

# KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

*The Alcohol Beverage Executive's Newsletter*

Volume 39, No.8 • Copyright 2025 Whitaker & Company, Publishers, Inc. • March 6, 2026

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## **Reyes Acquiring 5 More RNDC Units, Drops Illinois**

Reyes Beverage Group will acquire five additional markets from **Republic National Distributing Co.**, according to a memo from RNDC CEO Marc Sachs:

“As you know, we have been in discussions with Reyes about their potential acquisition of some of our markets, including Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., As those conversations have progressed, Reyes recently shared an updated proposal reflecting their intention to acquire additional RNDC markets — Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. As part of this updated proposal, Illinois is no longer part of the proposed transaction.”

The agreement was first reported by VinePair, which said RNDC didn't respond to a request for comment. We weren't able to reach either Reyes or RNDC late Friday.

Following VinePair's publication, Reyes CEO said, “We are incredibly excited to expand our footprint in new and existing markets,” chief executive officer Tom Day says. “This is an important milestone in Reyes' history, and we thank the RNDC team for their collaboration. Together we are committed to supporting employees and suppliers through this transition.”

>> *Tips on this or any other ebv/al news? Send them to [editor@bevnewsonline.com](mailto:editor@bevnewsonline.com). If documents are involved, please include those.*

## **Wine Revenue Outperforms Volume; Spirits Sales Softening**

Wine revenue is outperforming volume while Spirits revenue is softening faster than volume, signaling pricing pressures in core segments, **SipSource** reports.

The **Wine & Spirit Wholesalers of America** service also notes that on-premise are declining, particularly for premium and higher-margin items that rely on on-premise visibility.

Wine's ability to stabilize or in some cases improve, revenue suggests price/mix benefits or premium resilience may be helping offset softness in cases. By contrast, Spirits are seeing the opposite effect: revenue momentum is fading faster than volume.

Spirits' deceleration is being driven largely by Core segments, where nine of eleven product classes are experiencing volume trends that are outperforming revenue trends. In other words, even where cases are moving, pricing power appears to be under pressure, SipSource said.

Active Accounts have begun to decline, led by the on-premise channel. Fewer active outlets create an additional headwind, particularly for premium and higher-margin items that rely on on-premise visibility and trial.

That said, the path forward offers reason for measured optimism, SipSource said. The February and March 2025 comparisons to close Q1 are not overly challenging. For Spirits, the prior-year comparisons sit at -5.6% in volume and -4.8% in revenue. Wine faces comparisons of -8.1% in both volume and revenue.

Similarly, the February through June comparisons to close the first half remain manageable: Spirits at -5.7% volume and -5.0% revenue; Wine at -7.4% volume and -6.5% revenue. Easier comparisons create an opportunity for trends to stabilize as we move deeper into 2026.

Looking ahead, several segments warrant close attention. Within Bourbon, month-to-month volatility has been pronounced, making it a key barometer for broader U.S. Whiskey performance. In Tequila, the “Other” segment saw a string of four consecutive growth months broken in January, while Reposado posted a soft start to the year—raising questions about whether momentum can return this spring. On the Wine side, Sauvignon Blanc has delivered two consecutive months of revenue growth, offering a potential bright spot in an otherwise pressured category.

The industry remains in a recalibration phase. Stabilization—not acceleration—may be the near-term goal. With manageable comparisons ahead and pockets of resilience emerging, the coming months will be critical in determining whether this transitional moment turns into a firmer foundation for the back half of the year.

## Control States

Control States began the year with January 9L volume declining -2.1% and dollar sales volume decreasing -3.7%, resulting in a negative price mix of -1.6%, the **National Alcoholic Beverage Control Association** reports..

The volume decline was partially attributable to four fewer selling days in Michigan, the second-largest spirits control state. This was partially offset by three additional selling days in Utah, for a net loss of one selling day across the system.

On a rolling 12-month basis, spirits finished down -1.6% in 9L volume and -3.1% in \$Vol, yielding a -1.5% price mix, with all metrics slightly weaker than full-year 2025 results.

Category performance remained consistent with prior months, as only Cocktails (driven by Canned RTDs) and Tequila delivered positive 9L volume growth. Tequila’s volume gain, however, must be viewed in the context of a -2.3% price mix decline, the weakest price mix performance among all categories.

Wine showed continued sequential improvement, with January 9L volume down just -0.3% and \$Vol declining -1.1%, resulting in a -0.8% price mix. Over the rolling 12 months, wine trends are gradually stabilizing, with 9L volume at -5.4%, \$Vol at -3.9%, and price mix at +1.5%.

