

KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

The Alcohol Beverage Executive's Newsletter

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Heineken Acquires FIFCO's Beverage Business, Owner of Genesee

Heineken said it completed the acquisition of FIFCO's beverage and retail businesses, following the receipt of all regulatory and corporate approvals.

FIFCO was founded in Costa Rica in 1909 and its operations are primarily in Central America where it has a broad portfolio of beer, wine and spirits. Its FIFCO USA unit operates the Genesee Brewery and is one of the largest beer companies in the U.S. In addition to Genesee, its portfolio also includes Labatt USA, Seagram's Escapes, Lipton Hard Iced Tea, Magic Hat and Imperial, which it imports from Costa Rica.

Rolando Carvajal, FIFCO's current CEO, will join Heineken and continue to lead the operations, ensuring business continuity while driving growth.

Heineken's CEO and Chairman of the Executive Board **Dolf van den Brink**, commented: "Today marks an exciting milestone as we officially welcome FIFCO's talented team and iconic brands into the Heineken family, strengthening our leading position in the attractive and growing Central American region. We know the FIFCO business and culture intimately through our long-standing partnership which will support a fast and smooth integration."

The addition of FIFCO's beverage and retail businesses further advances Heineken's EverGreen 2030 strategy, driving premiumisation, innovation, and superior growth across the attractive markets in Central America. Heineken is committed to unlock revenue and cost synergies across commercial execution, logistics, and brewery operations. Further value will be created through the addition of a diverse portfolio of beverage brands - including the iconic Imperial beer - and a well-established retail network.

Barrel Craft Spirits Sells Blending Facility

In a move to "right size" its production capacity, **Barrel Craft Spirits** sold its bottling plant in Jeffersonton, Ky., to American Craft Bottling. Terms weren't disclosed.

"We regularly refine our commercial strategy to stay ahead of evolving industry trends to support long-term growth," said BCS Founder Joe Beatrice. "While the economic environment has presented challenges across the spirits industry, it has sharpened our focus and reinforced the importance of proactive decision-making."

BCS will consolidate all blending operations at its original Gilmore facility, which offers enough capacity to support current and future needs. The company will also invest in new equipment and technology to expand its operations without disrupting ongoing work.

"We're grateful to our loyal fans and whiskey enthusiasts who have continued to support us with each release," said Beatrice. "We plan to continue bringing you the most innovative, creative, and complex products our industry has to offer in 2026 and beyond."

Founded in 2013 in Louisville, Kentucky, BCS selects and blends products that explore different distillation methods, barrels, and aging environments. BCS's extensive stocks of high-quality casks mean it can craft extraordinary blends that maximize the nuances of each ingredient. Creative finishes and a liberated approach to blending guides every product release.

The award-winning line of BCS releases are sold in 49 US states, Puerto Rico, the UK, South Korea, the Ukraine, and Australia. Follow Barrell Craft Spirits on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#), or visit barrellbourbon.com.

ACSA to Senate: Fund TTB, Treasury Now

A government shutdown "is not an inconvenience – it is an immediate threat the the livelihoods for those within the beverage alcohol sector."

In a letter to Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, **Margie A.S. Lehrman**, CEO, **American Craft Spirits Association**, and Past President and Government Affairs chair **Rebecca Harris** noted "craft distilleries, breweries, and wineries depend on the timely approval of product labels and formulas, and even simple transfers of spirits, by the Treasury Department's **Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau (TTB)**.

In the letter to Thune and Schumer, the ACSA leaders said they recognized "there are larger appropriation issues but noted the Senate could pass H.R. 7006, minimizing impacts to the alcohol beverage industry, Treasury Department financial regulators and Department of State programs bill. HR 7006 passed the house with bipartisan support.

A government shutdown will halt all TTB reviews, leaving hundreds of new and revised products in limbo. Delays in label approvals mean missed market opportunities, lost revenue, and serious harm to the very businesses that have revitalized this American industry, they noted.

