

# Rhode Island

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*How Beer, Wine & Spirits Get To The Marketplace*

# THE BEVERAGE JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2016



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BACK TO BASICS

ARMAGNAC  
ON ITS OWN

GERMANY'S  
YOUTH MOVEMENT

IN PRAISE OF  
CHILEAN CABERNET



IS **SCOTCH**  
ON THE ROCKS?  
COMPETITION FOR  
THE CLASSIC WHISKY



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# THE BEVERAGE JOURNAL

RHODE ISLAND

# OCTOBER 2016

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The largest compilation of beverage alcohol price and brand information.

HOW BEER, WINE  
AND SPIRITS  
GET TO THE  
MARKETPLACE



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# MARKETPOINT

From fall favorite flavor standbys to seasonal upstarts, this month's issue explores what's trending, and how to sell them.

- "Is **Scotch** on the Rocks?" It is at a crossroads and we examine several factors: non-age statement whiskies; innovation; value beyond single malts; Brexit; mixability; and "gulp," shortages.
- "Back to Basics" with **Saké 101**. These handy guides are always online on our site and easy to download and email. Share with your staff and industry colleagues.
- "**Armagnac: On Its Own**" investigates how this spirit is separating itself from Cognac, and fitting perfectly into the craft movement.



- Merchants and restaurants prepare to stock **rosés** year round. It's not just a warm weather wine anymore.
- German **Riesling**, the perennial underdog wine, is rising to the top of tastes.
- We return to Chile for **Cabernet Sauvignon**, which continues to be the country's most high profile wine.
- Plus local news, brand profiles, retail and on-premise **hot-topic** offerings.
- Access products, pricing and direct-to-wholesaler ordering right at your **fingertips** ... from the floor or behind the bar. Check out our trade-only, secure website with your own, personal password. Need help? Call us at 203-288-3375, ext. 100.



## ON THE COVER

Photograph by  
Grisha Tukanov / Snapwire

**TANQUERAY REVEALS NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH SNOOP DOGG**

Tanqueray Gin launched a new strategic partnership with entertainment icon Snoop Dogg to highlight the brand’s focus on the Gin & Juice cocktail, which is celebrated in the success of Snoop Dogg’s 1993 classic hit song “Gin & Juice.” Snoop Dogg will actively oversee the Tanqueray Gin & Juice campaign by developing signature Tanqueray cocktail recipes, such as “Laid Back,” using Tanqueray No. Ten, Ciroc Apple, fresh pineapple juice and club soda. “Working with Snoop Dogg will help regain Tanqueray’s foothold as ‘the gin of choice.’ It is a perfect fit that cultivated an organic, yet strategic, partnership that we truly believe brings back a newfound love for Gin & Juice cocktails,” said Keenan Towns, Brand Director for Gins at Diageo.



**TSG CONSUMER PARTNERS ACQUIRES DUCKHORN WINE COMPANY**

TSG Consumer Partners, a private equity firm, has acquired Duckhorn Wine Company from GI Partners. The transaction includes all six Duckhorn Wine Company wineries: Duckhorn Vineyards, Goldeneye, Paraduxx, Migration, Decoy and Canvasback; their corresponding properties; and more than 600 acres of estate vineyards, including Three Palms Vineyard in Napa Valley. President and CEO Alex Ryan, who has been with the company since 1988, will continue to lead Duckhorn Wine Company. “GI has been an ideal partner and we look forward to working with TSG,” said Ryan. “TSG recognizes and values how unique we are in the North American wine industry and is committed to preserving the strong culture that defines us. At the same time, we share an exciting vision for our company’s future.”



**BOSTON BARTENDER NAMED USBG MOST IMAGINATIVE BARTENDER**

The United States Bartenders Guild named Schuyler Hunton of Boston the 2016 North American “Most Imaginative Bartender” during the 10th annual bartender competition,



sponsored by Bombay Sapphire. Hunton competed against 10 other North American mixologists and won the top slot with his cocktail, “Breakfast in Bombay.” Hunton will be featured on a special edition cover of GQ’s December 2016 “Men of the Year” issue, along with his winning cocktail recipe. The competition was judged by NYC-based mixologist Pam Wiznitzer, L.A. restaurant owner Pablo Moix, San Francisco-based bar partner Jacques Bezuidenhout, Phoenix mixologist and beverage consultant Kim Hassarud, and the Bombay Sapphire’s North American Brand Ambassador Gary Hayward.

**CONSTELLATION BRANDS REDESIGNS MODELO PORTFOLIO MARKETING**

Constellation Brands announced the introduction of Casa Modelo as the new “master brand house and portfolio-approach” for the Modelo family of brands. Casa Modelo is designed to help establish Modelo as the quintessential Mexican brewer allowing for “more effective cross-promotion and awareness building for each Modelo beer brand.” The Modelo portfolio, which includes Especial, Negra and Chelada, will feature unified packaging to maintain consistency among the Modelo brands.



**RÉMY MARTIN PARTNERS WITH ACTRESS JACKIE CRUZ**

Rémy Martin Cognac announced its 2016 Circle of Centaurs mentorship program with actor, singer and photographer Jackie Cruz, known for her role as Marisol “Flaca” Gonzales on the Netflix series “Orange is the New Black.” The mentorship initiative with Cruz is new among the series in Rémy Martin’s Circle of Centaurs programs. “Today’s consumers are not defined by one skill and should be recognized for their many talents,” said Emma Medina, Vice President of Rémy Martin the Americas. “Jackie’s myriad of talents makes her an ideal partner for Rémy Martin’s Circle of Centaurs program.” This program is an extension of the brand’s One Life/Live Them campaign to celebrate individuals’ many talents.



# MAMMA MIA!



# INTRODUCING



### **Mamma Mia!**

You can't say it without an exclamation point and you can't say it without smiling. Whether you've had the best day or a #MammaMiaMoment it just feels good to say.

### **Mamma Mia Red Blend**

Smooth, full-bodied red blend made predominantly with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes harvested at peak ripeness. Notes of berries and plum with a soft finish.

### **Mamma Mia White**

Made predominantly with Grechetto and Procanico grapes, this white wine balances its natural acidity with a delicate, off-dry finish.



Please contact your Rhode Island Distributing sales person for more information.

# SALUTE TO LIFE, LAUGHTER & LASAGNA!

MAMMAMIWINES.COM

**SAILOR JERRY SPICED RUM NAMES NEW BRAND AMBASSADOR**

Steve Millar was named the U.S. Brand Ambassador for Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum, a William Grant & Sons brand. Millar will join Daniel “Gravy” Thomas and Ashley Marsh in the undertaking of sharing the story of Norman “Sailor Jerry” Collins and the spiced rum. Millar has held various positions in the food and spirits industry over the last seven years and served in the U.S. Army with six tours as an active soldier. “Steve’s personal experience as an Army vet, background in spirits and living life on his own terms, embody the independent spirit and unapologetic attitude of the rum’s namesake,” said Josh Hayes, Senior Brand Manager, Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum.



struggling to find employment after serving our country,” said Brice. “Veterans sacrifice so much for our country. I think it’s important to support them as much as we can. I look forward to working with UV Vodka to raise awareness and increase support for this important cause.”

**TERLATO FAMILY CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH RUTHERFORD HILL WINERY**

Since 1996, the Terlato family has owned the Rutherford Hill Winery in Napa Valley and this year marks their 20-year anniversary of ownership. “When my sons and I



purchased the winery, we decided we would cut production in order to focus on quality, and not quantity. In these 20 years we have accomplished our goal. The quality of Rutherford Hill wines has come a long way, and that is only the beginning, as the plan now is to continue to improve the quality every year,” said Anthony Terlato. Rutherford Hill wines have earned many 90-plus point reviews. Terlato said working with famed winemakers and wine consultants like Michel Rolland and Simonit & Sirch has helped them increase the quality of wines produced.

**WINERY MOVES TOWARD CLEAN ENERGY GOALS WITH SOLAR**

Michael David Winery completed the first phase of their solar electric systems on the Highway 12 and Bare Ranch locations in Lodi, California. The Highway 12 facility features two solar electric systems, together making up 350 panels for a 108kW system, which produces 200,000kWh per year. “Michael David Winery is trying to be a real leader in the industry with a multitude of sustainable practices,” said Kevin Phillips, Vice President of Operations of Michael David Winery. Further plans include solar electric systems in the barreling and aging facility on Armstrong Road, which will offset 100-percent of its electrical needs.



**PIONEER IN WINES AND ARTS LEAVES LASTING LEGACY**

Margrit Mondavi of Napa Valley, widow of Robert G. Mondavi and a pioneer of contemporary wine culture, died on September 3. She was 91. As Vice President of Cultural Affairs at Robert Mondavi Winery, she was instrumental in shaping the modern-day California wine industry through her life-long pursuit of, and success in, uniting wine with fine art, music and culinary artistry. She joined the winery in 1967. Under her direction, Robert Mondavi Winery developed original cultural and culinary arts programs that are now benchmarks for the wine world. With the support of her late husband, Robert G. Mondavi, she created a showplace for painters, sculptors, photographers, jazz and classical musicians, and the great chefs and winemakers of the world.



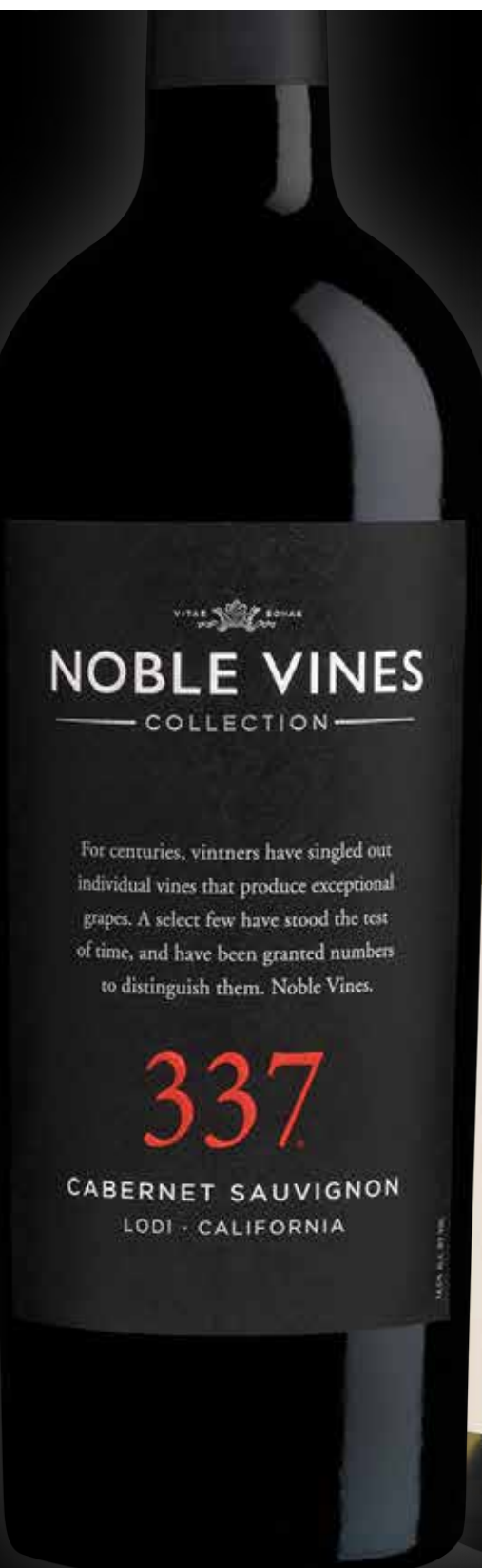
**UV VODKA AND LEE BRICE TEAM TO HELP MILITARY FAMILIES**

Phillips Distilling Company, supplier of UV Vodka, partnered with Grammy-nominated country music star Lee Brice to promote UV Vodka’s “Salute to Heroes” campaign, which is designed to help veterans and their spouses across the United States find meaningful employment. The partnership includes social media campaigns from Brice, along with a sweepstakes and prizes. “I’m honored to partner with UV Vodka to support veterans and their families who may be





# SAME VINES - SAME QUALITY - NEW LOOK



JUNE 2016  
**WINE ENTHUSIAST**

**90** POINTS

“Best Buy”

**337** CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2013

JULY 2016  
**FOOD & WINE**

**TOP PICKS**

WINES UNDER \$15

**446** CHARDONNAY 2014

# New law allows retail sales by breweries and distilleries

Small businesses, tourism stand to gain

BY DANA SLONE

Legislation passed by the General Assembly, and ceremonially signed on September 10 by Governor Gina M. Raimondo, allows breweries and distilleries to sell limited amounts of their products to visitors for sampling and off-site consumption.

Representative Michael A. Morin and Senator V. Susan Sosnowski introduced the bill (2016-H 8100B, 2016-S 3053A) to assist Rhode Island's growing brewery and distillery industries and to encourage an "increasingly popular" segment of the tourism industry.

"Rhode Island is on the move," Raimondo said. "We're making real changes to leverage our already strong tourism and food industries, while bolstering our overall efforts to use regulatory modernization and innovation to attract business. This legislation will allow breweries and distilleries to keep growing and creating jobs."

Although wineries in Rhode Island are allowed to offer samples and retail sales of their products, under the previous law, distilleries and breweries were banned entirely from the retail sale of their products at their plants. The new law, which is now in effect, allows breweries and distillers to sell each visitor up to 288 ounces of malt beverages and 750 mL of spirits per day at retail for consumption off the premises, in containers no larger than 72 ounces each.

Additionally, it would enable them to sell up to 36 ounces of malt beverages or 4.5 ounces of distilled spirits per day to each visitor for consumption on the premises, allowing visitors to sample their products before purchasing.

