

KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

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

Volume 84, No. 24

Copyright 2023 Whitaker & Company, Publishers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

August 12, 2023

Who & What —

Dia Simms, currently CEO, **Lobos 1707 Tequila and Mezcal** has been named executive chairwoman of the board. **Carlos Vigil** is hired as president/CEO. He joins from Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, where he led the company's commercial and digital transformation across sales, service & eCommerce.

Vintage Wine Estates promotes **Tracey Mason** to senior vp-marketing. She will oversee all wholesale and digital-native brand marketing.

Winebow Imports promotes **Jessica Partington** to senior vp-spirits. **Richard Driscoll** is named head of business development, spirits.

RNDC Reps Nosotros Tequila in Illinois

Nosotros Tequila and Mezcal picked **Republic National Distributing Co.** as its distributor in Illinois.

Nosotros has doubled its business in Illinois each year since 2020 with no signs of slowing down. The agave brand launched in Illinois in 2020 with **Romano Beverage**, which helped drive the brand's market launch and growth. Key off-premise partners include Binny's Beverage Depot, Foxtrot Market, Woodman's Markets, Heinen's Fine Foods, and Dom's Kitchen and Market, and notable on-premise partners include Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Ballyhoo Hospitality, Boka Restaurant Group, and Four Corners.

Beer Wholesalers Step Up Purchases of Imports; Craft Segment Shows Signs of Bottoming

The **National Beer Wholesalers Association's** Beer Purchasers' Index continued to paint a gloomy overall picture, but orders for imported beers surged sharply and a 14-point year-over-year swing for craft suggested the segment may have bottomed out and should see higher levels of ordering in the future. Here's how the segments break out for August:

The index for imports continues to point to expanding volumes with an August 2023 reading of 73, a full 10 points higher than the August 2022 reading of 63.

The craft index at 42 continues to signal contraction but is 14 points above the August 2022 reading of 28.

The premium light index posted another expansionary index reading of 58, a 20-point jump above the August 2022 reading of 38.

The premium regular segment index at 48 is also significantly above the August 2022 reading of 33.

The big downward shift in the below premium segment noted in July 2023 appears to be an anomaly, as the August reading rebounded to an expansionary reading of 52 — a full 10 points above the August 2022 reading of 42.

The FMB/seltzer reading of 33 in August is only slightly higher than the August 2022 reading of 31, suggesting the segment, similar to craft, has bottomed out and may see higher levels of ordering in the future.

Finally, the cider segment posted an August reading at 33 compared to 26 in August 2022.

A reading above 50 in a segment means volumes in that segment are expanding. An index below 50 indicates volumes are contracting.

Heineken Completes Exit from Russia

Heineken N.V. said it completed the sale of 100% of its Russian business to Arnest Group for 1 Euro. All remaining assets, including seven breweries in Russia, will be transferred to the new owners.

Arnest Group owns a major can packaging business and is the largest Russian manufacturer of cosmetics, household goods and metal packaging for the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector.

Arnest Group has taken responsibility for the 1,800 Heineken employees in Russia, providing employment guarantees for the next three years.

In addition to the Heineken brand which was removed from Russia in 2022, production of Amstel will be phased out within 6 months.

No other international brands will be licensed in Russia with the exception of a 3-year license for some smaller regional brands which are required to ensure business continuity and secure transaction approval. Heineken will provide no brand support and will receive no proceeds, royalties or fees from Russia.

Comment: As you look at that 1 Euro "sale" price for seven breweries and other assets, you may think *The Wall Street Journal* was 100% correct in its Saturday (8/26) edition carried an essay headlined "[The Godfather in the Kremlin](#)" saying Russia has evolved "into a mafia state held together by violence

and incapable of global leadership."

Guinness 0 Initiative Raises Funds To Relieve Food Insecurity

Guinness says Pro Bowl QB Joe Burrow and Hall of Famer Joe Montana have teamed up to raise funds for the [Joe Burrow Foundation](#) as part of the Guinness Gives Back initiative. Replicas of the Guinness 0 jersey worn by Burrow in this first piece of content will be available for purchase at [Guinness0Jerseys.com](#), with all proceeds going to the Joe Burrow Foundation, whose work focuses on addressing food insecurity.

