

KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK

The Alcohol Beverage Executive's Newsletter

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U.S. Brewers Production Fell 5.8% in December

For December 2025, the Beer Institute estimates the volume of beer produced in the U.S. subject to excise tax at 10,800,000 barrels, a 5.8% year-over-year decrease.

In November, imported beer volumes grew 4% from last year. The year-to-date trend through November is down 5.3%.

Andrew Heritage, the **Beer Institute**'s economist, notes that although the TTB will revise previous months upward (and the final two months of the year remain an estimate), the current 2025 figure for taxable removals is -5.9%. In 2025, approximately 139.1 million barrels of beer were produced and sold in the U.S.

The first quarter showed the biggest decline – a 6.8% drop in shipments and down 7.7% in depletions, Heritage notes. After the first quarter, beer sales declined at a far slower rate of -5.2% in shipments and -4.5% in depletions over the final three quarters.

The outlook for 2026

Thus far in 2026, the picture is mixed, with some early weeks in January offering positive industry trends and then recent weeks are softer but made difficult to interpret by nearly three straight weeks of below-average, freezing temperatures with large amounts of snow and ice on the ground throughout the Midwest, Northeast, and extending down to the Mid-Atlantic.

The first four weeks ending in January showed industry growth of 2.5%, followed by two weeks of declines. This was the most prolonged period of consecutive weeks of industry growth in years. Furthermore, industry volumes did not begin to decline until late January last year, indicating the industry favorably cycled some of its most difficult weekly comps it will face in 2026.

The most recent two weeks of declines cloud the picture a bit, but have been steepest in states with continued harsh winter weather. An initial look at the load-in for the Super Bowl shows Texas grew volume by 2.6%, while all other states declined. Beer sales in the on-premise continue to outpace off-premise sales, suggesting consumers are willing to spend on beer.

2026 will show signs of industry stabilization, Heritage says, with a long list of beer-drinking occasions over the summer months, as U.S. host cities are 11 of the 16 North American sites for this summer's World Cup. Celebrations for America 250 and a favorable weekend date for July 4th will add further momentum.

The bottom line: Headwinds remain, but there are plenty of opportunities on the board.

Consumers remain uncertain over the future state of the economy and pessimistic about its current state, Heritage says. Aggregate macroeconomic figures show an expanding economy despite a slowing labor market and growth trajectory. “Yet, there will be plenty of reasons for Americans to celebrate over the year with a beer, which will lead to industry stabilization.”

This Government Shutdown Won’t Affect TTB

We’re in another government shutdown, but this time it affects only parts of the Department of Homeland Security, **so the Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau** is continuing business as normal. It looks like this may be a long one.

The issue is whether the Democrats’ demands for meaningful limits on immigration officers, including an end to wearing masks, will be enacted. Democrats say they won’t vote to fund DHS until their demands are accepted. They note widespread condemnation of ICE tactics in Milwaukee and elsewhere and say some of their voters are demanding they hold firm.

No way, say Republicans. They argue voters support President Trump’s handling of immigration and the actions being taken to end the Minneapolis surge show Trump is being responsive to public concerns. Immigration and border security have long been pillars of strength for Trump.

But polling is painting a different picture. For instance, an [NBC News](#) poll out Wednesday showed 49% of adults strongly disapprove of how Trump is handling border security and immigration, up from 38% strong disapproval last summer. And another NBC poll finds 43% want ICE reformed, 29% want it abolished, and 29% want it to continue in its current form.

Overtime Pay Tax Credit for Farm Workers Proposed in Calif.

If film workers get a tax credit for working overtime, why not employers of ag workers?

That’s the logic behind a bill pending in the California Legislature that would create a payroll tax credit for agricultural employers who pay overtime wages to their employees. Under the bill, employers would be reimbursed dollar-for-dollar for 100% of overtime wages paid.

