BEVERAGE JOURNAL
RHODE ISLAND

MARCH 2023

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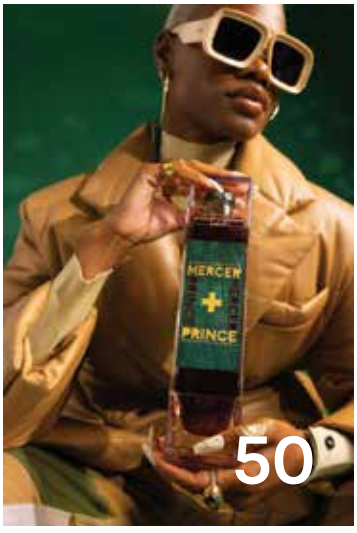
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The largest compilation of beverage alcohol price and brand information.

HOW BEER, WINE AND SPIRITS GET TO THE MARKETPLACE

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Issue Highlights

March bids adieu to winter's grasp and we transition from hibernation to hustle. And what better time to focus on health and wellness within the beverage industry than the season's change?

Past stories have showcased wellness from within: a renewed self-guided permission to acknowledge and respond to burnout. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to new levels of awareness in self-care and work-life balance and that continues to blossom into healthier methods of operating. In past hospitality work, I, too, have hosted, served, tended bar, closed, cleaned and stocked until the wee hours of the morning, sharing in the culture and habits that came with that territory.

The big, happy difference now is that a newer mindfulness toward wellness pervades the dialogue and is changing those long-held work norms by establishing beneficial practices. A good thing. A secondary feature arrives at the intersection of where branding and marketing meets health and wellness: functional beverages.

The issue also offers a well-timed look at Irish whiskey. Get ready to sell armed with the latest information via infographics. Locally, you will find a plentiful array of the market's news. The RI Hospitality Association column ponders artificial intelligence and robotics as no longer novel but now much-needed support to existing, ongoing industry challenges.

The month's Around Town section is filled again with pages of your brand showcases and lively events. Make sure we know your news too. Spring tastings and other delights are filling up our planned coverage calendar—don't be left out in the cold!

Cheers,
Dana



Dana

Dana Slone
Managing Director & Editor



ON THE COVER

Photography courtesy of Bonninstudio/Stocksy.

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ANNUAL WINE REPORT OUTLINES CONSUMPTION TRENDS



Silicon Valley Bank released its annual report outlining trends in wine consumption, with a summary showing the premium wine segment prospering despite losses in overall wine market share to spirits. While premium wine sales experienced another strong year amid an increasingly challenging marketplace—with revenue on average up 9.7% through September 2022—the U.S. wine industry experienced negative sales volume growth due to a decrease in sales of lower-priced wine. Consumers older than 60 are the only growth segment. While older consumers are paying more for premium wine, younger buyers are increasingly less engaged with the wine category and 35% of 21- to 29-year-old consumers drink alcohol, but not wine. That number drops 7 percentage points to 28% for individuals 50-59 years old. Of those consumers who left that group, two percentage points moved to being at least marginal wine consumers. Meanwhile, 5% are now abstaining from drinking alcohol. The full report is available at **svb.com**.

CARNEROS AVA CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Carneros Wine Alliance, a nonprofit association of wineries and grape growers in the Carneros American Viticultural Area (AVA), is celebrating the AVA's 40th anniversary throughout 2023. With a history that dates to the 1800s, Carneros received its AVA status in 1983 and the Carneros Wine Alliance was formed shortly thereafter in 1985, now comprised of more than 45 wineries. Carneros was the first wine region in California to be defined by its climate characteristics rather than political boundaries, in large part due to the San Pablo Bay that straddles both Sonoma and Napa. In the year ahead, the Alliance will host activities to highlight the anniversary of the AVA while supporting the overarching mission to promote vineyards, wineries and visitor destinations of the Carneros region, including its annual Spring Barrel Tasting and an anniversary celebration in October to toast the end of its monumental year.

INFINIUM SPIRITS NAMES THARP PRESIDENT



San Diego-based Infinium Spirits Inc. appointed Jan Tharp as President on Jan. 17. Tharp most recently served as President and CEO of Bumble Bee Seafoods. During her tenure, she led the team through the development of a transformational corporate strategy with a focus on growth and innovation and expanded the presence of its international portfolio of brands. Tharp has an extensive background in relationship management, supply chain and international business, holding several executive leadership positions in the food and beverage sector, including as a current Board Member and past Co-chair of the Packaging & Processing Women's Leadership Network. Infinium Spirits' portfolio of award-winning spirit brands includes Templeton Rye, Skrewball Whiskey, Seagram's Vodka, Corralejo Tequila, Crystal Head Vodka, Zaya Rum, Highway Vodka, Torres Brandy, Tears of Llorona Tequila, Los Arango Tequila, Magdala Orange Liqueur, Rives Gin, Perro San Juan Mezcal and El Gobernador Pisco.

RIBOLI FAMILY WINES NAMES NEW LEADERSHIP



Riboli Family Wines, family owned and operated since 1917, announced leadership changes in January. The company appointed third-generation family member Steve Riboli as President and CEO. He will lead the strategic vision for the family business and be responsible for all brands, including the 2023 national launch of Stella Rosa Brandy. Santo Riboli, former President and eldest of the third generation, will now serve as Chairman of the Board and will focus on the company's and winery's growth through planning, investments and development of new products and tastings rooms/retail shops, advising on the operations of their statewide California distribution company. Anthony Riboli was appointed as Officer of the Board, in addition to his winemaker duties, overseeing all winemaking and management of the family's estate vineyards in Paso Robles, Monterey and Napa. The management team also expanded to include more than 10 family members actively working within the company in different roles.

MS WALKER BRANDS ADDS ARGENTINIAN IMPORTS



MS Walker Brands was named the national importer for the Cigar Box and Frida Kahlo wine brands, which are part of the Santa Rita Estates portfolio. Cigar Box includes Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. The Frida Kahlo label includes a Red Blend and Cabernet Sauvignon. MS Walker Brands will also import Battle Axe, a 100% Argentinian Malbec sourced from a single-vineyard estate with vines that are more than 80 years old. This new national partnership builds upon a long-standing relationship between Cigar Box and MS Walker's wholesale distribution operation, which has been selling the brand throughout the Northeast since it launched in 2011.

UNCLE NEAREST LAUNCHES HBCU OLD FASHIONED CHALLENGE

Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey, the best-selling black-owned spirits brand in the world, announced the launch of its HBCU Old Fashioned Challenge, a nationwide initiative to raise $1 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Kicked off on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and extending through Black History Month and Women's History Month in February and March, respectively, the program will raise money to be distributed among the country's top 58 ranked HBCUs. For every Uncle Nearest Old Fashioned sold at participating bars and restaurants, $1 will be donated to the challenge. Uncle Nearest aims to raise money and shine a light on the contributions to workforce diversity and the role it plays in economic mobility. Consumers will be able to participate in the challenge through March 31. For a list of participating bars, restaurants and retailers, and to learn more about HBCUs, visit **oldfashionedcocktail.com**.

DIAGEO SET TO ACQUIRE DON PAPA RUM



Diageo announced in January it will purchase Don Papa Rum, a super-premium dark rum from the Philippines, for an initial $282 million, with a further potential consideration of up to $192 million through 2028 subject to performance. The deal is expected to close in the first half of this year. According to Diageo, the super-premium rum market is in "the early stages of premiumization," showing a compound annual growth rate of 27% in the U.S. and 18% in Europe between 2016-2021. Don Papa has outpaced that growth in Europe, up 29% in the same time frame, with its strongest markets being France, Germany and Italy. The acquisition will be funded through existing cash reserves and is expected to close in the first half of 2023.

ACTOR MOMOA TO KEYNOTE WSWA



The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) announced movie star, entrepreneur and activist Jason Momoa as the keynote speaker at WSWA's 2023 Access LIVE, formally WSWA's Convention & Exposition, held April 2-5 at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Momoa will celebrate the launch of his sustainable craft spirits brand, Meili Vodka, along with business partner and brand Co-founder Blaine Halvorson, during the presentation. Access LIVE brings together wholesalers, suppliers, retailers, service providers, importers and exporters for relationship building, deal making, interactive experiences, content-producing opportunities, celebrity engagement and hot-topic panel discussions. To register, find exhibit information or view the schedule, visit **accesslive.wswa.org**.

DISCUS ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS

The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) opened registration for the 2023 Annual Conference June 14-15 at the Marriott Marquis in Chicago. Themed DISCUS 50th Celebration: 50 Years Advancing Spirits in America, the conference will bring together a diverse group of top experts in their respective fields to identify challenges and opportunities facing the industry and to share ideas on how to navigate the changing spirits marketplace and legislative landscape. Conference sessions will feature topics such as consumer retail experience, DEI, brand promotion, future industry innovation, challenges facing the industry from supply chain to economy, sustainability, consumer behavior data, ecommerce, no- and low-alcohol trends, a policy roundtable, a *Shark Tank*-style competition and award presentations, among highlights. The conference will also include festive networking events, including a Taste of Chicago opening reception, a Networking Lunch, Sponsor Receptions, Craft Distributor Reception and the 50th Anniversary Celebration Event. Visit **distilledspirits.org** to learn more.

McCALL NAMED WOODFORD RESERVE MASTER DISTILLER



Woodford Reserve named Elizabeth McCall as Master Distiller, the third in the bourbon brand's 26-year history, succeeding Chris Morris, who assumes the role of Master Distiller Emeritus. Morris began mentoring McCall to take on the role in 2015, when she became Woodford Reserve Master Taster and then Assistant Master Distiller in 2018. She first joined Woodford Reserve's parent company, Brown-Forman in 2009. McCall, who has been training for the role for over a decade, will oversee quality and innovation efforts and bring new Woodford Reserve products to market. She will lead the brand's special, rare bourbon releases, including the Master's Collection and Distillery Series.

























RIHA BEGINS NEW HOSPITALITY OUTREACH EFFORT

The RI Hospitality Association (RIHA) launched its newest community and legislative engagement effort by forming its Kitchen Cabinet, with a first event hosted at the Providence Marriott Downtown's Marquis Room on Jan. 17. The Kitchen Cabinet, which reports to the RIHA Board of Directors, was launched to pay careful consideration to the types of industries within the RIHA's 800-plus membership, from lodging to food service, to allied and ancillary segments and help find solutions to market challenges. Built as a think tank of leaders who have an impact on Rhode Island's hospitality industry, efforts will focus on initiatives to propel the hospitality industry post-pandemic into a next successful chapter through innovation and collaboration. The first forum featured industry experts Liz Tanner, Secretary of Commerce, State of Rhode Island, and Matt Weldon, Director, RI Department of Labor and Training. Participants were encouraged to come ready with their thoughts and questions in order to have a meaningful dialogue.

1. Dale Venturini, President and CEO, RI Hospitality Association (RIHA); Matt Weldon, Director, RI Department of Labor and Training; and Bill Walsh, Government Strategies, RIHA.
2. Heather Singleton, COO, RIHA; Anthony Santurri, Colosseum and Freeplay Bar Arcade; and Michele Dolliff, Senior Account Executive, OceanPoint Insurance.
3. Giulianna Galiano-Gomez, Gracie's Ventures and Maggie Longo, Hospitality Management Consultant, Small Business Development Center.
4. Forum panelists Matt Weldon, Director, RI Department of Labor and Training and Liz Tanner, Secretary of Commerce, State of Rhode Island.
5. Bill Kitsilis, Chairman, RIHA Board of Directors and Owner, Angelo's Palace Pizza and Antonio's Pizza by the Slice.
6. Matt Weldon, Director, Department of Labor and Training; Liz Tanner, Secretary of Commerce, State of RI; and Dale Venturini, President and CEO, RIHA.
7. Guests filled the Marquis Room in the Providence Marriott Downtown.
8. Participants shared thoughts and questions during the open dialogue session.
9. Anthony Santurri, Colosseum and Freeplay Bar Arcade.
10. Chris Trosin, Metro Lobster & Seafood.
11. Colin Geoffroy, G Hospitality and Co-chair, Kitchen Cabinet, Treasurer, RIHA Board of Directors.
12. Caroline Bhatia, Vice President, Membership and Business Development, RIHA.

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MANCINI BEVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS NEW RTD SPIRITS

Mancini Beverage – Rhode Island Distributing division welcomed new additions from Heublein in ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktail form. Original Cocktails by Heublein builds on the brand's rich history as the original bottled cocktail, dating back to 1892. The premium line of craft cocktails brings the pleasure of a perfect mixed drink into an anywhere, anytime experience. Effortlessly enjoyable, each cocktail fuses the finest spirits with the highest-quality ingredients and expert craftsmanship and is made with award-winning spirits. The line includes Heublein 1792 Old Fashioned, Myers's Original Dark Rum Mai Tai, Wheatley Vodka Dirty Martini and 1792 Bourbon Manhattan. Two additional flavors will join the lineup in May: Corazon Margarita and Wheatley Cosmo. Also new to Rhode Island is Grind Double Espresso Shot, a 60-proof Caribbean rum-based liquid. Made with medium-roasted Colombian Arabica beans carefully blended with smooth Caribbean rum, the finely balanced espresso spirit can be mixed in a variety of creative cocktails. Grind Espresso Shot Mocha and Shot Caramel join the line with additional flavors for cocktail possibilities.

