

# 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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## Who & What —

OIV elects Yvette van der Merwe, CEO of South African Wine Industry & Systems, to a three-year term as president.

**Drinks**, a provider of eCommerce solutions to bev/al producers and on-premise retailers, names **Roger Nebedian**, who recently retired from E&J Gallo Winery after 37 years, to its board of directors.

## **Sazerac to Auction Rare Spirits to Benefit Victims Hurricanes Milton, Helene**

Sazerac Co. said it will hold an online auction of some of its most-prized and highly-coveted spirits to raise funds for the American Red Cross's relief efforts for Hurricanes Milton and Helene.

In partnership with BlockBar, Sazerac will be auctioning a variety of individual bottles and collections from its top distilleries and brands, including Buffalo Trace Distillery, The Last Drop Distillers, Barton 1792 Distillery, and A. Smith Bowman Distillery. The auction can be viewed at [blockbar.com/producers/sazerac/sazerac-hurricane-relief-charity-auction](https://blockbar.com/producers/sazerac/sazerac-hurricane-relief-charity-auction).

As part of the auction, a combination of rare and highly coveted Sazerac products will be available, including spirits sold individually as well as lineups of fan favorites sold as sets. To encourage maximum engagement from the worldwide spirits community, the auction will be run as a "no reserve" auction with the starting bid for each bottle or collection beginning at \$100. The auction runs through Nov. 1.

## **Southern Glazer's Layoffs Said to Include Entire Fine Wine Division, Full Book District Managers, RVPs**

Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits is reported to have done a major force reduction. While the company hasn't responded to our request for confirmation, here is what is being asserted on Reddit:

✓ It's a nationwide reorganization.

✓ From California: The entire Craft division was let go, along with a large number of fullbook Division Managers and RVPs. Salespeople are union, so they are generally safe at the moment.

✓ In Southern California, they laid off 40% of the On Premise Management. Not performance related as one of the DMs won Team of the Year last year and another was Team of the Year two years ago. "I assume because they were the highest paid. They were replaced with they ADMs. All other ADMs in SWS/Sig/Pacific were repurposed to KAMs (key account managers) in the own division. VP of Off Premise and two RVPs let go with packages. One DM and two Off Premise ADMs let go — two with 30-plus years at the company.

✓ Craft Division dissolved.

✓ RAM division dissolved.

✓ Domaine & Estates division dissolved.

✓ Two DMs from Signature Division laid off.

✓ Multiple Import specialists let go.

✓ Also layoffs in the chain division.

✓ "In Kentucky, a half-dozen brand manager level positions just got cut. This wasn't dead weight, either. At least one of them is someone I know personally as really good at their job. Another connection phrased it as everyone is being told, 'We're bringing in the Bobs.'"

## **• If True, Expect a Major Realignment of Wholesalers**

You should expect the impact of this to play out over the next several years. We anticipate a major realignment of wholesalers. Yes, SGWS will still be No. 1, followed by **Republic National Distributing Co.** and **Breakthru Beverage.**"

But you can also expect to see many smaller distributors add brands and staff. You can also expect to see new wholesalers pop up.

## **• How SGWS Dropped the Axe**

"There were large layoffs throughout the company in all sites. You won't find a press release on it because we were all offered a severance package that covers at minimum 2 months of our salary, so they don't have to announce what is going on. Everything was taken from us immediately and accounts shut down. It didn't matter how great of a performer you were or how long you worked there for. They just showed you the door," one Reddit post says.

"This has been in the works since Q1 of this year. Verified yesterday that a 30+ year employee was dismissed via a Zoom chat. Incredibly disappointing..."

"35 years, done in a 10 minute zoom call. Don't be silly and think because you were a dedicated one, more than half your life, really means anything to the man.

"Won't say what state I was in but I was one of those that got laid off. I went to

work like normal, got an invite to a meeting heard the rumors and by the time I got there was told my "position was eliminated" and it "was not related to performance in any way". Layoffs seem to all be happening on the management/trade development side of things. All of my devices were taken at the meeting so I didn't even get to text my direct reports. Crazy part was when I shot my direct supervisor a text after only to get a call back in about 5 seconds shocked because they were not told in advance.

### • Why: 'Consolidation Made SGWS, RNDC Too Big, Can't Give Fine Wine Attention It Needs'

Also from Reddit:

**"I have NOTHING concrete/factual to add — just my gut (and experience), but ...**

"I have to say I'm not all that surprised. Even before the merger with Glazer's, SWS was the 9,000-pound gorilla. After the merger just made them that much bigger. Consolidation has made SGWS and RNDC *too big*, and they can't give the care and the attention that fine wines need.

"You get to a certain size and it becomes all about moving boxes, not about selling fine wines.

