

KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

The marketing, regulatory and financial news that matters . . . when it matters
for bev/al executives and their advisers

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Restaurants, Others Rebel Against Covid Closures

The San Francisco Chronicle's food editor, Esther Mobley, delivered the news as news should be delivered: Straight up with no sweetener: Bay Area officials ordered Wine Country closed to all visitors wanting wine tastings.

With yet another wave of Covid sweeping over the country, that's the best politicians can do. Close tasting rooms. Close bars. Close restaurants.

The orders are coming all over the country. And they are unnecessary. In August the Food & Drug Administration approved a \$5 test from Abbott that returns results within 15 minutes — and is 97% accurate.

There's some evidence those affected have had enough. Restaurants in Anne Arundel County, Md., for instance, went to court after the county executive imposed an in-person dining ban said the county executive "appears to have relied on a selective interpretation of the data relating to COVID-19 matters that ignores or minimizes other sources of COVID-19 contact..."

The order applied not only to indoor dining but to outdoor, too. "I thought we were listening to science. If we were following the science, show us the science that says outdoor dining was dangerous," said Brian Bolter, who owns Dry 854 and Red Red Wine Bar in Annapolis. "I think it's pathetic. I think we're being jerked around by the emperor."

In Montgomery County, Md., home to the National Institutes of Health, Food & Drug Administration and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where President Trump was treated, at least 35 restaurant have sued to overturn a county order requiring all restaurants to halt indoor dining.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan has noted family gatherings are the No. 1 spreader of the virus in Maryland according to contact tracing data.

"We're not a major contributing factor to coronavirus... We're low-hanging fruit. It's easy to pick on restaurants, and that's what is happening here, and it's extraordinarily frustrating," Bolter, the Annapolis bar operator, said.

We suspect you're going to see more challenges to similar orders. Indeed, in San Diego, a judge overruled Gov. Gavin Newsom's order closing restaurants and bars. In Sacramento, business owners are suing the governor and county over the closures. In Pittsburgh, restaurants are defying Gov. Tom Wolf's order closing dining rooms. "We're in dire need now for some kind of financial help, which we're not getting from the state or the [federal] government," he said. "So somebody's got to stand up for their rights to try to make a living," Rod Ambrogi, owner of Al's Café in Bethel Park, said. He said his restaurant and employees can't survive by serving take-out only.

Comment: As we've argued repeatedly, the way to solve this is testing. Given that FDA-approved, 97%-accurate, a \$5 test from Abbott bars and restaurants should be allowed to serve anyone who has had the Covid vaccine or who tests negative for the disease.

Overdose Deaths Expand During Covid-19. That's the headline on a Centers for Disease Control & Prevention press release noting that more than 81,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12 months ending in May 2020, the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period.

"The disruption to daily life due to the COVID-19 pandemic has hit those

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with substance use disorder hard,” said CDC Director Robert Redfield, M.D. “As we continue the fight to end this pandemic, it’s important to not lose sight of different groups being affected in other ways. We need to take care of people suffering from unintended consequences.”

Underage Drinking Levels Off But Marijuana Vaping Surges

In 12th grade the prevalence of marijuana vaping increased 7.7 percentage points in 2019, which is the second largest increase in 12-month substance use ever recorded in this grade (the largest increase was last year, with the 10.9% absolute increase in nicotine vaping).

In 10th grade the increase was 7.0 percentage points in 2019, which is also the second largest ever observed in the 29 years that the study has tracked past 12-month substance use in this grade (the largest increase was last year, with the 8.9% absolute increase in nicotine vaping from 2017 to 2018).

For all secondary students the increases in marijuana vaping translate into at least one million additional marijuana vapers in 2019 as compared to 2018.

The good news: Fewer American teens are consuming alcohol underage. That also has a downside:

The longer-term declines in underage drinking noted over the past few decades have leveled off. In 2020 there were no further significant declines observed in any of the three grades under study in the prevalence of lifetime, annual, 30-day, or daily use, or in binge drinking (defined as having five or more drinks in a row in the past two weeks). Year-over-year prevalence rates increased slightly from 2019 to 2020 among students in 8th, 10th and 12th grades, but all rates remain significantly lower than peak years.

“Today’s data highlights that our work to eliminate underage drinking is not done. While the perceived ease of access to alcohol among our nation’s youth continues to decline is good news, it is unfortunate to see alcohol consumption has leveled off from a very long historical decline,” said **Maureen Dalbec**, COO and senior vp-research and data analysis at **Responsibility.org**.