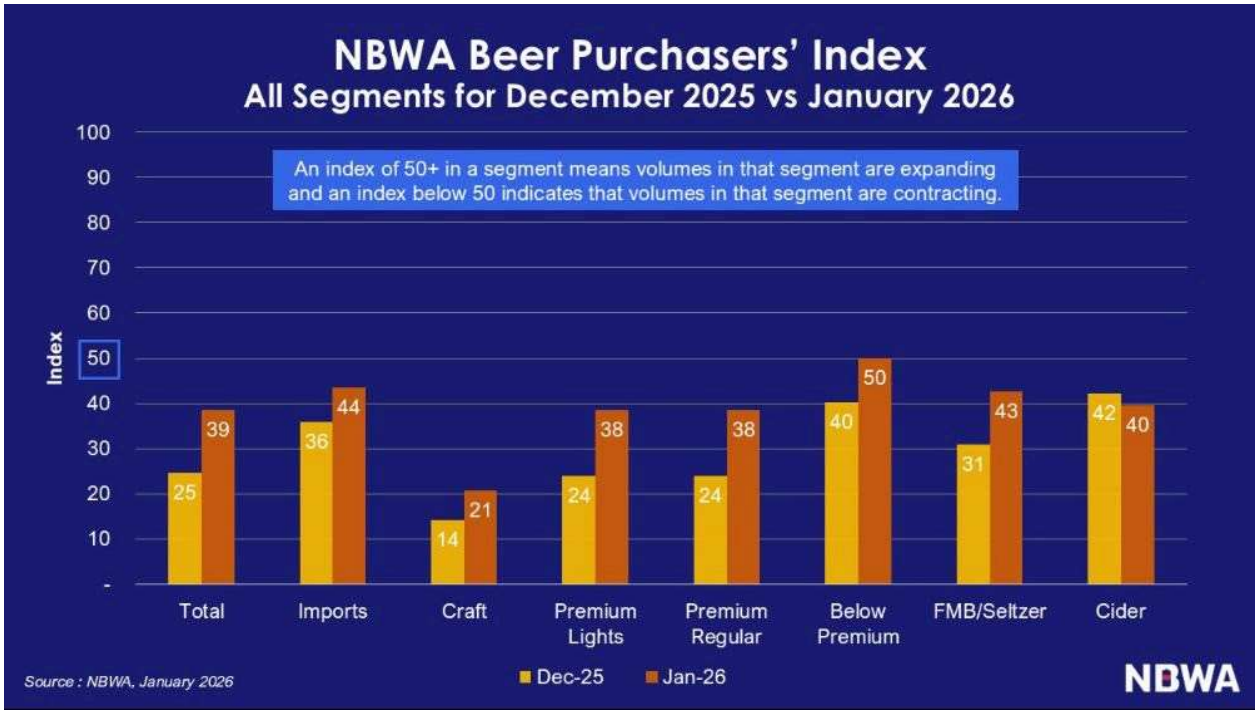
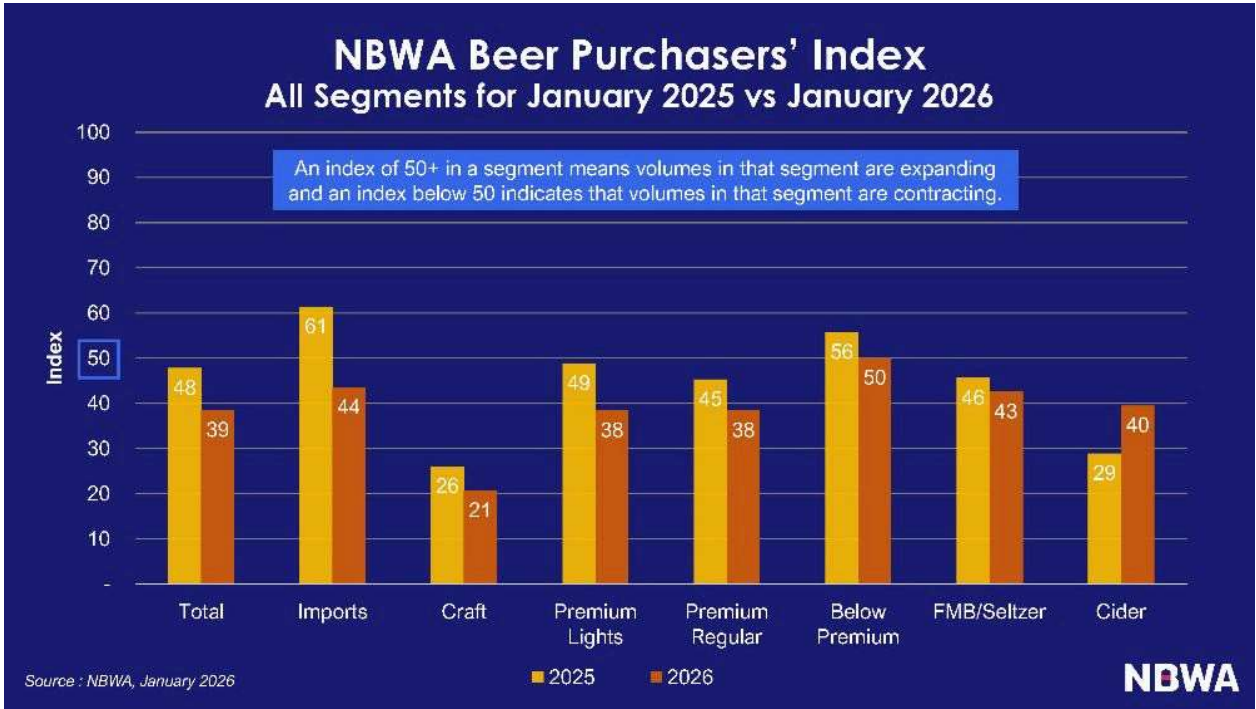
Valette Wines Partners with Regal Wine Company for Calif. Distribution

