

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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Thanksgiving Eve Saw On-Premise Drink Sales Jump 69.2%

That, according to **BeerBoard**, which reports on-premise drink sales were up 79.7% compared to 2020 Thanksgiving Eve and even up 8.4% compared to 2019 Thanksgiving Eve. These bumps were even more significant in major cities such as Chicago, which saw a 143.6% increase over 2020, and New York, which saw a 97.7% increase over 2020. BeerBoard also analyzed its hometown of Syracuse, which saw an increase of 107.8% compared to 2020.

On the night before Thanksgiving, which is widely celebrated with hometown friends and long-lost high school classmates, Light Lager continued to hold a firm grip on beer drinkers across the nation as the first-choice beer, followed by Lagers, IPAs, Belgian and White Ales, and Stouts and Porters. The top brands poured on Thanksgiving Eve were Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Miller Lite, Coors Light, Modelo Especial, Dos Equis, Blue Moon, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Stella Artois and Yuengling, respectively.

"Thanksgiving Eve might be the most underrated holiday of the year, yet it's one the most popular nights to grab a beer and catch up with those you haven't seen in a while," said BeerBoard Founder and CEO **Mark Young**. "So, as a technology and insights leader for the liquor, beer and wine sectors, we leverage our revolutionary technology to ensure the industry is prepared for nights like these. By creating reports on beer consumption across major – or unrecognized – holidays, sporting events and pop-culture events in America, we help retailers, brewers and distributors make informed, data-driven decisions based on significant market trends."

Spirits Top-Seller on Drizly Ahead of Thanksgiving

Liquor overtook wine as the top-selling bev/al category in 2021 in the days leading up to Thanksgiving. Liquor held 45% of share on Drizly from Nov. 22 - 24, 2021, followed by wine with 43% and beer with 12%.

Tequila continued its popularity during the holiday time frame, following its trend as one of the fastest-growing spirit categories on Drizly over the past few years. Reposado tequila gained share in 2021 when compared to the same time frame of the days leading up to Thanksgiving in 2020, scaling from the No 14 spot in 2020 to No 10 in 2021. Anejo tequila also increased in share, moving to the No 12 top-selling subcategory in 2021, which is up 10 spots from 2020.

While ready-to-drink increased from No 37 in 2020 to No 24 in 2021 in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, hard seltzer decreased slightly in share when comparing year-over-year, from the No 8 top-selling subcategory to No 9 in 2021.

PLCB Retail Sales Grew 26.4% in Year, E-Commerce Sales Up 237% Over Pre-Pandemic Levels

Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board's retail sales grew 26.4% over Fiscal 2020, the agency reported.

E-commerce sales in fiscal 2021 totaled \$16.8 million, a 37.3% decrease in dollar sales compared to the prior year due to the reopening of most Fine Wine & Good Spirits stores as of July 1, 2020, and an increase to in-store shopping. When compared to pre-pandemic dollar sales and transactions for 2018-19, sales for 2020 -21 were up by 236.6% and the number of transactions increased by 285.1%.

Total dollar sales for canned and non-canned ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages

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increased by 91.3% over 2019-20, with sales of canned RTD wines and spirits increasing by 336.3%.

In 2020-21, dollar sales for tequila increased by 52.3% over the prior fiscal year. Benefitting from the trend toward premiumization, sales of products in the \$40 to \$60 price range increased by 81.2%, while sales of products in the \$20 to \$40 price range increased by 48.9%.

A total of 53 counties had unflavored vodka as their top spirits category. American whiskey followed with 13 counties. Canadian whisky was the top category in Greene County.

California cabernet sauvignon was the top wine category in 26 counties, while another 19 counties had box red wine as the top wine category; beverage wine followed in 14 counties, and California chardonnay followed in eight.

The top three counties — Allegheny, Philadelphia, and Montgomery — accounted for almost 35% of statewide sales.

Sparkling Wine Surges in 2 Years

Sparkling wine has been the fastest-growing wine subcategory among American consumers over the past two years, growing by over 13% in 2021, according to off-premise sales data from [Nielsen IQ](#) and sales data from Drizly. On Drizly, Champagne and sparkling wine share is up five percentage points year-over-year, reaching 23% of wine category share.

The subcategory also accounts for 9% of overall share on Drizly in 2021 to date, up from 7% last year — a growth particularly significant given that wine category overall has lost share year-over-year.

This growth for sparkling wine is just the latest for an upward trajectory that has been climbing over the past decade. Much of the sparkling wine boom throughout the 2010s was thanks to Prosecco, which consumers gravitated towards for its easy-drinking flavors and affordability. More recently, Champagne's strength in the overall market has increased; exports to the U.S. have grown by more than five million bottles between 2015 and 2019, according to the [Comité Champagne](#).