"Years ago, when I worked for that 104-store chain, Kendall-Jackson offered a two truckload (T/L) deal on their "Vintner's Reserve" Chardonnay with a dock pick-up allowance.

"In other words, in order to get the best price on KJ VR CH, you had to buy in two T/L quantities. But in order to be competitive on price for the *rest* of KJ's wines, you had to buy in T/L quantities...so, it was a THREE T/L deal. The S[G]WS sales rep kept insisting it was a two truck deal, but I pointed out it was actually a three truck deal — two truckloads of Chard, and then a full truck of the other wines to get the best discount and stay price competitive with supermarkets like Safeway, Von's, Lucky's, and Albertsons...the rep would never admit it was a THREE truck deal, but was always happy to sell me the third truck...it's all about moving boxes."

And from a retailer: "As a small shop owner in Kentucky it feels like they have given up on selling fine wine already. I haven't even seen a rep from SGWS or RNDC in months and when I do feel like wading through the steaming piles of shit that are Proof and eRNDC all their deals are 10 cs in one brand family (saw a 15cs deal for the Gallo Italian brands- not across Gallo fine wine, just the Italian stuff) etc. It's not worth my time to mess with it and that's coming from a guy who has time to make comments on Reddit."

### • Are Cuts a Strategic Decision or Response To Legal or Financial Pressures?

Why the cuts? Are they a result of a strategic decision to exit the fine wine business? That certainly is one logical conclusion, and, perhaps, it is the most logical conclusion.

It's especially logical if one knows the history of wholesale industry consolidation. Forty years ago, there were at least 10 wine and spirits wholesalers in every state. Typically, each major supplier would be exclusive to one

wholesale house. Depending on the size of the state, there might be two or three or four wholesalers all with exclusive territories in a state representing one supplier.

Beginning in the 1980s, major suppliers began to push for consolidation of their wholesalers— instead of three or four per state, they wanted just one.. That made good business sense: It dramatically reduced the resources a supplier had to put into a state to get its products distributed.

Later in the 1980s, major suppliers began consolidating. For instance, National Distillers was sold to American Chemical, which owned Jim Beam. Schenley Industries and Heublein were sold to what became Diageo. The result of supplier consolidation was wholesaler consolidation.

One would think that having Diageo and, say, Brown-Forman brands in the same house would be a recipe for disaster. At a WSWA convention, it was explained that the solution was within a consolidate wholesaler-distributor to have separate divisions. So, you might have a Diageo unit, a Jim Beam unit and a Brown-Forman unit all within the same distributorship.

I never understood why the major suppliers allowed this, but they did. And again the push for "economies of scale" led to wholesaler consolidation — this time across state lines.

Now it appears SGWS at least has come to the conclusion that fine wine and craft products — whether imported or domestic — are just too much trouble. So, dissolve the specialized units that sold them and let the retailers order them through the various eCommerce platforms. Or maybe the major suppliers felt they weren't getting the attention they thought they deserved.

#### **Brand Building**

If this is what's happening, we will be amazed if the fine wines, craft brands and similar operations will stand for it. Year after year at WSWA conventions, speaker after speaker extolled how wholesalers "built brands." Wholesalers told state legislators they needed franchise laws to protect their investment in building those brands.

But this is business, and all contracts are written to be broken, so if this is a strategic decision by SGWS, we expect a realignment of brands with fine wines, craft and smaller brands exiting SGWS for a smaller, more specialized distributor.

#### **Legal Woes**

But it may not be just a strategic decision. Southern Glazer's has found itself in the cross-hairs of Lina Khan, the crusader-against-bigness who chairs the Federal Trade Commission.

SGWS already in in the crosshairs of the **Federal Trade Commission**. In June it was reported that the FTC was just "weeks away" from suing SGWS, alleging it provided "secret kickbacks" to select retail customers in violation of the 1936 Robinson-Patman Act.

SGWS's most recent proposed acquisition, of Horizon Beverage, is large enough it requires regulatory clearance. We suspect that has been true of most, if not all, of SGWS's acquisitions in recent years. But Khan might decide to seek to break the firm up, perhaps along state lines or perhaps along supplier lines. Whether Khan remains in office will very much depend upon the election.

**Financial Pressure**

SGWS doesn't have to disclose its financial results, so we don't know how profitable it is, although we assume it is profitable, nor do we know how it is financed.

But what we do know is that wine and spirits sales — but especially wine — have been down lately. Wine is down 8% year on year.

While wine and spirits wholesaling is a very profitable business, it is also one with high overhead costs. It should be obvious that an 8% or greater drop in sales will have a major impact on a distributor's finances. Facilities, trucks, etc., are fixed and cannot be reduced.