Fans also have the chance to win a signed jersey from both Montana and Burrow by following @GuinnessUS social handles, and keeping an eye out in the coming days.

California State Colleges Seek To Display Bev/Al Ads on Campus

Eight California State University campuses as well as St. Mary's College of California, are sponsors of [AB 840](#), a bill authored by Democratic Assemblymember Dawn Addis that will let the universities sell space to alcohol advertisers in stadiums and event centers. The universities are pushing for this in a scrounge for funding.

In testimony before the California Senate Governmental Operations Committee, Cal Poly Assistant VP of Strategic Business Services Dru Zackmeyer noted that "operating budgets are always tight. Sponsorships with local alcoholic beverage suppliers and manufacturers based in part on advertising opportunities... provide hundreds of thousands of discretionary dollars."

The California Assembly Appropriations Committee, however, said yearly revenue would be "...potentially in the low millions of dollars annually."

The measure is opposed by [Alcohol Justice](#) and other anti-alcohol groups in California which noted that among other sites on campus, the [Cal Poly Performing Arts Center](#) would be a beneficiary of these ads, and would in turn spend that new money to "allow 12,000 K through 12 students to experience live educational arts performances."

[Cruz Avila](#), executive director of Alcohol Justice, said this amounts to marketing alcohol to middle schoolers so you can maintain a facility to market alcohol to middle schools.

Avila said the industry committed to advertising only in media where more than 28.4% of the audience was underage. The underage CSU population is 40%, he said.

Avila noted that 40% of the CSU system is under 21, and said exposure to alcohol ads increases the intention to drink and the likelihood of binge drinking. "Alcohol consumption in college is associated with a range of concerns, according to the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism](#). Aside from simple academic problems as a consequence of drinking, collegiate alcohol use is associated with legal problems, violent assault, and sexual assault. In the worst case, alcohol can become a killer," Alcohol Justice said.

Comment: State colleges wouldn't be "scrounging" for money if state legislatures properly funded them. But that ended in the 1970s. Maybe Alcohol Justice should lobby for adequate funding for California state schools so they wouldn't need

to turn to bev/al funding to maintain their operations.

Farm Together Buys Hidden Oaks Vineyard

[Hidden Oaks Vineyard](#) in Clements, Calif., was recently purchased for \$3.2 million by [FarmTogether Inc.](#) The 102-acre organic cabernet sauvignon vineyard will continue its operations with the new owners overseeing the business management and production of the vineyard.

The Land Advisors Organization's agriculture specialists Quinn Mulrooney and Jonathan Kendall represented the seller Hidden Oaks Vineyard LLC in the transaction. The buyer, FarmTogether, also obtained the property's 2023 crops and well water for future farming needs in the transaction.

"With the value of farmland as an asset class continuing to perform well, we're seeing more investors looking for opportunities in the sector and the newer trend of crowd-funding of farmland investors has really been taking off," said Mulrooney. "In this case, a surge in demand for premium organic grapes and the fertile San Joaquin Valley farm drove pricing and interest from numerous interested buyers."

Line 39 Launches New Organic Wines

[Line 39 Wines](#), a Top 20 Premium wine brand and Certified B Corp., expands its portfolio to reach shoppers in the growing Better for You category with the release of Line 39 Organic.

Crafted by winemaker [Alyssa Reynolds](#), Line 39 Organic includes three new wines sourced from California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF): a 2022 Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, and Rosé (SRP \$15).

The Better for You category continues its growth in the wine industry with a 10.1% increase in off-premise sales vs. one year ago* driven by shopper focus on farming practices and nutritional content.

Splash Beverage Signs Distributors in Chicago, Mississippi, Georgia

[Splash Beverage Group, Inc.](#) said it entered new or expanded distribution agreements with Chicago's [Lakeshore Beverage](#), Mississippi's [Southern Beverage Co.](#), and Georgia's [United Distributors](#). At the same time, Splash announced that [Copa di Vino](#) will now be offered in nine Blaze Pizza locations across Southern California.