The limits are designed to allow visitors to sample a variety of products and take home up to the equivalent of four six-packs of 12-ounce bottles, while also accommodating growlers, the larger jugs popular among craft beer aficionados.

Both Morin and Sosnowski worked closely with the manufacturers in their districts to craft the legislation. Representative Morin (D-Dist. 49, Woonsocket) represents



Gov. Gina M. Raimondo at the signing ceremony on September 10 at Ravenous Brewing Company in Woonsocket. The new law allows breweries and distilleries to sell limited amounts of their products to visitors for sampling and off-site consumption.

Woonsocket, home to Ravenous Brewing Company, where the signing ceremony took place. Senator Sosnowski's 37th District of New Shoreham and South Kingstown includes the Sons of Liberty Spirits Company, Whaler's Brewing Company and Proclamation Brewing Company.

"I see this primarily as a way to help small businesses that have some really terrific potential. Getting their products into consumers' hands is critical if they are going to become known and gain a following. It's also a way to encourage tourism, since there are enough in each area of the state for enthusiasts to make a day of it, visiting breweries or distilleries, sampling products, and buying some to take home for later," said Morin.

Sosnowski said, "We are always looking for ways to encourage our homegrown small businesses, and this is an area where we have a number of really exciting up-and-coming businesses that would have much better opportunities to grow if we just bring our laws in line with those of neighboring states.

The legislation was cosponsored by Rep. Stephen M. Casey (D-Dist. 50, Woonsocket), Rep. Jean Philippe Barros (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket), Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) and Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown), Sen. Dennis L. Algieri (R-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown), Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) and Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence). ■

# WINE STASHED IN BOURBON BARRELS.



INTRODUCING

**COOPER & THIEF**  
CELLARMASTERS

— BORN FROM —  
**MISCHIEF**





Photos by Chris Almeida.

## NEWPORT YACHT EVENT FEATURES LOCAL FACES AND FLAVORS

The Boys & Girls Club of Newport County benefited from the Newport Yacht Rendezvous, locally referred to as the “Yacht Hop,” a fundraiser hosted on Newport’s notable yachts on August 12. United States Bartenders Guild Rhode Island (USBG RI) chapter member Jonathan Pogash, also known as “The Cocktail Guru,” along with Rhode Island’s Keel Vodka poured tastes and served cocktails for guests. The event was held in partnership with Yachts International and Newport Shipyard.

1. Max Moss, Territory Manager East, Keel Vodka; Tom McGovern, Co-Founder, Keel Vodka.
2. Jonathan Pogash created cocktails for guests.
3. A Yacht Hop cocktail menu with selection showcasing Hendricks Gin, Solerno Liqueur, Glenfiddich and Sailor Jerry Rum.
4. A cocktail punch featured during the Yacht Hop.



## COCKTAIL COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS BLUE CHAIR BAY RUM

The Two Ten Oyster Club set the stage for local bartenders and the M.S. Walker sales team for a Blue Chair Bay Rum cocktail competition on August 16. Bartenders competed for a chance to win a Kenny Chesney autographed guitar and tickets to his upcoming concert tour. Blue Chair Bay Rum is owned by Fishbowl Spirits, an independent spirit company owned by country recording music artist Kenny Chesney. Jason Viti of Basta was named the first place winner, followed by Amanda Fullham, Audrey King and Brax Marcao, named as the top three finalists.

1. Competing bartenders created cocktails featuring Blue Chair Bay Rum.
2. Competitor Danielle Riley of the Bristol Oyster Bar mixes up her cocktail as Judges Ian Magiros, On-Premise Key Account Specialist, M.S. Walker and Justin Sullivan, Assistant General Manager, M.S. Walker, look on.
3. The judges included Justin Sullivan, Assistant General Manager, M.S. Walker; Dana Strom, Regional Manager New England, Blue Chair Bay Rum; Ian Magiros, On-Premise Key Account Specialist, M.S. Walker.
4. Finalists: Amanda Fullham, Los Andes; Audrey King, Aurora Providence; Winner Jason Viti, Basta; Brad Marcao, Two Ten Oyster Bar.
5. Members of the M.S. Walker sales team during the Blue Chair Bay Rum event: Owen Thorpe, Sean Whittle, Matt Supinski, Melinda Aguiar, Christine Langford, Alan Babb, Ryan Lavoie, David Montoya and Joseph Brennan.



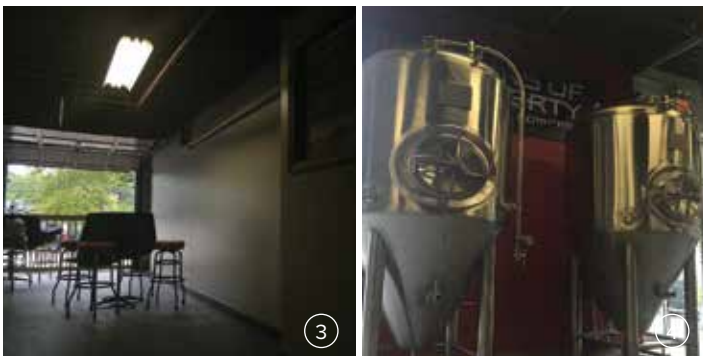
## BARREL EXPRESS OF RHODE ISLAND OFFERS BEERS, CIDERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Barrel Express of Rhode Island added new beer, mead and cider products to its growing portfolio, now launching in the Ocean State. Products hail from Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, among other import countries. Barrel Express of Rhode Island can now be found in the Brand and Price Index listing of *The Beverage Journal* and online via the Trade Login at [www.thebeveragejournal.com/rhodeisland](http://www.thebeveragejournal.com/rhodeisland).

## SONS OF LIBERTY EXPANDS TASTING ROOM, PRODUCTION FACILITY

Sons of Liberty Spirits Company of South Kingstown has expanded to offer 6,000 more square feet of tasting room and production space. Renovations to its new tasting room include two new bars, four televisions, a new lounge area and the conversion of an old loading dock into an open-air seating patio. The Sons of Liberty team transformed their old tasting room into the second production room to make space for more equipment to expand the production line. The spirit company is in the process of applying for its brewer's licenses to sell and produce modified versions of the beer they make that is currently used in the production of their whiskies.

1. Over the summer, Sons of Liberty Spirits Company expanded its existing location to offer a larger tasting room and more production space.
2. The tasting room features a wall made from oak stave.
3. The company renovated an old loading dock to include more seating space in its tasting room.
4. Part of its expansion includes adding new fermenter tanks to help with production.
5. The expansion includes more retail space for locally-produced artisan items and Sons of Liberty apparel.





## USBG RI PRESENTS SEMINARS FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

The United States Bartenders Guild Rhode Island (USBG RI) chapter will present an educational session in conjunction with the USBG's National Education efforts. On October 11 at Aurora in Providence, *The Rhode Island Beverage Journal* will sponsor a seminar introduction of its market-specific, trade-only product site. Topics will include using ordering and order management tools; accessing ratings, tasting and pairing notes; how to use search, price, and order features; building portfolios; managing order history and more. The session will include a guest spirit brand tasting from Atlantic Importing Company. Register for this event to activate a complimentary six-month subscription and receive an individual password for use in the live demo. Register at [www.DrinkWellRI.com/Education](http://www.DrinkWellRI.com/Education).

## Stars of the Industry



## RI HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES DATE FOR ANNUAL INDUSTRY AWARDS GALA

The Rhode Island Hospitality Association announced the date of its 2016 "Stars of the Industry" Awards Gala: Wednesday, November 30. The annual "Stars of the Industry" awards ceremony was created more than 20 years ago and is hosted by the RI Hospitality Association and RI Hospitality Education Foundation to recognize shining stars in the restaurant and hospitality industries. More than 500 guests attended last year's event from across all sectors of the trade. Recipients are nominated by their leaders, co-workers and customers. Awards are given in more than 20 categories. Winners are voted on by the public and elected officials of the board. The event will be held at Twin River Casino and features a vendor showcase, cocktail hour, awards dinner and entertainment. For more information, visit [www.rihospitality.org](http://www.rihospitality.org).

## READ NEWS, BE NEWS

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Sileni's Nano wines take their name from a combining form with the meaning "very small, minute."

**SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL FOR NEW NANO SINGLE-SERVES**

Prestige Beverage Group, U.S. importers of Sileni Estates Wines, is launching their line of single serve bottles, the Nano. The 187ml bottle has a unique clip-on glass and comes in five different varieties of premium Sileni Estates wine: Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Hawke's Bay Pinot Noir, French Cabernet Sauvignon, Italian Pinot Grigio and French Chardonnay. Convenient, lightweight and unbreakable, the Sileni Estates Nano is 100% recyclable and is tailored for wine enthusiasts on-the-go to enjoy at beaches, picnics, poolside, boating, camping, concerts and more. SRP \$2.99/187ml [www.sileni.co.nz](http://www.sileni.co.nz) | [www.prestigebevgroup.com](http://www.prestigebevgroup.com)



**LAFITE-ROTHSCHILD CREATES A NEW 'LÉGENDE'**

Conceived as an accessible tour of Bordeaux's distinct terroirs, the new Légende wines from Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite) highlight the region's top five major appellations. The range includes four reds and one white (Bordeaux Rouge, Bordeaux Blanc, Médoc, Saint-Émilion and Pauillac), includes some wine from the famed firm's estate program, and affordably priced (\$17.99-\$44.99). "We want to break down the barrier in perception that all Bordeaux is expensive and out of reach," says Stephen Brauer, President and CEO of Pasternak Wine Imports. "Légende is all about introducing customers to the pleasure of Bordeaux, with wines that can be paired and enjoyed with most every day occasions." [pasternakwine.com](http://pasternakwine.com)



**GHOULISH WINES ON TAP FOR OCTOBER**

Make no doubt: Halloween is an American holiday, and it lasts all month. There will be plenty of Halloween parties—perfect for a ghoulish vino...limited edition, of course.

- ▶ **Ravenswood** is back with Besieged 2015, featuring ominous swarming ravens and a blend of Petite Sirah, Carignane and Zinfandel (SRP \$15.99).
- ▶ The fourth annual limited edition of **HobNob Wicked Red Blend** (\$11.99) is joined by a Chardonnay; both labels feature intricately designed sugar skulls.
- ▶ From the original Devil's Cellar, **Casillero del Diablo**, comes a Devilish Release duo—a red blend and 100% Sauv Blanc, all dressed up this year. SRP \$11.
- ▶ And Apothic, a brand that's known for limited releases (think Dark and Crush), is back with **Apothic Inferno** (\$13.99), aged in bourbon barrels and presented as "wine with a whiskey soul."



**GOOD BUBBLIES ARRIVE IN SMALL PACKAGES**

Prosecco continues to deliver budget-priced bubbly pleasure—prompting suppliers to continue expanding the category. Banfi is introducing the first-ever Prosecco 12-pack. Fresh from Cantine Maschio, the brightly colored, easy-to-carry "Party Pack!" is perfect for tailgating and indoor parties alike. Each bottle is 187ml. Ideal for stacking alongside beer 12-packs. SRP \$47.99 (\$4/187ml).

[banfiwines.com](http://banfiwines.com)



# FRUITFUL PIE SPAWNS TART

THE MICRO SUCCESS OF 'CHERRY PIE' SETS THE TABLE FOR 'CHERRY TART'

BY JACK ROBERTIELLO

Jayson Woodbridge, the creator of widely-praised Hundred Acre Napa Cabs and the popular international Layer Cake wines, apparently didn't have enough on his plate in 2007. That's when he convinced the owners of Stanly Ranch in Los Carneros, Napa Valley, to give him an allocation of Pinot Noir so that he could prove his mettle and his ideas about the potential of very small lots.

Today, the three Cherry Pie single-vineyard Pinot Noirs have helped set a benchmark for micro-lot California Pinots, and even given birth to more popularly priced expressions of Pinot and Chardonnay called Cherry Tart.

More about that later; first, Cherry Pie. The three Pinot Noirs—Stanly Ranch, plus one Sonoma Coast and the other from Russian River Valley—are made using micro-lot fermentations to isolate individual flavors and aromas. Punched down by hand, and aged in a mix of new and used French oak, then rested uncracked and unfiltered *sur lie*, the resulting wines are priced from \$50 to \$60 and produced in lots of 6,000, 700 and 600 cases, respectively.

Still, it was risky to tag a pricey California Pinot with a label that seems more reminiscent of lower-priced wines focused on de-mystification, but Lori Green, Director of Marketing for brand owner Hundred Acre Wine Group, says it's all part of Woodbridge's *joie de vivre*. After all, it's not unprecedented—Layer Cake paid homage to his grandmother's baking.

"There's an obvious connection between the ripeness of cherries and Pinot Noir," says Green, but the thought actually came after the first vintage was in barrel. In early 2008 while in New York City, Woodbridge wandered into an art gallery exhibition of paintings by artist TR Colletta, and was drawn to an oil on canvas of a fresh cherry pie. He decided on the name for the brand and its label that day. "Jayson is not your typical staid winemaker, and he doesn't necessarily follow the rules," notes Green.

## SPIN-OFF TARTS

While Cherry Pie wines have been making their mark, his sales team was looking for something that could achieve a broader distribution, both on- and off-premise, something with a lower price point as well. Woodbridge started toying with the idea of a blend; In 2014-'15 he launched Cherry Tart Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, priced around \$20.



While production of the site-specific Cherry Pie wines is tiny, Cherry Tart wines are blended, and geared toward broader distribution and a lower price point.

To develop the newer wines, Woodbridge decided to apply his "micro fermentation" technique to create a multi-regional blend, using the tastes and flavor profiles of three distinct vineyards; the current Pinot Noir coming 42% from the Alta Loma Vineyard in Monterey County, 36% from the Rodgers Creek Vineyard in the Sonoma Coast and 23% from the Los Alamos Vineyard in Santa Barbara County.