A similar bill last year was defeated on a party-line vote in its first committee hearing. This year’s legislation has bipartisan support with both Democratic and Republican senators co-authoring the bill. Last year, while rejecting a similar tax credit for agricultural employers, the legislature passed a \$420 million increase in the Film Tax Credit.

Fuel by Frazia Official Wine Drink of NASCAR

NASCAR announced a new multiyear partnership with Fuel by Franzia, naming the brand the Official Wine-Based Ready-to-Drink (RTD) Partner of NASCAR beginning in 2026. As an Official Partner, Fuel by Franzia will engage fans through national promotions, custom content, at-track activations and marquee entitlements at some of NASCAR’s most iconic venues.

“NASCAR delivers unmatched, full-throttle energy and a deeply connected fan base — and that’s exactly where Fuel by Franzia belongs,” said **Helen Kurtz**, Chief Marketing Officer, **The Wine Group**. “With Fuel by Franzia entering the RTD space, this partnership with NASCAR is a game changer for the brand, placing us at the center of race-day culture and giving us the opportunity to connect with NASCAR’s passionate fan base through bold experiences and social moments.”

Penna. Lawmakers Consider Third-Party Alcohol Delivery

Some retailers, such as Sheetz, currently offer beer delivery, but delivery services like DoorDash want to be able to provide the service, too.

According to the bill, delivery companies would be able to deliver beer, wine and ready-to-drink cocktails. It would amend the Pennsylvania Liquor Code and would create a “transporter for hire” license. Drivers would have to verify a customer's age and complete the state liquor control board training. It would also not allow drivers to leave the alcohol unattended on a doorstep or deliver it to visibly drunk people.

More than 30 states currently permit third parties to deliver alcohol.

Rep. Dan Deasy says, “The industry has changed, so you have to adapt to it and make sure there are safeguards in place,”

Crimson Wine Group Acquires Raeburn Wine Brand from Purple Brands

Crimson Wine Group, Ltd., an owner and operator of premium wineries across the West Coast, said it acquired Raeburn wine brand from Purple Brands. Terms weren't disclosed.

Founded in 2013, Raeburn is a premium wine brand producing about 250,000 cases annually from facilities in the Russian River Valley of Sonoma County, California. Raeburn's wines are distributed in major grocery stores, independent retailers and restaurants throughout the United States.

The transaction, which also includes certain inventory assets, is effective immediately and provides Crimson Wine Group with greater scale, adding to Crimson's more than 400,000 average cases produced annually, along with a proven brand in the ultra-premium Chardonnay and Pinot Noir categories.

"The acquisition of Raeburn reinforces our position as a leading fine wine company" said Jennifer Locke, Crimson's Chief Executive Officer. "The Raeburn portfolio, rooted in Sonoma County, will significantly increase our market presence and relevance with our retail and on-premise customers through a portfolio of varietals selling in the \$15 to \$25 retail price points. Raeburn is led by one of the Top 10 largest Chardonnay brands sold domestically, providing Crimson with a proven player in the growing luxury Chardonnay and White Wine categories."

Crimson said it may do a rights offering later this year.

Purple Brands' founder, owner and Chairman Derek Benham added, "This transaction is a win-win for both buyer and seller. It allows us to better focus on and further develop our spirits business, which includes our iconic Redwood Empire Whiskey brand, and gives Crimson a well-known, high-quality wine brand, adding to its rich and respected portfolio. Raeburn has been a tremendous success story and passing it to a dedicated wine group like Crimson ensures the brand's continued ascent."

Low-Alc Beverage Market Seen Growing to \$1.87B by 2030

The market for low-alcohol beverages will grow at a 6% CAGR to reach \$1.87 billion by 2030. That's according to a new study by The Business Research Co., London.

One of the strongest growth forces behind the low alcohol beverages market is the rising consumer focus on maintaining a healthier lifestyle. This trend includes choosing beverages that are perceived as

good for overall wellness and suitable for regular consumption. Many consumers view low-alcohol drinks as having fewer calories and less sugar compared to standard alcoholic beverages, making them attractive for health-conscious individuals.