Chicago-based Lakeshore Beverage, a member of the Hand Family Companies, is well known as a premier beverage company in Chicago that has deep passion about beer, cider, spirits, and wine. The agreement ensures that Splash Beverage's retail commitment to supply Pulpoloco in 7-Eleven stores will be well executed for the people of Chicago. Southern Beverage, headquartered in Ridgeland, Mississippi, has been a family-owned business since 1939, with five distribution centers and more than 260 employees distributing to 2,100 customers across 32 counties. Smyrna, Georgia-based United Distributors was founded in 1940 and is today the largest beverage alcohol distributor in both Georgia and Alabama.

Splash Beverage also announced that one of the na-

tion's fastest growing pizza chains, Blaze Pizza, will carry Copa di Vino in nine locations across Southern California.

Go Woke, Go Broke? Not If You're ABI

Did you notice **Anheuser-Busch's** earnings report? Yes, its sales were down a bit, thanks to the Dylan Mulvaney controversy. But its earnings were up.

That's partially a result of its sheer size globally, of the number of brands it has, of its pricing power. The same thing is true, notes analysts at Quad 7 Capital, of Chick-fil-A. There are groups that are very vocal against it, and yet Chick-fil-A "grows like wildfire."

As for **Bud Light**, sales are still falling, but, says Quad 7 Capital, the degree of the decline has stalled.

ABI's volumes were down, but revenue was up, as was profit.

We think the bottom line when it comes to backlash for taking stands that are out of fashion, these things will blow over. Sure, some people may decide to never buy another Bud Light, and some people will never enter a Chick-fil-A store. But other people may decide to buy a product or enter a store just because they do support the things the company has stood for.

The situation is quite different, however, when you're caught up in a broad political pushback, such as is occurring in Florida. Since Gov. Ron DeSantis attacked the Walt Disney Co. last year, Walt Disney World isn't as crowded, but neither are hotels and restaurants throughout the state. The Fort Lauderdale visitors bureau reported a couple of weeks ago that two convention with a total of 2,800 hotel rooms had cancelled reservations and moved to other states.

Celtic Honey Upgrades Packaging, Reformulates at 80 Proof

Celtic Honey (Luxco) has updated its packaging to feature a modernized, simplified logo. While the bottle is the same, the new packaging features an elevated capsule enclosure as well as foiled treatment on a craft-paper label for a premium look and feel.

The new formulation boosts the proof to 80 from 60 (40% ABV from 30% ABV), moving the brand from a cordial to a flavored whiskey.

Orange Wine Grows 55% on Drizly in Year

Maybe it's time to move to Florida, buy an orange grove and start growing oranges and producing orange wine. Drizly reports orange wine has experienced a 55% share growth over the past year.

"While orange wine remains a small piece of the total wine category, it is among the fastest-growing wine categories in the past year," says **Liz Paquette**, Drizly's head of consumer insights, adding the subcategory has grown from 0.11% of total wine share to 0.17% of total wine share in the past 12 months. "Orange wine has seen increased coverage in the media, driving consumer interest in the 'new' wine category," explains Paquette. "Additionally, as happened with rosé, the striking color of this wine likely contributes to consumer interest."

Because orange wines can be made from any white grape variety, their flavor profiles vary widely, offering

consumers a vast range of styles – and appealing to a number of different types of consumers.

Spain remains the most popular country of origin for orange wines sold on Drizly, accounting for 34% of category share in the past 12 months and 26% of share during the prior 12 months. Orange wines from Austria, Italy, and the U.S. are also popular. Over the past 12 months, these four countries accounted for 88 percent of orange wines sold on Drizly.

Across the platform, orange wines in the \$20 to \$30 range account for 55% of category sales, while those in the \$10 to \$20 range make up 43% of share.

Well-Known Orange Wines Brands Lead the Way

Consumers across the Drizly universe have shown dedication to the top brands within the category, with the top four most popular orange wine brands remaining steady even as the category grew dramatically. The top four brands over the past 12 months are Gulp Hablo Orange Wine, Bio-kult Naken Orange Wine, Field Recordings Skins Orange Wine, and Borgo Savaian Aransat Friuli-Venezia Giulia Orange Wine. From Spain, Austria, the United States, and Italy, respectively, these SKUs also align with overall regional popularity trends.