1. Heublein Original Cocktails in 1792 Old Fashioned, Myers's Original Dark Rum Mai Tai, 1792 Bourbon Manhattan and Wheatley Vodka Dirty Martini, all sold in 200-ml and 375-ml sizes.
2. Bottled at 60 proof, Grind Double Espresso Shot is made with medium-roasted Colombian Arabica beans carefully blended with smooth Caribbean rum. Also new are Grind Espresso Shot in Mocha and Caramel flavors.



LITCHFIELD DISTILLERY BOTTLED COCKTAILS ADDS NEW FLAVOR

Connecticut-based Litchfield Distillery added a new flavor in its ready-to-drink Litchfield Distillery Small-Batch Cocktails line: Espresso Martini. Handcrafted in small batches and made with Litchfield Distillery Batchers' Vodka, the spirit adds espresso coffee and natural flavors, and is bottled at "full-proof" cocktail strength for a rich, creamy and "utterly indulgent" offering. Serve chilled or add to ice in a shaker and mix it up for a frothy cocktail. Litchfield Distillery's bottled cocktails are available in 375-ml and 750-ml bottle sizes and are distributed in Rhode Island via Johnson Brothers. Espresso Martini joins Litchfield Distillery's Cosmopolitan, Manhattan and Old Fashioned handcrafted, bottled and ready-to-serve cocktails.

Litchfield Distillery Small-Batch Cocktails in Espresso Martini is a 45-proof rich and ready-to-serve offering.



MS WALKER OFFERS RAEBURN CABERNET SAUVIGNON

MS Walker of Rhode Island offers a new Cabernet Sauvignon from Sonoma County's Raeburn Winery. Raeburn wines are handcrafted from its Russian River Valley California Certified Sustainable winery following sustainable winemaking practices with water-efficient, low-impact farming. Crafted by Winemaker Joe Tapparo, the 14% ABV wine is a blend of 81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9.5% Petite Verdot and 9.5% Syrah, aged 12 months in French oak barrels. Described as an expressive Cabernet with juicy fruit notes, fine tannins and a muscular mid-palate, layered flavors of plums, dark cherry and vanilla are followed by a long and balanced finish.

Raeburn Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 Sonoma County is a California Certified Sustainable wine.





ATLANTIC BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS ADDS MASSACHUSETTS BREWS

Atlantic Beverage Distributors added new brews to Rhode Island heading into March from Massachusetts craft brewers. The first is Medusa Laser Kitten, an American IPA-style beer brewed by Medusa Brewing Company in Hudson. At 4.5% ABV, Medusa Laser Kitten packs plenty of Citra and Mosaic hops for a citrusy, fruity punch, while the body is kept extra pale, light and dry to let those hops shine. Two new brews from Lord Hobo Brewing Co. of Woburn join as well. The first is Lord Hobo Bodacious Vagabond DDH Juicy IPA, a double dry-hopped 8% ABV double dose of Styrian Dragon, Citra and Galaxy hops, which produce tropical fruit aromas with just a hint of pine, followed up by a blast of peach, pineapple and citrus flavors. With less than .5% ABV, Lord Hobo Life Non-Alcoholic IPA "does not sacrifice flavor for responsibility," pouring bright and hazy with waves of tropical fruit aroma and citrus flavor finishing with a hint of bitterness.

1. Medusa Laser Kitten is a 4.5% ABV American IPA-style brew made with Citra and Mosaic hops.
2. Lord Hobo Bodacious Vagabond DDH Juicy IPA, a double dry-hopped 8% ABV beer, and Lord Hobo Life Non-Alcoholic IPA, with less than .5% ABV.

Cocktail Wars Newport Hosts Espresso Martini Challenge

Cocktail Wars Newport and sponsor Connecticut's Litchfield Distillery hosted a crowd of espresso martini enthusiasts at OceanCliff Resort's Safari Room Restaurant on Jan. 15. Spearheaded by Cocktail Wars Newport Founder and Bartender John Begin, the event featured eight bartenders creating their version of an espresso martini featuring Connecticut-grown and Connecticut-made Litchfield Distillery Batchers' Vodka for a panel of judges, which included David Baker, Co-founder and Master Distiller, Litchfield Distillery; Douglas Maloney, Brand Ambassador, Litchfield Distillery; and Reagan Nicole, Bartender and Restaurant Manager, Safari Room Restaurant. Set against ocean views, competitors were cheered on as they worked to create their cocktails for the judges to evaluate and for guests to sample. Reigning champion from December 2022's Cocktail Wars Newport challenge Melissa Meier, Newport Restaurant Group, Bar 'Cino and La Vecina Taqueria, won the day with her cocktail Coconut Mint Espresso, with Ariel Brodsky, Hotel Vanderbilt, named Runner-Up. The Litchfield Distillery spirits line is distributed in Rhode Island by Johnson Brothers.



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Photos by Laura Widness.

1. Cocktail Wars Newport series sponsor Litchfield Distillery on display. Bottled at 80 proof, Batchers' Vodka is distilled from corn grown during the summer months in Sharon, Connecticut, distilled 4¾ times and uses a gravity-fed charcoal filter that takes 12 hours to filter 100 gallons, creating its smooth taste.
2. Litchfield Distillery Co-founder David Baker and Brand Ambassador Douglas Maloney were special guests to present the brand and served as judges.
3. Melissa Meier, Newport Restaurant Group, Bar 'Cino and La Vecina Taqueria; Jimmy Oca, Wally's Wieners; Chris Montana-Parra, Connecticut Bartender; John Begin, Founder and Bartender, Cocktail Wars Newport; Gabi Oliva, Caleb & Broad; Mitchell Swass, Breakwaters Cigar & Whiskey Lounge; Charlie Bullis, Bar and Board Bistro; and Ariel Brodsky, Hotel Vanderbilt.
4. Cocktail Wars Newport Founder and Bartender John Begin introduces the field.
5. Winning bartender Melissa Meier, Newport Restaurant Group, Bar 'Cino and La Vecina Taqueria.
6. Meier's winning cocktail, Coconut Mint Espresso Martini, made with Litchfield Distillery Batchers' Vodka, Galliano Ristretto, Fernet-Branca, coconut cream and fresh-brewed espresso.
7. Runner-Up Ariel Brodsky, Hotel Vanderbilt.
8. Brodsky's cocktail, After Midnight.
9. Competitor Charlie Bullis, Bar and Board Bistro.
10. Bullis' cocktail, Upside Down.
11. Mitchell Swass, Breakwaters Cigar & Whiskey Lounge.
12. Swass' cocktail, Dulce Espresso Martini.
13. Competitor Gabi Oliva, Caleb & Broad.
14. Oliva's cocktail, Vanilla Bean Espresso.
15. Competitor Chris Montana-Parra, Mix Prime, Woodbury, Connecticut.
16. Montana-Parra's cocktail, Coconut Dracula.
17. Competitor Cam Hutchinson, Narragansett Beer.
18. Hutchinson's cocktail, Buzzed Neighbor.
19. Competitor Jimmy Oca, Wally's Wieners.
20. Oca's cocktail, The Copper Club.
21. Litchfield Distillery Co-founder and Master Distiller David Baker; Reagan Nicole, Bartender and Restaurant Manager, Safari Room Restaurant; and Douglas Maloney, Brand Ambassador, Litchfield Distillery conferring.
22. Melissa Meier's winning moment.

See more at:
thebeveragejournal.com/litchfield-espresso-martini-challenge























Photos by Laura Widness.

MS WALKER HOSTS WINTER WAREHOUSE TASTING

MS Walker of Rhode Island hosted its annual winter trade tasting at its Warren warehouse on Jan. 17. The tasting showcased a variety of fine imported and domestic wines and spirits and unique selections available to accounts. Trade guests mingled and MS Walker representatives provided brand education during the afternoon event of sips, small bites and sales.

1. Ryan Lavoie, Sales Representative and Howard Gantz, Retail Sales Manager, MS Walker.
2. A pour of Le Paradou Cinsault Rosé.
3. Ron Virgin Rum, Plantation Panama Rum, Plantation Jamaica Rum, Canerock Rum, Admiral Nelson's Black Patch Spiced Rum, Russian Standard Platinum Vodka and XDar Wheat Vodka.
4. Villa Maria Bubbly Sauvignon Blanc, Living Coral Sparkling Rosé, La Gioiosa et Amorosa Prosecco, Sea Smoke Sea Spray Sparkling Wine, Voga Prosecco and Cavicchioli 1928 Prosecco Love DOC Spumante Extra Dry Limited Edition.
5. LaPostolle Chardonnay Cuvée Alexandre Atalayas Vineyard, Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils Bourgogne Chardonnay, Marc Brédif Royal Oyster Muscadet Sèvre Et Maine Sur Lie, Thymiopoulos Atma Xinomavro, Douloufakis Femina and Ktima Kir-Yianni Paranga White Wine.
6. Wildsong Rosé, Château Saint-Roch Old Vines Rosé, Hunt & Harvest Rosé of Pinot Noir, Château Maris Rosé, Forever Young Cuvée Prestige Rosé Wine and Cavicchioli 1928 Rosé.
7. Chopin Rye Vodka, Gin Lane 1751 London Dry Gin, Benham's Sonoma Dry Gin, Lunazul Primero Tequila Añejo Cristalino and El Capo Reposado Tequila.
8. The Arsonist Red Blend, Ryder Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Catena Agrelo Cabernet Sauvignon, Matchbook Estate Bottled Petit Verdot, Tilia Bonarda, Folonari Merlot and Tilia Malbec Syrah.
9. Cavicchioli 1928 Prosecco Love DOC Spumante Extra Dry Limited Edition, Brut Dargent Blanc de Blancs Chardonnay, Marsuret L'Estro Prosecco and Il Borro Lamelle Toscana.
10. Whiskeysmith Peach, Blood Orange and Salted Caramel.
11. Cataldi Madonna Malandrino Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, My Story Red Blend No. 1, Fog & Light Pinot Noir and Irmana Frappato.


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MS WALKER TEAM SHOWCASES PORTUGUESE WINES

MS Walker Fine Wines & Spirits' Jack Couto, National Iberian Portfolio Manager, presented a range of wines from Portugal to Rhode Island sales teams on Jan. 20 at Tavolo Wine Bar & Tuscan Grille in Providence. The group enjoyed exploring the regions of Portugal while pairing brands with light bites, tasting through red wines from Beyra by winemaker Rui Roboredo Madeira, made in the highest altitude of Portugal; Ruelas from the Lisbon region by winemakers António Ventura and Carlos Eduardo; Castello d'Alba from Duriense, Northern Portugal; Quinta Dona Maria, located in Estremoz in the Alentejo region; white wines from Castello d'Alba; Foral, produced by Quinta do Regueiro Estate in the northernmost region of Portugal, Melgaço; Costa do Sol Vinho Verde; and a Port from Van Zellers & Co. of Douro, producing the region's famed fortified wine since the 18th century.

1. Red wines from Beyra, Reulas, Castello d'Alba and Quinta Dona Maria.
2. White wines from Portugal's Castello d'Alba, Foral and Costa do Sol.
3. MS Walker Fine Wine & Spirits' Jack Couto, National Iberian Portfolio Manager with MS Walker of Rhode Island's sales team.



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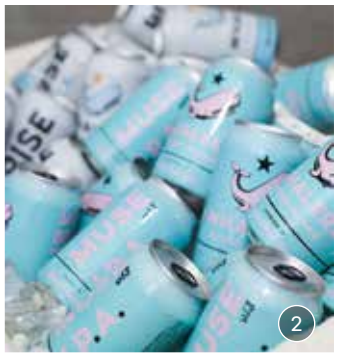
SONS OF LIBERTY SPIRITS CO. LAUNCHES NEW FLAVORED VODKA

South Kingstown-based award-winning Sons of Liberty Spirits Co. launched its new Chocolate Espresso Flavored Vodka, now available in stores and bars via distributor Mancini Beverage – Rhode Island Distributing division. Team from George's of Galilee in Narragansett hosted a Jan. 29 launch event using the brand in a chocolate espresso martini sampling event. Using housemade, "roasted to perfection" chocolate and espresso infused with vodka, Sons of Liberty Chocolate Espresso Flavored Vodka, at 35% ABV, gluten-free and made in small batches, offers a full-bodied and silky-smooth spirit. This newest flavor joins Salted Caramel Flavored Vodka among the line of whiskies, flavored whiskies and gin.

1. Sons of Liberty Spirits Co. launched its new Chocolate Espresso Flavored Vodka, 35% ABV.
2. George's of Galilee in Narragansett hosted a Jan. 29 launch event crafting chocolate espresso martinis using Sons of Liberty Spirits Chocolate Espresso Flavored Vodka.



