BEVERAGE JOURNAL
CONNECTICUT

MAY 2024

Search & Order Online with
TheBeverageJournal.com



THE NEW ECONOMICS OF CRAFT BREWING

WHERE DOES HARD SELTZER STAND?

POWER IN TASTE

100% Naturally Gluten-Free / In Small Batches



MYSTERY EXCLUSIVE
Juneteenth 2024 bottle



NEW RELEASE

1.75L SIZES
8x DISTILLED

- 1.75L Black Momma New York Vodka
  100% NY Corn; Charcoaled Filtered
- 1.75L Black Momma Vodka (Red Label)

ORDER NOW ON PROVI.COM

BLACK MOMMA VODKA

blackmommavodka @blackmommavodka

blackmommavodka.com | gravesandebraxtondistillers.com | 631-880-5650

Please Drink Responsibly. Gravesande Braxton Distillers 74 N. 19th Street, Wheatley Heights, NY 11798

BEVERAGE JOURNAL
CONNECTICUT

MAY | 2024











FEATURES

38
RETAIL REVIEW
New Hartford's Signature Wine & Spirits brings its own brand to life.

40
CPSA NEWS
Colorado's wine in grocery stores is a warning for Connecticut.

43
WHITE WINES OF RIOJA
In a continuation from last month, white grapes get the spotlight.

44
SERVING UP
New Norwalk venue The Pompano offers a seaside inspirational spritz.

48
THE ECONOMICS OF CRAFT BEER
How breweries are staying afloat amid declining sales.







54
LINKING WINE WITH NATURE

Chilean wine brand Natura is partnering with 1% for the Planet.

56
TWO CONFERENCES JOIN FORCES

DISCUS and Women of the Vine & Spirits hosted a sold-out three-day joint event.

60
THE FUTURE OF HARD SELTZER

Sales may be down, but the category remains popular.

DEPARTMENTS

5 Issue Highlights
6 News Front
10 Around Town
37 Regulatory News
42 CRA News
45 New Products
47 Wine Buzz
52 Profile: J. Lohr's New Riverstone Labels
58 Profile: Catena's Lightweight Bottles

Page 1a The Index

Liquor Brand Index | Wine Brand Index | Beer Brand Index

The largest compilation of beverage alcohol price and brand information.

HOW BEER, WINE AND SPIRITS GET TO THE MARKETPLACE

BEVERAGE JOURNAL
CONNECTICUT

MAY 2024

Volume 90 Number 5

{ISSN 0744-1843}

PUBLISHER
GERALD P. SLONE
gerry@thebeveragejournal.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR/EDITOR
DANA SLONE
dana@thebeveragejournal.com

SUBSCRIPTION/RETAIL & BAR SERVICES
BRIAN SLONE
brian@thebeveragejournal.com

DESIGN
EVAN FRASER
evan@thebeveragejournal.com

CONTENT COORDINATOR
SARA CAPOZZI
sara@thebeveragejournal.com

Subscriptions & Renewals

$43 FOR **ONE YEAR**
$73 FOR **TWO YEARS**

$11 FOR **SINGLE COPY**
(Includes shipping and handling)

All sales are final.

Send checks and renewals to:
PO Box 185159
Hamden, CT 06518

thebeveragejournal.com **203.288.3375**

Published Monthly By: Beverage Publications, Inc; 2508 Whitney Avenue, P.O. Box 185159; Hamden, CT 06518 is devoted to all liquor, wine and beer licensees as described by the Department of Consumer Protection, Liquor Control Division.

Nothing may be reproduced or uploaded without written permission from the publisher. This includes articles, pictures, pdf files, online or electronic versions. Not responsible for unsolicited material or advertising claims.

The opinions expressed here are that of the individual authors and not necessarily the views of Beverage Publication, Inc. We reserve the right to reject any material that is flawed due to content or design.

All advertisements and price list advertising are subject to the approval of The Beverage Journal which reserves the right to edit, reject or properly classify.

Periodicals postage paid at New Haven, CT.
Postmaster: Send address changes to:
CT Beverage Journal, P.O. Box 185159, Hamden CT 06518
DO NOT FORWARD.

BMG BEVERAGE MEDIA GROUP
PROVI
SevenFifty

National Coverage, Local Advantage
The Beverage Network Publications are served by: Beverage Media Group, Inc.
2444 Morris Ave., Suite 318
Union, NJ 07083
www.beveragemedia.com
www.provi.com
www.sevenfifty.com

Please Recycle This Magazine

Issue Highlights

Hello, May! Springtime is really here and with that we see the annual uptick of portfolio shows, trade tastings and special market guests. Expect to see pours and more in this month's edition—always in our Around Town section (and the next few forthcoming)—as we offer recaps from large-scale wholesaler and supplier showcases. Make sure we know about your events too.

This issue is filled with a variety of stories. Craft beer has surely seen its ups and downs. The cover story focuses on the industry's several decades of growth through recent struggles, as brewers and brands rethink local market metrics. A rival rising category for consumer dollars—hard seltzer—is among the factors impacting craft beer, but it, too, has an ebb and flow. A secondary feature looks deeper.

Locally, the Connecticut Package Stores Association reviews the past year in Colorado, where an initiative backed by big dollars from the grocery lobby enabled sales of wine outside of wine shops and liquor stores. The same efforts that take place here in the Nutmeg State—but with a different legislative process—have, so far, remained at bay. It's no secret that the biggest detriment to community package stores is what happens when wine is allowed in grocery and big-box stores. It's a gateway for change that is not a positive one where today so many thrive. And as you will read, it is not just stores who are in danger … it's also smaller importers and wholesalers. Stay involved with your state trade associations. Each year, the stakes are higher.

We celebrate retailers each month in many ways, covering your in-store news and charitable events but also notably through Retail Review. By spotlighting stores, we share to trade readers, buyers, sellers, legislators, regulators and consumers the unique role of these businesses. Want to be showcased? Just ask! It's no cost: it's news. Opening up insight into your operations helps put a human face to the business—and that's often lost in one industry-shaking change or another. We also celebrate on-premise with the monthly cocktail-centric Serving Up recipe. Our role is not just to convey who is selling what but to advocate for the trade—and it starts within.

Cheers,
Dana



Dana

Dana Slone
Managing Director & Editor



ON THE COVER

Cover Credit: Adobe Stock.

CONNECT WITH US

Find us on Facebook
@BVJonline

See our pics on Instagram
@beveragejournalctri

Find us on LinkedIn
@Beverage Publications, Inc. (CT & RI Beverage Journals)

Search & Order from TheBeverageJournal.com, powered by SevenFifty & Provi.

RODNEY STRONG PRESIDENT CASTALDI RETIRES

Rodney Strong Wine Estates announced in March that Carmen Castaldi, who has served as President of the Sonoma County-based company for nearly 20 years, is retiring. He will serve as Senior Adviser to the Board. The company will not hire a new president and will have a trio of executives running operations, announcing the promotion of Anthony "AC" Capobianco to Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Capobianco, along with Tobin Ginter, Chief Financial and Operations Officer, and Justin Seidenfeld, Senior Vice President of Winemaking and Winegrowing, will collaboratively oversee operations and lead the organization moving forward. Rodney Strong Wine Estates includes Rodney Strong Vineyards, Davis Bynum Wines, Knotty Vines, Upshot Wines and Rowen Wine Company. The group sustainably farms 12 estate vineyards across almost 1,200 acres.

CONSTELLATION BRANDS' GLAETZER TO LEAD WINE & SPIRITS DIVISION



Constellation Brands appointed Sam Glaetzer as the company's new Executive Vice President and President, Wine and Spirits Division, effective March 11. Glaetzer succeeds Robert Hanson. In addition to Glaetzer's new responsibilities leading the division, he will also serve as a member of Constellation's Executive Management Committee. He brings nearly 30 years of wine and spirits industry experience to the role. He joined Constellation Brands in 2014 as Managing Director of the company's New Zealand and Australian operations and over the past decade has held a number of leadership capacities in general management, international commercial sales, supply chain operations, product quality, new product development, acquisition integrations and divestitures. Most recently, Glaetzer served in the role of Senior Vice President, Global Operations and International Sales, at Constellation.

DARIOUSH APPOINTS AVERY AS PRESIDENT



Napa Valley's Darioush appointed Chris Avery as President. Avery has worked in the wine industry for nearly 20 years, and he most recently served as the President of Patrimony Estate and Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing at DAOU Vineyards & Winery. Prior to that, he served as Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Opus One and held leadership roles at Hundred Acre Wine Group and Jordan Vineyard & Winery. "Chris has decades of experience working with iconic wine brands that are household names for lovers of luxury, high-end Cabernet Sauvignon," said Proprietor Darioush Khaledi. "He joins our highly dynamic, long-tenured team of senior managers, including our daughter Sally, and will continue to evolve the Darioush brand and embrace our mission of creating unparalleled wine, and delivering one-of-a-kind hospitality experiences to our guests."

EMPSON USA MAKES STRATEGIC HIRES

Empson USA announced new strategic appointments in March. Giovanni Caveggia joins the importer as the Director of Portfolio Management, a newly created key role within the organization. With more than 25 years of experience in the growth of Italian brands, he will directly engage with Italian wineries, spearheading the expansion of Empson USA's Italian portfolio. Prior to joining the company, Caveggia held the position of Director of Italian Brands – Heritage Division at Winebow Imports and served as the NY/NJ Wholesale Manager for Vias Imports. Empson USA also strategically expanded its presence across the United States by appointing several new Regional Managers, notably Cameron Dauterive, who will serve Connecticut, Maine and Rhode Island. He was formerly a Sales Representative at Hartley & Parker Limited, Inc., in Connecticut.

BEAM SUNTORY NAMES ALVARADO TO BRANDS ROLE



Beam Suntory appointed Constellation veteran John Alvarado as U.S. Chief Brands Officer in April. Across a 25-year career, Alvarado has held senior brand marketing roles at Keurig, Dr. Pepper and Constellation Brands, where he served as Senior Vice President of Marketing, leading efforts on Corona and other brands. He contributed to 44 consecutive quarters of growth for Constellation Brands and developed a portfolio of brands based on differentiated positionings and unique stories, Beam Suntory noted. In particular, he brings deep understanding of U.S. Hispanic and Latin American markets, the company said. He also worked on the Jim Beam brand from 2003 to 2006. He will be based in Chicago. The company also named Bryan Dedeker as Regional General Manager for the U.S. East Division. Dedeker has been with Beam Suntory for nearly 12 years.

The Beach
BY
Whispering Angel

THE ROSÉ THAT MAKES WAVES



AN OCEAN FRIENDLY ROSÉ

Wine, © 2023 Moët Hennessy USA, Inc., New York, NY Please Drink Responsibly

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

CONECUH BRANDS ADDS TO SALES LEADERSHIP



Conecuh Brands LLC announced the addition of two new members to its sales leadership team. Pam Loch joins the company as Vice President of National Accounts, On-Premise, and Bill Nolan assumes the role of Vice President of National Accounts, Off-Premise. In their respective roles, Loch and Nolan are responsible for accelerating the growth of the Conecuh Brands portfolio across key national account customers in both the on- and off-premise channels. Since its inception in 2014, Conecuh Brands has become an incubator of super-premium spirits brands. Its portfolio has expanded from a single Clyde May's Whiskey SKU to a portfolio of super-premium bourbons, ryes, cask strength and single barrel expressions. Conecuh has also launched the award-winning Próspero Tequila brand, resurrected the dormant McConnell's Irish Whisky trademark and acquired the global sales and marketing rights to Van Gogh Vodka.

INDUSTRY'S ALAN DREEBEN PASSES AWAY



Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC) announced the passing of company partner Alan Dreeben on March 25. With nearly five decades of industry experience, Dreeben was pivotal in shaping the company's growth trajectory. From his humble beginnings at E. & J. Gallo Winery to his instrumental role in the formation of Republic National, his journey was marked by dedication, passion and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Dreeben began his career path in 1966 at E. & J. Gallo Winery. He was part of a pioneering leadership training program and reported directly to Ernest Gallo. He played a vital role in RNDC's growth, serving as Vice Chairman and Director, followed by continued involvement after retiring in 2020. Throughout his career, he demonstrated an exemplary adherence to both his professional endeavors and his community. His leadership extended through numerous charitable organizations and educational initiatives, including bringing the Wine & Spirit Education Trust certification to the United States. His tireless advocacy for causes close to his heart, from health care to mentorship and education, serves as a testament to his generous spirit, representatives said in a media release.

WSET LAUNCHES NEW SAKE QUALIFICATION

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) launched its new Level 2 Award in Sake I qualification in April. WSET currently offers the Level 3 Award in Sake and the Level 1 Award in Sake, which were launched in 2014 and 2016, respectively. In the last 10 years, more than 17,000 students around the world have taken a WSET sake qualification, with most coming from Japan, the UK, the U.S. and Hong Kong. The Level 2 Award in Sake will complete WSET's suite of sake qualifications. Building on the Level 1 Award in Sake, it will explore in more detail topics including sake production, types of sake, how to serve the drink and factors affecting its flavors. The course also builds tasting skills using WSET's globally recognized Systematic Approach to Tasting to equip students with a universal language to describe what they are tasting and a framework for assessing quality. The WSET Level 2 Award in Sake focuses on how the ingredients used by brewers are processed and combined to create the different styles of sake. It will also teach students how to describe and assess the quality of the sakes they taste.

BRONCO WINE CO. MOURNS FOUNDER'S PASSING



The Franzia family and Bronco Wine Co. announced the passing of John G. Franzia, remembered as a cherished father, a founding partner and an esteemed figure in the wine industry. Franzia peacefully passed away on March 25 in Modesto, California, at the age of 84. In 1973, he co-founded Bronco Wine Co. with his cousins, Fred T. and Joseph S. Franzia, with a vision to craft high-quality wines accessible to all. A trained enologist from UC Davis, he was a true farmer at heart, believing that the essence of great wines begins from exceptional vineyards. He will be fondly remembered for his fierce love for his family, his exceptional craftsmanship in winemaking and his passion for all things outdoors, particularly fly-fishing. His visionary leadership led Bronco Wine Co. to pioneer state-of-the-art winemaking facilities, shaping the industry's standards. His enduring legacy will forever inspire future generations, the family's statement reported.

SoNo Vodkas



The Newest Top-Rated Vodkas to Quench your Summer Thirst



HANDMADE IN CONNECTICUT

PRODUCED, BOTTLED AND DISTRIBUTED BY:

DOUBLE GOLD AWARD-WINNING DISTILLERY
SONO 1420 AMERICA'S MARITIME DISTILLERY

19 DAY STREET, NORWALK, CT · SONO1420.COM

100% Natural · Sugar-free
Gluten-free · Vegan
Average analysis per 1.5 fl. oz.
97 Cals, 0g Carbs, 0g Fat

SHOP WITH PROVI







Photos courtesy of John Tsipouras, Slocum & Sons.

FARMINGTON SHOWCASES DUCKHORN VINEYARDS WINES

Slocum & Sons hosted a pairing dinner featuring wines from Duckhorn Vineyards' Decoy Limited Wines portfolio at Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar in Farmington on Feb. 22. Guests enjoyed four courses of cuisine prepared by the Five Corners Bistro culinary team, each paired with a different wine from the Decoy Limited Wines portfolio. During the evening, guests tasted Decoy Limited Brut Rosé Sparkling Wine, Decoy Limited Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and Paraduxx Proprietary Red Blend. Founded under Duckhorn Vineyards' Decoy line, Decoy Limited wines are luxury wines offered at an accessible price point. Decoy has a long-established reputation for delivering exceptional-quality wines. Made by Decoy Limited Winemaker Dana Epperson, the new Napa Valley and Sonoma Coast wines in the blue label line are the latest among Decoy's commitment to producing attractively priced wines made from exceptional vineyard sources.

1. Michelle Faille, Manager, Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar; John Medonis, Chef, Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar; Christos and Despina Theodoropoulos, Co-owners, Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar; Ian Merriss, District Manager, The Duckhorn Portfolio; and John Tsipouras, Sales Representative, Slocum & Sons.
2. Ian Merriss, District Manager, The Duckhorn Portfolio discussing the evening's showcased wines with guests.
3. The fourth course, beef petite filet, espresso, candied sweet potato and cacao, was served with Paraduxx Proprietary Red Blend.





Photos courtesy of Connecticut Distributors, Inc.

CDI CELEBRATES SILVER OAK CELLARS

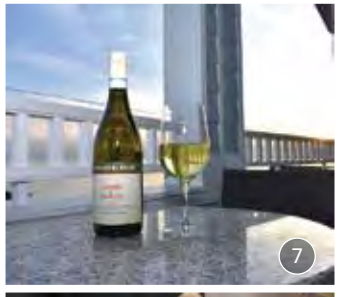
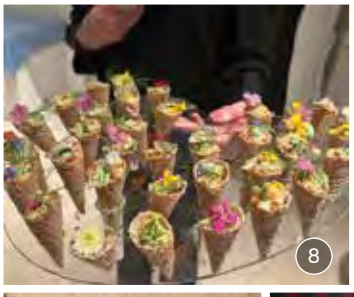
Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI), welcomed wines from Napa Valley's Silver Oak family of brands to its premium portfolio on March 22, which includes its two sister wineries, Timeless and Twomey. Founded in 1972 by friends Ray Twomey and Duncan and Justin Meyer with the goal to focus on a single varietal, Cabernet Sauvignon, Silver Oak's commitment to excellence extends through its recovery from a fire in 2006 to achieving the first LEED Platinum certification for a winery. Additionally, its Timeless Napa Valley honors Co-founder Ray Duncan and is crafted from grapes grown in the Soda Canyon Ranch terroir by Winemaker Nate Weis. Twomey, the explorative sibling winery of Silver Oak, offers a collection of world-class, small-batch Pinot Noirs and an estate Sauvignon Blanc. "Bringing Silver Oak, Timeless and Twomey into our portfolio is a privilege," said John Slocum, President, CDI. "Their unparalleled dedication to winemaking and sustainable practices aligns perfectly with our values, and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to sell these magnificent wines."