The On-Premise channel declined in January, with 9L volume decreasing -5.3% and \$Vol declining -7.4%, as only 3 of the 14 reporting states posted growth. Rolling 12-month

On-Premise performance remained slightly negative, finishing at -0.8% in 9L volume and -2.6% in \$Vol, resulting in a -1.8% price mix.

On-Premise wine posted similar monthly results, with 9L volume declining -4.3% and \$Vol decreasing -1.4%, generating a +2.9% price mix. On a rolling 12-month basis, On-Premise wine finished at -4.5% in 9L volume and -2.6% in \$Vol, yielding a +1.9% price mix.

## **Trump's Delay in Refunding Illegal Tariffs Costing Taxpayers \$700M a Month**

When a judge at the Court of International Trade ordered the government to quit stalling on refunding those tariffs the U.S. Supreme Court declared invalid because President Trump lacked the authority to impose them, he was acting not just to enforce the rule of law but also to save taxpayers \$23 million in interest expense – \$700 million a month. That's according to the Cao Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington, which added that if the government were to drag out refund lawsuits until the end of the president's term, as [he recently suggested](#), taxpayers would owe importers about \$25 billion more.

Meanwhile, get ready for new tariffs to kick in next week. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessant on Wednesday said the U.S. was "likely" to implement a 15% global tariff this week. He missed that. As of midnight Friday, there hadn't been any announcement on tariffs. He missed the date, but we suspect he's right with the time

## **Colorado Eyes \$60M in Fees from Bev/Al Industry**

Colorado Democratic lawmakers are facing a \$1 billion budget shortfall. So where do they turn to get the money? One place – no surprise – is the alcohol beverage industry.

As usual, they wrap the tax in do-good clothing, saying they will use it to provide alcohol treatment, prevention and recovery services, all of which face potential cuts.

The new fees are roughly 3 cents on a six-pack of beer, 5 cents for a standard wine bottle and 26 cents for a fifth of spirits. That may seem small, but, says Shawnee Adelson, executive director of the Colorado Brewers Guild, "Increasing taxes on breweries in Colorado would be like Maine lawmakers going after lobster fishermen or Georgia with peach farmers,"

And it would put 131,000 jobs and more than \$22 billion in economic activity at risk. The industry currently pays \$7.2 billion in taxes.

The bill's supporters say the state has a rate of alcohol deaths that is twice the country as a whole and twice the rate of a decade ago

## **Beer and Wine Sales in Maryland Grocery Stores Appear Stalled**

What is practically a perennial effort to let other retailers sell some alcoholic beverages appears destined to stall again, with two key Senate Democrats saying a Senate bill is not poised to move forward, and a House version hitting a brick wall of concerns about small business owners Wednesday.

“I don’t foresee us this year taking on this issue in a significant way,” Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City) told reporters Tuesday. “I do think probably in the next term, we’re going to have to figure out some sort of compromise here.”

He said he does not see that compromise emerging in the remaining six weeks of this session, but that “in the next term, there’s probably a broader conversation about how to do this as fairly as possible, because we do know that it is that convenience is what Marylanders want.”

Cailey Locklair, president of the Maryland Retailers Alliance, called Ferguson’s comments “unfortunate.”

“We have independent studies stating that \$75 million in new revenue would come to Maryland. This is not a new tax. This is not a new cut. This is a decision that benefits communities. It provides jobs. Neighborhood Stabilization retains existing stores and attracts new ones.”

Sen. Pamela Beidle (D-Anne Arundel), chair of the Finance Committee, said last fall a return of the bill would likely meet a similar fate this year. She said Friday she does not believe the committee has changed its position.

“I still think there’s a great deal of concern about these small, family-owned businesses, and we’ve all heard from them. I really think that it’s a tough issue to weigh,” Beidle said Friday. “Convenience for constituents is important, but so is small business, and to be business friendly.”

Maryland is one of four states, with Delaware, Alaska and Rhode Island, that do not allow grocery stores or other retailers to sell beer, wine or liquor.

Restrictions in Maryland date back about 50 years. Some stores at the time were selling alcohol, including distilled spirits. Today, about 30 nontraditional stores sell alcohol. The list of grandfathered license holders include groceries, convenience stores and pharmacies. Some continue to sell liquor, as well.

The bills face opposition from a powerful alliance of alcohol wholesalers, distributors and retailers.

Like Beidle, many lawmakers worry about the fate of small-business owners.

“We’re talking about pulling the rug out from under small, established businesses who have built their businesses,” said Del. April Rose (R-Carroll), during Wednesday’s Economic Matters Committee hearing. “A lot of these are family-owned businesses, and you’re changing the rules, and you’re making things much more difficult for them.”

