

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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Penna. High Court Oks DtC of Specialty Wines

It's just a one-sentence affirming Commonwealth Court Judge P. Kevin Brobson, who found the **Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board** was failing to properly implement changes to the state's liquor code mandating that specialty wine sellers can distribute their products directly to customers, rather than through the PLCB.

8th Circuit Rejects Challenge to Missouri Retail DtC Law

The U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower-court decision upholding a state law that said only licensed, in-state Missouri retailers can deliver bev/al to local residents.

In essence, the court adopted an originalist approach, declaring that "... those seeking a more consumer-oriented organization of alcohol industries must "turn to state-by-state political action on behalf of consumers who are hurt by these laws."

Comment: The 8th Circuit is exactly right on this point. The place to change laws is in the state house, not the courthouse.

Brown-Forman to Double Woodford Reserve Capacity

The move is a response to growing demand, the company said. The expansion includes three new copper pot stills at the historic distillery.

"Woodford Reserve is a key driver of growth for the company -- and the investment ensures the brand continues to expand around the world," said **Brown-Forman** President/CEO **Lawson Whiting**. "Woodford Reserve has enjoyed exceptional growth over the last decade, maintaining a double-digit net sales growth rate year-to-date with more than 1 million case sales."

The expansion includes additional fermentation tanks, a new building to house the boiler plant and a barrel unloading/storage area.

Construction will begin this spring and is expected to be completed in summer 2022. The distillery will remain fully operational during the work.

Woodford Reserve bourbon was introduced in 1996, and its distillery is a national historic landmark where distilling first began in 1812.

The expansion is Brown-Forman's latest investment in bourbon. It spent considerably to build back its Old Forester bourbon brand. Its flagship brand is Jac

Off-Premise Sales Ease for 1st Time in a Year: NielsenIQ

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Nielsen IQ reports dollar sales of alcohol within NielsenIQ's measured off-premise/retail channels are down compared to the same week one year prior.

For the latest week, ending March 13, total off-premise alcohol dollar sales declined by 1.9%. Wine growth was -8.1% and spirits growth was flat (0%). Beer/FMB/cider was the surprise this week, with positive growth, up 0.4%. However, seltzers and FMBs drove most of that growth, with core beer (excluding seltzers, FMBs, and cider) down 2.2%. Indeed, seltzers alone shifted total off-premise alcohol by a percentage point. If we were to remove seltzers from the scope, total alcohol would have been down 3% in NielsenIQ off-premise channels.

Still, compared to two years ago, before Covid, off-premise spirit dollars are up 28%, wine is up 19%, and beer/FMB/cider is up 17% compared to the same week in 2019. This all indicates that alcohol dollars are still far above off-premise

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norms when comparing to years prior to the pandemic. However, as more states open up, we will begin to see these trends flatten in the off-premise.

Overall growth rates are flat for spirits but some categories are still growing by double or even triple growth rates, while others are declining by double digits in Nielsen-IQ off-premise channels. Tequila is still a massive growth driver, up 31%. Ready-to-drink cocktails are up 147%, cognac up 26%, cordials 7%, and Japanese whisky up 23%. Total whiskey declined by 1.8%, with American whiskey down 2.5%. Vodka off-premise dollar sales declined by 14% and gin is down by nearly 10%.

94% of States Have Restaurants Open, 80% Have Bars Open

That doesn't mean operating at 100% capacity. Indeed, the phrase Nielsen CGA used in its report was "open in some capacity."

On Premise velocity in outlets that are currently operational has increased 319% in the week of March 13, 2021, vs. March 28, 2020, when the On Premise shutdown initially began; velocity in the latest week is up +13% compared to same time last year, March 14, 2020

Average outlet dollar sales (velocity) are up +4% in the latest week (March 13 v March 6) across the U.S.

Florida remains the strongest state of those analyzed benchmarked against March 28, 2020, with velocity up 420%. Growth in the week to March 13 vs. March 6 is driven by Orlando (+10%), however, other key markets also experience growth with Miami up +6% and Tampa +4%. Sales velocity is now +19% year-over-year (comparing the same week one year prior) and up 6% from March 6, 2021.

Ballast Point Brewing Expands in Calif., Closes in Chicago

Plans to open a brewpub in San Francisco were originally announced in 2018 but later halted in 2019 by former owner **Constellation Brands** prior to the sale of Ballast Point to Kings & Convicts. Ballast Point San Francisco is expected to open by the end of the year and will join the craft brewery's five Southern California locations in San Diego, Anaheim, and Long Beach.