1. Jeff Flood, Director of Eastern Regional Sales, Silver Oak Cellars; John Slocum, President, Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI); Matt Katz, Northeast Regional Manager, Silver Oak Cellars; Jon Fredyna, Vice President of Marketing, CDI; and Paul Puhalla, Vice President of Sales, CDI.
2. Twomey Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, Twomey Russian River










MADISON EVENT CELEBRATES WOMEN IN WINE

Worldwide Wines, in collaboration with Madison Beach Hotel and the Madison Chamber of Commerce, hosted the Women in Wine Soiree at Madison Beach Hotel on March 8. Spearheaded by Worldwide Wines' Tanya Raisz Porcelli on International Women's Day, guests gathered for a talk from prominent women with careers in the wine industry, which included guest speakers Claudine Pépin, President, The Jacques Pépin Foundation; Grazia Pelosi, President, Worldwide Wines; and Amy Ezrin, Owner, Sandy Giovese and Partner, The Piedmont Guy. Each speaker discussed inclusivity and their experiences in the industry and answered guests' questions on how to be successful in their career paths. Guests enjoyed wines from Oddero, a family-owned winery in Piedmont run by women winemakers, paired with passed canapés from the culinary team at Madison Beach Hotel. During the evening, guests tasted Oddero Langhe DOC Riesling and Barbera d'Asti DOCG Superiore Nizza. The Women in Wine Soiree was the second in a two-part series hosted by the Madison Chamber of Commerce, with the TrailblazHer event kicking off the planned events on March 7.

1. Worldwide Wines, in collaboration with Madison Beach Hotel and the Madison Chamber of Commerce, hosted the Women in Wine Soiree at Madison Beach Hotel on March 8.
2. Rollie Wesen, Executive Director, The Jacques Pépin Foundation; Claudine Pépin, President, The Jacques Pépin Foundation; and Jacques Pépin.
3. Tanya Raisz Porcelli, Sales Representative, Worldwide Wines; Grazia Pelosi, President, Worldwide Wines; Amy Ezrin, Owner, Sandy Giovese and Partner, The Piedmont Guy; and Claudine Pépin, President, The Jacques Pépin Foundation.
4. Tanya Raisz Porcelli, Sales Representative, Worldwide Wines; Grazia Pelosi, President, Worldwide Wines; and Amy Ezrin, Owner, Sandy Giovese and Partner, The Piedmont Guy showcasing Sandy Giovese Vino Rosato, Vino Blanco and Vino Rosso.
5. Tony Pinto, Former Owner, Shoreline Wine Merchants, Guilford; Elisa Bramato, Owner, Esca Restaurant & Wine Bar; Sarah Reed, Bar Manager, Esca Restaurant & Wine Bar; Caron Besek, Sales Representative, Worldwide Wines; and Grazia Pelosi, President, Worldwide Wines.
6. Mary Polchaninoff, Host and Executive Producer, "Shore Things" on Valley Shore Community Television and Tanya Raisz Porcelli, Sales Representative, Worldwide Wines.
7. A glass of Oddero Langhe DOC Riesling on the patio at Madison Beach Hotel.
8. Lobster tartare cones with dill crema, yuzu, espelette pepper and passion fruit.
9. Braised short ribs with onion jam in phyllo cups.
10. A glass of Oddero Barbera d'Asti DOCG Superiore Nizza.
11. Sandy Giovese Vino Rosso, Vino Blanco and Vino Rosato.











Photos courtesy of Connecticut Distributors, Inc.

CDI TEAM VISITS TUTHILLTOWN SPIRITS DISTILLERY

Team from Connecticut Distributors, Inc.'s Considine and Vanguard divisions were treated to a visit to New York's historic Tuthilltown Spirits Distillery on March 8. The group toured the 200-year-old gristmill turned distillery, learning about its history and current innovative distilling practices, from founder Ralph Erenzo's goal to revitalize whiskey production in New York when he founded the distillery in 2003 to its position today as a leading craft spirits distiller. Gathering in the distillery's Visitor Center, which serves as its gift shop, tasting room and cocktail bar, the team enjoyed tastes of the Hudson Whiskey line. Each of the distillery's seven expressions are made from locally sourced grains and its current lineup includes Bright Lights, Big Bourbon New York Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Do the Rye Thing New York Straight Rye Whiskey, Short Stack New York Straight Rye Whiskey Finished in Maple Syrup Barrels, Back Room Deal New York Straight Rye Whiskey Finished in Peated Scotch Barrels, Four Part Harmony, New York Four Grain Bourbon, New York Straight Bourbon 5 Year Old and Hudson 3 Year Old Mets Limited Edition.

1. Team from Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI)'s Considine and Vanguard divisions were treated to a visit to New York's historic Tuthilltown Spirits Distillery on March 8.
2. The CDI sales team in front of Tuthilltown Spirits Distillery's tasting room and gift shop on March 8.
3. The group tasted through the Hudson Whiskey line.
4. The group toured the 200-year-old gristmill turned distillery, learning about its history and current distillation practices.
5. The CDI sales team enjoyed cocktails featuring Hudson Whiskey.

HAPPY 50TH Golden ANNIVERSARY

CAYMUS VINEYARDS

June Arrival



SLOCUM & SONS
FINE WINES & SPIRITS

NORTH HAVEN, CT • (203) 239-8000
ORDER AT STORE.SLOCUMANDSONS.COM

Slocum & Sons Hosts Spring Spirits Show

Slocum & Sons hosted a spring Spirits Show and cocktail competition at Spacecat Brewing Company in Norwalk on March 12. The event featured a variety of fine spirits from both domestic and international suppliers. Sales representatives and suppliers were on hand to discuss portfolio offerings with guests. A cocktail competition featuring local bar talent ran before and during the trade show.



1



2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9


10



11



12


13


14


15


16


17


18


19


20

1. Slocum & Sons hosted a spring Spirits Show and cocktail competition at Spacecat Brewing Company in Norwalk on March 12.
2. All of Slocum & Sons: Marco Conte, Account Development Manager; Jonathan Edwards, Account Development Manager; and Jeff Juliano, Regional Manager.
3. Christophe Dumoulin, Regional Manager, Western CT, Slocum & Sons.
4. Steve Poirier and Carl Duhoffmann, Preiss Imports.
5. Jerusha Torres, Four Roses Bourbon.
6. Litchfield Distillery's Peter Baker highlighting Litchfield Distillery Batchers' Straight Bourbon Whiskey and Brand Ambassador Douglas Maloney showcasing Litchfield Distillery Batchers' Double Barreled Bourbon Whiskey.
7. John Henry, Partner, El Buho Mezcal highlighting El Buho Mezcal.
8. Chris Stoltz, Northeast Regional Manager, Chopin Imports.
9. Jean and Lili de Montal, Château Arton.
10. Villionaire Brand Ambassador Heather Kekac.
11. Laura Kanzler, Trade Marketing Manager and Paige Shelton, Regional Sales Manager, Hotaling & Co.
12. Stephen Giles, Senior Regional Sales Manager – New York, Phillips Distilling Co. showcasing Prairie Organic Gin.
13. Tucker Reeks, Northeast Regional Manager, Dos Hombres Mezcal.
14. Robert Forman, Director of Spirits and Kate Cassidy, Northeast Regional Manager, Dalla Terry Winery Direct.
15. Sean O'Donnell, Senior National Sales Manager, Taconic Distillery and David Bolanos, Bar Manager, Fairfield County Hunt Club.
16. Eamon Rockey, Owner, Rockey's Botanical Liqueur.
17. Mike Dwelly, Northeast Brand Manager, Old Elk Distillery highlighting Old Elk Port Cask Finish.
18. Gary Pickard, Northeast Regional Manager, Pacific Edge Wine & Spirits.
19. Mallori Moffat, Luxury Account Manager, Clase Azul México.
20. Bryan Tiedemann, Founder/CEO, Dirty Pelican Organic Cocktail Mixers showcasing Dirty Pelican Mango Passionfruit Margarita.



1



2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9


10

VOTTO VINES HOSTS SPRING TRADE TASTING

Votto Vines hosted a spring portfolio tasting at its headquarters in Hamden on March 19. The event showcased a variety of white and red burgundy wines from Votto Vines' portfolio. Sales representatives and suppliers were on hand to discuss portfolio offerings with guests who paired small bites with selections.

1. Votto Vines hosted a spring portfolio tasting featuring burgundies at its headquarters in Hamden on March 19.
2. Domaine Damien Martin Bourgogne Pinot Noir, Domaine Michel Goubard et Fils Mont-Avril Rouge Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise, Domaine Paul et Marie Jacqueson Les Champs Martin Mercurey Premier Cru, Domaine Roy Cuvée Zélie Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune, Domaine Roy Auxey-Duresses 1er Cru Les Duresses, Domaine Doreau Monthelie Bourgogne, Domaine Doreau Monthelie Vieilles Vignes and Domaine Doreau Les Champs Fulliots Monthelie Premier Cru.
3. Adam Matthews, Sales Representative, Votto Vines highlighting Domaine Roy Auxey-Duresses Premier Cru Les Duresses.
4. Scrimaglio Piemonte Chardonnay Sparkling Brut, Scrimaglio Piemonte Rosso, Strade di Puglia Rosso and Val de Loire Sauvignon Blanc.
5. Mike Munk, Senior Vice President of Sales, Votto Vines pouring Samuel Billaud Chablis.
6. Domaine Françoise André Corton les Renardes Grand Cru, Domaine Françoise André Savigny-Les-Beaunes Les Vergelesses Premier Cru, Domaine Françoise André Beaune Les Bons Feuvres, Jean-Charles Fagot Pommard Les Cras, Jean-Charles Fagot Les Meix Grapin Rouge Bourgogne Côte d'Or Pinot Noir and David Renaud Irancy.
7. Irene Bececco, Sales Manager, Tenuta Bellafonte.
8. Tenuta Bellafonte Collenottolo Montefalco Sagrantino, Pomontino Montefalco Rosso and Sperella Montefalco Bianco.
9. A pour of Tenuta Bellafonte Collenottolo Montefalco Sagrantino.
10. Foncalieu Vallée des Pins Coteaux d'Aix en Provence Rosé and Endless Weekend French Rosé.
11. Hope Shiverick, Vice President, Shiverick Imports pouring a white burgundy.
12. Azienda Agricola Bianchi Nebbiolo Gattinara, Lorenzo Melani Brunello di Montalcino, Scrimaglio Barolo, Scrimaglio Barbaresco and Torrevento Castel Del Monte Riserva DOCG Vigna Pedale.
13. Domaine Michel Goubard et Fils Mont-Avril Rouge Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise 2019, Domaine Michel Goubard et Fils Mont-Avril Rouge Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise 2022, Domaine Doreau Bourgogne Aligote, Jean-Pierre et Alexandre Ellevin Petit Chablis, Domaine Paul et Marie Jacqueson Rully and Domaine Paul et Marie Jacqueson Rully La Pucelle Premier Cru.
14. A pour of red burgundy.


11


12


13


14



ACE DISTRIBUTING INTRODUCES NEW SOJU FLAVORS

Ace Distributing welcomed new soju Hodori to its portfolio in 2023 with flavors that include Blueberry, Passionfruit, Watermelon, Yogurt, Lychee, Strawberry and Mandarin. Now, three new flavors have joined the offerings from Hodori with Plum, Green Grape and Apple. Soju is a popular Korean spirit distilled traditionally from rice. Hodori (which means "tiger" in Korean) is produced in the traditional small-batch method that has been used for centuries. Hodori Soju is low in alcohol: The clear liquid is traditionally shared between friends and loved ones during meals together. Soju is also an innovative ingredient for cocktail creation or enjoyed with beer. With so many flavors for customers to choose from, Hodori Soju offers plenty of variety on shelves and bars.

Hodori Soju's new flavors: Plum, Green Grape and Apple. Valley Pinot Noir, Silver Oak Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Silver Oak Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and Timeless Red Blend 2020.







Photos courtesy of Freixenet Mionetto USA.

SLOCUM & SONS SHOWCASES BARBARESCO WINES

Freixenet Mionetto USA, in collaboration with Slocum & Sons, hosted a pairing dinner featuring wines from Italian producer Pertinace at Joanne's Table in Fairfield on March 20. Special guest and Export Manager Elena Orberto presented the wines to guests, providing the winery's history and its current sustainability initiatives. The evening began with a tasting of three varietals: Pertinace Dolcetto d'Alba 2021, the house wine of the region; Barbera d'Alba 2021; and Langhe Nebbiolo 2021. Guests tasted the new Barbera and Nebbiolo, both of which will be available in the market starting in July, concluding with a second flight of wines: Pertinace Barolo 2019, Barbaresco Classico 2019 and Barbaresco Cru Marcarini 2018. Located in the Piedmont region of Italy in Treiso, one of the three Barbaresco towns in the heart of the Langhe Hills, Pertinace's roots date back to 1973 and today it is part of a cooperative of 20 growers who continue to focus production on the Nebbiolo grape—the base for its Barbaresco Classico and single-vineyard Cru Marcarini and Nervo. Pertinace's environmental and sustainability efforts are recognized with the SQNPI Bumble Bee emblem as seen on its labels. The winery also boasts Equalitas certification for its efforts in promoting economic, social and environmental sustainability with environmentally sound agricultural methods and cellar practices.

1. Elena Orberto, Export Manager, Pertinace; Joanne Monroe, Joanne's Table; Asher Monroe, Joanne's Table; and Rachel Imbrogno, Senior Brand Development Manager, Luxury Portfolio, Freixenet Mionetto USA.
2. Rachel Imbrogno, Senior Brand Development Manager, Luxury Portfolio, Freixenet Mionetto USA and Elena Orberto, Export Manager, Pertinace.
3. Freixenet Mionetto USA and Slocum & Sons teams enjoying dinner featuring Pertinace wines at Joanne's Table in Fairfield on March 20.

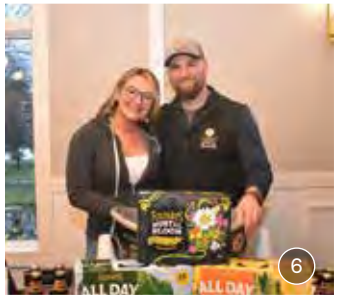






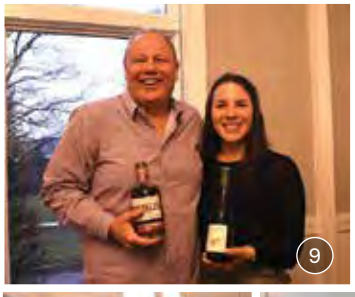


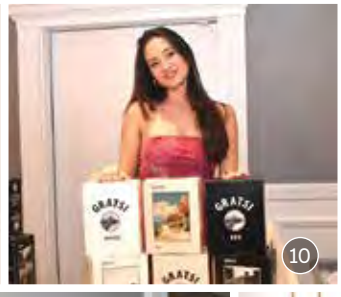










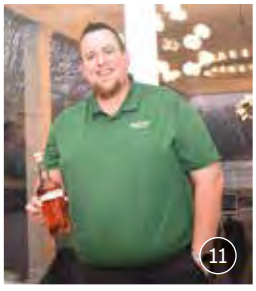


FARMINGTON CHARITABLE TASTING SHOWCASES BRANDSS

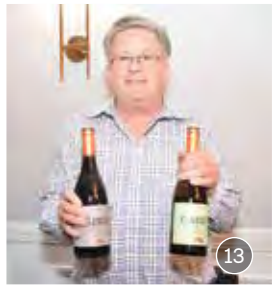
The Bottle Shop of Unionville, in partnership with the Farmington Community Chest, hosted its 12th annual Wine Beer & Spirits Tasting at the Farmington Polo Club on March 23. Representatives from suppliers and distributors poured a variety of beverage tastes for guests from 21 tables throughout the venue. Guests also enjoyed food catered by the culinary team at the Farmington Polo Club and cigars from The Penthouse Cigar Lounge. A portion of the event proceeds benefited the Farmington Community Chest and Farmington Police Benevolent Association.

1. The Bottle Shop of Unionville, in partnership with the Farmington Community Chest, hosted its 12th annual Wine Beer & Spirits Tasting at the Farmington Polo Club on March 23.
2. All Farmington Community Chest members except where indicated. **Top Row:** Joe Capodiferro; Nadine Canto; Bruce Urso, Owner, Bottle Shop of Unionville; Pamela Urso, Owner, Bottle Shop of Unionville; Nick Karangekis; Chelle Grande; Eleni Bouzakis; Molly Donovan; Ken Brickner; and Michelle Keough. **Seated:** Ann Kerr and Dan Kalosieh.
3. Gary Hovhanessian, Wine Manager, Bottle Shop of Unionville pouring Salentein Reserve Malbec.
4. Angela Salvatore, Brand Ambassador and Matthew Fagin, Sales Representative, Martignetti Companies.
5. Stephanie Lindsey, Sales Representative, Connecticut Distributors, Inc., showcasing Louis M. Martini Cabernet Sauvignon.
6. Alina Juliano and Sean Juliano, Southern New England Sales Representative, Founders Brewery.
7. Clint Johnson, Sales Representative, Allan S. Goodman highlighting Allumea Grillo-Chardonnay.
8. Alex Richardson, Sales Representative, Allan S. Goodman with the Old Forester Whiskey line.
9. Brescome Barton's Scott Perrault, Sales Representative and Stephanie Chenail, Zone Manager.
10. Sasha Suvorova, CT State Manager, Gratsi Wine.
11. John Lounsbury, Market Development Representative, Sazerac Company highlighting Traveller Whiskey.
12. Bill Grabek, Priam Vineyards pouring a rosé for a guest.
13. Bob Lindblad, Sales, Murphy Distributors showcasing Cabriz Reserva and Encruzado Reserva.
14. Mariette Slater, Brand Manager, Full Moonshine.
15. Hector Moran, The Penthouse Cigar Lounge.

See more at:
thebeveragejournal.com/farmington-fundraiser-2024











THE SUMMER OF MEXICANA

Your Cocktails Deserve an Award-Winning Tequila



POR AMOR

DonJulio

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.
DON JULIO Tequila. 40% Alc/Vol. Imported by Diageo Americas, New York, NY.