"While the entire portfolio is primarily red, we thought, 'Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are a natural pair,'" says Green. "It makes sense for the portfolio itself and the salespeople are all for it." Why not?—it has worked well for the Burgundians.

Cherry Tart Chardonnay is fermented in small stainless tanks in small lots and barreled in new and once-used French Oak barriques. All of the new barrels are used on the Stanly Ranch portion of the blend, which makes up 21%; nearly half comes from the Garcia Vineyard in Monterey County and the remaining 30% from the Oak Meadows Vineyard in Sonoma County.

Now that they are bringing to market 25,000 (Pinot) and 15,000 (Chardonnay) case wines, Hundred Acre has increased their sales team and are looking to spread the word to the rest of the country beyond their initial successes in California, New York and Texas. After all, cherry pies and tarts are all-American dishes. ■

Jayson Woodbridge was inspired to name his line of "micro" Pinot Noirs Cherry Pie after an oil painting he saw in NYC.





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# LiDESTRI'S DYNAMIC DUO

## TWEAKING TRADITION, PINK LIMONCELLO & MÜ STAND OUT

BY SARA LEHMAN

While some spirits suppliers specialize in one type of product, LiDestri Food and Drink operates in an impressively wide range. As a private label and contract manufacturer of beverages and spirits (not to mention food), the company supplies over 40 million cases of product each year—from ciders and juices and smoothies to coffee and tea and plant waters, to whiskey, wine products and cocktail mixers.

With five state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, it stands to reason that this family-owned company has learned a lot in 40 years about what people like to drink, and why. In fact, when it comes to beverage development, LiDestri offers R&D resources, consumer insight professionals, marketing experts and the latest processing and packaging technology.

“We’re very proud of how our company has evolved and grown while staying steeped in our roots,” explains Stefani LiDestri, Co-President and Chief Marketing Officer. “Both our new website and our new name exemplify our company’s character: Where tradition meets innovation.” Those are evident in two particular offerings: Pink Limoncello and mü.

### Think Pink

With Pink Limoncello, LiDestri has taken an Italian classic and given it a fresh, contemporary spin. Bright and vi-

brant with striking citrus notes and pleasant sweetness, it delivers authentic lemon character and traditional limoncello finish.

And that color! The pink adds serious pop. Besides the added shelf appeal, the stand-out color expands usage opportunities. Ditto the fact that it comes in both 750ml and 50ml sizes. Pink Limoncello makes a great hostess gift, birthday gift and adorable stocking stuffer. It also has plenty of options of bridal parties—bachelorette gift, table-setting card holder or shower favors, for example. While the 52 proof liqueur is traditionally sipped chilled, it can be mixed into cocktails and even infused into cupcake frosting.

Perhaps most important of all, Pink Limoncello is unique—the first pink limoncello ever! The eye-catching brand broadens its appeal



The 50ml size opens up a range of new usage options for both Pink Limoncello and mü—from wedding favors and decorations to party favors and stocking stuffers.



Pink is hot; the simple but eye-catching Pink Limoncello bottle gives the product real ‘pop’ on the shelf.

beyond other liqueurs, giving merchants more selling points.

### Calling Coffee Lovers

Another unique brand in the LiDestri portfolio is mü—a creamy, coffeehouse-inspired cocktail. It starts with a flavorless base from fermented fruit, which puts it into the wine category. The wine base creates exceptional smoothness compared to spirits-based products.

Another vital distinction: natural coconut oil gives this product an appealing creaminess, which works as a stage for four enticing flavors: Vanilla Latte; Chocolate Chai; Coco Cappuccino; and Espresso Macchiato. The expressive flavors give mü an edge over other cream liqueurs. And like Pink Limoncello, usage options are invitingly broad. The 13.9% ABV iterations can all be sipped chilled or over ice, and restaurants can promote it on their dessert menu, or even add it to a dessert recipe. It’s also great blended into a milkshake. It comes in 50ml as well as 750ml, which makes mü a great impulse buy for retailers to stock near the register.

By pushing boundaries, LiDestri has given retailers two novel twists on already appealing flavors—ideal for grabbing attention and delivering delicious novelty that will have customers coming back for more. ■

# Rockin' Pink



750 ml

*LiDestri's Pink Limoncello is the sweet and sassy pink liqueur that's truly exclusive. If it's a category disrupter you're after, Pink is your must have!*



50 ml



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**Beer Trade Association Releases**

**Annual Jobs Impact Report**

The National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) recognized independent beer distributors and their employees “whose work positively impacts the national and state economies” in honor of this past Labor Day. A September news release announced annual local job statistics outlining their impacts on local economies.

“From truck drivers to graphic artists and sales representatives, America’s beer distribution employees work day in and day out to make this the best beer market in the world,” said NBWA President and CEO Craig Purser.

According to the economic impact report *America’s Beer Distributors: Fueling Jobs, Generating Economic Growth & Delivering Value to Local Communities*, more than 3,000 beer distribution facilities directly employ 135,000 men and women in communities across the country.

Localized statistics include:

- Rhode Island beer distribution facilities directly employ 219 people, who earn \$18.5 million in wages and salaries.
- Rhode Island beer distributors add \$111.9 million to the nation’s gross domestic product.
- Rhode Island beer distributor activities generate \$540,000 in

economic impact to communities through the support of charities, local events and economic development.

- Rhode Island beer distributor activities contribute \$24.2 million to the federal, state and local tax bases. This does not include an added \$39 million in federal, state and local alcohol excise and consumption taxes on beer sold in Rhode Island.
- The Rhode Island beer distribution industry contributes more than \$102 million in transportation efficiencies for the beer industry each year.

In all, the report summarized that beer distributors contribute a total of \$70 billion in economic impact across the nation, contributing nearly \$13 billion to the federal, state and local tax bases, with nearly \$11 billion in federal, state and local alcohol excise and consumption taxes. It also reported that the industry contributes more than \$23 billion in transportation efficiencies for the beer industry each year.

Beer distributor activities result in nearly \$178 million in economic impact to communities through the support of charities, local events and economic development. To view the full report, visit [nbwa.org/resources/economic-impact](http://nbwa.org/resources/economic-impact).

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# Beach Wine and Liquors

BY SAVANNAH MUL

**E**ight years ago, the recession left M. Scott Lyons without a job when his employer shut down. Puzzled on his next career move, he began to think of a “recession-proof business” to invest in, he said. In 2012, he went into business with his parents, Tom and Andi Lyons, and purchased a 1,400 square-foot retail liquor store on Aquidneck Avenue.

The new business came with the need for renovations. Lyons made the decision to close the store for seven weeks to remodel, which included removing the wood paneling on the walls, ripping up the carpet, replacing the ceiling and floors, as well as making more room for storage in the back.

“We gutted the store,” Lyons said. “We had to utilize every inch of space and storage in the store.” During the renovations, he always kept the customer in mind and set a goal for the consumer to have a comfortable and relaxed shopping experience.

Today, the organized racks, clean aisles, bright lights and the warm greeting from



M. Scott Lyons, General Manager with store dog, Stella.



**LOCATION**  
43 AQUIDNECK AVENUE  
MIDDLETOWN, RI

**FACTS**  
SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1,400  
YEARS IN OPERATION: 4

a friendly face behind the counter support the goal he had from the very beginning.

“I absolutely love it,” said Lyons, whose experience in the industry dated back to a job in college as a sales representative at a distributorship. “The customer experience is first and foremost. It’s important to go the extra mile and they appreciate that.” Lyons said he trains his entire staff of about seven employees with this philosophy.

To ensure this focus, Lyons is a “big believer” in special orders. “As long as it’s available [in state], I’ll order it.” Beach Wine and Liquors also stocks ice, water, snacks, plastic cups, and sunscreen for added customer convenience.

Lyons knew he wanted to call the store Beach Wine and Liquors to pay homage to the area and the close proximity to Easton’s Beach. “We really stick to our name,” he said. “The staff wears polos with the [Beach Wine and Liquors] logo,

or Hawaiian shirts. It’s a lot of fun.” The store embodies a summer vibe with reggae music typically playing year-round.

Beach Wine and Liquors stocks wine, beer and spirits to the tune of approximately 2,200 SKUs. “We do a pretty good mix of sales,” he said. Business slows down a bit during the off-season, but he said Middletown is a great neighborhood to be in and he has developed a loyal customer base.

Stocking inventory was a “new science” that Lyons had to “get used to.” He makes adjustments after each season to help him assess improvements for the following year, with an eye on next year’s summer season.

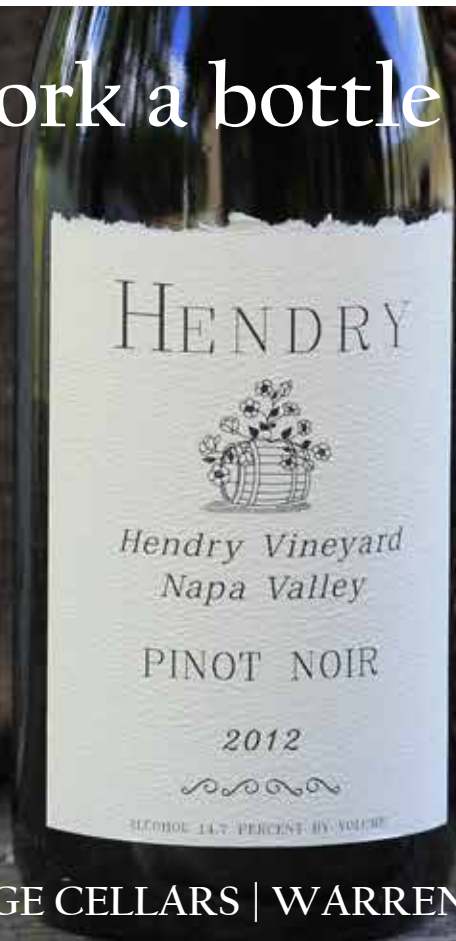
“We’re still figuring it out, but I think I got it as close to a science as I can ... We’re always picking and choosing what to sell and I carry what I like and what our customers like. If something doesn’t sell, we try something else.” ■

**FEATURE YOUR STORE**



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

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# Falling in Love with October

BY LEN PANAGGIO

Columbus Day Weekend is upon us, and to me, it is the true grand finale of summer and the beginning of winter. Our region has so much to offer at this time of year, especially the bounty of our farms. While we're always in tune with what our farmers and fishermen have to offer, one harvest that operators often overlook is that of our local wineries, breweries and distilleries.

As I have said in the past, we seem to forget that these vineyards are actually farms run by farmers. It would seem to me that with the long, hot summer we have had, that the crop this year will be exemplary. I view this as a perfect opportunity to arrange a staff visit with one or several of the local wineries, whether in Rhode Island, Connecticut or Massachusetts. Clearly, once they harvest the grapes, crush begins, and this is exciting to witness.

The more a staff can learn about wines, the better; and the education one receives is knowledge they can use throughout their lives. Remember, if you can get your staff behind a product, it will have a better chance of selling. And certainly, taking them on a tour almost invariably enhances their selling game.

Visiting any one of our local microbreweries is equally as important. Granted, growing barley and hops is a bit difficult around here, but what makes the microbrewers is their creativity. They are always looking for something different, something that can be available seasonally or year-round, combining different flavors to create something very interesting. I find that this group of people has really shaken up the beer world, and has certainly put the mainstream, industrial brewers on their collective toes.

Last on the list of tours is our local micro-distilleries. Plus-up your experience at any of these sites, and arrange for a cheese

artisan to meet you and your staff and go over pairings. If you can go to a farm that is making cheese, even better. As more and more restaurants are putting out cheese plates, be sure that the selections are agreeable with a single wine or beer pairing rather than one per selection.

October is a pivotal month; we will be making many food and beverage seasonal adjustments. In addition to Oktoberfest and pumpkin beers, by month's end, we'll be seeing the return of winter beers. Not to mention that rosé wines are not just for summer anymore! With these changes, as I always say, it's important to stay on top of your inventory of all of these seasonal offerings.

One of the truly great things about being in the restaurant industry today is that it is so dynamic, it has changed so much over the years with the advent of farm-to-table, celebrity chefs, mixologists, the Food Network and more. It is difficult to stay on top of all the trends, but those who don't will see a slow erosion in their customer base.

Further your staff training with attendance at trade shows, and look to your staff for input, as they are out in the restaurant and bar world and can tell you what another place is serving that is hot!

The beverage world is always looking for that home run. As operators, we need to be made aware of these items and then judge for ourselves their potential. I have just proposed several strategies; and I know there is not enough time to do all of them. But, if you don't do any, you are cheating yourself, your staff and ultimately your guests, who, after all, are looking to you to provide those products that are in the forefront!



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## ABOUT LEN PANAGGIO

BEVERAGE CONSULTANT

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



# THE COST OF 'CHIP' CARDS AND PROTECTING AGAINST FRAUD

BY DALE J. VENTURINI, PRESIDENT & CEO, R.I. HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

Many of us currently have an EMV credit or debit card – also known as a ‘chip’ card. These safer versions of the traditional magnetic-strip cards were designed to protect consumers against fraud. Long used in Europe, EMV – which stands for Europay, Mastercard and Visa (the three companies to spearhead the effort) – offers advanced levels of technology, including encryption to help prevent against having credit card numbers skimmed, accessed or duplicated into a counterfeit card.

The United States has the dubious title of having the most credit card fraud occurrences. According to Barclays, in 2015, the U.S. was responsible for 47 percent of the world’s credit card fraud.

The new chip cards, the process of which most of us find to be longer and more cumbersome, are prevalently used in the retail industry. However, that could all be changing. In fall of 2015, the

major credit card companies pushed an EMV mandate in which most merchants in the U.S. would need to shift to an EMV-compatible transaction system. If not in compliance, businesses could be subject to non-compliance fees and, more worrisome, merchants who don’t comply will also be responsible for the costs associated with accepting fraudulent transactions or ‘chargebacks.’ Previously, the fraud was usually absorbed by the bank that issued the credit card.