Kings & Convicts, which owns Ballast Point, also announced it would permanently close its Chicago Ballast Point Kitchen and Taproom in the West Loop. "We love Chicago and will remain invested in the region with Kings & Convicts, but have decided it's in the best interest of Ballast Point and its long-term success to focus on our roots in San Diego and California as a whole," said Brendan Waters, CEO of Ballast Point and Kings & Convicts. "The ability to highlight our products in a tasting room across from a world-class entertainment facility and as part of an incredible development in San Francisco aligns well with our vision for Ballast Point."

Ballast Point is planning to finish construction of an approximately 12,000 sf taproom and kitchen — 1,500 sf of which is outdoor patio space — in San Francisco's Mission

Bay District. Ballast Point San Francisco will be equipped with a 3-barrel research and development brewhouse with four, 3-barrel fermenters and two, 3-barrel brite tanks enclosed in glass for public viewing. The taproom will offer Ballast Point beers on draft and R&D releases exclusive to the San Francisco market, as well as a full menu and wine list, growler and crowler fills, and a retail area for merchandise and packaged beer to go.

47 Bev/Al Groups Urge End of Bev/Al Tariffs

Forty-seven U.S. associations representing all tiers of the beverage alcohol industry are marking National Agriculture Day with the launch of the Toasts Not Tariffs Coalition to advocate for the permanent removal of all EU, UK and U.S. tariffs on beverage alcohol products in connection to the steel and aluminum and WTO Boeing/Airbus disputes.

Coalition members represent the entire three-tier chain of the U.S. alcohol industry including distillers and vintners who make the products, importers and wholesalers who distribute the products, and liquor stores and restaurants that sell the products.

"From barrel makers to warehouse workers and restaurant serving staff, these protracted trade disputes that are totally unrelated to the alcohol sector are having a very real and harmful effect on American jobs," the coalition said. "By joining together, the Toasts Not Tariffs Coalition is sending a unified and clear message that these retaliatory tariffs on beverage alcohol products must come to an immediate end."

The U.S., EU and UK recently announced four-month suspensions of U.S. tariffs on certain EU and UK distilled spirits and wines, and EU tariffs on U.S. spirits in the WTO Boeing/Airbus disputes. However, the EU and UK continue to impose a 25% tariff on American Whiskeys, including Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey, in the steel and aluminum dispute. The EU's tariff on American Whiskey will double to a devastating 50 percent on June 1, 2021.

Just 3 Varietals Account for 90% of Drizly's White Wine Sales

The three: Chardonnay holds the highest share of white wine sales value (\$2.9 billion), followed by Pinot Grigio (\$1.6 billion) and Sauvignon Blanc (\$1.3 billion).

These three best selling varietal wines—Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, and Pinot Grigio—make up 90 percent of all white wine sold on Drizly. However, Sauvignon Blanc holds the top spot, representing 40 percent of white wine share, followed by Chardonnay at 30 percent and Pinot Grigio at 22 percent.

According to Rossman, Sauvignon Blanc has grown by 24 percent in the U.S. market—more than any other varietal wine. "Sauvignon Blanc has a distinctly different style compared to Chardonnay, and consumers gravitate to the crisp, refreshing, light-bodied, and flavor-rich characteristics, especially those that originate from New Zealand," she says. Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc was the best-selling white wine SKU on Drizly over the past 12 months,

with sales up 30 percent in IRI markets, according to Rossman.

The majority of white wines sold on Drizly come from the U.S., with American wines comprising 50.3 percent of white wine sales over the past 12 months. New Zealand held the No. 2 spot with 24.5 percent of share, largely driven by the popularity of its Sauvignon Blancs, and Italy came in at No. 3.

“White wines have also experienced increased growth in alternative packaging,” says Rossman, highlighting Kim Crawford’s 250-milliliter can options. Though most white wines sold on Drizly are packaged in bottles, white wine consumers are also more likely to embrace boxed wine; the box format comprised 11.5 percent of white wines sales, while it only comprised 7.2 percent of overall wine share.

Two boxed wines—Bota Box Pinot Grigio and Bota Box Sauvignon Blanc—also ranked among the 10 best-selling white wine SKUs on Drizly over the past 12 months, though they each dropped a few spots from the year prior (from No. 5 and No. 7, respectively, to No. 7 and No. 8).

Drizly’s Best-Selling White Wine SKUs, Past 12 Months

1. Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc
2. Oyster Bay Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc
3. Santa Margherita Pinot Grigio DOC
4. Matua Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc
5. Kendall-Jackson Vintner’s Reserve Chardonnay
6. Cavit Pinot Grigio
7. Bota Box Pinot Grigio
8. Bota Box Sauvignon Blanc
9. Josh Cellars Chardonnay
10. Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc

“The white wine consumer generally shares many of the same attributes as the general wine consumer, with the one difference being that white wine consumers tend to skew a bit more female,” says Rossman. Many white wine brands, including Kim Crawford, gear their marketing strategy towards women and those with active lifestyles.

