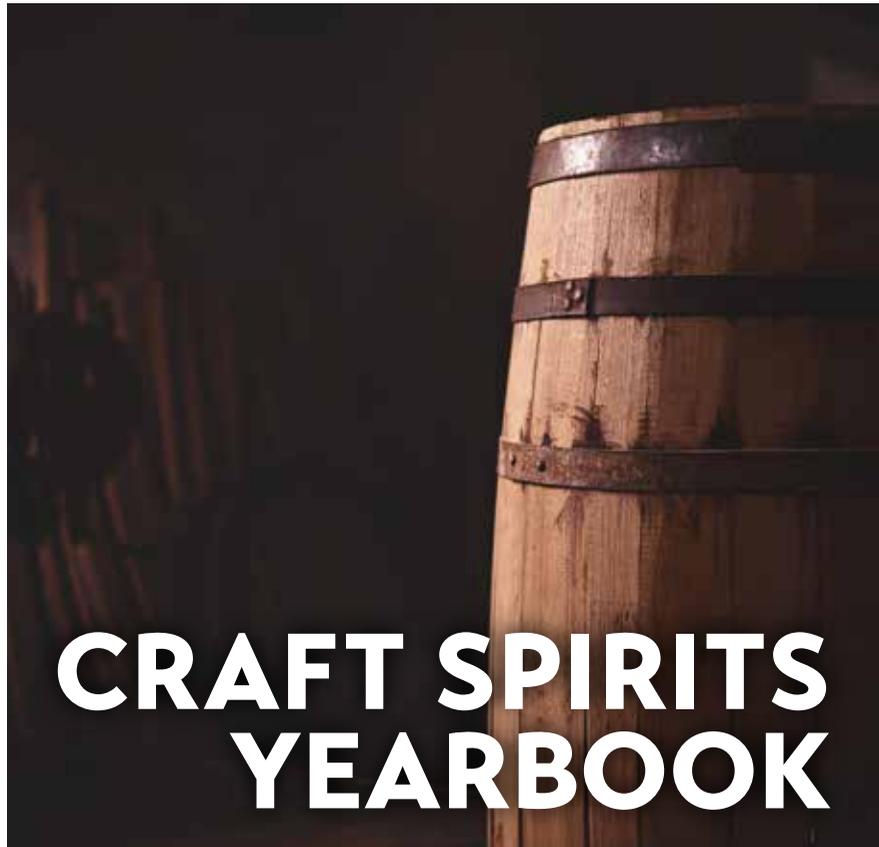


CRAFT SPIRITS

THE ART, SCIENCE AND BUSINESS OF DISTILLING

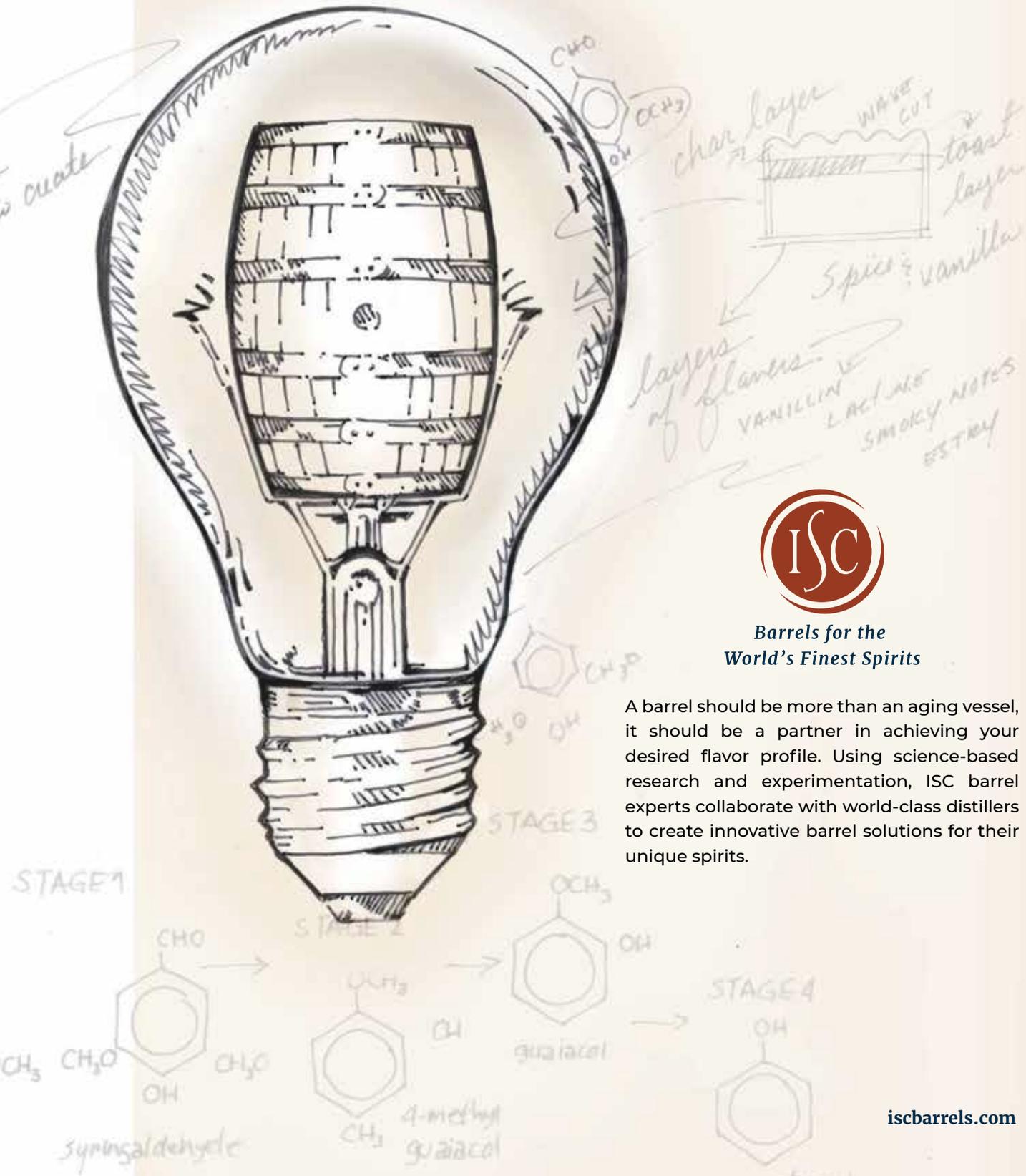


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A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN CRAFT SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



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CRAFT SPIRITS

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LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

It would be a massive understatement to say that much has happened since the last time we all met in person at an ACSA Distillers' Convention and Vendor Trade Show.

Of course, among the many happenings is the biggest of them all, the reason we haven't convened in the same room since 2019. Then, there's the fact that the White House has a new occupant.

And let's not forget one of the most significant developments for our industry: permanent federal excise tax relief.

CRAFT SPIRITS magazine

On a more personal note, *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine made its debut about six months after the last in-person convention. And we've had a new issue every other month since.

You're used to seeing it in its digital-only form, but for this special supplement to the magazine, we've decided to shake things up a bit.

As we cautiously shift back from the virtual to the actual world, the *CRAFT SPIRITS* Yearbook is coming along for the ride as the first, we hope, of many annual print editions. The entire team would like to express our gratitude to our sponsor, Lallemand Biofuels & Distilled Spirits for their generous support in bringing the Yearbook into the world.

