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

# THE BEVERAGE JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER 2016



2016

# BARTENDERS TO WATCH



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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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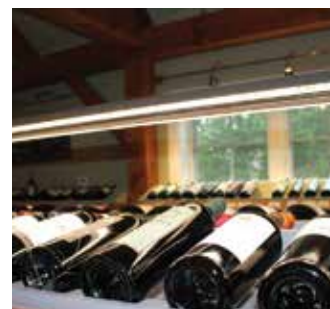


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# MARKETPOINT

September means it's time to hit the books: this one in particular. From hot category selling tips to the industry's top talent making the news, this issue offers plenty to get schooled on.

- The cover story features the annual "**Bartenders to Watch.**" This year we highlight the current crop of Diageo World Class. This group of 15 talents offers fresh insights and and inspiration.
- It's National **Bourbon** Month, so we give it the "101" treatment. Get the facts on "America's native spirit." Remember, too, these handy guides are available for download on our website.
- New Zealand **wines** take the spotlight with a feature on its market emergence.



- Historic **Newport** Hotel Viking just celebrated 90 years. We chat with their general manager, as well as their food and beverage director, recalling the past with an eye on the future. "Serving Up" reports a recipe from another historic Newport location. And nearby, we see a local brand launch in action with an international cause at its heart: Snow Leopard Vodka.
- The "Beer Column" offers **brews** as the perfect meal enhancer, beyond replacing wines, with its pairing suggestions. "On-Premise Advice" transitions serving from summer to fall.
- In **brand** profiles, Gekkeikan, and its sake brands, gain with the new Shaw-Ross partnership. RumChata focuses on recent on-premise growth with partner Jack Daniel's.
- Plus, local faces, places, new products and so much **more**. Read anytime, anywhere — in print or online.



## ON THE COVER

World Class Bartenders photographed in Root Cellar Bar at W Washington, D.C.  
by Andrew Kist.



## WILD TURKEY NAMES ACTOR MCCONAUGHEY AS CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Academy Award-winning actor Matthew McConaughey has signed on as Creative Director for Wild Turkey in a multi-year partnership. McConaughey will serve as “chief storyteller” for Wild Turkey, both in front of and behind the camera, to reintroduce the bourbon brand – starting with television and digital campaigns that he will direct. “Wild Turkey has the history and qualities of a brand that depicts the dedication of someone to do something their own way, even if that way isn't always the most popular,” said McConaughey. “I want to help share their unique story.”



## TALES OF THE COCKTAIL HONORS BACARDI AMBASSADOR

Colin Asare-Appiah, Senior Portfolio Ambassador Northeast for Bacardi USA, was named the “Best American Brand Ambassador” at the 10th Annual Tales of the Cocktail Spirited Awards on July 23. For the past five years, Asare-Appiah has worked towards fostering brand advocacy and building brand loyalty in the bartending community. “I am honored to receive this coveted American Brand Ambassador award,” said Asare-Appiah. “I enjoy engaging with and promoting the industry every day, and this award is a culmination of the efforts of the entire Bacardi trade advocacy family, spreading knowledge in a dynamic way that will further elevate the community for decades to come.”



## BEER INSTITUTE PROMOTES CONSUMER TRANSPARENCY

The Beer Institute announced an initiative to encourage members to display consumer information on their products, packaging or websites. This new initiative would prompt beer companies to disclose serving fact statements, a list of ingredients, and/or a reference to the website with the information available through a QR code. According to a recent survey from Harris Poll and Nielson, 72-percent of beer drinkers say it's important to read nutritional labels when buying food and beverages.



## FORD, JOSE CUERVO PARTNER TO MAKE CAR PARTS FROM AGAVE

Jose Cuervo and Ford Motor Company plan to use agave plant byproduct to develop sustainable bioplastic material for use in vehicles, giving the base ingredient of tequila a second chance at usefulness. The two companies are testing the bioplastic use for interior and exterior components, such as wiring harnesses, HVAC units and storage bins. Initial assessment found the material holds promise because of its durable and aesthetic qualities. “There are about 400 pounds of plastic on a typical car,” said Debbie Mielewski, Ford Senior Technical Leader, Sustainable Research Department. “Our job is to find the right place for a green composite like this to help our impact on the planet,” she said.



## MONKEY SHOULDER NAMES NEW U.S. BRAND AMBASSADOR

Sebastien Derbomez was named U.S. Brand Ambassador for Monkey Shoulder Malt Scotch Whisky, a William Grant & Sons brand. Derbomez is responsible for promoting the brand story and showcasing Monkey Shoulder products through education and events. “Seb is a talented mixologist and advocate for both Monkey Shoulder and the industry as a whole,” said RJ Whittington, Monkey Shoulder Brand Manager. “His expertise, commitment to his craft and fun-loving personality make him a perfect fit for this role.” Derbomez formerly served as brand ambassador for Hendrick's Gin in the U.S. and Australia.



## DOUBLE CANYON RELEASES PLANS FOR NEW WINEMAKING FACILITY

Double Canyon, known for producing Cabernet Sauvignon from Horse Heaven Hills appellation in Washington, broke ground on a new winemaking facility in West Richland, Washington. Construction began in mid-August for the new 47,000-square-foot space. Double Canyon anticipates the facility to be complete by August 2017 with production capacity around 50,000 cases and the opportunity for growth.

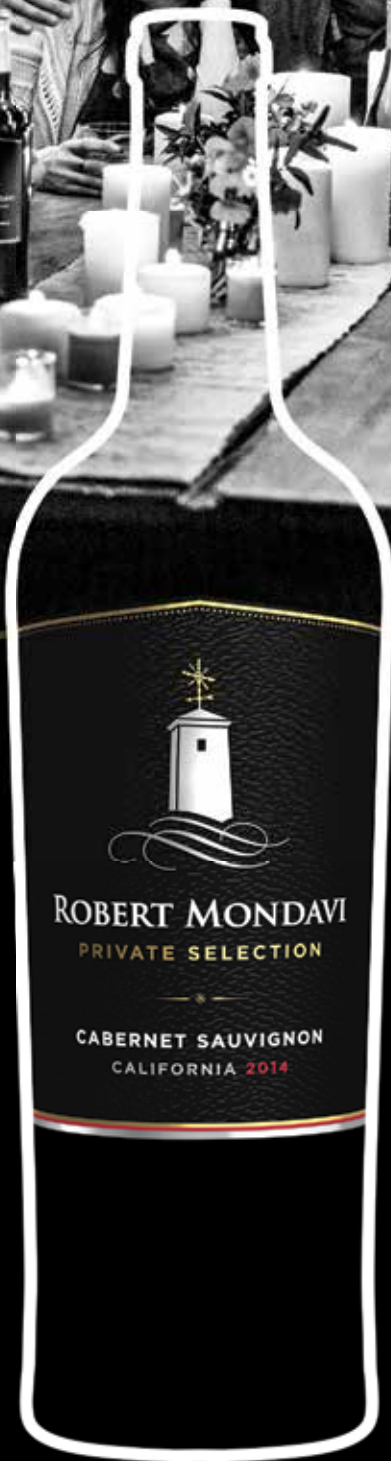






# NEW LOOK. OLD FRIENDS.

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## CHAMPION LPGA GOLFER KERR RELEASES NEW WINES

Cristie Kerr, an LPGA multi-winning American professional golfer, launched her second wine project, Kerr Cellars, under acclaimed Winemaker Helen Keplinger. Kerr Cellars features wines from Napa and Sonoma, California vineyards. Kerr Cellars joins Curvature Wines in the Kerr brand portfolio. Keplinger was voted the 2012 Winemaker of the Year by *Food and Wine Magazine* and has been the winemaker for Kerr wines since 2013. "It is a privilege to be able to share these exceptionally fine wines, which began production in 2013, with the public," said Kerr. "Much like golf, it takes a lot of time and patience to be in the wine business."



## ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Robert Mondavi Winery celebrated their 50 year milestone on July 16 at their winery in Oakville, California with live music, in-depth wine seminars and tastings, cooking demonstrations with local chefs, a photo booth, and horse-and-buggy rides through the historic To Kalon Vineyard. Masters of Wine Mark de Vere and Peter Marks led wine demonstrations throughout the day for guests. The winery was established in 1966 and is recognized as a pioneer and industry leader in the construction of Napa Valley wines. Staff at the winery prepared a short video to commemorate the anniversary and pay tribute to the late Robert Mondavi.



## DIAGEO NORTH AMERICA RECOGNIZED FOR DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

For the fifth consecutive year, Diageo North America was recognized by *Diversity MBA Magazine's* "50 Out Front for Diversity Leadership." Diageo ranked 18th overall and was identified as the "Best in Class" for representation of women and people of color in senior leadership roles. *Diversity MBA* also named Diageo employees Lisa Lee, Brand Manager of North American Whiskey; Krya Patterson, Director of Diversity and Inclusion; and Kamilah White, Talent Engagement Business Partner and Supply to its "Top 100 Under 50" list.

**DIAGEO**

## J. LOHR WINEMAKER RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR REDS

Winemaker Steve Peck of J. Lohr Vineyards was named Winemaker of the Year at the San Luis Obispo County Wine Industry Awards. Peck has been the red wine maker for J. Lohr



Vineyards for the past decade and leads the vineyard's red wine program, which includes 2,600 acres of red varieties, focusing on Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Petite Sirah in Paso Robles and more than 140 acres of Pinot Noir in Santa Lucia Highlands and Arroyo Seco appellations of Monterey County.

## CRAFT + ESTATE APPOINTED U.S. IMPORTER OF BURCH FAMILY WINES

Craft + Estate, a member of The Winebow Group, announced they will be the exclusive U.S. importer of Burch Family Wines. "We are truly honored to represent these distinctive wines in the U.S. market," said Liz Mathews, Senior Vice President of Craft + Estate. Burch Family Wines is a family-owned and operated company that produces Howard Park, MadFish, and Marchand & Burch wines from Western Australia's Margaret River and Great Southern region. "At a time of renewed interest in Australian wine, Craft + Estate have taken a significant position with the 'cool climate' Australia category by adding these dynamic properties," said Mathews.



## PATRÓN TEQUILA ANNOUNCES BOTTLE ART CONTEST

Patrón Tequila announced the third edition of the "Art of Patrón" bottle contest, in which participants have the chance to win \$10,000. "People often tell us that empty Patrón bottles, and even our distinctive round corks, are just too beautiful to throw away. As a matter of fact, thousands of images of Patrón bottles transformed into interesting and unique art pieces have been posted on social channels and online," said Lee Applbaum, Global Chief Marketing Officer at Patrón Spirits. Entries for the contest will be accepted until October 14 and winners will be named in November. For submission guidelines and instructions visit [ArtofPatron.com](http://ArtofPatron.com).



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## HORIZON BEVERAGE VISITS LOOKOUT FARM FOR HARD CIDER LAUNCH

Horizon Beverage Wayne Division visited Lookout Farm in Natick, Massachusetts on July 13, following the launch of the cider brand in Rhode Island. Lookout Farm Hard Cider is available in 4-packs and on draft. Salespeople from the Wayne Division of Horizon Beverage toured the Lookout Farm facility and learned about their hard cider production process. Lookout Farm Hard Cider is made from fruit grown on the Belkin Family Lookout Farm, which has been an operating farm since 1651.

1. Sales Representatives of Horizon Beverage Wayne Division at Lookout Farm in Natick, Massachusetts.
2. Lookout Farm Hard Cider.



## FOUR ROSES BOURBON POURS AT NEWPORT FLOWER FESTIVAL

During the Newport Flower Festival in June, Four Roses Bourbon provided guests with samples to taste, as well as a seasonal cocktail punch. Four Roses Bourbon is produced in Kentucky under Master Distiller Brent Elliott. *Whisky Magazine* named the brand its "Whisky Distiller of the Year" for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2015. The Newport Flower Festival was held at the Rosecliff Mansion in Newport with proceeds from the event benefiting The Preservation Society of Newport County. Four Roses Bourbon is distributed in Rhode Island via McLaughlin & Moran, Elevated Spirits Division.

Jerusha Torres, Northeast Regional Manager, Four Roses Bourbon and Alexei Beratis, Inspired Beverage, Inc.



## NEWPORT STORM RELEASES NEW BREW TO SUPPORT LOCAL ALS FUNDRAISING

Newport Storm Brewery released foRister, a barrel-aged double IPA, inspired and brewed for local Newport man and former Newport Storm employee, Bobby Forster. Forster was diagnosed with ALS in December of 2014, and this beer represents a "celebration of his life" while raising awareness about ALS. In March, Newport Storm's Brewmaster Derek Luke attended a fundraiser for Forster that inspired him to create a beer that "encapsulated [Forster] and his zest for life." The IPA features cascade, citra and motueka hops, for a beer with flavors of orange, grapefruit and nectar fruits. "From raw material selection, label design, to the final bottling day, Bobby's imprint is pronounced on this brew," said Luke. "So cheers to a barrel aged IPA, brewed solely to raise awareness for ALS and to celebrate this amazing man." On July 17, Newport Storm Brewery, along with the Forster Family, hosted a launch party for foRister beer. The event featured beer samples and light food. Part of the proceeds from all sales of foRister beer will go toward funding ALS research and helping the Forster family.



Photos by Chris Almeida.

## REAL MCCOY RUM PICKS TWO FOR BARBADOS BRAND EXPERIENCE

The United States Bartenders Guild (USBG) and Stonington-based brand, Real McCoy Rum, held its final bartending competition, "The Real McCoy," on July 11 at the Ocean Cliff Resort in Newport. The competition spanned a three-month period during which bartenders submitted recipes each month highlighting the rum. Two winners were awarded an educational rum trip to Barbados and media training experience with Real McCoy Rum CEO and Founder Bailey Pryor. Maeghan Kleinerman, winner of the Recipe Rounds and David Roth, winner of the Live Mix-Off, will make the trip. Ginny Edwards won the People's Choice Recipe at the event. All three winning recipes will appear on the Real McCoy Rum website.