"Suddenly, people felt like sparkling wine was a wine that spoke to them with the increased production of affordable styles like Prosecco," says Katherine Cole, a wine writer who authored the forthcoming [Sparkling Wine Anytime](#) (out in March 2021). "The whole brand identity was changing from an exclusive, glamorous beverage to something very accessible." The popularity of aperol spritzes and sparkling wine in cans also contributed to this accessible image, as did pét-nat, which seemed more approachable (in a "hipster" way) with its beer bottle-like crown cap.

But across the board, Drizly consumers have been trading up significantly this year. In 2021 alone, the average unit price of sparkling wines on Drizly increased by \$5 to \$26.69, while Champagne prices have risen to an average unit price of \$50.09.

"While IWSR does see strong growth for Champagne, which is naturally more premium priced, we also see consumers across other sparkling categories premiumizing," says **Adam Rogers**, North American research director at **IWSR Drinks Market Analysis**, of the trending growth in

all categories of sparkling wine. "This can mean moving into another sparkling category or brand, or trading from a value brand to a standard or premium brand in the same sparkling subcategory, such as Prosecco or Cava."

Michelle DeFeo, the president of [Laurent-Perrier U.S.](#), notes that while the majority of Champagne is still purchased during the holiday season, more consumers are embracing Champagne year-round. "Our customers buy Laurent-Perrier not just for special occasions, but also for enjoying while on vacation or even just as a special treat for themselves at home," she says, noting that Q4 comprises 40 percent of Laurent-Perrier business, with the remainder split evenly between the other three quarters.

"I think we've done a great job of showing wine lovers that Champagne is a wine that is not just for celebrations, but that it is a perfect pairing for food and for the daily lifestyle," says **Philippe André**, the U.S. ambassador for [Champagne Charles Heidsieck](#). "Our wines naturally pair with food." He adds that the trend of pairing Champagne with simple foods like fried chicken or french fries have helped the category become more approachable.

Drizly data indicates consumers are increasingly reaching specifically for Champagne. This French favorite now holds up 57% percent of subcategory share, up from 49% in 2020. These premium offerings have an average unit price of \$50 — nearly double the average unit price of all sparkling wines on Drizly. During the same period, Prosecco saw a share decrease of eight percentage points — from 29% to 21% — and other value categories remained relatively flat.

"Prosecco lost share this year as a result of Champagne's growth and share shifting from one category to another," says **Liz Paquette**, Drizly's director of consumer insights. "Premiumization was a big driver of this as consumers looked to trade up in the category."

Consumers are also spending more time researching their Champagnes, seeking out deeper experiences with the brands they are purchasing and realizing the value in exploring and trading up. "We are a little pricier, but we offer a great value," says André. "We exceed a lot of other wine regions in terms of value per bottle, and we're putting more dollars in retail shop owners' hands that way."

Though non-vintage brut Champagne is still the biggest driver of Champagne sales in the U.S. — it comprises 69 percent of total imports, according to the Comité Champagne — it's important to carry a variety of Champagne styles. "Consumers like choices," says Elise Cordell, the manager of Champagne trade engagement and events at [Pernod Ricard USA](#), which owns [Perrier-Jouët](#), who points to the growing popularity of rosé Champagne and low-dosage options. "There will always be cuvées that dominate the conversation because of visibility, but discovering something new or exploring a current trend is a form of treating yourself."

Offering options at different price points is important as well. "We know consumers are going to trade up once they start exploring," says André, "so give them the options to do that. Giving them variety at great value will allow you to upsell."

Here are Drizly's top-selling sparkling wine brands,

2021 to Date

1. Veuve Clicquot
2. La Marca
3. Moët & Chandon
4. Dom Perignon
5. Korbel
6. Mionetto
7. Chandon
8. Perrier-Jouët
9. Mumm Napa
10. Nicolas Feuillatte

Control States Spirits Case Sales Ease 0.9%

The depressed growth rate that was influenced by an imposing comp (13.9%) and calendar anomalies. Montgomery County Maryland (7.7%), New Hampshire (3.3%), and West Virginia (2.8%) reported monthly growth rates for October exceeding their twelve-month trends. The growth rates for Alabama (0.6%), Iowa(-1.3%), Idaho (-2.3%), Maine (-5.1%), Michigan (-6.0%), Mississippi (-2.7%), Montana (-6.8%), North Carolina (0.1%), Ohio (-0.8%), Oregon (-2.9%), Pennsylvania (7.6%), Utah (-14.9%), Virginia (0.6%), Vermont (-0.7%), and Wyoming (-2.3%) fell short of their 12-month trends. Control state rolling-12-month-volume growth, 4.5%, fell from September's reported 5.7%. Spirits' volumes are growing 4.7% year-to-date compared to 8.7% a year ago.