Meticulously Curated Features

Physical tangibility isn't the only thing that sets the Yearbook apart. As its name suggests, it's a bit of an annual retrospective of some of the key articles that have appeared on the digital pages of *CRAFT SPIRITS*. We've curated some of our finest editorial offerings, spotlighting the most topical, enduring trends within the craft spirits community.

ACSA Annual Report

Additionally, the *CRAFT SPIRITS* Yearbook is home to the ACSA Annual Report, which highlights all of the major activities, initiatives and events your trade association has spearheaded to advocate for and elevate this dynamic industry—which, according to the hot-off-the-presses Craft Spirits Data Project, includes nearly 2,300 distilleries (as of August

2021), producing about 12.2 million 9-liter cases. Our craft producers now command 4.7% of total U.S. spirits volume and 7.1% of total spirits value.

The Main Event: The Craft Spirits Supplier Showcase

But before I get too bogged down with the data, I need to tell you about the largest component of the *CRAFT SPIRITS* Yearbook: our Craft Spirits Supplier Showcase. We've compiled what's essentially our industry's version of the Yellow Pages, with detailed listings of all of the relevant suppliers to craft spirits producers. Whether you're in the market for a bottling line, grain, packaging, fermentation microbes, an architect or a public relations partner, you'll find them all—and many other product and service provider categories—beginning on page 26.