Many point to the experience in Colorado, which allowed groceries nine years ago to sell beer, wine and spirits. To do so, the grocery had to buy existing licenses from two nearby stores.

By 2023, some stores reported [drops in sales](#) of up to 15% and a 33% reduction in employees. Gov. Jared Polis (D) [signed a bill](#) last April ending the practice of groceries buying out smaller stores to enter the market. – Maryland Matters

## **Coravin Celebrates 2 Millionth Wine-by-Glass System Sale**

[Coravin](#), said it sold its two millionth wine-by-the-glass system, marking a major milestone in the brand’s journey to transform how wine is discovered and enjoyed around the world.

Coravin has spent more than a decade reshaping wine culture by enabling consumers and hospitality professionals to serve and enjoy still or sparkling wine by-the-glass without compromise. Since its first commercial release in 2013, Coravin has helped unlock wine discovery and premiumization across restaurants, wine bars, and homes around the world. Today, the system is an industry standard, used in approximately 70% of the World's Best Restaurants.

“Reaching two million systems sold is deeply personal for me,” said Greg Lambrecht, Founder and Inventor of Coravin. “What began as a solution to a problem I experienced myself has become something much bigger, a way for people to drink wine by-the-glass without waste or pressure. This milestone represents millions of individual moments of discovery, and that is incredibly meaningful.”

The wine by-the-glass category is experiencing sustained global growth. According to Coravin's [2025 independent consumer research](#) conducted across the US, UK, and Australia, more than half of consumers report ordering wine by-the-glass more frequently than they did two years ago. Key motivations include wine exploration, flexibility, moderation, and access to premium wines without committing to a full bottle.

## Gallo Luxury Group Debuts Monte Rosso Estate Wines

**Gallo Luxury Group** today announced the debut release of Monte Rosso Estate, fine wines made by Argiano's Winemaker and CEO Bernardino Sani and led by Estate Director Diego Del Pino.

Born from one of California's most historic and celebrated mountain vineyards, Monte Rosso Estate marks a significant milestone for the Gallo Luxury portfolio—uniting the site's 140-year legacy with a refined, terroir-driven vision and an inaugural release that reflects both tradition and innovation.

Located on the southwest slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains in the Moon Mountain District, Monte Rosso is recognized for its iron-rich red volcanic soils, high elevation, and vineyard blocks originally planted in the 1880s. These elements have long contributed to Monte Rosso's reputation as one of California's most celebrated and historically important vineyard sites.

Monte Rosso Estate represents the first time the vineyard's storied legacy will be expressed as a dedicated estate. Under the leadership of **Sani and Del Pino**, the estate embraces a philosophy rooted in heritage, precision, and respect for terroir—bringing together traditional winemaking sensibilities and California mountain intensity.

“Monte Rosso is one of the world's most compelling mountain vineyards,” said Bernardino Sani. “Its history, its power, its volcanic energy - our job is simply to refine and reveal what the site already gives us.”

Monte Rosso Estate's debut follows the vineyard's recent certification as an organic vineyard, further reinforcing its commitment to land stewardship, responsible viticulture, and purity of expression. The Estate's wines are sourced from some of the oldest and most esteemed blocks in the Monte Rosso Vineyard.

“This place leaves a signature on every grape,” said Diego Del Pino. “With Monte Rosso Estate, we're shaping a new chapter—built on stewardship, precision, and a clear vision for what this extraordinary site can express.”

The Monte Rosso Estate inaugural collection will be offered in March 2026 through allocation on its website and in select trade channels.

Monte Rosso Estate 2024 Semillon — sourced from a single 3.8-acre block planted in 1886. It is considered the oldest Semillon block in the Northern Hemisphere. Its vines are farmed dry. SRP \$65

Monte Rosso Estate 2023 The Essence — our Zinfandel Field Blend is the wine of the land. It captures the unvarnished soul of Monte Rosso Vineyard, its singular freshness and aromas. It is a journey back to the origins of the vineyard. Our blend comes from three unique blocks planted in 1900, including plantings of Zinfandel, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir and Carignan. These blocks are also dry farmed. SRP \$85

Monte Rosso Estate 2023 The Impression — Red Blend (Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec) - Bernardino Sani's rendition of the best Cabernet blend our vineyard can produce on a given vintage. This blend will be different from one year to the next, adapting our sourcing and blend to what each vintage has to offer us. Always approaching our craft with the ambition to create wines that are fresh, elegant and balanced. SRP \$120

Monte Rosso Estate 2023 Los Nin~os — Cabernet Sauvignon - Los Nin~os is a 3.7-acre block planted in 1940 by Louis M. Martini. It is believed to be the oldest block of Cabernet Sauvignon still bearing fruit in California. SRP \$190.

