Consumer Trends: Top 10 Adult Beverages For 2013

CHICAGO (PRNewswire) — Technomic, the premier resource for actionable adult beverage information, tapped its analysts, consultants and experts to highlight the trends shaping the drinks business in 2013. Based on ongoing research into spirits, wine and beer volume and sales, as well as surveys, interviews and discussions involving brand marketers, on-premise and retail operators, bartenders and consumers, these insights are supported by Technomic's extensive adult beverage database including its Trends in Adult Beverage [1] reports and other tools, such as MenuMonitor [2] and the consumer-tracking Project CO-PILOT [3].

The major developments influencing adult beverages in 2013 include:

1. Wines go sweet. The sweet wine trend continues, with varietals including Moscato showing up in table wines and in pink sparklers on menus across the country. Red blends also proliferate, delivering a range of flavor profiles, many of which skew toward the sweet and medium-bodied end of the spectrum to appeal particularly to Millennials.
2. Beer comes to the table in high-end restaurants. Extensive beer lists developed with the same care as wine lists take hold at upscale-casual and fine-dining restaurants, where beer's food-friendly nature further enhances the dining experience.
3. Next-level ciders. Hard cider's growth continues, thanks to the broad appeal and food-friendly flavor profiles, not to mention increased distribution and marketing support as major supplier companies are now playing in the category. New flavored varieties further bolster the category in both retail and restaurant/bar outlets.
4. Unexpected flavors in unexpected places. Confectionary flavors in vodka provide ongoing excitement, but flavors show up and take some categories in new directions. Canadian whisky appeals to younger adults with flavored expressions, while rum and tequila continue to deliver new flavor experiences. The duality of sweet-and-savory and other flavor combinations take flavored vodkas into new realms, as do unique and unexpected offerings that inspire at-home and professional bartenders alike.
5. Next-level retailing. Adult beverage retailing takes an upscale turn, moving from "package store" to "bottle shop" concepts that focus on eclectic spirits, wine and beer offerings, hand selling of products and attention to the overall customer experience. In-store sipping and sampling proliferates, thanks to legislative changes, and growler filling stations find favor in convenience and grocery outlets.
6. Mixers matter. The quality trend prompts bar pros to apply the same stringent standards to selecting and showcasing mixers, juice, flavorings, purees, bitters and other drink ingredients as they do to the alcohol

components.

7. New drinks on tap. Innovative dispensing systems at bars and restaurants bring spirits and cocktails to the tap, sometimes even at patrons' tables. Keg wines also deliver unique vintages in a fresh format.
8. Digital drinks. Wine, cocktail and beer lists presented on digital tablets put descriptive information, photos and even food-pairing suggestions at guests' fingertips in bars and restaurants, while in-store tablets and digital kiosks provide product details, ratings and serving suggestions at retail. Smartphone apps, along with QR codes on everything from packaging to menus, also immediately connect consumers to interesting drink information.
9. Beer gardens indoors and out. The communal experience of the beer garden goes beyond the major markets. The hottest trends in beer, food and socializing come to life in large open spaces—both indoors and outside—devoted to the casual enjoyment and exploration of beer and food as beer gardens show up in markets from New York to New Orleans and beyond.
10. Whiskey wows. From whiskey-flavored liquors to flavored whiskeys, and from single barrel bourbons to new takes on rye, whiskey's appeal grows. In bars and restaurants, the storied brown spirit attracts more young adults and women, while consumers experiment with both traditional and new expressions for at-home enjoyment.

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