach. Kenny Arbuckle, bar manager at Santa Monica's Southeast Asian Cassia, maintains a changing section of low-alcohol cocktails on the menu. The

most popular these days is Rome with a Bloody View (Leopold Bros. Aperitivo, lemongrass- and pineapple-infused dry vermouth, blood orange syrup, fresh-squeezed lime juice).

Less is More

Some drinks don't necessarily eschew the stronger stuff, just measure them lightly. Japanese whisky is a secondary ingredient in Cassia's Dragonfruit Collins, made with the gentian- and quinine-fortified wines Bonal and Suze, Kikori Whiskey, and dragonfruit and lime juices. Sherry takes the lead in the Starfruit Sherry (Fino Sherry, starfruit, orgeat, lime, Thai basil) and the Cortez (sparkling Riesling, Amontillado Sherry, cinnamon syrup, lemon).

"I think proof isn't necessarily always the driver," says Arbuckle. "It's more about the quality you get from certain liqueurs and vermouths and the lighter amaros. A different flavor profile than the one you get from more spirit-forward cocktails."

While Sherry-based cocktails have become more common lately, Port generally has yet to receive the same sort of attention. One notable exception: Elixir in San Francisco, where owner H. Joseph Ehrmann currently features Sandeman Port with lemon, soda and ice.

But regardless of the venue, contemporary customers are clearly less interested in the punch they get per drink than they are the flavor experience at whatever proof, and sometimes, going lighter is the best way to bring better flavors out. ■

FORGERY PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE KEPPLER



Fine dining destinations are especially welcoming to the low-alcohol approach.





CRU BEAUJOLAIS

IN THE

POST-NOUVEAU WORLD

CLASSIC FRENCH GAMAY GAINS FRESH LIFT FROM MERCHANTS AND SOMMS

BY DAVID LINCOLN ROSS

Gimmicky from the get-go, Beaujolais Nouveau has been in steady decline. The fanfare-padded release of the first wine of the harvest (popularized in the 1970s) had a great run. And yes, as a fresh, fruity expression of the Gamay grape, it still deserves a place at the Thanksgiving table.

But there is so much more to Beaujolais. The region's distinct sub-regions, or crus, all produce Gamay-based reds of consistent quality. And their generously fruity yet smooth character is in fact re-sounding with the American public. The 10 crus of Beaujolais—Brouilly, Côte de Brouilly, Chiroubles, Chénas, Fleurie, Ju-

liénas, Morgon, Moulin-à-Vent, Régnié and Saint-Amour—posted a robust 63% gain in the first six months of 2016 versus the same period in 2015, according to the French Agriculture Ministry.

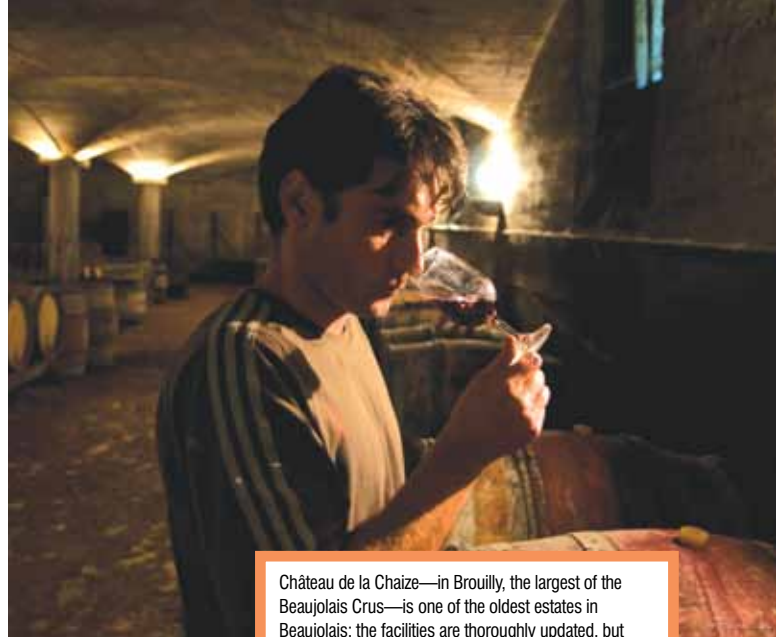
That is some real momentum. The recent growth appears to be fomented in large part by trade enthusiasm at the point of sale. The wine simply has many advantages that make it easy to recommend, both on- and off-premise.

Raj Vaidya, Wine Director, Restaurant Daniel, New York, says, “Beaujolais crus offer incredible bang for buck.” Daniel’s wine list features 13 crus, including a 2001 Domaine de Vissoux “Garants” Fleurie,

While not considered as “serious” as Bordeaux or Burgundy, place definitely matters with cru Beaujolais. Above left, Fleurie, one of the 10 official sub-divisions, or crus, of Beaujolais.

for \$95 and a 2009 Domaine Barbet Saint-Amour for \$75. He adds, “Beaujolais crus also age better than many realize, which is why I love to list some older vintages.”