Add to that the run-up in interest rates. We have no knowledge of SGWS's balance sheet, but we suspect that a substantial amount of its debt is short-term, with a five-to-10 year maturity. Borrowings made five to seven years ago, when the Federal Reserve had driven interest rates practically to zero, now must be refinance at significantly higher rates.

The layoffs at SGWS may reflect a strategic decision to change its business, or they may reflect legal or financial concerns or perhaps all three.

Whatever the reason, we think they will lead to a major realignment of the wine and spirits wholesale business.

**Boston Beer Net Falls 26% in 3rd Period; Sales Up 0.6%, Depletions Off 3%**

**Boston Beer Co.** reports third quarter sales rose 0.6% to \$605.5 million as depletions fell 3% and shipments eased 1.9%. The company said net income fell 26% to \$33.5 million, or \$2.87 a share, in the quarter from \$46.3 million a year earlier.

The company attributed the lower shipment volume to declines in Truly Hard Seltzer that were partially offset by growth in the Company's **Twisted Tea**, **Sun Cruiser** and **Hard Mountain Dew** brands.

The higher revenue figure reflects both price increases and lower returns, the company said. The lower earnings was "primarily driven by brand impairment and a higher tax rate partially offset by higher revenue, higher gross margins and lower advertising, promotional and selling expenses." Boston Beer said.

"We continue to believe that there is significant growth opportunity in Beyond Beer categories despite some near-term variability in alcoholic beverage demand. The Boston Beer Company has a proven track record in creating new categories, producing beyond beer beverages and getting them into the hands of drinkers," said Chairman and Founder **Jim Koch**. "We are using the strong cash generation of the business to invest in our brands and return cash to shareholders. Based on our view of the long-term growth prospects for the company, we recently expanded our share repurchase authorization by \$400 million."

"We continue to make progress on our strategic priorities to nurture our core brands, launch and support innovation in a disciplined way and modernize our supply chain," said President and CEO **Michael Spillane**. "Our guidance has been narrowed to reflect three quarters of results, somewhat softer near-term category trends and solid gross margin delivery. We are focused on implementing plans to po-

sition the company for an improvement in operational and financial performance in 2025 and beyond."

**Marie Brizard W&S Sales Edged Up in Period**

**Marie Brizard Wine & Spirits** reports sales increased slightly – 1.3% – in the third quarter, driven by a 4.3% increase in international sales.

Sales in Europe were relatively stable in the third quarter, as the strong performance from Industrial Services in Spain helped offset the decline of the International Strategic Brands business;

In the United States, despite a positive quarter for Marie Brizard, revenues fell 11.4% in the third quarter, as the Sobieski brand continued to face stiff competition and a steady decline in distributor inventories.;

Business picked up in the third quarter in the Asia Pacific region (South Korea, Japan and, to a lesser extent, Australia), mainly driven by the Marie Brizard and Gautier Strategic Brands, although the global environment remained sluggish.

**Accolade Wine Plan to Acquire Pernod Ricard Wine Business Okayed**

**Accolade Wines**, the Australian-based international wine business owned by Carlyle Group, the American private equity firm, won approval to acquire **Pernod Ricard's** wine business. Terms weren't disclosed.

**Hurricane Helene's Disaster In Asheville Described**

There's no way to describe the disaster that befalls a community when a hurricane or flood strikes, but [The Washington Post](#) ran a story that painted a picture of the

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woes of the craft brewers in the city that had been known for its vibrant beer scene.:

"Of the approximately 55 breweries in the greater Asheville area, four or five are likely to be declared total losses as a result of the storm. Seven miles southeast of Zillicoah in Asheville's Biltmore Industrial Area, **New Origin Brewing** was leveled by a Norfolk Southern railcar borne upon the floodwaters like a locomotive. Just down the block, **Brewery Cursus Keme** was reduced to planks and tangled wires. New Origin owner **Dan Juhnke** said his brewery is among several awaiting municipal planning department communication that will inform them whether they can rebuild on the floodplain. Even one of the city's largest breweries, the East Coast campus of **New Belgium Brewing**, remains closed and won't be able to fulfill beer orders for several weeks," the Post reported.

The devastation suffered by Asheville's breweries isn't just bad news for the breweries, their owners and employees. It's bad news for the city, too.

Asheville breweries alone contributed just shy of \$1 billion to the economy in 2019, the most recent year for which data is available from Riverbird Research, a division of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. Much of this comes from beer-related tourism.

In mid-October, the Post reported, plumbers were able to re-engineer Highland Brewing's equipment to use water pumped in a tanker rather than city water. It's costing Highland tens of thousands of dollars to truck water in, but that allows Highland to turn its packaging line back on, and, soon, its brewhouse.