## **Tilray Brands Buys Brew Dog in \$44.23 M Deal**

Tilray Brands said it completed the acquisition of certain highly strategic assets of [BrewDog's](#) global platform, including the global brand and related intellectual property, the UK brewing operations and eleven strategic brewpubs in the United Kingdom and Ireland, for a total consideration of £33 million.

Tilray, which also produces medical marijuana, is separately negotiating to acquire certain BrewDog assets in the United States and Australia.

Founded in 2007, BrewDog quickly became one of the largest independent craft beer brands in the United Kingdom with its portfolio of iconic craft, premium and low & no alcohol beer brands, "With the BrewDog acquisition, our total global beverage platform is expected to grow to ~\$500 million in annual revenue, creating one of the largest diversified craft beverage platforms globally," Irwin D. Simon, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Tilray Brands, said. "Through this expanded platform, we see significant growth opportunity for BrewDog through broader distribution and the ability to invest back into brand and innovation, while introducing Tilray's complementary beverage brands into international markets. On a combined basis, we expect Tilray's diversified global business to reach ~\$1.2 billion in annualized revenue."

## **Jackson Family Wines Buys Oregon's Big Salt Wine Brand**

Jackson Family Wines purchased Big Salt, an Oregon wine brand. Terms weren't disclosed.

Big Salt specializes in dry white wine blends featuring aromatic grape varieties such as riesling, gewürztraminer and muscat. The wines are said to be highly coveted for their energetic acidity, minimal intervention during winemaking and affordable pricing.

In a separate development, Jackson Family Wines said it will close its Carneros Hill Winery. Thirteen employees will lose their jobs at the Sonoma production facility, Jackson Family Wines told California in a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice.

The site “served as overflow production capacity and was not tied to any specific brand” and had “become underutilized,” prompting consolidation, Jackson Family Wines communications director Sean Carroll told the [San Francisco Chronicle](#). The Chronicle also notes that Jackson Family, owner of Kendall-Jackson and about 40 other labels, turns out around 6 million cases a year, according to industry estimates.

## Who & What –

**Gallo** named **Horizon Media** its agency of record for audience development, media planning, buying, and measurement across its portfolio.

**Amaterra Winery**, the Portland, Ore., winery and restaurant rooted in a “For the Love of the Earth” philosophy, promoted **Morgan White** to Head Winemaker. White, who previously served as Assistant Winemaker and Production Manager, will now lead winemaking operations at Amaterra’s state-of-the-art, gravity-flow facility.

## SGWS Execs Indicted for Bribery

The indictment of Stephen Magliocco, a former vice president for Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits; Michael Dehdashtian, vice president of chains; Adrian Ruiz, senior vice president for California; Ryan Dow, director of sales; and Loratina "Tina" Muscara, director of sales, is the latest in a series of cases arising from alleged violations of the Federal Alcohol Administration Act.

The indictment doesn't name Southern Glazer's, choosing to call it "Distributor 1," but identifying details such as office locations make it clear it is SGWS.

It alleges the defendants and co-conspirators "devised and participated in a scheme to provide bribes to employees of retail grocery chains to increase the purchases of certain alcohol brands and to obstruct any investigations into the bribes by creating and maintaining false financial documents.

“Southern Glazer’s is committed to full compliance with all applicable laws and industry regulations, and we hold ourselves and our employees to the highest standards of ethics and integrity,” said an SGWS spokesperson said. “We have cooperated with relevant authorities and will continue to do so.”

The indictment explains that employees and suppliers of Distributor-1 knew that the distribution company and its partners were prohibited from paying bribes to alcohol retailers and wholesalers to purchase certain brands to the exclusion of others, and that the distribution company was subject to audit and inspection by the Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau (TTB).

The investigation was revealed last year when two executives of Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits pleaded guilty to bribing SGWS employees to favor their products.

The five former employees of Distributor-1 allegedly took steps to conceal the bribes paid to employees of grocery store chains in California and the funding of those bribes, including using

approved vendors of Distributor-1 and some of its alcohol suppliers to issue false invoices purporting to be for a legitimate business expense, but which in reality funded the purchase of prepaid gift cards valued at up to \$1,000 each, luxury and designer items such as watches, purses, and golf and exercise equipment, among other things.

The indictment further alleges that Michael Sean Salene, 60, of Garden City, Idaho, an employee salesman for a Napa winery, bribed the head alcohol buyer for a large national grocery store chain that operates approximately 300 stores in California, lied to investigators when questioned about those bribes, and falsified invoices.