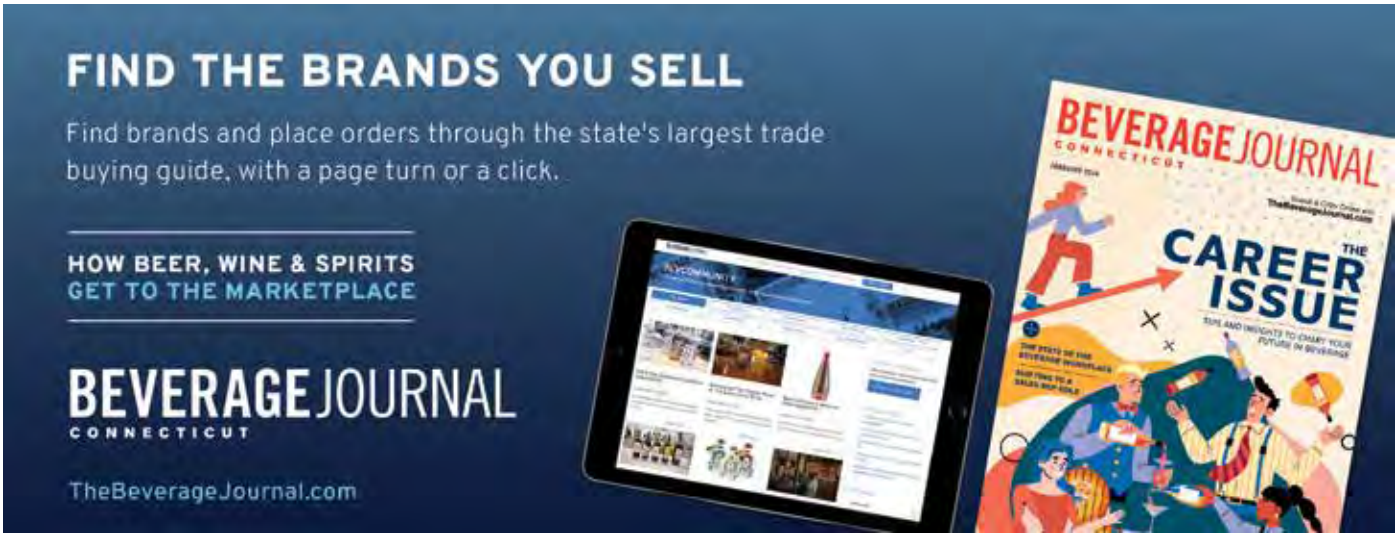




ANGELINI WINE LTD. BRINGS FLAVORS OF TUSCANY TO CONNECTICUT

Angelini Wine Ltd. showcased Tuscan portfolio selections paired with cuisine during several wine dinners, as well as on local television news, in March. Three wine dinners were hosted by Strega in Milford, La Marea Ristorante in Old Saybrook and South Bay in Fairfield, each featuring special guest Salvatore Ferragamo Jr. of Il Borro Wines. Ferragamo led guests through courses inspired by the flavors of Tuscany, expertly paired with organic Tuscan wines. The highlighted wine pairings ranged from Il Borro Borrigiano, Pian di Nova, Sparkling Rosé, Chardonnay and the iconic Super Tuscan Red, among offerings. During the winemaker's visit, Angelini Wines Ltd. and Ferragamo were featured on WFSB-TV Channel 3 Eyewitness News "Great Day Connecticut" on its recurring #winewednesday segment. Marcy Jones interviewed Ferragamo to learn more about the Ferragamo family's wine and take viewers on a virtual Tuscan journey at the Saybrook Point Resort & Marina, where the segment was shot.

1. Il Borro Borrigiano, a wine from the Ferragamo family, combines the elegance of the Sangiovese with the structure and spicy notes of the Cabernet Sauvignon: Sangiovese 70% Sangiovese and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13.5% ABV.
2. Salvatore Ferragamo Jr., Il Borro Wines; Danillo Mongillo, Chef, Strega; and Julius Angelini, Co-owner, Angelini Wines Ltd.
3. Channel 3 Eyewitness News "Great Day Connecticut" on its #winewednesday segment: Marcy Jones interviewed Salvatore Ferragamo Jr. at the Saybrook Point Resort & Marina.
4. Salvatore Ferragamo Jr. with Nino and Juliana Pisanzio, Owners, La Marea Ristorante with their daughter Alessia.
5. Vin Santo Occhio di Pernice 2015 paired with assorted desserts at South Bay, Fairfield.





1



2


3



4

HIGHLAND IMPORTS WELCOMES NEW BRANDS TO CONNECTICUT

Highland Imports welcomed new spirits and wines to its state portfolio. The first is Aupale Vodka, made with glacier water found in Baie-Comeau in Northern Quebec. The vodka is distilled seven times for an 80-proof luxury spirit that is corn-based, gluten-free, kosher and with no added preservatives. Aupale Vodka Seltzers combine the vodka with natural cold-pressed juices from disregarded fruits topped with rare New Zealand hops essence, sold in 4-packs of Grapefruit, Lemon Cranberry, Basil – Lime and Passion Fruit – Vanilla. Second, at 5.9% ABV, Brad's Blend of Rum & Cola Craft Cocktails combine a top-shelf four-year aged rum with cola in four all-natural flavors: Original, Coconut, Cherry Rum and Lite Cola blends in 12-ounce cans. Third is Stel+Mar, a lineup of 100% California wine. A sponsor of the National Park Trust, proceeds from every bottle sold are donated to help preserve national parks across the U.S. The winery offers its commitment to sustainability and minimizing environmental impact from vineyard practices to eco-friendly packaging. Under award-winning Winemaker Philip Zorn, Stel+Mar is available in Cabernet Sauvignon, Proprietary Red Blend, Rosé, Chardonnay, Sparkling Rosé and a forthcoming Sauvignon Blanc. And lastly, is Wetzel Estate Winery and Vineyard, a family-owned and -operated winery established in 1990, located in the Mid-Willamette Valley just outside of Dallas, Oregon. Its annual wine production is intentionally limited to maintain consistent premium quality across its brands. New to Connecticut are Chateau Bianca Pinot Noir and Chateau Bianca Pinot Gris, each 13% ABV.

1. Aupale Vodka and Vodka Seltzers in Grapefruit, Lemon Cranberry, Basil – Lime and Passion Fruit – Vanilla.
2. Brad's Blend of Rum & Cola Craft Cocktails in four all-natural flavors: Original, Coconut, Cherry Rum and Lite Cola.
3. Stel+Mar is available in Cabernet Sauvignon, Proprietary Red Blend, Rosé, Chardonnay, Sparkling Rosé and a forthcoming Sauvignon Blanc. Independent female artist Stephanie Cheng's vibrant labels adorn every bottle.
4. Wetzel Estate Winery & Vineyards Chateau Bianca Pinot Noir and Chateau Bianca Pinot Gris, each 13% ABV.

Connect with the trade community.

Let us help you showcase what's new in the local market each month, in print and online. New brands, great works and team efforts. Email us to find out how to get your news featured.

thebeveragejournal.com/community

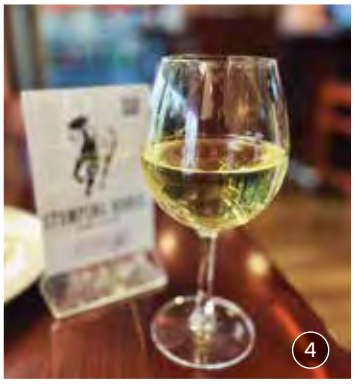
BEVERAGEJOURNAL BEVcommunity

















STOMPING HORSE WINES CONTINUES BRAND TASTINGS

Stomping Horse wines were showcased across multiple venues in Connecticut in March as part of the company's continued brand building with wholesaler Votto Vines. Stomping Horse was founded by Dawn Page, Steven Shewbrooks and Byron Brewer. Horse lovers, wine lovers and philanthropists, the team set out to create fine wine that brought together their passions in a fully realized Connecticut-based wine company whose offerings are bottled directly at the vineyard in Washington State's Columbia Valley. Stomping Horse Chardonneigh Washington Columbia Valley 2021, 100% Chardonnay, and Thoroughblend 2020, 65% Mourvèdre, 27% Syrah, 5% Grenache, 1% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Viognier are from Washington's Yakima and Columbia valleys. A summer launch of Rosehay, the brand's first rosé, is planned.

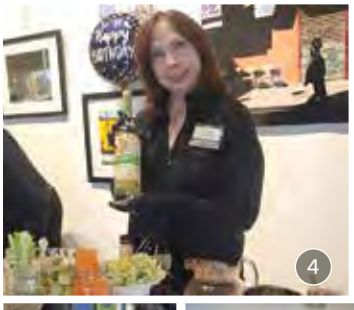
1. Stomping Horse Co-founders Byron Brewer, Dawn Page and Steven Shewbrooks at Kitch in Mystic Village.
2. Celebrating National Horse Protection Day on March 1 at Kitch in Mystic, Stomping Horse showed shoppers wine label model Trouper, an off-the-track thoroughbred and his barn mate, Mavis, also a rescue.
3. Stomping Horse Thoroughblend at Donahue's Madison Beach Grille in Madison.
4. Stomping Horse Chardonneigh at Recovery Room Restaurant in New London.
5. Stomping Horse wines at Scotland Spirits in Scotland.
6. Stomping Horse wines at Silva's Package Store in Waterford.
7. Stomping Horse is available at Flanders Fish Market & Restaurant in East Lyme.



1


2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9

Photos courtesy of Bridget Schulten, Fifth State Distillery.

COMMUNITY EVENTS HIGHLIGHT FIFTH STATE

Spirits from Bridgeport's Fifth State Distillery were showcased at several Fairfield County events in February and March. Fifth State Distillery Owners and Co-founders Bridget and Rob Schulten hosted a cocktail class with Chef Katie McKeon at the Westport Farmers' Market in February. The Bridgeport-based distillery presented a donation to Lori Cochran-Dougall, Executive Director, Westport Farmers' Market, during the occasion. Then, on March 3, Fifth State hosted a Bloody Mary Bar at the Farm to Barn Brunch at the Carriage Barn Arts Center in New Canaan. Guests enjoyed a brunch made with seasonal and local ingredients from New Canaan Farmers Market vendors and a Bloody Mary cocktail featuring Fifth State Simply Celery Vodka and Premium Vodka with their own added garnishes. Fifth State's ready-to-serve cocktails—which include Espresso Martini, Bee's Knees, Chocolate Old Fashioned and the new White Negroni—were showcased at the Taste of Stamford at Harbor Terrace on March 21. Founded by the Schultens, the award-winning Fifth State Distillery spirits uses Connecticut-grown, non-GMO corn to make its many gins, whiskeys, vodkas and liqueurs. Products include Fifth State Gin, Seville Gin, Vodka, Ginger Zap Vodka, Simply Celery Vodka, Wonderful Water Nutmeg Liqueur, Limoncello and CT Maple Whiskey, among them. The brand is self-distributed across Connecticut.

1. Cocktails featuring Fifth State Distillery spirits at the Westport Farmers' Market.
2. Bridget Schulten, Co-founder, Fifth State Distillery presenting a donation check to Lori Cochran-Dougall, Executive Director, Westport Farmers' Market.
3. Chef Katie McKeown, Contestant, "Hell's Kitchen" and Rob Schulten, Distiller and Co-founder, Fifth State Distillery at the Westport Farmers' Market.
4. Bridget Schulten, Co-founder, Fifth State Distillery at the Farm to Barn Brunch at the Carriage Barn Arts Center in New Canaan on March 3.
5. The Fifth State Bloody Mary Bar at the Farm to Barn Brunch featuring Fifth State Simply Celery Vodka and Premium Vodka.
6. Fifth State Simply Celery Vodka was featured in the event's Bloody Mary cocktail.
7. Guests at the Taste of Stamford on March 21 showcasing Fifth State Distillery spirits.
8. Guests at the Taste of Stamford at Harbor Terrace enjoying tastes of Fifth State Distillery spirits.
9. Fifth State Espresso Martini ready-to-serve cocktail at the Taste of Stamford.



Photos by Casey Goulden.

NEW HAVEN COCKTAIL COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS TUCK GIN

New Haven's Omni Hotel hosted a cocktail competition featuring Tuck Gin on March 18. The event was held in the hotel's Bar 19 venue. Twelve local bartenders competed making their best cocktails using Tuck Gin for judges, with Karina Soto of 1928 Cocktail Club emerging as the winner. Founded in Westport, Connecticut, by three friends, Tuck Gin takes its name from the Saugatuck River. The line includes Tuck Gin, Barrel Finished Gin (aged in French oak barrels previously used for red wine) and its Tuck & Tea canned line, which takes its gin and creates a noncarbonated canned cocktail blended with organic black and green teas and a small amount of pure cane sugar. Tuck Gin is distributed in the state by Connecticut Distributors, Inc.

1. New Haven's Omni Hotel hosted a cocktail competition featuring Tuck Gin on March 18.
2. Winner Karina Soto, 1928 Cocktail Club.
3. Karina Soto, 1928 Cocktail Club making her winning cocktail.
4. Soto's winning cocktail.

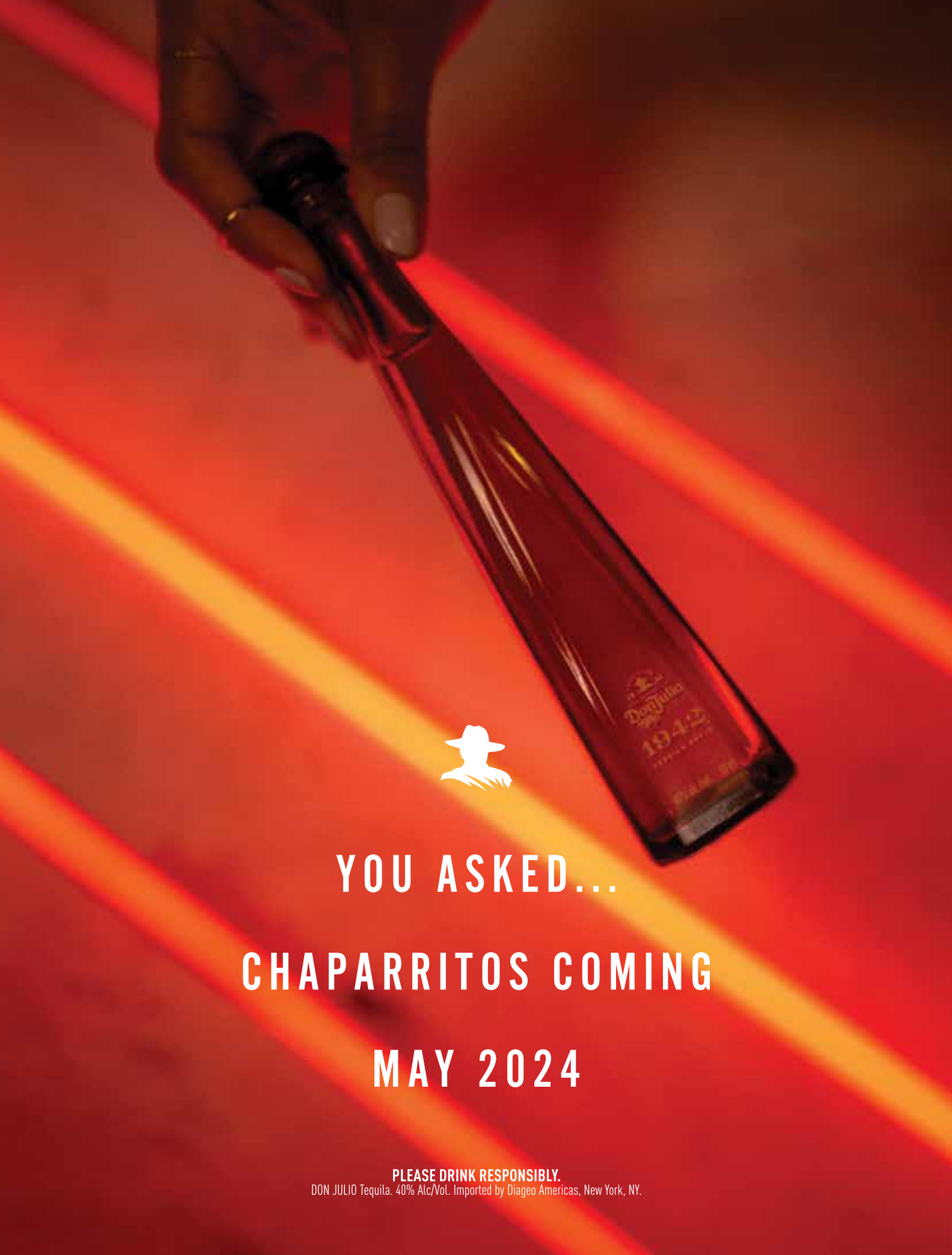


Photos courtesy of Marcia Passavant, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.

MEZCALUM FOUNDER VISITS KINDRED SPIRITS IN FAIRFIELD

Mezcalum mezcal was showcased during a visit and bottle signing with Erin Lichy, Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer, Mezcalum, hosted at Kindred Spirits & Wine in Fairfield in early March. Lichy was on-site with Marcia Passavant, Spirits Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., to lead a tasting and provide a background on the new artisanal mezcal brand. Co-founded by Erin and Abe Lichy of TV's "The Real Housewives of New York City," Mezcalum is an all-natural, artisanal spirit made from a hand-harvested, wild blend of agave and is double-distilled for a flavor that is light on smoke with complex undertones. The mezcal is made from non-GMO agave and has zero carbs, zero sugar and zero additives. The spirit is distributed in the state by Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.

1. Mezcalum mezcal was showcased during a visit and bottle signing with the brand's Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer Erin Lichy at Kindred Spirits & Wine in Fairfield in early March.
2. Mezcalum artisanal mezcal is made with 100% Espadín and Cuishe agave. It is clean and sustainably made from non-GMO agave with zero carbs, zero sugar and zero additives.
3. Guests with Erin Lichy (center), Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer, Mezcalum and Marcia Passavant (second from right), Spirits Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.
4. Mezcalum is an all-natural, artisanal spirit made from a hand-harvested, wild blend of agave and is double-distilled for a flavor that is light on smoke with complex undertones.
5. Erin Lichy, Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer, Mezcalum poured tastes and signed bottles for guests.



PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.
DON JULIO Tequila. 40% Alc/Vol. Imported by Diageo Americas, New York, NY.



Photos courtesy of John Tsipouras, Slocum & Sons.

HARTFORD DINNER SHOWCASES GLENDALOUGH WHISKEY

Kicking off St. Patrick's Day weekend, Slocum & Sons hosted a pairing dinner featuring Glendalough Irish Whiskey at Hartford's Trumbull Kitchen on March 14. Hosted by John Tsipouras, Sales Representative, Slocum & Sons, with special guest Brendan Crowley, Brand Ambassador, Glendalough Distillery, the St. Kevin and the Blackbird and Other Tales: A Glendalough Distillery Tasting Dinner paired Irish-inspired cuisine with tales of Irish saints. The Trumbull Kitchen bar team created a different themed cocktail for each course, highlighting Glendalough Wild Botanical Irish Gin, Double Barrel Irish Whiskey, Pot Still Irish Whiskey, Single Malt Mizunara Oak Finished Irish Whiskey and Single Grain Calvados XO French Oak Barrel Finished Irish Whiskey. Crafted in Ireland's Wicklow Mountains from hand-picked wild botanicals, the unique flavors of Glendalough Distillery's award-winning spirits are inspired by both its majestic surroundings and the legacy of St. Kevin of Glendalough, one of the patron saints of the Diocese of Dublin who is remembered for his love of the nature of Glendalough.