October's three-year CAGR of rolling-12-month 9-liter case volumes, 5.3%, is the fourth highest (tied with Aug 2021) recorded three-year growth period in the control states during the 21st century. The 21-year control state CAGR of 3.1% suggests that the last six three-year growth periods are above average. During October, the 3-year CAGR, a long-term growth rate, and the rolling-12-month-trend growth rate, a short-term growth rate, crossed; the 3-year CAGR is now greater than the rolling-12-month-trend growth rate for the first time in 34 months. Sales are generally more brisk during periods when short term rates exceed long term rates.

Control state spirits shelf dollars were up 2.6% during October while trending at 9.8% during the past twelve months. Montgomery County Maryland (12.4%) and New Hampshire (14.2%) reported growth rates exceeding their twelve-month trends. Alabama (2.8%), Iowa (1.1%), Idaho (2.5), Maine (-0.6%), Michigan (-5.0%), Mississippi (1.5%), Montana (-3.1%), North Carolina (6.6%), Ohio (2.3%), Oregon (3.3%), Pennsylvania (9.5%), Utah (-11.8%), Virginia (4.6%), Vermont (2.1%), West Virginia (-1.5%), and Wyoming (5.7%) grew shelf dollars at rates below their twelve-month trends. Shelf dollars in the control states are up 10.3% year-to-date compared to 14.8% last October.

Price/Mix for October is 3.5%, up from September's reported 2.4%.

October's Price/Mix, 3.5%, has moderated from the eye-popping values of May 2020 through June 2021, suggesting Price/Mix is coming in line with pre-COVID averages (2.3%).

However, premiumization continues to sustain the Price/Mix values calculated for the control states. During October

2021, the median and weighted average prices of 750 ML spirits volumes sold in those control states that set retail price points continued to be reported at historically high levels; the median price was \$24.99, and the weighted average price was \$17.95. During 2020's October these prices were \$24.95 and \$17.19, respectively.

Cocktails, with 3% share of the nine-liter case control states spirits market, was October's fastest growing category with 37.8% reported and a twelve-month trend of 38.6%.

Tequila, with 8% share, grew at 15.3% during October and 21.6% during the past twelve months. Vodka, with 32% share, grew during the same periods at -1.9% and 0.3%, respectively. All categories grew at rates below their twelve-month trends: Brandy/Cognac (-13.3% during October, -2.2% twelve-month trend), Canadian Whiskey (-5.0%, 1.3%), Cocktails(37.8%, 38.6%), Cordials(0.9%, 10.4%), Domestic Whiskey(-3.0%, 5.3%), Gin (-6.2%, -0.7%), Irish Whiskey (3.6%, 12.9%), Rum (-4.0%, 0.6%), Scotch (-6.4%, 0.9%), Tequila (15.3%, 21.6%), and Vodka (-1.9%, 0.3%).

October's nine-liter wine case sales growth rate was -8.9%. Pennsylvania (reporting -8.6% nine-liter-case growth for wines), New Hampshire (-7.4%), Mississippi (3.9%), Utah (-21.8%), Montgomery County Maryland (-13.2%), and Wyoming (-11.6%) are the control states that are the sole wholesalers of wines and spirits within their geographical boundaries. Rolling-twelve-month wine volume growth in these six control states is -1.8%, down from September's reported -0.4%..

Bordeaux Producer Sentenced to Prison

French authorities found **Vincent Lataste's** company, **Sequoia**, "attempted deception on substantial quantities of wine," and other offenses. He was sentenced to a year in prison and his company, renamed Awesome was fined €100,000, €50,000 of which was suspended, while he himself was fined €30,000 with €20,000 suspended.

Le Monde newspaper said the case started when inves-

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tigators from the French equivalent of TTB did a "routine check" and found levels of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) 90 micrograms per liter over the 150 milligram per liter cap. Sulphur dioxide can also be used to change the flavor of wines by reducing levels of acetaldehyde, which gives sherry its distinctive smell, and also stops old wines from turning brown.

FMB/Seltzer Decline Continues

The Beer Purchasers Index (BPI) reading for FMB/seltzer continued falling to an unprecedented 31 from 87 in November 2020. Meanwhile, imports and premium lights are the only segments in solid expansion territory this month, according to the **National Beer Wholesalers Association's** Beer Purchasers Index. The "at-risk" inventory measures are still below 50 for all the segments except FMB/seltzer, signaling continued supply constraints in the system.

NBWA said it expected to report an upward trend in the monthly readings as supply-side challenges resolve over time. But it added it expects industry numbers will continue to behave erratically over the next few months as shipments, depletions and sales to consumer measures remain out of sync.