Other popular orange wines on Drizly include Meinklang 'Weisser Mulatschak,' Vichingo Costa Toscana Vermentino Macerato Sulle Bucce, Glinavos Paleokerisio Semi-Sparkling Orange Wine, Punctum 20.000 Leguas Orange Wine, Bosman Fides Grenache Blanc, and Gerard Bertrand Orange Gold Organic.

Orange Wines Are Escaping the Cities

To date, orange wine sales over-index on Drizly in major cities, specifically New York City and Los Angeles. While these cities tend to be bellwethers for large beverage trends such as ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails and rosé wine, orange wines are quickly becoming easier to find and

Use This Coupon to Subscribe Or Renew

To: Whitaker & Company, Publishers, Inc.
14305 Shoreham Dr, Silver Spring, MD 20905-4481
 YES! Begin (or renew) my subscription to **KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK.**

- Daily and Weekly by e-mail - \$823 (1 yr/233 issues)
- Weekly by First Class Mail — \$823 (1 yr/47 issues)
- Maryland residents — add 6% sales tax
- Check enclosed
- Charge my VISA/MasterCard/Amex

 Expires _____ Security Code _____
 Signature _____
 Name _____
 Firm _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ ZIP+4 _____
 Phone _____
 FAX _____
 e-Mail _____

For Fastest Service: FAX TO 301-879-8803

enjoy outside of major cities as well.

"Though it remains harder to find than other wine categories, adding orange wine to your inventory is an opportunity to set yourself apart, particularly on online marketplaces like Drizly that can help attract new customers," says Paquette.

According to Drizly data, most orange wines are sold alongside other wines, indicating this is a trend to watch among wine consumers rather than the drinking population at large – though that could change as more orange wines become available. "As inventory continues to grow and orange wine becomes available we expect more and more consumers to be interested in trying it," says Paquette.

The Next Phase for Orange Wines

"I think that the category will expand greatly as more and more people start making orange wine," says Whidbee, noting this poses both opportunity and challenge for consumers. "It's exciting because we will start to see a larger variety of great and easy-drinking orange wine, but it also means that there will be more commercially made wines in this category that may include additives to make them fit the category, as opposed to being made naturally."

Drizly data is already indicating that new entrants to the market are becoming popular with consumers on the platform: The top five fastest-growing orange wines in 2023 to date include bottles from less-popular regions, and four of the five fastest-growing orange wines are from brands that didn't previously make Drizly's top 10. This year to date, the five fastest growing orange wine brands on Drizly are Chile's Echeverria, Australia's Unico Zelo, Oregon's Swick Wines, Spain's Cellers de Can Suriol, and France's Gerard Bertrand.

Based on this data, retailers could consider stocking orange wines from a range of places to capitalize on this trend. However, despite consumers' continued interest in alternative formats in other categories like spirits and RTD cocktails, popular orange wines are overwhelmingly purchased in traditional formats, rather than in formats like cans.

NC State, New Belgium Brewery End Co-Branded Collaboration

New Belgium Brewery and NC State University have ended their four-year co-branded beer collaboration. Old Tuffy Premium Lager and related merchandise will no longer be produced; it will be available on a limited basis until current supplies are sold.

The partnership generated financial support for NC State students, pride for alumni and fans, and aware for New Belgium as they established their North Carolina brewing operation.

RNDC Reps Nosotros Tequila in Illinois

Nosotros Tequila and Mezcal picked Republic National Distributing Co. as its distributor in Illinois.

Nosotros has doubled its business in Illinois each year since 2020 with no signs of slowing down. The agave brand launched in Illinois in 2020 with **Romano Beverage**, which helped drive the brand's market launch and growth. Key off-premise partners include Binny's Beverage Depot, Foxtrot Market, Woodman's Markets, Heinen's Fine Foods, and

Dom's Kitchen and Market, and notable on-premise partners include Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Ballyhoo Hospitality, Boka Restaurant Group, and Four Corners.