“We’ve all seen what Burgundy pricing has been in the last three vintages, with shortages, so we’ve enhanced our cru Beaujolais selections,” says Veronica Litton, Wine Director, Crown Wine & Liquors in Miami. “I am proud to say Crown features all 10 crus.”



Château de la Chaize—in Brouilly, the largest of the Beaujolais Crus—is one of the oldest estates in Beaujolais; the facilities are thoroughly updated, but ancient presses on display speak to the legacy. Right: Stéphane Aviron is among a wave of modern winemakers focusing on old vines and embracing biodynamics.

Terroir & Beyond

J.R. Thomason of Flatiron Wine & Spirits, New York, sums it up: “A Beaujolais Cru is cheaper than Burgundy, and at \$20 you can have a terroir-driven Chenas or Saint-Amour.”

Georges Dubœuf, founder of Les Vins de Georges Dubœuf, and renowned for promoting Beaujolais (Nouveau in particular) since the early 1960s, is seeing better opportunities than ever for crus in the U.S. “Our exports of crus Beaujolais are up this year, and our importer, distributors and customers are passing on the message of their incredible value in the world of wine.”

Dennis Kreps, co-owner of Napa-based Quintessential Wines, importer of Dubœuf’s portfolio, says, “One of the key points to effectively selling Georges Dubœuf’s Cru Domaine and Château wines is location. The wines represent the nuances of ‘place’ just as much as Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits, at very approachable prices.”



“Surprising value. Authentic terroir. Excellent table manners. Even earth-friendly practices. Beaujolais has a lot going for it.”

-Dennis Kreps

Gamay’s intrinsic food friendliness also presents opportunity. In texture and flavor, it offers natural appeal for Pinot Noir, Merlot and even red blends drinkers. Beaujolais also has an affinity with Côtes-du-Rhône, another bistro-approved French regional favorite.

Anthony Cohen, Brand Manager, French & European Estates, Frederick Wildman and Sons, New York, importer of three producers of Beaujolais, including Château Fuissé, Domaine Labruyère and Stéphane Aviron, asserts, “Beaujolais is Lyon,” referring to the food capital of France, where a roast chicken, *pommes frites* and a Beaujolais are revered as a gastronomic holy trinity. He adds, “Crus are food friendly, fruity, not overpowering, yet complex.”

Trey Beffa, co-owner of K&L Wine Merchants, with three stores in San Francisco, sees yet another attraction: “Younger winemakers in Beaujolais are pursuing

sustainable farming and introducing natural or organic, and/or bio-dynamic wines; this is stimulating our customers to try these new cru wines.”

Surprising value. Authentic terroir. Excellent table manners. Even earth-friendly practices. Beaujolais has a lot going for it. Nouveau fading toward nostalgia has opened the door for greater focus in the trade on cru offerings, notes Pascal F. Salvadori, Vice President, Senior Portfolio Manager & Director of Education, Esprit du Vin (Palm Bay International), which represents Château de La Chaize from Brouilly.

Jules Dressner, co-owner of New York-based Louis/Dressner, importer of seven cru Beaujolais producers, summarizes: “Beaujolais is fun and affordable, and people finally figured this out. But they can also be complex and terroir-centric, so you can ‘geek out’ to them. It’s the best of both worlds.” ■

SELLING TIPS

- ▶ “You know Beaujolais Nouveau—time to try a Cru! Similar plot, but with more action...”
- ▶ Fruity, low in tannins, Beaujolais Crus are ideal for people who love white or rosé wines, or even Pinot Noir or red blends.
- ▶ “Try it with a little chill—it’s bright and fruity but smooth.”
- ▶ Just like Beaujolais Nouveau is great with turkey, Beaujolais Crus make the perfect match with roast chicken...and much more.

RED TRUCK & HELIX HIT THE ROAD

NOVEL CORK STOPPER IS OPENED & CLOSED BY HAND, WITHOUT LOSING THE CELEBRATORY 'POP'

BY W. R. TISH

Innovation is a word people in every trade love to toss around. Products themselves, of course are a common target of tinkering; packaging is perhaps even more frequently the focus of marketers' attention.

But when you stop to think about it, notes Carlos de Jesus, Marketing Director of world-leading cork supplier Amorim, packaging in the wine industry has seen no true inventions for decades. "In our industry, Helix is the first packaging breakthrough of the 21st century," says de Jesus. "All the others—screwcaps, bag-in-box, even cans and Tetra-Pak—were born last century."

What is Helix? In short, the world's first corkscrew-free cork, easily opened and re-closed with the twist of one's wrist. The ergonomically-designed stopper, made from natural cork, is specially threaded to fit the custom bottle. The need to engineer both a new bottle and a new stopper required extraordinary cooperation between Amorim and the world's largest bottle manufacturer—as well as the

national marketer, Bronco Wine Co. (broncowine.com), which chose the Red Truck line as the first brand in America to feature Helix.

From Bronco's standpoint, outfitting Red Truck—as well as the pink, white and green "Truck"-labeled wines—with Helix was a natural choice among their brands. "What could be more American than Red Truck?" asks Bronco Wine Co. Chairman Fred Franzia. "Do you know how many pickup trucks are sold in America? Helix is a new idea for a timeless icon."