On Drizly, white wine consumers skew slightly older than the average Drizly wine buyer. The 56 to 62, 63 to 69, and 70+ age groups all hold a higher share of white wine sales than they do for overall wine sales.

Total Off-Premise Alcohol Sales Ease 1.9%

That’s according to NielsenIQ for the week ended March 13. Wine sales fell 8.1% and spirits were flat.

Beer/FMB/cider saw positive growth, up 0.4%. However, seltzers and FMBs drove most of that growth. Excluding seltzers, FMBs, and cider, “core beer” was down 2.2%. Seltzers alone shifted total off-premise alcohol by a percentage point. Excluding seltzers, total alcohol would have been down 3% in NielsenIQ off premise channels.

As a comparison, total fast-moving consumer goods declined by 20.7% for the week ending March 13, Nielsen said, far outpacing the slight declines for off-premise alcohol. Compared to two years ago, NielsenIQ off-premise spirit dollars are up 28%, wine is up 19%, and beer/FMB/cider is up 17% compared to the same week in 2019. This all indicates that alcohol dollars are still far above off-premise

norms when comparing to years prior to the pandemic. You can expect that as more states open up, these trends will begin to flatten in the off-premise.

A glimpse of what’s coming for off-premise sales may be gathered from Texas, one of the first states to completely reopen bars and restaurants and lift the mask mandate.

For the week ending March 13 (3 days into the full opening) beer/FMB/cider sales were down 4.9% in Texas in off-premise channels. While sales in Texas declined more than the total U.S. growth rates (+0.4%), declines in other large beer states were even greater, with Florida down 5.5% and Illinois down 8.8%. Sales for the latest week in Texas are in line with dollar sales for previous weeks, 5.6% vs the prior week. So far, we aren’t seeing massive shifts in volume away from the off-premise, but that will likely change for the week ending March 20.

Beer/FMB/Cider

For the week ending March 13, nearly all segments in beer declined in dollar sales compared to the same week last year. Premium lights were down 4.2%, below premium (-7.6%), craft (-5.2%), cider (-7.1%), and FMBs excluding seltzers (-0.7%). Which segments carried the category to keep growth trends in the black? Hard seltzers (+26.4%), super premium (+4.2%), imports (+3.8%), Mexican imports (+6.4%), hard tea (+44%), and non-alcoholic beer (+25%).

Seltzer growth was led by **Truly**, which was the #1 growth brand not only for seltzers, but also for the entire beer/FMB/cider category. Truly’s growth was driven by the lemonade and new iced tea seltzers, illustrating that innovation is just as important -- or even more important -- now than pre-pandemic time periods. **Modelo Especial** and **Michelob Ultra** also were big growth drivers for the latest week.

Spirits

While overall growth rates were flat for spirits, some

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spirit categories are still growing by double or even triple growth rates, while others are declining by double digits in NielsenIQ off-premise channels. Tequila is still a massive growth driver, up 31%. Ready-to-drink cocktails are up 147%, cognac up 26%, cordials 7%, and Japanese whisky up 23%. Total whiskey declined by 1.8%, with American whiskey down 2.5%. Vodka off-premise dollar sales declined by 14% and gin is down nearly 10%.

All price tiers in spirits declined compared to year ago, except for the ultra premium price tier, which grew by 16.5%, signaling continued premiumization in spirits in off premise channels.

Wine

Sparkling led growth in off-premise wine. Table wine declined by 12.4%, while sparkling wine grew by 18.2%. French champagne grew by 76%. However, Nielsen said it is important to note that at this time last year, table wine growth far outpaced growth of sparkling wine, so sparkling wine isn't facing as difficult comps. Flavored wine (+33%) and wine cocktails (+102%), while still very small, continue to grow and surpass last year's dollar volume.

Similar to spirits, the high-end tier in off-premise table wine continues to grow, with the \$20-\$25 price tier up 1% and \$25 price tier up 12.7%. Dollar sales for all price tiers below \$20 have declined compared to sales for the same week last year.

A-B, Patagonia Settle Trademark Dispute

Patagonia, the outdoor clothing and gear retailer, had claimed **Anheuer-Buch** had appropriated its brand identity. But they reached a settlement -- terms weren't disclosed -- and have asked a federal judge to dismiss Patagonia's lawsuit.

What the New Normal Will Look Like: Online Shopping, Curbside Pick-Up Continues

Half (50%) of the survey respondents indicated plans to continue using curbside pickup and home delivery services once Covid restrictions are lifted, with 21% expecting to actually increase their use of these services, a new J.D. Power Survey finds. Consequently, the quality of mobile apps, websites and supporting services will continue to be a rising source of competitive differentiation in the retail sector.