1. John Tsipouras, Sales Representative, Slocum & Sons; Brendan Crowley, Brand Ambassador, Glendalough Distillery; and Stephen Lewis, Manager, Trumbull Kitchen.
2. The St. Muirgen the Mermaid cocktail featuring Glendalough Wild Botanical Irish Gin, kombu, Lillet Blanc and lemon.
3. The first course, Wellfleet oysters on the half shell, with the St. Muirgen the Mermaid cocktail featuring Glendalough Wild Botanical Irish Gin, kombu, Lillet Blanc and lemon.
4. Public House Lamb "Stew"—whiskey-Dijon marinated lamb chops, baby carrots, black currant glaze, sweet peas and potato farls—was served with the St. Patrick and the Innkeeper cocktail, a blend of Glendalough Double Barrel Irish Whiskey, honey, thyme and lemon.
5. The third course, orange glazed duck breast and leg confit with spiced baby beets, Japanese turnips, white rose potatoes and apple and cress salad, was served with Glendalough Pot Still Irish Whiskey and Single Malt Mizunara Oak Finished Irish Whiskey served neat.
6. Dessert was an Irish apple crumb cake—cinnamon sponge cake, Calvados crème anglaise and vanilla bean—with the St. Gobnait and the Marauders cocktail featuring Glendalough Single Grain Calvados XO French Oak Barrel Finished Irish Whiskey, Yellow Chartreuse, Bénédictine and Angostura Aromatic Bitters.









LATITUDE BEVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS NORTHCROSS IRISH WHISKEY

Latitude Beverage Co. celebrated St. Patrick's Day with tastings of its Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey brand across Connecticut. In partnership with Vine Ventures, the team saw 18-plus retail events throughout the month leading up to the holiday. Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey is distilled and matured in Dundalk, Ireland, and made with the pure waters from the nearby Cooley Mountains. Crafted from a blend of double- and triple-distilled whiskeys and triple cask aged, the spirits mature in a combination of ex-bourbon barrels and Oloroso sherry and new American oak casks. Rich with aromas of graham cracker and honey, the whiskey offers flavors of chocolate syrup and beignets, giving way to creamy butterscotch and orange zest, with a long finish that showcases its sherry maturation. Latitude Beverage Co.'s growing portfolio of national wine and spirits brands also includes 90+ Cellars, Iron Side, Mija Sangria, Steel 43 Vodka, Tequila Zarpado and Wheel Horse Whiskey.

1. Branford's Coastal Wine & Spirits hosted Vine Ventures Brand Ambassador Marcia Waterford on March 8 for a Northcross Irish Whiskey tasting.
2. Big Gary's in Colchester hosted Vine Ventures Brand Ambassador James Fogarty with an Irish music backdrop for the Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey tasting event.
3. Danbury's BevMax hosted Vine Ventures Brand Ambassador Karen Hupchick on March 15 to taste Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey.
4. On March 15, Maximum Beverage in Farmington hosted Vine Ventures Brand Ambassador Deb Paradis with Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey.







MADISON BEACH HOTEL SHOWCASES HENDRICK'S GRAND CABARET

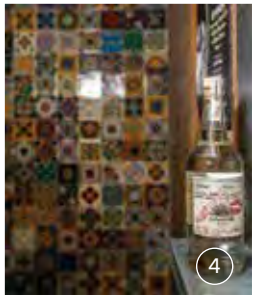
Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI), and Hendrick's Gin joined forces on April 3 at the Madison Beach Hotel for its monthly Crow's Nest Cocktail Club. Under the guidance of Lead Bartender Mike Mills, attendees were treated to the venue's innovative creation of the month, a cocktail aptly named Spring Is in the Air. The session highlighted Hendrick's Grand Cabaret as the star ingredient, which was artfully combined with amaro and Aperol to craft a unique blend that perfectly encapsulates the essence of spring. "This initiative showcases the versatility of Hendrick's Gin and solidifies Madison Beach Hotel's reputation as a hub for cocktail enthusiasts seeking new and exciting experiences," said Stacey Pabst, Trade Development Manager — William Grant, CDI. Made under Master Distiller Lesley Gracie as a limited-edition offering, Hendrick's Grand Cabaret offers stone fruit flavors, sweet herbs and rose scents.

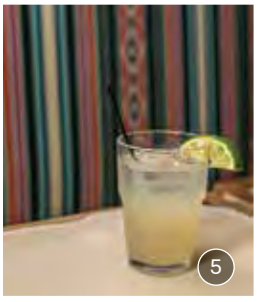
1. Hendrick's Grand Cabaret is the brand's newest limited-edition offering, with stone fruit flavors, sweet aromatic herbs and a smooth fruity finish.
2. Spring Is in the Air highlights Hendrick's Grand Cabaret combined with amaro and Aperol in a fresh spring cocktail.
3. Lead Bartender Mike Mills takes guests through the creation of the evening's cocktail, Spring Is in the Air.







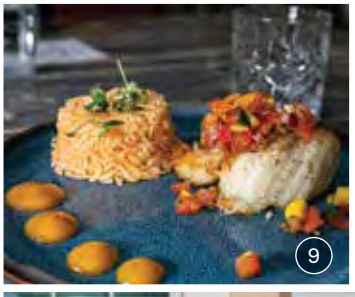


















Photos by Michael Leung.

MADISON PAIRING DINNER HIGHLIGHTS CASAMIGOS TEQUILAS

Brescome Barton hosted a pairing dinner featuring Casamigos Tequila at Comomango Mexican Kitchen & Cantina in Madison on March 20. Special guest Lee Einsidler, CEO, Casamigos Tequila, was on-site to provide guests with an educational exploration of the tequila line, joined by Brescome Barton's Gene Sepe, President and CEO; Veronica Saurett, Account Development Manager; and members of the Brescome Barton sales team. Guests enjoyed four courses of cuisine prepared by the culinary team at Comomango, each paired with a different expression of Casamigos Tequila. During the evening, guests tasted Casamigos Tequila in Blanco, Cristalino Reposado and Añejo expressions. Casamigos was famously founded by actor George Clooney along with entrepreneur friends and partners Rande Gerber and Mike Meldman. The brand was sold to Diageo in 2017 and is distributed in Connecticut by Brescome Barton.

1. Casamigos Tequila in Blanco, Cristalino Reposado and Añejo expressions were showcased during a Brescome Barton pairing dinner at Comomango Mexican Kitchen & Cantina in Madison on March 20.
2. All of Brescome Barton except where indicated: **Back Row:** Rachel Torre, Zone Manager; Don Riles, Senior Support Analyst; Anthony Germe; Gene Sepe, President and CEO; Donna Borzillo, Administrative Assistant; and Mike Heins, Trade Development Manager. **Front Row:** Lee Einsidler, CEO, Casamigos Tequila and Veronica Saurett, Account Development Manager.
3. Lee Einsidler, CEO, Casamigos Tequila and Kate and Marco Siguenza, Owners, Comomango Mexican Kitchen & Cantina.
4. Casamigos Jalapeño Blanco Tequila.
5. A margarita featuring Casamigos Tequila.
6. Lee Einsidler, CEO, Casamigos Tequila led guests through an education of the Casamigos Tequila line.
7. The first course, tortilla soup, with chipotle, garlic, chicken, red onions, peppers and tequila topped with Mexican crema, was paired with Casamigos Blanco Tequila.
8. The second course, lobster taco: pan-seared lobster with a touch of butter, topped with red cabbage, ripe mango and Jicama slaw, was paired with Casamigos Reposado Tequila.
9. The third course, pan-seared Chilean sea bass with Mexican rice topped with mango habanero pico de gallo, was paired with Casamigos Cristalino Reposado Tequila.
10. A taste of Casamigos Añejo Tequila paired with passion fruit mousse.
11. Veronica Saurett, Account Development Manager, Brescome Barton.
12. Casamigos Añejo Tequila.

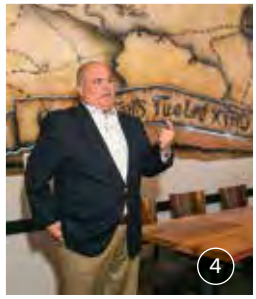


1



2


3

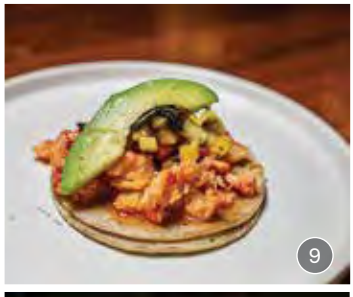

4


5


6


7


8


9


10


11


12

Photos by Michael Leung.

HARTFORD PAIRING DINNER SHOWCASES CAYMUS WINES

Slocum & Sons collaborated with Hartford's Fire by Forge for a pairing dinner featuring Napa Valley's Caymus wines at March 25. Scott Randall, Brand Manager, Slocum & Sons, presented the wines and gave a background on Caymus Vineyards' history and winemaking techniques. Executive Chef Van Hurd and his culinary team created a five-course menu, with each course paired with a different Caymus wine, including Caymus Red Schooner Transit No. 2, Mer Soleil Chardonnay, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Emmolo Sparkling Wine and The Walking Fool Red Blend. Founded by Lorna and Charlie Wagner Sr. in 1972, Caymus Vineyards is still 100% family-owned and -operated by Lorna and Charlie's son, Chuc, and family in the center of Napa Valley in Rutherford, California. The winery focuses on Cabernet Sauvignon, with grapes grown in low-fertility soils on the valley floor and its surrounding mountains using viticulture practices that influence its unique style of Cabernet.

1. Slocum & Sons hosted a pairing dinner featuring Caymus wines at Fire by Forge in Hartford on March 25.
2. Scott Randall, Brand Manager, Slocum & Sons; John Tsipouras, Sales Representative, Slocum & Sons; Van Hurd, Executive Chef, Fire by Forge; Justin Morales, General Manager and Hospitality Instructor, Fire by Forge; and Ben Dubow, Executive Director, Forge City Works.
3. Caymus Red Schooner Transit No. 2, Mer Soleil Chardonnay, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Emmolo Sparkling Wine and The Walking Fool Red Blend.
4. Scott Randall, Brand Manager, Slocum & Sons presented the wines to guests.
5. Justin Morales, General Manager and Hospitality Instructor, Fire by Forge.
6. Barback Ryan Maleryn pouring Caymus The Walking Fool Red Blend.
7. The first course, an oyster shooter, paired with Caymus Emmolo Sparkling Wine.
8. The second course, Berkshire pork belly with sweet and sour beluga lentils, truffled celery root and apple slaw, was paired with Caymus The Walking Fool Red Blend.
9. The third course, lobster taco with black truffle, mango salsa and avocado, was paired with Caymus Mer Soliel Reserve Chardonnay.
10. Tournedos Rossini, rubbed fillet of beef, Hudson Valley foie gras, potato gratin and wild mushroom madeira demi was served with Caymus Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.
11. Dessert, an Atlantic beach tart with saltine crust, lemon lime filling, whipped cream, Maldon sea salt and candied lime, was paired with Caymus Red Schooner Transit No. 2.
12. Guests Doug Barber, Andrea Hawkins and Alfred Loomer toasting with Caymus red wine.



Photos courtesy of SoNo 1420.

SONO 1420 HOSTS BARREL SELECTION TASTING IN NORWALK

Norwalk's SoNo 1420, America's maritime distillery, hosted the ownership and bar team from O'Neill's Irish Pub & Restaurant for a private barrel tasting and selection at its distillery and tasting room on March 27. Guests were led through a fun and interactive experience tasting different barrels of 1420 bourbon to choose their own barrel for their Norwalk restaurant, which will be ready to serve this summer. Through SoNo 1420's barrel select program, customers are able to choose either a full barrel, equivalent to 160 to 200 bottles, or a half barrel, equal to 80 to 100 bottles. Spirits have been aged between two to six or more years. Private barrels can be crafted from a blend of whiskeys that customers select from a variety of mash bills and custom aging and barrel-finishing options are available. SoNo 1420 was founded in 2019 by Ted Dumbauld, who launched the distillery after experimenting with hemp-based whiskey recipes. All of the brand's ultra-premium, award-winning spirits are crafted in historic South Norwalk on Day Street.

1. Donny Leahy, Partner, O'Neill's Irish Pub & Restaurant.
2. Ollie O'Neill, Co-owner, O'Neill's Irish Pub & Restaurant.
3. Pete Hastings, O'Neill's Irish Pub & Restaurant.
4. Bill McCarthy and Darren Pocsik, O'Neill's Irish Pub & Restaurant.
5. Bill McCarthy, Pete Hastings and Darren Pocsik, O'Neill's Irish Pub & Restaurant; and Ted Dumbauld, Founder, SoNo 1420.
6. Tastes of SoNo 1420 Bourbon.



MURPHY DISTRIBUTORS ADDS DERECHITO TEQUILA

Murphy Distributors announced the newest addition to its curated tequila portfolio: Derechito Tequila. From the heart of Jalisco, Mexico, Derechito Tequila's Founder and CEO Alberto Callejo hails from Spain and a winemaking family. Dedicated to craftmanship, Derechito uses only the finest blue Weber agave. "With Cinco de Mayo right around the corner, could there be a better time to add Derechito Tequila to our growing premium tequila lineup," said Matthew Murphy, President of Murphy Distributors. "It is exceptional." Derechito Tequila is crafted in a process that honors the traditions of tequila production. From agave fields to aging in fine oak barrels, every step is carefully executed to ensure a smooth and flavorful tequila experience. Murphy Distributors will carry all of the offerings from Derechito, including Blanco, Reposado, Añejo, Extra Añejo and a Rose tequila, which pays homage to Callejo's Spanish roots. The Rose tequila was a silver award winner in the 2023 Bartender Spirit Awards, while the Reposado took a gold in the 2022 London Spirits Competition.

WORLD'S BEST FLAVORED WHISKEY

CHILL YOUR BLAZE!



BLAZIN' LEMONADE

Double Gold Award-Winning
BLAZE Cinnamon Bourbon

Invigorating zest of lemonade

Succulent sweetness of peach juice

7% ALC/VOL · 14 PROOF

BLAZE CINNAMON BOURBON

Double Gold Winner + Best in Class Finalist
SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS COMPETITION

Handcrafted in small batches for the highest quality

Real, straight bourbon for an authentic whiskey flavor

100% Natural · GMO Free · Vegan

SHOP WITH PROVI

HANDMADE IN CONNECTICUT

PRODUCED, BOTTLED AND DISTRIBUTED BY:
DOUBLE GOLD AWARD-WINNING DISTILLERY
SONO 1420 AMERICA'S MARITIME DISTILLERY · 19 DAY STREET, NORWALK, CT · SONO1420.COM

Wethersfield Tasting Raises Funds and Spotlights Brands

Sammy's Buy-Rite Liquors, in collaboration with the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department, hosted the annual Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department Beer & Wine Tasting at the William J. Pitkin Community Center in Wethersfield on March 28. Representatives from local distributors and suppliers, along with fire department volunteers, poured a variety of fine wine, spirits and craft beer selections for guests. A portion of the proceeds benefited the Wethersfield Volunteer Firefighters Association Scholarship Fund.


1


2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9


10


11


12


13



















1. Tim DeGenarro, CT Account Manager, Drink Delta; Sam Shah, Owner, Sammy's Buy-Rite Liquors; and Rachel Thibodeau, Connecticut Distributors, Inc. (CDI).
2. Anthony Dignoti, Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director, Town of Wethersfield; Captain Marty Sitler, Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department; and Chief Brian Schroll, Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department.
3. Rachel Thibodeau, CDI showcasing Juggernaut Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.
4. Kassandra McCarthy, Sales Representative, CDI pouring RumChata Pineapple Cream.
5. John Tsipouras, Sales Representative, Slocum & Sons.
6. Cleigh Turley, Martignetti Companies highlighting Côte des Roses Art Edition Rosé and Surfside Iced Tea + Vodka.
7. James Dolney, Sales Representative, Worldwide Wines pouring a St. Francis red wine.
8. Rachael O'Connell, Sales Representative, Latitude Beverage Co. highlighting 90+ Cellars Lot 21 French Fusion.
9. Michael Mauro, Sales Representative, Opici Family Distributing highlighting Smith & Hook Cabernet Sauvignon and Wander + Ivy Red Wine Blend.
10. Dipak Patel, Sales Representative, Brescome Barton showcasing El Pino Club Sea Floored Pinot Noir.
11. Lisa Panteleakos, Regional Sales Manager, The Long Drink Company showcasing The Finnish Long Drink in Traditional Citrus and Peach.
12. Brand Ambassador Angela Salvatore showcasing Broken Shed Vodka.
13. Tara Brunelle, Brand Ambassador highlighting Wild-Arbor Original Liqueur and Marcia Passavant, Spirits Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., showcasing Mezcalum.
14. Debbie Licho, Co-owner, Waypoint Spirits pouring Waypoint Vodka Raspberry Iced Tea.
15. A guest with Obee Bird, Co-owner, Nineteen 70 Something Bourbon.
16. Vincent Melita, MD&S Distributors showcasing Root Out Root Beer Flavored Whisky.
17. Stephanie O'Connor, SoNo 1420 highlighting SoNo 1420 Single Barrel Whiskey.
18. Brand Ambassador Nayda Flores showcasing 'Merican Mule Light Mango Mule.
19. John Henry, John Henry Co. highlighting Paul Sutton Bourbon.
20. Steve Turpak, Stormalong Cider showcasing Stormalong POG Punch.
21. Haily Connelly, Highland Imports highlighting La Sueca Sangria.
22. Wayne Crow, Regional Sales Representative, Connecticut Valley Brewing Company showcasing Connecticut Valley Spiked Smoothie Cherry Pie.

See more at:
thebeveragejournal.com/wethersfield-fire-dept-fundraiser-2024

Monsieur Touton Selection Hosts April Portfolio Tasting

Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., hosted a spring trade tasting at BAR in New Haven on April 3. Guests enjoyed a walkaround tasting of Monsieur Touton's portfolio offerings with unique wines from regions within France, Italy, Spain and the U.S., accompanied by pizza from BAR. Staff from Monsieur Touton Selection, along with supplier representatives, were on hand to pour and discuss selections, with domestic and imported spirits among highlighted tasting opportunities.