1. **Standing:** Mark Tubridy, USBG NYC; Maeghan Kleinerman, USBG Boston, Recipe Rounds Winner; Troy Clark, Judge, United Mixologist; Leanne Favre, USBG NYC; Brian Weber, USBG NYC; Ginny Edwards, USBG Boston, People's Choice Recipe Winner; Peter Luciano, USBG Rochester; Cat Rockefeller, USBG NYC; David Roth, Live Mix-Off Winner; Bailey Pryor, Judge, CEO and Founder, Real McCoy Spirits; Jonathan Pogash, Contest Host and Judge, The Cocktail Guru.  
**Kneeling:** Kayleigh Speck, USBG RI and Pamela Wiznitzer, Judge, President USBG NYC.
2. David Roth, USBG NYC and Live Mix-Off Winner.
3. Real McCoy Rum and Roth's winning cocktail.
4. USBG RI Competitor Kayleigh Speck.

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Photos by Chris Almeida.

## COASTAL EXTREME BREWING COMPANY RELEASES NEW PRODUCTS

Coastal Extreme Brewing Company, the makers of Newport Storm Beer and Thomas Tew Rum, held a release party for Sea Fog American Whiskey and Rhode Sodah on July 20 at their distillery in Newport. Guests sampled the new products, as well as talked with co-founders Brent Ryan and Derek Luke. Sea Fog American Whiskey is aged seven years in ex-bourbon barrels and made from pale and peated malts. The whiskey features peat, smoke, vanilla, caramel and oak. Rhode Sodah is “golden colored ale with juicy hop flavor and a touch of bitterness.” El Dorado, citra and equinox hops give the beer aromas of orange, tangerine and mango. The Canada Pale and honey malt gives the brew a crisp and clean finish.

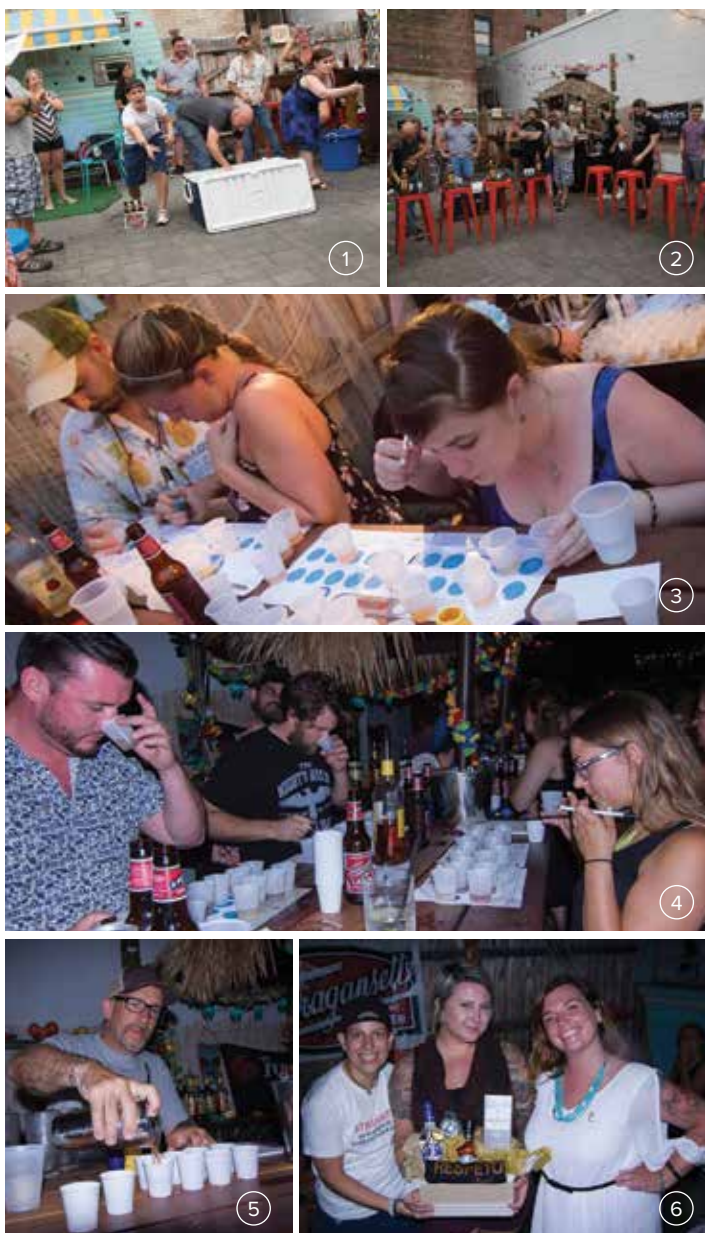
1. Clare Simpson-Daniel, Public Relations and Events Captain, Newport Distilling Company and Brent Ryan, Master Distiller, Newport Distilling Company.
2. Rhode Sodah, new from Newport Storm Brewery.
3. Newport Distilling Company's Sea Fog 7-Year-Old American Whiskey.



## SAGE CELLARS HOSTS WINE DINNER, UPCOMING HOWELL MOUNTAIN WINE SERIES

Sage Cellars and Mill's Tavern in Providence hosted “Summer in the City,” a five course food and wine pairing dinner on July 27. In September, Sage Cellars presents a series of in-store wine tastings and wine dinners to highlight the Howell Mountain AVA produced by women winemakers. The appellation is within California's Napa Valley and offers a unique growing climate. The Women of Howell Mountain series includes Kara Dunn from Retro Cellars, Heather Griffin from Summit Lake Vineyards, Jacalyn Spence from Spence Vineyards and Desiree Altimus from Red Cap Vineyards. The series will begin on September 28 with a wine dinner at Besos Kitchen and Cocktails in East Greenwich. A second wine dinner will be held at Simone's Restaurant in Warren on September 29. To view a full list of events and reserve tickets for the wine dinners, visit [sagecellars.com](http://sagecellars.com).

1. Sage Cellars Sales Manager Kate Turner on July 27 at “Summer in the City.” The featured wines included a 2006 Sparkling Pointe Brut Seduction Methode Champenoise of Long Island, rated 90 points in *The Wine Advocate*, *Wine Spectator* and *Wine Enthusiast*; 2009 Truchard “Perfect Moment” Late Harvest Roussanne of Napa Valley; 2013 Bosman Adama White Blend of South Africa; 2013 Smith Madrone Chardonnay of Napa Valley, rated 92 points in *Wine Enthusiast*; 2012 Titus Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon of Napa Valley rated 92 points from Robert Parker and 93 points from James Suckling; and 2006 Summit Lake “Clair Riley's Pirate Reserve” Zinfandel Port of Napa Valley.
2. Wines from the upcoming Women of Howell Mountain series.



Photos by Chris Almeida.

## USBG RI ORGANIZES BARTENDER OLYMPICS

United States Bartenders Guild Rhode Island (USBG RI) chapter members competed in the Bartender Olympics at Ogie's Trailer Park in Providence on July 25. Bartenders Kristi Little and Sam Royds, both of Gracie's, were named the first place winners. The event featured a Narragansett Bottle Shuck Off, where competitors had to open a dozen Narragansett beer bottles and then shoot the bottle caps into a bin; a Four Roses Bourbon Perfect Pour Competition, where the bartenders had to pour three different amounts to an exact measurement; and the Origin/86 Company Shot competition had competitors creating shots using no more than five ingredients and featuring an 86 Company spirit product. Lastly, Edrington hosted a blind tasting in which competitors were given a set of unmarked cups containing different spirits along with a list of options and had to correctly identify the cups' contents. The event was emceed by Kayleigh Speck, Brand Activator for Edrington Americas.

1. Competitors during the Narragansett Bottle Shuck Off Contest. Kristi Little, Gracie's; Ed Goll, GCB; and Kristine Dunphy, Bacaro.
2. Teams getting ready to compete in the Four Roses Perfect Pour Competition.
3. Competitors in the Edrington Blind Tasting Competition. Tony Mazzella and Kayla Harper, Nick's On Broadway and Kristine Dunphy, Bacaro.
4. Competitors during the Edrington Blind tasting. Ian Single, Sons of Liberty Spirits; Tyler Schweppe, The Dorrance; and Katelyn Patterson, Bacaro.
5. Frank Martucci, General Manager of Beverage Operations, Twin River Casino, during the Origin/86 Company Shot Competition.
6. Kristi Little and Sam Royds of Gracie's were named first place winners, pictured here with Kayleigh Speck, Brand Activator, Edrington Americas.

## NARRAGANSETT BREWING COMPANY RELEASES LATEST MASH-UP

Narragansett Brewing Company has teamed up with Bananagrams for its newest beer, Hi-Neighbor! Have a Hefeweizen! "Rhode Island holds a special place in our hearts as the game was invented at our house in Narragansett, and my father, Abe, loved to have fun and lived to get a laugh from whoever was around," said Rena Nathanson, President, Bananagrams, Inc. "We can't think of a better way to celebrate our tenth Bananaversary and a decade of laughter, wordplay and silliness than sharing a toast with our neighbors at 'Gansett, another Rhode Island classic." The beer is brewed with 40% wheat malt and left unfiltered to give the yeast notes of banana and clove. The American craft hop, El Dorado, gives a slight orange aroma. This mash-up is the fourth in the series, joining Del's Shandy, Autocrat Coffee Milk Stout and Allie's Double Chocolate Porter.







## RIDC HIGHLIGHTS COPPER & KINGS AMERICAN BRANDY IN PROVIDENCE

The Eddy in downtown Providence hosted Rhode Island Distributing Co.'s (RIDC) guests and trade professionals, along with special guest representative Jennifer Hussey of Copper & Kings American Brandy Company. The Eddy's Jen Davis mixed a variety of cocktails for the evening that featured Copper & Kings Aged Brandy, Immature Brandy and Apple Brandy. The American brandy is made in the Butchertown neighborhood of Louisville, Kentucky, distilled in American copper pot stills and matured in bourbon barrels. The distillery has taken on a number of initiatives to reduce their carbon footprint, including using solar energy, using repurposed shipping containers and planting a monarch butterfly garden. Copper & Kings is now distributed in the state via Rhode Island Distributing Co.

1. Copper & Kings Aged and Immature Brandy.
2. The Brandy Old Fashioned cocktail featuring Copper & Kings Aged Brandy.
3. The Copper & Kings Sidecar cocktail.
4. Jennifer Hussey, Sales Representative, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, Copper & Kings.
5. Jen Davis, United States Bartenders Guild Rhode Island (USBG RI) Chapter Member and Bartender at The Eddy, mixing cocktails.
6. Joe Morenzi, General Manager, Rhode Island Distributing Co.; Chris Woods, Vice President of Sales, Rhode Island Distributing Co.; Jennifer Hussey, Sales Representative, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, Copper & Kings; Fred Andrade, Sales Representative, Rhode Island Distributing Co.



## NARRAGANSETT BEER RELEASES FOURTH BEER IN LOVECRAFT SERIES

Narragansett Brewing Company released the White Ship White IPA, the fourth beer installment in the Lovecraft Series that pays homage to H.P. Lovecraft, the famous horror writer and lifelong Providence resident. White Ship is a 6.8% ABV and 50 IBU Belgian style white IPA. The ale features a creamy Belgian yeast profile and is brewed with four types of American and Belgian malts. The IPA contains El Dorado and Mandarina Bavarian hops, which give it a tangerine flavor. The White Ship label was designed by Pete McPhee, a local Rhode Island artist, to pay tribute to *The White Ship*, Lovecraft's story of a lighthouse keeper's adventure aboard a mysterious ship, where curiosity and greed win over his better judgement.



## MALFY GIN REFRESHES AT SUMMER LAUNCH PARTY WITH M.S. WALKER

Trade professionals gathered at Costantino's Venda Bar on July 28 to celebrate the launch of Malfy Gin in the Ocean State via M.S. Walker. Malfy Gin of Italy is distilled in Moncalieri using a stainless steel vacuum still. The spirit is made from six botanicals and lemons sourced from the Italian coastline. "Malfy Gin is all about fresh, zesty and easier to drink gin," said Elwyn Gladstone, Founder of Biggar & Leith Spirits Merchants and Malfy Gin. Trade guests enjoyed gin cocktails, live music and small bites provided by Costantino's on the restaurant's outdoor patio.

1. Jeff Livingstone, Partner, Malfy Gin; Mike Lester, On-Premise Manager, M.S. Walker; Elwyn Gladstone, Founder, Malfy Gin; and Brett Allen, General Manager, M.S. Walker.
2. Malfy Gin on display at the venue's outdoor patio.
3. Kristen Farrell, Bartender, Costantino's Venda Bar, preparing cocktails featuring Malfy Gin.
4. John Gasbarro, Owner, Oaklawn Liquors; Rich Lupiano, Oaklawn Liquors; and Mark Murtagh, Oaklawn Liquors.
5. Trade professionals gathered for the Malfy Gin launch.

## OCEANSTATE WINE & SPIRITS ADDS NEW ITALIAN APERITIVO LIQUEURS TO PORTFOLIO

Oceanstate Wine & Spirits added two new products to its portfolio, Caffo Mezzodi Liqueur and San Marzano Borsci, both of Italy. The Mezzodi is a "versatile aperitif" with aromatic herbs and Italian citrus fruits. Mezzodi is ideal for creating many kinds of cocktails. The Borsci, an Amaro, is described as a "powerful aperitif" to sip, or to pour into coffee or over ice cream to enhance the flavor. The aperitif is also used in cakes.

1. Caffo Mezzodi Liqueur is produced by Distilleria Caffo, an historic Calabrian company.
2. San Marzano Borsci is an Italian Amaro from Borsci, a family-owned company founded in 1840.