The rollout has been moving forward, but not without its challenges. According to a study by the National Retail Federation and Forrester, ‘The State of Retail Payments 2016’ found that 76 percent of retailers surveyed cited EMV as their top payment challenge of 2015. Eighty-six percent of those surveyed have implemented or expect to implement the EMV system by the end of this year. But, while many retailers are working to

complete the EMV transition, payment vendors have not been able to keep up with the demand to certify EMV equipment once installed.

While most credit card fraud occurs at retail locations, we are starting to see a rise in the hospitality industry. The instances of consumers using fraudulent or stolen credit cards have resulted locally in thousands of dollars of chargebacks occurring to some restaurant locations that have not installed a chip reader. The hospitality industry has been a slow adapter to EMV, but the National Restaurant Association (NRA) believes that each business needs to evaluate certain criteria before undertaking the expense of an EMV-compliant system.

According to the NRA, many restaurants have difficulty justifying the expense to convert to this new technology and have issued some helpful facts for businesses to consider:

- There’s no legal or regulatory requirement for merchants to install EMV readers. The card brands have simply modified their contracts to penalize those merchants who chose not to implement the technology – and the penalties happen only if a merchant is defrauded through the use of counterfeit or stolen cards.



**ASSOCIATION NEWS**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

## STATESMAN TAVERN

31 STATE STREET  
BRISTOL, RI

The American-style tavern's kitchen is "ingredient-driven" — and its bar echoes the same attention to detail, using hand-carved ice blocks, fresh juices, homemade bitters and syrups, and house infused spirits.



 Bartender  
Alan Caswell.

## BARTENDER

Alan Caswell

## COCKTAIL

Kentucky Mulep

## RECIPE

Add to a shaker glass:

- » 2 oz. Buffalo Trace Bourbon
- » 1/2 oz. House creme de mint (recipe below)
- » Ice

Shake.

In a copper mug, add crushed ice to form a dome. Strain mixture into the mug.

- » Add 1 oz. Barrett's ginger beer.
- » Garnish with mint sprig.

**House creme de mint:** Tear 1 cup mint leaves into quarters. Place in a sealable glass jar and pour 1-1/2 cups Hammer and Sickle vodka on top. Shake. Let steep 12 hours. Strain mint leaves. Return infused vodka to the jar.

Meanwhile, bring 1 cup water and 1-1/2 cups sugar to a boil. Let simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool, then add syrup to mint-infused vodka. Add another cup of torn mint leaves to the jar. Shake. Let steep for 10 hours. Strain twice to remove all mint leaves. Keep in resealable bottle.

"A cross between the iconic Moscow Mule and a Mint Julep, this cocktail packs the bourbon punch while also being refreshing," said Owner Sam Glynn.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

- EMV may be a fix for a problem you don't have. Counterfeit cards have primarily been a problem for high-end retailers, electronic stores and other retailers. Typically, carders and other criminals haven't targeted restaurants. If you haven't had a big problem, you may not need to make a change.
- To evaluate your potential liability, look at how many, if any, of your chargebacks are due to the use of counterfeit or stolen cards. If the numbers are low, it may be hard to justify the cost of EMV-enabled terminals. Even if you experience fraud, the cost of the chargeback may be far less than the cost of installing a new EMV reader, or fleet of readers. As you look at the expense of buying and installing EMV readers, consider whether you're better off investing in new technology that offers stronger protections, such as encryption and tokenization.

- As you upgrade your POS system, make sure the new system incorporates not only EMV technology, but also encryption and tokenization technologies. The NRA considers these technologies far more important for restaurants than EMV. Encryption technology immediately encrypts card data as it's entered into the POS system, so it's unintelligible even if it gets stolen. Tokenization replaces stored card data with "tokens." These tokens are unusable by hackers and have no value.

As more and more consumers begin using chip cards, this issue will continue to be a hot-button topic for our industry. If you would like to know more about EMV technology and compliance, please visit the NRA's website at [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org). For any local questions, please visit [www.rihospitality.org](http://www.rihospitality.org) or call us at 401.223.1120.

## ABOUT DALE J. VENTURINI

PRESIDENT &amp; CEO, RHODE ISLAND HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

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



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# SCOTCH WHISKY AT A CROSSROADS





**OPPOSITE:** Aberfeldy worker rolling cask in warehouse / Highland Park kiln ablaze / Johnnie Walker barrels **ABOVE:** Aberfeldy distillery / the Ardbeg Trio / Dewar's Scratched Cask / Highland Park Casks 1979 Orkney

BY JACK ROBERTIELLO

**F**rom a distance, the tale of the Scotch whisky business has been much the same for some time: single malts keep climbing, up about 50 percent in the last five years, while blended volumes continue to sag, now accounting for only about 80 percent of the category here.

But what's beneath the macro data points? Like with all spirit categories, there are trends and issues on the horizon poised to impact the Scotch whisky business. Here are Beverage Media's top 6.

**1 Non-age statements are here to stay.** Single malts with multiple ages—15, 18, 20 years old—are a relatively recent phenomenon, starting in the 1980s and exploding around the turn of the century as malt lovers opened their purses for additional versions of their favorite brands. Distillers accommodated the trend, allowing them to sell something at a premium.

But it was inevitably short-lived and as demand outstripped supply, the recent disappearance of many aged expressions has changed the landscape. Says Dr. Nicholas Morgan, head of whisky outreach at Diageo: "If you look at overall volumes of Scotch, blends and single malts, something



ABOVE: Dr. Bill Lumsden inspecting casks at the Glenmorangie.

**“I DON’T THINK OUR INDUSTRY HAS HELPED ITSELF HISTORICALLY BY ATTACHING SO MUCH IMPORTANCE ON AGE.” — Dr. Bill Lumsden, Glenmorangie**



like 75 to 80 percent does not have an age statement. So age statements have always been exceptional. Single malt producers adopted this approach without any thought about how they might grow.”

With the increasing international demand, many distillers have no choice but to make non-age statement malts part of their portfolio.

“I don’t think our industry has helped itself historically by attaching so much importance on age,” says Dr. Bill Lumsden, Head of Distilling and Whisky Creation at the Glenmorangie Company. “The change is good news in the respect that it gives us distillers a lot more flexibility. I do find the conversation about age statements particularly fascinating, because I’ve been doing non-



age since Ardbeg Uigeadail in 2001, and I don’t very often get asked its age.”

Distillers are now looking to create consistent flavor profiles in the new iterations, bottling some lively expressions like Highland Park Dark Origins, Oban Little Bay, Talisker Storm, Pulteney Navigator, among many others.

The current attitude that non-age statement whiskies are replacements will fade, says Morgan. “This idea of non-age which is a sort of pejorative will go away because people will get used to seeing a mix of products with and without age statements, and they’ll make their choice based more on their confidence in the various brands.”

## 2 More innovation to come

While single malts long provided the most significant whisky innovations, these days blends are as likely to present something different.

Scratch Cask was Dewar’s most recent effort to stem the 15 year decline in blended whisky. “Our Dewar’s Scratched Cask expression was a release which was largely created to appeal to consumers who tend towards bourbon as their go-to whisky,” says Dewar’s global brand ambassador Fraser Campbell. “We will always endeavor with our innovative approach to blending whisky by experimenting with different casks and techniques, whilst listening to the feedback and comments from our consumers.”

Johnnie Walker has done well with Double Black, a smokier version introduced a few years ago, and last year offered the first in the Select Cask series, Rye Cask Finish. “There’s more opportunity for innovation in blends, mostly in first maturation and a particular cask regime, or in the finishing process,” says Morgan.



Lumsden says distillers will be looking at different areas of change in single malt as well, like barley varieties and fermentation profiles. “I have a lot of interesting projects up my sleeve. There are so many different possibilities - length of fermentation, temperature control, different size and type vessels, yeast varieties - the permutations are almost limitless and that excites me because I did my PhD in fermentation science.”



“People are going to be trying lots of different things,” says Lew Bryson, consultant and author of “Tasting Whiskey.” “A number of companies are blowing the dust off their blend portfolio because they are not what people really want so much anymore. Some of the new methods work, and you can make a better margin when they get popular.”

It’s crucial more blends innovate he says. “You can’t make up a five percent loss in blends with a 10 percent growth in malts. They need to solve the malt and the blend problem.”

## 3 Great value beyond single malts.

While single malts continue to get pricier, blends have been relatively inexpensive while producers develop some interesting tweaks. Bryson points out that numerous outstanding new blends are relative bargains, mentioning Cutty Sark Prohibition, Great King Street, Black Grouse, as well as blended malts like Big Peat, Sheep Dip and Monkey Shoulder, for offering great price for value.

**“IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS ABOUT 10 NEW SCOTCH DISTILLERIES HAVE STARTED PRODUCING AND THERE ARE 40 MORE CURRENTLY BEING PLANNED OR BUILT.”**

— Rosemary Gallagher, Scotch Whisky Association



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*John O'Connell*  
John O'Connell  
West Cork Distillers Founder





**“THERE’S MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATION IN BLENDS, MOSTLY IN FIRST MATURATION AND A PARTICULAR CASK REGIME, OR IN THE FINISHING PROCESS.”**

— Dr. Nicholas Morgan, Diageo

Recruiting customers to Scotch has long been the job of blends. “They are the lifeblood of Scotch whisky. Some of those recruits will choose Johnnie Walker Red and stay there the rest of their lives, some may move on to other blends or malts, and others will become promiscuous in what whiskies they drink,” says Morgan.

The difficulty in reproducing a blend from 15 or more malts and a handful of grain whiskies is often overlooked, but for Diageo, blended whisky is key, says Morgan. “We make great single malt to make great blends.”

## 4 Brexit? Forget it!

Says Rosemary Gallagher head of communications for the Edinburgh-based Scotch Whisky Association, “It’s too early to say what the impact of Brexit will be. It’s just over a month since the UK voted to leave the EU and there has been lot of political change in the time since. We need to wait for more detail from the UK Government to gain more of an insight about the impact in reality. We are



consulting with our members and liaising with government to ensure there is a strong understanding of industry priorities, as well as the potential challenges and opportunities that may result.”

Most agree no one has any idea of the Brexit impact, although Bryson suggests it could ultimately mean better supply and lower prices for US buyers. With Scotch globally selling about three times as much as American whiskey, the competitive marketplace means there will always be challenges, says Gallagher. But no one yet knows what Brexit will mean.

## 5 Mixability.

Blends have always been entry level whiskies, meant to be mixed, and it’s only a matter of time before bartenders turn more often to the broad flavor profile available for exploration.

Highballs are one area expected to grow, led ironically by the Japanese habit of drinking their pricey whiskies with soda. Johnnie Walker Red was specifically developed to be drunk with soda and Morgan says he saw a prolifera-

tion of the simple refresher served at this summer’s Tales of the Cocktail.

Bryson agrees. “I’m serving a lot of Scotch and soda these days, and with the highball overall making a big comeback, it can only mean good things for blends.

## 6 There’s plenty of whisky.

Some age statement malts are disappearing, and some single malts will always be hard to get, but for the most part, distillers have plenty to sell.

Says Campbell, “There may be issues that individual distilleries and companies face from time to time such as limited supplies of barrels and limited reserves of their finest stock, but this is only due to the fact that Scotch whisky is in higher demand than ever.”

“We have between eight and nine million casks maturing in warehouses, and there’s very little chance of us running out anytime soon,” says Morgan, noting that Diageo has been increasing malt and grain production for ten years, aware of the ebb and flow of Scotch’s popularity.

While supply from many of the sought after single malts are unlikely to increase, and a surge of popularity can mean a drop in allocation in another, a broad range of Scotch is unlikely to require hoarding. There are currently about 120 whisky distilleries in Scotland, the highest concentration in the world.

“In the last couple of years about 10 new Scotch distilleries have started producing and there are 40 more currently being planned or built,” says Gallagher. “The future therefore looks bright.” ■





# Raise Expectations



JOHN BARR RESERVE BLEND IS THE ULTIMATE BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY, ACHIEVING THE HIGHEST SCORE WITHIN ITS CATEGORY AND PRICE TIER AT THE ULTIMATE SPIRITS CHALLENGE, THE PREMIER COMPETITION FROM AMERICA'S FOREMOST EXPERT ON DISTILLED SPIRITS, PAUL PACULT.





# SAKE 101

BY JIM CLARKE

**S**aké is hot! Perhaps not literally. While hot saké is still popular, much of the growth in the U.S. is in premium styles, typically consumed chilled. More than a third of Japan's saké production comes to the U.S. these days, and that doesn't even account for the majority of saké Americans are drinking, over 70% of which is domestic.

While most drinkers still probably have their first saké experience at a sushi restaurant, saké is also finding a place

in retail shops and Western restaurants, just as other Japanese ingredients like wasabi are finding new homes. Wine and beer importers are taking note, so saké is moving beyond specialist Japanese importers, who have traditionally focused on Japanese outlets. Wine and spirits importers have added saké to their books and are bringing it to all sorts of accounts. The recently signed Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will also make it that much easier for saké to find it's way here.

## WHERE IS IT PRODUCED?

Is there saké terroir? Not really; breweries can source rice from anywhere, even outside Japan. In the past, regional brewers guilds maintained their own sets of brewing practices, and the local water can also affect a saké's character.