Magliocco, Dehdashtian, Ruiz, Dow, and Muscara are each charged with conspiracy to commit bribery and obstruct investigations. Magliocco, Ruiz, and Muscara are also charged with falsification of records to obstruct investigations. Salene is charged with Travel Act bribery and making false statements.

The indictment says that from 2016 to March 2024, distributor employees and brand representatives gave Patrick Briones, who LinkedIn identified as an assistant sales manager at Albertsons Co., sweetheart deals in exchange for buying and promoting certain brands carried by SGWS.

The bribes were discussed during regular planning meetings, prosecutors said, with employees sometimes staying after to privately discuss which items came with kickbacks.

These alleged kickbacks included prepaid gift cards, luxury items, consumer electronics and even cash, as well as travel expenses like airfare, hotel stays, expensive meals and golfing trips. Employees allegedly falsified statements and invoices involving vendors to skirt detection, disguising many of them as business expenses such as “marketing” or “seminar.”

The U.S. Attorney's Office notes that an indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The possible sentence depends upon the crime committed. If convicted of conspiracy, of interstate travel in aid of racketeering enterprise – bribery, of false statements defendants face a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count. If convicted of falsification of records to obstruct investigations they also face 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for.

Any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence.

Southern Glazer's last year settled a major lawsuit the complained the company illegally boycotted an online alcohol-selling platform. In 2014, the Federal Trade Commission sues SGWS for illegal price discrimination.

## **A (Correct) History Lesson on Beer in Cans**

Food & Wine published an article that was picked up by "WSWA Daily News Clips," headlined, "Here's the Real Reason Beer Comes in Aluminum Cans."

The article notes, correctly, that the first commercial use of a can for packaging beer was in 1935 when Gottfried Krueger Brewery of Newark, N.J., first offered beer and ale in cans. Up until

then "beer was available in kegs, barrels, bottles, and transport containers called growlers. Packaging beer in cans was revolutionary and changed how consumers thought about and consumed beer.

"Of course," the article says, "bottles didn't immediately disappear. For a long time, during the post-Prohibition years in America, glass containers were king. Those bottles came in all shapes, sizes and colors. Cans largely came in one size – 12 ounces – and even as the technology improved and aluminum became the standard material, there was a feeling among beer drinkers that cans were a lesser vessel when compared to glass."

And then the article goes off track. "That began to change as small, or "craft," breweries grew in the United States. While some craft brands dabbled in cans early on, credit can be given to Colorado-based [Oskar Blues Brewery](#), which went all in on canning in the early 2000s and made the packaging a centerpiece of its sales and marketing."

Wrong, wrong and wrong. Anheuser-Busch first introduced cans in 1938 in an attempt to get Americans to drink beer again after Prohibition. The packaging led to an increase in Budweiser sales that lasted until the start of World War II in 1939.

When it comes to packaging, the Food & Wine article got one thing right about the history of beer packaging: "bottles didn't immediately disappear." In fact, today they still represent 27% to 29% of total volume, far behind cans which dominate beer packaging at 64% to 71% of total volume. Craft brewers now package about 70% of their beer in cans.

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## **Barboursville Winery Sold**

The Virginia winery will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The buyer was a private equity group. Terms weren't disclosed. Winemaker/ General Manager Luca Paschina will remain as CEO/President.

"Our investor group, with no other wine industry interests, fully supports Barboursville's mission — to craft world-class wines and provide outstanding hospitality, while preserving the grounds of the historic vineyard estate and elevating the prestige of Virginia wines nationally and internationally," Paschina said in a press release.

## **Services Sector Heating Up**

Economic activity in the services sector continued to expand in February, the nation's purchasing and supply executives say in the latest ISM® Services PMI® Report. The Services PMI registered 56.1%, its 20th month in a row in expansion territory, and an increase of 2.5 percentage points.

"February's Services PMI® features the third month in a row with all four subindexes being in expansion territory, similar to a period from December 2024 through February 2025," said Steve Miller, who chairs the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) Services Business Survey Committee.

"Also, all 10 reported indexes were in expansion territory for the first time since March 2021. Further, eight of these indexes are on positive trends, with increases of as much as 11 percentage points over the last six months. The two indexes with negative trends over this time period are Prices, which has declined 6 percentage points, and Inventory Sentiment, which is down 0.4 percentage point. Although the Prices Index is still in expansion territory and in its longest streak above 60 percent since March 2023, February's reading is its lowest in 11 months.

## **Far North Spirits Grand Winner of DISCUS Competition**

Far North Spirits was named the grand winner of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States' (DISCUS) [Innovation Showcase](#) competition during the awards presentation at the 2026 DISCUS annual conference in Louisville, Ky.