According to a J.D. Power Pulse Survey conducted in January of 2021, there was a notable increase in both curbside pickup and home delivery across all three sectors. While 83% of consumers said that they still made in-store grocery purchases over the past three months, a growing percentage (51%) said they made online purchases over the same period.

Inversely, consumers indicated that they were more likely to have restaurant food delivered (73%) than eat at the restaurant. In addition, the pulse survey revealed significant demographic differences around gender, location and age which are important for the industry to understand over the course of 2021 and beyond.

● **Curbside Pickup:** Gen Y, Baby Boomers, and pre-Boomers all adapted to curbside delivery and are using online services and mobile apps at a higher rate than millennials and younger generations. In addition, women, married

couples, and consumers living in rural or remote areas were more inclined to utilize pickup services for their groceries. Not surprisingly, states that had fewer COVID-19 restrictions also had more customers using curbside pickup.

● **Home Delivery:** Men, people living alone and consumers living in high-density urban areas were those most likely to use home delivery. Also, customers in states with more restrictive COVID-19 measures in place tended to utilize home delivery services at higher levels than average.

Interestingly, the survey did not find significant overlaps in consumer purchasing behaviors; people were likely to stick with whatever service (pickup or delivery) they chose.

When it comes to restaurants, consumers continue to be very happy with delivery services. An overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents indicated that they did not experience problems with their orders. Two-thirds (68%) found online and mobile applications easy to use and 60% indicated that their orders were delivered on time.

The survey also found that the more customers use a specific service—either delivery or pickup—the higher their satisfaction, with good user-oriented application design driving adoption. These include:

● **Timeliness and Level of Engagement.** Getting orders right and fulfilled in a timely manner are also big satisfaction drivers, along with making sure consumers have a clear idea of what steps to take and a clear view into the status of their orders.

● **Friendliness.** Despite the increased digital nature of interactions introduced by COVID-19, it turns out that courtesy still goes a long way. This expressed itself most clearly with curbside pickup services compared to delivery. This is likely because customers have more opportunity to engage with the staff who are direct retailer employees.

As consumers continue to gain more comfort with digital and mobile apps for their shopping needs, retailers will need to continue investing in their digital engagement strategies, J.D. Power said. Half (50%) of the survey respondents indicated plans to continue using curbside pickup and home delivery with 21% expect to actually increase their use of these services. Consequently, the quality of mobile apps, websites and supporting services will continue to be a rising source of competitive differentiation in the retail sector.

Carlos Alvarez Donates \$20 Million to UT Austin Business School

Gamrinus Co. founder **Carlos Alvarez** and his wife, Malu, are donating \$20 million to University of Texas San Antonio's business school, which will change its name to Carlos Alvarez College of Business.

The gift from the Alvarez family is the first of its kind in the university's history and will be used to advance research-enhancing activities, including establishing endowed faculty positions, graduate research fellowships and undergraduate research programs.

"This gift is a transformational moment for UTSA and the College of Business and will advance our mission to become a great public research university," said President Taylor Eighmy. "The Alvarizes' longstanding philanthropic support of UTSA and educational institutions nationwide is a

testament to their commitment to fostering generations of future business leaders.”

Alvarez's success story began in June 1981 in Austin when he sold the very first cases of Corona beer in the United States. Alvarez moved with his family in 1986 from Mexico to San Antonio and founded [The Gambrinus Co.](#), which became the U.S. importer for the Grupo Modelo beer brands. For the next 20 years Gambrinus was responsible for selling and marketing what would become the most successful brand in contemporary beer marketing history—Corona Extra.

Alvarez acquired the Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner in 1989. At that time the historic Texas brewery had been in decline for several years and faced serious financial difficulties. Having seen Austin's developing consumer support for Shiner and recognizing the brewery's heritage, which dates back to 1909, he was convinced of the brand's potential. After investing in the brewery's facilities and in selling and marketing efforts behind its beers, Shiner is a leading independent craft brewery in the U.S. with Shiner Bock as its flagship brand. Gambrinus also owns and operates the Trumer Brewery in Berkeley, California, brewer of Trumer Pils, the most awarded pilsner in the world and a leading brand in the San Francisco Bay Area.

A prominent community leader, Alvarez serves on the boards of Cullen/Frost Bankers Inc., the United Way of San Antonio and the World Affairs Council of San Antonio. He is also a member of Haven for Hope's leadership advisory council.