Valette Wines is partnering with **Regal Wine Co.** for exclusive California distribution. The partnership brings together two family-owned companies that share a commitment to quality, authenticity, and the stories behind the wines they represent.

Regal Wine Company will manage Valette Wines portfolio in California with exclusive representation covering statewide availability in both on-and off-premise channels. The portfolio features collaborations with Jesse Katz (Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc), Bob Cabral (Pinot Noir), David Ramey and Tom Rochioli (Chardonnay), and Michael Browne (Pinot Noir). Together, these winemakers bring over a century of combined expertise, which helped Valette Wines achieve back-to-back 100-point scores for the 2021 and 2022 Skellenger Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignons.

"We've had the privilege of knowing Chef and Restaurateur Dustin Valette and his family for years through their award-winning restaurants and contributions to Healdsburg's wine and culinary scene," said Matt Conneely, SVP and General Manager of Regal Wine Company. "As multi-generational, family-owned businesses both rooted in Sonoma County, we share the same values around quality, authenticity, and community, which makes this partnership a natural fit for our portfolio."

Beer Purchasers Index Surges in January



National Beer Wholesalers Association's Beer Purchasers' Index hit its highest level in January since July 2025, posting a 14-point jump since December.

All segments except Cider posted higher month-over-month readings, led by the first Below Premium reading of 50 in over a year.

The combination of index readings for at-risk inventory (45) and BPI (39) moves the industry from contractionary to cautionary positioning to start the new year.

Looking across the segments for January:

The imports index at 44 is 17-points lower than January 2025 and eight points higher than December 2025.

The craft index at 21 is five points lower than January 2025 and seven points higher than December 2025.

The premium lights index at 38 is 11-points lower than January 2025 and 14-points higher than December 2025.

The premium regular index at 38 is seven points lower than January 2025 and 14-points higher than December 2025.

The below premium index at 50 is six points lower than January 2025 and 10-points higher than December 2025.

The FMB/seltzer index at 43 is three points lower than January 2025 and 12-points higher than December 2025.

The cider segment at 42 is 11-points higher than January 2025 and two points lower than December 2025.

NBWA's Beer Purchasers' Index is the only forward-looking indicator for distributors to measure expected beer demand. The index surveys beer distributors' purchases across different segments and compares them to previous years. A reading greater than 50 indicates the segment is expanding, while a reading below 50 indicates the segment is contracting.

Champagne Shipments Eased 2% in 2024

In 2025, Champagne shipments account for 266 million bottles, a slight decline of just under 2% compared to 2024 (270 million), Comité Champagne said. .

Exports indicate a very slight decline to nearly 152 million bottles (compared to 153.2 million in 2024); confirming the major importance of international markets, and Champagne's global appeal.

The French market represents around 114 million bottles in 2025. Despite a moderate decline compared to the previous year (118 million in 2024), it is still the reference market for Champagne and therefore remains an absolute priority for the industry.

“The French market is a showcase for our appellation, and we must strengthen it. We have all the assets we need – expertise and collective strength – to consolidate this position and promote Champagne,” explains Maxime Tournier, President of the Syndicat Général des Vignerons and co-president of the Comité Champagne.