You'll want to keep the *CRAFT SPIRITS* Yearbook close to you throughout the year as both a marketplace and a personal reference.

As always, we invite your feedback on how we can improve our coverage in the six regular issues we typically publish between January and December, as well as the content in our future yearbooks. You can always reach us at news@americancraftspirits.org with story ideas, your company news, new product announcements or just to say hello.

Here's to a happy and prosperous 2022. All of us at *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine and ACSA look forward to continuing this amazing adventure with you! ■



Jeff Cioletti
Editor in Chief



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A TOAST TO CHANGE

Like so many of you, I am ankles-deep in the bustle of the final quarter of 2021, juggling demand and supply, navigating a shortage of whatever it is this week, and adapting to the many ways things have changed for our small businesses since March 2020.

I became president of ACSA shortly after the pandemic started, just about a month after frantically trying to help small distilleries respond to the crazy demand for hand sanitizer during the first chaotic month of the pandemic. We read guidance documents from the Food and Drug Administration and the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau multiple times each day; worked with the Department of Transportation to navigate rules for shipping sanitizer; and in between, tried to answer questions from members about how to navigate the new and changing rules and regulations affecting their businesses. We all got accustomed to Zoom meetings (sigh). I made hundreds of phone calls to new and returning members, thanking them for their participation in the association—if you joined recently and haven't talked to me yet, I promise I'm behind, but I will be reaching out!

Our community of small producers is leading real change. ACSA has been a spirits industry leader in creating opportunities for under-represented folks to learn the spirits business and to join us, either through entrepreneurship or employment. We envisioned and created a nonprofit organization, the Spirits Training Entrepreneurship Program for Underrepresented Professionals (STEPUP) Foundation, with a focus on making real education and opportunity happen. Check out stepupinternship.org to find out how you can help build change in our community.

The phone calls to members have been so important, both to the association and to me personally. I have asked how you all are doing, and heard about the issues which are keeping you up at night. The craft spirits industry has grown so incredibly fast over the past 10 years, but for many of us, we are the only distillery in our area, and miss feeling part of a larger community. So many calls from members are looking for mentors and other personal connections to the larger craft distilling community. We hear you, and our conference will have many opportunities to make these connections

across state lines, and even across the country.

Members have talked to me about the ways their businesses have changed as a result of COVID. So many folks have dived into the RTD category! It has been interesting to see how that pivot is changing the industry's focus on differential treatment between malt, wine and spirit-based drinks with similar ABVs. Tax treatment, choice of outlets and distribution may all differ between categories. Advocating for equal treatment regardless of base will help many small distilleries grow and thrive.

Many distilleries found that the pandemic made it possible for them to ship to their customers by common carrier for the first time, just like wineries have been doing for decades. Last year 15 states offered direct-to-consumer spirits shipping bills. ACSA is working hand-in-hand with guilds in several states to help with advocacy at the state level—a whole new frontier for our association. You can tell that one of my personal passions is advocacy—telling our stories to lawmakers as well as customers is the way to create the change we all want to see.

Education is also key to all our success during these times of rapid change. Keep in touch with our education committee—they are working hard creating new content to keep members up on the absolute latest information in all these different areas. I can't wait to explore the offerings in Louisville and see all you beautiful people in person! I am so excited to raise a glass, learn some new things, toast some old friends and make a whole bunch of new ones. ■



Becky Harris
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OPPORTUNITIES IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

In March 2020, I opined to anyone who would listen: “How cool is it that we are living a part of history?” I suspected this thing called the novel coronavirus was a big event but had no clue just how overshadowing it would become.

With our American Craft Spirits Association annual convention taking place only two weeks later in a shimmering new hotel (we would be the first large group to grace its lobby) and our first foray into a convention center (we exceeded hotel exhibit space and were expanding into a larger arena), our momentum for growth, in-person connections and on-site learning came to a screeching halt. Hah, little did I know, and boy was I naive, to the pandemic’s long-lasting, social and economic disruption to our lives, both personal and professional.