Lost Lantern Closed 2nd Round Capital Financing

Lost Lantern, a Vermont-based independent bottler of American whiskey, enters 2026 following a year of continued momentum, defined by strategic investment, team growth, solid consumer demand, and national recognition.

In 2025, Lost Lantern successfully closed a \$1 million seed round led by FreshTracks Capital, a leading Vermont venture capital firm. The investment supports expanded sales and marketing initiatives as the company prepares for a major new release slated for 2026. The funding also enabled Lost Lantern to grow its team, reinforcing the company's long-term vision and operational strength.

As part of that expansion, Lost Lantern welcomed Robin Cornell as Operations Manager and Emily Trostel as Marketing & Vermont Sales Manager. Cornell brings deep experience from Vermont's startup ecosystem and works closely with Co-Founder Nora Ganley-Roper to oversee day-to-day operations. Trostel joins Lost Lantern from nearly a decade working in marketing and communications within global tourism, and now focuses on brand growth, consumer engagement, and the company's home-state market.

Treasury Wine, RNDC Settle Dispute

Treasury Wine Estates said its U.S. subsidiary reached a settlement with Republic National Distributing Co. arising from RNDC's closure of its California operations last September.

As part of the settlement agreement, TWE will repurchase Treasury Americas and Treasury Collective portfolio inventory held by RNDC in California for its original sale value net of a confidential settlement that compensates TWE for the impact of RNDC's closure in the state.

Taking account of the expected on-sale of this inventory to other customers, commencing this half, the net cash outflow in the fiscal 2026 second half relating to this settlement agreement is expected to be about S\$65 million.

RNDC will continue to distribute TWE's portfolio across a number of other US markets and is supportive of RNDC's recent initiatives to strengthen their business model and capital structure, including the planned divestment of several markets to **Reyes Beverage Group** and the establishment of new financing arrangements.

In the fiscal first half, Treasury Americas depletions in states distributed by RNDC grew 2.7%. The settlement does not alter the planned reduction of distributor inventory levels outside of California over about two years, as disclosed on Dec. 17, 2025, the company said.

TWE CEO **Sam Fischer** said, "Although RNDC's decision to exit the Californian market had a significant impact on our performance in 1H26, we are pleased to have reached this resolution with RNDC, who remain a committed and high-performing partner for TWE across a number of other US markets."

RNDC Sets More Layoffs

Hardly unexpected. Following the closure of its California operations, Republic National Distributing Co. has seen a number of suppliers move elsewhere. RNDC confirmed, but didn't give a number of workers to be let go.

RNDC to Rep Willamette Valley Vineyards In New York, Maryland, DC

Willamette Valley Vineyards said it selected **Republic National Distributing Co.** (RNDC) its distributor in New York State and the Mid-Atlantic region.

This Mid-Atlantic change aligns Maryland and the District of Columbia with the company's existing relationship in Virginia. The transition to utilize RNDC's expansive network within New York State positions the winery to reach new and existing consumers in this essential market.

"Through its partnership with the Opici family over the past four years, RNDC has made significant investments in the New York State market, more than doubling its sales force and adding full state coverage with its new Syracuse warehouse. We are excited about the opportunity ahead to strengthen our presence in this critical market for Oregon wine and our flagship Pinot Noir varietal," said Willamette Valley Vineyards CEO Michael Osborn.

"We value partners who share our commitment to quality, innovation, and building brands with intention," said Joel Polichene, RNDC's State Executive Vice President of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington D.C. "Willamette Valley Vineyards reflects those principles, and we're energized by the opportunity to deepen their reach across key East Coast and Mid-Atlantic markets through the strength of our local teams."

Willamette Valley Vineyards also announced two additions to its national sales division and a reorganization of its sales team into five regions. Robert Goodrich joined the company as Eastern Region Sales Director, bringing more than 15 years of experience in wine distribution and supplier sales, most recently serving as Regional Director of Chains for Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. Jimmy Lewis was named California Sales Manager and joined the company with more than 30 years of experience representing California wineries, wholesale distribution, and an earlier culinary career.