## WHAT'S IT MADE FROM?

### RICE:

There are 60 types of rice traditionally used for saké, but today nine dominate production. A few important ones:

**Yamada Nishiki:** premium, and aromatic; used for most Daiginjo sakés

**Gohyakumangoku:** the most common rice in terms of overall production

**Oseto:** Earthy and rich, one of the few rice varieties that a moderately experienced drinker could actually pick out in a tasting

### WATER:

As with beer brewing, water is added at several points; the local water is often a determining factor in brewing styles. Hard waters encourage a more complete, drier fermentation.

### YEAST:

There are 15 officially approved yeast strains. #7 is the most used; #15 is prized for creating aromatic complexity.



## HOW IT'S BREWED

**1. MILL RICE** The rice is milled to remove the outer coating until it's basically pure starch.

The rice grains are washed, steeped, and steamed.

**2. WASH RICE**

**3. KOJI** Koji, a mold that facilitates the conversion of starches into sugars, is sprinkled onto a small batch of the rice. Yeast is added next, along with lactic acid, to prevent bacterial infection.

**4. ADD RICE**

Once the koji and yeast are fermenting well, the remaining rice is gradually added. Fermentation lasts 18-30 days.

The saké is pressed, filtered, and pasteurized. It's then diluted with water to lower the alcohol from 19-20% down to 15-17% before bottling.

**5. SAKÉ**

## SAKÉ CLASSIFICATIONS

Saké quality and style is all about milling the rice; the more the outer part of the rice is milled away, the purer the resulting flavors. Daiginjo is the purest.

The other factor is whether the saké is made solely from rice, or if it has neutral brewers alcohol added. Pure rice saké is called **Junmai**. When alcohol is added, the saké is **Honjozo**.

■ **"BASIC"**  
(milled to **70%** or less original grain size)

■ **GINJO**  
(milled to **60%** or less original grain size)

■ **DAIGINJO**  
(milled to **50%** or less original grain size)

**JUNMAI:**  
Pure Rice Saké

**HONJOZO:**  
Contains Added Alcohol

**JUNMAI**  
Full-bodied, earthy

**HONJOZO**  
Dry, minerally

**JUNMAI GINJO**  
Medium-bodied, fruity with a mix of fruit, floral notes

**HONJOZO GINJO**  
Light, aromatic, fruity

**JUNMAI DAIGINJO**  
Light-bodied, complex

**HONJOZO DAIGINJO**  
Light, aromatic

Adding alcohol became a practice in response to rice shortages after World War II. Most quality saké in the U.S. is Junmai – pure rice – but Honjozo styles are not necessarily to be looked down on, and often win awards in Japan.

Daiginjo and Ginjo sakés are more expensive – it takes more rice per liter than a less milled style - so they're naturally considered more premium, but in many cases it's more a difference of style than quality.

FEATURED BRAND  
**GEKKEIKAN**



### ANCIENT BEVERAGE, MODERN APPEAL

Saké remains still little-known to many Americans, but this spells opportunity. No company knows this better than Gekkeikan, the largest supplier of saké in the U.S. market, accounting for over half the saké sold here in grocery stores.

### PREMIUMIZATION IS KEY

Gekkeikan is finding that the majority of their growth here is being fueled by premium offerings like Horin and Black & Gold.

▶ **Horin** is a Junmai Daiginjo—the highest grade of saké—and is ultra-smooth and creamy, with complex fruit (apple, lime) and floral notes (honeysuckle, eucalyptus). SRP \$45

▶ **Black & Gold** is fuller-bodied than most sakés and has a slightly savory character. SRP \$14.99

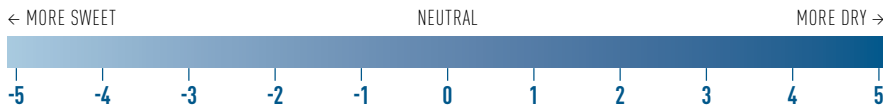


### INNOVATION DRIVES GROWTH

- ▶ Gekkeikan introduced the Saké Meter Value on the back of bottles to communicate levels of sweetness or dryness.
- ▶ They have released a number of single serve bottles which have taken off with younger drinkers.
- ▶ Gekkeikan's **Zipang** Sparkling Saké—lightly sparkling, lightly sweet, packaged in 250ml bottles—has proven successful in nightlife venues.
- ▶ The rich, creamy texture and tropical flavors of Gekkeikan's unfiltered Nigori have particular appeal for Millennials.
- ▶ Saké is also proving fashionable with mixologists...saké sangría, anyone?

## SWEETNESS

THE SMV – Saké Meter Value – is a useful label indicator for how sweet a saké is. “0” is the mid-point, with higher numbers being drier, and negative numbers sweeter.



## TRENDS

- ▶ **Mixology:** Saké is another tool at the savvy drink recipe developer’s disposal
- ▶ **Glassware:** The latest trend in the U.S. for serving saké is to serve it in small white wine glasses rather than the traditional boxy wooden masu saké cups or small ceramic cups.
- ▶ **Namazake:** This unpasteurized saké is as daring as saké types get; some beverage pros consider it livelier, fresher and more fragrant than pasteurized—and a great menu item for restaurants and bars that like to see themselves as being ahead of the curve trendwise.



### FEATURED BRAND TY KU



Today’s beverage market is flavor-driven, so why shouldn’t modern saké get in on the fun? TY KU, has entered on- and off-premise with two saké infusions:

**Cucumber** is hot, and TY KU’s Junmai infusion is delicate and refreshing, with cucumber flavor evident right through the smooth finish.

**TY KU Coconut**, a Nigori infusion, has a silky texture and creamy taste, with a subtle hint of vanilla. Both can be enjoyed chilled in a wine glass or mixed in cocktails.

## SAKÉ SHORTS

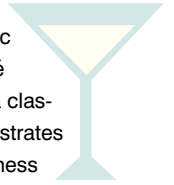
Saké is fermented, not distilled, so it is not a spirit. It is fermented from rice—which is a grain, rather than fruit—which makes it more like beer than wine. However, stylistically (not carbonated) and flavor-wise, saké is closer to wine than beer.

Saké originated in China, not Japan, thousands of years BC. An industrial revolution in Japan in the 1300s set the stage for large-scale production.



## MIXOLOGY

Saké is a bit of a wild card for mixology. Perhaps the most basic example, the Saketini—with saké taking the place of vermouth in a classic, not very dry martini—demonstrates how saké adds body and roundness to a cocktail. Here are some of saké’s advantages at the bar:



- ▶ **Low Octane:** Being lower in alcohol than spirits, saké is a popular choice for lighter, lower-alcohol drinks
- ▶ **Textural Bonus:** Saké’s natural viscosity can give a cocktail an added dimension of texture
- ▶ **Special Effects:** That same viscosity opens up new possibilities for cocktail dynamics—for instance, a barspoon of bright red grenadine dropped into a cloudy white Nigori saké can represent Japan’s flag.



## SELLING POINTS

- ▶ **Health Considerations:** Saké is gluten-free and sulfite-free.
- ▶ **With Food:** Sake, lacking the structural extremes of wine (e.g. pronounced acidity or high tannins) is flexible at the table, and works particularly well with complex or spicy dishes.
- ▶ **Hot Sake:** While not the norm for premium sake, hot sake is a great tool for keeping guests engaged with your beverage program when they want something (literally) warming.
- ▶ **Singled Out:** Saké is increasingly becoming available in smaller, “single portion” bottles so guests can try it without making a big commitment.
- ▶ **Shelf Life:** Once opened, sake can last up to two weeks if kept properly chilled, reducing waste by-the-glass.



Saké is woven into Japanese culture; there are even specific phrases for drinking sessions. Tsukimi-Zaké means drinking sake while watching a full moon, for example, while Yukimi-Zaké means drinking saké while watching snow fall.

## SAKÉ BY THE NUMBERS

# OVER 60 VARIETIES OF RICE DESIGNATED AS SAKÉ RICE

IN ONE 5.5 OZ GLASS  
OF SAKÉ, THERE ARE:

**180-240  
CALORIES**

SAKÉ IS  
GENERALLY ABOUT

**15%-17%  
ALCOHOL**

THERE ARE **1,800** SAKÉ BREWERIES (CALLED KURA) IN JAPAN,  
MOST MAKE SEVERAL GRADES OR TYPES, SO THERE ARE LIKELY AS MANY AS

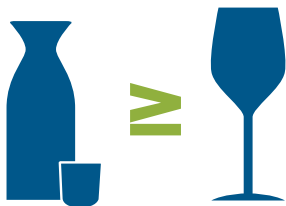
**10,000** DIFFERENT SAKÉ AMONG THESE BREWERIES.

IN THE U.S., THERE ARE PRESENTLY FEWER THAN 10 BREWERIES.

SOURCE: SAKÉ-WORLD.COM

## SAKÉ & FOOD

There are reputed to be 400+ flavor components in saké, about twice the number found in wine. Most importantly with respect to food, the structure of saké is considered by many to be better than wine in terms of complementing umami flavors in food. Umami—sometimes referred to as the fifth taste, alongside sweet, sour, bitter and salty—describes the savory taste that comes from amino acids and nucleotides in foods such as fish, cheese and mushrooms.



## LEARN MORE

- ▶ The **WSET** recently introduced Level 1 and 3 Courses, created by MW Antony Moss. [wsetglobal.com/qualifications/wset-level-3-award-in-sake](https://www.wsetglobal.com/qualifications/wset-level-3-award-in-sake)
- ▶ **John Gauntner's Saké Professional Course** is held around the country several times each year; recognized by the Saké Education Council, participating students take the Certified Saké Specialist exam. [sake-world.com/sake-professional-course](https://www.sake-world.com/sake-professional-course)
- ▶ **The Saké School of America** offers several different courses, including the WSET Level 1 Course. [Sakeschoolofamerica.com](https://www.sakeschoolofamerica.com)

## OTHER SAKÉ TERMS TO KNOW

### TOKUBETSU:

"Reserve," with no legal definition; typically milled beyond the requirements of its classification.

### NAMAZAKE:

Unpasteurized saké. Often seasonal (spring), these sakés have more acidity and often some green or grassy notes. Must be kept chilled.

### KIMOTO:

A traditional technique that allows indigenous lactic bacteria to grow on a mashed paste of yeast, koji, and rice, which generates lactic acid, rather than adding it manually. Typically earthy and rich, with pronounced acidity.

### YAMAHAI:

Similar to Kimoto, in that indigenous bacteria create the lactic acid.

### KOSHU:

Aged saké. After 7 or 8 years takes on a complex, Madeira-like character.

### KIJOSHU:

Fortified and aged. Finished saké is added to a fermenting batch, stopping fermentation; and the saké is then aged. Similar to koshu, but richer and sweeter.

### NIGORI:

Cloudy white saké, as it contains rice and koji sediments. Typically fruity and sweet.

### GENSHU:

Saké that hasn't had water added before bottling, so it's stronger 19% alcohol or so.

"It is the man who drinks the first bottle of saké; then the second bottle drinks the first, and finally it is the saké that drinks the man."

— Japanese proverb



The issue of saké serving temperature made a cameo in the James Bond film *You Only Live Twice*. Tiger Tanaka asks, "Do you like Japanese saké, Mr. Bond? Or would you prefer Vodka Martini?" And 007 responds: "No, no, I like saké, especially when it is served at the correct temperature—98.4 degrees Fahrenheit—like this is."

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# FOLLOW THAT CAB

WITH CONSISTENCY, QPR AND STILL-UNTAPPED POTENTIAL,  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON SETS THE PACE FOR CHILEAN REDS

BY W. R. TISH



**I**n the spirit of the answer being right under our proverbial nose, Cabernet Sauvignon has quietly established itself as Chile's most reliably well-made red wine. Without taking anything away from Chile's other important grapes—Sauvignon Blanc, Carmenere spring to mind—Cabernet is the flag bearer. Which is great for Americans, because it's consistently delicious, still delivering value and on track to continue getting better

Beverage Media invited Chilean expert and Master Sommelier Fred Dexheimer and three top NYC sommeliers to Beverage Media for a tasting of three Chilean varietal wines. While the Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir were revelatory (see “Coastal Forecast,” July 2016), the Cabernet round was more reinforcing—and a bit humbling even. “As somms in New York City, we are unfortunately always

looking for what's new and different, and we sometimes want to leave behind the old and the tried,” noted Paul Greico of Terroir wine bars after the tasting. “But I must say, in Chile, some of the coolest stuff happening is in the world of Cabernet.”

Dexheimer pointed out that while Cabernet is Chile's most-exported varietal

red wine, and consistently garners the highest ratings, it is currently “less sexy” than other grapes in Chile (and beyond). Yet it has thrived in Chile, more than just keeping up with the global peers. The grape has benefited greatly in Chile from the coordination of winemakers and geologists, identifying ideal sites. Cabernet anchors many of the country's high-end icon reds, both among artisanal producers and big wineries with carefully managed “micro” programs.

And Cabernet improvements are being bred into the winemaking culture: “It's not just consultants flying in—it's winemakers flying out,” explained Dexheimer. Chilean Cabernet is “balanced and well-priced,” making it a high-



Fred Dexheimer, MS

**Opposite page:** The Colchagua Valley is one of several Chilean regions that have excelled with Cabernet Sauvignon; some 30,000 acres of the grape are planted there. The Maipo Valley, which Fred Dexheimer calls “Chile’s Napa,” has over 16,000 acres of Cabernet planted.

**Panel of Sommeliers:** Luke Boland of La Sirena, Chris Raftery of Corkbuzz Studio, and Paul Greico of Terroir Wine Bars.



margin glass pour in the \$12-\$16 range, and delivering a solid quality/price ratio for merchants, especially in the all-important \$10-\$20 SRP range.

Not surprisingly given SRPs ranging from \$14.99 to \$70, wines in our tasting varied in intensity and structure, but quality was evident across the board. Said Fred Dexheimer: “Consumers will all find something to love in this range, especially if they are not looking for fruit bombs.”