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Photos by Laura Widness.

WHALERS BREWING COMPANY FEATURED AT COAST GUARD HOUSE

Coast Guard House in Narragansett welcomed Whalers Brewing Company for a Friday night beer-pairing dinner on Jan. 27 in the venue's upstairs Anchor Room. The four-course meal and dessert paired the Rhode Island craft beer offerings of Rise American Pale Ale, 5.5% ABV; Piesces, 5% ABV; Muse, 7% ABV; American Strong Ale, 9.5% ABV; and Hazelnut Stout, 6.5% ABV. A team from Whalers Brewing Company, including Director of Sales Gregory Horton and Brand Ambassador Libby Walker, educated guests on the showcased brews, respectively paired with arancini, oysters au gratin, pork belly BLT, BBQ ribs and hazelnut tiramisu. Founded in 2011, Whalers Brewing Company is a project by Josh Dunlap and Wes Staschke, who brew, can and keg on-site at its facility in the historic Palisades Mill campus located in South Kingstown. The brand is distributed in Rhode Island by Horizon Co. – Wayne division.

1. Coast Guard House hosted Whalers Brewing Company for a pairing dinner on Jan. 27 in the venue's Anchor Room.
2. Chilled Whalers Muse, a flagship freestyle IPA and Whalers Rise, a flagship award-winning APA.
3. A place setting showcases the evening's pairings.
4. All of the Coast Guard House except where indicated: Gregory Horton, Director of Sales, Whalers Brewing Company; Libby Walker, Brand Ambassador, Whalers Brewing Company; Fred Koury, Manager; Alexa Aspirno; Matt Gant; Carla Peter; Zach St. Jean; and Cameron Gagnon.
5. Fred Koury, Manager, Coast Guard House welcomes guests.
6. Gregory Horton, Director of Sales, Whalers Brewing Company.
7. A freshly poured Rise ready to be paired.
8. The first course paired with Rise: an arancini trio of Parmesan, mozzarella and lobster.

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EXTRA REFRESHING TASTE
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Heineken® SILVER



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Rhode Island Brew Fest Celebrates 10th Anniversary

The 2023 Rhode Island Brew Fest on Jan. 28 at WaterFire Arts Center in Providence marked the 10th anniversary of the annual celebration of American craft brewers. The day comprised two sold-out sessions, as craft beer fans were greeted with tastes, more than 50 breweries and over 200 styles of beer specifically. Guests enjoyed food and products from exhibiting vendors and received a custom commemorative glass. Hosted by the Rhode Island Brewers Guild and produced by Gray Matter Marketing, the event supports the attending brewers by purchasing all the products at the festival. Unlike many beer festivals, there are no booth fees for brewers, who are paid to participate on top of donating a portion of every ticket sold to the Rhode Island Brewers Guild. Established in 2013, the Rhode Island Brewers Guild is the official brewery association in the state, existing to support and promote Rhode Island craft breweries.



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Photos by Laura Widness.

1. The 10th Annual 2023 Rhode Island Brew Fest took place on Jan. 28 at WaterFire Arts Center in Providence.
2. The day's two sold-out sessions offered tastes of over 200 styles of beer from more than 50 breweries.
3. Josh Miller, Brand Ambassador and Allie Sasher, Marketing, Atlantic Brewing Company.
4. Homer Johnsen, Business Manager, Shaidzon Beer Company.
5. Susan Davis, Events Manager and Nannette Gendrea, Manager of Promotions, Good Dogg Hard Seltzer.
6. TJ Wyrebek, Brewery Representative, Samuel Adams.
7. Zack Signore, Field Sales Representative, Citizen Cider.
8. Kyle Toste, Brewer; Jenn Toste, Bartender; and Ryan Mitchell, Assistant, LineSider Brewing Co.
9. Katrina Shabo, Director of Sales, Medusa Brewing Company.
10. TJ Doyle, Territory Manager, Athletic Brewing Co.
11. Brand Ambassadors Mike Ciceron and Luke Basler, Wachusett Brewing Co.
12. James Groleau, Brand Ambassador; Nicole Lasky, Event Coordinator; and Will Gaess, Brand Ambassador, Whalers Brewing Company.
13. Kelly Marciano, Territory Sales Manager and Kyle Stewart, Boston Sales Representative, Zero Gravity.
14. Jess and Ben Pratt, Rhode Island Sales Representatives, Grey Sail Brewing.
15. Sam O'Connor, Brand Ambassador, Wormtown Brewery.
16. Emily Vides and Michael Patterson, Co-owners, Small Change Brewing Company.
17. Rachel Fanning, Marketing and Caleb Hebert, Marketing, Chair 2 Light Lager.
18. Jay Muraco, Sales Representative and Casey Wright, Bartender, Foolproof Brewing Company.
19. Chris Bacon, District Manager – RI, Dogfish Head.
20. Mandy Holt, Promo Lead and Brian Tait, Bartender, Narragansett Beer.
21. JT Ethier, Business Manager and Derek Rix, Brand Ambassador, Greater Good Imperial Brewing Company.
22. Conner DeVarney, Market Development Manager and Nick Malby, Director of Sales – East, Spindrift Beverage Co.

See more at:
thebeveragejournal.com/ri-brew-fest-winter-2023

Horizon Beverage Celebrates Team at Awards Dinner

Horizon Beverage Co. of Rhode Island fêted sales achievements and teamwork at an evening awards dinner at Café Nuovo in Providence on Jan. 27. The annual sales event saw honors for Divisional Salespersons of the Year and Team Player categories, as well as the Longevity Awards, given for five-year increments of employment with the company, all among the night's recognition of achievements. Celebrants enjoyed cuisine from Café Nuovo's kitchen team accompanied by fine wines.


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Photos by Adam Haley.

1. Café Nuovo in Providence set the stage for Horizon Beverage Co. of Rhode Island's sales awards evening on Jan. 27.
2. Bob Swartz, President, Horizon Beverage Co. of Rhode Island and Ben Rubenstein, Managing Director/Principal, Horizon Beverage Group.
3. Longevity Awards honorees with Ben Rubenstien (eight from left): Noryedg Perez, Nick Lavoie, Dan Blais, Orlando Silva (kneeling), Peter Vigeant, Bob Swartz, Gary Faragalli, Ryan Cabral, William Boynton, Abel Santos, Ryan Broz, Mike Devaney, Dave Dwyer, Lori Brunelle and Johnathan Ribeiro.
4. Longevity Awards honorees with Ben Rubinstein (fourth from left): Jonathan McGowan, Mark Morin, Corey Bailey, Eric Marsh, Peter Hilton, Nephi DiPalma, Matt Kanaczet, and Sean Stalls.
5. Longevity Awards honorees with Ben Rubenstein (second from left): Daryl Chabot, Jessi Barreto, Don Leonard and Chris Martin.
6. Longevity Awards honorees Steve Risko and Steve Marsh with Ben Rubenstein (center).
7. Longevity Awards honorees with Ben Rubenstein (third from left): John Johnson, Mike Squittiere, Gregg Quadrini, Margie Diaco and Bob Buonaccorsi.
8. Longevity Awards honorees: Joe Robinson, Ann Buonaccorsi and Fred Macari with Ben Rubenstein (center).
9. Jose Francisco, General Manager, Fradin division with Peter Vigeant, Salesperson of the Year, Fradin division.
10. Steve Morelli, General Manager, Copley division and with Second Runner-Up Don Leonard. Not shown: Winner Bill Conley and First Runner-Up Joel Smith.
11. Daryl Chabot, General Manager, Wine Marketing division and Jim Celletti, Salesperson of the Year, Wine Marketing division.
12. Ryan Broz, General Manager, Wayne division with Collen O'Brien, Salesperson of the Year, Wayne division.
13. Mike Squittiere presents Mike Sisto with a Team Player of the Year award.
14. Mike Squittiere congratulates Nick Lavoie for winning a Team Player of the Year award.
15. Horizon Beverage Co. enjoying the celebration.
16. Wines from the Horizon Beverage Co. portfolio accompanied meal courses.



Photo courtesy of Narragansett Beer.

NARRAGANSETT BEER CELEBRATES MILESTONE YEAR

As the 32nd-largest craft brewer in the United States, Narragansett Beer announced a milestone year for 2022. The company said it "pushed forward and returned to its pre-pandemic volume" of more than 100,000 barrels with a total depletion volume growth of 5%, driven across a wide geography and led by key markets of New York, Virginia, Washington, D.C., North Carolina, Ohio and its home market of Rhode Island, among them. On-premise accounts led channel growth with a 23% increase and draft lines surpassed pre-pandemic levels, the company reported. Since first opening in 1890, Narragansett Beer has experienced a storied history of "remarkable highs and lows." In 2005, lifelong Rhode Islander and company President Mark Hellendrung and his team resurrected the brand and, in 2022, the brewery completed its first full year of operations at its 18,000-square-foot waterfront brewery and taproom across from India Point Park, welcoming over 100,000 visitors. Head Brewer Lee Lord and the brew team also created more than 30 innovative craft beers. "It's exciting and humbling to be back after everything we've all been through over the last couple years," said Hellendrung. "There's so much more to do and we're all really looking forward to crushing it again in 2023."

Narragansett Beer President Mark Hellendrung.



EAST COAST BEVERAGE INTRODUCES NORTHCROSS IRISH WHISKEY

Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, East Coast Beverage welcomes Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey to Rhode Island. New from Latitude Beverage Co., the Irish whiskey import is made from a blend of whiskies, distilled in copper pot stills and matured in a combination of ex-bourbon barrels, Olorosso sherry casks and virgin American oak barrels. Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey is non-chill filtered and bottled at 86 proof, 43% ABV, offering aromas of graham cracker and honey. Once sipped, the sweetness of the malt is immediately present with flavors of chocolate syrup and beignets, before giving way to the tastes of creamy butterscotch and lively orange zest. The finish is long and showcases the influence of the sherry maturation with notes of marzipan and dried cherries. Northcross Irish Whiskey is crafted and matured at Ireland's Great Northern Distillery in the city of Dundalk in County Louth, located about halfway between Dublin and Belfast. The distillery was founded by Irish whiskey legend John Teeling and is the largest independent distillery in Ireland.

Northcross Triple Wood Irish Whiskey is non-chill filtered and bottled, 43% ABV. The blend is matured in a combination of ex-bourbon barrels, Olorosso sherry casks and virgin American oak barrels.

GOLD STANDARD

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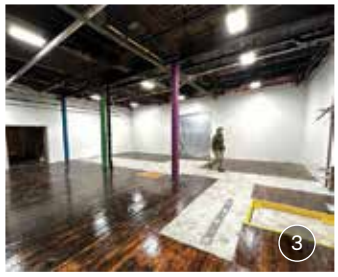
90
CALS

3g
CARBS

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Per 12 fl. oz. serving average analysis: Calories: 90, Carbohydrates: 3.0 grams, Protein: 0.6 grams, Fat: 0.0 grams.











RHODE ISLAND SPIRITS SHARES RELOCATION REPORT

Rhode Island Spirits, makers of Rhodium gins, vodkas and liqueurs, shared a pre-opening status on the company's buildout of its new distillery space located at 40 Bayley Street in Pawtucket, which began as 2022 came to an end. Co-founder Kara Larson said the new home features "a larger and more flexible distillery space, efficiency improvements and much improved freight access, so we should be able to respond to changes in demand more quickly and easily. We also invite any retail managers or owners to get in touch for a tour or a tasting training for their staff." The new space is a block away from the new Pawtucket/Central Falls MBTA station and was back in full production swing in February. New England's only LGBT-owned spirits brand, the Rhode Island Spirits line is crafted from local fresh, farmed or foraged ingredients and is gluten-free, organic, non-GMO and vegan, with all in the lineup but one certified kosher by RI Kosher. Rhodium Grapefruitcello Liqueur, Rhodium Limoncello Liqueur, Rhodium RI Red Vodka, Rhodium Coffee & Black Walnut Vodka, Rhodium Citron Vodka and Rhodium Forager's Gin are among its brands, all distributed in the state by Horizon Beverage Co. of Rhode Island – Copley division.

1. Rhode Island Spirits' Founders Cathy Plourde and Kara Larson outside 40 Bayley Street in Pawtucket.
2. A "before" picture of the larger and more flexible distillery space.
3. Larson reviewing the progression of renovations.
4. New floors and walls preceded the installation of the distillery's equipment.
5. Larson places the Rhode Island Spirits' still—nicknamed Bob—into its new spot, ready to make its Rhodium gins, vodkas and liqueurs.

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Photos by Laura Widness.