1


2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9


10


11


12

























1. Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., hosted a spring trade tasting at BAR in New Haven on April 3.
2. All of Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.: Nathan Cloutier, CT Sales Manager; Richard Zenick, Wine Consultant; Gregory Tousignant, Sales Representative; Marcia Passavant, Spirits Manager; Aaron Sumpter, Wine Consultant; Andrew Healey, Sales Representative; Franck Girard, Assistant Vice President of Sales; and Gary Grunner, Vice President of American Portfolio Wine and Spirits.
3. Gary Grunner, Vice President of American Portfolio Wine and Spirits, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.
4. Dan Cote, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., highlighting Domaine Montrose Solis Lumen Rosé.
5. Celine Della Ventura, Bordeaux Grand Cru Classe Portfolio Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.
6. Guillaume Nadal, Bernard Magrez Portfolio Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., showcasing Bernard Magrez Le Château Pape Clément.
7. Kim Aliczi, Wine Educator, Serious Wining Wine Tasting Events highlighting Louis Pommery Carneros Chardonnay.
8. Nico Bentivenga, Wine Consultant, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., showcasing Bellavista Franciacorta Brut Alma Grande Cuvée.
9. Matsu El Recio, Matsu El Picaro, Alona Rioja Anadidos, Hacienda Lopez de Haro Reserva and Hacienda Lopez de Haro Crianza.
10. Lorea Amatria, Brand Manager, Bodegas Lan showcasing Bodegas Lan Culmen Reserva.
11. Paul Gardiner, Sales Representative, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., and Mike Pulvertaft, Founder, Wild-Arbor.
12. Anna Brunel, Brand Ambassador, Union des Vignerons des Côtes du Rhône highlighting Domaine Galuval Cairanne La Montagne.
13. Francois Xavier Chaillou, Wine Sales, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.
14. Celeste Borders, International Sales Director, RGNY.
15. Jamie Bossard, Sales, Bouchaine Vineyards showcasing Bouchaine Estate Pinot Noir.
16. Van Potts, President and Founder, Preston-Layne & Partners highlighting Keenan Cabernet Sauvignon.
17. James Russo, Northeast Division Manager, Paradise Brands LLC showcasing Monkey in Paradise Vodka.
18. Tesseron XO Cognac, XO Perfection Cognac, XO Ovation Cognac and Composition Fine Champagne Cognac.
19. Shravan Dilawri, Partner, Filibuster Distillery and Guests Karishma and Arun Lillaney, Liquor World.
20. Marcia Passavant, Spirits Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd., highlighting Kojiki Japanese Whisky.
21. Mario Delgado, Spirits Portfolio Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.; Marcia Passavant, Spirits Manager, Monsieur Touton Selection, Ltd.; and Shravan Dilawri, Partner, Filibuster Distillery.
22. Kevin Piacentini, President, Winery Associates East.
23. Louise Comte, Brand Ambassador, Cathiard Vineyard showcasing Cathiard Cabernet Sauvignon.
24. James Challice, Senior Vice President of Sales, Mezcalum.



Photos courtesy of SoNo 1420.

STAMFORD EVENT HIGHLIGHTS SONO 1420 SPIRITS

Spirits from South Norwalk's SoNo 1420 were showcased at a bar takeover event at the Connecticut Cigar Company's C3 Lounge in downtown Stamford. During the Pardi Gras event on March 28, team from SoNo 1420 poured tastes of select spirits from the craft distillery and gave guests education on the brand, known as America's maritime distillery. Blake Poon, Mixologist and Master Distiller, SoNo 1420, created special event cocktails for guests, who paired selections with hand-rolled cigars from the Connecticut Cigar Company. During the event, guests tasted 1420 Single Barrel Whiskey, a gold medal winner in the San Francisco World Spirits Competition; Special Reserve Spirit, a gold medal winner in the San Francisco World Spirits Competition; and Full Proof Whiskey, a double gold winner in the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. SoNo 1420 was founded in 2019 by Ted Dumbauld, who launched the distillery after experimenting with hemp-based whiskey recipes. All of the brand's ultra-premium, award-winning spirits are crafted in historic South Norwalk on Day Street. The brand is self-distributed in Connecticut.

1. SoNo 1420 Single Barrel Whiskey, Special Reserve Spirit and Full Proof Whiskey.
2. Nick Casinelli, Owner, Connecticut Cigar Company and Ted Dumbauld, Founder, SoNo 1420 highlighting SoNo 1420 Full Proof Whiskey.
3. Nick Casinelli, Owner, Connecticut Cigar Company and Blake Poon, Mixologist and Master Distiller, SoNo 1420.
4. Frank Fumega, Guest; Stacy Gorman, On-Premise Specialist, SoNo 1420; and Blake Poon, Mixologist and Master Distiller, SoNo 1420.
5. Ted Dumbauld, Founder, SoNo 1420; Frank Fumega, Guest; Stacy Gorman, On-Premise Specialist, SoNo 1420; Nick Casinelli, Owner, Connecticut Cigar Company; and Blake Poon, Mixologist and Master Distiller, SoNo 1420.

CONNECTICUT PACKAGE STORES ASSOC, INC. CPSA MEMBER OF AMERICAN BEVERAGE LICENSEES

CONNECTICUT Restaurant ASSOCIATION

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS SCHEDULE JUNE GOLF EVENTS

The Connecticut Package Stores Association (CPSA) is hosting its annual golf tournament at Whitney Farms Golf Club in Monroe on June 12. Enjoy a day of golf, which includes lunch and reception with industry peers. Visit **ctpsa.com** or call the CPSA office at 860-346-7978 for team sign-up, tournament information and sponsorship opportunities. The Connecticut Restaurant Association (CRA) will host its annual Golf Classic at Lyman Orchards Golf Club on June 26. CRA brings together restaurant operators and industry vendors for a day of golf, food and fun. The annual outing supports the Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation, the nonprofit 501(c)(3) arm of CRA. Contact CRA for information and sponsorship opportunities at **ctrestaurant.org**.

From the Office of M. Caitlin S. Anderson
Liquor Control Division Director
April 3, 2024

CONNECTICUT Consumer Protection

RE: Delivery Extension Approved for April 2024

The Department received a written request filed by the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of Connecticut, Inc. ("WSWC"), requesting permission to deliver alcohol beverage products ordered in April 2024 through Friday, May 3, 2024.

The Department reviewed this request, which highlights: (1) the nature of the April calendar ending on a Tuesday, and (2) the anticipated high number of orders for April. Specifically, April is a "buy-in" month, meaning several large suppliers reduce prices on popular products and create a period of high demand, particularly in the final days of the month before the prices increase. Because April ends on a Tuesday, the WSWC believes wholesale orders will exceed delivery capacity and make completion of the increased deliveries by the end of the month impossible for wholesalers.

Following review, the Department approves the request to extend delivery of products ordered in April 2024 until May 3, 2024. This approval extends to all Connecticut wholesalers. Please note that this approval pertains to extension of delivery only and not to the placing of orders. All orders must still be placed by April 30, 2024.

If you have any questions regarding this extension or any liquor-related matter, please email us at **dcp.liquorcontrol@ct.gov**.

The Department of Consumer Protection, through the State Liquor Control Commission, oversees all sales of liquor in the State of Connecticut. 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 901, Hartford, CT, 06103. Visit the Liquor Control Division website, **ct.gov/dcp**.



Signature Wine & Spirits

BY **SARA CAPOZZI**







LOCATION

516 Main Street
New Hartford, CT

FACTS

Square footage:
1,200

Years in operation:
3 months



Located in the picturesque Litchfield County town of New Hartford, Signature Wine & Spirits brings its own brand of great selection and friendly customer service to the northwest corner and beyond. The shop was opened by brothers Sam and Vinny Advani in late January and is the latest business at 516 Main Street to serve the community as a package store.

The Advanis are originally from the Virgin Islands and often visited family in Connecticut. When they relocated to the state in 2020, inspired by their uncle who owns a couple of package stores and a restaurant in the area, they decided to go into the industry. "I was always around the business when I was visiting and had a liking for it and an interest in it," Sam Advani said. He worked previously in jewelry and car sales and said he "always liked the retail and sales part of [the package store industry]."

The brothers opened their first Signature Wine & Spirits in Simsbury in June 2021 and, after a few years of cultivating business there, felt it was time to expand. "The idea of opening up one more store with the same name in a different county was something that we were interested in and the right opportunity presented itself," Advani said. "We're excited and the people are excited and we'll be doing some exciting things."



Signature Wine & Spirits Owner Sam Advani.

Signature Wine & Spirits is easily accessible at the center of town, located near a group of well-frequented businesses including a salon, bank, gas station and well-known farmers market, making it part of a full service stop for customers running errands.

When the Advanis opened the latest location, they started with no inventory, which gave them the opportunity to build their product selection the way they wanted it. They started with "the basics: seltzers, whiskeys, bourbons, rums, vodkas, tequilas and wines," he said. "We went with the well-known brands, the stuff we know people drink on a regular basis. We also take a lot of requests from customers, so it's a mixture of knowing what sells well and taking requests from people."

Providing great customer service is a priority to Advani. "We're always willing to go above and beyond when it comes to special requests or case discounts," he said.

He's spent the past few months bringing in new products, getting to know his customer base and what they like, and meeting other small business owners in town who want to bring more focus back to Main Street. The majority of shoppers are town locals, but Signature also sees people from Winsted, Barkhamsted and Torrington stopping by. Outdoor attractions like Ski Sundown, the Farmington River and Satan's Kingdom State Recreation Area bring in out-of-state visitors as well.

Plenty of perks await customers, including in-store tastings to help them discover items, local delivery through Uber Eats and state minimum sales on a new product every month. Advani takes part in private barrel programs, currently offering bottles of an Elijah Craig barrel pick. The store also partners with distributors and local restaurants to offer pairing dinners at local eateries.

The Advanis connect with customers and promote store tastings and other events through Signature's Instagram and Facebook accounts. With an interior renovation finished, they're taking the shop into its next era serving the New Hartford community. ■

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


INTRODUCING
CONNECTICUT
MX Martignetti Exchange
Your Order. Your Business. Your Time.
Connecticuts' Newest Wholesale Beverage Alcohol E-commerce Solution.
Anywhere Anytime Any Device
Sign Up Today!
Search
Discover
Shop
Manage
Order
Pay
For more information about MX Exchange reach out to your Sales Representative or Contact Us at :
CTCustomerCare@Martignetti.com | CT.MartignettiExchange.com


Designed for LIQUOR Merchants
Loyalty
Instant ID Verification
Secure Payment
Customer Satisfaction
Inventory Control
Cloud Multistore
Match or Beat Your Rates
Accept Chip Cards Now
Power of Substance
posmatic
www.posmatic.com
Contact Us
718.707.9788

ONE YEAR LATER IN COLORADO

BY **SEAN HUGHES**, CONNECTICUT PACKAGE STORES ASSOCIATION

It has been just about a year since wine sales in grocery stores in the state of Colorado have been allowed. The expansion was approved by the voters of Colorado when they passed Proposition 125. It passed by only 1.2%, an extremely narrow vote when looking at the margins of voting percentages for the other propositions that were on the ballot. So here we are, a year later after grocery stores started selling wine. Colorado Public Radio News recently did an in-depth story to cover the effects on the industry in the state—talking with store owners, distributors and manufacturers who have all felt some variation of change.

In the last year, the Colorado Department of Revenue has reported that there has been some loss in small package stores across the state as they have had to close their doors. What the data does not show is the amount of package stores that are currently listed for sale.

One of those store owners who was lucky enough to sell was Kate Conte, the former owner of Grape Escape in Denver. She sold her store after 24 years in business once grocery stores started to outcompete popular wine brands. Another store, Bottle Shop 33—which had been named the Best Liquor Store in Denver by the *Denver Westword* paper—closed its doors after a decade in business. The rosé and sparkling wine market that was a staple for the store in the summer season completely fell off. Their wine sales dropped 20% in the first year alone.

Across the city, Matthew Amerson of Mayfair Liquors in Denver, which opened in 1959, said he has lost nearly a third of his wine sales to grocery stores. Being a medium-size store has helped Amerson keep Mayfair Liquors open. While he does not have a large store that has a big overhead—costs such as utility and rent—he is not a small store either. This, in Amerson's viewpoint, has allowed him the freedom to navigate the ever-changing marketplace. One dark side to the industry now is the loss of other small retail stores, meaning the shrinking pool of customers from those stores who do not want to buy at grocery stores become his customers. "If other stores go away and I'm around, there are people that don't want to buy stuff at the grocery store … and they're going to come to me," he said. "But it doesn't feel great to hope for the failure of other small businesses so that I survive."

In response to the year since Proposition 25 passed, store owners introduced House Bill 24-1373 to the Colorado legislature, which would restrict hard liquor and spirits sales in grocery stores. With wine seen as a gate opener for more liquor products to flood supermarkets, this bill intends to preempt those efforts further. The bill specifies that only liquor stores would be able to sell them, whereas now grocers can if they carry the correct licenses. Mat Dinsmore, who owns two liquor stores in Northern Colorado and is the President of Colorado Independent Liquor Stores United, said since Proposition 125 went into effect, at least 100 independent liquor stores—and possibly as many as 150—have closed across the state, as reported on 9NEWS Denver on April 7.

On the distributor side, things were quite interesting. Matthew Roesch of Anvil Wine Company, which specializes in small European wines, has seen a few of his package store customers close their doors. His wine portfolio is small and is not sold in grocery stores, mostly because they don't have the supply that the grocery stores would need. The predominant wines being sold in grocery stores currently are mass-produced wines from California. Another change that Roesch has seen in the industry is that stores are not buying large quantities of products at one time. The orders have become much smaller as store owners do not want to have a lot of reserve products.

For the manufacturers, there is also a change in the marketplace. Patric Matysiewski is the Winemaker for Sauvage Spectrum, a winery in Colorado. The winery itself started in 2019 and sells to about 200 liquor stores. The stores that they sell to are not ordering as much and are in an uncertain area for their business. There is a fear in the industry of who is going to make it and who is not. Diebolt Brewing is a local brewery in Denver. They tested out selling their craft beers in supermarkets, but Matysiewski found that the shelf-space system was very "mercenary" when compared to liquor stores. He has since removed his products from grocery stores and is focusing on liquor stores. While he has not heard of a lot of stores closing, he has seen quite a few changes in ownership in the last year.

While we are a year into wine in grocery stores, already so much has changed in the industry. One thing seems evident: The only true winner in all of this is the entity that was pursuing this all along—the grocery stores. Time will tell how many stores can continue to survive this changing market a year from now.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about any of these issues and the benefits of membership at **ctpsa.com**.



SEAN HUGHES
Account Director,
Connecticut Package
Stores Association





The Voice of the Retail Liquor Industry in Connecticut

CONNECTICUT PACKAGE STORES ASSOC, INC.
cpsa
MEMBER OF AMERICAN BEVERAGE LICENSEES

The CPSA is your ally. Each session we address key issues to protect the industry and your business. What legislation will harm and what will benefit package stores? Several issues return each year and new issues arise. While we will not know the answer to all these questions until the next session, we know based on the past sessions, that there will be undoubtedly new introduced legislation that could harm your business irreparably. That is why we are here; to fight for you in the halls of the Capitol by communicating the great benefit small businesses such as yours offer to the framework of the Connecticut economy and the service and products you provide to your customers.

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

WHAT **VICTORIES** HAVE WE HAD?

Fought successfully against wine in food stores, against the repeal of minimum bottle, against beer in gas stations and box stores, against the addition of wine and spirits bottles in Connecticut's bottle bill, and more.

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

APPLICATION FORM

Name _____ Business Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

☐ Tier 1: 10+ full & part time employees $500.00 x #of stores ____ = $ _____
☐ Tier 2: 5-9 full & part time employees $400.00 x #of stores ____ = $ _____
☐ Tier 3: < 5 full & part time employees $300.00 x #of stores ____ = $ _____

CALL us at 860.346.7978 OR **FAX** or email this page to 860.346.7978 OR **PRINT** an application or PAY ONLINE: ctpsa.com and mail your check to: 455 Boston Post Rd, Suite 203B, Old Saybrook, CT 06475

THE CRA CELEBRATES RELOCATION WITH NETWORKING EVENT

BY **YVETTE M. TAVARES**, VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AND OPERATIONS, CONNECTICUT RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

In August of 2023, the Connecticut Restaurant Association (CRA) moved to our new offices at Putnam Park on the Connecticut River in Wethersfield. After more than six years at The Exchange in Farmington, we had simply outgrown the space and were eager to find a new home base.

In addition to needing an office that could sufficiently support our growing staff and association, it was important for us to find a location that offered quick access to the State Capitol while still being centralized to the rest of the state. With convenient access off I-91, our Wethersfield location did just that.

As one of the oldest towns in Connecticut with the largest historic district in the state, we consider downtown Old Wethersfield to be an extension of our office with bustling restaurants, quaint little shops and a charming Main Street community. In addition, our office building is the site of two popular local restaurants, River and Tequila Rio, owned and operated by longtime CRA members Chris and Martha Henney.



John Bourdeau, Sparrow by JB; Vinnie Carbone, Carbone's Hospitality; and Yvette M. Tavares, Vice President of Sales and Operations, CRA.



Phil Barnett, Hartford Restaurant Group; Andy Gutt, Stone Row Kitchen + Bar; Christos Provistalis, Paradiso Insurance; and Scott Dolch, President and CEO, CRA.

To celebrate our move, the CRA hosted an office warming reception last month, welcoming more than 75 restaurateurs and guests from across the state. Beyond central Connecticut, guests came from a range of towns including Stamford, Danbury, New Haven, Mystic, Litchfield, New Milford, Southbury, Chester, Old Saybrook and Willimantic. We understand how busy restaurateurs are and are thrilled to see more and more members recognizing the value of connection and in dedicating time to expand their network.

In fact, one of the things we hear most about the value of membership is that beyond our critical advocacy work, it's the relationships our members are able to build through their active engagement with the CRA.

Keith Beaulieu, owner of The Main Pub in Manchester and Chairman of the CRA Board, said, "Becoming involved with the CRA is the single most important step I've taken for the long-term growth and success of my business. The more I put in, the more I get back. There's absolutely no question about that."

We understand it can be difficult to find the time to break away from the business and get out to industry networking events. But for those who look at it as an investment in themselves, the time and energy are well spent.

Our offices are located at 100 Great Meadow Road, Suite 100, in Wethersfield. For an appointment, please call 860-278-8008 or email **info@ctrestaurant.org**.

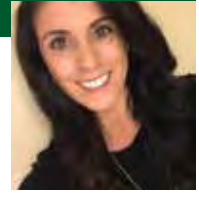


Louise Albin, Café Louise and Bob and Dee Sulick, Mulberry Street.

LEARN MORE

Interested in learning more about CRA and member benefits?

Simply visit us at **ctrestaurant.org.**



YVETTE M. TAVARES
Vice President of Sales and Operations, Connecticut Restaurant Association



THE WHITE WINES OF RIOJA

BY RYAN ROBINSON

Summer is around the corner, and I am always looking for new, fresh styles of white wine to enjoy. Tap into your adventurous spirit to step outside of your comfort zone and join me in embracing the white wines of Rioja! It's Part Two as promised from last month's look at reds.