Looking across the segments for November:

- The index for **imports** continued into expansion territory for a reading of 68 in November 2021, about the same reading as November 2020.
- The **craft** index fell below 50 for a third month, with a reading of 47 compared to a reading of 55 in November 2020.
- The **premium lights** index posted a reading of 54, indicating continued expansion, yet the number is still below the November 2020 reading of 70.
- The **regular domestic** beer segment index is at 38, which is now significantly below the November 2020 reading of 58, yet is still in expansion territory.
- The **below premium** segment at 29, took another hit year-over-year from the November 2020 reading of 49.
- The **FMB/seltzer** took another big hit, falling over 50 points to 31 in November 2021 from 87 in November 2020.
- Finally, the **cider** segment remains well below 50 with a reading of 32 in November 2021 compared to 34 in November 2020.

Index readings over 50 signal expansion, under 50, contraction.

Linganore Winecellars is 1st Maryland Winery to Solar-Power Entire Facility

Linganore Winecellars has installed a solar system that will completely power the winery. "It's sort of cool" said **Anthony Aellen**, VP-Winery Operations. "We're growing grapes coming from the field and now we're growing power on the farm as well."

The Maryland winery recently installed 720 solar panels, each generating 350 watts, for a total of 252 kilowatts. This is enough to power the entire operation, and one of the first wineries to do so in the Mid-Atlantic region. As grapes are grown, harvested, and made into wine, the environment and its future are prioritized.

This is the latest effort, in a long list of green initiatives by the winery including skylight lighting, tracking solar connected to EV chargers, pulp composting, just to name a few. "Seeing the effects of climate change in the last 20 years, we can now grow different varieties that we couldn't grow 20 years ago. It's just warmed up that much! To mitigate this, we had focused on eliminating fossil fuel from generating power, and buying wind power. Now we're growing our own power and that's really the key," says Aellen.

"We take our role as stewards very seriously. Back in 2012 we installed EV chargers and now, nine years later, there's a push to convert vehicle power to electric. You must be able to think a bit further into the future, to think of what your grandchildren and their grandchildren are going to be left with. We can't just leave this earth and screw it up for everybody else. It's up to us to make decisions that will bring about positive change. Our aim is to not only to support the land but leave it better than we found it."

Iconic Brands Expects to Produce 3 Times As Much Ice Pops, Cocktails in Expansion

Iconic Brands is expanding its **TopPop** facility to meet growing demand for flexible packaging in the beverage sector. It expects to have the capacity to make at least 150 million ice pops and cocktail drink products, three times the number of units produced this year.

It said it expects to be able to product 150,000 flexible stand-up cocktail packages a day, including shots. And it plans to add a custom plastic bottling line in the 2022 third quarter.

Iconic also recently received **Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau** (TTB) approval to manufacture wine, malt and spirits and to do custom product blending in-house at its newest facility in Pennsauken, N.J. The new facility is expected to begin production early in the first quarter of 2022 and reach its full potential production capacity by the end of the quarter.

"Our investment in the new TopPop facility, which we expect to result in increased capacity beginning in the first quarter of 2022, is ahead of schedule and we expect it to scale well throughout the year for a strong ROI," said Iconic Chief Executive Officer. "We just reported our strongest quarter in the Company's history, and our customer base is taking notice and continues to grow, demonstrating increasing demand for TopPop's innovation in product creation and efficient packaging solutions. We believe that TopPop is now well positioned to boost Iconic to record revenue growth in 2022."

Cover Crops Boost Sustainability Of Vineyards; Strategy Can Aid Marketing

Growing cover crops under grapevines in vineyards can reduce erosion, enhance soil health, reduce herbicide use and improve water quality, according to a team of **Penn State** researchers, who suggest that growers can promote improved sustainability in production as part of a marketing strategy that may result in consumers being willing to pay more for wine.

"With so many wineries not only in Pennsylvania but

throughout the country vying for consumer dollars, emphasizing sustainability is one way to differentiate themselves from competitors,” said researcher **Kathy Kelley**, professor of horticultural marketing and business management. “We know that Gen Z and millennial consumers, especially, have a profound interest in sustainability and are very environmentally conscious.”

Cover crops in vineyards are increasingly relevant, contends another member of the wine and grape team in the College of Agricultural Sciences, **Michela Centinari**, associate professor of viticulture. She pointed out that excessive precipitation events have greatly increased in frequency and severity in some grape-growing regions, including the U.S. Northeast, due to climate change.

“These heavy downpours result in myriad problems in vineyards, including erosion and soil runoff, nutrient leaching, excessive vine vegetative growth, and diseased fruit,” she said. “The negative impacts of excessive precipitation events on vineyards are made worse by the maintenance of bare soil under the vines.”