[Far North Spirits](#) took home first place for its Single Varietal Rye Whiskey. The Minnesota distillery aimed to push back on monoculture in the industry, deciding instead to grow unique, open-pollinated rye grain varieties on their century-old family farm. These rye varieties are selected and farmed specifically for their flavor when distilled, a radical approach that is virtually unheard of in the industry.

[Wheyward Spirit](#) came in second for its Wheyward Spirit & Wheyward Wheyskey. Rather than using a typical grain, grape or agave to produce its spirits, Wheyward Spirit sources upcycled whey to make innovative farm-to-flask spirits. This more holistic approach to fermentation and distillation allows the distillery to retain a signature flavor true to its source. Whether savored aged (Wheyward Wheyskey) or unaged (Wheyward Spirit), this innovation is defined as a specialty spirit for diverse mixology.

Third place was awarded to [Proof 8](#)'s Digital Deeds, a secure, tamper-proof digital identity assigned to a cask when it enters a warehouse or is filled at a distillery. Digital Deeds stay with the cask for its lifetime, recording details like ownership, origin, age, alcohol-by-volume (ABV) and location.

This gives a transparent audit trail visible to all stakeholders: distilleries, warehouses, brokers, HMRC and cask owners. As an alternative to outdated analog systems, Digital Deeds also help to prevent fraud, meet regulatory requirements and improve operational efficiency.

## **Butter Wines Intros ButterZero, A New NA Line**

[Butter Wines](#), best known for [Butter Chardonnay](#)—the No. 1 best-selling premium SKU of Chardonnay—introduces [ButterZero](#), a new line of non-alcoholic wines.

Crafted to deliver great taste with less than 0.5% alcohol by volume, 65 calories or less per glass<sup>2</sup>, and gluten-free, ButterZero expands the Butter portfolio with a premium option for wine consumers seeking more choice. The line launches with four varieties—Sparkling Rosé, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir—available in 750mL bottles.

## **New: Remy V, Modern White Spirit from 100% French Grapes**

The House of Rémy Martin announces the launch of Rémy V, a fresh, modern white spirit distilled from 100% French grapes. Crystal clear, naturally smooth, and crafted to empower a new generation of drinkers, Rémy V makes every sip a statement of authentic self-expression. SRP: \$34.99.

## **Mission Craft Cocktails in Supply Pact with 3d Gen Tequila Distillery**

[Mission Craft Cocktails](#) announces an exclusive new supply agreement with [Productos Finos de Agave](#) (PFA) for all of its tequila-based cocktails.

"We're absolutely thrilled to be aligning Mission Craft Cocktails with a third-generation tequila maker in the heart of Jalisco, Mexico. Productos Finos de Agave has an award-winning product and have been generationally producing consistently excellent tequila that will allow us to grow and meet the increasing demand for our tequila-based ready-to-drink cocktails," says Founders Amit Singh and Marcin Malyszko. "Watch this space - Mission Craft Cocktails will be rolling out additional margarita varieties in the coming months, giving consumers even more ways to pour it forward this spring and summer."

## **Holla Spirits Revamps R-t-D Crush Lineup**

The updated portfolio features striking new can designs, fully printed cartons, and the introduction of a grapefruit crush flavor, expanding Holla's lineup of vodka-based canned cocktails.

To make trial easier than ever, Holla is also launching super-accessible Variety 4-Packs, showcasing its 12oz orange, grapefruit, watermelon, and blueberry Crush cocktails—each lightly carbonated and crafted at 4.5% ABV. Select SKUs are also available in a 16oz single serve size ideal for retail cold boxes and stadiums.

In addition, Holla is debuting a first-of-its-kind canned cocktail innovation: CrushTea™, a refreshing blend that combines the brand's wildly popular orange crush with tea, delivering a new twist on a fan favorite.

"We saw a real opportunity to raise the bar in RTDs by leaning into what people actually want—big, bright flavor, approachable strength, and packaging that feels as fun as what's inside," said Patrick Shorb, Founder of Holla Spirits. "This refresh isn't just about how our cans look; it's about making it easier for consumers to discover Holla, try multiple flavors, and have a great time doing it."

## **Wine Sales Rose 3% in 2025, But Volume Fell 3.4%**

The total value of the U.S. wine market rose by more than 3% to \$114 billion in the 12 months through January. but total market volume headed in the opposite direction declining 3.4% to 374 million cases.

That's the estimate from market research firm bw166.