The majority of American teens have never consumed alcohol; among students in grades 8, 10, and 12 combined, 56% report they have never consumed alcohol in their lifetime. Over the past decade the number of combined students reporting they have consumed alcohol decreased 15%, proportionally, and 45% from its peak of 80% in 1991, clear indications of the success in delaying the onset of underage drinking.

“After a long period of decline, the consumption of alcohol among our nation’s youth appears to have stabilized. In 2020, 22 percent of teens reported they had been drunk in the past year – this is too many and we can and must do better. Responsibility.org will redouble our efforts to do our part to eliminate underage drinking and to work alongside parents, teachers and caregivers to continue making the prevention of underage drinking a priority,” said **Chris Swonger**, president and CEO of the **Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.** (DISCUS) and Responsibility.org.

Alcohol Justice Challenges ABI's Takeover of Ace Beverage

Alcohol Justice, the antialcohol activist group, urged California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to launch full-scale investigation of recent actions in the state by **Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI)**.

Alcohol Justice said it believes ABI is in violation of California's Cartwright Act and federal antitrust statutes, case law, and a 2018 federal court consent agreement.

If ABI is allowed to takeover Ace Beverage, just two companies -- ABI and Reyes Holdings -- would control an estimated 85% of the wholesaler market in California, Bruce Lee Livingston, Alcohol Justice's CEO, said in a letter to Becerra.

ABI is already the dominant producer in California, Livingston's letter says, adding that if ABI acquisition of Ace is allowed to stand, ABI:

- Potentially (can) get inside information on retail activity at nearly every store, on-sale ABC licensee, or small producer.
- Lower and raise beer prices at will.
- Offer generous promotions and swag to retail tier purchasers to force out competitive brands.
- Make it difficult for craft brew producers to get onto their trucks, while under lock-down conditions the craft brew industry is already suffering great economic stress.
- Diminish distribution market share for any remaining independent distributors, forcing them out of business or forcing them to sell their assets and routes to ABI at deep discounts."

Alcohol Justice Board President Richard Zaldivar, the founder of The Wall – Las Memorias (a community-based health prevention non-profit), said, "The diverse population of Los Angeles is already suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic and does not need cheap beer products in our neighborhoods or struggling mom and pop small business retailers under the thumb of a global corporation like Anheuser-Busch InBev. The middle tier of beer distribution in Los Angeles needs protection from unfair business practices."

The Alcohol Justice [letter](#) raises the possibility that ABI's recent acquisitions in California and its dramatically expanded market position could violate the spirit, if not the actual letter, of the October 2018 US District Court for the District of Columbia final judgement and order.

The decree “precluded [ABI] from acquiring beer distributors ... without allowing for (U.S. Justice) department review of the acquisition’s likely competitive effects.

ABI agreed to that consent decree to purchase the world's second major beer producer, SAB Miller-Coors. The court-approved settlement decree is supposedly monitored by the federal government to prevent over-concentration and undue influence by the behemoth manufacturer.

"The intent of that federal settlement was made clear by the US Department of Justice in their July 2016 news release, namely to “prevent any increase in concentration in the U.S. beer industry,” and to “preserve the ability of smaller brewers ... to compete against ABI by protecting

their access to important distribution networks." The goal of the July 2016 decree was to preserve the right of "independent distributors that sell ABI's beer [to] have the freedom to sell and promote the variety of beers that many Americans drink," Lington's letter says.

"Alcohol Justice believes that California's antitrust law – the Cartwright Act, other statutes and case law – are relevant and being violated," added Livingston. "And therefore, it is appropriate for Attorney General Becerra to investigate and prosecute, even if a federal response does not occur from the Department of Justice."

Four Trends Rocking the Bev/Al World

Older consumers are drinking more -- and trading up. That's not the way it's supposed to be, according to conventional wisdom. But that's what's happening, according to **Bourcard Nesin**, the beverage analyst at **Rabobank**. Not only that, he says in a detailed report, but per capita alcohol spending among individuals over 65 has more than doubled over the past 15 years. How did bev/al brands miss this? And yet, miss they did: Most brands still don't market to people over 45.

Not only that, but for the first time in U.S. history, in 2019 women represented the majority of bev/al consumers under 25. Women are drinking more. Men are drinking less. And the number of women of color that drink alcohol at least once a month has increased 64% over the past 15 years.

And finally, a mystery. Young people under the LDA are drinking less, a lot less. Sixty percent (60%) less, in fact. They are also using drugs less, having sex less. No one knows why.

Older consumers are open to new brands, and consumers over 45 account for half of spending in categories like premium spirits, Nesin says. But most brands don't market to them.