## Coors Light to Sets Ads for Big Game 2025

Details are under wraps, but Molson Coors' chief marketing officer, **Sofia Colucci**, says:

"In 2025, Coors Light will bring a new take on Choose Chill to one of the largest stages in the country and we can't wait for you to see it," she says. "From our college football team alliances to partnerships with some of the chilliest players on and off the field, Coors Light and football belong together. Next year, expect to see more mountain-cold refreshment and more chill from Coors Light in the Big Game."

## Trade Panel Won't Impose Duties On Glass Wine Bottles From China

The U.S. International Trade Commission voted not to impose countervailing duties on glass wine bottles imported from China. The decision came after an investigation found no "industry in the United States is ... materially injured or threatened with material injury by reason of imports of glass wine bottles from China."

The investigation had been requested by the **U.S. Glass Producers Coalition**, which is comprised of **Ardagh Glass Inc.** (Indianapolis, Ind.), and the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

Details about how much a bite the Chinese bottles were taking from the U.S. market were redacted from report.

The commission acknowledged its decision "may" potentially affect glass pricing."

Imposition of tariffs has become a major issue in the

current presidential campaign. Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, has proposed significant tariff hikes as part of his presidential campaign; The Tax Foundation estimates that if imposed, his proposed tariff increases would hike taxes by another \$524 billion annually and shrink GDP by at least 0.8%, the capital stock by 0.7 capture the effects of retaliation, nor the additional harms that would stem from starting a global trade war.

In related actions, the commission voted to continue investigating glass wine bottles from Chile and Mexico.

## 65% of Americans Favor Allowing Craft Spirits to Be Shipped Direct

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Americans and 85% of those who drink craft spirits at least once a month say it should be legal for craft spirits to be shipped direct from the craft distillery to consumers.

That's according to a just-released poll of more than 2,000 U.S. adult and 641 regular craft spirits drinkers commissioned by **Sovos ShipCompliant** and the **American Craft Spirits Association**, and conducted by The Harris Poll.

"The data confirms that American adults in general and regular craft spirit drinkers in particular remain dissatisfied with current craft spirits shipping laws. It's time for shipping laws to keep pace with the demand and evolving market," said **Alex Koral**, regulatory general counsel, Sovos ShipCompliant.

"Increased access to DtC shipping has the potential to benefit consumers, distillers and industry players across the board, particularly at a time when the spirits industry and craft distillers above all are struggling to succeed. There is plenty of precedent with a well-regulated DtC wine market. Spirits producers and consumers simply want to see that same access and opportunity afforded to them."

Key trends and highlights from the report include:

**Current Spirit Shipping Laws Not Adequate:** Only nine states, plus Washington, D.C., permit interstate DtC spirits shipping. Yet nearly two thirds of Americans (65%) and the majority of regular craft spirits drinkers (81%) want to see changes in current U.S. spirits shipping laws to allow for DtC spirits to be shipped in more states than it is currently legal in.

**Boosting Sales at Retail for DtC Shipped Brands:** Nearly all regular craft spirits drinkers who are likely to purchase craft spirits via DtC (92%) say if they purchased and enjoyed a brand of craft spirits via DtC shipping, they would be likely to look for that brand at a retail store. As demonstrated over nearly two decades of legal DtC wine shipping in the U.S., brands that build success via DtC often have strong entry in the wholesale distribution and retail environment. The same would appear to hold true for DtC spirits.

**Purchase Intent and Reviving Revenue:** The current DtC shipping restrictions are causing distilleries to leave significant revenue on the table for out-of-state enthusiasts. More than three quarters of regular craft spirits drinkers (77%) have tried a craft spirit while traveling that they wish they could purchase, but is not available near their home, up

from 71% in 2022. More than four in five regular craft spirits drinkers (82%) say they would be more likely to try new craft spirit brands if they were able to purchase the spirits via DtC shipping to their home — an increase from 74% two years ago.

“When it comes to craft spirits, there are more choices than ever before—but very few ways for consumers to access them due to antiquated and limited shipping laws,” said **Margie A.S. Lehrman**, CEO, American Craft Spirits Association. “As consumers increasingly seek more convenient ways to make their purchases, states will need to give spirits producers the tools they need to meet and expand their customer base. It is time to modify and modernize regulations to align with consumer demands for choice and convenience, and create open and fair competition for this innovative industry.”

To download the full 2024 Direct-to-Consumer Spirits Shipping Report, visit [DtCSpiritsReport.com](https://DTCspiritsreport.com). Additionally, [visit the Sovos ShipCompliant website](#) for the most up-to-date information on the rules and regulations governing DtC spirits shipping.

## Young Adults Find Wine Lists In Restaurants Uninspiring

Wine has low visibility and been pushed to the back of drink lists in casual restaurants and appears ‘boring and tired’, according to consumers interviewed for a new [Wine Market Council](#) study on *How to Attract Young Adults and Multicultural Consumers to Wine*.