1



2



## Newport's Storied Hotel Viking Turns 90

### A Reflection on Past, Present and Future

BY LAUREN DALEY

Since Newport's historic Hotel Viking turns 90 this year, it's an apt time to hear from two industry members who are helping lead the iconic hotel into the 21st century. Under the guidance of General Manager Robert Burnetti and Director of Food and Beverage Chef Kevin Thiele, the Victorian-era hotel has undergone a recent renovation, added innovative new cocktails, more wines and themed restaurant events, created the Viking Wine Festival, and increased their presence on social media.

All the while, the Viking has maintained its authenticity and dignity. On the National Register of Historic Places, Hotel Viking offers 208 elegant guest rooms and suites, two ballrooms, and dining and drinks at the hotel's award-winning One Bellevue Restaurant and Top of Newport roof deck bar. Hotel Viking offers 208 elegant guest rooms and suites, two ballrooms, and dining and drinks at the hotel's award-winning One Bellevue Restaurant and Top of Newport roof deck bar.

Burnetti, a Pennsylvania native, started as General Manager in 2015. He's worked in the hotel industry since 1985, after earning his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Mansfield University in Pennsylvania.

Thiele, who lives in Bristol, R.I., started at the Viking as a chef after graduating from Johnson & Wales' culinary program in 2004. He then



Hotel Viking's Director of Food and Beverage, Chef Kevin Thiele.



General Manager Robert Burnetti (center) flanked by Evan Poitras and Garret Reed.

served as executive chef before starting his current position. Thiele was awarded "Chef of the Year" by the Rhode Island Hospitality and Tourism Association among other distinctions. The two weighed in on the Viking's past, present and future.

**THE BEVERAGE JOURNAL:** *What drew you to the hospitality business?*

**BURNETTI:** After college, I was fortunate enough to land a job as a night auditor at the Marriott in Worcester ... right when they built the Centrum [now DCU Center] there, and all the bands would come through. It was an exciting time for that hotel, and coming out of college, that was a big deal to see all the stars [who] would stay at there — Prince, Van Halen, Kiss, Joan Jett. That was 1986. The hotel business is so full of stories ... that's what keeps me addicted.

**TBJ:** *Why did you join Hotel Viking?*

**BURNETTI:** Oh gosh, it was always the prize when I moved to Rhode Island. I always had my eye on this hotel. I had a strong desire to work in Newport, at this hotel specifically. The more recent part of my career was spent at branded hotels, so to come to a hotel like this — independent, with a rich history, outside the bounds of a brand — it was an incredible opportunity.

**TBJ:** *What's your favorite part of your job?*

**BURNETTI:** Just working here. This hotel has such an amazing history; it's been here 90 years, and just being part of its history is very exciting ... I'm humbled by the staff here; some have worked here for as long as I've been in the business. We're collaborating to make the hotel better than it's ever been.

**LOCALCHATTER**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

# "BOURBON 101" GIVE YOU SELLING IDEAS? SHOP FROM OVER 201.

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# GLUTEN IS NOT FREE IN RESTAURANTS

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



We all know people who struggle with food allergies. From peanut butter, to shellfish, and strawberries to dairy, the idea of dining out when one has a food allergy can be an alarming proposition. Restaurants have to be incredibly careful when preparing and serving food to guests with allergies and have strict protocols to follow and diners need to be able to trust restaurants to take these restrictions seriously.

One allergy on the rise is gluten. From those with Celiac disease and other forms of gluten sensitivity and intolerance, to those simply looking to embrace what is a perceived a healthier lifestyle, gluten-free is taking center stage at many restaurants.

What is gluten? It is the general name of proteins found in wheat, rye, barley and triticale. It acts like glue that helps foods retain their shape. This allergy has dictated its own menu in many establishments, even pizzerias where gluten is a key ingredient.

The gluten-free movement has moved far beyond restaurants and entire aisles in grocery stores have been devoted to this category. According to a recent report in *U.S. News & World Report*, the gluten-free retail industry is projected to earn as much as \$2.34 billion in 2019.

Gluten-free options are far from free, however, with prices markedly higher in both retail/grocery store and restaurant locations. Why? It costs much more to prepare foods without gluten. And, in a restaurant environment, the handling of

the gluten-free item is equally as important and often requires additional labor.

According to the National Restaurant Association (NRA), gluten can be found almost everywhere in a restaurant kitchen. From traces of flour that might be airborne, to particles of breading in deep fryers, to touches of wheat-based sauces, the biggest challenge to serving truly gluten-free food in a restaurant is the possibility of cross contamination.

Currently, no FDA rules exist for restaurants serving gluten-free items other than the protocols in place for any allergy-based condition. The NRA is a valuable resource for restaurants that want to ensure that they are doing everything possible to prevent cross-contamination.

Understanding the allergy in the front of the house is the first rung on the service ladder. When a guest informs a server that a gluten allergy is present, the server should immediately alert a manager or consult the kitchen on foods that the guest can safely consume. Having a written resource handy on which foods contain gluten is invaluable. However, with menus often changing seasonally, taking the extra step to consult the kitchen is crucial.

Before proclaiming things "gluten-free" on a menu, there are some things to consider in the kitchen. First, flour is one of the biggest cross contaminants; its fine consistency allows

it to be airborne and potentially travel to other areas in the kitchen. So, if a pastry chef is baking desserts, there is a strong possibility that the flour being used can wind up in an area of the kitchen reserved for food-allergy preparation and handling. Unless a restaurant is using an alternative like rice flour, the likelihood of cross-contamination is high.

Maintaining a separate food-preparation and handling station for all food-based allergies is critical. And, additional protocols including frequent hand washing and donning new gloves for each order is also encouraged. Storing gluten-free items in sealed containers away from other ingredients and also using dedicated cooking tools, utensils and cookware will also help protect guests against possible gluten exposure.

Regardless of whether a customer has Celiac disease, gluten intolerance or is simply looking to eat gluten-free for its perceived health benefits, each request has to be taken as seriously as any other food-allergy situation. As we see food allergies on the rise, ensuring that restaurants are taking every actionable step possible to ensure a safe and an enjoyable guest experience is priority number one.



## LEARN MORE

For the latest information on gluten-free food handling and protocols for food allergies, please visit [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org)



## ABOUT DALE J. VENTURINI PRESIDENT & 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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# Charlestown Wine and Spirits

BY SAVANNAH MUL

Jane Gross received a call from her brother 10 years ago, when she was living in Germany with her husband, Christoph, and their two children, asking her if they would consider moving back to help with the family business, Charlestown Wine and Spirits, operational since 1979. Her first answer was “no.”

After more consideration, Jane knew her parents needed help, and she missed her family. They decided to return back home and never looked back. When they arrived in the Ocean State, Jane, Christoph and her brother, Jonathan Maldon, decided to build a new structure to replace the small and outdated building. Five years ago, the three of them opened the new location just down the street from where it once stood.

“Besides happiness,” she said, “the new building allowed for more products and



Jane Gross, Co-Owner, Charlestown Wine and Spirits.



## LOCATION

4625 OLD POST ROAD  
CHARLESTOWN, RI

## FACTS

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 5,070

YEARS IN OPERATION: 5  
(IN CURRENT LOCATION)

more visibility in the store. We were able to bring in all the things we wanted to have. [The building] gave us this freedom to create and reflect how we wanted the store to look ... in the community. It's a labor of love.”

The building features a heating and cooling system using geothermal energy. Due to their sustainable and energy-efficient efforts, the business received an Energy Star from the federal government, which is proudly displayed on the doors of the building.

The original storefront of Charlestown Wine and Spirits is still present in photos hanging on the walls in the store to reflect the family's history in the business.

Gross staffs about seven employees in the busy summer months to keep up with demand and scales it back to around five employees for the remainder of the

year. Justin Hutchins, the wine manager at Charlestown Wine and Spirits, said when it comes to selecting wines to stock, “we find things that everyone can be happy with.”

Hutchins said the relationships they build with the “wine-centric distributors” have helped build up their selection of global wines from family-operated farms. “People can find wines here that you can't find anywhere else in South County,” he said.

“Justin has a wonderful ability to select different wines for us and for our customers to try something new,” Gross said. Charlestown Wine and Spirits also stocks cheese and olives, along with other small snacks. She said she chooses these items based on how well they pair with wine. “Everything in that selection is meant to go with wine,” she laughed. ■

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)

# PREMIUMIZATION IS SWEEPING THE NATION

HERE'S HOW TO GO WITH THE FLOW

BY JEFF SIEGEL



**S**een the numbers that say wine drinkers are trading up to more expensive labels, but don't want to alienate those of your customers who are happy spending what they've been spending? Concerned about changing your inventory mix with no guarantee that it will pay off and you'll be left with wine to mark down for a loss?

Not to worry—you're not stuck between a rock and a hard place. It's possible, according to several retailers, to take advantage of what the experts are calling "premiumization." The trend, most evident over the past couple of years, is boosting sales at \$10 a bottle and up, while wine costing less than \$7 is slumping.

But it's not necessarily difficult to keep everyone happy, no matter how much money they want to spend. That's because, these retailers say, wine drinkers aren't just trading up. They're still looking for value, even when they spend more money.

"We haven't seen anyone spend more money just to spend more money," says Glenn Erhlich, co-owner of Corks in Denver, which specializes in wine that costs \$15 or less—the sweet spot for premiumization. "They still want quality. They're just willing to spend a little more when they buy it."

In this, retailers should address these issues to keep their current customers happy and still include room—and give value—for those who want to trade up:

**"They still want quality. They're just willing to spend a little more when they buy it."**

## ◉ Where are they trading up from?

Chris Keel, who owns Put a Cork in It in Fort Worth, TX, near the Texas Christian University campus, says his customers want something better than grocery store national brands. "They started with the 'cheaper/sweeter' California reds like Apothic or Cupcake," he says. "So then I have to show them a good value, usually from Spain or Italy, and they can see the difference in quality and will pay the couple of extra dollars more." Keel has had success with the Crapula Gold 5, a Spanish blend (\$12); the Italian Villa Monsignore Barbera d'Asti (\$12); and the French Château de Paraza Minervois Rouge (\$12).

## ◉ Keep looking for bargains.

"We're asking our customers to trust us, so we have to be very aware and very careful about what we put on the shelf," says Sue Fortuna, the owner of Bauer Wine & Spirits in Boston, MA. One

way to do that, she says, is the 2-for-\$12 section, which still delivers sales volume despite all the trading up. That's because she says her customers know the wines aren't cheap in quality, despite the price. The selection changes regularly, often from distributor closeouts, and keeps the customers who don't want to spend more happy.

## ◉ Education.

At Corks in Denver, Erhlich says the trend toward pricier bottles has helped them educate their customers, which translates into more sales. Case in point is Sauvignon Blanc, where customers who want to trade up can go from an \$8 New Zealand import to a French white Loire like the Le Grand Caillou Patient Cottat (\$15) or the Pomelo California Sauvignon Blanc (\$11). In turn, he says, they learn to notice—and appreciate—the difference in quality, style and terroir.

## ◉ Focus on special occasions.

A section in Corks that sold \$20 and \$25 wine gathered dust during the recession, says co-owner Pam Glynn. Today, though, customers who want to bring a bottle of wine to dinner at a friend's house are using those racks, moving up from \$15 wine. In this, says Glynn, she has to find value at those prices so as not to disappoint those customers, who expect better quality at \$25. ■



# GOOD FOOD AND THE RIGHT BEER

BY JACK KENNY



Beer people can and do drink whatever they want with every kind of food. There are no rules, or even guidelines, that say which type of beer is proper for a given dish or course. A Rolling Rock drinker will uncork his favorite green bottle along with a bowl of chocolate pudding, thank you very much.

There are, however, suggestions galore for those who want to enhance the dining experience with a brew that will complement the meal. On-premise people probably have had some experience with food-beer pairings, but off premise the beverage and meal recommendations pretty much take place in the wine aisles. Some basic ideas and suggestions could extend that experience to the beer section.

Everyone knows something about pairing wine with food, and some know more than others. What they probably don't know is that some beers are considered more appropriate than wine with certain dishes. A good example is spicy food: There's nothing like a malty lager to counter the power of spices and capsaicin. Also, rich foods are well complemented by beers that are somewhat acidic, such as a Flanders red ale. Happily, there is no one beer for any type of meal.

Helpful information about pairings, as well as specific style recommendations, is available at a multitude of websites, but in particular at the site of the Brewers Association ([brewersassociation.org](http://brewersassociation.org)). The BA recommends three points to keep in mind when selecting a beer for food.

The first is "Match strength with strength." A delicate dish works best with a delicate beer, they say, and the same with highly flavored foods and assertive beers. Keep in mind that the strength of a beer doesn't mean just its alcohol percentage, but also its malt character, hop bitterness, sweetness, richness and more.

"Find harmonies" is the second point to consider. Sharing a common flavor or aroma elements works well between beer and food. One good example: "the clean caramelly flavors of an Oktoberfest lager and roasted pork."

Third is "Consider sweetness, bitterness, carbonation, heat (spice) and richness." This is about interactions of food and beer, which can be specific and predictable. "Taking advantage of these interactions ensures that the food and beer will balance each other, with one partner not throwing the match out of whack. One sort of has to parse these out one by one as the situation demands, and find flavors that will enhance one another."

Some specific interactions:

- Hop bitterness, roasted malt, carbonation and alcohol in beer create a balance with the sweetness, richness (fat) and umami in food.
- Beer's sweetness and maltiness balances food's spiciness (chili heat) and acidity.
- Hop bitterness emphasizes spiciness and the heat from chilis.

The BA's beer and food matching chart, prepared by highly respected beer expert Randy Mosher, contains a good deal of useful information about beer types as well as pairings.

Say you have pilsner and blonde ale in the fridge and you want to create a meal around them. Choose lighter foods, such as chicken, salads, salmon or bratwurst. For cheeses, select Monterey jack or a mild white cheddar. For dessert, a lemon custard tart will do fine.