Nesin sees trouble down the road. Not only are most brands ignoring older drinkers, but they are failing to connect with younger drinkers.

Another problem: In 2004, only 23% of regular drinkers were people of color. Today that number has jumped to 31%, thanks to Asian, Black and Latina women. The population of women of color who regularly use alcohol has increased more than 84% since 2004. Why? Maybe the rise of musicians like Cardi B are changing norms about how women of color are supposed to behave. Or maybe its a result of declining church attendance. Or maybe higher more WOC are attending college.

Now that's not to say white men don't account for most alcohol purchased in the U.S.; they do. But -- their share is falling quickly. Bottom line: companies need to hire more people of color in order to diversify their workforces and avoid embarrassing gaffes.

Here's another surprising fact: In 2019, young women were more likely than young men to use alcohol. "Men still drink way more than women," Nesin says, adding:

"But over the past 15 years, per capita alcohol consumption among men has been flat or declining, while it has steadily increased among women. This trend is consistent across age, racial, and ethnic groups. Women, for example,

account for most of the rising prevalence of alcohol use among older consumers and people of color.

It's a fascinating -- and important -- study.

Little Visibility to Future in Wine: Ciatti

The challenge in the wine industry -- and, we suspect -- every other industry is that "everyone -- buyers and sellers alike -- are tentatively trying to navigate their own way through a landscape with little forward visibility."

That phrase comes from Ciatti, the global wine and grape brokers, which cites Nielsen data that off-premise domestic table/sparkling wine sales in the US have continued strong, with sales up 17% by value in the four weeks ending Oct. 31 versus the same period of 2019.

"Consistent statistics such as these have led to a suggestion that total wine sales in the US could be up this year by volume, with the off-premise managing to offset the on-premise's cratering, but this is based on the assumption that this year's off-premise OND sales will follow the traditional trend -- something that cannot be taken for granted in this, the most untraditional of years," Ciatti says.

Ciatti adds that the pandemic appears to have sped up the trend toward online shopping. Off-repremise pricing has risen a bit, Ciatti says, but there's a worry "Redirecting the wine into the off-premise, often with a much-reduced price tag on the shelf, can run the risk of brand devaluation in the longer term."

Ciatti estimates "current Cabernet inventory is approximately half what it was in December 2019, while the respective inventories of Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel are also significantly less than they were to varying extents."

Ciatti said it continues to expect the 2020 harvest to total about 3.4 million tons.

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Bell's Brewery Cut Energy 10.3% in 2 Years

Bell's Brewery, Comstock, Mich., was honored by the Environmental Protection Agency for reducing Bell's energy per barrel packaged by 10.35% over the last two years.

The three projects that yielded significant reductions were:

Compressed air leak detection: small holes or cracks develop over time in compressed air tubing. Using an ultrasonic device, Bell's found and fixed worn pneumatic gaskets and tubing which saved the equivalent of 151,000 kilowatt-hours or enough electricity to power 14 homes for one year.

LED retrofitting: By replacing fluorescent bulbs at the brewery with LEDs, Bell's saved the equivalent of 127,000 KWH per year or enough electricity to power 12 homes for one year.

Glycol heated CO2 vaporizer: two separate systems (fermentation and CO2 vaporization) were combined into one efficient system to save 190,000 KWH per year or enough electricity to power 17 homes for one year.

The brewery partnered with Consumers Energy to make energy efficiency upgrades at its main brewery in Comstock, Mich., near Kalamazoo.

The work at Bell's also supports Consumers Energy's Clean Energy Plan – a road map for protecting the environment and embracing innovative, affordable energy solutions. By 2040, Consumers plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions and meet 90 percent of Michigan's energy needs with clean resources.

Pabst Brewing to Distribute Jack Daniel's County Cocktails

The partnership will create greater scale for **Jack Daniel's Country Cocktails** through access to Pabst's supply chain capabilities as well as new points of distribution, **Brown-Forman Corp.**, which owns Jack Daniel's, said.

The agreement gives Pabst the exclusive rights to sales and distribution of Jack Daniel's Country Cocktails and any future Jack Daniel's flavored malt beverages. The agreement between Brown-Forman and Pabst will take effect April 1, 2021.

21 Seeds Tequila Signs with SGWS

The agreement will make 21 Seeds available in most of the country, the company said.

The brand has three signature infusions – Grapefruit Hibiscus, Cucumber Jalapeno, and Valencia Orange – all lower ABV at 35 percent, gluten-free, non-GMO, and ideal for low-cal cocktails that are easy for the at home mixologist.