The qualitative shop-along study tracked and interacted with participants via video while they were shopping for wine in casual restaurants, bars, online, and in grocery and retail shops across the U.S. The goal was to highlight or uncover what a diverse sample of under-40 consumers liked and didn't like about wine.

“Probably one of the most surprising results,” said Dr. **Liz Thach**, MW, President of Wine Market Council, “was what the young adults said about wine lists in casual restaurants and bars. They described how wine is frequently listed towards the back of the beverage menu and looked boring and unappealing compared to the colorful photos and descriptions of cocktails and list of craft beers, which were organized by taste and bitterness profile.”

The qualitative shop-along study is the first half of a larger Wine Market Council study on what the wine industry needs to do to better engage young adult and multicultural consumers. It tracked 27 young adults shopping for wine in various physical and online locations across the nation and resulted in 46 hours of video footage and feedback for analysis. Though not generalizable, the results indicate areas to measure in a quantitative survey.

“The second half of the study will be a national survey, which we are developing with our research partner, [Ethni-facts](#),” explained **Christian Miller**, Research Director with Wine Market Council. “The shop-along interviews allow us to identify key issues to measure in the survey, and this topic of how wine is listed in casual restaurants and bars is definitely something we need to explore in more detail. Other intriguing new findings involved difficulties in shopping,

and perceptions of fruit, flavors and alcohol.”

For the on-premise wine shopping portion, young consumers were allowed to select the location. Perhaps to be expected, none of young consumers selected expensive white tablecloth restaurants with extensive wine lists and a sommelier to assist them. Instead, they chose to visit casual restaurants, sports bars, and wine bars.

“In a couple of locations, shoppers were delighted to find wine cocktails, such as an iced wine slushie, which they appreciated,” reported **Mike Lakusta**, CEO of Ethni-facts. “This suggests there could be an opportunity for more wineries to provide wine cocktail recipes, along with their regular wine selections.”

The shoppers also suggested that it would be useful if wineries could provide a short description of what the wine tastes like, similar to cocktail descriptions. “The wine menu too often just lists chardonnay or cabernet sauvignon and the name of a brand. That doesn't really tell a young adult what the wine will taste like,” said Lakusta. “It's time for the wine industry to take some initiative and work with casual restaurant and bars to make the wine list more appealing.”

The study also found that young adults shopping in grocery stores and wine shops often felt overwhelmed with the large selection of different types of wine. They pointed to simple signage in stores, such as ‘red wines this way, white wine that way’ and a ‘better for you wine section (low and no alcohol wines)’ as very helpful, but complained that not all stores had this option. They also said they appreciated stores that offered staff picks or provided a small taste of wine so they knew if they liked it enough to purchase. (However, this option is not legal in all states.)

Surprisingly, many of the young adults had not shopped for wine online before – perhaps due to the high shipping costs. But when they did so as part of the study, many enjoyed the experience. “Several compared shopping for wine online as similar to shopping for cosmetics or clothing, and they really enjoyed the ability to filter by wine color, style, varietal and prices,” stated Lakusta.

“We are excited about the results of this first half of the study,” stated Thach, “and look forward to launching our national survey next month to gather some quantitative data. This will provide us with some statistics and clear direction on the most critical actions items the wine industry should take to better engage with young adults and multicultural consumers, in a responsible fashion.”

## Sango African Agave Spirit Released in U.S.

**Spearhead Spirits**, the premium African spirits company, announces the release of Sango African agave spirit – a collection of 100% agave spirits made using wild African Agave Americana from the Karoo desert and Agave Salmiana from South Africa's Eastern cape province. Sango launches with a blanco as well as a reposado that's been rested in South African red wine casks for up to 12 months.

Sango is an African take on tequila that pays homage to Mexican agave mythology. The name Sango stems from the revered deity, Shango, the African god of thunder and lightning. In Mexican agave mythology, the agave plant was

cooked by a lightning bolt striking from a thunderous sky, and the magical spirit that resulted from the agave being split open and releasing its juices was considered an elixir of the gods.

Agave Americana and Agave Salmiana find their second home in Africa and are found across several African countries, so they were a natural choice for the base of Sango. Whilst the African agave spirits industry is relatively nascent, Sango is bold in its approach and is the first African agave spirit to focus on a US launch.

Sango is hand harvested, double distilled and bottled additive-free in KwaZulu-Natal. Spearhead sources much of its Americana Agave and Salmiana Agave from the arid, semi-desert region of Karoo and Eastern cape province, respectively, and is also experimenting with other varieties from other parts of Africa, such as Tanzania and Kenya. Spearhead hand-selects plants for Sango with a field-tested BRIX of between 24 - 35 before harvesting by hand. The agave is roasted using artisanal methods in a combination of ovens and fire pits before being double distilled. No additives are added to the spirit before bottling.