Next weekend you're planning a barbecue with some roasted, smoked meats and sausages. A perfect beer is porter, a dark brown ale whose aroma and flavor of roasted grains complement the rich meats, and whose maltiness balances the smoke and spice of the grilled foods.

India pale ale is a real treat with strong, spicy food, especially curry. Serve a bleu cheese such as gorgonzola, and end the affair with a ginger spice cake.

An abbey dubbel is a Belgian beer style that is brown, strong and features the characteristic sweetness and esters from specific yeasts. This beer is ideal for barbecued meats, meat stew, a thick steak, or a smoked rib roast. It's also great with chocolate desserts.

Beer Advocate, the website that contains tens of thousands of beer reviews and rankings by users, has a great page for food pairings. Simply choose your style of food from a long drop menu and a selection of beer types will result ([beeradvocate.com/beer/style\\_pairings/](http://beeradvocate.com/beer/style_pairings/)).

For Chinese food, choose a Czech pilsner, Euro strong lager, Japanese rice lager, or a light lager. For Italian food you have the option of American blonde ale, American pale lager, light lager, and maibock/helles bock. For Latin American cuisine the list of beers is long and includes amber or red lager, English porter and Irish dry stout.

Bon appétit!

## ABOUT JACK KENNY

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



WRITE TO HIM: [thebeercolumn@gmail.com](mailto:thebeercolumn@gmail.com)

## DRAMBUIE GETS 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY UPDATE

Drambuie—a combination of heather honey, herbs, spices and aged Scotch whisky—remains the same secret recipe, as it has since 1745, but it's sporting a new look. "Bonnie Prince Charlie" debossed on the bottle's shoulder pays homage to the charismatic royal who came to Skye, Scotland in the hope of reclaiming the throne for his exiled father James Stuart. "An Dram Buidheach, The Drink That Satisfies" on the bottle's neck represents the Scotch Gaelic name (and its translation) given to the liqueur 100 years later by the residents of Skye. SRP: \$34.99 [drambuie.com](http://drambuie.com)



## BARREL CRAZE: JAMESON'S COOPER'S CROZE

The first release of Jameson's Whiskey Makers Series—a range of three whiskeys which highlight the whiskey-making process—The Cooper's Croze was created to showcase the profound influence of the barrel on the character of a whiskey. Ger Buckley, Jameson's fifth generation head cooper, uses virgin American oak, seasoned bourbon and Iberian sherry barrels for this release, named for the tool used to make the groove where the head of the barrel is positioned in order to seal it. "Barrel making transcends generations, as I've used the same methods and tools passed down from my grandfather, that's the beauty of the craft," says Buckley. 86 proof; SRP \$69.99.



## FLOTILLA OF SEA-POWERED SPIRITS HIT U.S. SHORES

Is it something in the water? Or just coincidence? Either way, a handful of artisanal wines and spirits with a connection to the sea are landing on U.S. shelves:



A "fog collector" harvests vapor in the San Francisco Bay.

Hangar 1 Vodka is launching **Hangar 1 Fog Point** (\$125), made with San Franciscan fog-caught water—and in the process building awareness of alternative water sources in light of California's drought issues. Man-made "fog collectors" positioned throughout San Francisco capture the fog's water vapor; this sustainably sourced water—purer than that from bottled and tap—is then used to dilute the vodka to proper proof. The vodka is created with Bonny Doon, whose biodynamic wine is used to create the base distillate. Profits will be donated to the expansion of sustainable water applications.

Edinburgh Gin, from Spencerfield Spirits, has extended its line with two entries. **Cannonball Navy Strength** (SRP \$47, 114 proof) resurrects an old—full-proof—style of gin commissioned by the British Navy; it is intensely flavored with Sichuan pepper and citrus. **Seaside Gin** (\$39.99, 86 proof) harnesses the essence of the Scottish seaside via botanicals including scurvy grass, ground ivy and bladder wrack; these are complemented with aromatic spice notes from grains of paradise, coriander and cardamom.



**Nautical Gin** (\$33, 84 proof) is an American premium gin infused with 15 ingredients, including a rare coastal botanical—the inspiration for the gin's name. While citrus-forward, it delivers a subtle and appealing hint of sea salt. (Available in NH, MA and RI; and soon in NY, NJ, MD, GA and FL. The custom bottle also has a flat back—so the gin will stay stationary inside any sea-faring vessel.



Maui-based **Hawaii Sea Spirits** has expanded distribution via Southern Glazer's 42-state distributor footprint, as well as with Martignetti/United, MS Walker, Hartley-Parker, Lipman Brothers, Capitol-Husting and National Distributing Co. in additional markets. The move helps bring the supplier's Ocean Organic Vodka to all 50 states. (SRP \$32.99, 80 proof)



**The Hidden Sea** wines channel the mineral-rich alluvial soils of the Limestone Coast of South Australia which, several ice ages ago, was covered by the Great Southern Ocean. Fossils of sea creatures and whales are found in the vineyard's soils; the line consists of a Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot and Shiraz. SRP: \$24.99





# Snow Leopard Vodka Launches in Rhode Island

Spirit entrepreneur aims to impact wildlife conservation, one martini at a time

BY SAVANNAH MUL



^  
Snow Leopard Trust UK and Snow Leopard Vodka Founder Stephen Sparrow at BLU Restaurant in East Greenwich, Rhode Island.

Where might you find Stephen Sparrow? Likely kayaking, exploring or photographing wildlife. Now you can find him launching a vodka. The self-proclaimed “wilderness man” found his vocation in his many travels and its fruition is set to benefit a unique cause: snow leopards.

It was this love of nature and exploring that led him to create the Snow Leopard Trust UK and the Snow Leopard Vodka brand. While trekking the Himalayas, which he completed in 2005, he learned about endangered snow leopards and the International Snow Leopard Trust. In 2006, he registered his own charity – Snow Leopard Trust UK – yet lacked the funds for the sort of impact he hoped to make. After talking with friends, he began producing vodka and called it Snow Leopard Vodka. Fifteen percent of all profits go directly to the Snow Leopard Trust UK to aid conservation efforts of snow leopards in Asia.

“It’s about using the consumer choice to do something amazing and getting a highly endangered creature off the endangered list so future generations can live in a world with snow leopards,” Sparrow said. “I believe in the goodness of human nature.”

Rhode Island became its first U.S. market launch via Rhode Island Distributing Co. this spring. Sparrow visited in July, supporting his brand in the Newport area.

The vodka is billed as the “first luxury vodka made from the rare spelt grain, and natural spring water.” Distilled six times, it has a fresh floral and anise aroma, produced under Master Distiller Joanna Dawidowicz. There are a variety of launch programs planned for the Rhode Island market, including the “Real Million Dollar Martini,” during which participating bars will create their own take on a martini featuring Snow Leopard Vodka.



One dollar from every martini sold will go to the Snow Leopard Trust UK charity fund. The end goal of this campaign: raise \$1 million for the trust. Sparrow will teach local bartenders and bar managers about the Snow Leopard brand and declare them “Snow Leopard Rangers,” complete with a certificate recognizing their training and knowledge gained about endangered snow leopards and the vodka. From there, a brand building program will begin.

When a customer orders a drink featuring Snow Leopard Vodka at a participating bar, the bartender will give the guest a branded postcard encouraging the customer to make a connection via a time-honored tradition: writing. “In this busy, crazy world we live in, we never have enough time to see the people we care about,” Sparrow said. The postcard campaign offers the customer a method to reach out and connect with a loved one while sharing snow leopard information.

Other initiatives during the launch include in-store product tastings and local brand education sessions as well as conservation and cocktail events at local venues.

“It’ll be about how many people can we engage, and adopt this brand as their choice vodka,” Sparrow said. Sparrow remembers back to when he first experienced a rare sighting of a snow leopard in 2010 during a stay in Mongolia. He said he felt humbled about his commitment and work to save the less than 5,000 snow leopards remaining in the wild.

To date, Snow Leopard Trust UK has raised about \$300,000 USD and Sparrow hopes the launch in Rhode Island will gain momentum and raise the goal of \$1 million. “This will be a good test market,” Sparrow said. “We can learn here and take it further.” ■

# Move Over Summer Winter is Coming

BY LEN PANAGGIO

It's hard to believe, but fall is in the air. The weather is changing and things are cooling off in the resort communities. We have been blessed with a beautiful summer, but it's time to look towards a season of opportunity for the urban hospitality businesses, and that means winter programming.

Recently, I went to a Goose Island Beer Dinner at The Brick Alley Pub in Newport. It was during Goose Island's Migration Week. This event takes place from March through November and migrates through cities in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Korea. They landed in Newport August 1-5. During a city's migration week, Goose Island sponsors a series of events that are not only fun, but informative. It made me think ahead, and as winter approaches, many of us need to start thinking about sparking interest in our restaurants: what better way than hosting a beer or wine dinner.

Obviously, having a brew master, winemaker or owner attend and speak lends credence to the event and brings it up a level. But, to accomplish that, owners have to plan these types of events early on for the best chance of success. Having this type of event is an opportunity for your culinary team to get outside the constraints of their daily menus and try something new and creative. Clearly, from a guest's point of view, it is a chance to try different products paired with differing foods in one of their favorite restaurants. I truly believe in the value of these events and encourage everyone to hold a few throughout the year.

In addition to special events, fall brings with it a desire for products that are more appropriate to the season. I am a strong proponent of getting ahead of the Oktoberfest demand, as it is real, but doesn't last long. There are so many great versions of these beers and you need to have several of them, but you also need to monitor them so that you are not stuck with them after Columbus Day Weekend!

Today, most culinary teams have seasonal menus or at least additions to the base menu featuring seasonal products. The growth of farms and farmer's markets in our state is real. The bounty of the summer and fall harvest provides a veritable cornucopia of fresh vegetables and, alongside our amazing seafood products and other proteins, all the ingredients for a culinary success exist in our little state.

As it gets cooler, our food and beverages tend to become heavier in style. Transitioning from lagers to ales, and white wines to reds happens naturally. Of course, in the middle is rosé, most customers today still think it is a summer wine, but it truly is versatile and at least one should be offered by the glass year round.

I often speak of our obligation to keep things fresh in our restaurants, both culinary and beverage programs. Like everything else in our world today, things move fast; yesterday's hot beer, spirit or wine may be collecting dust if you aren't on top of your game.

The craft beer movement is on fire and offers so many choices. Guests expect us to have some representation on the menu as the category is growing at the expense of the mainstream brewers. As for wine, there are so many differing varietals coming out of the winegrowing regions that are overlooked to the expense of the noble grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling. For too long we have been conditioned to sell these grapes, but, the wine world is changing fast, and I urge all to consider other varietals.

Our audience is evolving and millennials play a huge role in the direction of our beverage programs; this is your future, tap into it — no pun intended. Spend the time and effort to evaluate your entire program, front and back. It truly is an exciting time to be in the business and a shining industry in our state!

Santé.



BLACKSTONE  
CATERERS



## 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 CASTLE HILL INN

590 OCEAN DRIVE  
NEWPORT, RI

The Castle Hill Inn is a historic mansion built circa 1875. The Dining Room at Castle Hill Inn is a *Forbes* Four Star award-winning restaurant that boasts more than 800 wines and plenty of seasonal, creative cocktails.



Bartender  
Anthony Spates.

## BARTENDER

Anthony Spates

## COCKTAIL

More Champagne, Peas  
(A pea-and-mint-infused vodka,  
topped with bubbles)

## RECIPE

Step One, mix:

- » 20 oz. Sobieski Vodka
- » 8 oz. Dolin Dry Vermouth
- » 2 oz. fresh mint
- » 6 oz. simple syrup and lemon zest

Use a food processor to slightly break up 10 oz. of frozen peas. Add to mixture. Let soak for three days.

Step Two:

In a Boston shaker filled with ice, add 2 oz. house pea and mint vodka with 1 oz. Michelle Brut. Pour into chilled martini glass. Garnish with pea tendrils.

"The drink is subtle and refreshing. You may not recognize the pea flavor right away if you didn't know what was coming," said Dining Room Manager Anthony Boi. "It's a great way to bring the garden into your martini glass, and can be enjoyed before a meal without coating your palette with fruits and sugars."

## LOCAL CHATTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

**TBJ:** *Can you tell us about the history of the Viking?*

**BURNETTI:** We're actually in the process of archiving old photos [that can] speak to the history of the hotel, so when people ask about it, we can show them ... JFK and Jacqueline Bouvier stayed here; they were married near the hotel [at St. Mary's Church in Newport]. Will Rogers, the American humorist, stayed here...

**TBJ:** *How have you focused on the food and beverage side?*

**BURNETTI:** In any independent hotel, the food and beverage needs to stand out ... and we've renovated One Bellevue Restaurant and Bar [areas]. We brightened it up, so that as you walk in, it's a more inviting feel ... We've more than doubled our sales [at rooftop bar] Top of Newport, with themed events such as "Craft Beers and Burgers Mondays," "Lobster Love Tuesdays," "Spirits and Stogies Wednesdays."

**THIELE:** Thursdays we do "Tacos, Tapas and Tequila." We partner with Proximo, a vendor that offers different tequilas, like Dobel, Jose Cuervo, 1800 and 1800 Coconut. The chefs come up with tacos and tapas, and bartenders come up with a margarita. That's been working out well.

**TBJ:** *What else have you done, beverage-wise?*

**THIELE:** We've added signature cocktails to all outlets, increased our wine presence, brought in new wines, and started the Viking Wine Festival [a sequence of winemaker-hosted dinners featuring various wineries held twice a month from January to March].

**TBJ:** *What wines are you liking now?*

**THIELE:** Personally, I like any Frog's Leap [from Napa Valley]. We carry their Zinfandel; it's really nice. I like zinfandels, dark reds.