“With a great back story, excellent product, and now Southern Glazer's as its distributor, 21Seeds is well positioned for expanded commercial success across the U.S.,” said **Ray Lombard**, executive vp-Supplier Management and Business Development for Southern Glazer's.

Quintessential Adds Champagne Palmer

Quintessential will welcome **Champagne Palmer & Co.** to its portfolio effective Jan. 1. The esteemed Champagne House, regarded for its highly acclaimed wines and prestigious vineyard holdings will enter into an exclusive U.S. market import partnership with Quintessential at the start of the new year.

As the exclusive U.S. importer for Champagne Palmer &

Co., Quintessential will oversee all sales and marketing for the portfolio.

The agreement includes Champagne Palmer's unique Rosé Solera (SRP \$80) as well as their emblematic Brut Reserve (SRP \$60) and Blanc de Blancs (SRP \$90)—both of which were just announced as the best wines in their respective categories at the 2020 Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships (CSWWC). The Vintage 2012 (SRP \$120) and limited allocations of select library vintages and large format bottles will also be available through Quintessential. Additional cuvees from the Palmer & Co range will be introduced gradually.

Wasatch Brewery Releases 3 New Beers, 12-Pack

The Park City, Utah, brewery released a 7.1% ABV Imperial Amber Ale, which it is branding “**Wonderful Winter Ale.**” Why? Because “we think it is!,” the brewery says. It will be available all winter long in liquor stores across Utah and Wasatch brewpubs and taprooms. It formerly was known as First One Down Warmer.

A sessionable 5% ABV Snow Bank Amber will be available all winter long, both on draft and in 6-packs at grocery stores.

The newest year-round release from Wasatch is **Our Share IPA.** “The name comes from Wasatch's iconic tagline,” says Brand Director **Caitie Gold.** “We drink our share and sell the rest’ is at the heart of what we do: making beer we love to drink, and Our Share is no different. This is a beer we want to crack open at the end of a shift and share with friends.” Our Share will be available across Wasatch's distribution footprint on draft and in grocery.

Wasatch combined two of its new brews for a perfect duo 12-pack designed with variety in mind: a classic IPA and an Amber Lager pair up to satisfy everyone's pre or post ski sessions with Our Share and Snow Bank. This new duo will be around through the end of February, followed by a warmer-weather-forward pair of beers., Wasatch says.

Harpoon Brewery Collaborates With WhistlePig Rye Whiskey

The resulting product, **The Bock Hog**, is a limited release and will be sold as single 22 oz. bottles, sealed with a wax coating. It will also be available on draft starting this month at Harpoon's Boston and Vermont breweries.

“The barrels used for The Boss Hog VII: Magellan's Atlantic are incredibly special to us, but we knew they were in good hands with our neighbors at Harpoon Brewery. It's the first time beer has ever been finished in South American Teakwood and it pairs masterfully with the flavor profile of a beer like Harpoon's Doppelbock,” said **Meghan Ireland**, Whiskey Blender at WhistlePig.

Moët Hennessy to Provide WhistlePig To Europe, Asia, Takes a Financial Stake

Moët Hennessy, a world leader in luxury wines and spirits, is pleased to announce that it has established a partnership to exclusively bring **WhistlePig**, the #1 distiller in the ultra-premium and luxury rye whiskey category in North America (1), to consumers in selected markets in Europe and Asia. In addition, as part of this partnership, Moët Hennessy acquired a minority stake in WhistlePig.

“The arrangement with Moët Hennessy marks a signifi-

cant moment for WhistlePig," says **Jeff Kozak**, CEO, of WhistlePig. "We could not be more pleased to align our brand with the leader in luxury wines and spirits. We are excited about the future collaboration with Moët Hennessy's team in the international market."

"We have long admired LVMH as a builder of amazing brands and products, and we have learned a lot from Moët Hennessy over the years" says **Wilco Faessen**, co-founder of WhistlePig.

"There is a great portfolio fit, and, critically, our cultures are very much aligned in terms of patiently building our brands and business over time, with a focus on quality and a differentiated experience for our consumers and our customers. Formalizing this through an investment in the company plus a comprehensive route to market partnership internationally is another critical milestone in our journey."

"We are convinced that WhistlePig fits very well with the rest of Moët Hennessy's portfolio. This high quality and top-rated whiskey brand has done a remarkable job distinguishing itself among the emblematic and iconic craft distilleries in the United States with an ultra-premium standing in terms of identity, quality and price positioning," says **Philippe Schaus**, President & CEO of Moët Hennessy. "We look forward to launch WhistlePig in various markets in Europe and Asia early next year. It is an exciting opportunity for our team to bring the WhistlePig brand and product portfolio to many of our most valued customers."