At the national level he serves on the boards of National Public Radio and the World Affairs Council of America, both in Washington, D.C. He is a trustee of Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina; a former trustee of School Year Abroad in North Andover, Massachusetts; and a member of The University of Texas System's Chancellor's Council.

Recognized as a legendary Texas businessman, Alvarez was inducted into the Texas Business Hall of Fame in 2010. In 2011 he received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which celebrates inspiring immigrants to the United States whose philanthropy works for the betterment of their communities.

Wine Topped Takeout Orders in Pandemic

It was the most-ordered category for takeout alcohol during the Covid-10 pandemic, according to CGA, the on-premise research and insights consultancy. In January 2021 alone, 52% of consumers ordering takeout alcohol included wine in their order. It was the most-ordered category for takeout alcohol during the Covid-10 pandemic, according to CGA, the on-premise research and insights consultancy. In January 2021 alone, 52% of consumers ordering takeout alcohol included wine in their order.

Beer Continues to Increase Shipments

Beer Institute estimated February tax-paid shipments by U.S. brewers at 11,625,000 barrels, an increase of 2.6% compared to February 2020 removals of 11,325,000. Thus

far this year, shipments totaled 24,350,000 barrels, up 2.5% from 23,748,000.

Calif. Distillers Urge DtC Of Spirits Be Made Permanent

The **California Artisanal Distillers Guild** urged the legislature to pass [SB 620](#), a new bill to make direct-to-consumer (DTC) shipping of distilled spirits permanent.

The move pits distillers against California's powerful wine lobby. Winter have been able to ship direct to consumers for more than three decades.

"Making direct-to-consumer shipping of spirits here in California a permanent option for consumers is a safe and customer-focused way of increasing convenience and supporting local distilleries," said **Cris Steller**, executive director of the California Artisanal Distillers Guild and owner of **Dry Diggings Distillery**.

"Direct-to-consumer shipping of wine has already existed in the state for more than three decades, and spirits consumers should be afforded the same opportunity. By working with our distributor and retail partners, the distilling community can expand consumer convenience, build upon the important role the three-tier system plays, and responsibly implement direct-to-consumer shipping in California. This is simply the consumer-driven response to the new reality of our socially distanced economy."

"This simple, commonsense measure will help bring parity in the alcohol industry," said Sen. Ben Allen (D). "Allowing distilled spirits and beer manufacturers to ship their products directly to consumers, as is already allowed for wine, will support affected businesses that have struggled to stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Under an executive order from Gov. Gavin Newsom, California distillers have been able to ship direct-to-consumer during the pandemic as a temporary economic relief measure. This move is said to have saved many distilleries from permanent closure.

"Wineries have been shipping their products to Californians for 35-years, but distillers never could," said **Ryan Friesen**, VP of the California Artisanal Distillers Guild and head distiller **Blinking Owl Distillery**. "Under new temporary COVID relief measures, distillers have finally been able to ship their products directly to consumers, saving many businesses from closing their doors permanently during this pandemic. Thanks to the consumer-driven desire for a safe and socially distanced way of purchasing spirits, many California distilleries have been able to weather the COVID storm. Distillers now seek to make this shipping privilege permanent after a year of safely and conscientiously demonstrating the value and need for this ability."

Both Dry Diggings Distillery and Blinking Owl Distillery were forced to close their tasting rooms for months and suspended tours. They each shifted operations during the pandemic to provide hand sanitizer to their communities.

"Permanently allowing direct-to-consumer shipping in California will create a more convenient marketplace for adult consumers and provide much-needed support to craft distillers facing financial hardship from the closure of tasting rooms and tours due to COVID-19," said **Adam Smith**,

vp-state government relations at the **Distilled Spirits Council of the United States**.

"Wine producers have successfully and responsibly shipped their products directly to consumers for more than three decades in the state, and distillers should have the same market access. Further, the world of commerce is rapidly changing – especially in light of the pandemic – and the market must adapt to meet consumer demand. We stand with California's distillers and urge the legislature to make direct-to-consumer shipping permanent in the state," he added.

Tanduay Picks Hensley for Arizona Sales

Tanduay, the Philippine-made rum, will be distributed in Arizona by **Hensley Beverage Co.**

Tanduay, which has been hailed as the world's number one rum for three consecutive years, has credited its partnerships with top distributors as one of the major factors for its sales success. It has been declared the world's number one rum for three consecutive years by Drinks International magazine. In 2019 alone, it sold more than 20 million 9-liter cases.

"Tanduay is distinctly unique and we are thrilled to introduce the rum to Arizona. The rums are delicious and are perfect on their own or as part of a cocktail," said **Rob Knutsen**, Brand Manager, Hensley Beverage Co.

Apart from Arizona, Tanduay is now available in the states of California, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, and Wisconsin, and the territory of Guam. It is also available in China, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg.