**TBJ:** *Do you carry local beers?*

**THIELE:** Yes, currently Revival Brewing

Co., Newport Storm, Fool Proof [all from RI] and Two Roads IPA from Connecticut. Also, Long Trail beers from Vermont. I like Revival's Zeppelin; we've had it since early spring, and people love it. It's a lighter, hoppier Hefeweizen.

**TBJ:** *Any local spirits?*

**THIELE:** We carry Sons of Liberty, made right here [South Kingstown], and we also carry Thomas Tew Rum made here in Newport.

**TBJ:** *What are some creative new cocktails you've added?*

**THIELE:** We do a Blood Orange Margarita, but instead of [a] white salted rim, we use a black salt made by Maestro Dobel. We do blood orange simple syrup, triple sec, Maestro Dobel, fresh lime juice ...

We have a spin-off of a muddled berry cocktail called "Berried Treasure," where we muddle raspberries, blueberries and blackberries with simple syrup, add Bombay Sapphire gin, a splash of Chambord black raspberry liqueur, peach schnapps and club soda; shake and pour in a rocks glass. It's a really strong, fruity flavor, a bright color. We sell a ton of those.

**TBJ:** *What trends are you seeing overall on the cocktail front?*

**THIELE:** People are going back to classics — more Manhattans, Old Fashioneds, things like that. More English style, old-style gins: Boodles, Plymouth Gin.

**TBJ:** *What about beers and wines?*

**THIELE:** Everyone wants craft, local beer [where] bartenders get to tell a story: It's made down the street, or across the bay. The younger crowd, everyone's looking for IPAs. For wine, more people ordering Malbecs, more so than regular cabs or merlot. People are getting more knowledgeable about wines, especially those in the younger, 25- to 40-year-old range. They're ordering exotics, like malbecs, rieslings, zinfandels. They're going after South American, New Zealand wines. ■

Interview has been condensed and edited.

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BEVERAGE MEDIA'S

• 2016 •

# BARTENDERS TO WATCH

**A**s bartending continues to grow as a career and attract the attention of aspirational achievers, the standards on display in the many and varied competitions held throughout the year have improved as well. A trip to a distillery or a hefty check are great prizes, but today, bartenders are just as keen for the accolades that an intense, multi-day competition can bring them.

Now in its seventh year internationally and fifth including U.S. participants, the lengthy test of skills produced in collaboration with the United States Bartenders' Guild,

USBG World Class Sponsored by Diageo, is a global training program and internationally recognized competition that aims to elevate the craft of the bartender and build careers in the drink industry.

The international nature of the competition and its rigorous process are why this year, Beverage Media decided that our annual survey of the field of men and women who stand behind the bar, our "Bartenders to Watch," should focus on those competitors who made it through multiple regional heats to contend earlier this year in World Class North American finals in Washington, DC.

TEXT BY JACK ROBERTIELLO

PORTRAITS BY ANDREW KIST





The prize? The right to represent the continent in the global finals, for the first time to be held in the U.S., (Miami specifically) in the last week in September.

Two years ago, the U.S. entrant, Charles Joly, won the competition, and this year, the mantle of America's bartending hero is borne by Andrew Meltzer, assistant manager of 15 Romolo, one of San Francisco's better-known cocktail watering holes.

"I'm so excited to be named the U.S. Best Bartender of the Year; it's something I've been working towards for quite some time. This competition has given me so much—excellent knowledge, skills and industry camaraderie that will have such valuable impact on my career," says Meltzer.

While Meltzer moves onto the finals, other contestants, some to whom have notched their third straight finals, have lots to offer as well. With backgrounds that might otherwise have pointed them toward careers in law, medicine, baseball or firefighting, these 15 bartenders represent a cross-section of where bartending is today in America.

As for World Class, the program is a six month education tour leading up to five Regional competitions and one North American Final; it drew thousands of applicants, with 75 finalists selected to compete regionally. With judges including past winners Joly, Tyson Buhler, Jeff Bell and Ricky Gomez, and

This year's World Class North American finals were held at the W Washington's intimate Root Cellar Whiskey Bar, in the lower level of the hotel's Mediterranean-inspired restaurant Pineau. Local ryes line the brick archways of the bar, signaling the bar's whiskey focus, but guests may also opt for barrel-aged cocktails and superb wines. Meanwhile, the hotel's rooftop lounge, POV, serves a balanced menu of classic and seasonal cocktails.

bartenders and educators including Tony Abou-Ganim, Steve Olson, Julie Reiner, Anu Apte Elford, Jacques Bezuidenhout, and USBG National President David Nepove, the battle for the annual crown of "World's Best" continues to grow in significance. Another reason these following 15 bartenders belong on the 2016 list of the ones to watch. ■

01

## ANDREW MELTZER

CITY: SAN FRANCISCO, CA

BAR: 15 ROMOLO

### What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

My bar back, Simon, also bartends at a famous dive bar. He is very well trained and focuses on many more details than his patrons expect. I love watching him work and making awesome cocktails at a place that is known only for martinis.

### Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

I owe so many thanks to Ian Adams and Aaron Gregory Smith, my two managers at 15 Romolo, for their endless support and guidance. They have taught me so much about being hospitable, running a good business, and passing on the torch of mentorship.

### If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

My best friend's dad is a psychic and when I was a kid he said that I would be an actor.

### What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

I regularly see an acupuncturist and I get a massage. Add to that some yoga and lots of long walks, so I manage my stress pretty well. But nothing compares to an afternoon at Banya, the Russian bathhouse. If you're really needing a detox, they'll beat you with juniper and oak branches before throwing you in the cold plunge; that's what I call relaxation!

### What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

My favorite three drinks are the Daiquiri (with agricole white rum), the Manhattan (50/50, rye whiskey, on the rocks), and the Americano. My favorite spirit to mix with is whiskey because there are so many different styles, flavors and opportunities for great cocktails.



### Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

Live music fuels me outside of work. I can't get creative without hearing some improvisational jazz or jams; I can't get limber without a good dance; and I definitely can't shake my tins to a nice rhythm without hearing a good beat to set my tempo.



02

**JUSTIN WARE**

CITY: HOUSTON, TX

BAR: JOHNNY'S GOLD BRICK

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?**

Balancing my preparation time with running the bar. Being general manager of a bar is a more than a full time position, and having to balance the immense amount of practice, research and development that it took to feel prepared for World Class was very strenuous.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

I had the opportunity to stage at Anvil, which was a humbling experience that led to being part of the opening staff at Julep. These, to me, were great achievements and huge steps in my career.

**Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?**

Bobby Heugel, Alba Huerta and everyone in their group. Everyone involved with that group has such a drive and passion for the industry it's infectious.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

I would most likely be working in a restaurant kitchen. I started with aspira-

tions to become a chef and had a brief stint as a prep cook and line cook. I still would like to get back in a kitchen and make restaurant-quality food.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

Graduating from Texas A&M in 2012. I am one of the first people in my family to get a four-year college degree. It was an incredible achievement for me because I have dyslexia and as a child people had low expectations for me. At some point I decided I would show everyone wrong.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue a career behind the bar?**

Start small and stay humble. Learn, master and then perfect the presentation of the classics. Walk before you can start to run. No one ever knows everything and no one is the absolute best; there is always someone you can learn from or learn with. Be sure also to taste EVERYTHING—things that are delicious and new and things that are not so good.

03

**CHRIS CARDONE**

CITY: NEW YORK CITY, NY

BAR: I SODI

**What makes you a good bartender?**

I try to always remember that the time guests spend at my bar is extremely valuable to them. I try to make sure that everyone who sits in front of me leaves happier than when they entered in any way that I possibly can.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

I'm not sure I have a "proudest moment." I can honestly say that I'm grateful for every single day that I get to do what I love to do for a living, without compromising my integrity or personal beliefs.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

Miserable. In all seriousness, I wouldn't trade what I do for anything else in the world. However, if the New York Rangers need a backup goalie, I'm available.

**What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?**

I have two kids, five and three years old. Bartending in an extremely high volume

restaurant in NYC is my method of decompression.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

Every single day I remind myself to be eternally grateful for this moment. "Life is available only in the present moment. If you abandon the present moment you cannot live the moments of your daily life deeply." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

I truly enjoy agave spirits. Agave dances a beautiful dance between art, passion, religion and chaos. Everything about agave from its growth, to the production, to the product makes it pretty remarkable stuff.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue a career behind the bar?**

Be yourself. Be passionate. Work really hard. Always bring an empty cup. Be humble. Never stop trying to learn. Always try to be better than yesterday. There is more than one right way to do anything. But most importantly: Be a bartender, not a brand.

04

## BLAKE JONES

CITY: ORLANDO, FL

BAR: THE COURTESY BAR

### What makes you a good bartender?

My ability to talk to anyone as if I've known them for years. I grew up as an only child so having to make friends was a tough and challenging task. It taught me social skills, though, so being in this platform only takes it a step further. That and my attention to detail, because it's certainly not my ability to remember people's names.

### What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

My first is when I moved on to the national finals for World Class. It was such a challenging year for me—I married my wife and got to do a lot of awesome things in the business, however I lost some really close friends and had some big upsets. So

moving on to nationals really gave me the boost I needed.

Secondly would be my wife winning her first bar competition. She's been bartending for many years but just started to get into this side of the business and I helped her with technique and spirit training in the beginning. So to see her do so well, and to see how she used the training and took it a step further, makes me super happy.

### Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

The men who helped train me to be where I am today, Patrick Bolster and Jeff Knott, helped and taught me almost everything to get started behind the bar, and I am forever grateful for their patience, knowledge and compassion. Also Sean Kenyon, whom I met a couple years back. In the few hours we worked together I learned so much from him. We stayed in contact and he still gives me life lessons all the time. Whether he knows it or not, he's been a huge part of my career.



### Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

Getting a photograph published for the first time. That was a great feeling. A moment of accomplishment that is indescribable for me, for sure.

05

## LAURA NEWMAN

CITY: NEW YORK CITY, NY

BAR: MOTHER OF PEARL

### What has been most challenging for you about competing in World Class?

Focusing and channeling all of my ideas into something clear and concise. I've been referring to competing in World Class as "bartender figure skating." On one hand, you want to wow the judges with something that's high-concept and totally new to them (like a quadruple axel), but at the same time you want to be 90% sure you'll nail it (more along the lines of a triple axel).

### What makes you a good bartender?

On a technical level, I'm a great bartender because I am extremely fast. It can be so frustrating to go to other bars and see

them create cocktails without a sense of urgency. The number one thing that guests care about is getting their drinks quickly. A sense of urgency is something that is very difficult to teach, and it warms my heart to see a bartender knocking out a round of drinks in record time.

### Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

Sother Teague has been hugely influential on me both as a bartender and as a person. I don't like saying that he's my mentor, because we've never actually worked together behind the bar, but beyond being one of my dearest friends, he's supported and encouraged me since the day I started bartending in New York City. He's influenced every career decision I've made.

### If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

I'd probably be practicing law in some form. I'm very analytical, enjoy being locked in libraries doing research for days at a time and am probably the most stubborn and argumentative person I know.

### What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

I am a huge fan of wine, Sherry and vermouth—not only because of how dramatically they can transform cocktails, but because they're also delicious on their own. As a certified sommelier, I like to think that every time I drink these things I'm practicing and increasing the breadth of my knowledge. But I also just really enjoy drinking these things because of how delicious they are.





06

**JOSHUA GONZALES**

CITY: INDIANAPOLIS, IN

BAR: THUNDERBIRD

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high-level competition as World Class?**

Having been to World Class nationals before, the thing to remember is that you are really competing against yourself. You succeed or fail on your own merit. It's all about the time you put in before you step in front of the judges. There is no room for error.

**What makes you a good bartender?**

I think I'm pretty good but I'm always trying to become a better bartender. Like all trades, bartending is a never ending series of learning lessons and opportunities to improve your skills. We never stop learning.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

Opening my own bar, Thunderbird. It was the most difficult thing I've ever done.

**Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?**

I was fortunate enough to have Angus Winchester mentor me over the last year. He's been incredibly important in helping me develop as an owner/operator. It's amazing what you can accomplish when you admit all the things you don't know. Angus and his team helped me learn this lesson.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...**

Running political campaigns.

**What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?**

Spending time with my dog and watching pro wrestling.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

In 10 years I hope each of my current bartenders is operating their own joints,

and I'm pulling Sunday night guest shifts behind their bars.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

Bonded bourbon is about the only thing I sip on. It's 100 proof perfection.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

Rescuing my pit bull from the humane society. Seeing her growth over the past year has been very rewarding.



07

**ZACH LYNCH**

CITY: JACKSONVILLE, FL

BAR: ICE PLANT

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?**

The most challenging part of this competition has been trying not to overthink certain challenges, to over-complicate them but still keep them clever. I definitely know where the bar is set for years to come now after seeing the amazing group in the finals.

**What makes you a good bartender?**

I really love serving people and chatting them up. I would hope we all know balanced drinks, and great knowledge is available for most who want to learn, but you really can't teach loving to serve guests and making friends.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

The two years I have been a part of the World Class competition have definitely been a high point, but the proudest moment so far has been seeing how far the team and program at the Ice Plant have come since I was able to start it.

**What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?**

A laid back day with the wife and son is always a great decompression. I can get off of work at 3:00 or 4:00am but when Thatcher and the wife wake up at 7:00 I'm stoked to hang out.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

Hopefully running a really fun bar program or preaching the good word of hospitality and good spirits.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

I really love the versatility of gin in cocktails and the complexity of the genre as a whole. There have been so many new styles of gin that I never get sick of trying new ones.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

Getting to watch my son grow up has been unbelievable. It was a whole new chapter in life that I'm loving.





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08

**EGOR POLONSKIY**

CITY: CHICAGO, IL

BAR: UNTITLED SUPPER CLUB

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?**

The most challenging part was finding time to prepare for it and balance it with my regular work schedule. I manage and bartend at one of the busiest bars in Chicago and normally work 50-60 hours a week, and preparation for World Class probably added another 20-25 hours to the work schedule.