Rioja is a diverse and ever-evolving wine region in northern Spain. Historically, Rioja cultivated more green grape varieties than red. Today, that balance has drastically shifted. When I think of Rioja, red wines of great quality and value immediately come to mind. The mass of the Rioja appellation encompasses three autonomous communities: La Rioja, Álava and Navarra. This growing appellation is protected by two mountain chains and is dissected by one major river with seven river valleys. To add to the diversity, the altitude ranges from 984 to 2,625 feet (300 to 800 meters).

With this wide array of geographic and geologic features, the wines produced here show great variability. If anything, Rioja is so much more than what you think it should be that it warrants a second or third look. Because of this diversity, it is hard to define a singular style of Rioja wine. One thing that is certain: The younger generation is returning to make wine and their style is very different than that of their predecessors.

Currently, white wine makes up 9% of the total wine output, but it is on the rise. These new white wines have been gaining praise from both wine critics and masters of wine. There are fittingly nine authorized green grape varieties allowed in Rioja. The most planted, despite its brief 10-year new planting ban, is Viura (also known as Macabeo, an integral grape in the production of Cava). Viura can build very age-worthy white wines that we find in the market from the traditional producers of Rioja, but it can also display a lively freshness that is quenching in the summer heat.

To me, Viura is akin to Chardonnay. It is like a blank canvas. On its own, it is not very appealing, but with the help of a skilled hand, it can be shaped into something beautiful with its own identity. The winemaking techniques and terroir play a heavy role in sculpting its identity that thrives in the bottle. This grape variety represents about 70% of the green grape plantings in the region, paving the way for great diversity.

Rioja white wines continue to show intrigue. The first Rioja wine to receive a 100-point score from master of wine and wine writer Tim Atkin was a white wine in 2021 with the R. López de Heredia Viña Gravonia 2001. This wine, 100% Viura aged in oak for four years, screams with both body and complexity. A perfect example of the traditional guard in Rioja.

Rioja white wines can also be very fresh and modern with a minimal touch of oak. The new generation of winemakers who are investing in white wine production are passing on the mandatory minimum oak aging of six months for white wines. While these wines still carry the Rioja DOCa label, they are not permitted to use the terms Crianza, Reserva or Grand Reserva. Instead, they are opting for the green Generico label. Don't be fooled by the misleading name Generico, as there is nothing generic about the new white wines of Rioja! They are crisp and zesty, brimming with freshness, character and complexity.

The wines of Rioja were built on tradition and quality. Great lengths have been undertaken to ensure this continued quality through traceability and enforced standards. These standards have paved the way for the new generation of winemakers as they are allowed to experiment with new methods of production. Be adventurous and try a bottle of Rioja Blanco!



Green Grape Varieties of Rioja

Viura	Tempranillo Blanco	Chardonnay
Malvasía	Maturana Blanca	Sauvignon Blanc
Garnacha Blanca	Turruntés	Verdejo



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryan Robinson

Ryan Robinson is the Director of Education for Brescome Barton and Worldwide Wines in Connecticut. He is also the Wine Director for Cornerstone Restaurant Group in North America and South Korea, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of New Haven. He holds the credentials of Advanced Sommelier-CMS; WSET Diploma and WSET Educator in Wine, Sake and Beer; Rioja Wine Educator; Wine Scholar Guild Educator and Spanish Wine Specialist; and Certified Scotch Whisky Professional from the Council of Whiskey Masters.

The Pompano

16 North Main Street
South Norwalk, CT

The Pompano is a vibrant coastal seafood restaurant concept presented by seasoned restaurateur Christian Burns, whose restaurant cred includes The Ginger Man in Greenwich and the former Cask Republic in New Haven. The Pompano is located in the former space of Evarito's, his Mexican-inspired restaurant and rooftop bar, which closed post-COVID. The new venue's design aesthetic is wrapped in white brick with icy blue banquet seating, wood furnishings, an open kitchen, spirited photography of fishing escapades, a streetside panoramic view of bustling South Norwalk and a rooftop view of the Long Island Sound and Norwalk's local boating community. The decor and the menu are designed to bring a slice of South Florida's coastal charm to the Northeast. The menu is prepared by Executive Chef Franz Fruhmann, with starters such as bluefin tuna tartare with tomato concassé, avocado mousse and soy; caviar service with classic accompaniments; salads and more. Made-to-order sushi is prepared at The Pompano's sushi bar and there are plenty of fresh-market fish and carnivorous course options in between, all responsibly sourced from local purveyors and trusted sustainable fisheries. Creative cocktails, local craft brews and a curated wine list—including a wine Coravin program featuring premium wine by the glass pours—plus house-made desserts complement the dining experience.





The Pompano Spritz.
Photos courtesy of The Pompano.

Cocktail
The Pompano Spritz

Ingredients

- 2 oz. Hendrick's Grand Cabaret Gin
- .75 oz. fresh grapefruit juice
- 3 oz. rosé prosecco
- .25 oz. simple syrup
- Spritz (finish spray) St. George Absinthe Verte
- Garnish: dehydrated orange slice

Method: Combine gin, grapefruit juice and simple syrup in a mixing glass over ice and stir. Strain over a stemmed wine glass with ice. Add the prosecco on top, lightly spritz absinthe and garnish with a dehydrated orange slice.

"When spending time down in South Florida and trying different cocktails, I came across spritz sections on many menus. After trying many while enjoying seafood and oysters, we decided to come up with our very own," said Christian Burns, Owner of The Pompano. "The Pompano Spritz's citrusy and slightly bitter flavors provide a refreshing contrast to the delicate sweetness of our raw bar seafood selections and give our guests an alternative to wine while enjoying these dishes,"



DON'T MISS

ACCESS TO MARKET NEWS & WHOLESALER PORTFOLIOS

Your expiration date is located on the top line. Renew and never lose access to prices, products and market information.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
**********5-DIGIT 13606
CT 005645 EXP Date FEB 24 004/040
HAPPY PACKAGE STORE
JOE SMITH
579 WEST MAIN STREET
ANYVILLE CT 13606

BEVERAGE JOURNAL
CONNECTICUT

HOW BEER, WINE & SPIRITS GET TO THE MARKETPLACE
www.TheBeverageJournal.com | 203.288.3375

NEW PRODUCTS



1 2 3 4 5 6

1. 9DIDANTE

The first project from Bacardi alum Alex Ouziel's Kaliro Spirits is *The Divine Comedy*-inspired 9diDante, a collection of Italian vermouths highlighting wines from the Piemonte DOC. Along with the Inferno Rosso and Purgatorio Extra Dry, there is now the bitter Paradiso Rosé, a blend of 88 percent Cortese and 12 percent Nebbiolo grapes from Torino. It can just as easily be woven into tequila and mezcal cocktails as it is savored on the rocks with grapefruit.

SRP: $35 per 750-ml bottle
9didante.com

2. BADGER BEVS

In 2023, David Vogel launched Badger Bevs with Jillian Vose, the bartender behind the forthcoming Hazel and Apple in Charleston, South Carolina. The premium cocktail mixers, which can also be enjoyed on their own, debuted with a versatile lineup of club soda, tonic water, and ginger beer starring Nigerian ginger, and has grown to include ginger ale and tart sparkling grapefruit options.

SRP: $8 per four-pack of 250-ml bottles
badgerbevs.com

3. RÉSONANCE

Résonance, Maison Louis Jadot's vineyard in Oregon's Willamette Valley, is dedicated to producing Burgundian-style wines like the Founder's Blocks Pinot Noir 2021. A true expression of the Yamhill-Carlton AVA, Founder's Blocks is composed of the finest grapes culled from the neighboring Résonance and Jolis Monts vineyards, both of which share a similar terroir, and exhibits complementary flavors of black fruit and black pepper.

SRP: $75 per 750-ml bottle
resonancewines.com

4. SAGAMORE SPIRIT

Back in 2020, Maryland distillery Sagamore unveiled its well-received Manhattan Finish rye whiskey in limited quantities. Now, it's back as part of the Sagamore Spirit Reserve Series. The full-bodied, 103-proof whiskey reinterprets the Manhattan cocktail by uniting four-year-old straight rye whiskey that was aged in separate vermouth, bitters, and cherry brandy casks for at least 20 months. It can be relished neat or with amaro in a Black Manhattan.

SRP: $79.99 per 750-ml bottle
sagamorespirit.com

5. MALIBU SPLASH

Mango is the newest addition to Malibu Splash, the line of ready-to-drink sparkling malt beverages from United States Beverage centered on Malibu coconut-flavored white rum. Coinciding with the arrival of the new 5% ABV variant is the Sunshine Variety Pack, bringing together single-serve cans of the tropical mango with pineapple, strawberry, and watermelon versions.

SRP: $17.99 per eight-pack of 12-oz. cans
malibudrinks.com

6. VARA WINERY & DISTILLERY

Albuquerque's Vara Winery & Distillery puts the spotlight on New Mexican-made spirits like High Desert Gin, Corona de Oro Rum, and the new-to-the-lineup floral Painted Sky Vodka and light Estrella Blanca Rum. The former's base consists of Vara's own grape brandy and high-proof, grape-based spirit and is filtered through activated carbon. The latter, ideal for cocktails, starts out as first-press light cane juice molasses and passes through 100-micron pad filters following distillation.

SRP: From $25 per 750-ml bottle
varaspirits.com

NEW PRODUCTS



7. PROCERA GIN

Fresh *Juniperus procera* berries growing wild in the Kenyan highlands are the backbone of Procera Gin's extremely limited-edition Green Dot 2023 vintage. It features a sugar cane base and juniper berries, leaves, and wood hand-harvested from a single tree in Narok County that lend the earthy, cocktail-friendly spirit notes of herbs and stone fruit. Reinforcing the notion of African terroir is the hand-carved Kenyan coconut wood box that each hand-blown, recycled glass bottle is nestled in.

SRP: $179 per 700-ml bottle
proceragin.com

8. SPRINTER

Joining the booming ready-to-drink category is Sprinter, a canned vodka soda from media personality Kylie Jenner. Led by industry veteran Chandra Richter as head of product development and operations, the 100-calorie, 4.5% ABV Sprinter combines real fruit juice, premium vodka, and sparkling water in black cherry, peach, grapefruit, and lime varieties.

SRP: $19.99 per eight-pack of 355-ml cans
drinksprinter.com

9. JULIETTE

Charles Jacquin et Cie, known for Chambord and Domaine de Canton, has ramped up its cordials collection with Juliette, an ultra-premium peach liqueur sprung from small pêche de vigne grown in France's Rhône Valley. Made by hand in limited-quantity batches with only natural ingredients, it features touches of vanilla and honeysuckle that make it ripe for mixing with Champagne.

SRP: $49.99 per 1-litre bottle
juliettelique ur.com

10. THE FINNISH LONG DRINK

Refreshing and quick to serve, the long drink has been part of Finland's beverage culture since Helsinki hosted the 1952 Summer Olympics. The Finnish Long Drink illuminates the ritual with citrusy traditional, zero, and strong iterations as well as cranberry and the recently rolled out peach. Originally part of the brand's Midsummer variety pack, peach is made with real liquor and sparkling fruit flavors and canned at 5.5% ABV.

SRP: From $11.99 per six-pack of 12-oz. cans
thelongdrink.com

11. HIGH N' WICKED

High n' Wicked, the importer and bottler of whiskeys from Altamar Brands, has teamed up with Foursquare Rum Distillery in Barbados on a single grain Irish whiskey. The 100-proof limited release was distilled in County Cork, Ireland, from 95 percent corn and five percent malted barley and aged in former bourbon barrels. Then, it was finished in Foursquare casks that previously held Marx X 2007 rum for six months, culminating in notes of clove and caramel.

SRP: $79.99 per 750-ml bottle
highnwicked.com

12. VOSA SPIRITS

Vosa Spirits, co-owned by model and actress Kate Upton, has expanded its ready-to-drink offerings with the 7% ABV High Line Tropics collection. The six times-distilled vodka, natural fruit juice, and sparkling water cocktails—passion fruit, mango, lime, and watermelon—are slightly effervescent and follow High Line's peach, cherry, lemon, and pineapple flavors introduced in 2023.

SRP: $21.99 per eight-pack of 355-ml cans
vosaspirits.com



INSPIRED BY BORDEAUX

Enamored with the estate Merlot, **Baldacci Family Vineyards** winemaker Michael Baldacci set out to craft a Napa Valley cuvée showcasing the five traditional Bordeaux varieties. The result is the Proprietary Red Blend 2021, a well-structured berry- and baking spice-laden wine fusing 30 percent Merlot, 27 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 20 percent Cabernet Franc, 15 percent Malbec, and eight percent Petit Verdot.

SRP: $70 per 750-ml bottle

BETTER TOGETHER

More than 2,000 laborers, winegrowers, winemakers, and oenologists comprise Union Champagne, the winemaking cooperative based in Avize, France. New to the group's Chardonnay-focused **Champagne De Saint-Gall** label is the Orpale Grand Cru Millesime 2012, a blanc de blancs rife with toasted almond and buttery notes that can be savored as an apéritif or alongside seafood dishes. To amplify its mineral character, a portion of the blend intentionally skipped malolactic fermentation.

SRP: $139 per 750-ml bottle





A MODERN SPAIN

La Rioja Alta winery **Bodegas Áster** has debuted Áster El Espino 2020, a punchy, contemporary wine from Ribera del Duero. The food-friendly, finessed wine, harvested from 87 hectares of Tinta del País, opens with aromas of blueberry, blackberry, and red plum and is housed in a bottle adorned with a fittingly sleek label designed by Stranger & Stranger.

SRP: $40 per 750-ml bottle

WARM-WEATHER REPRIEVE

Joey Tensley is known for his rich Syrah wines from Santa Barbara, but he's released a light-bodied, chillable version just in time for summer. **Tensley Wines**' Syrah Lite is born from organically farmed grapes that are macerated for six days and matured for six months. It has just a 13% ABV, but stays true to Syrah's robust character, melding spice with dark, juicy fruit.

SRP: $20 per 750-ml bottle





COOL-CLIMATE COMPLEXITY

Calistoga's **Frank Family Vineyards** produces some of the most sought-after Chardonnay wines in the Napa Valley. Consider the 2022 vintage of the Carneros Chardonnay, flaunting notes of vanilla and Meyer lemon. Primarily made with grapes from the winery's own Lewis Vineyard and rounded out with fruit from Beckstoffer Vineyards in Napa-Carneros and Sangiacomo Vineyards in Sonoma-Carneros, the wine undergoes partial malolactic fermentation and embraces bâtonnage during the aging process.

SRP: $40 per 750-ml bottle





THE NEW ECONOMICS OF CRAFT BREWING

WITH CRAFT BEER SALES DECLINING IN A MATURE INDUSTRY, WHAT ARE BREWERIES DOING TO STAY AFLOAT?

BY JOSHUA M. BERNSTEIN

Last year, a landlord for Denver's metal-loving TRVE Brewing delivered some expensive bad news. Rent was increasing at TRVE's production facility, nicknamed the Acid Temple, where the brewery began making IPAs, lagers, and mixed-culture beers in 2014.

Stomaching a rent hike was unappetizing. Over the last decade, operating a labor-intensive brewing system in an aging industrial building had grown tougher, sending TRVE on a fruitless search for suitable space. "Nothing suited our needs," says Nick Nunns, the founder and CEO.

TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: Taproom at Kings County Brewers Collective; Array Bottle Shop.

At a beer event last fall, Nunns discussed the predicament with Brandon Capps, the founder of New Image Brewing, which opened a larger production facility in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, in 2022. New Image's excess capacity could help TRVE produce beer at scale, no need for additional infrastructure. "Every brewery doesn't need to have its own system," says Erin Nunns, TRVE's co-owner and COO.

This February, TRVE closed the Acid Temple and relocated production to New Image, a move meant to safeguard TRVE's business operations for the foreseeable future.

"Craft beer isn't growing like it once was, but it's growing up," says Capps.

After several decades of steady and sometimes stratospheric growth, the craft beer industry has seen declining sales for the past few years, thanks to an overcrowded market, changing drinking behaviors, and competition from canned cocktails, spirits, and other new beverage categories.

"We've seen a shift back into a safety net. People want to know what they're going to get when they buy a beer."

– Matt Drummond, NIQ

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ARRAY BOTTLE SHOP / KINGS COUNTY BREWERS COLLECTIVE

"Double-digit growth papered over many business issues," says Bart Watson, the chief economist for the Brewers Association. Last year, off-premise craft beer sales declined nearly 1 percent while volumes dropped 4.4 percent according to Circana, a Chicago-based market research firm. And the drumbeat of notable brewery closures sounds louder each week, with North Carolina's New Anthem Beer Project and Necromancer Brewing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, shuttering this winter.

To better navigate today's choppy economic waters, breweries are reevaluating production and product mix to stay afloat and better serve a reduced, yet still thirsty consumer base. Creating targeted portfolios through SKU rationalization and recalibrating focus on core ranges, in addition to exploring hard tea and THC beverages, can rightsize operations for the craft brewing industry's new economic reality.

BEER DRINKERS ARE BECOMING LESS PROMISCUOUS

Prior to the pandemic, craft breweries could package any hazy IPA and expect customers to purchase every four-pack. Novelty drove consumer demand.

"It was almost like a treasure hunt," says Dan Scheie, a utility electrician and craft beer aficionado from Yonkers, New York. But an onslaught of weekly releases can cause customer fatigue. When the pandemic paused taproom visits, Scheie began buying the same trusted beers sold nearby.

"Funny enough, a world-class beer like Sip of Sunshine from Lawson's [Finest Liquids] was readily available at the gas station down the hill from my house," he says.

Reliability and availability are becoming important metrics, especially as customers grow more hesitant to spend $20 on an unknown four-pack. "We've seen a shift back into a safety net," says Matt Drummond, the client solutions manager for market research firm NIQ. "People want to know what they're going to get when they buy a beer."

At Array Bottle Shop, in Portland, Oregon, beer buyer and co-owner Stephen Braigen only offers eight taps (seven beer, one cider) and a tightly curated selection of packaged beer and cider. "More drinkers seem to be going back to things that they enjoyed and want to have again."

REINING IN RELEASES IS KEY FOR DISTRIBUTION

Cutting down on beer releases seemingly contradicts the creative, anything-goes ethos that fueled craft brewing's 2000s boom. Dream it, brew it, sell a ton of it. But these days, just because a brewery can brew something doesn't mean it should.

"The marketplace has pretty unanimously decided that it doesn't need more variety," says Zack Kinney, a founder of Kings County Brewers Collective (KCBC) in Brooklyn. KCBC cut around 20 percent of its SKUs last year and will eliminate a similar amount this year. "Not all ideas and experimentation are worthy of a long life," Kinney says.