They join the team led by Senior Director of National Sales Rebecca Geschwender, alongside Shelli Fowler, Central Region Sales Director; Tyler Voorhies, West Region Sales Director; and Chelsie Jewell, who manages the winery's significant local Oregon business.

"Willamette Valley Vineyards remains focused on innovation and identifying new, strategic points of distribution, particularly at the national level," adds Osborn. "To support this focus, we have organized our internal team and, on a market-by-market basis, selected the selling organizations best suited to share our passion for Oregon wines with our retail and restaurant partners."

Furthermore, the company has transitioned its Pennsylvania representation to Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, effective immediately. These refinements within the winery's distribution relationships and sales team re-arrangement will allow Willamette Valley Vineyards to continue serving its consumer base effectively, drive meaningful growth and strengthen our market position.

Twomey Names Ryan Hodgins Director of Winemaking

Twomey, the producer of Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc from Silver Oak Cellars, today announces the appointment of Ryan Hodgins as Director of Winemaking. Most recently, Hodgins served as Winemaker at FEL Wines.

“Ryan’s thoughtful, expressive winemaking resonates deeply with the values of our portfolio of brands,” says Justin Hirigoyen, VP of Winegrowing at Silver Oak Cellars, who previously occupied the role of Director of Winemaking for Twomey.

Miss. House Okays Direct Shipment of Liquor, Sunday Sales, Imposes 15.5% Tax

The Mississippi House approved 62-47 and sent to the state Senate bills permitting the direct shipment of liquor to consumers and approved a measure allowing local authorities to permit the sale of alcohol on Sunday. The package also impose 15.5% tax on distilled spirits sold in Mississippi.

Rep. Hank Zuber (R) said the measures will bring Mississippi's liquor laws "into the 21st Century."

Heineken to Slash Up to 6,000 Jobs in Productivity Push

Heineken plans to eliminate about 6,000 jobs – roughly 7% of its workforce – over the next two years as it seeks to boost productivity through AI, outgoing CEO Dolf van den Brink told CNBC's "Squawk Box Europe."

The world's second-largest brewer reported sales eased 4.7% to \$34.26 billion (about \$40701 billion) and net profit of 952 million euros (about \$1,131,083,285).

Total volume declined 1.2%, with consolidated volume down 2.1%, and licensed volume up 17.8%. Heineken brand volume grew 2.7%, global brands volume grew 1.9%.

Net revenue grew 1.6%, net revenue per hectolitre up 3.8%.

Over 60% of Heineken's markets, including over 80% of Heineken's priority growth markets gaining or holding share.

Marketing and selling expenses expanded to 9.9% of net revenue.

Heineken said it is projecting operating profit growth rising 2% to 6% this year.

Van den Brink said “Productivity has been a top priority in our evergreen strategy... we committed to 400 to 500 million euros (\$476 million to \$600 million) of savings on an annual basis, and this is a first operationalization of that debt commitment.”

The job reductions will help the brewer to invest in growth and in its premium brands, he said.

Calif. Winegrape Growers Tells Leg Priorities

Here are the top legislative priorities for 2026 of the California Association of Winegrape Growers:

- Require wine labeled as "American" be made from 100% American-grown winegrapes. This would ensure that wine labels accurately reflect grape origin, giving consumers confidence in the products they purchase, CAWG says.

- Create a tax credit for agricultural employers to fully offset the costs of overtime wages paid by agricultural employers.
- Expand opportunities for small, non-estate wineries that purchase local grapes to sell wine and offer tastings at certified farmers' markets, strengthening direct-to-consumer connections and supporting local supply chains.

Michter's to Ship Only 315 Bottles of Celebration Sour Mash

Michter's Distillery will begin shipping the 2025 Edition of **Michter's Celebration Sour Mash Whiskey** this month, marking only the fifth time this expression has been released.