**What makes you a good bartender?**

Knowing the products behind the bar, being hospitable and knowing what is going on in the world, city and my neighborhood.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

Gin. So many great drinks are made with it. Really a lot of flavor to build around. Even if a person says that he doesn't like gin, I rarely believe it. Most likely, that person never had an Aviation or Bee's Knees or Southside or Negroni.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

When I heard the word "mentor" from one of my bartenders.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

I studied to be IT engineer and IT marketing specialist. It Did not work out, obviously. Never considered any other option after.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

I basically don't know what is going to happen next month even. Opportunities come fast and most times are unexpected.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?**

Do not ever stop working on yourself. Read more. Taste and taste and taste; train your palate. Learn to make really basic drinks really well. Live a healthy lifestyle.

09

**KAMURAN MATARACI**

CITY: DENVER, CO

BAR: HOP ALLEY

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?**

Everything. It's designed to challenge you in every way possible, and it lives up to that expectation. Being around the other competitors all day constantly reminds you of the high level everyone is executing at. They're 14 of the most creative, disciplined and eloquent bartenders in the nation. Also, finding a headspace where I can talk to the judges like they're guests at my home bar, and shed the nervous awkwardness, is a challenge I was underprepared for.

**What makes you a good bartender?**

The bartenders I believe are "good," are the ones that hold court. They know something about every one of their guests. They

hold simultaneous conversations, with different people and groups at the bar. They move fast, but gracefully. They smile a lot. They speak and listen at all the right times. Maybe I'm in the minority, but my metric for assessing a "good bartender" has little to do with drinks or spirit knowledge. I'm far more impressed by a bartender who can cut off an over-intoxicated guest with such grace, the guest wishes to shake their hand on their way out.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

Catching and batting third for the Oakland Athletics. Probably a few starts at first base. Gotta protect the knees as I get older.

**What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?**

Letting my dog take me on a late walk when the streets are asleep. Listening to the silence is very calming.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

Sherry or Low-ABV? That's what we're supposed to say, right?

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

The moment when bread comes out of the toaster perfectly warm and crispy.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?**

Listen, ask questions and be passionate about hospitality. Spirit knowledge and drink making will never be more important than one's ability to gracefully take care of their guests.

# Raise Expectations



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10

**GIANCARLO AVERSA**

CITY: DETROIT, MI

BAR: THE LAST WORD

**What makes you a good bartender?**

Engaging and pleasing my guests is my first order of business. I do a lot to educate myself on my methods and techniques of preparing cocktails and spirits. And I love learning about cocktails and spirits—how they're made and their histories.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

I'm very proud to have been involved in the World Class Program for three years in a row, of reaching the National Finals two times, and I am especially proud to represent my town of Ann Arbor, my chapter of the USBG (Greater Detroit)



and my state of Michigan in the cocktail industry.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

Pursuing a career in music. I'm in a band called The Pherotones, the house band at The Last Word with a weekly spot. I play piano, and I guess you could say we are a jazz band, but not in the traditional sense—we like to explore pop music, jazz and play fantasies on themes. In the same

night you could hear Duke Ellington, Cyndi Lauper, Franz Liszt and the Mario 2 theme song.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

My go-to cocktails are either a classic rum Daiquiri with a rhum agricole, or a Hanky Panky with Tanqueray No. Ten. A classic single malt, an overproof bourbon or rye, a rich and smoky mezcal or a finely produced absinthe. It's hard to choose with so many great options, but any of these would make me very happy. P.S. I also love a cold can of Hamm's.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?**

Make sure you like people and late nights. I try to remind people that it is a service industry that we are in. As a bartender your first priority should be to serve your guest. Knowledge, flair and great cocktails are integral to top level bartending, and longevity in the field. But I feel that a person stepping behind the bar should only do so if they truly like serving and making people happy.

11

**JASON SNOPKOSKI**

CITY: DENVER, CO

BAR: AVANTI FOOD &amp; BEVERAGE

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high-level competition as World Class?**

The biggest challenge has been to find brainstorming, planning, preparation and practice time. Running Avanti Food and Beverage, a high-volume program in Denver, plus maintaining a very active advisory role for Mécha and Mezón in Connecticut leaves minimal time. No matter how important the opportunity, it ultimately had to play second fiddle to my roles where the livelihoods of dozens of employees and the experiences of thousands of guests were at stake.

**What makes you a good bartender?**

Empathy, positivity, awareness and vision. The ability to connect the dots between people and things. Curiosity and the desire to learn everything.

**Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?**

In the bar world I absolutely, positively would not be where I am today without Andy Seymour.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

I tend to drink a lot of wine, Sherry and vermouth of all kinds, and gravitate toward niche categories of spirits like pisco, mezcal, agricole rum, brandy and amari.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

A few years ago my wife and I had a small, magical wedding in Puerto Rico followed by a simple barbeque back in



Connecticut with our friends and family. That was a monumental summer which set the tone for how we've lived our lives together since.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?**

So many young bartenders put too much emphasis on learning cocktail recipes. Make understanding and practicing the art of hospitality your primary objective.



# *Gemma di Luna*

ITALY'S NEW GEM



1 2

**ERIC BENNETT**

CITY: BIRMINGHAM, AL

BAR: CARRIGAN'S PUBLIC HOUSE

**What makes you a good bartender?**

On the hospitality side, I want to be a great host to every guest that walks into my bar. That means being attentive to their needs, making them feel at home, and personally and genuinely connecting to each guest. From the production side, it's learning new techniques, employing interesting flavor combinations, and creating cocktails that resonate for those that drink them.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

My proudest moment probably came after the first cocktail competition I won. I look back on that experience now and I am grateful to have even been included, considering how inexperienced I was. What made that moment great was that my parents were there—they were there supporting me and were able to see that what I was doing was worthwhile and

meaningful and that I could make "this bartending thing" a profession.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

I started working in a bar in college to help keep me afloat. I was in school as a biological chemistry major and wanted to be a gynecologic oncologist. So maybe I'd still be on that path. I am also very much interested in how people's minds work, so maybe I'd be pursuing something in the psychology field.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?**

My first question is always, do you like to serve? Are you willing to put other people's wants and needs well ahead of your own well-being? Can you deal with people at their worst and still stay at your best? If so, then maybe being behind the bar is for you. You never really know until you actually do it—this profession is still very much trial by fire.

1 3

**BRIAN MEANS**

CITY: SAN FRANCISCO, CA

BAR: DIRTY HABIT

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high-level competition as World Class?**

Knowing that you're competing against some of the best bartenders out there can be quite intimidating. Thinking of new flavor combinations for cocktails and presentation methods has always been a challenge for me.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

It probably has to be watching the bar I currently work in get built from the ground up, and watching it open and be successful.

**Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?**

In the bar world would have to be Kevin

Diedrich, Brian MacGregor, Jacques Bezuidenhout, Jen Ackrill, Jon Gasparini and Greg Lindgren, Jenn Colliau, David Nepove, Jim Meehan, John Gertsen, Julio Bermejo, Ken Luciano, Steven Liles, Martin Cate, Andy Seymour, Neyah White, Lulu Martinez, Jeff Morgenthaler and Brooke Arthur. All of the above have contributed so much to our industry, whether with their cocktails, bars, management, financial tools or knowledge. I strive to continually learn from all of them.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

A firefighter.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

I love beer... a good Kolsch on a hot day is awesome. Or Milk Stout... all day.

**What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?**

Learn as much as you can whether it's reading old cocktail books or new ones, but pay attention to those around you. Put your head down, work hard, be humble. We are extremely fortunate to do what we do. We get to make drinks and entertain for a living, travel the world and meet some amazing human beings. Be grateful.

1 4

**NAOMI LEVY**

CITY: BOSTON, MA

BAR: EASTERN STANDARD

**What makes you a good bartender?**

Making a delicious, well-balanced drink is just a small portion of what being a good bartender is all about. The rest is about being engaging, attentive and most importantly caring. I am genuinely invested in each of my guests having a wonderful time. The bar is my home and when you come into my home it is important to me that you feel taken care of whether you are trying my newest creation or just having a glass of water.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

I was the first person in my family to make



a career out of working in restaurants and bars. My little brother is now the second. I helped him get a bar backing job in college and he has worked his way up to bartender in one of the most renowned bars in DC. This year, he watched me compete in World Class. I found out how he was gushing to someone I know about watching me compete and how impressed he was. Nothing could make me prouder than making him proud.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

Event planning or perhaps teaching.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

I would love to have built a successful business by then and would like to be traveling a lot. Perhaps I'm the host of my own travel show? I think what is so wonderful about this business is the seemingly limitless possibilities when it comes to how you build your path.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

I have so many favorite moments from my travels: whether it is learning to Tango in a Milonga in Buenos Aires, watching Flamenco in the south of Spain, being invited to stay with a Priestess in Austria, or spending a night in a treehouse with my sister in Thailand. It is usually the meals or drinks I have shared with friends and family during those experiences that help make them so memorable.

1 5

**JORGE VARGAS-BAQUEDANO**

CITY: SAN JOSE, CA

BAR: JACK ROSE LIBATION HOUSE

**What makes you a good bartender?**

Besides making great drinks, I focus on hospitality and creating an experience for the guest. I want the guest to leave happy whether they just had one drink or we were able to have a conversation over dinner.

**What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?**

My proudest moment was when I developed my style of shaking. I like to add a Latino flair when I shake, a little like dancing salsa. It makes shaking entertaining for the guest.

**If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?**

Science is another one of my passions,

and if I weren't tending bar I would be a biologist working in National Parks around the country. Before I discovered tending bar, I went to school for zoology.

**What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?**

Either watching a great movie relaxing at home or going to the casino and playing in a poker tournament.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

In ten years, I will have hopefully made an impact on my local bartending community and will be enjoying being a dad to my first child due this August.

**What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?**

My go-to spirit is gin because I like the different botanicals found in the different brands. It poses a challenge for a bartender to understand the different brands and the cocktails that highlight them. My favorite drink is a Gin and Tonic because you can taste all the botanicals and it is refreshing any day of the year.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

My favorite moment was becoming a United States citizen earlier this year. Being a Peruvian native, it was an especially proud moment for my wife and me.





# BOURBON

## 101



BY JEFF CIOLETTI

**W**hen people talk about the worldwide whiskey renaissance, the first word that comes to most minds is bourbon. Sure, other styles are on fire at the moment—Irish, American rye, even Canadian—but the one that's got most of the globe talking is

America's native spirit. A couple of decades ago, producers could barely give the stuff away—it was “grandpa's drink” after all—but today bars in the most far-flung corners of the world (even Scotland!) have multiple shelves dedicated to the U.S.-made, corn-based whiskey.

### WHERE IS IT PRODUCED?

**Federal law dictates that only bourbon whiskey produced in the U.S. can be called “bourbon.”** And the U.S. has numerous trade agreements with other countries to enforce that restriction as well. It is most closely linked to Kentucky, where it originated, where about 95% of it is made and where the style's most iconic brands hang their hats (and they're the only ones that can claim the prestigious label, “Kentucky Straight Bourbon”).



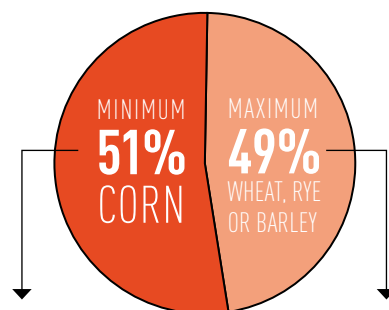
### DID YOU KNOW?

Because bourbon is so closely associated with Kentucky, many had assumed it took its name from the Bluegrass State's Bourbon County. However, that notion has been challenged and largely debunked. Many historians assert that it's more likely bourbon took its name from Bourbon Street in New Orleans. True, most of the distillers were in Kentucky, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a large number of the spirit's drinkers were in the Big Easy (sent there via the Mississippi River). Eventually people started referring to the whiskey as “that stuff they drink on Bourbon Street,” or so the story goes.

**BOURBON ST**

### WHAT'S IT MADE FROM?

The first rule (and there are several) is that bourbon's mash bill must be at least 51 percent corn (though many go considerably higher). The remainder tends to be wheat, rye, barley or any combination of those.



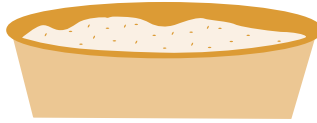
## HOW IS IT MADE?

Decisions to be made at the distilling stage include the ratio of corn/grains; types of yeast; and distillation strength and barrel strength.

- 1** The grains are milled into flour and cooked with water.



- 2** After the mash is cooled to a temperature hospitable to yeast, it's time to ferment, usually for around three days. It produces a beer-like beverage often referred to as "distiller's beer."



- 3** That liquid is then distilled to no more than 160 proof and must then go into the barrel at no more than 125 proof (it's diluted with water to bring the proof down).



- 4** In order for it to be called "straight bourbon" it must be aged for two years. Top brands age for at least four years. If the maturation period is under four years, the label must have an age statement. If there's no age statement, it's safe to assume it's spent at least four years in the barrel.

## NOW ABOUT THOSE BARRELS...

It can be argued that bourbon was the first purposefully wood-aged whiskey style. The barrel rules and regimens continue to play a huge role in the finished product.

- THE BARRELS MUST BE MADE OF NEW AMERICAN OAK
- THE INSIDE IS CHARRED
- THEY MAY NOT BE USED AGAIN FOR BOURBON—ONE AND DONE

But lucky for Kentucky, the wood needn't be retired. Bourbon rules may dictate single use for the barrels, but most other whisk(e)y styles have no such requirement. Ex-bourbon barrels have held everything from Scotch to Japanese whisky (ex-Sherry casks are quite

popular as well), for varying periods of time, depending on the particular flavor profile the distiller wishes to achieve. The used bourbon casks are more in demand than they've ever been, especially as barrel-aged craft beers have become all the rage.