A-B Intros Cacti, a New Agave Spiked Seltzer

The brand, developed by Travis Scott, the songwriter, will hit shelves in the Spring.

It's also the latest push by **Anheuser-Busch InBev** into the near-spirits space.

"We are all about delivering what consumers want, and as a culture-shaping artist, Scott is incredibly connected to his fans and what's new and next in culture," said **Fabricio Zonzini**, president of Beyond Beer at Anheuser-Busch. "As we continue in our mission to lead industry innovation and optimize our portfolio for the future, I'm excited that we can play a role in bringing to life Scott's vision to deliver something new to the hard seltzer space."

Cactai Agave Spiked Seltzer will have a 7% ABV and will be available in three flavors to start: Lime, Pineapple and Strawberry. Brewed in Los Angeles and made with 100% premium blue agave from Mexico, the product will be available in 12oz cans sold in a 9 count Variety Pack as well as 16oz and 25oz singles sold in Lime and Pineapple.

Wilson Daniels Adds Commanderie de Peyrassol

The national launch is scheduled for February 2021. **Commanderie de Peyrassol** is owned by the Austruy family, who are estate driven, organic and biodynamic producers with a multi-generational effort spanning centuries.

Commanderie de Peyrassol is rich in historical significance with the property recording its first harvest in 1256.

Founded by the Knights Templar in the 13th century and combining modern winemaking with a respect for their estate's lineage, the Austruy family continues the revitalization started by Françoise Rigord in the late 1970s, who came to be known as "La Dame de Peyrassol."

Since 2001, when the property was acquired by Philippe Austruy, the family has dedicated extensive resources to improving the natural health of the vineyards and restoring the winery and Commanderie. Today the property is managed by Philippe's nephew Alban Cacaret along with a team of experts from the vineyard to the cellar.

Taylor Fladgate Releases A 1970 Single-Harvest Port

Only 200 cases are available, and SRP is \$300. **Taylor Fladgate** holds one of the most extensive reserves of very old cask-aged Port of any producer, which includes a collection of rare Single Harvest Ports. These are Ports from a single year that age to full maturity in seasoned oak casks, and Taylor Fladgate decided to make a limited release each year of a Single Harvest Port made 50 years previously; the 1970 Single Harvest is the seventh in the series.

Precept Wine Debuts A.G. Perino Dry and Sweet Vermouths

Precept Wine announces launch of **A.G. Perino Dry and Sweet Vermouths**. Crafted by winemaker **Hal Landvoigt**, A.G. Perino is 15 years in the making.

Inspired by late-night cocktails and conversation at a bar in Dusseldorf, Germany, Precept Founder and CEO **Andrew Browne** challenged Landvoigt to create a vermouth of exceptional quality and value. What followed was over a decade studying production methods; consulting with expert craftsman, winemakers, and bartenders; and tasting samples from around the world in an epic journey to create the best vermouth for everyday use.

"Although many producers 'back into' vermouth using leftovers and what is at hand, I developed A.G. Perino from the ground up, similar in nature to the method of producing the world's best gins," remarked Landvoigt. "The base wine is equally as important as the additional layers of flavors captured by the herbs and botanicals. I wanted a vermouth with pronounced flavor."

Brooklyn Brewery Expands Non-Al Portfolio: Releases 'Brooklyn Special Effects IPA'

Coming off the success of its first non-alcoholic brew, **Special Effects Hoppy Amber**, Brooklyn Brewery releases **Special Effects IPA**.

"During development, we held ourselves to the same quality standards as any other beer in the Brooklyn portfolio, but Special Effects IPA posed an alluring technical challenge; could a non-alcoholic IPA actually be delicious? People will be glad to see that Special Effects IPA tastes like IPA! In this case we're a bit closer to a classic, West Coast IPA, with a light to moderate body, good fruit, a nice hop bite and a floral, citrus hop aroma," says Brooklyn Brewery Brewmaster and James Beard Award Winner, **Garrett Oliver**.

Proving yet again that flavor doesn't always have to correlate with alcohol content, Special Effects IPA brings the bright citrus hop aromas of a classic IPA to consumers seeking better non-alcoholic beverage options. The new non-alcoholic IPA comes in at under 100 calories and is brewed

to be enjoyed anytime, anywhere.

Special Effects IPA is the second release in Brooklyn Brewery's non-alcoholic portfolio. Since its launch in 2019, Special Effects has grown to the Brewery's #5 largest brand globally, and deemed one of the best non-alcoholic beers by teetotalers, beer geeks, and everyone in between.