Domestic table wine volume declined nearly 6% to 200 million cases. "The total market is better, but I don't think a lot of people feel it," said Jon Moramarco who is the founder of bw166 and the editor of the Gomberg Fredrikson Report, which has featured comprehensive wine market data for decades. "About 1/3 of wineries are growing, 1/3 are flat and 1/3 are declining."

"There's a quarter of total production capacity that still needs to come out," Moramarco said. "We're not running around like the sky is falling because the sky has kind of fallen already."

## **New Jack Daniel's Bottle Honors McLaren Formula 1 Team**

Jack Daniel's debuted a new limited edition Tennessee Whiskey in partnership with the McLaren Mastercard Formula 1 team.

The fourth annual bottle honors McLaren's 1000th Formula 1 Grand Prix and 160 years of whiskey-making at the Jack Daniel Distillery, with an elevated proof and a bottle wrap motif that will match McLaren's 1000th celebration designs throughout the season. It will be available this month in F1 Grand Prix global markets and other select locations.

## **Wine Market Council Exploring Why Some Consumers 'Don't Like Taste of Wine'**

The study will focus on infrequent wine drinkers and non-adopters who regularly consume other alcoholic beverages, a segment that represents a significant growth opportunity for the wine category.

“Wine offers an enormous range of flavor styles, but that diversity can make it difficult for consumers to know what they're getting,” said Liz Thach, MW, president of Wine Market Council. “We want to understand whether people are rejecting wine altogether—or simply rejecting the few wines they've tried.”

WMC research shows that up to 30% of non-wine adopters avoid wine because they dislike the taste, often describing it as “too bitter, too dry, or too strong,” particularly among young adults. At the same time, 24% of wine drinkers say label information rarely helps them choose a wine, and 34% report buying a bottle they expected to match a flavor or style they liked—only to be disappointed.

The project combines large-scale sensory data analysis with a consumer survey. Quini, a sensory intelligence platform, will analyze its extensive tasting database to identify patterns in how marginal wine consumers respond to sensory attributes such as sweetness, acidity, smoothness, bitterness, and alcohol levels.

“We have one of the world's richest consumer wine sensory datasets,” said Roger Noujeim, CEO of Quini. “By isolating responses from infrequent wine drinkers, we can begin to identify which flavor characteristics attract or repel them—and whether those reactions cluster into distinct consumer segments.”

Following the database analysis, the researchers will conduct a national survey of 1,000 U.S. adults ages 21–55 who either rarely drink wine or drink it only occasionally.

## **Sale of Napa Vineyard Likely in Bid to Avoid Foreclosure**

The former owners of Stricker Vineyard have filed a notice of foreclosure on the 40-acre vineyard which now belongs to Alpha Omega Winery. Robin Baggett, founder/owner of Alpha Omega told the [Napa County Times](#) he stopped payments on a note he signed when Alpha Omega purchased the vineyard. He said the winery could not “continue to throw good money after bad.”

Alpha Omega bought the Mount Veeder Road vineyard in 2020 from Larry and Collette Stricker for \$8.8 million.

Baggett said the vineyard "used to be worth a lot. It's not worth a lot now. . . . It's a sign of the times." The vineyard has to be replanted. Aging vines were pulled a few years ago at a cost of \$316,000.

Alpha Omega has tried to sell the vineyard for six months without success. Now the Strickers and Baggett have agreed to work together to sell the vineyard. There's a house on the property that apparently will not be part of the sale; Baggett has continued to make \$32,000 a month payments to a bank on that loan.

### The Money

Let's talk money: Baggett bought the vineyard from the Strickers for \$8.8 million, subject to a first mortgage of \$4.2 million. Apparently, the Strickers received \$6 million in cash, and the remaining \$2.8 million in a note, which apparently was tied to a second mortgage.

If Alpha Omega simply hands the deed over to the Strickers, they will have to pay off the bank. So, they and Baggett have agreed the best option is to try once more to sell the vineyard. It's already been up for sale once, and local real estate agents told the Napa County Times it's likely to go for less than \$6 million.

If the hoped-for sale is successful, the bank debt would be paid off and the Strickers would get whatever is left of the sale price.

Alpha Omega is trying to do the "right thing here even though we had nothing to do with the downturn of vineyard valuations and the wine economy," Baggett said. The loss of the vineyard might be financially painful, but the winery will keep operating; it buys most of its fruit.

As for Stricker, who purchased the property back in 1986, he sold his last cases in 2020. "'I'm glad I'm not in the wine business any longer,'" he said.

## **Trump's Tariffs Cut U.S. Wine Sales to Canada 78% . . .**

"Liberation Day," the day President Trump began imposing tariffs of various sizes on our best trading partners and allies, was April 1, 2025. But lest you forget, he was stirring the pot earlier, imposing a 25% tariff on Canadian exports.