BULLY BOY SHOWCASE DURING JANUARY TIKI TAKEOVER

Union Bar + Burrito in East Providence debuted a new food and drinks menu as part of a Jan. 31 Tiki takeover event hosted in collaboration with Bully Boy Distillers. The venue's team, including Jimmy James, Chef and Drink Slinger; Alyssa Venuti, Bar Consultant; and Aaliyah Johnson, Partner/Manager, created a variety of tropical-inspired, rum-based cocktails featuring the spirits line from the Massachusetts-based distillery. Showcased spirits included Bully Boy Distillers The Rum Cooperative Volume 1, The Rum Cooperative Volume 2, The Rum Cooperative Volume 3, Boston Rum and White Rum. Distributed in the state by Horizon Beverage – Copley division, Bully Boy Distillers, Boston's first craft distillery founded in 2010, is owned and operated by brothers Will and Dave Willis, who found their inspiration for making small-batch spirits through a local tradition and a deep-rooted family history.

1. Union Bar + Burrito hosted a Tiki takeover event on Jan. 31 showcasing Bully Boy Distillers' Massachusetts rum-based brands: The Rum Cooperative Volume 1, The Rum Cooperative Volume 2, The Rum Cooperative Volume 3, Boston Rum and White Rum.
2. All of Union Bar + Burrito: Jimmy James, Chef and Drink Slinger; Alyssa Venuti, Bar Consultant and Aaliyah Johnson, Partner/Manager.
3. The Philter #2 cocktail featuring Bully Boy Distillers The Rum Cooperative Volume 2, Fernet-Branca, pineapple and lime juice, and orgeat.
4. The Seawater cocktail featuring Bully Boy Distillers Rum, coconut-washed Campari and vermouth.
5. Jimmy James, Chef and Drink Slinger, Union Bar + Burrito mixing up cocktails for guests.
6. The Mercy Brown cocktail featuring Bully Boy Distillers The Rum Cooperative Volume 1, Bully Boy Distillers The Rum Cooperative Volume 3, falernum, lime and grapefruit juice, cinnamon syrup and an Angostura float.



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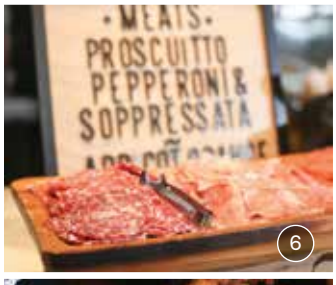
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Photos by Laura Widness.

CHARCUTERIE EDUCATION CLASS PAIRS WITH FINE WINES

A charcuterie board creation and wine-pairing class at Surf Club in Newport on Jan. 31 showcased fine wine selections from the portfolio of Johnson Brothers of Rhode Island. Guests selected and assembled their own custom selections of fine meats and cheeses, as well as fruits, nuts and chocolate, while learning which wine varietals and styles pair best to their tastes. Johnson Brothers Sales Consultants Phil Kitchen and Jill Hamilton led participants through a tasting of the wines, which included Martin Codax Albarino, Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc, Talbott Kali Hart Chardonnay, Conti Capponi Villa Calcinaia Piegaia Chianti Classico, J Vineyards Cuvée, Renato Ratti Barbera d'Asti DOC Battaglione, Belposto Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Hugh Hamilton Jim Jim Shiraz and Talbott Kali Hart Pinot Noir. The Surf Club hosts regularly scheduled public events at its Thames Street location centered around wine and food education, as well as private events.

1. Johnson Brothers of Rhode Island hosted a charcuterie board and wine-pairing class at Surf Club in Newport on Jan. 31.
2. Phil Kitchen, Sales Consultant, Johnson Brothers of RI and Laurie Berbrick, General Manager, Surf Club.
3. Sales Consultants Phil Kitchen and Jill Hamilton, Johnson Brothers of Rhode Island.
4. Martin Codax Albarino, Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc, Talbott Kali Hart Chardonnay, Conti Capponi Villa Calcinaia Piegaia Chianti Classico, J Vineyards Cuvée, Renato Ratti Barbera d'Asti DOC Battaglione, Belposto Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Hugh Hamilton Jim Jim Shiraz and Talbott Kali Hart Pinot Noir.
5. Manchego, brie, Gouda, cheddar and goat cheeses.
6. Guests used meats including prosciutto, pepperoni and soppressata to create their own charcuterie boards.
7. Chilled wines await class participants.
8. A pour of Renato Ratti Barbera d'Asti DOC Battaglione.



HORIZON MARKS CONSTELLATION BEER SALES MILESTONE

Horizon Beverage Company of Rhode Island celebrated its 2022 milestone of being the newest "1-Million Case Distributor" for Constellation Beer Brands, whose family of brands include Corona, Modelo and Pacifico. "We would like to thank our Horizon Beverage teammates, our customers and our supplier partners who have all helped to achieve this milestone," said Gregg Quadrini, President, Beer, Horizon Beverage Group. Sales teams and all company departments gathered in celebration in January to mark the occasion at the distributor's West Greenwich headquarters.

> Horizon Beverage of Rhode Island celebrated its 2022 achievement as 1-Million Case Distributor for Constellation Beer Brands, a milestone in cumulative sales for a U.S. wholesaler.



MANCINI BEVERAGE LAUNCHES CAPTAIN MORGAN COLLABORATION

Mancini Beverage – Providence Beverage division launched Vita Coco Spiked with Captain Morgan, the newest offering from a Diageo collaboration project with The Vita Coco Company. The line of premium canned cocktails is crafted with a blend of Captain Morgan rum and Vita Coco coconut water, making creating a delicious cocktail a few steps easier. Its three flavors are Piña Colada, finished with the flavor of fresh ripe pineapple, creamy coconut and dark rum notes; Strawberry Daiquiri, finished with the flavor of fresh-picked strawberries, ripe juicy lime and fruity rum notes; and Lime Mojito, finished with the flavor of fresh-muddled garden mint, ripe juicy lime and a touch of simple syrup, each at 5% ABV. Sold in 12-oz. cans, 4-pack.



MS WALKER APPOINTED DISTRIBUTOR OF FREIXENET MIONETTO USA

MS Walker of Rhode Island was appointed to exclusively distribute the entire portfolio of Freixenet Mionetto USA in January. "We have been honored to have historically represented the portion of their portfolio that includes such brands as Mionetto, Bollicini, Monsanto, Alfred Gratien and Pertinace. Now, we have been fortunate enough to also represent the balance of the portfolio that includes sparkling wine brands of Gloria Ferrar, Segura Viudas and Freixenet. MS Walker Rhode Island looks forward to proudly representing this portfolio and ushering in a healthy future for each of these iconic producers," said Anthony Bruneau, General Sales Manager, MS Walker Rhode Island. Freixenet's story stems from the Penedès region of Spain, where its first Cava was released in 1914. Mionetto's heritage sprouted in the heart of the Italian Prosecco region in 1887 and was the brand that introduced Prosecco to the United States in 1998. Today, both family companies continue their shared tradition of innovation and providing quality, premium wines.


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JOHNSON BROTHERS BRINGS ITALY TO SAKONNET POINT CLUB

Sakonnet Point Club in Little Compton, in collaboration with Johnson Brothers of Rhode Island, showcased fine wines and cuisine during a themed paring dinner on Feb. 3. The club's Italian Wine Dinner treated guests to a taste tour through Italy in five courses and education on the wines enjoyed. The night's offerings included Ratti Barbera d'Asti paired with truffle sacchetti, Pieropan Calvarino Soave Classico paired with radicchio and frisée, Jermann Pinot Grigio Friuli paired with grilled bronzini, Allegrini Amarone della Valpolicella paired with braised porchetta and Il Tramonto Limoncello paired with a ricotta torte. Guests were treated to a glass of J Vineyards California Cuvée made by *Wine Enthusiast* 2022 Winemaker of the Year Nicole Hitchcock. Founded in 1998 to revitalize an historic harbor property and to preserve its heritage, the Sakonnet Point Club's mission is to provide members and guests access to the Sakonnet waters and activities socializing in a setting of harbor and ocean views.

1. Sakonnet Point Club, in collaboration with Johnson Brothers of Rhode Island, hosted an Italian Wine Dinner for guests on Feb. 3.
2. Presenters Phil Kitchen, On-Premise Sales Consultant, Johnson Brothers of RI and Sean McNamara, Business Development Manager, E. & J. Gallo Winery.
3. Sakonnet Point Club's husband-and-wife duo General Manager Craig DeMott and Consultant Martina Halsey.
4. From Piedmont, Italy, Ratti Barbera d'Asti offers a fragrance of ripe fruit against a spice background.
5. Pieropan Calvarino Soave Classico, a certified organic expression of the popular Italian white wine, is made from a blend of Garganega (85%) and Trebbiano di Soave (15%).
6. Jermann Pinot Grigio Friuli, 13% ABV, is a full and fruity but dry and velvety wine from Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy.
7. Allegrini Amarone della Valpolicella—a rich, red wine from Veneto, Northern Italy—is made from Corvina grapes.
8. Phil Kitchen, On-Premise Sales Consultant, Johnson Brothers of RI addresses dinner guests.
9. Sean McNamara, Business Development Manager, E. & J. Gallo Winery speaks on the showcased Italian imports.
10. Nick Shepard, Johnson Brothers; Jill Hamilton, Johnson Brothers; and Sean McNamara, Business Development Manager, E. & J. Gallo Winery.
11. A first course of truffle-stuffed purses of pasta was paired with Ratti Barbera d'Asti.
12. A second course of radicchio and frisée was paired with Pieropan Calvarino Soave Classico from Veneto, Italy.
13. A pour of Allegrini Amarone della Valpolicella.


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Photos by Adam Haley.

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ROBOTICS, AI AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN HOSPITALITY

Voice of Rhode Island's Lodging, Restaurant, and Tourism Industry.

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

While the use of robotics in the restaurant and hotel industries was originally a novelty, modern versions of the technology have become increasingly sophisticated and, as a result, have proven to be useful in providing much-needed support to existing hospitality staffers and filling gaps due to a workforce shortage.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a launchpad for service robots in the hospitality industry, lessening the impact of staffing shortages and offering businesses a mechanism to provide necessary services without the worry of potential virus transmission to guests through human contact.

Utilizing different levels of artificial intelligence, service robots can perform a variety of functions, from standard transactional tasks (e.g., accepting payments, printing receipts, confirming a reservation, etc.) to those that require more data analysis and logical thinking (e.g., answering customer questions, delivering luggage to a hotel room, leading a tour of its facility, etc.). Through collaboration, these functionalities can sometimes alleviate the burden of less important customer requests, allowing human staff members to focus on higher-value priorities and tasks.

As the technology continues to evolve and the "intelligence level" of these robots grows with it, customer engagement with service robotics will likely become more fluid and natural. For now, customer-contact robots work best in support of their human counterparts, handling transactional and analytical duties, while existing staff members focus on social and emotional tasks.

Artificial intelligence in the hospitality industry goes beyond the implementation of robotic servers and hotel workers. It can be found in the hotel rooms and kitchens of tomorrow, bringing lodging accommodations to life with voice-activated or -enabled room amenities and allowing for the creation of more personalized experiences for customers and visitors alike.

Artificial intelligence can analyze online reviews and social media commentary and send out automated responses. It can support inventory management and help business owners decide the best pricing strategies and can support sales and marketing efforts through analyzing target segments, market demands, patterns and more.

While we are seeing more hospitality businesses incorporate the use of robotics and artificial intelligence into the workplace, the technology is still in its fledgling stage compared to what experts are predicting for it in the future.

Despite this, it is clear to me that this technology is one that our industry should explore and embrace to remain competitive in this "new" economy where customers (especially those who are young and tech-savvy) expect the best level of service wherever they go, whether from humans or computers!

As labor shortages continue to plague the job market in 2023, it is my belief that more hospitality businesses will employ the use of robotics in an effort to create a more efficient workflow, provide valuable new experiences for guests and to give existing staff members the tools and support necessary to provide the best service to customers. However, robotics, while on point in performing their specific functions, cannot and will not take the place of industry workers whose personal touch and work ethic have made the industry what it is today.

LEARN MORE

To learn how you can join the RI Hospitality Association and protect and grow our industry, please visit **www.rihospitality.org**.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR | **DALE J. VENTURINI,** President & CEO, RI Hospitality Association

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



CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS

BY LEN PANAGGIO

March is here and with it comes several important, impactful events. Daylight saving time is the first; starting when we turn the clocks ahead on March 12. Despite the controversy associated with springing ahead and falling back, the former is a welcome event in our industry, as the extra daylight is a harbinger of spring.

Next is St. Patrick's Day! While not a national holiday, it certainly is celebrated in a big way across the country, with parades and all sorts of restaurant and bar events taking place. It is a strong sales contributor. Concurrently, the National Collegiate Athletic Association's March Madness basketball tournament begins and it is another excuse for folks to go out and have fun! Lastly, a real watershed moment is the first day of spring, which means we have days getting longer, weather getting warmer and summer a mere 90 days away.

All this excitement after a long winter will typically prompt owners of outdoor bars to start prepping for summer. These venues are such an important part of the restaurant business, as whether on the coast or in the city, our guests want to be outside enjoying the fine weather while we have it.

Prepping outdoor bars obviously starts with addressing any repairs that have been on hold, thorough equipment checks and deep cleaning. After a long winter of hibernation, your outdoor bar most likely needs some sprucing up from a visual perspective as well. Remember, guests are constantly making judgment calls about a business based on how neat, clean and tidy things look. The same holds true for your indoor bar too. Make sure you are putting fresh eyes on everything as we go into the warmer weather.