Cannabis Brand Old Pal Intros a Pale Ale

Turn about is fair play, we suppose. With a number of beer brands like **Pabst** and **Lagunitas** -- to say nothing of **Constellation Brands** -- testing the cannabis waters, **Old Pal**, a leading cannabis company, announces the launch of **Old Pal Ale**. It's a traditional ale that does not include THC or CBD; it's just brewed to be beer.

"If 2020 has shown us anything, it's that we all need to find ways to create shareable experiences with our friends and community, so we worked to create OPA to give our community another way to come together," added **Charlie Cangialosi**, Old Pal's COO and former **Anheuser-Busch InBev** executive.

Sauvignon Blanc Wine Among Top 10 Trending Foods of 2020

That's according to Kroger Co., America's largest grocery operator, which made the prediction based on year-over-year sales growth.

Why sauvignon blanc? It's a comfort food, the company explains.

Provi Adds 2 New Components To Aid Distributors

Provi (www.provi.com), an ecommerce marketplace for the bev/al industry, released Sell Sheets and Storefronts - two components of a rapidly-expanding suite of products dedicated to delivering increased sales and ROI to their expanding roster of distributor partners.

"Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognized the opportunity to partner with Provi to enhance ordering convenience for our customers," said **Maggie Lapcewich**, chief growth officer, **Breakthru Beverage Group**. "Their new suite of distributor tools allow our associates and customers to be more efficient during this challenging time, and our custom Storefront gives us the ability to position our brands effectively on their marketplace."

Provi Storefronts give distributors their own dedicated space within the Provi marketplace. Fully configurable, distributors can now easily showcase new releases, seasonal selections, and announcements in a branded experience for their retailer customers. Retailers can browse, engage with promotions, and add products to their cart directly within the Storefronts experience.

Matt Prybylski, executive director of business management at **Empire Merchants**, said: "We are excited to partner with Provi to provide additional ordering capabilities to our customers. Our Empire Merchants branded Storefront on Provi gives us the opportunity to seamlessly customize our brand page and highlight our portfolio 24/7. The tool is extremely user-friendly, and Provi's real-time analytics give us additional insight to inform our strategy."

With **Provi Sell Sheets** (<https://www.provi.com/product/sellsheets>), distributor sales reps can now create curated, click-to-order lists to showcase new and relevant products for their clients. Reps can share lists via text, email, or directly within the Provi platform, where retailers have already seen and ordered from thousands of Sell Sheets.

Reps can then access robust analytics about Sell Sheets page views and purchase conversion, so they can continue to optimize their campaigns, delivering much-needed ecommerce tooling to today's sophisticated buyers and sellers.

"Provi's Sell Sheets are a powerful tool for our sales team to communicate with their retailers," said **Thomas Johnstone**, vp-sales technology & strategy at **Eagle Rock Distributing Co.**

"With thousands of products to keep track of, we know that education and seamless ordering are essential to our success. Provi's technology has already given time back to our reps by automating the order taking process. Now reps can use that time better than ever for upselling with Sell Sheets."

Results from early adoption of Provi's new Distributor Toolkit reveal how essential these developments are. During the pilot period, Storefronts have already boasted millions of product impressions resulting in retailers ordering an average of 70% more products from a distributor after engaging with that Distributor's Storefront. Sell Sheets have already been created and shared by hundreds of distributor reps, unlocking retailer visibility and order conversion for tens of thousands of products.

"As 2020 has dramatically emphasized, our industry deserves rapid, relentless innovation," said Provi CEO, **Taylor Katzman**. "We are very proud to have accelerated our product offering to serve all three tiers of the beverage alcohol industry with the launch of Storefronts and Sell Sheets. These features marry best-in-class digital tools for distributors with delightful experiences for retailers to enhance product discovery and seamless ordering. We appreciate all the incredible support we have received as we continue our exponential growth with suppliers, distributors, and retailers nationwide."

Patron's New Campaign Takes Aim at Competitors' Additives

Patron Tequila launches "*Toast Your Real Ones*," a campaign honoring those who have supported us and celebrated us through the ups and downs of this year.

"You can trust real ones to never sugarcoat it, just like Patron. We only use 100% percent real ingredients and no artificial additives to alter the smell, taste or color of our tequila. We are proud to not only be honest and real with our community about our production process but we are extremely proud to be one of the few brands that still makes tequila the hard way-- by hand, not cutting corners with fake or artificial ingredients," says **Adrian Parker**, global vp-marketing for Patron Tequila at Bacardi Global Brands Ltd.