“With a strong appellation and coordinated actions, we will continue to bring joy to all those around the world who have a taste for fine wines, dreams, celebrations and a zest for life,” comments David Chatillon, President of the Union des Maisons de Champagne and Co-President of the Comité Champagne.

Trump Threatens 200% Tariffs on French Wine to Get Macron on Peace Board

President Trump threatened to impose a 200% tariff on French wine and spirits to get French President Emmanuel Macron to join his "Board of Peace."

Trump's initiative appeared to be intended to undercut the United Nations. It was to begin with Gaza and then expand to other conflicts. Macron is understood to plan to decline.

Study: U.S. Consumers - Not Europe - Paying Trump's Tariffs

While President Trump was running around making noise as if a new trade war was starting, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick played down the likelihood of a new trade war during a speech at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland.

"We are here to make a very clear point: globalisation has failed the west and the United States of America. It's a failed policy. It is what the west has stood for, which is export, offshore, find the cheapest labour in the world, and the world is a better place for it. The fact is, it has left America behind. It has left American workers behind," he said.

But as disastrous as Trump believes globalization has been for U.S. workers, so has his tariff policy been. A study by the Kiel Institute we reported yesterday finds the American consumer has paid 96% of all tariffs.

Lutnick said Trump uses tariffs as a way to say other nations need to talk with the U.S. "Do I think the trade deals that we've set with Europe, with the UK, are they durable? I absolutely do ... What I see happening is diplomacy and talking and at the table, rather than action, which is something I think the president cares about," Lutnick said.

Poll: No to Military Force to Acquire Greenland

In a related development, New Reuters/Ipsos polling shows that more Americans oppose rather than support the U.S.' efforts to acquire Greenland and two-thirds are concerned that these efforts will damage the NATO alliance and U.S. relationships with European allies.

And while attitudes towards U.S. efforts to acquire Greenland vary across partisan lines, there is common ground on one key aspect: very few think that the use military force to acquire Greenland is a good idea.

EU Leaders: We Can Play the Tariff Game, Too

In a related development, calls are growing for the European Union to use its "trade Bazooka" against the U.S. if President Trump follows through with his threat to impose additional tariffs if Denmark doesn't agree to sell Greenland to the U.S.

Existing legislation says "economic coercion exists when a third country "applies or threatens to apply measures affecting trade or investment in order to prevent or obtain the cessation, modification or adoption of a particular act by the European Union or a member state."

The EU's "trade bazooka," officially the Anticoercion Initiative, allows the EU to shut off access to the EU single market representing 500 million consumers. It limits trade licenses and public procurement offers. For American services, the European market would be closed.

Michelob ULTRA Unveils Olympians in New Super Bowl LX Teaser

Michelob ULTRA, America's #1 top-selling and fastest growing beer brand, debuted a teaser that combines two of the most iconic moments in sports – the Super Bowl and the Olympic Winter Games.

In this teaser, titled “[The Jump](#),” fans can see a novice skier named Greg, quickly coming down the slopes while Olympic medalist Chloe Kim and Olympian and Stanley Cup champion T. J. Oshie watch in awe and say, “there’s only one man who’s taught him that,” alluding to a mysterious fourth character.

This action-packed spot was directed by Top Gun: Maverick and F1 filmmaker and action movie aficionado, Joseph Kosinski, as a continuation of a robust campaign that celebrates Team USA and the spirit of friendly competition.

What A-B is Doing for Super Bowl LX

Michelob ULTRA, Budweiser and Bud Light will unveil all-new commercials during the broadcast of Super Bowl LX on February 8.

As the Official Beer Sponsor of the NFL for over 20 years, Anheuser-Busch activates its iconic portfolio of brands on a global scale, fueling game-day traditions and showing up for fans during the sporting events that matter most to them. That includes investing more in Super Bowl LX than any other company as the game's #1 advertiser across all categories.

Kyle Norrington, Chief Commercial Officer at Anheuser-Busch, said: “We’re now in a one-of-a-kind year for sports and entertainment in America, and we’re primed to kickstart our plans at Super Bowl. As one of the most prolific advertisers in Super Bowl history, our new spots will provide fans with the first look at what they can expect throughout this extraordinary year as our portfolio of brands show up to celebrate unparalleled events including the World Cup, the Winter Olympics, America’s 250th birthday and Budweiser’s 150th anniversary. You can count on us to continue investing in the moments that celebrate beer, sports, and epic milestones.”