Speaking of cleanliness, there is one area of the bar often overlooked: the soda gun system. How often have you or your guests noticed an odd aroma and/or flavor that just shouldn't be there when a soft drink is ordered? Your vendor is probably not checking the gun holster for slime buildup, which can get in the nozzle, so make sure you are soaking the nozzle nightly and cleaning the BIB connectors. During routine Department of Health inspections, this is an area that is checked and that most business owners overlook. Insist that your vendor cleans the lines and replaces the filters.

In addition, think about the drains. I recommend pouring a carafe of boiling water down the beer drain as part of nightly cleanup to avoid yeast buildup and that pervasive stale beer odor. In addition to the drains, think about your ice machines and regularly clean them: it's important. Many owners don't realize that there are typically filters installed in the machines that can be expensive, but make sure they are changed.

Despite the chilled environment, the lids on the ice machines are petri dishes for mold; they should be cleaned regularly. And don't forget, dust is a big enemy of refrigeration, as it chokes the equipment. Fortunately, it is an easy fix, but if left unattended, the damage it causes could cost more than you think.

Now is also the time for the inside bar and service bar to get a deep cleaning as well. It won't be long before they, too, will be cranking up along with the outside bar for summer. There are plenty of pieces of equipment and areas of your business to clean in this shoulder season.

10 steak & sushi
BLACKSTONE CATERERS
George's of Galilee
Matunuck Oyster Bar
OAK HILL TAVERN HOUSE OF BAR-B-QUE
The Lobster Pot



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Len Panaggio / Beverage Consultant

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

Cork & Brew & Spirits Too

BY **SARA CAPOZZI**







LOCATION

2200 Broad Street
Cranston, RI

FACTS

Square footage:
3,300

Years in operation:
5 years
under current ownership



Situated in Cranston's historic Pawtuxet Village overlooking the cove, Cork & Brew & Spirits Too is a unique destination for fine wine, spirits and beer. The shop is housed in the former Cameron's Pharmacy building and its charming design and decor, which includes chandeliers constructed from wine bottles and custom-built display cases, gives it a sophisticated yet laid-back boutique vibe.

Run day to day by the small, close-knit team of Owner Al Sinclair, Dash Pena and Ruthie Spellman, Cork & Brew's picturesque, walkable neighborhood offers a variety of retailers and restaurants, bringing both locals and out-of-towners to the shop. Spellman is the wine specialist and both Sinclair and Pena are knowledgeable in rum and craft beer categories. Pena, also a bartender by trade, helps clientele find the exact ingredients they need to make cocktails from home and is the store's tequila expert.

"We do have a real contingent of people from the neighborhood," Spellman said. There's always an influx of shoppers, she explained, whether it's boaters from the marina, tourists staying in the local rentals or patrons of the three nearby BYOB restaurants. The store offers a 10% discount for customers who are looking for a bottle of wine, soju or sake to enjoy at those nearby eateries. The store is also pet-friendly, she said; dogs often stop in, with their owners in tow, looking for a dog biscuit from the staff.



All of Cork & Brew & Spirits Too: Dash Pena, Al Sinclair and Ruthie Spellman.

Crowds flock to Cork & Brew's weekend tastings, conducted either from its main tasting table or in its downstairs special events room. The whimsically decorated room, used primarily in the warmer months, also hosts classes, wine and paint nights and other neighborhood activities. Simone Pastore, Wine Tasting Consultant, helps to organize the tastings, which spotlight local as well as larger brands, often with a seasonal focus.

Popular items include natural wines, Oregon Pinot Noirs, craft beer and tequila. The team also highlights local brands with custom signage and store tastings. The store carries well-known Rhode Island brands, including wines from Gooseneck and Carolyn's Sakonnet Vineyard, the Rhode Island Spirits line and local brews too. A revolving Staff Picks section offers introductions to featured favorites.

Since Sinclair purchased the store in April 2018, the team has gradually made improvements to the shop's interior as well as the inventory it carries, going out of its way to bring in customer requests, whether it's a new wine or spirit or brand of cigar. The shop has its own humidor stocked with a large variety of imported and locally made cigars and cigar accessories.

"Al's really brought it to another level," said Spellman, "by listening to customers, what they wanted, cigars they might be interested in. Al does that with everything. We all do. Al makes the final decision, but if someone wants something, he'll order it ... as long as we have a spot in the aisle, he'll order it."

The crew prioritizes hands-on customer service. "That's one thing we definitely do is make sure we talk to our customers," said Pena. "Because we are a smaller store, we get to be a little more intimate and familiar with the products that we have and we also do research too ... I think it's important that [a customer] walks in and gets to talk to somebody who knows what they're talking about."

Chatting with customers also gives the Cork & Brew team a chance to introduce them to products they maybe wouldn't have tried on their own. "We try to go above and beyond to be more than just a place where you walk in, grab a handle and walk out," Pena said. "There's customers who sometimes will come in for one thing and we start talking on the history of this and they'll leave with stuff they didn't even know they wanted to try. They come back and say 'That was awesome.'" ■

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



Winter Wine Vacation: France, Part One

BY JONATHAN FEILER

Each January, the Ocean House closes for a few weeks to give the team a rest and to complete projects to restore the property to all its glory. Usually, I am headed South as fast as the bell rings at the end of the season. This year, my team and I headed North and East, to France, spending two weeks in Burgundy, Chablis and Champagne. Our team-building objective was to learn, taste and experience the many wines, regions and people that we read about and discuss with our guests every day.

I have been on many wine trips in the past, but never planned one. There are many details to be considered, such as where to stay, who and where to visit, where to eat, what type of transportation to book and what type of overall experience I was looking to create. In the beginning phases, my idea was to fill our days with winery visits, but limit them to only two a day, so that we could spend time taking in the culture, food, shopping and historical sites of each region we visited. Most importantly, we had to leave extra time to visit every storied or spontaneous vineyard and winery that we were near.

The planning of the trip took over three months to coordinate, including guidance and recommendations from distributors, suppliers, wineries, chefs and co-workers. When choosing wineries, the goal was to not just visit the names of the famous or large wineries that everyone knows, but to see many different operations: production, methodology, viticulture, as growing and winemaking would differ at each.

When choosing restaurants, I made sure that lunch spots were close to wineries we were visiting and dinner locations had interesting food and wine menus with unique service styles. Most restaurants offer three- to four-course tasting menus for reasonable prices and have extensive wine lists peppered with many producers, vintages and regions that are not available domestically.

That overall plan worked quite well. In total, we were able to visit eight wineries, enjoy leisurely lunches and sensational dinners, take in the local culture and view the historical hillsides and valleys of Burgundy and Champagne. One of my pet peeves of past wine trips was the inability to stop and take in all the sites and really absorb the local area. Since I was the master of destiny this time, I made it a point to build in the time for curiosity, adventure and ad-libbing.

On two separate occasions, we were able to slowly drive through the villages of Vosne-Romanee, Gevrey-Chambertin, Aloxe-Corton, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet, just to name a few. We stopped at every famous vineyard in the villages and geeked out at their soil compositions, the way the vine rows were laid out, their exposure to the sun, the elevation of each vineyard compared to itself and its neighbors and took copious amounts of pictures and selfies.

We made Beaune our headquarters for seven days so we could fully immerse ourselves in its history and culture. Beaune was built during the pre-historic ages and is to this day still the wine capital of Burgundy. The region of Beaune is the villages, vineyards and buildings including The Hospice de Beaune, Clos Vougeot, Puligny and Chassagne Montrachet, Corton-Charlemagne and, of course, the crown jewel, the vineyard of Le Montrachet.

My favorite moment was the day we visited The Hospice de Beaune, in the center of the village of Beaune. The Hospice was built in 1443 to care for the sick of the local community; today, it is a museum and the home of the famous annual wine auction. The building is awe-inspiring with its signature tiled roof. We arrived for our tour early on a Saturday morning, not knowing that when we emerged from the Hospice's gift shop, we would be transported into the most incredible farmers market I had ever seen in the village square. As huge foodies, this was a very welcome sight. We visited each booth and tasted the many cheeses, mustards, olives, charcuterie and pates. It was an incredible and welcome surprise. That one moment was the reason why I wanted to take this trip with my team. While it didn't really have to do with anything wine-related, it allowed us to be part of the local community for a few hours and really understand the culture of the region.

Throughout our trip, we learned something new every day and at each leg of the journey we found what we coined a "holy moly!" moment as we drove through the region and realized a village or vineyard. Being on the ground in Burgundy and Champagne is an invaluable experience that no book or podcast can re-create. I believe that we came back as a more knowledgeable, energized and connected team, and I am looking forward to sharing what we learned and saw.



Jonathan Feiler

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jonathan Feiler is Group Director of Wine for Ocean House Management Collection, including the *Forbes* Five-Star Ocean House, the award-winning Weekapaug Inn, the Watch Hill Inn and the Inn at Hastings Park, where he oversees the wine and beverage program and practices a wine philosophy centered on versatility and approachability. He also is responsible for a full program of beverage education classes for individuals and groups.

Surf Club

337 Thames Street
Newport, RI

Situated among the bustling eateries and shops of Thames Street and overlooking Newport Harbor, Surf Club brings its own brand of comfort food and familiar favorites to guests looking for the perfect spot to grab a casual meal and catch up with family and friends. Located in the Perry Mill Market below the Newport Bay Club, the venue's decor is comfortable and rustic with nautical details, such as the 150-year-old wooden beams outfitting the interior. The rustic open kitchen is anchored by its Marra Forni brick pizza oven, which adds to the laid-back vibe. During the warmer months, outdoor dining and tiki cocktails are available in The Surf Shack. To eat, guests can choose from freshly baked pizzas created from house-made dough and marinara sauce, tacos, salads, sandwiches and poke bowls. To drink, select wines are available by the bottle and glass, along with a variety of domestic and craft beer. The venue also offers a noteworthy craft cocktail list, with seasonal and signature creations using high-end spirits and fresh ingredients.





Bartender
Jack McCarthy

Cocktail
Spicy Watermelon Margarita

Ingredients

- 1.5 oz. Monte Alban Blanco Tequila
- .75 oz. Triple Sec
- .5 oz. house-made sour mix
- 3 oz. freshly juiced watermelon and serrano peppers to taste. (The cocktail is batched; the team juices 4 to 6 watermelons and then juices the peppers to taste.)
- Garnish: lime slice

Method: Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker over ice. Shake vigorously and strain the mixture into a glass filled with ice. Garnish with a lime slice.

Bartender Jack McCarthy with Surf Club's signature Spicy Watermelon Margarita.

"At Surf Club, we try to make sure when creating flavor profiles, we use as many natural ingredients as possible," said Laurie Berbrick, General Manager and Event Coordinator, noting that staff regularly juices watermelon, kiwi, and honeydew and makes its own rosemary, chai tea and honey simple syrups. "We try not to use flavored spirits where we can use ingredients and we change our drink menu four times a year to coincide with the seasons and throw a few specials in along the way."



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THE NEW HEALTH AND WELLNESS HACKS

INDULGENCE, LONG HOURS, AND UNHEALTHY HABITS ARE OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS, BUT MANAGEABLE CHANGES AND A SHIFT IN MINDSET CAN BOOST MENTAL, PHYSICAL, AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

BY KELLY MAGYARICS

Long shifts, late nights, physically demanding work, and a seemingly unlimited supply of alcohol and food; the drinks industry is rife with obstacles to thwart healthy habits.

But the pandemic—and a burgeoning trend of mindful drinking—have spurred a renewed interest in wellness, and drink professionals are rethinking their approach. Here are top tips from bartenders, sommeliers, and sales reps for prioritizing a healthy lifestyle.

ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN A REGULAR SLEEP ROUTINE

People who get enough sleep boost their immune systems, maintain a healthier weight, have a decreased risk of serious health concerns, reduce stress levels, improve their mood, think more clearly, and get along better with people—a must for constant interactions with guests. Yet working late, lingering for drinks, and rising early to run errands can cause sleep deprivation and irregular sleeping habits.

"Routines are very important for my mental and physical health, and post-shift stability is equally important," says Scott

ILLUSTRATIONS CREDIT TO ADOBE STOCK



"Ample rest is necessary to avoid total exhaustion."

-Scott Taylor, beverage director at Harris' Restaurant

Taylor, the beverage director at Harris' Restaurant in San Francisco. "Erratic working hours can make keeping a sleep schedule very difficult, but ample rest is necessary to avoid total exhaustion." Striving to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day is ideal but often impossible; still, try not to "catch up" too much on your days off or it could sabotage the rest you get on your work days.

STAY HYDRATED

Chantal Tseng cites drinking enough water as the number one tip to stay healthy—and it's often the most overlooked. "When your body doesn't have enough water, you strain so much of the rest of your system," says the Washington, D.C.-based bar sommelier. The stress and workload can throw you out of balance, she says, hindering the ability to make the right decisions for your mental, physical, or emotional needs.