Only 315 bottles of the 2025 Edition will be made available worldwide. Bottled at 115.2 proof (57.6% ABV), Michter's Celebration has a suggested retail price of \$6,000 per bottle in the United States. Only seven barrels were chosen from Michter's aging stocks for the 2025 Edition of Celebration: four Kentucky Straight Rye barrels and three Kentucky Straight Bourbon barrels.

"Each release of Michter's Celebration is truly unique and cannot be replicated. This extraordinary whiskey is a symphony decades in the making, orchestrated by Master of Maturation **Andrea Wilson** and Master Distiller **Dan McKee**," said Michter's President **Joseph J. Magliocco**. "Together, they carefully oversee the aging and blending process, selecting these seven whiskeys not only for the extraordinary individual characteristics each brings, but with the understanding that together, they will create a whiskey so exquisite that the sum is even greater than its individual parts. It reflects patience, precision, and profound expertise composed into a single, unforgettable experience."

Each bottle of the 2025 Celebration Sour Mash Whiskey is presented in a special gift box containing a letter signed by Michter's Master Distiller Dan McKee. "This is the third edition of Michter's Celebration in my time as Master Distiller, and each release is one of a kind. I'm so proud to have personally selected the barrels for this release," McKee said, adding:

"The 2025 Celebration contains whiskey from seven extraordinary barrels, with the youngest whiskey being over 12 years old and the oldest whiskey being over 30 years old. It's remarkable how the oldest barrels contribute just the right amount of oak influence while leaving room for the delicate nuances of the other beautiful ryes and bourbons in the blend to shine."

Traveller Whiskey's 1st Extension is Full Proof

Buffalo Trace Distillery Master Distiller Harlen Wheatley and Grammy-winning singer, songwriter and musician Chris Stapleton unveiled Traveller Whiskey Full Proof.

A bold evolution of the original Blend No. 40, it's the award-winning brand's first line extension since its January 2024 debut. Bottled at 121 proof, the new release is described as a testament to the art of American whiskey blending, delivering amplified intensity while preserving the balanced, 'easy-sippin' versatility that defines Traveller's signature style.

Curious how far Traveller's signature 90 proof could be pushed without sacrificing its smooth, approachable character, the duo began exploring different blend adjustments and techniques. Guided by a shared commitment to quality, the breakthrough came during a backstage tasting, where Stapleton and his band unanimously agreed the selected higher-proof expression captured something special and needed to be bottled.

"Prior to collaborating with Harlen Wheatley and Buffalo Trace Distillery on Traveller Whiskey, I generally leaned toward higher-proof and barrel-strength bottles," Stapleton says. "Needless to say, when we decided to experiment with a higher-proof expression, I was excited to see where that could land. One night after a show, we had two potential Full Proof contenders backstage with the band and some friends. Everyone agreed 121 was the clear winner. It's the same easy-to-drink DNA, just turned up a few notches. I think Traveller Whiskey Full Proof is one of those moments where more of a good thing is definitely a good thing."

"Across our products, we like to experiment with proof as a way to bring out different flavor characteristics already present in the whiskey," says Harlen Wheatley, Master Distiller, Buffalo Trace Distillery. "When we started experimenting with proof in Traveller's blended recipe, flavors and finishes came to the forefront that aren't as apparent in the 90 proof blend. It's remarkable how different the blended recipe responds to proof variation compared to our straight bourbons. We think where we've landed is a completely unique offering that every whiskey drinker should try."

Initially launched as a limited release, Traveller Full Proof is now available to retailers, bars and restaurants nationwide via Sazerac's distributor network at a suggested retail price of \$39.99.

Ezra Brooks 90 is Back

More than half the requests posted by fans on the **Ezra Brooks** Instagram and Facebook page pages during 2025 included requests for the return of EzraBrooks 90. So that what Lux Row Distillers did – it reintroduced the brand in 50 ml, 375ml, 750 ml and 1.75L sizes.