Overall, development of Helix took four years. The novel technology needed to deliver on several levels, according to de Jesus: "The most obvious is the look and performance as a closure," he says. "Also, it could not present any complications on the bottling line."

The Pop Loved 'Round the World

While Helix, like other non-traditional packages, is fundamentally about convenience, de Jesus emphasizes that Helix offers easy opening and reclosing without losing the positive aesthetic of the uncorking process. Around the globe, he explains, the sound of a bottle of wine being uncorked evokes a positive, happy response whenever it is heard. "Developing Helix has opened up some territory that we—Amorim, the cork indus-

Developing Helix required unprecedented cooperation between bottle, cork and wine supplier.

try, the wine industry as a whole—had been neglecting. Or at least overlooking," he shares. "We can not underestimate the marketing power of that 'POP!'"

Amorim did not create the pop, but Helix retains it; this feature is a true point of distinction relative to screwtops, making it a good selling point.

Amorim conducted market research in China, UK and USA for Helix. While Bronco is the first to use in the U.S., some 26 brands are already using Helix around the world (France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Austria, South Africa.)

Fred Franzia notes that for Bronco Wine, Helix is "not a test" for Red Truck. "We are strong believers that this will be a back bar on sale item as well as an easy open-easy close for the one-glass-a-day-at-home drinker."

Industry eyes will be watching closely when the new Helix-equipped bottles of Red Truck roll out in January, nationwide. And all ears will be tuned in for this 21st century invention that delivers not only maximum opening/reclosing convenience, but also a modern version of the timeless "pop." ■



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The development of Helix is the result of a four year collaboration between Amorim and O-I, companies with extensive design and innovation expertise.

Convenience

For the very first time, consumers can enjoy the ritual of uncorking the bottle, including the associated “pop,” without the need for a corkscrew.

GREEK & BEYOND

JOHNNY LIVANOS, GENERAL MANAGER
OUSIA, NEW YORK CITY

BY ALIA AKKAM



Johnny Livanos is the General Manager overseeing the beverage program of Ousia, the new Mediterranean venture from Livanos Restaurant Group inside the New York residential building VIA 57 WEST.

BEVERAGE MEDIA GROUP: New Yorkers have long loved your family's restaurant, Molyvos. How will the soon-to-open Ousia be different?

JOHNNY LIVANOS: We like to think of Ousia as Molyvos' kid sister. Molyvos is recognized as one of the top destinations for traditional Greek food and boasts the largest selection of Greek wine in the U.S. Ousia will have a more contemporary approach—expect playful plating and presentation. At every establishment, Livanos Restaurant Group emphasizes using only the freshest seafood and local produce, so this will play a large part on the menu at Ousia as well. Our wine list highlights indigenous varietals and notable selections from Spain, Italy and France.

BMG: Ousia is a restaurant. Is one of the priorities of the drink program finding synergy with the kitchen?

JL: When I am building a cocktail, I always turn to food. For example, we have the Baklava Island that reflects both the current tiki craze and my love for the dessert. I looked to find the flavors that make baklava so delicious in items on our backbar. So, we use aged rum to provide

“The most important thing is being able to discuss the flavor profile of a drink and provide benchmark comparisons that help someone.”

a richness and molasses quality, allspice dram to add a layer of baking spice and walnut liqueur to give the drink a nutty element.

BMG: What are some other cocktails poised to be favorites?

JL: Athena the Wise is our Manhattan variation with bourbon, sweet vermouth and Rakomelo, a Greek spirit that blends honey, cinnamon and allspice. The Pomegranate Pisco Punch is fruity, savory and full of alliteration: Pisco, pineapple, pomegranate and pink peppercorn all shaken together and served up. Cardamom is widely used in Greek and Middle Eastern cuisine; our Ousia Mule includes cardamom-infused vodka, Aperol, lime juice and ginger beer.

BMG: When starting a restaurant from scratch, how do you ensure that your hospitality structure is solid from the get-go?

JL: The first step is hiring for personality. You can teach anyone how to serve, but it's harder to train someone to be nice and compassionate. Before we open, we will conduct about two weeks of in-depth training to make sure our staff is well educated on the food and beverage selections. In addition, we plan on bringing in industry experts—winemakers, brewmasters and distillers are the best at engaging staff. As much as you work to prepare for every scenario, a lot of the most rewarding training happens on the fly when dealing with real guests who have real needs.




BMG: Although diners are increasingly familiar with Greek products like Retsina and Mastika, how do you spark an educational conversation with guests?

JL: One of my favorite things to do is talk about booze, but not everybody out there who dines with us cares about, say, what type of still is used in the distillation process or what kind of soil a particular grape is grown on. The most important thing is being able to discuss the flavor profile of a drink and provide benchmark comparisons that help someone form an idea of what it may taste like. You never want to shove information down someone's throat when they are just trying to enjoy a nice meal, but if they are genuinely curious and have a lot of questions, I like to go all out. They are allowing me to geek out about beverage, so I will have some fun with it: give them a taste, show them the bottle, tell them a story. ■

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