Centinari co-authored a study to determine whether vegetation growing under and around vines could solve these problems, and it turns out it can. In [findings recently published in *Frontiers of Plant Science*](#), Centinari and **Justine Vanden Heuvel**, a plant scientist at **Cornell University**, demonstrated that either natural or seeded “under-vine vegetation” can help mitigate many of the problems associated with excessive precipitation.

The cost of seeding and mowing under-vine vegetation — or cover crops — can be far greater than applying herbicides, Kelley noted, but she suspected that many consumers are willing to pay more for a wine they know is produced more sustainably. To find out, she conducted a study to characterize several wine consumer groups that were “likely” to sample — taste before purchasing — wine from vineyards using cover crops.

Kelley and colleagues recently reported in [International Journal of Wine Business Research](#) that 72% of 956 wine consumers from the mid-Atlantic region surveyed were willing to pay \$18.99 for a 750-ml bottle of wine, which included a \$1 surcharge to cover associated sustainable production costs, including cover crops. Additionally, of that group, 26% — 195 wine consumers — indicated that they would be willing to pay \$20.99 for that same bottle of wine.

Croft Intros 1st RtD Canned Pink Port and Tonic Cocktail

Croft, one of the original founding Port houses, launches the first ready-to-drink Pink Port & Tonic cocktail, presented in a stylish and convenient pre-mixed 250ml can. This first pre-mixed and ready-to-drink Croft Pink & Tonic canned cocktail is 100% recyclable and is available in the U.S. market now, after launching first in the United Kingdom and Portugal.

“Croft’s rich heritage and history spanning over four centuries has inspired us to maintain a pioneering spirit,” says **Adrian Bridge**, Managing Director of **Taylor Fladgate**. “By releasing the world’s first-ever rosé Port, and now first rosé Port cocktail, we continue to innovate and

bring versatile, refined options to the market that have the future in mind while staying rooted in tradition.”

“Croft Pink is defined by an abundance of rich, berry plump fruit with a delicious exotic quality and spicy character,” says **David Guimaraens**, Technical Director and Head Winemaker of **Fladgate Partnership**. “By combining Croft Pink with the perfect amount of proprietary tonic, the result is a delicious cocktail, bursting with character that will surprise and delight even people who are not familiar with this outstanding Port.”

DISCUS Launches StandardDrinks.org

Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. (DISCUS) launched a new website, [StandardDrinks.org](#), featuring a drink calculator and resources to assist adult consumers in making responsible decisions regarding alcohol consumption.

The website includes the definition of a “standard drink,” which contains 0.6 ounces of ethanol (the pure alcohol that is in all beverage alcohol), and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans’ recommendation for moderate drinking for adults of legal drinking age who choose to drink: up to one standard drink per day for females or up to two per day for males.

The site highlights the fact that there is no beverage of moderation, only the practice of moderation and features examples of “standard drink equivalents,” including: 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (40% alcohol by volume [ABV]), 5 ounces of wine (12%ABV), 12 ounces of beer (5% ABV), or 12 ounces of a canned, ready-to-drink (RTD) beverage (5% ABV).

“Knowing the definition of a standard drink and understanding drink equivalence are essential aspects of responsible alcohol consumption and are key educational components of [StandardDrinks.org](#),” said **Dr. Amanda Berger, Ph.D., DISCUS Vice President of Science and Health**.

Visitors to the site can use the interactive calculator to input the volume, or container size, and the ABV of their beverage to see how it measures up to one standard drink.

“Today’s beer, wine and spirits products come in a range of containers with varying alcohol content, which makes the ability to calculate standard drinks even more critical,” said Berger. “The drink calculator gives consumers a way to see how their beverage of choice compares to one standard drink as defined by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines.”

Other resources on the site include educational consumer videos with **Kathleen Zelman MPH, RDN, LD**, nutrition expert and former director of nutrition at WebMD. In one video, Zelman uses popular RTD beverages to demonstrate the importance of understanding the alcohol content of these products and how they compare to the definition of one standard drink.

“As a dietitian, I counsel adults to keep track of their alcohol consumption by knowing the ABCs of ABV and how the alcohol content of the drink they choose relates to one standard drink,” said Zelman. “The Dietary Guidelines are arguably the most important road map we use to promote public health, and this new website will help to inform adult consumers about the government’s guidance on alco-

hol.”

The site links to additional resources on alcohol consumption from sources such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Responsibility.org, the distilled spirits industry’s not-for-profit foundation to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking.

Dr. Berger stated that the new website is part of DISCUS’ commitment to promote the U.S. Dietary Guidelines as a USDA MyPlate Strategic National Partner.