### IN THEIR WORDS...

▷ **CHRIS RAFTERY, CORKBUZZ STUDIO:**

The Cabernets had what you want Cabernets to have from the New World, which is a blend of ripeness and fruit, while also kind of respecting its Old

World roots. You have this minerality, you got some beautiful green notes and freshness. It’s not all about over-ripeness and alcohol. These are wines that are balanced. They have a restrained use of oak, if any, and they taste good.

▷ **LUKE BOLAND, LA SIRENA:**

There were some that kind of drank very much to what my perception of Chilean wine would be—a bit riper fruits, a kind of nice, juicy characteristic that’s still well-structured. Then it had some that had these really developed, sort of vegetative, interesting characteristics that really reminded me of some classic

Bordeaux kind of styles. Nothing here was one-dimensional, and from glass to glass you could always tell a pretty significant style between where the wine came from and the winemaker influence as well.

▷ **PAUL GREICO, TERROIR:**

When you think about price and value and food expression and pure drinkability, and how are these things going to go with food, the range of Chilean Cabs that I just tasted hit it right on the nail head. I can’t imagine there’s many places on Planet Earth that can grow the Cabernet grape with this range of consistency like Chile. ■

## CABERNET SAUVIGNON

**CARMEN 2012  
GRAN RESERVA  
MAIPO VALLEY**



Shockingly great value at \$9.99 wholesale (in NY). Black fruit, olive tapenade and spice; rich, but still with freshness. SRP \$15 (Trincherio Family Estates)

**CASA SILVA 2014  
LOS LINGUES VINEYARD  
COLCHAGUA VALLEY**



Ripe dark fruit; hint of sweetness, but also savory tones. Chris Raftery liked its “very Chilean identity.” 100% Cabernet. \$20 (Vine Connections)

**CONCHA Y TORO 2014  
MARQUES DE CASA CONCHA  
MAIPO VALLEY**



Good classic Maipo style; ripe red fruits supported by fine structure. Understated oak, some nice spice. 6% Cabernet Franc. \$24 (Excelsior)

**LOS VASCOS 2013  
GRANDE RÉSERVE  
COHCHAGUA VALLEY**



Paul Grieco praised its “power & length.” Luc Boland loved the aromatic complexity and “def’t” blend, yielding freshness along with ripe fruit and structure. \$20 (Pasternak)

**SANTA CAROLINA 2014  
RESERVA DE LA FAMILIA  
ALTO MAIPO**



Another “classic” in style: ripe red fruit and mint-herbal/savory edge. Paul Greico found it “refined and polished.” Gentle oak, fine tannins. \$20 (Lauber)

**SANTA RITA 2012  
MEDALLA REAL  
MAIPO VALLEY**



The aromatic intensity of “alluring sweet spice” impressed Luc Boland. Plush fruit, but some finesse; feels “both relaxed and buttoned up.” \$20 (Palm Bay)

**SANTA RITA 2012  
CASA REAL  
MAIPO VALLEY**



This icon Cabernet is loaded with stuffing that rewards now but clearly can carry for years. Attention-grabbing deliciousness; steakhouse-ready. 100% Cabernet. \$70 (Palm Bay)

**VALDIVIESO  
SINGLE VINEYARD  
MAIPO VALLEY**



A real group favorite—juicy, rich and dense; polished yet rustic; and again an intriguing savory quality. Tannins support but don’t bite. \$25 (Wine Bridge Imports)



# ARMAGNAC

ON ITS OWN

## MAKING A CASE FOR FRANCE'S TRUE 'CRAFT' BRANDY

BY JIM CLARKE

**G**ers, France: a land of 180,000 people...and 4 million ducks. But scattered among these foie gras-fated flocks in France's southwest are grapevines—12,800 acres—destined for another, less controversial gastronomic delight: Armagnac. The locals say Armagnac is, “not the best-known, but known by the best”—a proverb which increasingly flatters Americans. Armagnac imports rose 131% from 2009 to 2014, according to the Bureau National Interprofessionnel de l'Armagnac (BNIA), and that growth appears to be continuing; Americans are getting to know Armagnac.



“Right now Armagnac has something that’s just what consumers are looking for: It doesn’t get more craft than Armagnac,” says Michael Martensen, co-founder of Madrina, a Dallas restaurant and bar with an expansive brandy list.

The French agree. “In our region,” says François Lasportes, Maître de Chai at Château Laubade, “you won’t find big brands, as you could find in Cognac, for instance. Instead of tens of big houses disconnected from the terroir, you will find hundreds of small Armagnac producers deeply rooted in our region.” Lacking the marketing spend that big brands generate, Armagnac has relied on focused importers and the BNIA’s promotional programs such as the Armagnac Academy to spread the word.

Armagnac isn’t just Cognac from another region. “Armagnac is to Cognac as Mezcal is to Tequila,” says Martensen (appropriately enough, Madrina is a French-Mexican concept). In both cases the first spirit draws on a wider range of raw materials, allows for more diversity in production techniques, and is less strict in terms of labeling requirements. Armagnac permits 10 grape varieties, but four dominate, and one, Baco, is a major differentiator. A hybrid between Folle Blanche and Noah Baco was developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is the only hybrid permitted in an A.O.P. anywhere in Europe.

“For us, that’s the ultimate grape variety for distillation,” says Lasportes. “We love it





to a point that we are the largest Baco grower in the Armagnac region. He says that while Baco is powerful and fruity when young, it really needs aging to come into its own, when it develops “a wonderful structure” with a long finish and rancio, chocolate, and roasted notes. Of the other major varieties, Lasportes says Ugni Blanc contributes fruit and elegance, Colombarid pepper and spice, and Folle Blanche floral characteristics.

### LAY OF THE LAND

Armagnac is divided into three regions: Bas Armagnac, Tenareze and Haut Armagnac, but the latter’s plantings have dwindled to almost nothing. Bas Armagnac’s sandy and loamy soils

Armagnac permits 10 grape varieties, but four dominate—Ugni Blanc, Colombarid, Folle Blanche and Baco. The only hybrid grape allowed in any European A.O. P. region, Baco is the real differentiator; powerful and fruity when young, it adds structure and complexity with age.

represent two-thirds of the vineyards, and Tenareze’s clay and limestone almost all the rest. Along with the grapes, terroir, small producers and ancient traditions (distillation in Armagnac goes back over 700 years, making it France’s oldest eau-du-vie), Armagnac’s alembics—copper, continuous stills in almost every case, and sometimes wood-fired—set it apart from Cognac and many other brown spirits as well.

Despite its growth, Armagnac is still a niche product, and the challenges of selling it are nothing new, according to Benoit Hillion, Director at Dartigalongue. Their market research in 1945 said that most Americans were unfamiliar with Armagnac, that Americans prefer to drink spirits as cocktails, and that it’s important to focus on premium Armagnacs and higher-end consumers—all points Benoit thinks still hold up. Christine Cooney of Heavenly Spirits, Dartigalongue’s importer, has modified that approach. During much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the focus was on rare, vintage Armagnacs,



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creating an expensive reputation. “When I started to promote Armagnac in the U.S. 20 years ago, I decided to change that misperception and started to offer more affordable Armagnacs that were six years old and older. Consumers are shocked when I sample them on Dartigalongue Armagnac XO and tell them the price. [Today] Americans can buy an Armagnac for \$40 or \$50 that will be delicious.”

## SELLING STRATEGIES

Martensen at Madrina in Dallas encourages drinkers to try Armagnac neat or on the rocks, but says that Armagnac brings its own character to cocktails. “In cocktails it’s a little more raw, not as refined. A sidecar with Cognac is very elegant and smooth. In the same exact recipe but with Armagnac you find

## Grapes, terroir, small scale and alembics all set Armagnac apart from Cognac.

things stick out – maybe nuttiness, maybe more distinctive aromas like nutmeg, or vanilla.” Hillion says it can stand in for other brown spirits creating variations on classics like the Manhattan or Old-Fashioned.

When it comes to labeling, we can gratefully drop the comparisons to Cognac...and compare Armagnac to Calvados instead. As in the latter, everything—VS-type designations, Scotch-like years (20 ans, etc.) and vintages—is fair game. Martensen says his guests respond best to years of aging and vintages because they’re clearer: “I can sell a 20 year easier than if it’s designated XO.”

While the minimums are clear—VS, one year in wood; VSOP, 4 years; XO or Napoleon, 6, and Hors d’Age, 10—many producers exceed them. Vintages must be at least 10 years old, and in Armagnacs designated by years aged, no Armagnac under that age can be used in the blend.

Unaged Armagnac is also a possibility. “We have been producing a white eau-de-vie for almost 20 years,” says Rémy Grassa, 5<sup>th</sup> generation co-owner (with

Barrel sample being drawn at Armagnac Delord, founded 1893. Michael Martensen, of Madrina in Dallas and Madrina’s Jack Rose cocktail, made with Armagnac replacing applejack.

his brother, Armin) of Tariquet, the region’s largest independent producer, but only after 2005 could it be labeled as Blanche Armagnac. “Our specificity is to produce it only with the Folle Blanche grape, which has almost disappeared in the region. It is difficult to grow but offers unique floral and spicy notes.” Blanche Armagnac is in some ways analogous to American whiskey’s “white dog,” albeit as an eau-du-vie it’s more fruit-forward and softer on the palate.

Rémy says that the Blanche goes well with blue cheese, and that younger Armagnacs (VS or VSOP) work as aperitifs, especially lightly chilled—a change from the constant challenge of selling spirits at the end of a meal. Desserts are an obvious pairing, but he says meats like short ribs with a caramelized sauce can also make an intriguing match. On its own, Tariquet is a great introduction to Armagnac, according to Martensen. “It’s very modern; whenever you taste Tariquet, it’s delicious. I like to taste it next to Castarrede or Darroze; Castarrede’s very rustic, so to have those side-by-side is a great gateway for Cognac drinkers, and a great look at the spectrum of what Armagnac can do.” ■



# Everybody Loves RumChata



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# GERMAN WINE: THE NEXT GENERATION

**A DECADE ON, 'GENERATION RIESLING' IS IMPACTING GERMANY'S MOST FAMOUS GRAPE—AND MUCH MORE**

BY JEFFERY LINDENMUTH

**J**ust 10 years ago, German wines in the U.S. were mostly white wines, with cryptic names or obvious sweetness, and not considered particularly fashionable, except perhaps by a handful of urban sommeliers. In response, the German Wine Institute created a tasting of the wines of 25 young German winemakers, an exercise that has since blossomed into the world's largest community of young winemakers: Generation Riesling. Now boasting over 500 members, these young winemakers are representative of the cultural forces that are reshaping German wine, now and for the future.

## **TIMES ARE CHANGING**

Jan Eymael, the third generation winemaker at Weingut Pffeffingen, founded in 1622 in the Pfalz, was among the first members of Generation Riesling and

is typical of the member profile: internationally experienced, well-educated, gregarious and ambitious. "My parents' generation was about fearing competition. The cellar was completely closed and there was no exchange, even with neighbors," says Eymael, describing how pervasive suspicion and isolation kept the industry stagnant. Today, he runs an apprenticeship program aimed specifically at nurturing new winemakers.

Sebastian Engel, age 25, is doing his two-year internship with Marc Weinreich, another of the original members of Generation Riesling, currently producing all organic certified wines, with a focus on Riesling at Weingut Weinreich in Rheinhessen. "I went to the Generation Riesling web page [generation-riesling.de], called Marc and he said 'come by for a chat.' It's different than reading a book. You need to be able to taste and smell and

learn from someone with knowledge," says Engle.

Christian Ress, owner of Weingut Balthasar Ress, says the ultimate result of this new era of sharing has been heightened quality for the consumer. "The general public does not see it, but in the Rheingau we have a core group that gets together and tastes. Today we trust each other and talk openly," says Ress.

## **REAL RESULTS**

In addition to soaring quality, the spirit of openness among young German winemakers can be credited with dramatic shifts in style. While Riesling remains the favored, and most planted, grape of Germany, and Generation Riesling, accounting for 55% of their wines, it's what young winemakers are achieving with the grape that is revolutionary. They are exploring and embracing

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At ProWein 2016 last, Generation Riesling celebrated 10 years as an association. Multiple producers banding together at this important trade show every year helped the group gain recognition.

individual vineyard attributes. And, these winemakers favor dry Rieslings over traditional off-dry and sweet wines. Looking back Eymael says his parents made at least 40% sweet wines, while sweet wines account for less than 10% of his production.

Stuart Pigott, author of *Best White Wine on Earth: The Riesling Story*, observes “The most important thing about the members of Generation Riesling is how relaxed their approach to wine is. For them, it is all about making mostly dry wines that are as attractive and distinctive as possible.”

Stefan Winter began making wine at age 16 and now, 20 years into his career, is finally seeing recognition and rewards for his changes at Weingut Winter in Dittelsheim-Hessloch. “It takes a long time to change things,” says Winter, who introduced hand-picking, spontaneous fermentations and lees aging for whites. “It’s not wrong what my parents did. It was their time. But I want to do it my way. I want to produce dry Riesling, so we really changed everything,” he says.

### MORE THAN JUST RIESLING

Winter also crafts a Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), but only in the best vintages, roughly once every three to four years, when it yields a typically racy and mineral-driven red, with nice silkiness of texture to the red fruit. “I’d rather say I have no wine in the cellar than say I am sorry for the wine I have in the cellar,” he says.

Red wine ambitions run high in Germany, especially among the young generation. Spätburgunder now constitutes about 26% of the production of the Gen-

## “RED WINE AMBITIONS RUN HIGH IN GERMANY, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUNG GENERATION.”

eration Riesling, second only to Riesling itself and helping to position Germany as the world’s number three producer of Pinot Noir (after France and the U.S.). The German Wine Institute affirms that Germany stands to be one of the great beneficiaries of climate change, with Pinot performing increasingly well, and likely to be joined by other international reds like Merlot if the trend continues.