New Creative Work

For 20+ years, Michelob ULTRA, America's #1 top-selling and fastest-growing beer, has been synonymous with championing an active lifestyle and encouraging social athletes to give it their all – whether it's their first time on the slopes or they're competing for Olympic gold.

This February, sporting worlds will collide to provide fans with the ultimate live sports viewing moment; the Super Bowl and the Winter Olympic Games. As the Official Beer Sponsor of Team USA and a staple for watching football, Super Bowl LX is the perfect stage for Michelob ULTRA to bring these two iconic moments together with a commercial about America's competitive spirit.

Super Bowl LX is a key part of the [brand's full-scale campaign](#) in support of the Winter Olympic Games which includes new Team USA-branded packaging for fans to enjoy as they cheers to the home team.

This year, Budweiser is returning to the Super Bowl with a spot that honors its longstanding – and ongoing – legacy in American culture. To celebrate the brand's milestone 150th anniversary and America's 250th birthday, Budweiser will deliver an empowering, heartfelt national commercial that captures how its beer is not only made in America; it's made of America.

As part of its larger “Made of America” campaign, Budweiser is also releasing the limited-edition Heritage Can Series pack featuring four unique designs representing different eras of the brand’s history. Ready in time for Super Bowl LX, these Heritage Cans are available wherever Budweiser is sold. Fans can collect all four to get excited for what’s to come in the next 150 years.

Bud Light returns to the Super Bowl stage, showcasing the brand’s iconic humor and celebrity partners who display their willingness to do anything for the clean, crisp taste of Bud Light. Celebrating the brand’s passion points of sports and music, the official beer sponsor of the NFL will debut new creative that celebrates the universal fixture of any great Super Bowl LX party: the keg.

All three commercials will appear through national media campaigns inclusive of the general market, Spanish language and streaming broadcasts, pre- and post-game activations, integrations at retail and out-of-home placements both in San Francisco and key markets around the country.

Activating in San Francisco

Anheuser-Busch's Super Bowl impact will also extend beyond the broadcast, bringing multiple brands directly to fans with events that will enhance the Super Bowl weekend experience in San Francisco.

On Friday, Feb. 6, "Bud Light Presents Post Malone & Buddies" will see the global superstar back on Bud Light’s stage for his second-consecutive Super Bowl performance, as the Official Beer Sponsor of the NFL continues providing 21+ fans with bucket list experiences.

\$100K-\$150K Households Living Paycheck to Paycheck Doubled in 12 Months

Among households earning \$100,000 to \$150,000 annually, the share living paycheck-to-paycheck by necessity has doubled in twelve months, from under 10% in early 2025 to 24% by December 2025, according to PYMNTS, a consultancy focused on the economy, payments and AI.

That, as much as anything, explains all the talk about affordability. It may also explain why in addition to health care and alcohol issues, etc., bev/al sales have been lagging.

Iowa Bill Seeks to Overturn Citizens United

A proposed amendment to the Iowa State Constitution would ban corporations from financially contributing or otherwise participating in election and ballot issue activities, with language specifying this does not stop businesses from being able to manufacture, operate or sell election equipment.

This proposal is specifically a means to combat the impacts of the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, which struck down limits on how much money a corporation can directly spend in support of a political campaign.

Many critics of the decision have said Citizens United has given corporations and wealthy individuals the ability to fund elections without their identities publicized, as political action committees and candidates accept contributions from [“dark money” groups](#) — often 501(c)(4) social welfare groups or 501(c)(6) trade associations — which do not have to publicly release information about their donors.

Wahls, who is running for Iowa's U.S. Senate seat in 2026, said in the 16 years since the Citizens United decision, "the floodgates opened, and it became easier for corporate interests and anonymous groups to spend unlimited amounts to influence our elections, often without voters even knowing who is behind it."

He said the court decision has allowed special interests to set political agendas while the issues impacting most Iowans go unaddressed.

Exactly how the amendment would work, if adopted, isn't clear, since Federal constitutional protections are applied to the states under the U.S. Constitution's 24th Amendment. – Reporting by Iowa Capital Dispatch."

No Clear Evidence Cannabis-Based Medicines Relieve Chronic Nerve Pain

There is no clear evidence that cannabis-based medicines provide pain relief for chronic neuropathic pain, an updated Cochrane review finds.