“Over the decades, DISCUS has distributed several thousand copies of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines on alcohol to physicians, nutritionists and other health professionals,” *said Dr. Berger*. “Through this new website, the distilled spirits industry will continue to do its part to help disseminate the messages of the Dietary Guidelines.”

The website also notes that some adults should not consume alcohol at all and recommends that visitors discuss alcohol consumption with their physicians, who can determine what is best for them based on individual factors, such as family history, genetics and lifestyle.

Drake's Organic Intros a Margarita in a Box

Drake’s Organic Spirits launches [Drake’s Perfect Margarita Boxtail](#) (1.75L; SRP \$19.99), which joins Minted Mojito, Watermelon-Tini, Mango Punch, and Black Cherry Limeade in this innovative, eco-friendly, ready-to-drink cocktail line. No artificial colors, flavors, or sweeteners are ever used in Drake’s products.

A refreshing combination of Drake’s Organic Tequila, organic triple sec liqueur, organic fresh lime and other citrus juices, the 12% ABV Drake’s Perfect Margarita Boxtail brings the convenience of boxed wine to the cocktail arena. All Drake’s Boxtails are shelf stable and have only 5g sugar per serving; the outer box is made from recycled paper and 100% compostable; and at 14 cocktails per box, this choice saves five hard seltzer cans going into landfills, making it both a delicious and ecologically sound choice.

Woodford Reserve Releases Winter 2021 Master's Collection

Woodford Reserve, the world's top-selling super-premium American whiskey, announces the Winter 2021 Master’s Collection release - **Woodford Reserve Five-Malt Stouted Mash**. It’s a whiskey that exhibits the flavors of a classic beer.

In Kentucky, a fermented grain mash is traditionally called “distiller’s beer.” Distillation converts this “beer” into a spirit that will become a “whiskey” once barreled.

“Five-Malt Stouted Mash is an expression unlike any other we’ve released before,” Master Distiller **Chris Morris** said. “The rich, roasted malty stout flavors mingle with bright touches of baked fruit, crisp spices, and orange zest for a unique Woodford Reserve experience.”

“Woodford Reserve’s distillery was constructed by Irish stonemasons in 1838,” Assistant Master Distiller **Elizabeth McCall** said. “That history, plus the fact that we distill in the “Irish” style with triple pot stills, inspired us to mash and distill this year’s Master’s Collection.”

This year’s expression marks the 17th release of the

Master’s Collection. This limited-edition Master’s Collection is 90.4 proof and is available in select U.S. and global markets with a suggested retail price of \$129.99 for a 750ml bottle.

Robert Mondavi Winery Offers Ceramic Bottles with NonFungible Tokens

In a bid to transform itself and elevate its position as Napa Valley's preeminent luxury winery, **Robert Mondavi Winery** partnered with French luxury porcelain house Bernardaud to create a series of 1,966 exquisitely designed Limoges porcelain 1.5L bottles.

The magnums hold custom wine blends created by the acclaimed winemakers of the Robert Mondavi Winery Technical Council—Geneviève Janssens, Andy Erickson and Thomas Rivers Brown—and are sourced from the iconic To Kalon® Vineyard in Napa Valley.

Each bottle will be offered exclusively through generative art non-fungible tokens (NFTs), each a unique and collectible piece of art, available for purchase starting December 15, 2021 at nft.robertmondaviwinery.com.

Inspired by the porcelain bottles and wine blends and driven by an autonomous system in tandem with the artist's creative code, generative artist Clay Heaton will produce 1,966 original works of digital art created at the moment of purchase. These tokens act as a “key” to unlock redemption of the wine bottles, exclusive winery experiences and insider access to future offerings.

“We set out to create something truly revolutionary, channeling the visionary mindset of Mr. Mondavi himself, and are proud to introduce the Robert Mondavi Winery x Bernardaud NFT collection to mark the genesis of an historic transformation for the winery,” says Robert Hanson, President, Wine & Spirits division at Constellation Brands, the parent company of Robert Mondavi Winery. “Our shared commitment to incredible quality, farm-to-bottle craftsmanship and pioneering innovation has culminated in a thrilling endeavor from a winemaking perspective and a compelling investment for digital asset collectors, luxury design enthusiasts, and fine wine aficionados alike.”

Oskar Blues Releases Barrel-Aged Imperial Stouts

“Barrel-aged beers are so special because of the amount of care and work that goes into them from so many different people,” said Sara Laurienti, Oskar Blues Longmont’s Director of Brewery Operations. “The quality of our barrel-aged beer directly correlates to the time that our team puts in when it comes to brewing the beer, filling the barrels, organizing the barrel storage for blending and emptying the barrels. Barrel-aging is one of the few things that is really ‘all hands on deck’ across all departments in the brewery.”