Between the onslaught of customer needs, orders, extra details, running around, and other demands, you might not notice you're thirsty—which means mild dehydration has already set in. "Keep real hydration goals—maybe even partner up with a coworker so you can both remind each other to drink water." Stash a refillable water bottle where you'll see it, and sip from it often.



"When your body doesn't have enough water, you strain so much of the rest of your system."

-Chantal Tseng, bar-somm

BREATHE—ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE EXERTING YOURSELF

When we're stressed, we tend to take quick, shallow breaths—which causes fatigue and increases tension in the body. But breathing regularly with mindful, deeper breaths keeps you calmer and raises energy. Tseng compares her body to a car: "Start your shift with a full tank of fuel, no rusty parts or malfunctioning gears, keeping water and oxygen circulating."

No matter how busy you get, she says, make sure you breathe, particularly when shaking cocktails or lifting heavy objects like cases of wine. She recalls a time she threw out her back at work while mixing drinks, which became a recurring injury; the only way to keep it at bay was to remind herself to breathe. "For some reason, folks often have a tendency to hold their breath while doing something strenuous, which is the worst thing you could do," adds Tseng.

PRACTICE MINDFUL DRINKING

Imbibers in and out of the industry have increasingly turned to Dry January and Sober October to reset. While these work well for some people, Aaron Thompson prefers to practice daily moderation. "Holding yourself accountable can be difficult if you're constantly working and socializing in an environment that lends itself toward a lot of drinking or partying," says the owner and sommelier for Brother Wolf in Knoxville, Tennessee.

While he admits that it's only natural that colleagues will want to decompress together after work to commiserate on the issues they may have encountered that day, that often not only includes alcohol but starts with shots to beat closing time—and peer pressure and FOMO are powerful. "Set a goal [with a buddy] before you go out to only have a certain number of drinks and hold yourself accountable, remembering to have grace if either of you fails," he suggests.



"Set a goal [with a buddy] before you go out to only have a certain number of drinks and hold yourself accountable, remembering to have grace if either of you fails."

-Aaron Thompson, owner and sommelier at Brother Wolf

Andy Myers, MS, the wine director at Kohanaiki, a private club in Kona, Hawaii, is a big proponent of enjoyment—in moderation. "Nothing we do is without risk, it's all about mitigating it and still living life to the fullest. So catch the big wave and enjoy a great glass of wine."

PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT TO MAD ROSE CREATIVE // PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHANTAL TSENG // PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BROTHER WOLF



"Nothing we do is without risk, it's all about mitigating it and still living life to the fullest."

-Andy Myers, MS, wine director at Kohanaiki

PICK UP A DIVERSION

Taylor bemoans the lack of resources available for healthy decompressing after work—a by-product of late hours when everything's closed. Still, they recommend carving out space and time for a solo activity to recharge your batteries and prevent burnout, like a museum visit, nature hike, or playing video games. They also plan something big to look forward to, like their upcoming trip to Chile. "Even if it's half a year away, having a rewarding break in the back of my mind keeps me motivated," says Taylor.

If you have the space and resources, Taylor suggests adopting a dog. "Dogs are great therapy animals that force you to get out into the fresh air for walks and encourage the maintenance of a regular schedule," they say. "There are plenty of dogs in shelters waiting for companionship. It's a win-win."

IMPLEMENT SMALL LIFESTYLE TWEAKS...

Attempt to adhere to rigid rules and you set yourself up for failure and low self-esteem. Jen Rae, the lead bar manager for Sea Creatures in Seattle, sticks to a few simple guidelines. She sets an alarm to rise early a few days per week—skipping the early wake-up call when she recognizes that her body needs the extra rest. She also doesn't drink at home and reminds herself every day to take vitamins, eat fruit and vegetables, and hydrate. Finally, she maintains a close circle of friends outside of the service industry.

Rae, a rock climber and runner who recently underwent three neurosurgeries for a cerebral aneurysm, considers herself a bit more motivated now to live a healthier lifestyle. "It's amazing how healthy the human body can feel by just doing the simple things, and it can cascade into a cool lifestyle with fun hobbies or activities that your body and mind has energy for," she believes.

...BUT MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

With more than 35 years in the industry, H. Joseph Ehrmann admits that he is still trying to lead a healthier life. "The gregarious, fun nature of our business makes it difficult, especially when you're young and think you are invincible," says the proprietor of Elixir in San Francisco. (Spoiler: you're not.) He urges pros to relinquish the thought that they have all the time in the world and start good habits early. Internalize a consistent mindset of moderation as the key to enjoyment; he compares it to savoring a bite of food versus shoveling forkfuls. And maintaining a consistent lifestyle means keeping a routine that's manageable



"If you don't start small and sustainable, you'll continue to struggle with it forever."

-H. Joseph Ehrmann, proprietor of Elixir

"Group classes with app schedules work really well and help me hold that time sacred for myself."

-Dana Darley, on-premise channel manager at Heaven Hill Brands



and effective yet flexible enough to roll with life's little ups and downs—and temptations. "Once you've achieved these regular changes (not dramatic), then you can think about getting more serious," he believes. "If you don't start small and sustainable, you'll continue to struggle with it forever."

SCHEDULE TIME FOR EXERCISE

The odd hours were always Dana Darley's biggest excuse for not sticking to a workout routine—but she found a techy solution. "Group classes with app schedules work really well and help me hold that time sacred for myself," says the on-premise channel manager for Heaven Hill Brands. "Mainly because it populates automatically into my calendar and I can't book meetings or anything else over that block."

Getting charged a penalty fee for canceling at the last minute is also a big incentive to show up. If you wait until you "find the time" to exercise, you'll never start—the secret is to carve it out, just like you would a night out with friends. She highly touts group workout class Orangetheory for drinks pros who struggle to prioritize fitness.

At the end of the day, Darley believes it's really just a decision to put your health above work—an encouraging shift in awareness from the industry: "You can't be great for anyone else if you aren't good with yourself first." ■

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KOHANAIKI // PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF H. JOSEPH EHRMANN // PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY HEAVEN HILL BRANDS



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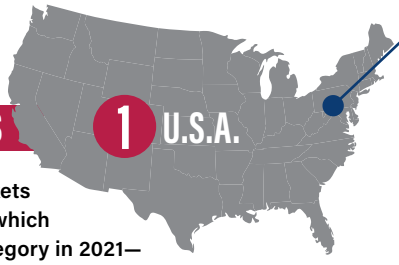
THE LATEST IN IRISH WHISKEY

BY ALIA AKKAM

DATA INSIGHTS AND KEY FACTS ABOUT IRELAND'S SIGNATURE SPIRIT

IRISH WHISKEY TODAY

TOP 5 IRISH WHISKEY MARKETS



Following the U.S., the largest markets for Irish whiskey include the U.K.—which commanded five percent of the category in 2021—followed by Ireland, Germany, and Poland.





Source: IWSR Drinks Market Analysis

STATE SIDE STATS

40%

The U.S., the largest Irish whiskey market, holds approximately 40 percent of volume share.

Source: IWSR Drinks Market Analysis

In 2022, more than 6.1 million 9L cases were sold in the U.S. That's $1.4 billion in revenue for distillers.

Source: DISCUS

6.1 MILLION

In 2021, consumption of Irish whiskey in the U.S. increased in volume by 15 percent.

15%

Source: IWSR Drinks Market Analysis

In 2022, U.S. dollar sales of Irish whiskey totaled over $570 million, with over 21.8 million units sold. This is down slightly from 2021 (over $579 million and 22.7 million units).

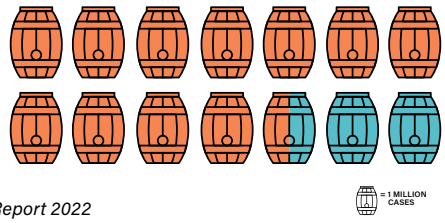
Source: NielsenIQ

$570 MILLION

$26.15 The average unit price of Irish whiskey (up from $25.51 in 2021).

14 MILLION

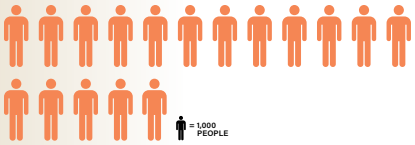
cases of Irish whiskey were sold globally in 2021, **an increase of 21 percent** from 2020.



Source: Irish Whiskey Association's Irish Whiskey Global Report 2022

LOCAL IMPACT

Source: Irish Whiskey Association Report



The industry directly employs over 1,700 people in Ireland, contributing approximately

€700 MILLION

in gross value to the economy.

€63 million was spent in local communities by visitors to distilleries.



HIGH GROWTH

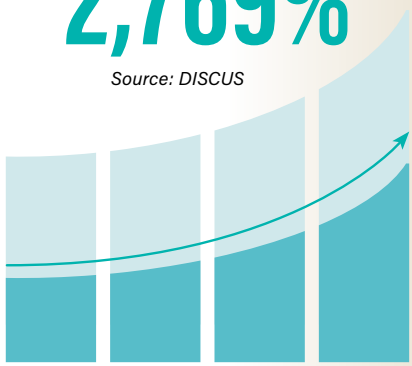
Since 2003, high-end, premium Irish whiskey grew a staggering

1,053%

and super-premium Irish whiskey grew

2,769%

Source: DISCUS




OWN YOUR SWEET SPOT
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IRISH WHISKEY HISTORY

1608

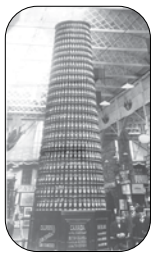
Founded in 1608, Bushmills, in Northern Ireland, was the first licensed Irish whiskey distillery.

1776

Irish whiskey was, like its Scottish counterparts, also referred to as whisky. The "e" was incorporated simply to differentiate the category, but a few brands—like McConnell's, which dates from 1776 in Belfast, and Waterford—have gone back to their roots and dropped the "e" across all branding.

1893

In 1893, Powers Irish Whiskey took part in the Chicago World's Fair by building a striking tower of Powers bottles.



1952

Starring Irish whiskey, the cream-topped Irish Coffee was popularized in the U.S. at San Francisco's The Buena Vista in 1952, courtesy of travel writer Stanton Delaplane. The Buena Vista now churns out a staggering 2,000 Irish Coffees a day.

2022

Jameson ventured into flavored territory with the debut of Jameson Orange in 2022. Another innovation, the ready-to-drink Jameson Ginger & Lime, followed soon after.



POWERS IRISH WHISKEY PHOTO COURTESY OF POWERS IRISH WHISKEY

CHARACTERISTICS

Irish whiskey is rarely peated, but there are a few exceptions, including The Connemara, Kilbeggan Black, Teeling Blackpitts, and Waterford's Fenniscourt and Ballybannon single malts.

MALT

Irish whiskey is characterized by malted barley, although pot-still varieties allow for the addition of other unmalted cereal grains.

In 2010, there were only four whiskey distilleries in operation in Ireland, garnering sales of less than five million cases. Today there are over 40 on the island, producing around 110 million LPA of whiskey every year.

Source: Irish Whiskey Association report



THE BUSKER

At its state-of-the-art Royal Oak Distillery in County Carlow, **The Busker** produces all three classic styles of Irish whiskey—single grain, single malt, and single pot still. The mellowing of its blend, Triple Cask Triple Smooth, and Single Grain expressions all take place in rare Cantine Florio Sicilian Marsala wine casks from 1833.

CULTURE



Helen Mulholland, the first female master blender in Irish whiskey history—and the first woman to receive a Chairman's Award from the Irish Whiskey Association—began her career at Bushmills, where she spent almost three decades before moving to Athrú Whiskey. Bushmills carried on their legacy of having women at the helm when Alex Thomas took over in 2021.

Irish Whiskey Association
Drinks Ireland

ILLUSTRATION CREDIT TO ADOBE STOCK

BYE, BYE, AMERICAN RYE.



SAY HELLO TO ITS IRISH COUSIN.

POWERS 100% IRISH RYE WHISKEY.

POWERS
ESTD 1791
IRISH WHISKEY

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GOING GREEN

WEST CORK DISTILLERS

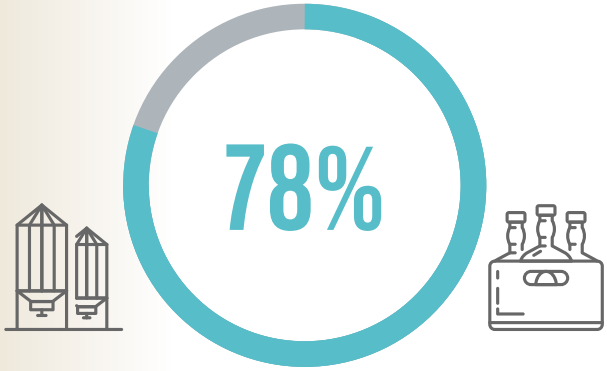
Along with its bourbon and Black Cask varieties, **West Cork Distillers**—founded in 2003 by childhood friends John O'Connell, Denis McCarthy, and Ger McCarthy—experiments with innovative finishes. Some are aged for an additional six months in casks that previously held Blacks of Kinsale IPA and Blacks of Kinsale stout beers; others in barrels using peat and bog oak culled from Glengarriff Forest.