Chronic neuropathic pain is caused by nerve damage. Existing medications help only a minority of patients, driving interest in alternatives, such as cannabis-based medicines. These can include herbal cannabis or isolated ingredients of the cannabis plant such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) by inhalation, mouth sprays, tablets, creams, and patches placed on the skin.

Researchers reviewed 21 clinical trials involving more than 2,100 adults, comparing cannabis-based medicines with placebo over periods of two to 26 weeks.

Cannabis-based medicines were grouped into three types: products which contain mostly THC, the psychoactive component of cannabis; products which contain mostly cannabidiol (CBD), a non-intoxicating compound; and balanced THC/CBD products, which contain similar amounts of both.

The review found no high-quality evidence that cannabis-based medicines reduce neuropathic pain more than placebo across the three types of medicines. While some small improvements were reported by patients using products with both THC and CBD, these changes were not large enough to be considered clinically meaningful.

Reporting of adverse events was not consistent across the included trials, so certainty around side-effects was low to very low across all types of cannabis-based medicines. Products containing THC were associated with increases in symptoms such as dizziness and drowsiness, with a potential increase in the number of people withdrawing from trials due to side effects.

"We need larger, well-designed studies with a treatment duration of at least 12 weeks that include people with comorbid physical illnesses and mental health conditions to fully understand the benefits and harms of cannabis-based medicines," said Winfried Häuser, clinician and lead author, from Technische Universität München and Medical Center Pain Medicine and Mental Health Saarbrücken. "At present, the quality of most of the trials is too poor to draw firm conclusions."

The authors conclude that the evidence remains weak and uncertain, underscoring the need for higher-quality research before cannabis-based medicines can be recommended for chronic neuropathic pain.

Paso Robles Wine Month to Launch Nationally May 2026

Launching in May 2026, [Paso Robles Wine Month](#) (PRWM) is a new national initiative celebrating the wines, culture and community of Paso Robles Wine Country.

Led by the [Paso Robles CAB Collective](#) (PRCC) in collaboration with the [Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance](#) and [Travel Paso](#), and supported by [Bay Cities Packaging](#) and [Tastry](#), the program brings together wineries, grocery chains, independent retailers, restaurants and chefs to drive awareness, trial and sales across on- and off-premise channels while supporting regional tourism.

The initiative launches as the global wine industry faces ongoing headwinds, even as Paso Robles continues to outperform. According to Nielsen data comparing 2025 to 2023 (52 weeks ending Dec. 27, 2025), Paso Robles premium Cabernet Sauvignon, accounting for more than 50% of the region's planted acreage, posted a 3% increase in sales. Recent Circana data also shows that three of the top six Cabernets at every price tier are Paso Robles-appellated wines and members of the PRCC.

"Paso Robles Wine Month is about meeting today's wine consumers where they are," said Rhonda Motil, vice president of marketing at J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines and PRCC marketing committee chair. "The initiative celebrates the quality and diversity of our region in a way that is accessible and food-driven, while giving wineries, retailers and restaurants a strong platform to connect with new audiences."

Paso Robles Wine Month reflects how younger audiences are reshaping wine culture. These consumers favor casual, occasions, value authenticity and sustainability, and increasingly discover and share wine through food and social media.

Through a partnership with Tastry, an AI-powered taste science platform that helps shoppers discover wines aligned with their preferences before opening the bottle.

Don Julio 1942's Bottle for Year of the Horse

Tequila Don Julio 1942 honors Lunar New Year with the release of the limited-edition Year of the Horse bottle, a symbol of legacy and new beginnings. Featuring the same luxuriously smooth, award-winning tequila made with 100% Blue Weber Agave, the Tequila Don Julio 1942 Year of the Horse Edition bottle

Indiana's Coach Cignetti Gets Free Beer for Life After National Championship Win

After leading Indiana University's Hoosiers football team to its first national championship, head coach Curt Cignetti said he would be sipping on Upland Brewing beer. Upland decided he should have access to some Hoosier Lagers whenever he wanted.