New Brew to Benefit Nebraska Student-Athletes Name-Image-Likeness Payments

Kros Strain Brewing, an award-winning local brewery in La Vista, Nebraska, announced a collaboration with The 1890 Initiative, LLC ("1890"), a business dedicated to helping student-athletes in Nebraska benefit from their name, image, and likeness ("NIL"). Kros Strain will introduce a new beer, **Cornhead Lager by 1890**, with proceeds from every sale supporting NIL initiatives for Nebraska student-athletes.

Dulce Vida Tequila Sponsors University of Texas Athletics

Dulce Vida, an organic and additive-free tequila, is now the official tequila sponsor of University of Texas Athletics; The University's alumni association, Texas Eyes, and Texas Performing Arts.

The sponsorship kicks off the Longhorns Football season on September 2nd. There will be a Dulce Vida Tequila Bar with a custom mural showcasing "The Spirit of Austin" located at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium for fans of legal drinking age.

"Dulce Vida is the Original Austin Tequila, so we could not be more thrilled to become an official sponsor of the Texas Longhorns," said **Eric Dopkins**, Chairman, C.E.O of Dulce Vida's parent company Milestone Brands. "To connect to our Texas roots and engage Texas Longhorn fans, the Texas Exes, and Performing Arts, is a tremendous opportunity for Dulce Vida as the original organic, additive free tequila with roots right here in Austin Texas."

Bacardi 1st Spirits Partner Of 2023 MTV Video Music Awards

This year's Video Music Award will focus on 50 years of Hip Hop culture and the songs, artists, albums and videos that have defined the genre. Bacardi rum is the first-ever spirits brand to sponsor the MTV Video Music Awards, a distinction that suits the brand, which has long taken inspiration from movement and self-expression, and supported artists through programs like Music Liberates Music. Through the partnership with MTV, Bacardi raises a toast to the impressive legacy of these culture-defining artists, their creativity, and their indelible contributions to music, style, and the way we all move.

As a vanguard of the visual identity of music, we're honored to be the first-ever Spirits Partner of the MTV VMAs, especially during the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop," said **Lisa Pfenning**, Bacardi's vp-North America. "As the VMAs have long celebrated both the sound and the style of Hip Hop, BACARDÍ has long been embedded in Hip Hop culture, inspiring some of the most memorable lyrics, movements, and music video moments from artists who have defined a generation. We look forward to working with MTV and Paramount Brand Studio to present this monumental celebration and highlight the multiple points of Hip Hop cul-

ture."

In addition to the awards celebration itself, Bacardi has several special events planned.

--BACARDÍ Vintage pop-up in New York City

--A Limited-Edition BACARDÍ x VMA bottle and Consumer Sweepstakes

--BACARDÍ Mojito Mo-Problems, the Official Cocktail of the VMAs

Beam Releases 7th Chapter In Little Books Series

James B. Beam Distilling Co. and **Freddie Noe**, Eighth Generation Master Distiller of the **Fred B. Noe Distillery**, announced the seventh installment in Noe's acclaimed annual release, blended whiskey series – Little Book Chapter 7: "In Retrospect."

"In Retrospect" is a blend of seven cask-strength American whiskeys – one curated from each of the brand's previous six chapters and a seventh new addition. The release is a reflection on Noe's past creations since the inception of his blended whiskey series and a nod towards what's ahead as he continues to explore new horizons of American Whiskey in his newly minted role of Master Distiller, Fred B. Noe Distillery.

"Being named Master Distiller was a humbling moment for me, and it inspired me to reflect on the whiskey journey I've been on so far," Noe said. "Little Book is a big part of that journey. Looking back on previous chapters' liquid streams with fresh eyes to create something entirely new was an incredibly rewarding challenge – and a testament to the fact that there are so many possibilities yet to be uncovered in American Whiskey."

Since its inception, Little Book Whiskey has sought to open whiskey fans' eyes – and expand their palates – to the limitless taste profiles possible through blending high-quality aged whiskeys. This exploration of the American Whiskey category continues to fuel Noe's passion for blending, and now inspires a team under his leadership at the Fred B. Noe Distillery.

"This retrospective chapter was a great opportunity to involve my new team in the journey and spirit of Little Book," said Noe. "Everyone brought their ideas to the table and thought about how we can create the highest potential from this unique catalog of whiskeys we've utilized over the years. I'm really proud of the final outcome and excited to help expand folks' whiskey journey with this release."