BARRELS ARE ONLY USED ONCE FOR BOURBON, BUT ARE IN HIGH DEMAND FOR FINISHING OTHER WHISKIES



## WATER, WATER

The distinctiveness of Kentucky bourbon owes a great deal to the limestone-rich water in the state, known for its alkalinity (high pH, the opposite of low-pH acidity) and its minerality.



## FEATURED BRAND ELIJAH CRAIG



### BATCH BY SMALL BATCH

Elijah Craig embraces not only bourbon's historic origin, but also its current-day quality and range of expressions. The brand is named for the Rev. Elijah Craig, aka the "Father of Bourbon," the man who first stored his whiskey in barrels that had been charred in a fire. Production of Elijah Craig Bourbon remains unapologetically hands-on.

### SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

The brand's most important expression, Elijah Craig Small Batch, was first introduced in 1986, before the term "small batch" was ever popularized. Among its signature qualities:

- Made from 8- to 12-year-old bourbon, Small Batch delivers perfectly balanced taste; smooth yet full-flavored, thanks to extra aging
- Each batch is bottled exclusively from a dumping of 200 barrels or less
- New premium packaging brings enhanced shelf presence

### CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Elijah Craig Small Batch was awarded a double gold medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. It has twice been awarded "Best of the Best" from Whisky Magazine. And in 2014, the Small Batch won a Gold Medal at the WSWA Spirits Tasting Competition.

### THE GOLD RUSH

2 oz Elijah Craig Small Batch  
¾ oz Domaine de Canton  
½ oz Fresh lemon juice

Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass, add ice and shake until well chilled. Strain into a cocktail glass and garnish with a Luxardo cherry.





## COMMON USES...

### SIPPING:

- Higher-end bourbons are meant to be savored, often with a drop or two of water to open up the flavor, or over one large cube of ice.
- Ditto for barrel-proof bourbons (anywhere from 110 to upwards of 140 proof).
- While higher-end bourbons would make amazing cocktails, keep in mind that means letting the other ingredients dilute and overshadow something people pay a premium for.



### OLD FASHIONED:

- The Old-Fashioned actually fits the original definition of “cocktail” published in 1806: spirit, bitters, water and sugar. Typically served over ice.
- Bourbon, rye or other available whiskies were likely the main ingredient in the originals; brandy was also commonly used.
- There are many variations; common components beyond the core four ingredients are a slice of orange peel (with just enough fruit to juice the rim) and a cocktail cherry.



### SELLING POINT

Although it did not become official until 1964, bourbon is the only distinctly American spirit. And it has never been better and more varied in options as it is today. For whiskey novices, bourbon is a good choice because its taste profile is sweeter than malt whiskies. Connoisseurs will relish the various single-barrel, high-proof and limited-edition bottlings. And as **America's spirit**, it makes a great gift, at diverse price points.



### MANHATTAN:

- It shares a lot in common with the Old Fashioned, except for the addition of vermouth.
- Ice plays a less prominent role in the final pour; usually it's shaken with the bourbon, bitters and vermouth, but the liquid often is strained out, sans cubes.



### MINT JULEP:

- A staple of the weeks surrounding the Kentucky Derby, the Mint Julep is made with muddled mint, simple syrup, bourbon and crushed ice, garnished with a sprig of fresh mint (pretty much like a snow cone for adults).
- Its proper vessel: a shiny metallic cup (most are stainless steel or silver plated; fancier ones are pewter and even sterling silver).



### FEATURED BRAND JIM BEAM BLACK



#### RAISING THE BAR WITH EXTRA AGE

With bourbon sales on fire, product line extensions have proliferated. Among the most notable: Jim Beam Black, which just took home top honors—the “Bourbon Trophy”—at the International Wine & Spirits Competition (IWSC). This 86 proof Jim Beam Black ages years longer in white oak barrels than original Jim Beam. It appeals to whiskey drinkers who are looking to “trade up” and spend a little more on their bourbon. This expression demonstrates the impact of extra aging: a more advanced, complex bourbon experience—full-bodied, with smooth caramel and warm oak notes.

## BOURBON & TENNESSEE WHISKEY BY THE NUMBERS\*

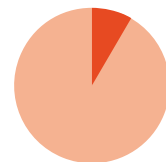
2015 TOTAL VOLUME {INCLUDING FLAVORED WHISKIES}:

**22.9 MILLION CASES**

VOLUME CHANGE  
2014-2015: **↑ +6.4%**

2015 TOTAL  
SUPPLIER REVENUE:  
**\$3.1 BILLION**

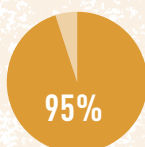
VOLUME SHARE  
OF SPIRITS:  
**10.3%**



SOURCE: IWSR U.S. BEVERAGE ALCOHOL REVIEW

## BOURBON FUN FACTS

**1** Kentucky produces 95% of the world's bourbon supply, but by definition it can be produced in any state.



**2** Though all bourbon must be aged, there is no minimum aging requirement; products labeled straight bourbon whiskey must be aged at least two years.



**3** Before Prohibition there were over 2,000 distilleries in Kentucky; now there are fewer than 30.



# KENTUCKY BOURBON BY THE NUMBERS

(EXCLUDES BOURBONS OUTSIDE THE BLUEGRASS STATE)

2015 PRODUCTION VOLUME:  
**1.9 MILLION BARRELS**

 = 200,000 BARRELS



VOLUME IN  
GALLONS:  
**APPROXIMATELY  
100.7 MILLION**  
{1 BOURBON BARREL=53 GALLONS}  
**THE HIGHEST SINCE 1967**

BOURBON  
INVENTORY IN  
KENTUCKY [TOTAL]:  
**6.7 MILLION  
BARRELS**  
**LARGEST SINCE 1974.**

SOURCE: KENTUCKY DISTILLERS ASSOCIATION

## WHAT'S IT TASTE LIKE?

- **Corn** gives it a sweeter profile than malt whisky
- **Caramel and vanilla** are the more pronounced notes, thanks to the barrel
- There also can be **spicy hints**, as well as a bit of nuttiness

The non-corn grains play a significant role in the overall profile:

- **High-rye** bourbons bring a lot of the grain's spicy character
- **Wheated** bourbons tend to be softer and a touch sweeter

## TYPES OF BOURBON

- **Straight Bourbon:** Bourbon that must be aged for at least two years
- **Kentucky straight bourbon:** Must be made in Kentucky
- **Small Batch:** Bourbon from a small number of barrels—the definition of “small” varies from distillery to distillery and there's no set standard
- **Single Barrel:** Everything in that bottle came from a lone barrel
- **Barrel Proof:** Bourbon bottled at the strength from which it emerged from the barrel without the addition of water to bring down the ABV

**4** The first bottled bourbon was sold in 1870; prior to that, the whiskey was shipped in barrels directly to taverns.



**BACK TO  
BASICS**

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improve your Wine & Spirits Education

FEATURED BRAND  
**OLD HICKORY**  
GREAT AMERICAN WHISKEY



## BOTTLED HISTORY

Deeply rooted in America's bourbon tradition, Old Hickory Great American Whiskey delivers character reminiscent of Andrew Jackson, acclaimed U.S. President, General and Statesmen. “Old Hickory,” as Jackson was known, was a connoisseur of fine whiskey, and enjoyed his own blend from a distillery on the grounds of his Tennessee plantation home.

## HALLMARKS OF OLD HICKORY

- Each expression of Old Hickory is made from 100% brand-owned stocks.
- All the corn is sourced from farms within a 250-mile radius of the distillery.
- Water used to distill Old Hickory is drawn from glacial aquifers dating back 1.2 million years which formed the Ohio River basin as it looks today.

### Old Hickory White Label

**Proof:** 86 proof, the traditional “perfect proof” preferred historically by American distillers

**Character:** Rich and near mahogany in color; intense spice and oak aromas; bold, masculine style, with notes of cedar and gingerbread

**Finish:** Long, with hints of pie crust and sweet tobacco

**Usage:** modern whiskey cocktails and bourbon connoisseurs



### Old Hickory Black Label

**Proof:** 80 proof (combination of bourbon and whiskey)

**Character:** Amber in color; attractive aromas of cherry custard, pistachio gelato and almond nougat; silky texture; medium-to-full bodied taste

**Finish:** lingering flavors of white toffee, dried cherry and honey custard

**Usage:** traditional mixing or sipping straight







Te Motu Vineyard, Waiheke Island



Murdoch James Estate, Martinborough

# NEW ZEALAND'S ZIP

LED BY THEIR ICONIC SAUV BLANC, NZ VINTNERS KEEP GAINING SHARE

BY W. BLAKE GRAY

**M**ost countries experience ups and downs with exporting wines to the United States. Australia's hot, then it's not. Argentina's the next big thing, and then it's scrambling to maintain shelf space. New Zealand, though, just goes up and up, even with a fresh tidal wave of Sauvignon Blanc about to crash on our shores.

New Zealand had a huge harvest in 2014: nearly 30% bigger than its previous high, which was 2013. That's a lot of wine to sell, and for most countries it would mean a challenge, but the market drank it up. After a normal-sized 2015 harvest, this year's harvest is super-sized again, almost as big as 2014. But don't expect many discounts.

Last year sales of New Zealand wines in the U.S. were up 17% by volume and 18% by value in the stores Nielsen measures. And that's par for the course. New Zealand exports to the U.S. have nearly quadrupled in volume since 2006, according to New Zealand Winegrowers. There has not been a single year with a dropoff, not even in economic crisis years.

"If you look at the amount of wine consumed in the U.S., it's about 375 million cases," said David Strada, U.S. Marketing Manager for New Zealand Winegrowers. "We're still less than 2% of the country's consumption. We're still little New Zealand."

That is certainly the public perception, and it doesn't hurt. In reality, New Zealand exports more wine than Portugal or Argentina.

## Hobbit Power and Beyond

"When Sauvignon Blanc started getting really strong, from about the early 2000's on, at that time, there were the Lord of the Rings movies," says Ken Mudford, Director of Inventory for Sherry-Lehmann



Brancott Estate, Marlborough





Te Mata Estate, Hawke's Bay



Palliser Estate, Martinborough

Wines and Spirits in New York. “There was the America’s Cup, which New Zealand won at that time. You couldn’t open the *New York Times* without there being an article about New Zealand of some kind. An awful lot of people visit New Zealand, too. Tourism is a major factor. When you do an in-store tasting, it’s amazing how many people have been to New Zealand. It always surprises me.”

Sherry-Lehmann might have more New Zealand wine than anywhere else in the U.S., with 140 SKUs, according to Mudford. Amazingly, less than half are Sauvignon Blancs.

But that’s an aberration. For all the media attention to Central Otago Pinot Noir, 93% of the Kiwi wine exported to the U.S. is white, and 86.5% of New Zealand’s total world exports are Sauvignon Blanc.

“They found a real niche with their Sauvignon Blanc,” says Terry Southard, a wine buyer for The Wine Library in New Jersey. “That trademark style really caught on. Not to mention, it’s a very affordable wine. Between \$10 and \$15 they’re able to make a Sauvignon Blanc that’s affordable and we’ll be able to make a good margin.”

You wonder when that gravy train is going to end. New Zealand increased its planted hectares by 50% in the last nine years. But many of the plantings are not Sauvignon Blanc, which means the country must sell more of its other

varieties. The locals are helping—unlike export-focused Chile and South Africa, New Zealand has a healthy domestic wine market, with consumption up 24% last year alone.

New Zealand makes excellent Chardonnay (9% of the country’s plantings) and Riesling, as well as Pinot Noir that can be pricey. They’re not completely on America’s radar yet, but Gary Itkin, general manager and buyer for Bottlerocket Wine & Spirit in New York says, “It’s not a big stretch for people.”

In fact, Itkin thinks a key reason that New Zealand wine hasn’t faced the kind of backlash that Australian wine did is it “checked the boxes” for sophisticated wine drinkers from the beginning: “They started with regional identification,” Itkin says. “It was New Zealand, it was Marlborough. It was New Zealand, it was Martinborough. There were already demarcated areas. When Australia was working through its popularity, it didn’t really matter where [wine] came from. It just became a general wine. It was Shiraz, that’s it. Every country has regional differences, but if people aren’t told it’s important, they don’t learn it’s important.”

So there’s no reason to expect this wave to lose its potency anytime soon. Even with no more Hobbit movies on the horizon, Middle Earth’s wine industry just stays magical. ■

Pegasus Bay Winery, Waipara



## SAUVIGNON BLANC

- Dog Point
- Giesen
- Greywacke
- Matua
- Saint Clair
- Seresin
- Sileni Estates
- Tohu
- Villa Maria

## PINOT NOIR

- Ata Rangi
- Craggy Range
- Felton Road
- Neudorf
- Peregrine
- Quartz Reef
- Rippon

## OTHER

- Amisfield Pinot Noir Rosé
- Craggy Range Riesling
- Giesen Riesling
- Huia Brut sparkling wine
- Kumeu River Chardonnay
- Te Mata Cabernet Merlot



# SAKÉ SAVOIR FAIRE

WITH A NEW SHAW-ROSS PARTNERSHIP, GEKKEIKAN TAKES THE SAKÉ CATEGORY IN THE U.S. TO THE NEXT LEVEL

BY KRISTEN BIELER

**G**ekkeikan is the largest supplier of saké in the U.S. Yet all that Yoshi Yumoto, VP Brand Manager for Gekkeikan, sees is untapped potential.

While there is talk of a saké “boom” of late, it remains a small category, and one which Americans still have much to learn about. “We are trying to drive the shift from the traditional saké accounts like Asian restaurants into mainstream accounts like Italian restaurants and bars,” Yumoto explains. “Interest from sommeliers and mixologists is fueling this, and chefs are recognizing just how food-friendly saké is. Our job is to educate them.”

