Consumer Trends: Mead Sales Skyrocket by 130 Percent

LAKEWOOD, Wash. (PRNewswire-USNewswire) — Mead [1], the alcoholic beverage made from honey, may be the world's oldest fermented drink, but it is also the country's hottest. A recent industry survey [2] reveals that mead sales increased 130% from 2012 to 2013, exceeding growth rates for beer, wine, distilled spirits and hard cider.

The numbers were released from the annual survey of American Mead Makers Association [3] (AMMA) members. The trade organization represents the US mead industry. The number of domestic meaderies has grown from 60 just three years ago to 194 today, accounting for 2.5% of American wineries. Mead is popping up on restaurant wine lists, store shelves and bar taps across the country.

"I don't ever remember seeing a beverage category show 130% growth from one year to the next," observed industry watcher Darrell Corti of Corti Brothers Gourmet Food in Sacramento. AMMA president Chris Webber is overjoyed. "The numbers are stunning. Mead is on fire. Production technique has really improved. Quality has skyrocketed across the board. It's just a matter of exposure — once people taste it, they love it."

While honey is the primary fermentable in mead, different styles incorporate fruit or spices, and range from dry to sweet, and still to sparkling. Mead may also be barrel-aged, like wine, craft beers and spirits. "The in-the-know beverage connoisseur needs to know about mead. It's exploding in popularity because it's delicious. We can't keep up with demand," stated Ken Schramm, author of "The Compleat Meadmaker," [4] and owner of Schramm's Mead in Ferndale, Michigan.

Evidence of honey in fermented beverages dates back more than 9000 years [5]. Mead's heritage includes being known as the original aphrodisiac. It appears in the mythology and literature of European, Indian and African cultures. Mead's popularity was eclipsed by beer and wine, whose production can be expanded much more readily. "You can plant another vineyard," commented Schramm, "but you can't plant a row of beehives." As mead maker Fred Buhl, owner of Fred's Mead Company in Florida, quipped, "The last 300 years have been kind of rough for the mead business, but it's been picking up."

More information on the mead industry, along with a list of US Meaderies, can be found in American Mead Maker, the journal of the American Mead Makers Association at: http://issuu.com/americanmead/docs/amma_14.1 *[6].*

www.meadmakers.org *[3]*

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