Lukas Kraus is making a name for himself with the red Dornfelder grape, a successful vinifera crossing created in Germany in 1956. Dornfelder is often maligned for yielding inky red wines that are quite soft in texture, or is vinified as a simple, sweet, red. Poking fun at the grape’s detractors, he dubbed his dry offering “Pornfelder” and has found quick success in Germany and international markets. “There is so much Riesling, and it is very good, so I think why do I want to do another? My first test in winemaking was my father gave me a small plot of Sylvaner and said, ‘Do you want to do with it.’ I drank that wine and fell in love, so now I like the underdog varieties,” says Kraus.

Another rising star among young winemakers is Weissburgunder, aka Pinot Blanc, which had the greatest increase



in plantings last year, rising 790 acres to maintain Germany’s global lead in plantings of Pinot Blanc. However, much of the excitement this year revolves around an even lesser-known white: Scheurebe, which celebrates the 100th anniversary of its creation by German viticulturalist Dr. Georg Scheu in 1916.

Traditionally used for sweet wines, Scheurebe is an aromatic white now achieving recognition for striking dry wines in the hands of winemakers like Pegglingen’s Eymael. “Scheurebe is just fascinating, and offers great possibilities with food—asparagus, Thai food, curries, bleu cheese. Suddenly, I don’t have enough Scheurebe for the U.S. market,” he says.

Generation Riesling started as a loosely knit group of young winemakers, trying to inform the wine-loving world that German wine is about an amazingly versatile and delicious white grape called Riesling. Now 10 years into their collaboration, they, and we, are finding out it is even more than that! ■



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# PINK IN PLACE

**ROSÉ WINES ARE HERE TO STAY—BE READY TO SELL THEM ALL YEAR**

BY ED MCCARTHY

**R**osé wines, once considered a summer specialty, have exploded. A bump in popularity first became apparent around 2000. Some thought that the rise of rosé was just a fad that would wane in a few years. But exactly the opposite happened: rosé wines continued to grow in sales. Boom!

Two primary factors have sparked the popular growth of rosés:

- ⊙ With the Millennial population, new wine drinkers are emerging regularly. Because rosés offer more flavor than many white wines yet lack the tannin of red wines, they provide easy access into wine drinking.

- ⊙ Rosé wines are now higher in quality than ever. Overtly sweet and simple rosés are disappearing, and today's dry pink wines appeal to a more sophisticated clientele.

Lorena Ascencios, head buyer of the huge Astor Wines and Spirits in New York

City, has seen the pink writing on the wall. She reports that “Rosés are absolutely selling all year-round. Two years ago,” Ascencios confides. “I bought a huge number of rosés, and was a bit worried that I’d be stuck with them. In December, customers were still asking for rosés. We sold them all.”

Indeed, as often is the case, New York is ahead of the curve. The city is also a bellwether of rosé style. Ascencios says that Provence rosés are the biggest-selling rosé category at Astor—no surprise there. Provence is the only wine region in the world where rosés are the largest-selling wine type. Provence has also established an elite image for its rosés, and is pretty much the standard which other regions and nations take aim to compete with, if not replicate.

Christy Frank, owner of Frankly Wines, a shop in Tribeca, has found that light-bodied, pale Provence rosés sell big in summer months, but full-bodied rosés sell more in the winter. Frank agrees that rosés are now selling all year round.

ABOVE: Rosé wine has gained popularity for a number of reasons. It's a great easy-access wine for younger LDA drinkers. There are more good dry rosés than ever. And for many who have been to France, Provence dry rosés in particular conjure up the easygoing, sun-washed lifestyle of the Mediterranean.

France, the biggest major per capita wine-drinking country in the world, produces the most rosés. Key regions include the upper Loire Valley, in the Sancerre region; and the southern Rhône Valley, with its Tavel and Lirac wines.

Italy, Spain, and the United States (especially California and, to a lesser extent, Long Island), also produce many high-quality rosés. Italy, a perpetually huge wine producer, makes rosés throughout the country, but especially in Sicily, Abruzzo, and the Veneto (where Bardolino rosés are inexpensive and delicious).

Spain also makes excellent, inexpensive rosés, especially in Navarra and Rioja. The same grape varieties that make





ABOVE: In the Hamptons, where Whispering Angel has become among the most popular wines in summer and beyond, the brand got together with candy producer Sugarfina to make rosé-flavored gummie bears—adding even more excitement to all things pink.

these regions' reds, particularly Tempranillo, are used for the rosés.

For proof of dry rosé's ascent in the U.S., look no further than the descent of White Zinfandel. After its heyday in the 1980s and '90s, White Zin, really a rosé, still sells, but its popularity has fallen off dramatically. Now, drier, more serious rosés are in demand—from California and Long Island and beyond.

Rosé's pleasing color gives it great shelf presence and/or case stack opportunities. Smart merchants are making sure to stock both a variety of origins and a range of price points. And now it is evident that even after summer fades into autumn and winter, the charms of rosé wine can and will continue to entice wine drinkers.

To add extra interest for your rosé-seeking customers, the boom in supply

has made it easier to find truly distinctive bottlings—whether they have interesting backstories, unusual composition, eye-catching packaging or memorable character.

Here are some of the rosés I recommend:

## FRANCE

**Provence Rosés** are plentiful; most retail in the \$20 to \$25 range. Look especially for Bandol and Cassis village rosés, generally among the best. One of the superb rosés in France is Chateau Simone, from Provence's smallest AOC district, Palette. It is mainly Grenache and Mourvèdre; full-bodied and delicious (\$65 retail).

**Loire Valley Rosés**, including many made from Pinot Noir, are among my very favorites in the world. Lucien Crochet's Sancerre Pinot Noir Rosé (\$25-\$28 retail) is a top producer.

## ITALY

Two of Italy's (and the world's) finest rosé wines come from the unlikely region of Abruzzo, home of many mass-produced,

inexpensive reds. The late Edoardo Valentini was one of the world's greatest winemakers; now his son, Francesco, continues to make an exquisite, cherry pink masterpiece, Cerasuolo di Montepulciano d'Abruzzo (about \$70, retail). Professor Luigi Cataldi Madonna makes two Cerasuolos from the Montepulciano variety—his inexpensive version, Cataldi Madonna Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo, is a good buy at \$16 retail. Cataldi Madonna's best Cerasuolo, Pie delle Vigne (grapes crushed by foot), costs more than double that, but is difficult to find in the U.S.—worth the search.

## UNITED STATES

Some remarkable rosés are now being made in the U.S. For me, two stand out—one from California and one from Long Island. Presqu'île, a fairly new winery making wines in Santa Barbara County's Santa Maria Valley, already has received acclaim for making one of California's top rosés, all Pinot Noir; it has floral aromas and berry flavors, and represents excellent value at \$20.

Channing Daughters is a remarkable winery in Long Island's Hamptons region. Winemaker Chris Tracy works with 42 grape varieties at last count (including many Italian varieties), with six Rosatos, all from different varieties (\$18-\$20). You can have a great rosé tasting with Channing Daughters rosatos alone! ■





# ADVANCING THE ART OF VODKA

## EXPLORING VAN GOGH VODKA'S BOLD NEW PACKAGING

BY ROGER MORRIS

**V**an Gogh Vodka has long been known for bold flavors. Now, Van Gogh is incorporating bold new packaging with vivid splashes of colorful painting and distinctive lettering that will command the visual attention of consumers as well.

Beginning this fall, Van Gogh will roll out its redesigned line of 15 flavored vodkas to accompany its unflavored Van Gogh Vodka, all featuring one standard, easily visible brand logo.

“When we started making Van Gogh Vodka in 2000, we first concentrated on getting premium flavors in the bottle, and then we concentrated on the bottle itself,” says Norman Bonchick, Chairman and CEO of 375 Park Avenue Spirits. “Ours was the industry’s first see-through bottle,” he recalls, “and it sent the message that there was quality in the bottle.”

While the original bottle was frosted with a see-through window, the new bottle is crystal clear, making the new design pop, with VAN GOGH lettering just above the mid-point of each bottle. The flavors inside the bottle will be identified by specially com-

missioned paintings—executed in the style of Van Gogh—by New York artist Joy Olney.

“What we have achieved is more consistency,” Bonchick says, “and the name ‘Van Gogh’ stands out so that the consumer can easily identify it on the back bar.”

### Capturing Their Imagination

“The creation of the vodka and its flavors are truly wonderful and imaginative,” says Ron Wong, Executive Creative Director for Spring Design Partners. “In the redesign, we strive to present

the brand through this filter of artistic Expressionism. One can appreciate the contrast of a beautiful matte-white canvas against richly textured brushstrokes of original oil paintings.” A specially textured varnish has been applied to the artwork on each bottle so that the illustration actually looks—and feels—like a painter’s brush strokes.

“I believe the redesign was necessary to capture the imagination of the Millennial market and contemporize the brand for today’s consumer, who is focused on authenticity and experience,” Bonchick says. The Van Gogh re-introduitory campaign will feature trade publication ads, social media and special media events.

A total of 16 expressions, culled from an original selection of 25, will make up the revised portfolio. Van Gogh Vodka, Açai-Blueberry, Citroen, Cool Peach, Dutch Caramel, Dutch Chocolate, Double Espresso, Espresso, Mango, Melon, Oranje, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Raspberry, Vanilla and Wild Appel.

Van Gogh Vodka (SRP \$24.99/750ml) is crafted in small batches by third generation Master Distiller Tim Vos at the Cooymans Distillery in Tilburg, Netherlands. ■



The classic unflavored Vincent Van Gogh bottle continues to be represented by the Starry Night background.

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# CASILLERO DEL DIABLO SCARING UP SALES

NEW 'DEVILISH' DUO AIMS TO BOOST BURGEONING 'HALLOWINE' SUCCESS

BY W. R. TISH



"Devilish Release" Casillero del Diablo Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 comprises 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Syrah, 2% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot and 2% Petite Sirah. The white counterpart, a 2016, is 100% Sauvignon Blanc.

Once upon a time, Halloween was effectively a fun-filled week or so, culminating in a night of decorations, costumes and candy. Then grown-ups crashed the party and it has become a solid two-month affair with merchandising opportunities galore, including wine.

Casillero del Diablo, which roughly translates to "Devil's Cellar," was the first wine to align with the holiday, almost a decade ago, and has been building a reputation as *The Official Wine of Halloween™* for several years. Organic growth has been impressive: sales volume almost doubles during Halloween season.

"Every year has gotten better and better for us," explains Ed Barden, Director of Marketing at Excelsior Wine Company. "and we saw that as an opportunity."

Specifically, Excelsior has created a special seasonal package for the two most popular red and white Casillero del Diablo SKUs, issued together under a "Devilish Release" label.

The liquid in each is exactly what it has been, but the painted bottles are primed to push Halloween sales to scary new heights. The Devilish Release duo entered the national market in September—and with the eye-catching new package, Barden expects demand to extend even past Halloween (or until supplies run out).



## Eye Candy

The seasonally themed "Devilish Release" is also getting plenty of support from the supplier and distributors for sell-through. In addition to national campaign presenting 'Halloween. Celebrate The Official Wine of Halloween™', the roll-out includes:

- Halloween-themed shippers and displays
- Distributor in-store display contest with a prize to see a Manchester United FC Devils soccer match at the team's home ground in the UK
- Mail-in rebates and IRCs (where legal)
- Beer cross-promotions
- Halloween promotions with iBotta with Drizly
- Vinepair video appealing to Millennial consumers

On-premise accounts can also tap into the fun: Distributors will be providing seasonally themed coasters as well as

halos and horns for wait staff and bartenders to wear.

Especially exciting about the new Devilish Release is the fact that Casillero del Diablo is already a trusted brand with a proven Halloween track record. "The striking new package and dynamic promotions will add excitement for an already popular choice nationwide," notes Barden. He adds that Casillero del Diablo was really built in independent stores,

From Gothic arches to countertop coffins, distributors are ready with impactful POS displays for stores large and small.



Aiming to extend the Devilish power to on-premise, the brand is making wait staff halos and horns available.

rather than in supermarkets like many of its similarly priced peers.

## Dressed for Success

Brand owner Excelsior is essentially enhancing the natural connection between Casillero del Diablo and Halloween, giving retailers and restaurants a chance to make that connection even stronger and send sales soaring throughout the entire arc of America's annual Halloween love affair, not just the last week of October.

Indeed, amid the perennial flood of black and orange imagery of the season, the green and red graphics of the Devilish Release ensure that the case stacks and individuals bottles alike stand out from the pack.

As Halloween continues to gain traction with adults, Casillero del Diablo is giving merchants and restaurants a novel yet proven way to tap into this very particular American trend. It's a seasonal program that ghouls, ghosts and goblins can all get behind. ■

# FEELING DEVILISH THIS FALL?



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Have the devil on your side this selling season with the fall Devilish Release by Casillero del Diablo.

- Casillero del Diablo is unstoppable with a +8% increase YOY\*
- As the official wine of Halloween, Casillero del Diablo is the #1 imported Cabernet Sauvignon in the premium price category.
- Limited edition custom painted bottles.
- Shipped in coordinating outer shippers.
- Two 750 ml varietals available: Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc.

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[casilleroeldiablo.com](http://casilleroeldiablo.com)



# ELIJAH CRAIG: BOURBON PIONEER

## THE ORIGINAL 'SMALL BATCH' GETS A FRESH PACKAGE

BY JACK ROBERTIELLO

**M**uch of American whiskey history is shrouded in legend, and we'll never know if it's accurate to call him the "Father of Bourbon," but the brand that bears Elijah Craig's name is thriving during the current bourbon boom and ready for its contemporary makeover. The Elijah Craig portfolio—Small Batch; 12-Year-Old Barrel Proof; and two Single Barrels (18 and 23 years old)—has been on a tear, with current growth around 30% annually.