For decades some tequila makers have added artificial flavors, aromas, and colors to alter quality and enhance the taste of their products, Patron says.

"2020 has been a year of great resilience that has enabled us to realize what really matters and recognize the peo-

ple that have stood by our side," Parker says. "With the Toast Your Real Ones campaign, we are honoring the real ones in our lives—those who have supported us and celebrated us through the ups and downs of this year. Because you can trust real ones to never sugarcoat it, just like Patron."

Brands Promote New Year's Eve at Home

When I was younger, my idea of the perfect New Year's Eve celebration would have been to be at the Waldorf-Astoria, dancing to the music of Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians.

Well, Lombardo and his band are no longer with us. And neither, for the matter, is the Waldorf, which closed for renovation on 2017 after being purchased by China's Airbang Insurance Group.

But time marches on, and in 2020 there wouldn't be a big celebration at the Waldorf anyway. So brands, such as Tequila Don Julio, are stepping forth to provide what it describes as "the ultimate at home experience" for New Year's Eve.

For instance, you can order one of 20 **Tequila Don Julio NEW VVIP Party Kits**. It includes all the party essentials for a group of six. Enjoy Tequila Don Julio 1942 and Tequila Don Julio Blanco, craft cocktail mixes, party décor and accessories, Bluetooth speaker, instant camera and more. The kit also includes silk robes, eye masks and refreshing Vita Coco; perfect accoutrements for stepping into 2021 in style. SRP: \$2,021

Somewhat less expensive is the Tequila **Don Julio NYE Curated Cocktail Kit**: To elevate your cocktail game, this kit includes a specially crafted Tequila Don Julio Blanco cocktail, custom New Year's Eve glassware and party accessories for a group of four. SRP: \$129.99.

Don Julio will also donate \$50,000 to Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation.

But the best offer is one you can win -- Don Julio describes it as "an epic experience curated by Grammy-nominated artist Big Sean. It's a sweepstakes that includes "everything needed for the unforgettable night you deserve, including a dedicated concierge for food and cocktails, one-of-a-kind party décor and accessories, a \$1,500 gift card for at-home bottle service, and even a personalized countdown message from Big Sean himself. The gifts are topped off with a "turn down kit" that includes silk loungewear and Vita Coco... perfect for getting a fresh start on New Year's Day. To enter the sweepstakes, participants can head to 2021likeadon.donjulio.com through Dec. 24," the brand says.

Hennessey Celebrates NBA

Hennessey, the official spirit of the NBA, WNBA, NBA G League and USA Basketball, commemorates the progressive vision of the sports league and celebrates the tip-off of the 2020-21 NBA Season with new creative and consumer offerings rolling out Dec. 21.

The creative pays tribute to players' unwavering commitment to drive culture forward, on and off the court. Spots debut across TV and Hennessey's Instagram and Twitter channels just in time for the NBA season tip-off on Dec. 22

at 7 p.m. on TNT.

Neft 'Official Vodka of Rose Bowl Stadium'

The designation as "Official Vodka of the Rose Bowl Stadium" lasts until June 30, 2023. Neft will be available at Rose Bowl Stadium events throughout the duration of the partnership, including games on New Year's Day, 2022 and 2023. During the 2021 Rose Bowl Game, NEFT will be participating via a variety of virtual Rose Bowl events and activities.

NEFT also will be served at the Brookside Golf Club – the second-most played golf course in the country and located on the Rose Bowl Stadium grounds – where it will enjoy premium placement at the clubhouse bar and on the golf course beverage carts, including a specially branded Neft beverage cart.

"The Rose Bowl Stadium is one of the most prestigious venues in the country and like NEFT, embodies a winning, authentic spirit," said **Jeff Mahony**, Chief Executive Officer of NEFT Vodka. "Winner of multiple gold medals from a variety of international competitions as well as named Best Vodka from the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, NEFT is made from the purest ingredients that are so clean only three distillations are required at the well. The result is a refined flavor profile and a natural, slightly sweet finish that can be sipped straight, or used to enhance your favorite cocktail. We are excited about partnering with America's Stadium and look forward to sharing our indisputably superior vodka with Rose Bowl guests and fans over the next few years."

NEFT Vodka is currently available in California, New York, New Jersey, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, Montana, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and South Carolina.

Pernod Ricard Turns to Nielsen

Nielsen said **Pernod Ricard** signed on as an e-commerce client. It is one of 20, including Dollar Shave Club, to sign up for Nielsen Connect.