Over 95 percent of all glass bottles used for Irish whiskey are currently sourced in the U.K. or EU.
Source: Irish Whiskey Association report



In search of a more sustainable or resilient supply chain, 78 percent of Irish whiskey producers have switched suppliers.
Source: Irish Whiskey Association Report

Irish Distillers—known for Jameson, Powers, Redbreast, and Midleton Very Rare—launched the Sustainable Green Spring Barley Scheme, working with over 200 barley growers to help reduce their carbon footprint and promote biodiversity. They also announced plans for the Midleton Distillery, in County Cork, to become carbon neutral by 2026.

Irish Distillers
Pernod Ricard

teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

Drinks Ireland, which represents Irish drink manufacturers and suppliers, along with Irish Distillers, William Grant & Sons, and Diageo, have entered an agreement with Teagasc, Ireland's agricultural and food development authority, to support a more eco-minded supply of Irish grain as part of the Teagasc Signpost Farm initiative.

DIAGEO

Irish Distillers
Pernod Ricard

Independent Family Distillers Since 1887

NORTHCROSS

Ireland's largest independent distillery, Great Northern Distillery, in County Louth, has prime access to pure water from the Cooley Mountains. It is home to such brands as Northcross Triple Wood Whiskey, which comprises a blend of whiskeys matured in former bourbon, sherry, and virgin American oak casks.



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HOW J. LOHR VINEYARDS & WINES IS FOSTERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WINEMAKING TALENT

KICKING OFF ITS SIXTH YEAR, THE #JLOHRWOMEN CAMPAIGN AIMS TO BRING NEW TALENT AND IDEAS INTO THE INDUSTRY WITH AN EVENT SERIES AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Kristen Barnhisel, winemaker

Kristen Barnhisel has extensive experience in regions from Washington State to Northern California in crafting wines of authenticity and purity. This is the expertise that landed her the role as winemaker, white wine, at J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines in 2015. It's precisely this type of talent J. Lohr hopes to foster in the next generation of women in the wine industry with its #JLohrWomen campaign, now in its sixth year. It features a series of online sessions aimed at aspiring winemakers with a corresponding opportunity to shadow the winemaking team—including Barnhisel herself.

"The industry has made some great strides the last few years on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) awareness," says Rhonda Motil, the vice president of marketing at J. Lohr, but "there is more to do."

In March 2022, Deloitte, in collaboration with Women of the Vine & Spirits, released an industry-wide study entitled "Women Raising the Bar". The study states that less than 20 percent of women think their company's efforts on DEI have been "very successful" in creating a better workplace.

"Most women surveyed had concerns about what will attract the next generation of female leaders into the industry," says Motil, with sixty percent of women indicating a lack of DEI as the top issue preventing them from considering a career in the beverage alcohol industry.

"It has been discussed that only 14 percent of California wineries have a woman in one of their lead winemaker positions," says Cynthia Lohr, the co-owner and chief brand officer. "And women in C-suite positions in the wine industry, compared with other industries, are equally modest."

In early 2023, J. Lohr kicked off the program with its #JLohrWomen LinkedIn virtual event series, hosting three events in marketing, sales, and viticulture and enology respectively. After each session, participants were invited to submit a short essay about their interest in the program. Three successful entrants will be selected to join the J. Lohr team for shadow days at the wineries.

"The shadow program, and the corresponding conversations, are in part due to the women and men who came before us and paved a clear path towards elevating equity within the alcohol beverage industry," says Motil.



The program aims to provide insight on wine industry career opportunities for students at California schools with wine adjacent programs, although all geographic locations are welcome to join the virtual sessions. "We are trying to reach women (and men) already in the wine industry as well as those considering a career in some facet of the wine industry," says Lohr.

The goal is to give back to the community by investing in education to foster the next generation of talent. Of course, Barnhisel isn't the only female star at J. Lohr. As a family-owned and managed business of five decades, the company has a long history of employing and empowering committed, talented women who contribute to key roles as well as at the highest levels of leadership.

Experiential shadow days will be offered in marketing with Motil and Lohr; in science and viticulture and enology with Barnhisel and Anji Perry, the viticulture and vineyard research director; and in sales with Rita Di Lello, the vice president of national accounts on-premise and ecommerce, and Jessica Kollhoff, the director of hospitality and direct sales.

"Ultimately," says Lohr, "the question is less about whether women are underserved by the wine community and more about how we come together to inspire the best in all of our colleagues." ■

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

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Join the Conversation

#JLOHR #WOMEN



Rebecca Santos

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

Team Member Since 2011

Rebecca oversees the finances of J. Lohr's widespread vineyard operations. She helps our sustainable farming efforts supply only the highest quality grapes for our wines.



Susan Kanzaki

J. LOHR LAB SUPERVISOR

Team Member Since 1989

Susan tests every step of the winemaking process to ensure quality and authenticity in J. Lohr's wines.



Martha Muniz

PASO ROBLES PRODUCTION

Team Member Since 2015

Martha is an all-around VIP in our Paso Robles winery's barrels rooms, crush pad, and tank farm.



Cynthia Lohr

CO-OWNER and CHIEF BRAND OFFICER

Team Member Since 2002

Cynthia drives the winery's marketing and brand strategies. She is deeply committed to the company's leadership role in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the wine industry.

Join us as we celebrate diversity in the wine industry and those who have mentored and inspired us.

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NATURE-INSPIRED REBELLIOUS WINE LAUNCHES A PINOT NOIR

AFTER AMASSING AN IMPRESSIVE FAN BASE WITH ITS RED BLEND, THE CALIFORNIA NEWCOMER HAS SET ITS SIGHTS ON ANOTHER HOT WINE CATEGORY



In 2021, Rebellious Wine made its debut with a full-bodied, crowd-pleasing California red blend that quickly became a favorite among American consumers. Now, Rebellious has ventured into the growing Pinot Noir category.

Versatile Pinot Noir is an apt choice for the label's first complementary line extension. The rebel Pinot Noir grape has been part of the California landscape since it was smuggled over from France over a century ago. The grape also embodies the notion of terroir, a concept that is particularly attractive to today's thoughtful wine consumer. Few grapes can express the distinctive aromas and flavors of the location where they were grown as deftly as Pinot Noir, and in the case of the Rebellious Pinot Noir, the result is an enticing fusion of crushed raspberry, dark cherry, and restrained sandalwood notes that conjure scenic California vineyards.

Given its ability to transport wine fans to such distinct settings, it's no surprise that elegant yet easy-to-drink Pinot Noir remains one of the most clamored-for varieties on the market. Domestic Pinot Noir (a more affordable alternative to the heavyweights from the grape's native Burgundy) is growing at +4.1 percent in dollars within the Rebellious price segment that spans $17 to $23, according to Nielsen's off-premise data for the 52 weeks ending November 5, 2022.

"Pinot Noir continues to be the most exciting red variety in the wine industry. Each country is developing its own unique style, and Rebellious showcases a ripe, juicy Pinot Noir that has proven to be very popular with the U.S. consumer."

- Nick Poletto, VP, Director of Wine and Spirits Education, Kobrand

Rebellious is an ode to an unabashedly nonconformist approach to life as much as it is a celebration of the land—the brand takes its name from the hardy roots of grapevines that are deeply embedded in the earth, seeking water and survival amid nature's unpredictably powerful forces—producing wines that mirror this inspiring philosophy.



Consider the red blend. It boldly takes cues from France's Côte-Rôtie, the northern Rhône appellation where blending Syrah with a small amount of uplifting Viognier is the norm, by incorporating a splash of Sauvignon Blanc to round out its heady character. Likewise, the newest rebel includes a dash of Chardonnay that subtly invigorates the Pinot Noir's aromatics, brightens its acidity, and helps create its silky mouthfeel—all the while underscoring the progressive, unconventional Rebellious spirit.

Now, with a simple-to-open screw cap closure and an uncommon addition of brightening Chardonnay, the Rebellious Pinot Noir is poised to make a splash with a wide range of consumers. ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, Rebellious.

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REBELLIOUS

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SPIRIT OF GALLO IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF 2023'S TOP TRENDS

E. & J. GALLO'S SPIRITS PLATFORM HAS FAST BECOME AN INDUSTRY LEADER WITH ITS PORTFOLIO OF AWARD-WINNING BRANDS DRIVING THE TRENDS OF TOMORROW



Trend forecasting can be a challenging undertaking, but with a firm grasp on how sales across categories and regions have grown and where they've lagged, a company's well-grounded predictions can lead to smart risk-taking and huge growth. That's evidenced by the 90-year-old, family-owned E. & J. Gallo's March 2022 unveiling of Spirit of Gallo, a platform for the company's award-winning spirits portfolio to the trade.

If the longevity and expansion of Gallo's wine commerce is any indication, it's clear that the company has an ability to tap into consumer preferences and bring innovation that not only aligns with trends, but also with the company's strengths. "The innovation and acquisitions that we have made over the last six to seven years have been made because those brands were both additive to, and hold the values of, Spirit of Gallo," says Britt West, the senior vice president and general manager of Spirit of Gallo.

The portfolio's beginnings can be traced back to 1975, when the company introduced E&J Brandy. Today, Gallo is the fourth-largest spirits supplier by volume in the U.S. Its brands speak to some of today's biggest consumer interests, indicating the company's ability to observe and assess the marketplace, take risks, and place smart bets on where they think it's going.

TRADING UP CONTINUES WITH PREMIUMIZATION

Premiumization has become an increasingly consequential trend. According to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, the premium segment of most categories grew at a faster rate than value brands in the past few years. Among Gallo's premium and super-premium selections are Amaro Montenegro, Don Fulano tequila made by fifth-generation tequileros, and The Dalmore, an historic single malt Highland Scotch whose noted master blender, Richard Patterson, is known for creating some of the most expensive whiskies in the world. The Dalmore also recently introduced a 14-year-old expression finished in Pedro Ximénez casks. Each brand is a pillar of luxury in its respective category, driving home Spirit of Gallo's competitive stance in the premium and ultra-premium sectors.



"Premiumization is always a consideration when we do any prioritization exercise as we believe we have a diverse portfolio that meets the needs of consumers throughout their consumption journey across the years," says West.

SHAKING UP THE HOME BAR

Pandemic-era lockdowns led to the stratospheric growth in home-bartending. This created an opportunity for brands to offer high-quality, versatile spirits marketed for the home bar. West points to RumHaven, which is made with real coconut water, a meaningful differentiation from competitors when it comes to taste and an accessible enhancement to a home bar. Ca-

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF E. & J. GALLO

marena Tequila, New Amsterdam Vodka, and Stratusphere Gin by New Amsterdam are other products from the portfolio that can elevate the home bartender's game.

"At Spirit of Gallo, we always think quality first, regardless of the price point. Whether a $12 bottle of New Amsterdam Vodka or a $80 bottle of Horse Soldier Bourbon, we want the consumer to always enjoy the quality of what they put in their glass," says West. "Each of our brands offers something unique in their respective categories. Something that stands out from the competition."

INNOVATION IN RTDS

The past two years have shown that ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails can offer quality and attention to craft, as well as portability and variety. "With the demand by consumers to take spirits to usage occasions that have been traditionally dominated by beer, a huge opportunity presented itself for high quality and great tasting RTD alternatives."



According to a spokesperson at IWSR, RTDs grew by 15 percent in volume and 23 percent in value from 2020 to 2021, indicating that consumers are reaching for better quality brands—and Gallo have positioned themselves to perform well in this competitive realm.

The portfolio is a showcase of innovation. Since Gallo's May 2019 release of High Noon, the breakout low-calorie vodka-based seltzer made with real vodka and real juice, it unveiled Faux Pas, which was developed with woman-owned and -run media company Betches, and Wildcard, a canned cocktail line made with New Amsterdam Vodka. "What excites me about the success of RTD as a category is how quickly and successfully we were able to address this clear consumer behavior shift," says West.



THE POWER IN AUTHENTICITY

The American spirits industry has no shortage of great stories, but whenever Horse Soldier Bourbon hosts a bottle-signing event, guests line up to meet founders John Koko, Elizabeth Pritchard-Koko, and Scott Neil, as they tell the Horse Soldier story made famous in the 2018 action-drama movie 12 Strong. As retired members of the hand-selected detachment of Green Berets from the 5th Special Forces Group, they were the first to enter Afghanistan on horseback in the weeks following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "I've seen it on multiple occasions—the Horse Soldier team receives a standing ovation after their Whiskey and War Stories," says West, referring to the storytelling event series hosted by Horse Soldier. "People truly connect with the brand, the founders, and their journey. It's powerful."

Faux Pas also harnesses the power of a compelling story. With media company Betches as partners, their pioneering and creative use of Instagram communicates the brand's core values and personality. As West says, "Storytelling must come from a place of authenticity. Consumers quickly see past a gimmick."