The liquid streams used to create "In Retrospect" complement each other, resulting in an approachable liquid, even for those who have yet to try a cask strength whiskey.

US*1 Toasted Barrel Finish Rye Is Priced by Michter's at \$120

In September, when Michter's Distillery releases its US*1 Toasted Barrel Finish Rye a 750ml bottle will be priced at a \$120. The average barrel proof bottled for this release is 108.9 (54.45% ABV).

"We released the first toasted barrel whiskey of any American distillery in 2014 because we loved the unique

taste profile. At the time, we had no idea that it would create a new whiskey category for people to enjoy," said Michter's President **Joseph J. Magliocco**.

Michter's Master of Maturation **Andrea Wilson** oversees the special aging protocol that Michter's Toasted Barrel Rye undergoes. She observed, "Our Master Distiller Dan McKee and I first select fully matured barrels of our US*1 Rye. Then we transfer each of those rye barrels for finishing into a second barrel, made of special wood naturally air-dried and seasoned outdoors for 24 months and toasted to our specifications, but not charred. The Toasted Barrel Finish Rye is designed to showcase the beautiful extractives from a toasted only finish barrel that impart remarkable character and contribute to an exceptional experience."

California's Adds 1774 Acres To Organic Wine Grape Acreage

The increase was driven by four major producers. Jackson Family Wines represented 664 acres in Sonoma County. Constellation's To Kalon has 331 acres of Napa County's 430 acres. In Paso Robles/San Luis Obispo County, Halter Ranch has 200 of the 260 certified organic acres, and Stolpman has 175 of Santa Barbara County's 198.5 acres.

Southern Glazer's Donates \$50,000 to Aid Maui; Staff Raises \$50,000 for Homeless

Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits said it donated \$50,000 to aid Maui – \$25,000 to the Maui Strong Fund - Hawaii Community Foundation, which is providing financial resources that can be deployed quickly, with a focus on rapid response and recovery in Maui, and \$25,000 to the Kokua Restaurant & Hospitality Fund for Maui to help provide immediate assistance to hardworking restaurant, bar and hospitality workers displaced by the devastating wildfires that have impacted West Maui communities from Lahaina to Kapalua, a cherished home of the [Hawaii Food & Wine Festival](#).

In addition to this corporate donation, grassroots efforts have been led by Southern Glazer's employees to raise nearly \$50,000 for a fellow team member who lost their home during the disaster.

"The outpour of support we've received from community members, supplier partners, and our Southern Glazer's family is so greatly appreciated," said **Warren Shon**, EVP-Hawaii General Manager, Southern Glazer's. "The road to recovery for Maui will be long, but I know that we'll continue to work together to support our neighbors and organizations that are working around the clock to rebuild our beautiful and resilient island."

Bud Light Kicks Off NFL Season

Bud Light, official beer of the 2023-2024 NFL season is launching one of the brand's biggest NFL campaigns, with a new commercial, "[Easy to Sunday](#)." It :60, :30, and :15 second formats, with music set to "A Sunday Kind of Love" recorded by husband-and-wife country duo, The War and Treaty.

It's also bringing back Bud Light's fan-favorite, limited edition NFL team packaging for another year. This year's team cans prominently feature each team's logo and includes a player illustration in each team's official colors. The new cans also include a QR code fans can scan for information on how to win a NFL Sunday Ticket subscription from YouTube and YouTube TV, and fan merch through Bud Light's official merch partner, Fanatics.

For the 2023 season, Bud Light is partnering with YouTube to give away more than \$1 million in subscriptions to NFL Sunday Ticket from YouTube and YouTube TV to make streaming your out-of-market Sunday afternoon games easy. YouTube is the new home of NFL Sunday Ticket, which gives fans access to all live out-of-market Sunday afternoon games throughout the regular NFL season, and is available to purchase on YouTube and YouTube TV. Bud Light is also partnering with Fanatics to provide e-gift cards to [NFLshop.com](https://www.nflshop.com) so fans can shop for their favorite team's merch.