Low Carb, Low Calorie, Gluten-Free, Keto And Vegan-Friendly Wines Debut

Fresh Vine Wine, an exclusive collection of premium low-carb, low-calorie, gluten-free, Keto, and vegan-friendly wines is being introduced nationwide by Nina Dobrev and Julianne Hough. Produced in Napa, California, the Fresh Vine Wine collection features a California Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, California Rosé, and a Limited Reserve Napa Cabernet.

"Julianne and I were inspired to create Fresh Vine Wines after noticing the growing number of consumers making healthier choices surrounding wellness and longevity while also searching for a wine that compliments their lifestyle choices instead of undermining them," said Fresh Vine Wine Co-Owner Dobrev. "We have similar work schedules and at the end of the day, we love unwinding with a glass of wine."

Award-winning Napa Valley winemaker, Jamey Whetstone, collaborated with the Fresh Vine Wine team on the 2018 and 2019 Fresh Vine Wine varietals.

"In addition to the upcoming wine launches, we are also planning a few exciting Fresh Vine Wine activations for later this year," said Rick Nechio, Co-Founder of Fresh Vine Wine. "As tourism travel slowly gets back to normal, we understand in the next year traveling will have some limitations. In order to address that, we are excited to bring the Napa Val-

ley wine experience to wine enthusiasts across the country through pop-up wine tasting rooms that will combine food, music and wine to a town near you."

Schlafly Releases Variety Pack With 3 New Brews

Schlafly Beer, the original, independent craft brewery in St. Louis, released **Hoptic Visions**, four hop-forward beers available across a variety of IPA styles, including three new experimental brews. This is the second year for the Hoptic Visions pack, which features: Schlafly's fastest-growing SKU of the sessionable IPA; and the debut of West Coast IPA, Hazy Grapefruit IPA and Low Cal IPA. Hoptic Visions is available across Schlafly's distribution now.

"With Hoptic Visions, you can see how the style of IPAs has changed over the years. We are even introducing our first take on a low-calorie beer with Low Cal IPA. Our year-round IPA has quickly grown to be one of the top-performing beers in Schlafly's portfolio. At only 5% ABV with juicy flavor and slight haze, it's an easy-drinking take on the style. In addition, the Hazy Grapefruit IPA is a new beer for this year and West Coast IPA is another exclusive offering brewed as an ode to the IPA style that started it all - both are exclusive to the pack," says Schlafly's Founding Brewer **Stephen Hale**.

Savage & Cooke Launches RtD Craft Cocktail

Savage & Cooke distillery, located just outside of San Francisco on historic Mare Island, launched its first premium Ready to Drink craft cocktail in the US.

Home School is a full-strength bottled craft cocktail at 70 proof, packaged in a 4-pack with two servings per bottle. Savage & Cooke's bottled cocktails will be available nationwide in select stores. The RTD portfolio starts with a Blood Orange Manhattan and more recipes to follow.

Bombay Sapphire Expects to Be 1st Gin With 100% of Botanicals Sustainably Sourced

Bombay Sapphire (Bacardi Ltd.) said it's on track for all 10 of its botanical ingredients to be certified sustainable in 2021. With the suppliers of eight already certified according to the *For Life* standard, the goal is for the remaining two producers – for grains of paradise from Ghana and liquorice from China – to be certified in the months which follow the lifting of travel restrictions.

That would be a major step toward Bacardi, the largest privately-held spirits company in the world, achieving its 2025 goal of sourcing 100% of its key ingredients from sustainably certified suppliers.

The 10 botanicals, which include juniper from Tuscany, coriander from Morocco, lemon peel from Spain and cubeb berries from Java, are hand selected by Bombay Sapphire Master of Botanicals Ivano Tonutti to create the gin's taste.

Bacardi worked closely with its suppliers to help them achieve *For Life* certification. To be certified, suppliers must commit to continuous improvement in the following areas:

- the well-being of the people involved in the harvesting and supply of the botanicals;
- the reduction of their environmental impact;

their responsible purchasing practices; and sustainable development at a local level and key stages in the supply chain.

How Perrin Brewing Supports Local Business

Perrin Brewing Co., Comstock Park, Mich., (near Grand Rapids), is honoring local artist with a series of videos highlighting them and their stories.

The latest featured artist is jewelry maker and metalsmith, Emma Hoekstra. This week, Perrin is working with Emma to give away a set of her beautiful handmade earrings, along with a \$50 gift card to the Perrin Pub. The contest runs through March 28. Visit [Perrin Brewing's Instagram page](#) for more information.