Yumoto is a patient man—he’s started preaching the saké gospel on behalf of Gekkeikan nearly 30 years ago, back when the entire saké category was less than ¼ million cases in the U.S. (today Gekkeikan alone will sell nearly ½ million cases) and he’s still at it.

Many wine and spirits trade professionals are unfamiliar with the basics, such as temperature: “Serving saké hot is an American phenomenon that began when it was introduced here over 50 years ago. Premium sakés are best served chilled.” And shelf life: “Saké has a shorter shelf life than wine—ideally it’s consumed within a year of bottling. But once opened, it stays drinkable longer than wine—it’s good for two or three weeks in the refrigerator.”

## AT A GLANCE

**Traditional Gekkeikan’s** biggest seller, this Junmai is semi-dry and delicious in cocktails. SRP: \$6.99 - \$8.99 for 750ml

**Black & Gold:** “A saké for saké drinkers,” describes Yumoto, this is fuller-bodied than most sakés and savory. SRP: \$14.99

**Suzaku A Junmai Ginjo**—meaning that 40% of the rice grain has been polished away—this is remarkably smooth, creamy and fruit-driven, and one of Gekkeikan’s fastest growing sakés. SRP: \$24.99

**Horin:** This Junmai Daiginjo—the highest grade of saké and one of Gekkeikan’s finest offerings—is ultra-smooth and creamy on the palate, with delicate layers of apple, lime zest, honeysuckle and eucalyptus flavors and an extra-long finish. SRP: \$45

**Nigori:** This roughly filtered saké has a rich, creamy texture and appealing tropical flavors; it’s taking off with younger consumers. Yumoto recommends serving this extra-chilled. SRP: \$13.99

**Zipang:** Packaged in 250ml single serve bottles, this lightly sparkling Junmai saké is lightly sweet with true saké character coming through in flavors of ripe melon and peach (and only 7% abv). SRP: \$6



## Engaging Millennials

Gekkeikan is an old company: Passed down through 14 family generations over 370 years, dating back to 1637, it’s one of the oldest family-owned companies in the world. Yet it’s also one of the more innovative saké producers today.

The company introduced the Saké Meter Value on the back of bottles to communicate levels of sweetness, and released single-serve cans and bottles which have taken off with younger drinkers. “We want to find the balance between being accessible to U.S. consumers while still being authentic,” says Yumoto. A particular hit has been Zipang Sparkling Saké which is served in many nightlife venues such as New York’s Dream Hotel. “Saké Sangria has been very successful—and new flavors, like the Zipang Peach and Mango [release date Winter/Spring 2017].”

With seven large breweries in Japan and one in California (built in 1989), Gekkeikan is finding the majority of their growth here is being fueled by premium offerings like Horin and Black & Gold. It’s a strategy that the company’s new U.S. importer partner, Miramar-based Shaw-Ross International Importers LLC, is in line with.

“We are firmly focused on the premium side of the saké business,” says Yumoto. “And with our new partnership we are prepared to reach many more consumers who have yet to discover this ancient beverage.” ■

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Since 1637



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The Gold Medal Winning, ultra-premium Junmai Daiginjo sake with a flawless finish.

### SUZAKU

A Premium Ginjo sake with a smooth, creamy and light fruit finish.

### NIGORI

A "coarse" filtered sake that is naturally sweet with essences of peach, banana and mango.



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# INTRODUCING 'TEAMCHATA'

## RUMCHATA JOINS FORCES WITH BARTENDERS AND JACK DANIEL'S FOR ON-PREMISE GROWTH

BY JACK ROBERTIELLO



Caribbean Cream made with equal parts RumChata, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey and coconut vodka.

Proving there are always exceptions to the rule, the rum cream liqueur brand RumChata has successfully established itself as a stylish sipper in a category that has otherwise seen significant volume losses in the past few years. And now there are signs that the liqueur brand has started to blend over into the world of mixed drinks.

Especially with whiskies, RumChata has become a popular component in various party concoctions and has simultaneously made inroads into the on-premise environment. And the supplier took a major leap late last year to expand that whiskey mixability trend when it struck a partnership with Jack Daniel's, tying into Jack Daniel's Tennessee Fire and Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey.

"The partnership originated from the organic bartender and consumer trend of mixing RumChata with flavored whiskies such as Jack Honey [aka Honey Chata] and Jack Fire [aka Cinnamon Toast]," says Tom Maas, RumChata Founder and Master Blender.

The ongoing campaign consists of co-branded print and trade ads in lifestyle and beverage publications; dual/triple branded tool kits; an increased trade and consumer media spend; and on-premise national account menu placements. Both brands created recipe videos on YouTube as well as seasonal cocktails.

RumChata—a proprietary mix of five-times distilled Caribbean rum, fresh

cream, cinnamon, vanilla and other spices—has shown category-busting growth since its launch in 2009. The brand topped half a million cases for the first time in 2014 and is now available in large international markets like Canada, Australia, Spain, Germany, Great Britain and Mexico.

One factor helping spur RumChata's growth is that it contains one-third less butterfat compared to most cream liqueurs. Even more important, with widespread experimentation and steady sharing of recipes, especially on social media, the brand has experienced a boom in mixability both at home and at bars, says Maas.

### Fanning Social Media

"Everything from straight bourbon to the many different flavors like maple and cinnamon and honey, even Irish whiskey, are being mixed with RumChata," Maas says. "Many bartenders started experimenting with RumChata and started sharing those recipes over social media, which really exploded. Social media has been absolutely huge for RumChata in terms of both consumers and bartenders sharing recipes."

For example, recently the RumChata Caribbean Cream cocktail, made with Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey, received more than 34,000

likes and was shared more than 20,000 times on the RumChata Facebook page. The drink, made with equal parts RumChata, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey and coconut vodka, is then shaken and strained into a Martini glass, harkening back to the sweet Martini trend of the early 2000s.

Other drinks have also garnered attention. The RumChata White Lightning shot cocktail, made with two parts RumChata and one part whiskey or bourbon, is becoming very popular. "RumChata naturally brings out the subtle flavors of the whiskey. In particular, with bourbon, RumChata does a wonderful job of enhancing the caramel, vanilla and oak notes," says Maas.

The impact of this turn to sweet and strong creamy drinks is showing, says Maas. "In our core markets we sell 40% of our volume on-premise. Nationally it ranges around 20%, but it is growing as we expand the on-premise distribution outside our core states."

And the brand is looking to extend its off-premise reach with a novel twist with MiniChatas: 25ml serving cups filled with real RumChata. Perfect for hot or iced coffee, the shelf-stable MiniChatas are specially packaged for resale—SRP \$12.99 for a box of 15. And after testing in IL, WI and FL, they are now available nationally. ■





1



2



3



4



5



6

### 1. BIG RED WINERY 2014 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, PASO ROBLES

This Cabernet Sauvignon is a premier example of Paso Robles quality: big country that promises and delivers big red wines, like this Cabernet. Bolstered by 10% Petite Sirah, rich, harmonious flavors of ripe plum, black cherry and berries mingle with subtle notes of loamy earth, vanilla and sage, closing with fresh fruit on the finish. After your first glass, it's perfectly clear why it's called Big Red. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

**\$ SRP: \$19.99**  
[bruncowine.com](http://bruncowine.com)

### 4. ABERFELDY 16-YEAR-OLD SINGLE MALT SCOTCH

More mature than the popular 12-year-old and with a little less body than the coveted 21-year-old, Aberfeldy 16 presents a new version of the classic Highland-style malt. Aberfeldy's process—using water sourced from the Pitilie Burn, where alluvial gold mingles with the malt—gives the whisky distinctive honey notes. Aberfeldy 16 will join the John Dewar & Sons' single malt portfolio this fall.

**\$ SRP: \$89.99**  
[dewars.com](http://dewars.com)

### 2. LVOV VODKA

Royal Wine Corp. is proud to introduce LVOV, a premium vodka from Poland. It is distilled and filtered 4 times through an activated carbon and candle process, giving the spirit clarity and refinement. Gluten-free—as it is made exclusively from the finest potatoes—LVOV offers a slightly herbal aroma with a touch of sweetness and minerals as well as a creamy finish. Available nationally; 750ml, 1L and 1.75L.

**\$ SRP: \$15/750ml**  
[royalwine.com](http://royalwine.com)

### 5. SEVEN DAUGHTERS MOSCATO & PINOT NOIR CANS

Seven Daughters, a Terlato Wines brand, has launched two wines in convenient 250ml cans: the award-winning Moscato from Italy and Pinot Noir from prime California vineyards. Perfect for a day at the beach or any adventure on the move, the new cans are specially lined to preserve varietal character and consistency and contain the equivalent of two 4.2 oz glasses of wine.

**\$ SRP: \$14.99/4-can pack**  
[terlatowines.com](http://terlatowines.com)

### 3. CONDE DE LOS ANDES RIOJA

The Murua family, owners of several Rioja bodegas, bought Conde de los Andes in 2014 as an ambitious recovery project. The first fruits of their labors are about to be released: a dry Blanco and a red Tempranillo, as well as a Semi-Dulce (semi-sweet white) and limited amounts of the 2001 Tempranillo (library release; SRP \$80). Grapes come from approximately 49 acres within the revered Rioja Alta subzone, from vines more than 50 years old.

**\$ SRP: \$30-\$50**  
[quintessentialwines.com](http://quintessentialwines.com)

### 6. DONNAFUGATA 2015 SICILIAN WINES

Two wines from Donnafugata's "Fresh and Fruity" collection showcase indigenous Sicilian grape varieties in a fresh and juicy style. The 2015 Donnafugata "SurSur" Grillo derives its name from the Arabic word for cricket, the voice of spring; it resonates with bright peach and grapefruit with hints of herbs. The 2015 Donnafugata "Sherazade" Nero d'Avola, like its namesake narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, is enchanting, presenting aromas of strawberries and raspberries with hints of mild pepper.

**\$ SRP: \$20**  
[foliowine.com](http://foliowine.com)



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new  
products

## 7. PAUL MASSON PINEAPPLE & APPLE BRANDIES

Paul Masson, one of America's leading brandy producers, has added two new flavors. Paul Masson Pineapple is a delicate balance of the original brandy with overtones of candied pineapple and tropical fruit aromas. Paul Masson Apple delivers notes of fresh green apple, balanced by the warm notes of the brandy. Both are 54 proof and available in 50ml, 200ml, 375ml, 750ml and 1.75L.

**\$** SRP: \$11.99/750ml  
**globe** [cbrands.com](http://cbrands.com)

## 10. NOVO FOGO 'GRACIOSA' CACHAÇA

Novo Fogo is an award-winning, organic Brazilian cachaça handcrafted at a zero-waste distillery at the edge of the Atlantic Rainforest. Their brand new "Graciosa" expression is aged for two years in repurposed oak and then 18 months more in castanheira do Pará (Brazil nut wood) barrels, yielding a vibrantly aromatic yet creamy character. Scents of pecan and orchids lead into cherry custard on the palate, finishing with clove and anise. 86 proof.

**\$** SRP: \$34.99  
**globe** [novofogo.com](http://novofogo.com)

## 8. KIM CRAWFORD HOLIDAY BOTTLE

Kim Crawford, the #1 Sauvignon Blanc in the U.S., has unveiled their first ever limited-edition holiday bottle. Festively adorned with gold metallic detailing, this seasonal bottle is perfect for the holiday table, parties and gifts or even a stocking stuffer. This seasonal Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc will be available nationwide beginning in October.

**\$** SRP: \$17.99  
**globe** [kimcrawfordwines.com](http://kimcrawfordwines.com)

## 11. CODE ROUGE 'BRUT ETERNAL'

Gérard Bertrand, a leading producer of South of France premium wines, is pushing the envelope for the region's sparkling wine. His new Cremant de Limoux—a blanc de blancs made with Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc and Mauzac—is the result of meticulous blending of the various terroirs and grape varieties, aged on the lees for a minimum of 36 months. The provocative red bottle will turn heads, the Alpha and Omega symbols evoke the cycle of nature that inspired the name "Brut Eternal."

**\$** SRP: \$28  
**globe** [gerard-bertrand.com](http://gerard-bertrand.com)

## 9. LAURELWOOD 2014 PINOT NOIR, WILLAMETTE VALLEY, OREGON

Oregon's Willamette Valley enjoyed an ideal growing season in 2014. This 100% Pinot Noir, crafted by winemaker Bob Stashak, was whole-berry fermented in small open-top bins and hand-punched; then aged in neutral French oak, preserving the ripe fruit. The wine shows black cherry, blackberry and currant flavors framed by spicy vanilla. The finish is luxurious as gentle tannins dissipate. Only 1,000 cases produced. Marketed by Bronco Wine Co.

**\$** SRP: \$25.99  
**globe** [broncowine.com](http://broncowine.com)

## 12. TWISTED SHOTZ 'TAILGATE PARTY PACK'




The folks at Twisted Shotz are launching a "Tailgate Party Pack," just in time for football season. The multipack features their five most popular flavors—Rattlesnake, Washington Apple, B-52, Whipped Chocolate and Root Beer Flirt—so there's something to please everyone. Each individual Twisted Shotz combines two liqueurs in one double-chambered shot glass to conveniently bring the party wherever it happens to be. Alcohol by volume is approximately 20%.

**\$** SRP: \$16.99/15-shot pack  
**globe** [twistedshotz.com](http://twistedshotz.com)

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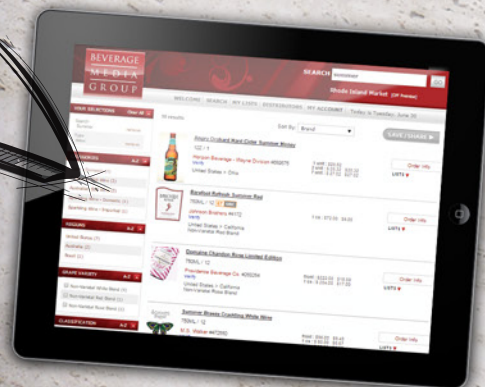
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