Cignetti led the Hoosiers to an astounding season, his second at Indiana. The school, which had been the losingest college football program in the country, on Monday became the only school to go 16-0 since Yale in 1894. It won the Big Ten Championship, the Rose Bowl, Peach Bowl and the National Championship Monday night, defeating University of Miami Hurricanes 27-21,

"Coach Cignetti and his staff have ignited IU Football and brought so much joy and energy to Bloomington and the State of Indiana," Upland said. "We are excited to continue providing beer for the Hoosiers as they celebrate the national championship, and we will be sending plenty of Hoosier Gameday Lager their way."

"We are also announcing a lifetime supply of Upland beer for Coach Cig as a thank you for the postgame comments. That was pretty unreal to watch in real time."

Indiana University Athletics and Upland Brewery have been working together for several years. A portion of Hoosier Gameday Lager proceeds go toward "student scholarships through IU Licensing and Trademarks."

1800 Tequila, Knicks Sweeps Offers Pickup Game at Madison Square Garden

1800 Tequila and the New York Knicks have joined to offer fans a chance to play a pickup game on the court at Madison Square Garden. It's open to residents of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut who live within 100 miles of MSG, and ends at 11:59 p.m. on March 6. Entry and info at nba.com/knicks/sweepstakes-and-promotions.

Champagne Telmont Official Champagne of Sail Team

[Champagne Telmont](#) announced a two-year partnership as the Official Champagne of the [Emirates Great Britain SailGP Team](#) for the 2026 and 2027 seasons. The partnership officially kicked off at the opening event of the [Rolex SailGP 2026 Season Championship](#) on Jan. 17 in Perth, Australia—where Emirates GBR took the win.

The partnership aligns with Telmont's sustainability platform and brings together two leaders united by performance, innovation, and sustainability. SailGP is widely recognized as one of the most technologically advanced and environmentally ambitious global sports competitions, racing high-speed F50 foiling catamarans across five continents.

Gordon Creek Vineyards Names Charles Comm Agency of Record

Charles Communications Associates has been retained by Garden Creek Vineyards, a premier family-owned wine estate in Alexander Valley, Sonoma County, to lead its public relations and marketing communications efforts. The appointment comes as the boutique winery prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2026, marking a quarter-century of winemaking excellence

[Charles Communications Associates](#) has been retained by [Garden Creek Vineyards](#), a premier family-owned wine estate in Alexander Valley, Sonoma County, to lead its public relations and marketing communications efforts. The appointment comes as the boutique winery prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2026, marking a quarter-century of winemaking excellence under the stewardship of second generation vintners, Justin and Karin Warnelius-Miller.

Founded in 2003 by industry leader Kimberly Noelle Charles, Charles Communications Associates is a boutique marketing firm specializing in family-owned wineries, sustainability storytelling, and strategic media relations.

[‘It’s Worse Than What You’re Seeing on the News’: The Hospitality Workers on the Front Lines of ICE Raids](#)

In Minneapolis and beyond, immigration crackdowns are destabilizing local bar and restaurant communities. Workers describe fear, loss, and the urgent need for industry-wide action. (A fine piece of reporting from Seven-Fifty Daily. If I had seen it one day earlier, it would have been in Your Beverage Reader this week.)

Drink Beer, Wine or Spirits Not Airplane Water on Flights: Health Group

Candidly, we never wish any industry ill. But it is nice for once to see a non-alcohol industry in the spotlight as being unsafe to drink. In this case it is the airlines and the water they serve. A bunch of flight attendants have been bad-mouthing coffee and tea served on flights.

Citing a study from the Center for Food as Medicine & Longevity, the flight attendants such as [travelwithsillerydell](#) to warn on Instagram that “The water that comes from the sink isn’t the same as the bottled water serve on board. It’s stored in tanks inside the aircraft, and those tanks are filled from airport water trucks, not directly from a clean, filtered tap.

“Here’s the problem:

- Those tanks and pipes don’t get cleaned
- Bacteria can build up inside the system over time.
- Several studies (like from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) have found coliform bacteria and even traces of E.coli in some aircraft water samples.

“That’s why airlines always serve bottled water, tea and coffee made from filtered water – never from the lavatory taps.

“So yes, please brush your teeth! Just use your own water bottle.”

As for the Center for Food as Medicine & Longevity, it ranked ranks 10 major and 11 regional airlines by the quality of water they provided onboard flights during a three-year study period (Oct.1, 2022-Sept. 30, 2026)..

“Delta Air Lines and Frontier Airlines win the top spots with the safest water in the sky, and Alaska Airlines finishes No. 3,” says Charles Platkin, PhD, JD, MPH, director of the Center for Food as Medicine and Longevity.