Sango has been available in South Africa for the past year and it will be released into the US, the leading market for agave spirits globally.

## Beam Distilling Offers Baker's High-Rye Bourbon

**Baker's High-Rye Bourbon**, a new expression that pays homage to Baker's trucking business, where he delivered grains to the **James B. Beam Distilling Co.** During this time, he developed an appreciation for different grains and their influence on whiskey.

This high-rye recipe has 2x the standard amount of rye in Baker's Bourbon and is a continuation of our innovation journey, celebrating **Baker Beam** and all that he did for our distillery

It offers a unique tasting journey with each pour, predominate tasting notes include the taste of charred oak, brown sweets, and a subtle rye spice. On the nose, it's charred oak with notes of vanilla, caramel, and dried fruits. It's full-bodied with a hint of baking spice.

This liquid is distilled to a 107 proof and barreled and aged for a minimum of 7 years, allowing the bourbon to pull more caramel, dried fruit, and vanilla flavor from the barrel wood.

## A-B Invests \$8 M in Flagship St. Louis Brewery

Anheuser-Busch announced a new \$8 million investment in its St. Louis brewery. Over the last 5 years, Anheuser-Busch has invested nearly \$2 billion in its facilities across the country to help create and sustain jobs and drive economic prosperity in the communities where it operates and its employees call home.

Brendan Whitworth, CEO of Anheuser-Busch, stated, "At Anheuser-Busch, we've built a legacy of brewing great

beer and showing up in our local communities – that's who we are. Our continued investments in our St. Louis brewery benefit not only our local team, but also our hometown, which continues to be a core part of our identity after more than 165 years. This brewery is as iconic as the beer we brew, and these investments help ensure that we not only have the infrastructure but also the people and talent to build on our legacy for generations to come."

As the nation's leading brewer, Anheuser-Busch is dedicated to investing in its facilities to help create and sustain jobs and fuel economic growth in St. Louis and beyond.

Since 2019, the brewer has more than \$165 million in its St. Louis campus alone, including renovating and reopening its Technical Excellence Center, which allows its workforce to grow in their careers and access new opportunities in their desired manufacturing fields. Since its reopening, the Technical Excellence Center has served 1,500 front-line workers from Anheuser-Busch facilities across the country.

## Holiday Brewing Enters Washington State

**Holiday Brewing Co.**, the nation's leading female-owned and operated gluten-free brewery, is excited to announce its expansion in the Pacific Northwest with placement in nearly 200 Safeway locations throughout Washington state.

"We're incredibly excited to expand our distribution into the Pacific Northwest and to team up with such distinguished athletes for this celebration," said **Karen Hertz**, founder/CEO. "Our mission has always been to provide safe, delicious, gluten-free beer to everyone who wants to enjoy it, and this expansion is a huge step in that direction. We're thrilled to be available in Washington state, thanks to our growing partnership with Columbia Distributing and retailers like Safeway."

Holiday's expansion into the Pacific Northwest will see its award-winning gluten-free beers, including customer favorites like Favorite Blonde Ale and 2024 Gold Medal Winner Fat Randy's IPA, stocked in nearly 200 Safeway stores across Washington. This marks a significant milestone in Holiday's growth as the brewery continues to expand its footprint in major markets across the U.S.

To celebrate this milestone, Holiday Brewing is partnering with members of the 1991 Washington Husky National Championship football team, including brothers Jay Barry and Damon Barry, to host a special event marking this significant achievement.

## Restaurants in Peril Financially

More than 43% of independent restaurant owners were unable to pay their September rent, according to an Alignable report. That's a slight improvement from August, when 45% failed to make rent.

But it's also a sign of very bad news for bev/al marketers that depend upon restaurant business to introduce new products or as a principal source of business. Restaurant chains and operators are expected to declare the most bank-

ruptcies this year, except for 2020 during the global pandemic.

What's the problem?

— Customers have trimmed their dining out occasions as food prices have risen – same store traffic is down 3.3% this year through Oct. 6. Visits to casual restaurants are off 4.5%.

— High interest rates

— Giving priority to growth over profit.

## Rabbit Hole Distillery Releases Limited 8-Year-Old Boxergrail Founder's Collection

**Rabbit Hole Distillery** launched **Boxergrail Founder's Collection**, a one-of-a-kind 8-year-old rye whiskey bottled at cask strength. Only 1,200 bottles of Boxergrail Founder's Collection are available for purchase at Rabbit Hole Distillery and in select markets nationwide.