KCBC produces experimental beers for its taproom audience while prioritizing five core beers for distribution, including Infinite Machine pilsner and Superhero Sidekicks IPA. Bulk purchasing boosts the bottom line. "Economies of scale are much more available to us when we're committing to core reci-

BELOW, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: TRVE Brewing Company's owners, Nick Nunns, Erin Nunns, and Zach Coleman; TRVE's Glastonbury Grove lager.





PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF TRVE / KCBC



ABOVE: Zack Kinney, the cofounder of Kings County Brewers Collective.

pes," Kinney says, adding that KCBC is ready to package beers in different formats, such as 12-packs, should retailers request it.

Distributors are helping steer this less-is-more approach. During its annual business-planning meetings, Vacationland Distributors, which covers New Hampshire and Maine, counsels breweries on focusing on three to five stable, always

"The marketplace has pretty unanimously decided that it doesn't need more variety. Not all ideas and experimentation are worthy of a long life."

– Zack Kinney,
Kings County Brewers Collective

available SKUs that can be sold at chain accounts like grocery stores.

"We're preaching back to basics," says co-owner and vice president John Squadrito. Part of this is a reaction to slowing sales of one-off and collaboration beers. "People want those core SKUs to rely on, whether it's on tap or on store shelves."

Vacationland also works closely with breweries on retail pricing, starting first with a brand's ideal market price and working backward to figure out margins. "I'd rather price the beer right to the consumer and have traction and longevity with a brand," Squadrito says.

It's also imperative for distributors to streamline and simplify decisions for beer buyers overwhelmed by all that choice. Sarene Craft Beer Distributors operates in five states, from Ohio to New York, and distributes more than 100 brands, including lager experts Schilling Beer. Instead of trying to sell dozens of beers from a brewery, Sarene highlights a handful of core beers that might be complemented by one or two rotating releases each month.

"You're keeping people who want to have that shiny new toy happy while still being able to grow your brand through these main money movers," says Kevin King, the brand development manager.

FOCUSED BREWERIES CAN STILL GROW

Ten years ago in craft beer, breweries could fling any sales dart at a dartboard—beer style, business model, branding—and "hit a bull's-eye," Watson says. "Now you've really got to aim."

Breweries and brands with clear, consistent messages and a focus on quality

BELOW: New Belgium Brewing's Voodoo Ranger family of IPAs, like the Juice Force and Tropic Force, is the craft beer industry's biggest growth driver.





PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF KCBC / VOODOO RANGER

products are outperforming the industry at large. Fiddlehead Brewing in Shelburne, Vermont, grew 22 percent last year on the backs of its flagship IPA and other hop-forward beers that are delivered, stored, and sold cold. "It's an important element to our success story," president and owner Matt Cohen said in a press release.

The craft beer industry's biggest growth driver is New Belgium Brewing's Voodoo Ranger family of IPAs. Last year, they accounted for six of Circana's top 30 craft beer brands, led by Voodoo Ranger Imperial IPA (No. 2) and fruity Voodoo Ranger Juice Force (No. 3).

In particular, the expanding Force line, including the punch-like Fruit Force and Tropic Force, is finding fans that "love high ABV paired with bold flavor," says Michelle Robertson, New Belgium Brewing's senior brand manager for Voodoo Ranger. "We're not just trying to speak to the craft beer drinker."

While New Belgium is finding traction in convenience stores with single-serving 19.2-ounce cans, there's only so much shelf space for another IPA. "We have to keep a close eye on not over-innovating," Robertson says. Last year, New Belgium released the Voodoo Ranger Hardcharged Tea, seeking white space in its portfolio instead of crowding another beer SKU into a cooler.

"Beer is such a community-driven and celebratory beverage it's easy to forget that, when you strip it down, it is a business."

– Nick Nunns,
TRVE Brewing Company

Embracing a different buzz can help a brewery branch out. As laws evolve, breweries are finding greener pastures with mood-altering THC drinks. In February, Hopewell Brewing in Chicago released the sparkling Choom, a lemon-lime beverage infused with hemp-derived THC—legal, thanks to the federal government's 2018 Farm Bill.

"Choom is currently our top seller in the taproom to go," says cofounder Samantha Lee, adding that four-packs cost between $15 and $20 depending on potency. "It's not eating into beer sales. The hope is that it's another area of growth."

There are no easy fixes, or magical hop blends, that will revert craft beer to its mid-aughts sales peaks. Making quality beer used to be a differentiator; now it's table stakes. Surviving and thriving in today's busy market requires breweries to excel at brewing and Excel spreadsheets, planning futures beyond another batch of beer.

By partnering with New Image, TRVE can adjust batch sizes to meet still-increasing wholesale demand for its beer, helping it focus on expansions. In March, TRVE opened a new location in Asheville, North Carolina, where it will brew for the local market, and plans to open a second Denver taproom this year. The goal is to build a sustainable business model, anchored in taproom experiences, that will sustain the brewery's ownership until retirement.

As Nick Nunns says, "Beer is such a community-driven and celebratory beverage it's easy to forget that, when you strip it down, it is a business." ■





BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Hopewell Brewing Company's THC-infused Choom; Samantha Lee, the cofounder of Hopewell Brewing Company.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF HOPEWELL BREWING



A FRESH LOOK FOR J. LOHR'S EMBLEMATIC CHARDONNAY

J. LOHR'S RIVERSTONE HAS DEFINED MONTEREY CHARDONNAY FOR OVER 35 YEARS. NOW, IT'S DELIVERING THE SAME STRIKING FLAVOR COMBINATION BENEATH AN EYE-CATCHING NEW LABEL AND EASY-OPEN CLOSURE

Since planting their first Chardonnay vines in Monterey in 1972, J. Lohr has embraced a simple, quality-focused motto: From soil to shelf. Their commitment to owning and managing vineyards, hand-crafting their wines, and controlling their own bottling and warehousing has made the brand a benchmark in the United States, especially when it comes to Chardonnay. This year, their emblematic Riverstone Chardonnay is breaking new ground with a vibrant label update and easy-to-enjoy screw cap closures.

The new label combines J. Lohr's classic motif with a spray of flowers, hinting at the flavors within the bottle and recalling the winery's cool-climate Monterey origins. The floral label stands out on crowded retail shelves, while drawing a connection to nature and J.Lohr's status as a Certified California Sustainable winery. Simultaneously, the brand's switch from corks to enjoy-anywhere screw caps appeals to contemporary drinkers eager to take wine on-the-go while also making Riverstone Chardonnay easier for service professionals to pour.



While the new label and closure represent a departure from J. Lohr's traditional packaging, the wine inside remains the same testament to Monterey that's captivated wine lovers for over 35 years. The 2022 Riverstone is a prime iteration of J. Lohr's estate vineyards. It showcases rich apple, pear, and tropical flavors, supported by a refreshing vein of acidity that compliments a lightly buttery finish tinged with French oak spice.

The wine attains its balance of ripe fruit and fresh acidity from J. Lohr's Elder loam soils and range of Chardonnay clones. Combining sandy loam with cobblestones, these soils naturally limit grape yields, resulting in well-balanced, nuanced Chardonnay grapes. In addition to making the most of Monterey's penchant for retaining the acidity and intense varietal character of Chardonnay, the J. Lohr team cultivates 10 Chardonnay clones, including Hyde-Wente and Mt Eden, which are blended to yield Riverstone's symphony of flavors and aromas.

In the cellar, white winemaker Kristen Barnhisel focuses on fusing the grapes' natural flavors with texture and added aromatics from French oak. Both barrel-fermented and barrel-aged, Riverstone undergoes weekly hand-stirring of the lees to build flavor and texture into the wine.

By controlling quality at every step of the grape-growing and winemaking process, plus carefully detailing their results each vintage, J. Lohr brings a depth of knowledge to Riverstone that results in consistently refreshing, expressive Chardonnay. It's a combination that's proven to be captivating on restaurant menus and store shelves since its 1987 debut vintage—and shows no signs of slowing down. ■



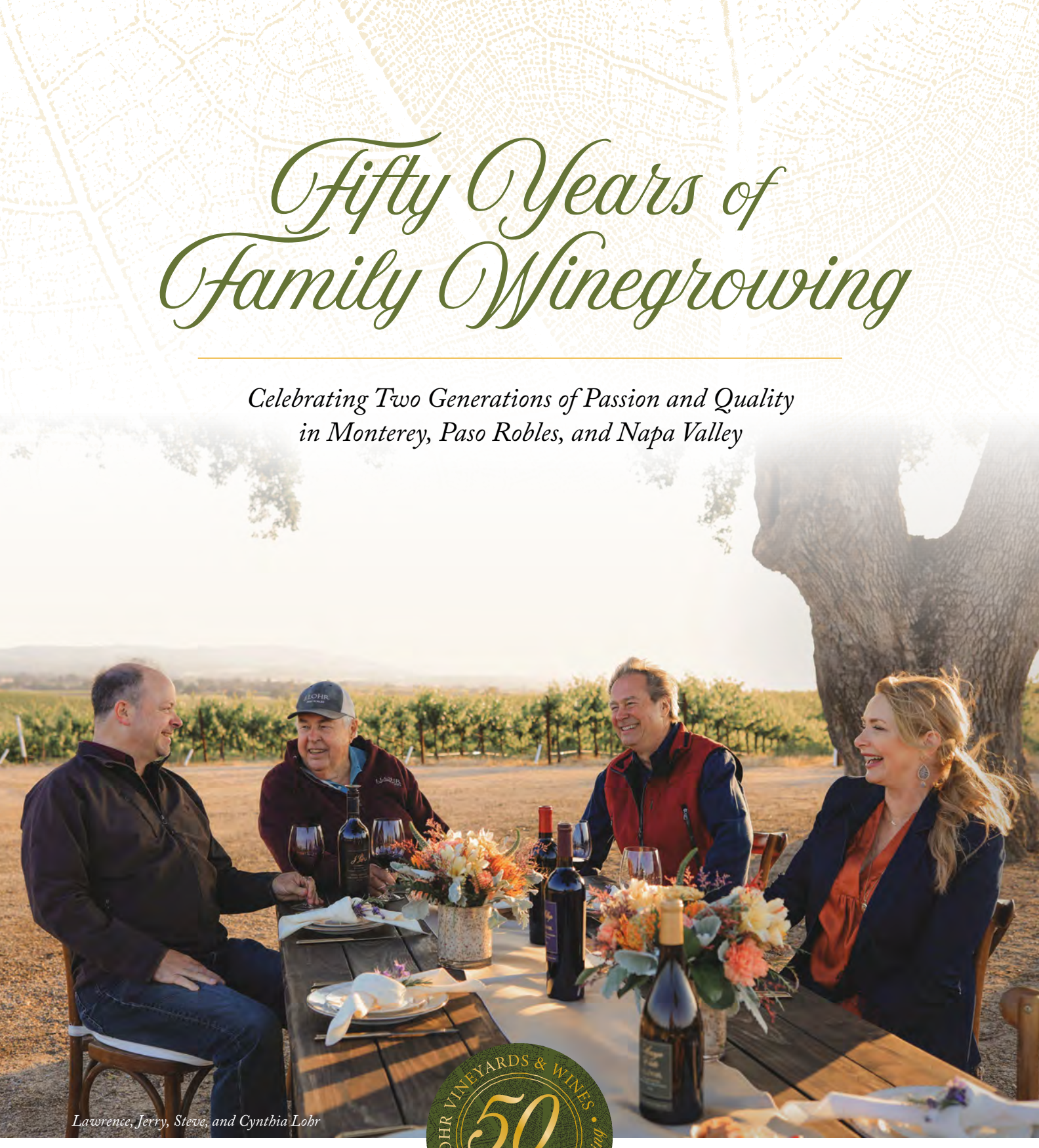
Jerry Lohr, Kristen Barnhisel, and Steve Peck

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF J. LOHR VINEYARDS & WINES

Fifty Years of Family Winegrowing

Celebrating Two Generations of Passion and Quality in Monterey, Paso Robles, and Napa Valley



Lawrence, Jerry, Steve, and Cynthia Lohr

J. LOHR
VINEYARDS & WINES

@JLohrWines | JLOHR.COM

© 2024 J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines



BRINGING NATURE TO THE FOREFRONT OF WINE

WITH ITS NEW NATURE-FORWARD LOOK—AND A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH 1% FOR THE PLANET—NATURA'S LINEUP OF ORGANIC, SINGLE-VARIETAL WINES IS DELIVERING ON QUALITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY

Chile boasts a vast range of premium terroirs ideal for an equally diverse set of grape varieties. From the snow-capped Andes to the dramatic Pacific coastline, Natura Wines takes advantage of the country's diversity of terroirs to craft dynamic, value-driven wines that are simultaneously good for people and the planet.

As its name suggests, Natura highlights wine's inherent connection to nature. This year, Natura, which is part of the Banfi Wines portfolio, unveiled new labels that heighten this connection. Featuring a larger, vivid blue-green leaf icon, the new labels signify each wine's central connection to the local flora and fauna, and Natura's commitment to organic wine production. Certified organic by Eco-cert and guaranteed gluten-free and vegan-friendly, Natura wines deliver on quality, sustainability, and transparency above all.

This year also marks the beginning of Natura's new partnership with 1% for the Planet, a network that helps companies give back to the environment. As a member, Banfi will commit one percent of total Natura revenue to environmental organizations. Through this partnership, Natura pledges support to the Rodale Institute, a global leader in regenerative agriculture research, education, and training. The goal of this partnership is to help increase regenerative organic acreage throughout the U.S., which in turn helps to improve soil health, and the environment as a whole.

Produced by Emiliana Organic Vineyards, a certified B Corp and the first Chilean winery to receive its regenerative organic certification, Natura wines truly echo their earth-first ethos. Grown across Chile's foremost appellations, including Casablanca, Colchagua, and the Rapel and Bio Bio Valleys, all of Natura's organically grown grapes are hand-harvested to ensure only pristine fruit enters the winery. After harvest, the focus shifts to maintaining the unadulterated flavors and aromas of each grape variety.

Natura's Cabernet Sauvignon, for example, undergoes fermentation in stainless steel tanks to maintain the grape's bold fruit flavors. After aging in a mix of French Oak barrels and inert vessels, the silken red wine shows juicy red and black berry flavors with accents of vanilla and baking cocoa. The brand's Sauvignon Blanc is similarly expressive, capitalizing on Chile's natural penchant for this complex white grape. Grown on clay and alluvial soils, it blends herbal and citrus tones in a crisp, lively version of Sauvignon Blanc with a distinctive Chilean edge.

By combining exceptional Chilean terroirs with precise techniques in the winery, Natura captures the essence of its wines' origins while offering a price-to-quality ratio that's both rare and refreshing. Now, as a 1% for the Planet partner, Natura is doing all this while also giving back to its most important resource—the planet. ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Natura Wines.



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NATURA

EVERY BOTTLE PURCHASED — MAKES AN — IMPACT

INCREASING
REGENERATIVE ORGANIC ACREAGE
THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES

1% FOR THE PLANET — MEMBER —





LEARN MORE AT

ECO CERT

Vegan

Certified B Corporation

©2024 Royal Imports, Melville, NY



TWO INDUSTRY CONFERENCES UNDER ONE ROOF

DISCUS ANNUAL CONFERENCE JOINED FORCES WITH WOMEN OF THE VINE & SPIRITS GLOBAL CONNECT! FOR A SOLD-OUT THREE-DAY EVENT—AND *BEVERAGE MEDIA* HAS THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS

In early March, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) held its fifth annual conference bringing together industry leaders and partners to connect, share ideas, and drive innovation in the marketplace—but it was the first conference in partnership with Women of the Vine & Spirits (WOTVS), who hosted their previously virtual Global Connect! as an in-person event under the same roof.

Held at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront in San Diego, California, over 700 participants came together for three days of sessions, breakouts, workshops, and panels, with the goal of exchanging ideas, fostering collaboration, and building a sense of community. They explored the trade show floor, featuring 38 exhibitors from 13 sectors of the beverage industry; networked at the Trends Bar with its menu of on-trend cocktails; and sampled dozens of North American brands at the Tasting Pavilion.



Some of the highlights included: a keynote from Santos Spirits' Guy Fieri and Dan Butkus on supporting the spirit of hospitality; and a WOTVS powerhouse panel on why courageous leadership matters, including: J Lohr's Cynthia Lohr; Pronghorn cofounder Dia Simms; Melanie Batchelor, the managing director of Campari; Tracy Aldworth, the chief transformational officer at RNDC; and Edrington president and CEO Paul Ross.

It was also a time to celebrate achievements and new launches. DISCUS's Spirits United unveiled their new advocacy campaign, The Cocktail Party, a fictional nonpartisan political party to unify consumers around key issues facing the distilled spirits industry in the run-up to the presidential election. And WOTVS launched its new campaign, 86 Harassment, an industry-wide initiative to address sexual harassment, with sup-

LEFT: The Courageous Leadership Session with moderator Cynthia Lohr, Tracy Aldworth, Dia Simms, Melanie Batchlor, and Paul Ross.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF DISTILLED SPIRITS COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES

OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP): Provi's chief corporate affairs officer, Andrew Levy (center), discussing the state of the industry alongside: Hasan Bakir, DISCUS; Janelle Christian, TTB; Marten Lodewijks, IWSR; Cheryl Murphy Durzy, LibDib; Juan Sánchez, Clase Azul; and Christine LoCascio, DISCUS.
BELOW: Responsibility.org booth.

port from partners including DISCUS and the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA).

Held aboard the USS Midway, this year's awards dinner honored five extraordinary leaders: Arielle Pierre, the associate manager of inclusion, diversity, and equity at Moët Hennessy USA; Brooke Glover, the CEO and cofounder of Swilled Dog; Hillary Wirtz, the senior director of culture and inclusion at Breakthru Beverage; California State Senator Bill Dodd; and Jim Bareuther, the former COO at Brown-Forman. The evening rightly ended with spectacular fireworks.

During the event, David Wojnar, the SVP of industry affairs and social responsibility for Provi, *Beverage Media*'s publisher, sat down with Chris Swonger, the president and CEO of both the DISCUS and Responsibility.org, and we bring you the highlights of their conversation.





Chris Swonger, the president and CEO of DISCUS and Responsibility.org.

DAVID WOJNAR (DW): Tell me about some of your achievements at DISCUS since you took a leadership role in 2018.

CHRIS SWONGER (CS): Since I arrived, we launched Spirits United, our grassroots platform, where we've got 73,000 people signed up and engaged; the DISCUS Academy; and we've expanded our membership. We have 65 partner members now, all invested in the betterment of the industry. All of that is to galvanize the industry to be united. There's power in numbers. If we can broaden our voice through platforms like Spirits United, it makes sure that our voices are heard by policy makers.