"When I think of craftsmanship, I think of something that's made with someone's two hands, and I think of something that's one of a kind, that you might not ever see again," said Emma.

You can see Emma's Craftsmanship Series story [here](#), and click [here](#) to check out more of her work.

Comment: This is a brilliant example of local marketing that any local distiller, vintner or brewer can do -- find another local businessperson, tell their story in a video, run a sweepstakes and offer a discount to your store.

La Crema Launches Sonoma County Sauvignon Blanc

The latest addition to its portfolio, the 2020 Sauvignon Blanc illustrates La Crema's ongoing exploration of west coast growing regions to produce uniquely expressive and elegant wines. This launch arrives on the heels of a successful year for La Crema, which was named one of the top fifteen growth brands of 2020 by Nielsen.

RanchH2O Launches Canned Cocktails with Texas Spirit

Softly launched in October 2020 in partnership with **Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits**, the brand is now available in Texas and New Mexico and will soon be sold in additional markets across the United States. Available as an easy-to-go four-pack served in standard 12-oz. cans, RanchH2O cocktails are sold for a suggested retail price of \$13.99 to \$15.99 at major liquor stores and through online retailers like Drizly and Minibar.

Flavors include **Ranch Water** (tequila, soda water, and lime), 7.0% ABV; **Classic Marg** (tequila, soda water, lime, and orange), 6.5% ABV; **Vodka Soda** (vodka, soda water, and cranberry), 7.0% ABV, and **Gin Fizz** (gin, soda water, and lime), to be released in late Spring, 7.0% ABV.

The brand was founded by native Texan **Amelia Lettieri** who serves as the brand's CEO. She says, "I created RanchH2O to provide a real cocktail experience in a convenient package without any question marks. No hidden agenda. Just a lot of refreshment with a bit of Texas sincerity."

The name RanchH2O is a play on the words Ranch and H2O and is named after the brand's flagship product, Ranch Water. Known as the "Unofficial Cocktail of West Texas," ranch water is a mix of tequila, lime, and soda water that has a long history and many Texas-sized fables as to its origin. Over decades, the cocktail's popularity moved east into bars

and restaurants across the state and is now a hot commodity in the ready-to-drink beverage category. RanchH2O's logo embraces its namesake's history, drawing inspiration from the custom ironwork of a ranch gate or a cattle brand, embodying the Americana spirit.

Virginia Distillery Co. Offers 3 New Whiskies

Virginia Distillery Co. released three new whiskies in its **Courage & Conviction** line. The release features individual bottlings of the core bourbon, sherry and cuvée that make up Courage & Conviction, the distillery's flagship American Single Malt whisky line.

"These individual bottlings are a great way for us to highlight the casks that are foundational to the Courage & Conviction line," Virginia Distillery Company CEO **Gareth H. Moore** said in the release. "One example is that we are one of only a handful of distilleries in the world to use these unique Cuvée casks, a profile developed by the late Dr. Jim Swan."

Each expression of the three casks retails for \$84.99 per 750 milliliter bottle with a 46% alcohol by volume.

Absinthia's Bottled Spirits Releases Absinthia Verte

Absinthia's Bottled Spirits releases Absinthia Verte, the follow-up to its inaugural and Gold Medal-winning Absinthia Blanche.

"As an unregulated category, there are a lot of 'crapsinthes' on the market that use artificial ingredients and dyes to achieve the end product. Absinthia absinthes are carefully crafted according to a vintage Swiss recipe using all-natural ingredients and no sugar," said J. Absinthia Vermut, founder and creator of Absinthia's Bottled Spirits.

"We start with a neutral spirit made from biodynamic grapes from California, and distilled that with organic herbs – fresh wormwood (*artemesia absinthium*), star anise, fennel seed, and coriander seed – from an organic farm in Oregon. The result is an aromatic, brilliantly clear and modern take on absinthe, launched in 2018 as Absinthia Blanche."

Hallmark Channel Wine Offers Rose Wine Seltzer in a Can

The low-carb (<8 carbs), gluten-free and vegan-friendly wine seltzer is made with 100% natural ingredients and has only 2.5g of sugar and 137 calories per serving. The news product, **Cheers**, is presented in fun, inviting 250ml cans and contains 8.4% alcohol.

"Cheers is an entirely new category. If you like rosé wine, sparkling wine or hard seltzer, then you will absolutely love Cheers," says **Andrew Nelson**, Hallmark Channel Wines winemaker. "The new Cheers Rosé is a unique seltzer because it's wine-based. We have been working on this formula for years and believe it's the perfect beverage for spring and all summer long – it's the best seltzer you will have all year!"

Cheers will be offered later this Spring in select cities throughout the U.S.