According to Nielsen Global Connect's latest data, the number of new online consumers has grown beyond 18 million since March, and this number continues to steadily grow. "The pandemic has required businesses in every vertical to rethink and adapt to the rapid changes in consumer behavior," said Liz Buchanan, Head of Nielsen's Consumer Intelligence Business Unit, North America. "In a matter of months, we've seen an accelerated growth of e-commerce in the U.S. and around the globe. And as we quickly moved to expand our e-commerce read, we saw tremendous momentum in the marketplace for our ePanel solution."

A-B Donates \$100,000 To St. Louis Urban League

Anheuser-Busch InBev continues to support A-B's hometown of St. Louis, donating \$100,000 to the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis to support economic opportunity and employment services in the community.

Guinness Open Gate Brewery Sets \$1 Million Focus For Baltimore's Black Community

The \$1 million fund will support three key focus areas

in the Baltimore region's Black community: economic justice, community empowerment, and equal representation. The contributions will support six different entities:

-- The Guinness Open Gate Brewery will fully fund the [Visit Baltimore Education and Training Foundation](#) for the next year, and plans to support it for the next five. Visit Baltimore will facilitate the end goal of creating at least ten hospitality career pathways with a focus on Baltimore's Black community.

The 600-hour paid apprenticeship aims to result in employment upon completion by Visit Baltimore or a partner organization. It was created to promote career interest in the hospitality and craft beer industries among minority students (21+), with a focus on introducing paths at the management level.

The apprentices will shadow at Visit Baltimore, Guinness Open Gate Brewery and another local tourism entity in a three-part immersive learning experience. Applications are currently open; eligible candidates must be 21 years of age or older.

-- [Reginald F. Lewis Museum](#), the brewery's support will champion underrepresented artists to inspire the next generation.

-- [Job Opportunities Task Force](#), which works to eliminate educational and employment barriers for low-wage workers by transforming the systems and policies that create and perpetuate those barriers, will benefit from a series of special release beer collaborations.

-- [Maryland Food Bank](#) previously benefitted, along with the Baltimore Action Legal Team, from a \$1 million donation to the Baltimore Community Fund. The brewery's culinary team also baked and donated over 16,000 loaves of bread to the MDFB's Middle Mile program, to assist with COVID relief efforts.

"Our team has spent months researching ways to do the most good with these funds, consulting local advisors and building a strategic framework to pay it forward, as both a neighbor and champion of change in the Baltimore region, delivering meaningful impact and sustainable support for the Black community," said **Jennifer Hudson**, Director at Dia-geo Beer Co.

Dripping Springs Distillery Donates Over 280,000 Meals to Food Banks

Dripping Springs Distilling said it donated over 280,000 meals to food banks in Texas and Tennessee to help feed families during the holiday season.

The roughly \$50,000 donation is being divided between Central Texas Food Bank, San Antonio Food Bank, Houston

Food Bank, Tarrant Area Food Bank, North Texas Food Bank, and Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee.

This donation is the result of the company's **Be A Good Spirit campaign**, which ran September through November 2020 in Texas and Tennessee. During the three-month sales campaign, a portion of each Dripping Springs Vodka and Dripping Springs Gin bottle purchased went back to help that area's local food bank.

Dripping Springs Vodkas and Gins are distilled in small, 50-gallon batches, in copper pot stills in the Texas Hill Country. They are corn-based, gluten-free, and certified Kosher by the Houston Kashruth Association.

Who & What -

Beam Suntory hires **Heather Boyd** to be Managing Director – US RTD. In September, Beam Suntory acquired On The Rocks Premium Cocktails, a rapidly growing premium ready-to-drink cocktail brand, and announced plans to expand market availability and the product range. Boyd will lead that effort. She joins from Acreage Holdings, which grows, processes and dispenses cannabis, where she was chief product and innovation officer.

Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. (DISCUS) hires **Amanda Berger**, Ph.D. as Vice President of Science. She joins from Porter Novelli in Washington, where she was vp-research, researching and evaluating programs that promote responsible decision making to ensure that they are effective and evidence-based. Before that, she was a principal research scientist at Battelle, a private nonprofit global research and technology development company. At Battelle, she provided research counsel on government education campaigns and programs for the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). She succeeds Dr. Sam Zakhari, who retired earlier this year as head of DISCUS's Office of Scientific Affairs.

Nick Kelly, who has been vp-partnerships, beer culture and community at **Anheuser-Busch InBev** will become the president of Charlotte FC, the North Carolina city's new football club effective Feb. 21.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK



JOEL WHITAKER, Editor