BA21 vol. 7 (11.5% ABV) is the newest edition of Oskar Blues’ barrel-aging program, which began in 2020 and continues to produce limited release barrel-aged beers with unprecedented flavor combinations. This imperial sweet stout is brewed with graham crackers for a biscuity backbone that stands up to months of aging in whiskey bar-

rels. Additions of rich chocolate and juicy cherry send this sucker to the sweet, sweet stratosphere.

Oskar Blues said it also is bringing back for a limited time Barrel-Aged Ten FIDY Imperial Stout, a 12.5% ABV juggernaut and longtime seasonal favorite at Oskar Blues.

Cabo Wabo Updates Packaging After 7 Years

Cabo Wabo (Campari Group) introduced new packaging that includes a refreshed label, super-premium design with visual cues celebrating the brand's history, and prominent agave iconography that represents Cabo Wabo's commitment to 100% blue weber agave, distilled in its owned distillery in the highlands of Jalisco. The refreshed packaging retains the same bottle shape, bottle cap, and award-winning liquid

Product is hitting shelves in early December and the launch of the new design will be supported by a new marketing campaign in early 2022.

Old Forester Celebrates Repeal Day With First-Ever National Sweepstakes

Old Forester Distilling Co. (Brown-Forman) is offering consumers nationwide the chance to win the opportunity to purchase a rare bottle of **Old Forester President's Choice**. Old Forester President's Choice retails for \$179.99 in limited quantities.

It's the first time the distillery has offered a national sweepstakes for one of its most sought-after bourbons.

"It's often difficult for consumers to buy President's Choice unless they happen to be at the distillery on the day it's released," Master Taster **Jackie Zykan** said. "We continue to look for ways to improve our systems to share these special bottles with our fans, and we believe this new approach can help us achieve just that."

People who enter the sweepstakes are seeking to win the opportunity to purchase one bottle of President's Choice. Consumers may enter the sweepstakes starting at 9 a.m. Dec. 2 through 5 p.m. Dec. 10.

President's Choice is a single barrel expression and among the finest whisky made by Old Forester, the only bourbon brand to exist before, during and after Prohibition -- and made by the same Brown family of Louisville, Ky.

Dec. 5, 1933, was the day Prohibition was repealed -- a moment now celebrated annually.

Rancho La Gloria Intros RTD Skinny Margarita

Rancho La Gloria, the largest brand in the wine-based ready-to-drink beverage category, announced a better-for-you extension of its line of bottled De Agave Wine Cocktails with the launch of its Skinny Margarita Cocktails. Available in Classic Lime and Strawberry, Rancho La Gloria Skinny Margaritas offer a convenient and low calorie option to a classic cocktail. It's 9.9% ABV, 90 calories per 5 oz. serving, with no sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, aspartame or artificial flavors.

"As one of the fastest growing ready-to-drink brands, Rancho La Gloria continues to innovate and push category boundaries with the consumer top of mind," said **Russell Stanley**, COO of **Patco Brands**. "The margarita has not only become a year-round cocktail, but also the No.1 drink of

choice in the U.S. With our new Skinny Margarita, we're pleased to offer our consumers yet another way to enjoy agave margaritas and are excited to welcome those looking for low calorie, low sugar options to the Rancho family."

On The Rocks™ Premium Cocktails Expands RTD Portfolio with Limited-Edition Manhattan

The classic cocktail is crafted with **Basil Hayden Dark Rye Whiskey**, which features a harmonious combination of three distinct liquid profiles starting with Kentucky rye grain, Canadian rye and a touch of California port. The Manhattan delivers a spicy complexity, perfectly balanced with fruit notes of sweet vermouth topped off with the acidity of bitters. Just in time for the holiday season, The Manhattan takes the time and guesswork out of creating the perfect pour. Simply pour over ice and enjoy a timeless creation. SRP: \$12.99/375ml bottle.

"On The Rocks was founded on the commitment to deliver constant innovation for the modern cocktail drinker, and we are thrilled to now offer a limited-release for those searching for the perfect Manhattan," says **Rocco Milano**, Co-Founder and Global Brand Ambassador of **On The Rocks Premium Cocktails**. "As a brand built on delivering bartender crafted, quality cocktails, this latest expression is a great complement and exciting extension to our growing portfolio."

Rabobank Honors Ball Corp.

Ball Corp., a leading global provider of aluminum packaging, is the 2021 recipient of the **Rabobank** Award for Excellence in Food & Ag Leadership. The company's infinitely recyclable aluminum packaging — including the sturdy, lightweight Ball Aluminum Cup — is an accomplishment that represents strong industry leadership, Rabobank said. The company has a clear commitment to local communities and has also successfully met multiple environmentally focused goals including:

- Reducing the carbon footprint of beverage cans from 2010 baseline by 25% (*exceeded at 26%*)
- Improving energy efficiency from 2016 baseline by 5% (*exceeded at 5.5%*)
- Improving water efficiency from 2016 baseline by 5% (*exceeded at 11%*)

Ball was the first can manufacturer to receive an Aluminum Stewardship Initiative certification, covering all 23 of its EMEA plants, and launched "Towards a Perfect Circle," a collaborative industry initiative dedicated to expanding global recycled aluminum content by 85% by 2030.