DW: How was your role at DISCUS impacted by the pandemic?

CS: When the pandemic hit, we initiated letters to all 50 governors about making sure that distilled spirits and beverage alcohol outlets were deemed essential. That had a critical role in supporting our consumers during a crazy time, but [also] supporting businesses all around the country. I'm proud to say that DISCUS was in the thick of [the hand sanitizer movement], working with the FDA and supporting many distilleries, when you couldn't find hand sanitizer anywhere.

Cocktails-to-go really complimented our modernization efforts. We recognized the impact for the on-premise, our bartender community, and the restaurants. Beverage alcohol plays a prominent role in their daily revenue, so cocktails-to-go was able to drive that. The distilled spirits sector performed really well during that era, and I'm proud to say DISCUS played a phenomenal role in that.

DW: Why is the dietary guidelines an important issue for DISCUS and its members?

CS: Every five years, the U.S. government publishes the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, and beverage alcohol has been included for the last 40 years. We're seeing evidence from some in the anti-alcohol community that they may be trying to politicize the dietary guidelines. DISCUS and the beverage alcohol industry is committed to sound science and the dietary guidelines should be governed and guided by a preponderance of evidence. This is really important on behalf of our member companies. We just want to make sure that important issues related to alcohol are guided by science and not by a particular agenda from one interest group versus another—and that includes the beverage alcohol industry.

DW: It's really important to eradicate sexual harassment in the industry and to support DEI efforts. Why did you feel WOTVS was a good partner for DISCUS?

CS: DISCUS has long been a great advocacy organization, but I did think it was an opportunity. Advocacy is a team sport, and the more people that can get engaged, that can enable our advocacy efforts [the better]. Leaning into issues like social responsibility and the environment [and] partnering with an organization like WOTVS on eradicating sexual harassment is about industry sustainability. It's about [creating] an industry where everybody should feel safe and comfortable … and our efforts with WOTVS and WSWA are key components of that.

DW: What do you want to say about your staff, your team, and your membership?

CS: Every day, those on the DISCUS team and the Responsibility.org team get up on behalf of our members and push for the betterment of the industry. We're lucky to have a great group of member companies that support our efforts. And it's a privilege and an honor for me to be in the role I'm in. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed.

INSIDE CATENA'S CAMPAIGN FOR LIGHTER-WEIGHT WINE BOTTLES



HEAVIER BOTTLES HAVE LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH FINE WINE, BUT REDUCING BOTTLE WEIGHT IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO LOWER A WINERY'S CARBON FOOTPRINT—AND THE ICONIC ARGENTINE PRODUCER IS DETERMINED TO SPREAD THE WORD

For years, consumers and professionals alike associated heavier bottles with better wine. That perception led to the wine world's equivalent of an arms race to package high-end wine in the thickest, most substantial glass bottles possible. As a result, the weight of the empty bottles used for super premium wines climbed as high as 1200 grams in some cases.

This, it turns out, has been terrible for the environment: Simply put, producing heavier bottles requires more energy and resources, and shipping them around the world requires more fuel. "Up to 60 percent of a wine bottle's carbon footprint is related to the weight of the glass bottle and its transport," says Dr. Laura Catena of Bodega Catena Zapata in Mendoza, Argentina.

The winery has long demonstrated environmental leadership in the industry with its Catena Institute of Wine regularly publishing its research into new sustainable initiatives in scientific journals—and its latest target is bottle weight. As Catena says, "Lowering bottle weight is the single most effective action one can take to reduce a wine bottle's carbon emissions."

BOTTLE WEIGHT IS AN INDUSTRY-WIDE ISSUE

The glass bottle is widely accepted as the gold-standard package for fine wine. And while a number of producers are experimenting with alternative options—bag-in-box, Tetra Pak, and more—glass is unlikely to be de-throned as the vessel of choice across the industry. To keep in step with increasing efforts to offset carbon emissions, wine producers around the world have been forced to take a hard look at the impact of every aspect of grape growing, wine production, and shipping—including its packaging.

The greatest emitter of carbon in packaging comes from outsourced glass production, according to International Wineries for Climate Action. The heavier the bottle and the less recycled glass is used in the bottle's production, the higher its environmental impact.

In addition, transportation—from production facilities to the winery, as well as from the winery to its customers—comes with a major environmental cost. But glass, as a material, has the potential to be a sustainable packaging option if produced properly.



CREATING HIGH-ALTITUDE WINES WITH LOWER CARBON EMISSIONS

Laura Catena has never done anything partway. She's a practicing physician, managing director of Bodega Catena Zapata, highly regarded author and speaker, and a leader in the wine industry, working to confront its role in climate change, by educating industry professionals and consumers about its environmental impact, and finding ways to improve it. The Catena Institute, for example, developed an in-house sustainability code for the winery which later became the foundation of the Bodegas de Argentina Sustainability Self Assessment Protocol adopted nationwide.

This year, Catena is spearheading the release of the 2022 Catena Appellation 'Vista Flores' Malbec in a bottle that is 45 percent lighter than previously—coming in at just 380 grams—as well as an educational campaign aimed at both staff and

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BODEGA CATENA ZAPATA / MATT WILSON

CATENA

BY THE NUMBERS

40% OVERALL GLASS WEIGHT REDUCTION 2008-2023

21% REDUCED CARBON EMISSIONS

1200 YEARLY REDUCTION IN METRIC TONS OF GLASS 2023-2024

TAKE THE QUIZ

@CatenaWines



Dr. Laura Catena of Bodega Catena Zapata

consumers about the importance of lighter packaging. Given the success of the Vista Flores in by-the-glass programs across the U.S., this represents serious volume.

Catena is fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead in shifting the consumer association between weight and fine wine. "Wine lives within a bigger context of luxury products, such as perfumes, Champagne, and spirits that come in heavy bottles with lots of packaging," she says. "To me, our campaign is about spreading the message that what matters is the juice inside the bottle and not the packaging. If enough people are talking about the benefits of reducing bottle weight, then consumers will start preferring lighter bottles. Producers always follow what the consumer wants, so the key person we need to convince is the wine lover."

There is a relatively recent historical precedent for success when it comes to reducing heavy packaging. "Remember when suitcases were heavy?" Catena says. "Just like today most suitcases are light, I think in ten years, glass bottles for most alcohol products will be light."

A YEARS-LONG EFFORT TO REDUCE BOTTLE WEIGHT

The rollout of the Catena 'Vista Flores' Malbec in its new bottle has been a long time coming. Lowering the weight of a wine bottle isn't just a matter of producing bottles with thinner glass walls. A bottle still has to safely protect the wine inside, remain intact despite the rigors of being shipped, and, in the case of sparkling wine, withstand the high pressure of the liquid and carbon dioxide inside. It also has to look and feel good.

"Our main partner has been Verallia, a French glass manufacturer that has bottle-making facilities all over the world, including in Argentina," says Catena. "Verallia's research and development department has been able to create very attractive-looking, low-weight bottles. Every year, they develop the design technology to reduce bottle weight further."

Bodega Catena Zapata started working with Verallia to reduce glass weight in 2009, as part of their sustainability goals, and today their bottles are overall 40 percent lighter than they were then. That reduction in weight since has lowered preboat transport carbon dioxide emissions by 21 percent and reduced the amount of glass they require by 1,200 metric tons.

The rollout is accompanied by an interactive education campaign. For example, there's a training quiz available through a QR code on the bottle of Vista Flores for restaurant staff or consumers, the results of which will allow the winery to gauge the success of its efforts, and then potentially modify them.

Next up, the winery intends to transition the Catena High Mountain Estate wines, its bestselling luxury offering, to a new 33 percent lighter bottle, which will be elegantly taller and thinner than the original. It will also be accompanied by a sales, trade, and consumer educational campaign to importers spanning the Americas, Europe, and Australasia.

This is just one part of Bodega Catena Zapata's mission to have a positive impact on the environment. They are also investing in drip irrigation for all their vineyards, to offset water shortages in the Uco Valley, and the Catena Institute is studying how to capture carbon on vineyards by planting trees and preserving native forests. But reducing glass bottle weight is an actionable step with immediate positive results. As Catena says, "There are simple things we can do to support the planet, and one of these simple things is choosing lighter wine bottles and less packaging for our products. What matters is the wine inside the bottle. Great wine and lighter grocery bags—it's a win-win proposition!" ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Bodega Catena Zapata.

WHERE DOES HARD SELTZER STAND TODAY?



DESPITE DECLINING SALES, RETAILERS SHOULDN'T COUNT HARD SELTZER OUT JUST YET. HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS FROM THIS STILL-POPULAR CATEGORY

BY PAMELA VACHON

The word "launch" rarely applied so well to a beverage category's introduction as it did with hard seltzer, which went stratospheric in a matter of a few years. From its mainstream emergence in 2016, a 2020 report from NIQ cited hard seltzer as "the most resilient alcohol segment in the U.S.," becoming a multibillion-dollar industry with over 300 brands having entered the category.

But in 2021, hard seltzer hit its peak, with slowing sales prompting some brands to destroy excess inventory and major media outlets to label the category as a fad headed towards extinction. However, brands and analysts alike believe it is premature to toll hard seltzer's death knell.

"The 'shakeout' process of underperforming brands being discontinued is nearing the end," says Adam Rogers, the research director of North America for IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, "with an eventual leveling off being the next stage of the segment's trend lifecycle." Lessons learned from hard seltzer's decline, as well as necessary pivots that place the category more in line with consumers' changing values, are key to the stabilization of sales forecasted for hard seltzer in the coming years.

UNDERSTANDING HARD SELTZER'S DECLINE

Putting hard seltzer's decline in context is key to understanding where it stands now, and where it is going. Quite simply, in helping to usher in the ready-to-drink (RTD) movement at large, hard seltzer became an agent of its own undoing.

Spirit-based RTD cocktails such as vodka or tequila sodas, which Rogers identifies as a move toward "premiumization" for hard seltzer drinkers, may taste similar to malt-based hard seltzers, but they are classified by market analysts as a distinct category, given that the production process between them is markedly different. This effectively moves some of those drinkers away from the hard seltzer segment, numbers-wise, but nonetheless into adjacent—competitive—options,



Adam Rogers, IWSR Drinks Market Analysis

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ADOBE STOCK / IWSR

sometimes crafted by hard seltzer brands themselves.

Fuller-flavored and higher-ABV RTD cocktails, as well as hard teas, have also claimed a piece of hard seltzer's pie. According to a 2023 report by NIQ, while RTDs overall experienced sales growth of 7.2 percent from the previous year, "spirits RTDs and flavored malt beverages [are] gaining share at hard seltzer's expense."

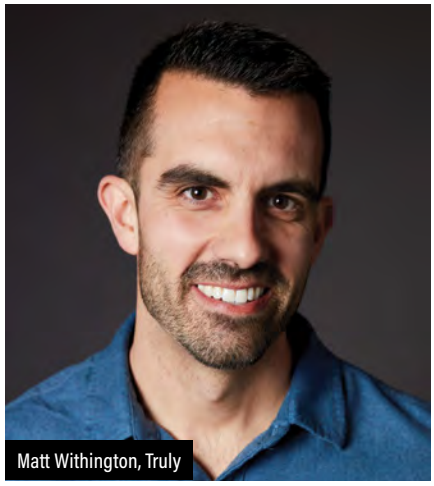
The same report also shows, however, that hard seltzer still accounts for 35 percent of the RTD mix for consumers. There is belief that hard seltzer will continue to be a mainstay, having reached category maturity, and a 2022 report from IWSR Drinks Market Analysis projects that "a saturated malt-based hard seltzer segment will retain the largest share of the overall RTD category over the next five years."

Hard seltzer is still in the mix because not all hard seltzer consumers made the sidestep to spirit-based selections. "Some consumers still prefer specific malt-based options, even if the brand has brought a spirit-based option to market," says Rogers, which he cites as being the result of their smaller price tags compared to their more premium, vodka or tequila-based counterparts.

DRIVING VALUE THROUGH HIGHER ABVS AND LARGER FORMATS

In short: hard seltzer is here to stay, but has already begun its evolution to stay competitive. A 2023 IWSR Drinks Market Analysis report notes that "the emphasis of the U.S. RTD market is shifting from volume to value, as consumers gravitate to more premium products with fuller flavors and higher ABVs."

A report from Cognitive Market Research forecasts larger growth in the coming years for hard seltzers above 5% ABV over those with less than 5%—an interesting evolution for the beverage, given its initial association with a "better for you"



Matt Withington, Truly

framework. Category leaders White Claw and Truly both offer an 8% ABV option (Surge and Truly Unruly, respectively) to meet this growing interest.

"We found that drinkers wanted that bigger punch and are looking to make the most out of their dollar," says Matt Withington, the senior marketing director for Truly. Rogers confirms that this has financial signals, especially for those that have stayed with the less expensive hard seltzer category: "Consumers selecting higher-ABV malt-based options—which are still less expensive than spirit-based products with lower ABV—indicating that they are seeking out value-added type products."



In addition to higher-ABV selections, larger-format, single-serve tallboys also offer hard seltzer devotees a higher value option. Withington notes that sales of Truly's single-serve, 24-ounce cans are up 20 percent over the last year. This also speaks to an important point about where hard seltzers are today, in a post-pandemic landscape, versus where they started, when consumers were mostly drinking at home. NIQ's 2023 report states: "The convenience channel is where single units are seeing an uptick as people go back to making quick trips, travel more, and spend less time in big-box stores."

According to Taylor Proctor, the general manager of Atlanta's Hop City in the Krog District, these aspects are playing

BELOW: Lunar Hard Seltzer has won over consumers with Asian-inspired flavors like Yuzu and Korean Plum.



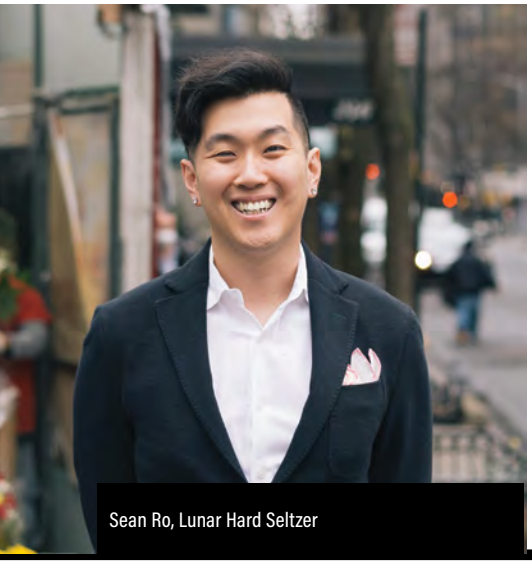
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF TRULY / LUNAR



out in retail. "The consistent theme between the hard seltzer category and the new cocktail-flavored, seltzer-adjacent category is pack size, and alcohol content," she says. "In general, people are gravitating towards 19.2-ounce or 24-ounce seltzer, and/or higher gravity. Some people will trade bigger cans for standard 5% alcohol, but our biggest demand is for higher-ABV options, and the bigger the can, the better."

EMERGING BRANDS AND FLAVOR TRENDS IN THE HARD SELTZER LANDSCAPE

While AB InBev discontinued the once-popular Bon & Viv hard seltzer in 2023, retailers report that much of the category shakeout seems to be among craft breweries who got into the hard seltzer game to begin with to account for declining beer sales. "We try to support smaller, more niche brands, and we used to carry many local options for hard seltzer, such as Monday Night Brewing, Scofflaw, New Realm," says Proctor. "At present, all local seltzer has been pulled from market distribution, and most breweries locally might have one seltzer option on draft for on-premise consumption. It has been increasingly difficult to find seltzer placements in the last year."


Sean Ro, Lunar Hard Seltzer

"Our biggest demand is for higher-ABV options, and the bigger the can, the better."

– Taylor Proctor, Hop City

Focused, independent brands are still emerging, and many of the most successful ones place an emphasis on smaller markets or niche flavors. Brands such Lunar and Nectar have put forth Asian flavors with rapid growth, which has been compounded by "robust growth" in the Asia-Pacific market for hard seltzer, according to a 2023 report by iMarc Group.

Since launching at the end of 2020, Lunar cofounder Sean Ro reports that brand sales, with flavors such as Yuzu, Lychee, and Plum, "have doubled year over year. Nectar Hard Seltzer, also founded in 2020, "is growing exponentially, and we are one of the top performing FMBs [inclusive of hard seltzers and other flavored malt beverages] in all the territories that we sell in," says cofounder Jeremy Kim. "This year, our sales will nearly double without expanding into a bunch of new markets." In the next quarter, Kim reports that Nectar will be available at major grocery chains and retailers, "meaning that previously, we were hitting those numbers in smaller grocery stores."




Danica Dias, Grown Folks

New brands are also still coming into the market with similar goals. Grown Folks was launched in 2024 as the first Black-owned hard seltzer. "It was clear that our perspective, tastes, and preferences were not reflected in the current offerings, and there was an opportunity within a large part of the population that were searching for products that speak to them," says Danica Dias, Grown Folks' founder, whose flavors include Ambrosia, Key Lime, and Peach Cobbler. The initial rollout of Grown Folks in local Whole Foods Markets "exceeded expectations," says Dias, with a rapid expansion to over 80 retail locations in California.

The next several years will show how hard seltzer stacks up against what are still optimistic projections for the category, despite the doomsday headlines that its initial decline prompted. Meanwhile, consistent with its early reputation for resiliency, the category continues to have a place on the shelf. ■

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LUNAR / GROWN FOLKS

BCB
BAR CONVENT
BROOKLYN

June 11-12, 2024

INDUSTRY CITY | BROOKLYN, NY

BAR CONVENT BROOKLYN (N).
A welcoming and collaborative environment in which the pioneers of the bar and beverage community gather to celebrate and sculpt the future of liquid culture through education, sharing best practices, and generating business opportunities.

A curation of the most premium brands driving the cocktail movement.



REGISTER NOW

BCBBROOKLYN24.COM/BMG

RECEIVE 25% OFF | USE CODE: BMG

Built by RX
In the business of building businesses

THERE'S

CHIANTI

AND THEN THERE'S

BANFI CHIANTI



CRAZY FOR CHIANTI

BANFI CHIANTI* DOLLAR SALES +13%

STOCK UP & JOIN THE CRAZE!

*(Banfi Chianti Classico Riserva, Banfi Chianti Classico, Banfi Chianti Superiore & Bell'agio Flask Chianti 750ml)

BANFI

banfiwines.com

*Nielsen total xAOC 26 weeks ending 3/2/24.

CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EU REG. NO. 2021/2115

©2024 Banfi Products Corp, Melville, NY