Building on the celebrated legacy of its previous 6-year iteration, this limited release is a distinct, richer interpretation of Rabbit Hole's award-winning Boxergrail Kentucky Straight Rye Whiskey. It marks the newest addition to the brand's highly sought-after Founder's Collection.

Drawing on the success of the brand's earlier Boxergrail Kentucky Straight Rye Whiskey, Rabbit Hole Founder and Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame whiskey maker **Kaveh Zamanian** opted for an extended maturation of 8 years for this release. Aged in wood-fired, toasted and charred new American Oak barrels and bottled at cask strength, this version achieves a new level of complexity and excellence in both flavor and appearance.

"For this latest Founder's Collection release, our team set out to honor our core offering of Boxergrail Kentucky Straight Rye Whiskey. We aged it for 8 years and bottled it at cask strength to show how cask and whiskey come together at natural strength. The result is a bold expression that embodies strong character, showcasing innovation and creativity while honoring our city's rich boxing heritage and fighting spirit," said Zamanian. "We're especially proud of this special edition rye and look forward to sharing it with those who favor one-of-a-kind whiskeys."

## Tequila Cazadores Offers Home cocina

**Tequila Cazadores**, an award-winning premium tequila brand from the Highlands of Jalisco, Mexico, announced release of its exclusive, limited-edition home entertaining collection in partnership with actress **Francía Raisa** - The Cocina Collection, inspired by Tequila Cazadores' mantra: "Real Tequila for Real People."

The items can be seen and purchased at <https://www.cazadores.com/us/en/cocina>.

Tequila Cazadores will also donate \$20,000 to the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, furthering their commitment to honoring and uplifting Hispanic heritage.

## Barefoot Wine Teams Up with Simone Biles

As the official wine sponsor of the NFL, **Barefoot Wine** is offering fans a chance at an exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime experience to watch the Green Bay vs. Chicago rivalry game on Nov. 17 with Biles. One lucky fan and their three friends will get the opportunity to enjoy the NFL WAG, or wives and girlfriends, game day experience alongside Biles.

To enter the contest, fans can visit [@barefootwine](#) on [Instagram](#) to leave a comment about why they want to win the Barefoot 'BandWAGon Box' gameday experience with Simone. Enter between now and 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on October 31, 2024 for a chance to win.

"We were very pleased with the response we received last year from our Barefoot Bandwagon Box contest with Donna Kelce," Gallo says. "We are excited to continue to support and inspire emerging fans this season with Simone leading our BandWAGon game day experience."

The experience with Biles includes pregame sideline access to watching the game from Barefoot's 'BandWAGon Box' suite. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience game day, watch football and enjoy wine with Simone Biles," Gallo says.

## A-B Continues Commitment to Folds of Honor As Bud Light, NFL Honor First Responders

Throughout Week 8 of the NFL season, leading up to National First Responders Day, **Bud Light** and its 27 NFL partner teams will honor first responders and their families with local team activations, in-game scholarship presentations and content featuring real stories from scholarship recipients.

Founding partner **Anheuser-Busch** is a founding partner of Folds of Honor. With its brands and wholesaler partners A-B has donated \$28 million to Folds of Honor over the past 14 years, including an additional \$3 million this year.

The funds have contributed to Folds of Honor's delivery of nearly 62,000 scholarships since the non-profit's founding. These educational scholarships benefit the spouses and children of military members who have fallen or been disabled while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and was expanded to support first responders' spouses and children in 2022.

Lt Col Dan Rooney, founder and CEO of Folds of Honor says, "Our longtime friends at **Anheuser-Busch** and Bud Light have once again stepped forward to help Folds of Honor provide life-changing educational scholarships to American heroes."

**Todd Allen**, SVP of Marketing for Bud Light, says "Anheuser-Busch and Bud Light are truly proud to continue this impactful relationship with Folds of Honor. Together with the NFL and its network of teams and communities nationwide, we stand firm in our commitment to supporting our local communities and honoring those who serve."

Bud Light's continued support of Folds of Honor allows for a dedicated scholarship available exclusively for families of fallen or disabled first responders. To generate awareness of this important cause, Bud Light is rereleasing the "First Responders Fund," a :60 second film that tells the real story of a family impacted by a Folds of Honor scholarship. Families of fallen or disabled first responders can find more information at [budlight.com/foldsofhonor](http://budlight.com/foldsofhonor).

## Gérard Bertrand Unveils New Line Of Organic Sparkling Wines

**Gérard Bertrand**, along with his daughter and creative director, Emma Bertrand, introduces **French Cancan**, a collection of organic and Brut Nature sparkling wines, rooted in French tradition and inspired by modernity, poised to reflect

the art of sparkling wine with its three distinct expressions: White, Rosé and Orange.

Produced in southern France, where sparkling wine originated in 1531, French Cancan brings a taste of history to the present.