Cru Winery Marks 20th Year with Tastings, Dinners and Commemorative Bottling

CRŪ Winery is celebrating its 20th anniversary with special tastings, wine dinners and a commemorative 20th anniversary bottling.

Wine lovers can take part in CRŪ Winery's 20th anniversary tastings at its Santa Lucia Highlands and Central Valley tasting rooms Sept. 9 & 10. These tastings will highlight the unique vineyards and regions on the Central Coast that CRŪ Winery sources from and will showcase wines rarely included on their tasting menus. In addition, the tastings will include a sneak peek of their highly anticipated Regan Vineyards Pinot Noir which will be released in 2024.

CRŪ Winery is also celebrating the 20th anniversary beyond their tasting rooms with a series of wine dinners hosted at fine restaurants throughout California.

To further commemorate their anniversary, CRŪ Winery bottled a limited number of 20th anniversary magnums of their signature SLH Pinot Noir from the Santa Lucia Highlands. Winemaker **Jose Reyes** handpicked the Smith & Lindley vineyard for this bottling to pay homage to CRŪ Winery's history and longstanding relationship with the Smith Family that farms this vineyard.

CRŪ Winery was founded in 2003 and for many years the modest winery only produced enough cases to be shared locally. They crafted wines from throughout California trying various appellations and ultimately landed on the Central Coast as the best location for their premium wine production. Today, CRŪ Winery crafts wines from prestigious vineyards throughout the Central Coast, is distributed nationally and in select international markets and has tasting rooms in Monterey County and the Central Valley.

Old Forester Sets Sweeps For 2023 Birthday Bourbon

Brown-Forman Corp. began when George Garvin Brown bottled some bourbon and called it **Old Forester**.

Each year the company remembers its beginning with the release of Birthday Bourbon, which has a one-of-a-kind flavor profile.

That's smart marketing, and it's something a family owned business can do easily enough: Pick the birthday of the company's founder, produce a special edition of the lead product, and celebrate founder's day by releasing. Most companies don't, and I don't understand why.

But Brown-Forman does, and the release of Old Forester Birthday Bourbon has become a big deal. "Every year, Birthday Bourbon is a unique opportunity for lovers of Old Forester to taste a snapshot of bourbon that was laid down over a decade ago. This year's 12-year-old offering serves up a classic Old Forester profile that honors George Garvin Brown's ongoing legacy," said Old Forester Master Taster **Melissa Rift**.

Old Forester's Birthday Bourbon bottles will be available for purchase nationwide at select retailers. But some people simply can't get to a "select retailer." I'm thinking of the Reynolds Family, which owns the 150,000 acre Long X Ranch in Kent, Texas. (To get an idea of just how isolated Kent is, check out [Google maps](https://www.google.com/maps).)

For those folks, and, indeed, anyone else bottles will be available at Old Forester Distillery in Louisville via a national sweepstakes running August 24 through August 31, 2023. The sweepstakes allow consumers nationwide a more equal opportunity to purchase the limited-edition expression. Birthday Bourbon bottles will not be sold at the Old Forester Distillery on Sept. 2, the days sweepstakes winners are announced.

Ross & Squibb Honors Repeal of Prohibition with Remus Repeal Reserve Series VII

Ross & Squibb Distillery Master Distiller **Ian Stirman** will release **Remus Repeal Reserve Series VII Straight Bourbon Whiskey** this September. The limited-edition bourbon is the seventh-annual offering of the distillery's award-winning Remus Repeal Reserve Bourbon collection. Bottled at 100 proof/50% ABV, Remus Repeal Reserve Series VII retails for a suggested \$99.99 per 750-ml bottle and will be available in limited quantities starting in September in honor of National Bourbon Heritage Month.

"We believe we have some of the best whiskey in the world aging here at the Ross & Squibb Distillery. The Remus Repeal Reserve series allows our team the opportunity to showcase these great spirits, as well as showcase our expertise at blending our best barrels to create a special medley each year," said Stirman. "As the latest in this award-winning collection, Series VII is certain to be a highly sought-after and much-enjoyed member of the Remus Repeal Reserve family."

To Your Continued Success,
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK



JOEL WHITAKER, Editor