Jack & Coca-Cola Now in 16 oz Single-Serve Cans

Jack Daniel's and Coca-Cola are expanding their Jack & Coca-Cola ready-to-drink (RTD) portfolio with the introduction of Jack & Coca-Cola and Jack & Coca-Cola Zero in a new 16 oz, single-serve can.

"Single-serve continues to grow in the ready-to-drink category and this size gives our retail, convenience, and on-premise partners an easy way to capture on-the-fly purchases while offering a lighter, more sessionable Jack & Coke," said **Mary Beth O'Mara**, Jack Daniel's RTD Brand Director. "This 16 oz can takes our classic recipe and adapts it to fit today's drinking occasions, ultimately meeting people where they are with a bold taste."

Last year, Jack Daniel's expanded its RTD portfolio with the addition of a Flavors Pack featuring Jack & Coke Classic, Jack & Coke Cherry, and Jack & Coke Vanilla, followed by the launch of a standalone Jack & Coke Vanilla 4-pack in response to consumer demand. The introduction of the 16 oz single-serve format continues that growth by giving retail, convenience, and on-premise partners a portable, easy-to-serve, and more sessionable option for in-the-moment occasions.

Jack & Coca-Cola and Jack & Coca-Cola Zero 16 oz single-serve cans are permanent SKUs with national distribution, available now in a 12-can loosepack with a suggested retail price of \$3.99 per can.

Redbreast Irish Whiskey Unveils Moscatel Wine Cask Edition

Redbreast, the World's Most Awarded Single Pot Still Irish Whiskey, launches [Redbreast Moscatel Wine Cask Edition](#), (SRP: \$109.99), the fifth iteration in the award-winning Redbreast Iberian Series.

While all Redbreast whiskies are matured in a combination of ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks, what makes the Iberian Series even more special is the unique sherry casks specifically selected for these expressions. Crafted by Master Blender David McCabe, this limited-edition honors both Redbreast's heritage and innovation by using Moscatel Wine casks from the historic Bodegas Quitapenas to enrich the flavor profile of the famed Irish single pot still whiskey.

Inspired by Redbreast's historic ties with fortified wines, Redbreast Moscatel Wine Cask Edition is first matured in a selection of ex-American whiskey casks and Spanish Oloroso sherry casks, followed by a final maturation period of 16 months in Málaga Moscatel casks. Bottled at 46% ABV, Redbreast Moscatel Wine Cask Edition is rich in Mediterranean expression, bringing a noticeably elegant and more citrus forward personality to the whiskey.

Ashley Longshore Designs Maker's Mark Label

Ahead of Women's History Month, Maker's Mark said acclaimed artist Ashley Longshore designed a limited-edition label celebrating spirited women and benefitting the leading nonprofit Vital Voices.

Through the end of March, bourbon enthusiasts can visit makersmarkpersonalize.com to personalize a complimentary Maker's Mark label with the name of an inspirational woman in their lives. Maker's Mark will donate \$1 for every personalized label ordered, up to \$50,000, to support the organization's mission of uplifting female leaders.

Known for her vibrant maximalism and irreverent sense of humor, Longshore designed a label befitting of Maker's Mark co-founder Margie Samuels and inspired the brand's Kentucky homeplace. Bursting with bee-pollinating blooms found across Star Hill Farm, nature is at the heart of the label's design with nods to the jewels—diamonds, pearls and gems—that have adorned Southern women for generations.

"From the very beginning, my grandmother Margie Samuels set a perfectly unreasonable standard that endures today—every bottle still hand-dipped in red wax, every barrel rotated by hand, and every decision guided by the brand's higher purpose," said Rob Samuels, managing director for Maker's Mark and eighth generation whisky maker. "Ashley Longshore shares that same pioneering and uncompromising spirit. We're thrilled to bring her art to life on a Maker's Mark bottle while supporting the meaningful causes championed by Vital Voices."