The airlines with the worst score are American Airlines and JetBlue, the study shows. “Nearly all regional airlines need to improve their onboard water safety, with the exception of GoJet Airlines,” Platkin says.

One reason our colonial forebearers drank – and they drank a lot, apparently – was that water of the day was decidedly unsafe. That apparently remains true for Flint, Mich.; Chicago; Milwaukee; Pittsburgh; Houston; Baltimore; Newark; Washington, D.C.; Detroit; Jackson, Miss., and San Diego.

Most of the cities on this list are dealing with older lead pipes and lack of maintenance. But San Diego, for instance, is dealing with industrial chemicals from Tijuana

Jellyfish Brewing Taps River Barrel Distributing

Jellyfish Brewing Co. tapped **River Barrel Distributing** to bring its diverse lineup of Seattle-brewed craft beers to bars, restaurants, and retailers throughout Western Washington.

Jellyfish Brewing, with its taprooms and brewing operations rooted in Seattle, offers an eclectic portfolio of beers that have earned loyal followings among locals. From crisp lagers and Northwest-style pale ales to robust stouts and hazy IPAs, Jellyfish Brewing’s diverse beer offerings reflect the creative spirit of the Pacific Northwest. Under this new partnership, River Barrel Distributing will begin rolling out Jellyfish Brewing’s

portfolio to its network of accounts, bringing increased access to beloved favorites like Smack IPA, Hydra Pils, Sir Hugs-A-Lot Hazy IPA, Planktonic NW Red, and many more.

“We’re thrilled to welcome Jellyfish Brewing to the River Barrel portfolio,” said Joe Cohen, Owner & General Manager of River Barrel Distributing. “Jellyfish has built a strong reputation in Seattle for brewing approachable, flavorful beers across a wide range of styles. This partnership allows us to help grow their presence while continuing our mission of supporting standout local producers.”

New Wine Industry Registered Apprenticeships Launched

Regional wineries, workforce leaders, and education partners have launched a new suite of Registered Apprenticeship programs tailored to the wine and beverage manufacturing industry. These apprenticeships are designed to stabilize local labor pipelines and strengthen technical capacity across vineyard, cellar, production, maintenance, marketing, and hospitality operations.

This program was designed by registered apprenticeship veterans at Los Angeles County’s South Bay Workforce Investment Board and customized for the wine industry by the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay (WANB). These new Registered Apprenticeships support wineries in the recruitment, hiring and training of local employees, across a broad array of career pathways in commercial production environments that are critical to the region. Workforce board partnerships can leverage government financial incentives, support recruitment and align publicly funded instruction to improve community resilience by strengthening the competitiveness of employers within the region.

Apprentices earn wages while building job-ready skills in grape and wine production and other key wine industry functions as designed by the employer and the workforce board. Unlike traditional hiring, apprenticeship programs allow employers to train talent to their exact processes, safety standards, seasonal rhythms, and operational culture which leads to reduced turnover, improved preservation of institutional knowledge, and a decreased reliance on temporary labor.

“Our business clients are in the driver seat. Our role is to function like a concierge of available workforce services that align regional industry, education, and government resources,” said Bryan Avila, wine industry veteran, and Apprenticeship Program Coordinator at WANB. “I work with hiring managers to learn about their training needs, and to serve as a thought partner in the design of an apprenticeship program that fits their business. Building reliable local talent pipelines from the high schools and community colleges for these wine county trades will help improve workforce retention and operational continuity.”

Available Apprenticeship Pathways Include:

- Wine Production & Cellar Operations
- Facilities Maintenance & Industrial Mechanics
- Quality & Laboratory Support
- Logistics, Warehousing & Supply Chain
- Hospitality, Tasting Room & Agritourism Operations
- Cross-trained Agroecology Operations (Pending)

Programs are designed to serve small, mid-sized, and large wineries, with WANB managing program design, administration, and funding coordination to keep participation efficient and cost-effective. These services are available at little to no cost to the employer, and do not require any changes of the employer.

Wineries, suppliers, and industry partners interested in sponsoring apprentices or launching a program are encouraged to inquire by scanning the QR code above or by email: bavila@workforcealliancenorthbay.org

To Your Continued Success,
KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

JOEL WHITAKER, Editor

Thanks for reading!