### Blue Note Bourbon Makes Limited Release Offering

**Blue Note Bourbon** launched a limited-release **Honey Bourbon Cask**.

The new expression began its journey by embracing the art of fusion. American oak barrels used for finishing were repurposed to produce delicious, barrel-aged honey. The team then returned the whiskey, which was aged for a minimum of three years, to the honey-infused casks for another round of aging to create "a distinct and harmonious profile."

Crafted in Memphis, the new expression features a mash bill of 70% corn, 21% rye, and 9% malted barley, which was bottled at 115.7 proof (57.85% ABV), unfiltered.

**Blue Note Honey Bourbon Whiskey** is available online at [BlueNoteBourbon.com](http://BlueNoteBourbon.com), [Seelbachs.com](http://Seelbachs.com), and in the following markets: Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas. SRP: \$64.99.

Blue Note's whiskey portfolio is distilled in partnership with **Bardstown Bourbon Co.** (parent company of Green River Distilling Co.) and then aged just north of downtown Memphis where the Mississippi and Wolf Rivers collide.

### Kendall-Jackson in Multi-Team NBA Deals With Sacramento, Orlando and Phoenix

**Kendall-Jackson**, renowned for producing America's #1 selling Chardonnay, has announced new multiyear partnerships with the Sacramento Kings, the Orlando Magic and the Phoenix Suns.

These agreements mark a major expansion following its recent partnership agreement with its local Bay Area team, the Golden State Warriors, and marks the first wave of several professional basketball partnerships since its collaboration announcement with the NBA.

"We're thrilled to expand our relationship with the NBA through these exciting new partnerships," said **Christopher Jackson**, Co-Proprietor of Kendall-Jackson. "Working with the Kings, Magic, and Suns allows us to connect with basketball fans across the country and share our passion for winemaking while enhancing the overall game-day experience."

The partnerships will officially launch at the start of the 2024-2025 NBA season.

To celebrate these partnerships and ongoing collaboration with the NBA, Kendall-Jackson has launched a nationwide sweepstakes, giving fans the opportunity to win a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the 2025 NBA All-Star Game, hosted in San Francisco.

The grand prize includes two tickets to the All-Star Game, a \$2,000 travel stipend, and a \$500 NBA Store gift card. Three runners-up will each receive a \$250 NBA Store gift card. Fans can enter online or via text message until Dec. 31, 2024. For more details and official rules, visit [www.kj.com/nba-allstar2025-sweeps](http://www.kj.com/nba-allstar2025-sweeps).

### Sango African Agave Spirit Released in U.S.

**Spearhead Spirits**, the premium African spirits company, releases Sango African agave spirit – a collection of 100% agave spirits made using wild African Agave Americana from the Karoo desert and Agave Salmiana from South Africa's Eastern cape province. Sango launches with a blanco as well as a reposado that's been rested in South African red wine casks for up to 12 months.

### Cooper & Thief Launches Bourbon Barrel-Aged Cabernet Sauvignon

The new 2022 vintage is sourced from 100% California-grown grapes and spent three months aging in bourbon barrels. The wine delivers the bold flavor that is synonymous with California Cabernet, including dark cherry and plum. Unexpectedly rich notes of vanilla, caramel and spice, from the influence of the bourbon barrel wood, culminate in an unforgettable, long, velvety finish for wine and whiskey lovers to savor. SRP: \$29.99.

### On the Rocks Premium Cocktails Releases Limited-Time Spiced Pear Whiskey Sour

[On The Rocks Premium Cocktails](#), a bartender-created, ready-to-serve cocktail brand, introduced the Spiced Pear Whiskey Sour, a limited-edition cocktail now available in select markets nationwide.

Drawing inspiration from seasonal flavors, this distinctive twist on the classic Whiskey Sour blends citrus lemon, caramelized pear, and a custom spice mix of cinnamon, brown sugar, allspice, and rosemary, all expertly crafted on a foundation of [Old Overholt Rye Whiskey](#).

"This cocktail perfectly captures the essence of the season with its warm blend of spices, caramelized pear, and the bold, smooth depth of Old Overholt Rye Whiskey," said **Carol Robert**, Managing Director Ready-To-Drink at **Suntory Global Spirits**. "Our goal was to craft a cocktail that embodies the inviting spirit of fall while upholding the premium quality and craftsmanship On The Rocks is known for. The limited-edition cocktail is an ideal addition to both festive seasonal celebrations and laid-back autumn gatherings."

The packaging's "scratch and smell" technology to let consumers experience the enticing aromas of pear and warm spices right at the time of purchase. This immersive feature enhances the consumer experience, drawing shoppers in and setting the stage for a truly memorable cocktail moment before the first sip.

To Your Continued Success,  
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK



JOEL WHITAKER, Editor