While Maker's Mark co-founder Bill Samuels, Sr. focused on crafting the highest-quality bourbon, his wife Margie shaped the brand; the bottle's shape, the label, the signature red wax topper and even the name are all her legacy.

Oishii Sake Expands to Whole Foods, Total Wine, Carnival Cruise

Oishii Sake Spritz said it is expanding distribution to nearly 300 Whole Foods Market locations in Florida, California, New York and New Jersey April 1. This follows the announcement of its recent partnership with Carnival Cruise Line.

Oishii's Watermelon Lime flavor only is available at Total Wine & Spirits stores in. This follows the announcement of its recent partnership with Carnival Cruise Line.

Packaging: four-packs; \$19.99 per four-pack. ABV, 6%.

Rémy Martin Releases 2 Bottles Celebrating Miami, Los Angeles

Rémy Martin said it released two new V.S.O.P This Is My City Limited-Edition bottles celebrating Miami and Los Angeles. The bottles highlight the distinct cultural influence and creative spirit of each city.

Following the V.S.O.P This is My City Limited-Edition launches in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Atlanta, the collection honors the cultural identity of each city through bold designs, vibrant colors, and visual nods to local landmarks, sports culture, and heritage.

The limited-edition bottles are an ode to Miami and Los Angeles through two unique expressions of culture. The Los Angeles Limited Edition bottle - A Melody of Dreams, reflects a city driven by ambition and artistry, where creativity is shaped across studios, stages, and entertainment. The Miami Limited Edition bottle - Rhythm of Paradise, captures a city powered by sound and movement, rooted in a rich musical heritage that influences culture and style worldwide.

Alongside the limited-edition releases, Rémy Martin is extending its [V.S.O.P This Is My City Microgrant Initiative](#) to Miami and Los Angeles, granting one emerging creative in each city a \$20,000 microgrant and tailored mentorship. Following the success of the microgrant's regional and national programming, this next phase of mentorship reinforces the brand's dedication to supporting entrepreneurs who are shaping culture and driving impact within their communities.

"Miami and Los Angeles are cities that consistently move culture forward, shaped by bold and ever-evolving creative voices," says **Tonia Mancino**, VP-Luxury Brands, **Rémy Cointreau Americas**. "Bringing Rémy Martin's V.S.O.P This Is My City Limited Edition to these markets allows us to honor what makes each city distinct while supporting the next generation of leaders who are shaping culture within their communities."

SGWS Supply Chain Boss Moves to Advisory Role

Bobby Burg, chief supply chain officer for Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, will be stepping away from his day to day responsibilities and assume the role of strategic advisor to Thomas Greenlee, chief financial officer, effective March 1.

The company said Burg will contributing his expertise and help to ensure the continued success of Southern Glazer's multi-year supply chain transformation initiative, for which he played a pivotal development role. This includes strategic support for the Company's 3PL subsidiary Ankaa Global Logistics, as well as emerging technology deployments, and future distribution center real estate strategies. He will also guide the transition of supply chain and operations leadership to the next generation, helping to further develop the strong talent bench he has nurtured throughout his tenure with the Company.

Burg has been a key architect of the Company's technology and supply chain evolution since joining Southern Glazer's through the acquisition of his family's South Carolina distributorship in 1993.

Over his three-decade tenure, he held pivotal leadership roles—including CIO and Senior Vice President of Supply Chain Strategy—guiding major enterprise initiatives across logistics, technology, and operations. Burg has also helped establish top-notch Business Continuity, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability capabilities for the Company, while most recently guiding

significant implementations in technology, automation, and new supply chain service offerings for suppliers and customers.

“Bobby has built a world-class supply chain function that is not just industry-leading, but one to be admired by any business,” said Wayne E. Chaplin, president/CEO. “We are grateful for Bobby’s dedication, vision, and expertise, and we look forward to his continued contributions over the years as a trusted advisor as we continue to innovate in this critical area of our enterprise.”