Busch Beer Sweeps Offers Weddings on the Farm

Covid may be headed toward suppression, but couples are still it hard to book venues for their weddings and receptions. **Busch Beer** to the rescue!

Busch scoured the country to find the most beautiful farms, and is transforming them into weddings venues throughout the month of July to host the most important day of Busch fans' lives.

Both farms, located in Idaho and North Dakota, grow the signature grains that help make Busch Beer so delicious. Busch will be providing 3 lucky couples with the venue and funds to help design their most perfect day. Also, Busch is furthering their support by providing a wedding planner, and will be covering the cost of catering and entertainment so the couples don't have any added worries - with plenty of Busch beer, too!

For couples having a hard time locking in their 2021 wedding venue, all they'll need to do is share on social media how Busch Beer brings them and their partner together, by using #BuschFarmWedding and #Contest to enter.

"Busch has been a staple at weddings for years, and we were disheartened to see even more couples unable to make their celebrations happen this year due to a lack of available venues," said **Daniel Blake**, VP of Value Brands at Anheuser-Busch. "We believe that weddings, just like our beer, are best enjoyed in the great outdoors, so we are thrilled to be working with American farmers to help create exclusive wedding venues for Busch fans."

Comment: This is a really clever promotion. A tip of the hat to the Busch Beer team.

Ketel One Honors Bartenders

Ketel One Family Made Vodka is partnering with Andrew Rannells to launch *Makers of Marvelous*, a program rooted in giving back to the hospitality community and celebrating bartenders for their service, craft and creativity.

After a year in which the hospitality community has been impacted due to COVID-19, Ketel One Vodka is continuing their support for a community of individuals that have been a part of the brand's identity since day one, and has pledged to donate \$50,000 to [Another Round Another Rally](#), which will be announced on Rannells social media.

Ketel One also invites consumers to celebrate National Cocktail Day by posting their versions of the at-home cocktails on Instagram as a toast to the bartenders (or places) they miss with the tags #MakeItMarvelous.

Seagram's Escapes Discussion Series Showcases Female Entrepreneurs

Seagram's Escapes recently announced a series of upcoming virtual panels as part of its female-driven Empowerment Tour. The event, in partnership with Rolling Out, an African-American-owned media company, will showcase and celebrate women who have blossomed in their respective fields and are invited to discuss their professional experiences. The first panel in the event was scheduled to go live March 26. Each panelist is a trailblazer in her respective

industry in a groundbreaking way and they will collectively discuss how they have flourished in their professional lives.

"This is a tough time to be in business in general, and we know COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black-owned businesses," said **Lisa Texido**, Seagram's Escapes brand manager. "It's important that Seagram's Escapes and our partners use our platforms to help these incredible businesses during this tough time, and we are honored to do our part."

Each panel features four inspiring women who have gone above and beyond in their lines of work. For the inaugural panel on Friday, March 26th starting at 7pm ET, Africa Miranda moderated, while Cynthia Bailey (Seagram's Escapes brand ambassador), Khadeen Ellis, (actress and influencer) and Monique Rodriguez, (CEO of Mielle Organics) participated

in the panel. Panelists will discuss how they paved their own paths to success, as well as how they thrive in their respective industries. The schedule following the first panel runs as follows, with monthly events a broad virtual audience can look forward to:

Saturday, April 24, 7 p.m. - RIDE Conference: Business & Entrepreneurship

Saturday, May 29, 7 p.m. - Design & Dialogue: Chefs and Mixologist Edition

Saturday, June 26, 7 p.m. - Star Studio: Roast & Toast – Comedians Edition

"I'm really looking forward to the panel. I think it's imperative for women to share their secrets to success with other women," says Miranda, of this year's tour. "We need to uplift and inspire each other now more than ever. And we're doing just that with this panel."

Who & What —

Nomadica, the Los Angeles-based women-and-sommelier-owned canned wine company, hires Tara Hannaford as its first Chief Operating Officer. Most recently she was VP-Sales at Casamigos Spirits Co.

Ste. Michelle Wine Estates names **Katie Nelson**, who previously oversaw winemaking for Columbia Crest and *ēlicit* Wine Project, has been appointed to oversee winemaking for **Chateau Ste. Michelle**, the company's flagship brand and the sixth-largest premium wine brand in the U.S. **Will Wiles** will succeed Nelson overseeing winemaking for **Columbia Crest** and *ēlicit* Wine Project. In Oregon, **Leah Adint**, previously the red winemaker for Chateau Ste. Michelle, has been appointed to work alongside longtime winemaker Gary Horner at **Erath Winery**, one of Oregon's pioneering wineries and producer of the region's best-selling pinot noir.

Continued Success,
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK



JOEL WHITAKER, Editor