Leading the drive is Elijah Craig Small Batch, which has also undergone an evolution in its make-up. Competing with such brands as Knob Creek and Woodford Reserve, Elijah Craig Small Batch now boasts a bottle with a sleeker look; a redesigned label highlighting Craig's reputed first use of charred oak barrels to age Bourbon Whiskey; and, crucially, a bottle opening designed for standard pour spouts, correcting a past issue as the brand looks to open more on-premise doors.

"We wanted to make the product work better in customer's hands especially



from a bartender perspective," says Susan Wahl, Group Product Manager at brand owner Heaven Hill Distillery. "We also wanted to maintain a couple of key brand attributes, including the iconic shape, and providing some information on the history around Elijah Craig."

For many years Small Batch was a 12-year-old expression, but recent popularity presented Heaven Hill with a quandary: to modify the age range and maintain the current price, or begin allocations and drastically constrain growth. In January, they started shipping a mingling of whiskeys aged eight to 12-years-old. The traditional Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey mash bill remains the same, as does the 94 proof.

"Maintaining our whiskey inventory is a huge job, especially when you're trying to forecast eight to 12 years out," says Wahl. "We're mingling 11- and 12-year-old whiskeys in each batch, supplemented with eight-, nine- and 10-year old, maintaining the flavor profile as well as the higher proof. And there's no intention of using anything lower than eight years old." Even with the new formulation, Small Batch features older whiskey than its competitors, as well as a lower price point (\$29.99 SRP).

### 'Small' Name, Big Meaning

Even before the term became popularized, Elijah Craig was made through a small batch selection of a relatively small number barrels coming from the sweet spots of various rickhouses. "Most



**WHAT'S NEW:** new package, new bottle opening. **WHAT'S NOT:** same mash bill, same proof, same price.

important to us is the special selection process," says Wahl. "Finding these barrels, pulling the best of the best from our aging inventory of over 1.2 million barrels, knowing where they are and how their location profoundly affects their flavor profile."

Heaven Hill whiskey experts weren't too concerned about maintaining Elijah Craig's quality reputation; they had already discovered some interesting things through their private barrel selection program currently available on an allocated basis to retail and on-premise accounts. Potential buyers received three samples that could be anywhere between eight and 12-years-old to be tasted blind. Resulting selections were all over the place. "We want people to see that while age is important, and we are very proud of our 18 and 23 Year Old Elijah Craig, barrels from the right place in the right rickhouses under the control of a master distiller who knows his product can be as good or better than an older bourbon," says Wahl.

And Elijah Craig Barrel Proof, also undergoing a packaging makeover for the next allocated release in January, will be the immediate beneficiary of the recent changes, with Heaven Hill able to free up enough 12-year-old bourbon to maintain its age statement. ■



Dennis Potter, Heaven Hill  
Co-Master Distiller

HE DIDN'T JOIN  
THE BOURBON  
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HE STARTED IT.

*Elijah Craig*

.....  
*The FATHER of BOURBON*  
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ELIJAH CRAIG.COM



P

new  
products

## 1. SENDA VERDE WINES FROM SPAIN

Northwest Spain is known as “España Verde” (Green Spain) for its lush vegetation. The region’s (mostly white) wines are aromatic and mineral-rich with a hint of salt—a reflection of the extreme maritime environment. Senda Verde, imported for the first time by Winesellers, Ltd., is a collection of wines from this unique region—all food-friendly and affordable. The line-up includes an Albariño from Rías Baixas, a Treixadura from Ribeiro, and a Godello and a Mencia from Bierzo.

**\$ SRP: \$13**  
winesellersltd.com

## 4. REDEMPTION WHISKEY LIMITED-EDITION AGED BARREL PROOF SELECTIONS

Redemption Whiskey, known for whiskey made with the highest-quality aging and blending techniques, added three new limited editions in their Aged Barrel Proof Collection: Straight Rye (mash bill 95% rye, 5% barley; aged 8 years, 122.2 proof); Straight Bourbon (75% corn, 21% rye, 4% barley, aged 9 years, 110.6 proof); and High Rye Bourbon (60% corn, 36% rye, 4% barley, aged 9 years, 109.2 proof). Redemption is distilled in Indiana and bottled in Bardstown, KY; each batch is hand-numbered.

**\$ SRP: \$99.99**  
deutschfamily.com

## 2. EFFEN VODKA THREE NEW FLAVORS

Effen Vodka has added three new flavors: Blood Orange, Green Apple and Raspberry. All three are bold and distinctive, while embodying the smooth, clean taste vodka lovers expect from the brand. The trio arrives after a breakout year for Effen, which doubled its business in 2015, thanks in part to its partnership with rapper 50 Cent. Effen Blood Orange, Green Apple and Raspberry are each made using natural ingredients and 100% premium wheat from Northern France; filtrated and distilled in Northern Holland.

**\$ SRP: \$26.99**  
effenvodka.com

## 5. DOPFF & IRION CRÉMANT D'ALSACE BRUT BLANC DE BLANCS

Responding to the increasing demand for French sparkling wines and the success of their bubbly rosé, Château de Riquewihr Dopff & Irion has released a Crémant d'Alsace Brut Blanc de Blancs. Made in the traditional method from a blend of 50% Pinot Blanc and 50% Pinot Auxerrois, the wine is comparable to Champagne in style but closer to Prosecco in price, offering Americans excellent value in a serious bubbly.

**\$ SRP: \$22**  
dreyfusashby.com

## 3. GRAVEL BAR 2015 DRY RIESLING, COLUMBIA VALLEY, WASHINGTON

The 2015 Columbia Valley harvest may have been the earliest ever. Hot summer days produced grapes with intense fruit flavors, but cool nights maintained balancing acidity. The Gravel Bar Dry Riesling is night-harvested, whole-cluster pressed and cold-fermented in stainless steel. It is aromatic and expressive, with flavors of citrus, peach and lime, and a hint of minerality and creaminess, delivering a divine sipping experience. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

**\$ SRP: \$17.99**  
broncowine.com

## 6. ANTHONY'S HILL MAGNUMS BY FETZER VINEYARDS

Aiming to differentiate Fetzer 750ml bottles from the brand’s 1.5L magnum bottles, Fetzer has rebranded the larger format Anthony’s Hill, after a hillside vineyard located by Fetzer’s winemaking facility in Mendocino. While the wine in the magnum remains the same, in spite of the label and name change, the wine in Fetzer 750ml bottles is being upgraded—some are now appellation wines. Anthony’s Hill’s comprises eight varietal wines, each with tasting descriptions on the front labels.

**\$ SRP: \$7.99**  
anthonyhill.com | fetzer.com





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## 7. MOOBUZZ GSM 2015

3 Badge Beverage has introduced a Grenache Syrah Mourvèdre (GSM) blend under its Moobuzz label, a line of Central Coast wines headed by vintner August Sebastiani. The Moobuzz 2015 GSM joins a Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Monterey. In crafting this wine, Moobuzz sourced grapes from the entire length of the Central Coast AVA. The blend of 70% Grenache, 26% Syrah and 4% Mourvèdre is bright and fruit forward, showing berry flavors and a touch spice on the finish.

**\$** SRP: \$21.99  
**3**badge.com

## 10. JOHN BARR BLENDED SCOTCH

John Barr gained fame for bringing a richer style of blended Scotch to the world. Today, brand owner Whyte & Mackay is launching John Barr Reserve Blend. It unites Highland malt and grain whiskies, for structure and richness, and Speyside varieties, for a mellow finish. The result is smooth and refined, with aromas of chocolate, apple and bread, and flavors of apricot, gingerbread and hazelnuts. "Extraordinary Ultimate Recommendation" at the 2016 Ultimate Spirits Challenge; also in 1L and 1.75L formats.

**\$** SRP: \$21.99  
whiteandmackay.com

## 8. TULLAMORE D.E.W. 14YO & 18YO SINGLE MALT IRISH WHISKIES

Tullamore D.E.W. has launched a new single malt range, comprised of 14 Year Old and 18 Year Old single malts. Thanks to triple distillation, mainly unique to Irish whiskey, the malts are particularly smooth and quite distinct from other single malts. Both Tullamore D.E.W. single malts are characterized by their rare, four-cask recipe, which sees the whiskey finished in Bourbon, Oloroso Sherry, Port and Madeira casks.

**\$** SRP: 14YO \$69.99 / 18 YO \$109  
tullamoredew.com

## 11. ROBERT MONDAVI PRIVATE SELECTION

Constellation is rolling out new packaging for the Robert Mondavi Private Selection line. The sleek redesign will still feature the iconic tower logo, but with an elevated new color scheme plus broader shoulders, a tapered profile for red wines, and heavier glass for an enhanced in-hand quality feel. Three of the 12 wines—Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling—now have a new screwtop closure.

**\$** SRP: \$10.99  
robertmondaviprivateselection.com

## 9. COLORES DEL SOL MALBEC, MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

Colores del Sol Malbec is sourced exclusively from the Luján de Cuyo district within Argentina's prestigious Mendoza region. The vineyards there are among the highest and driest in the world. The area stays cool while the grapes bask in bright, pure sunlight; the wine's name translates to "Colors of the Sun." Intense aromas of ripe blackberry and hints of spice lead into a rich, fruit-driven palate; full-bodied but balanced, with fine grained tannins. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

**\$** SRP: \$11.99  
bruncowine.com

## 12. RUMCHATA MINICHATAS

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# FRESH START

**JULIAN COX, BEVERAGE DIRECTOR,  
LETTUCE ENTERTAIN YOU ENTERPRISES, CHICAGO**

BY ALIA AKKAM

**T**he imprint Julian Cox has left on Los Angeles bar culture is profound. Now he brings his skill and remarkable knack for hospitality to Chicago, where he is the newly installed beverage director of Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises.

**BEVERAGE MEDIA GROUP:** Through the myriad thoughtful beverage programs you developed, you fueled L.A.'s passion for craft cocktails. What did you want to bring to the city?

**JULIAN COX:** Considering bartending is arguably the first American culinary art, I wanted our restaurants and bars to reflect that in their pursuit of excellence. We lost a lot of our history due to Prohibition. I wanted people to say they were bartenders with pride—not just actors who were trying to make ends meet.

**BMG:** What do you feel are the hallmarks of your L.A. legacy?

**JC:** We ran the whole spectrum of drinks creation. We were using big ice at Comme Ça and Rivera before anyone was doing this in L.A. Later, at Rivera and Picca we were using new spirits like mezcal, sotol and Pisco well before they became popular. I focused on a culinary cocktail approach inspired by great drink creators like Scott Beattie as well as the incredible chefs that I worked with. We were doing modernist drinks with a centrifuge and science as our guide long before they were talked about like they are now. Innovation and a healthy respect for classic cocktails was my focus for many years.

**BMG:** Now that the Midwest is home, what do you hope to accomplish here?

**JC:** The food and drink scene is one of the best in the country. I am hoping to provide Lettuce Entertain You with a serious beverage division that creates a lot of value for the company and our guests. I also hope to train as many humble and talented bartenders as I can. Teaching people is probably one of the things I am most proud of. It's amazing to see what they do with their lives and careers as they progress.

**BMG:** How are you re-imagining the idea of tiki at Three Dots and a Dash?

**JC:** It is without a doubt one of the busiest bars out there in terms of sheer volume. This provides a unique challenge. What we have begun to do is slowly change pieces to move it forward. We introduced liquid nitrogen, started making bi-annual menu changes and are focusing more on seasonality. Along with staff training and new products, it's giving us a chance to reach new people and at the same time hope we can recapture some of our old guests who haven't been by in a while.

**BMG:** Are there any specific drinks that are pushing the envelope?

**JC:** The Missionary's Downfall with "cryo muddled" mint is emblematic of how we are progressing. We essentially blanch the mint with liquid nitrogen, which preserves its intense flavor, and when shaken in a drink imbues it with an intoxicating mint



essence. We are now using science to create the syrups, techniques and infusions we are putting on our new menus.

**BMG:** What is your aim with the cocktail list at the Italian-American newcomer *il Porcellino*?

**JC:** It's a red sauce joint. Our bar programs should always be centered on the overall concept, so reflecting this theme our drinks are changing to be more classically inspired—think Martini, Sazerac, Gimlet and Manhattan.

**BMG:** The beverage menu at each LEYE establishment is fresh and distinct. For instance, there's a revamped Painkiller at Three Dots and a Dash; a Paloma Italiano (Cappelletti, grapefruit, San Pellegrino, salt, tequila) at *il Porcellino*; and the Savory Hunter (lime, lemon, ginger, harissa, mezcal) at *Đma*. How do you find balance?

**JC:** I had eight years of experience leading teams of multiple restaurants while at the same time running my own consultancy. I can assure you you need as much good help as possible. One of the biggest things that helped me is training bartenders. They tend to stay within our group and grow from the inside. I'll take as many of my veterans as I can with me to new projects and they maintain our standards while I continue to grow our people and subsequently our company. ■

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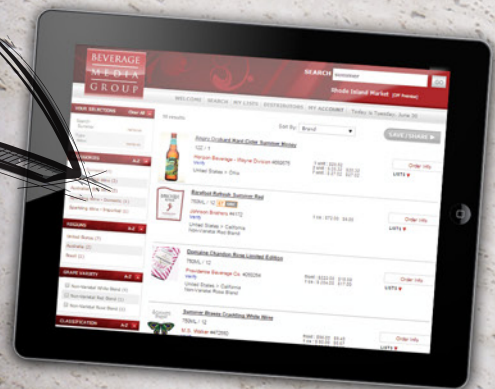
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