With this transition, Drew Vermilion, senior vp-supply chain strategy, and Ron Flanary, senior vice president-National Operations, will report directly to Greenlee.

NY Again Mulls Wine in Groceries

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again seems to be the motto for New York State groceries who are again seeking the right to sell wine in groceries.

The measure is opposed by independent liquor store owners who are emphasizing passage will lead to a loss of jobs for distributors, drivers, warehouse people, the wineries themselves.

Only Spirits Recorded Sales Losses in Last 4 Weeks: NIQ

January sales remained positive year-over-year, NIQ reported, with prepared cocktails accelerating momentum into late January with dollar sales up 8.8% and case volume up 3% in the four weeks ended Jan. 31 vs. the prior period when they were up 2.6%.

After Prepared Cocktails, Beer contributed most to Total Alcohol growth, up +0.9% in dollar sales, versus +1.1% in the prior L4W period (w/e January 24th), and down -0.4% in volume. Wine also contributed to growth, with value maintaining +0.3% growth from the prior period, with volume down by -1.4%.

Spirits was the only category to experience sales losses, with dollar sales down -2.8%, an intensified decline versus the -1.6% drop in the prior L4W period, with case volume down -1.3%.

Whiskey led the downturn, falling -4.0% in value and -3.1% in volume, NIQ said, followed by Vodka, down 1.4% in value and -0.6% in volume. Tequila saw similar dollar declines, down -1.7% in dollar sales, but a +2.0% increase in volume. In contrast, the “All Other” segment remained a strong outperformer, up +7.2% in dollar sales and +17.7% in volume, driven by accelerating Non-Alc Spirits growth, which surged +24.6%, as Dry January trends come to a close with the month’s end.

In the four weeks ending January 31st, Still Wine declined -0.9% in value and -2.2% in volume. Sparkling Wine remained a key growth driver, rising +10.3% in value and +9.7% in volume. Non-Alc Wine also sustained strong gains amid lingering

Dry January effects, up +11.0% in value and +8.9% in volume, continuing to meet consumer demand for health and wellness aligned choices. Sparkling Wine saw the strongest improvement in sales performance, increasing after a period of softer growth (-3.7% in the prior period).

The cross-category results point to a healthier backdrop for Total Alcohol, with Beer and Wine providing a stabilizing lift while Spirits continue to recover at a measured pace.

Illinois and Texas strengthened their regional performance but New York trailed, NIQ said.

Calif. Bill Would OK Wine Sales at Farmers Markets

A bill pending in the California State Senate would allow boutique and small-scale winemakers the opportunity to sell at certified farmers markets.

State Sen. John Laird, the prime sponsor, said the intention is to help small winemakers as wine consumption plummets. Currently, only estate wineries can sell at farmers markets.

Solar Powers 60% of Wine Production at Hope Family Wines

Hope Family Wines launched an expansive new rooftop solar array that offsets 60% of the energy needed to power the winery's entire wine production facility, administration offices and warehousing operation in Paso Robles, Calif.

"We can now proudly say that the majority of our wine is bottled using the same sunshine that makes the Paso Robles region so special," said Owner-Winemaker **Austin Hope**. "Paso Robles averages nearly 300 sunny days per year. It's an abundant resource that allows us to grow world-class Bordeaux, Rhône and other varieties--and that now provides our winery with a significant amount of renewable energy."

The solar array is the culmination of a nearly three-year effort led by Hope, VP of Winemaking **JC Diefenderfer**, Director of Facilities **Bill Sheffer** and Project Manager **Leticia Vasquez**. The winery team worked closely with Conley Rodman at Bahama Solar on permitting, planning, engineering and buildout along with guiding input from Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

The Next Milestone

The new 875 kW solar array features 1,500 panels situated on top of Hope Family Wines' state-of-the-art warehouse and bottling facility that opened in early 2025, and it marks the latest sustainability milestone for this Paso Robles winery.

To Your Continued Success,

KANE'S BEVERAGE WEEK



JOEL WHITAKER, Editor

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