AGE MATTERS IN BROWN SPIRITS

Sales of bourbon and American rye grew in tandem with the cocktail boom, and still today, legacy distillers are investing and expanding, and small craft distillers continue to open at a steady rate. "We, of course, keep a close eye on marketplace trends and brown spirit growth is here to stay," says West. Gallo's range of brown spirits includes musician A$AP Rocky's Canadian blended whiskey, Mercer + Prince, the award-winning Horse Soldier Bourbon, and the heritage-rich single malts of Dalmore and Jura.



Age has long been an indicator of value for consumers of bourbon and Scotch, but that association has rippled out across other categories, as demonstrated by the strength of reposado and añejo tequilas and the increasing attention paid to long-sleepy Canadian whiskey. Gallo's August 2022 investment in Tequila Komos includes the consistently highly-rated extra añejo expression, made all the more luxurious by its ceramic bottle.

"Our robust portfolio of brown spirits is what excites me most about the trend," says West. "We are only scratching the surface on what our brands can bring to consumers and I'm excited to see what the team does." ■

This content was produced in collaboration with our partner, E. & J. Gallo.



A$AP Rocky with his Canadian blended whiskey, Mercer + Prince



THE BIG BUSINESS OF FUNCTIONAL BEVERAGES

THESE DRINKS CONTAIN WELLNESS-ALIGNED INGREDIENTS SUCH AS CBD, ADAPTOGENS, AND NOOTROPICS, SOME CLAIMING TO ENHANCE MOOD OR RELAX THE DRINKER—BUT PROMISING ANY BENEFITS IS COMPLEX

BY HANNAH MARRIOTT

At the brightly lit new bottle shop in Manhattan's Rockefeller Center, the walls are lined with seductively designed beverages, and its window features a drinks trolley laden with smoked glass bottles—but what you won't find here is alcohol. Boisson is one of a growing number of dry bottle shops, which also has an on-premise and wholesale business serving top-tier establishments including Manhatta and The Clover Club.

You will find something else on prominent display: functional beverages, which contain buzzy ingredients that hint at alcohol-free health benefits, stress reduction, and pleasure. The label functional beverages has been used for decades to refer to drinks designed to have effects beyond taste and hydration, from energy drinks to vitamin-infused water, but it has recently become newly aligned with the non-alcoholic category.

Such drinks might include CBD, adaptogens (substances used in Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine to combat stress), or nootropics (substances designed to enhance brain function). Some even claim to enhance mood or relax the drinker in the moment. These include Three Spirits—its non-alcoholic aperitif, Livener, claims it can "reduce inhibitions and lift spirits"—and Kin, whose spritz contains "mood-boosting ingredients" that "stimulate clarity, creative freedom, and focus" according to the brand's website.

A GROWING NON-ALCOHOLIC ADJACENT CATEGORY

Kin was cofounded by model Bella Hadid, who has promoted the brand on Instagram to her 56.6 million followers. She isn't the

ABOVE: An inviting display at the Rockefeller Center outpost of non-alcoholic drinks shop Boisson in New York City.

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RIGHT: Marketed as a "superfood tonic," Sunwink contains ingredients like ginger, turmeric, and lemon balm.

only big hitter attracted to the sector: Connect Ventures, the investment partnership led by talent agency Creative Artists Agency (CAA), and global venture capital firm New Enterprise Associates invested $12 million in Boisson in August. De Soi, a functional drinks brand cofounded by CAA client Katy Perry, also raised $4 million in seed funding led by Willow Growth; it uses ingredients including reishi mushrooms (which the brand's website refers to as a "brain boosting botanical often referred to as 'the herb of immortality'").

The non-alcoholic drinks category is seeing massive expansion as more people explore a sober-curious lifestyle. A new survey from consumer insights platform Veylinx suggests that almost half (46 percent) of U.S. drinkers are trying to reduce their alcohol consumption, and 52 percent of those people are replacing alcohol with non-alcoholic drinks. U.S. sales of non-alcoholic adult beverages grew 20.6 percent to $395 million for the year until August 2022, according to NielsenIQ. Meanwhile, the Veylinx survey suggests that canned, non-alcoholic cocktails enhanced with CBD were judged 16 percent more appealing than standard non-alcoholic cocktails, while adding what the survey described as "natural mood boosters" increased demand by nine percent.

Sunwink markets its fizzy drinks as "superfood tonics" featuring ingredients including ginger, turmeric, and lemon balm, with healthful names like Hibiscus Mint Unwind and Immunity Berry. Eliza Ganesh, the CEO and founder, believes that functional drinks "probably have the best opportunity to be the leader of the non-alcoholic movement." She says that "having the double hit of something that tastes really good, coupled with that functionality, is in a way, probably more analogous to what you were hoping to get from a glass of wine to begin with. Just without the anxiety of the hangover."

"It's important to keep in mind that there is no such category, on a technical basis, as functional beverages."

– Abraham S.Z. Cohn, Esq, Cohn Legal

Megan Klein, the CEO of Little Saints, a range of non-alcoholic, sugar-free "mocktails" boosted by reishi, terpenes, and hemp, was inspired by her own use of reishi mushrooms in her morning coffee and CBD at night, which she found useful for managing anxiety. She worked "with a food scientist with her masters in adaptogens" and "a sacred plant medicine shaman" to create the drink with ingredients that, she says, "help us get immediately into our parasympathetic nervous system." While there are limited, sometimes promising studies exploring both reishi mushrooms and CBD separately, she admits that they have not been studied together, and her testing has largely been through friends and family.

Tatiana Mercer and Dash Lilley, the cofounders of Three Spirits, say the idea came to them "originally from a hedonistic lens. Ultimately, you drink for feeling and flavor. And so, to really rival alcohol, can you create a third way—a new way to feel good?" says Mercer. Their three non-alcoholic "spirits" are designed to replicate moments when drinking is "culturally embedded." They work with professor Michael Heinrich of the UCL School of Pharmacy and other independent advisors to "identify the best ingredients to use, but also to have a full understanding of their safety and regulatory status," says Lilley.

Many of these drinks come with a dizzying number of ingredients. Described on its website as a "mood elevator," Three Spirits' Social Elixir, for example, was born from "months researching how alcohol affects the human nervous system, and what gives us pleasure," says Lilley. "We looked at how alcohol affects those receptors. And then we started looking for plants that could mimic certain responses."

HOW FUNCTIONAL ARE THESE BEVERAGES?

Some of these drinks have undeniable energizing effects owing to caffeine or caffeine-adjacent ingredients like L-theanine. The other promised effects are more subjective. "If you think it's going to

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PASSOÃ
GET THAT
SUNSET VIBE
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PASSOÃ
THE PASSION DRINK
WITH
NATURAL
PASSION
FRUIT
LIQUEUR 17% VOL.
PORNSTAR
MARTINI
OR SIMPLY MIX
PASSOÃ & TONIC
PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY





ABOVE: The Three Spirits line is developed in tandem with an ethnopharmacology professor and other independent advisors.

compare to half a bottle of whiskey then, no, it probably won't touch the sides," says Mercer. "I think the minute you remove the comparison to higher volumes of alcohol, you take yourself to the right place for function." For those customers who do feel the drink's effects, she adds, there's an element of faith and context. "Belief and anticipation are really important. There's the smell, there's sitting down with your friends—there are all these things that are contributing factors to how you feel on a Friday night."

Heinrich says that "in the absence of evidence" he cannot say anything concrete about whether they cause a buzz but the claims are "plausible." He points out that these drinks create sensation "not only with the physiological effect" but with a "pleasant mouthfeel. It's really about making a healthy drink with an interesting flavor and an interesting profile and some reasonable preventive benefits without overdoing it in terms of claims."

Knowing precisely the effect of such drinks—if any—is close to impossible. Many commonly featured ingredients have been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years (for example, turmeric and ginkgo); some use new, synthetic so-called nootropics. Some of these ingredients have promising but limited research behind them, but some of those studies may not be in humans. Even those that are will likely examine those ingredients in isolation, at a specific dose, for a set amount of time, and not in the particular combinations in which they are offered in these products. Things get more opaque still because many brands don't reveal the dosages of their active ingredients, rather listing them as part of a proprietary blend.

Lilley says they are happy to reveal precise dosages on request but overall they are "not shy about dosing." The idea is that "there's lots of raw material in our drinks" and a total of three drinks would give the consumer the "recommended active dose" of a substance based on "the literature in the research that is available."

Rashmi Mullur, M.D., an endocrinology assistant professor and associate chief of integrative medicine at UCLA Health, uses adaptogens in her practice, but has big questions about the use of the same substances within drinks designed for cocktail hour. In herbal medicine, she says, these substances—whether ashwagandha or ginseng—are not meant to be used in perpetuity.

"These kinds of more potent herbals are given for short courses of time, while the patient works on their lifestyle with their practitioner," says Mullur. With buzzy ingredients such as reishi mushrooms, "they are very associated with immune function." But whether that benefit will translate to a human, in a drink, along with other ingredients which might interfere with it is difficult to say.

Most of the drinks do say in the small print that they should not be consumed by those aged under 18, pregnant, taking SSRIs, or who have a medical condition. Nevertheless, Mullur also has concerns that consumers will not think of these drinks as supplements, and will not treat them as such, or flag them with their doctor. This could be relevant if they have ingested, for example, panax ginseng, she says, which might slow blood clotting, but fail to mention it before a simple medical procedure. Many of these drinks contain B vitamins, too: "Most B vitamins are safe but biotin can interfere with lab testing, and B-6 you can get toxic from," she says. But it's such a complex area even experts don't agree.

REGULATORY COMPLEXITY

As for the regulatory side of functional beverages? "It's complicated," says Abraham S.Z. Cohn, a partner at Cohn Legal, PLLC, because the rules are different in every country. In the U.S. "it's important to keep in mind that there is no such category, on a technical basis, as functional beverages," he says. The FDA's view is that products are either "conventional beverages or dietary supplements. Each category is subject to a different set of rules, reporting requirements, and regulations."

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The FDA states that claims "have to be truthful and they have to be complete," adds Cohn, but it's hard to say how things will play out in reality.

If a functional drink markets itself as a conventional food then, in the U.S., it must use ingredients that are GRAS or "generally regarded as safe." The FDA has recently expressed concern about "novel ingredients" being added to beverages and other conventional foods—either those that are not already on the FDA's GRAS list or those that are on there but are being used in new ways. If these ingredients were deemed "unapproved food additives" by the FDA, the products could be considered adulterated, which would make them illegal to be marketed and imported in the U.S..

Three Spirits does not market its drinks as supplements because, in some countries, supplements cannot be showcased "in an alcohol consumption moment," explains Lilley. But many others, including Kin and Little Saints, are promoted as dietary supplements, which may give the brands more leeway over the ingredients they include. Calling a product a supplement may not always convince the FDA, however, if its believes that, in reality, the drinks are being sold and used as beverages, says Cohn.

Either way, the brands cannot make specific claims about a product's ability to prevent or cure any disease or condition without falling foul of the FDA, but they can make broader or vaguer claims, talking, for example, about the benefits certain ingredients have been seen to have on the body. Or they might simply say that they contain, say, adaptogens or nootropics, knowing that the wellness-inclined are likely to recognize those terms and be drawn to the product.

IT COMES DOWN TO TASTE

Whether all of this complexity stunts growth remains to be seen, but it's easy to see why so many people are willing the promise of the category to play out. The final, crucial, piece of the puzzle is taste. Some of these beverages have trouble balancing functional ingredients with flavor, especially when they avoid sugar, which is generally regarded as bad for health, and may sit uneasily with those choosing a drink for its purported health benefits.

Julia Bainbridge, an non-alcoholic drinks expert, likes Kin's drinks and recommends Three Spirit's Livener, not for its energizing properties, but because "it tastes like berries and tea up front, with some fiery heat on the back end." These drinks "don't make me feel anything and I don't necessarily wish they did," she says. As for CBD drinks, "none has ever given me a noticeable buzz of any sort." The ones that work well, from a flavor perspective, she adds, are those that "lean into the distinctive piney flavor of the plant instead of trying to mask it," such as Flyers Cocktail Co.

As John deBary, a bartender, author, and founder of zero-proof botanical drink Proteau (which is no longer operational), explains, creating good taste can be difficult. Alcohol is difficult to replicate as a solvent and in its texture; alcohol offers "a lot of raw sensory experience, like setting aside the productive physiological solution." Functional non-alcoholic spirits aren't easy to include in recipe books, he adds, because they are so niche and not easily substituted. Nor does deBary see them featured as often on bar menus as non-functional non-alcoholic products, believing bartenders may be mindful that "there are a lot of unknowns" in terms of how people may react to things.

All of that said, he personally rates Kin, Three Spirits, and Rasāsvāda drinks, not because of any potential functional benefits but because of their flavor. "To me," he says, "thinking about cocktails and drinks for so long, I find [them] quite tasty." ■

BELOW: Another glimpse into Boisson and its assortment of functional non-alcoholic beverages.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BOISSON





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