Why Workers Aren't Returning: They Want Flexibility, Better Work-Life Balance-- Survey

As many companies wonder why their workplaces remain ghost towns, a new survey reveals that COVID concerns are not what's discouraging staff from coming into the office. In fact, they are working from home because of the greater work-life balance it purportedly offers. Indeed, workers place such a premium on this balance, that a quarter of workers who changed jobs did so for the ability to work from anywhere.

What's more, Baby Boomers who left their jobs for this flexibility did so at twice the rate of Millennials.

The survey findings also reveal that workplace flexibility goes a long way in supporting workers' mental health. Seventy percent of workers say that flexible hours and work location are the top policies businesses can enact to support their mental health.

Conducted by **The Conference Board**, its latest workforce survey captured the thoughts of more than 1,200 US workers. Respondents weighed in on topics including career plans, factors driving them to pursue new job opportunities, opinions about remote work, mental health, and more.

Additional key findings include:

Among workers who quit during the pandemic, a quarter did so for the ability to work from anywhere.

If you voluntarily left your organization during the pandemic for another job, what were your reasons?

Among workers who recently changed jobs, nearly one in four (24 percent) did so for the *ability to work from home/anywhere*.

Better pay and *career advancement* remain the top reasons for changing jobs, according to 37% and 31% of respondents, respectively.

Only 8% found a new job because of *concerns over vaccine mandates*.

Despite decades in the office, Baby Boomers are quitting for the option to work from anywhere—and at nearly twice the rate of their younger colleagues.

If you voluntarily left your organization during the pandemic for another job, what were your reasons?

Baby Boomers quit for the ability to *work from anywhere* at nearly twice the rate of Gen Xers and Millennials:

Baby Boomers: 17%

Gen X: 9%

Millennials: 9%

For Millennials, *greater faith in the trajectory of the new organization* (10%) was as great a reason to change jobs as the *ability to work anywhere* (9%).

Men left their jobs for a flexible work location at more than twice the rate of women.

If you voluntarily left your organization during the pandemic for another job, what were your reasons?

For women, *career advancement* was a greater driver; for men, *better pay*, *better job fit*, and *flexible work location policy* were significantly greater.

Flexible work location policy: Women: 9%, Men: 21%

Career advancement: Women: 35%, Men: 29%

"Story after story has covered the premium younger generations place on flexibility in the workplace," said **Rebecca Ray**, EVP-Human Capital at The Conference Board. "But as these survey results demonstrate, that desire is not unique to Millennials. Indeed, at more than twice the rate of their younger counterparts, Baby Boomers left their jobs for the ability to work from anywhere—whether they are work-

ing from the comfort of home...or from an RV in Yellowstone."

Debunked: COVID concerns are not the reason offices are empty.

If you "work from home/anywhere," what drives your decision to do so? 72% cited work-life balance as the reason they work remotely. Productivity and safety were also factors, albeit much less so.

Fifty% of women are working remotely, compared to only 37% of men.

Significantly more women are working completely remotely; more men are working a hybrid schedule or are completely on-site.

Remote: Women: 50%, Men: 37%

Hybrid: Women: 39%, Men: 47%

On-site: Women: 10%, Men: 14%

Businesses must ensure that remote workers—many of whom are women—receive the same developmental and promotional opportunities as those who are on-site," said **Amy Lui Abel**, VP- Human Capital Research at The Conference Board. "Companies should be mindful of this potential pitfall, creating a level playing field for all workers as they develop their talent strategies in a world where less work is conducted in the office."

Why return to the office? It's all about personal connection. The best reasons to bring employees back into in the physical workplace are:

Connecting with team members: 74 %

Socializing and gathering with colleagues: 55%

Brainstorming with teams: 48%

Attending events and organizational activities: 39%

Connecting with manager: 37 %

More than 1 in 6 (15%) see no value at all in returning to the physical workplace.

Half the workforce is suffering from deteriorating mental health—even as the pandemic subsides. Flexibility is the most effective way to support workers' mental health.

Drawing a line: Workers want organizations that set boundaries and leaders who respect those boundaries.

66% of respondents want their organizations to encourage employees to disconnect at the end of normal working hours. And 60% want to be able to take "no-work" vacation days without guilt.

Continued Success,
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

JO-  EL WHITA-
KER, Editor