Canada responded. Canadian provinces began removing U.S. wines from store shelves in retaliation for U.S. tariffs, new full-year data shows the bans triggered a massive collapse in U.S. wine exports to Canada and left American wineries, growers and workers paying the price.

A new Wine Institute fact sheet detailing full-year 2025 trade data shows U.S. wine exports to Canada fell 78% year over year, driving a \$357 million loss in export value. The disruption also reversed a long-standing trade relationship — turning a \$254 million U.S. wine trade surplus in 2024 into a \$90 million trade deficit in a single year.

"Behind these numbers are family businesses, growers, distributors, hospitality workers and entire communities who have no connection to this dispute — and yet are paying the price every

day,” said Steve Gross, interim president/CEO of Wine Institute. “For many wineries, Canada wasn’t just another export destination. It was the market that made international growth possible.”

Canada was the top U.S. wine export market in 2024, representing 36% of all U.S. wine exports worldwide and \$460 million in shipments. In 2025, Canada’s share fell to 12%, destabilizing what had long been the anchor of the U.S. wine export economy. The impact was so severe that 81% of total global U.S. wine export losses in 2025 are attributed to the Canada bans.

#### Canada Is Losing Too

The bans are also creating measurable economic harm in Canada. The British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch is forecasting a CAD\$77.2 million budget shortfall for fiscal year 2025-26 — a 13.2% decrease in net income compared with the prior year — citing the removal of U.S.-made alcohol products as a contributing factor.

Canadian importers, sales representatives and hospitality workers have lost jobs and income, while consumers have lost access to familiar American brands.

#### Wine Institute Calls for an Immediate Resolution

U.S. wine is produced in all 50 states and generates more than \$323 billion in total economic activity, supporting rural communities and local economies nationwide.

With damage mounting and the bans failing to advance broader trade relations, Wine Institute is calling on leaders on both sides of the border to end this unprecedented barrier and restore normal trade.

“Our wineries urgently need a return to open trade with Canada. Their livelihoods depend on it,” Gross said. “Wineries plan and invest years ahead — you can’t replace a market like this overnight. One year is long enough.”

#### U.S. Alcohol Singled Out

We're reporting on the effects of Trump's tariffs almost daily. Yesterday we carried a story about a Napa Valley Vineyard facing foreclosure after its owner decided continuing to pay the mortgage would be "throwing good money after bad."

The Wine Institute notes that the Canadian bans on U.S. bev/al were because of tariffs that are totally unrelated to agriculture. The U.S. bev/al industry is the only U.S. industry that has been completely barred from every Canadian province.

In the fact sheet, Wine Institute detailed the damage done to U.S. Wine:

- \$357M+ in lost export value to Canada in 2025

- ~95% of affected wineries are family-operated small and medium-sized businesses.

- U.S. wineries are sitting on 1M+ cases of Canadian-labeled wine — inventory that can’t be absorbed by the U.S. market or shifted to other export markets.

- Regulations make Canadian-labeled wine unsellable without costly relabeling.

- Competitors from EU, Australia and New Zealand are filling vacant shelf space.

- U.S. wine is produced in all 50 states and generates more than \$323 billion in total economic activity

## **. . . And U.S. Spirits Exports to Canada by 70%**

One year after Canada removed U.S. spirits products from shelves in response to President Trump's tariffs, new data from the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) shows American spirits exports have plunged 70% (March-December).

"The damage to American distillers is unmistakable," said Chris Swonger, DISCUS president/CEO. "This policy has caused real and avoidable harm to an industry that has long championed open markets and zero-for-zero tariffs with our major trading partners. We deeply value our Canadian consumers, who have embraced the quality and diversity of American spirits for decades. We urge both governments to come back to the table to restore permanent tariff-free trade and restore Canadian consumers' access to these iconic American spirits."

## **Court to Trump Administration: Refund Illegally Collected Tariffs Now**

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit refused a request from the Trump Administration to delay refunds of the tariffs invalidated by the Supreme Court last month.

The ruling paves the way for the U.S. Court of International Trade to craft relief for businesses that successfully challenged President Trump's global tariffs.

The Trump Administration had said it would issue refunds if the tariffs were found unlawful by the Supreme Court. The high court ruled, 6-3, that the statute he relied upon did not give him the authority to impose tariffs.

But last Friday, the administration asked the Federal Circuit to let it wait 90 days "to allow the political branches an opportunity to consider options." Justice Department lawyers said it could take years for the refunds to be issued, even though the government routinely issues refunds for customs duties.

To Your Continued Success,  
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK



JOEL WHITAKER, Editor

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