On my home front, adult children (and their animals) descended, where I suddenly competed with my son-in-law for bandwidth—me for my multiple Zoom calls and him for online games. As an empty nester, my quiet home (including my office) suddenly burst with energy, excitement and lots of planning and re-planning for the unknown, during a period of unusual togetherness. (If truth be told, I was greatly relieved they left New York City to return to Virginia at a time when the coronavirus cases surpassed unimaginable numbers.)

As a family, we binged “Tiger King,” baked loaves of sourdough bread, made a bunch of TikTok recipes (yum ... that baked feta pasta was tasty!), and switched out our bandanas for packs of masks. We walked, rode the Peloton and whipped up some great cocktails with online tutorials. We traded business attire for business casual (okay—yes—more athletic gear than khakis). We did this as a family unit—creating our own bubble.

2020 stretched into 2021, and with it, the realization that this part of history unequivocally altered our paths forward. The impact was realized at home and at work.

As COVID-19 continued to plague the globe with its own historical timeline, our association, the only national trade group representing the interests of the larger craft spirits community, also learned to deviate and turn in new directions. Our own “bubble” propelled us into cyberspace. Moving our convention was just the beginning (and, if you don’t know, we will hold a convention in Portland in February 2023) of traveling through an evolving landscape. We scheduled, postponed and finally settled on a convention in Louisville, Kentucky, to gather in person in December 2021.

Days, often stretching into evenings, grabbed the time, dedication and political acumen of countless ACSA volunteers. We moved to virtual formats to embrace our community, to advocate—at times—for lifelines to keep our businesses open; to provide technical or compliance information; to figure out and share resources on production of hand sanitizer; to evaluate business

climates with data you supplied on multiple surveys so we could serve as a resource to the Small Business Administration; to assist with supply chain disruption; to support candidates who back our business efforts; and to host a virtual spirits competition and public policy conference.

We also took steps to realize a more diverse industry by launching the Spirits Training Entrepreneurship Program for Underrepresented Professionals (STEPUP) Foundation. We are proud that this initiative will provide underserved and underrepresented individuals with training, encouragement and opportunities to enter the craft spirits community through a comprehensive yearlong, immersive internship program.

Relationships were also enhanced as we worked with federal government agencies (including the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Transportation) and state regulatory bodies, who recognized the importance of direct-to-consumer shipping to allow consumers to safely and responsibly procure alcohol. We remain steadfast to nurture those bonds and press to modernize alcohol beverage laws and regulations.

ACSA staff also learned to stay the course as we continued to produce programs and award events to engage members, allowing networking to continue, even if gathering in our now common virtual bubble. Through our newsletters and *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine, we kept you updated on breaking news, upcoming events and industry content. And to keep our look and feel fresh, we modernized our branding, which you will see soon.

I was inspired by and want to believe that ACSA lives and has demonstrated this motto: “The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.”

It’s been a heck of a journey, and I want to offer a warm thank you to the countless volunteers who are the backbone of ACSA. You keep ACSA strong and enable us to move forward. Here’s to working together today for whatever tomorrow brings. ■



Cheers,

Margie A.S. Lehman
CEO



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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ACSA is grateful to its many volunteers who offer their time, talent and resources to advance the craft spirits industry. We are also thankful to the many committee members not listed on these pages who regularly provide thought leadership to address the concerns of small producers of craft spirits throughout the U.S.

The Year in Review

Spirited Purpose

The American Craft Spirits Association presents its 2021 Annual Report. According to the latest Craft Spirits Data Project, there are now 2,290 American craft distilleries and ACSA remains steadfast in its mission to elevate and advocate for the community of craft spirits producers. As the industry continues to grow, we are thrilled that ACSA has strengthened with a 104% increase in membership and sponsorship between 2020 and 2021.

Over the past year, ACSA worked tirelessly to fight for craft distillers in the halls of Congress and beyond, most notably in rallying support for the historic permanent federal excise tax (FET) relief, which prevented a 400% tax hike for distillers in 2021. ACSA further advocated for parity in direct-to-consumer (DtC) shipping and trade; played an integral role in the government's decision to withdraw surprise hand sanitizer fees for craft distillers; and strengthened bonds with state distilling guilds across the nation. In addition, we launched the Spirits Training Entrepreneurship Program for Underrepresented Professionals (STEPUP) Foundation, a diversity initiative that aims to foster diversity equity and inclusion in the craft spirits industry.

We also proudly provide a wealth of educational offerings with our in-person and virtual convention, webinars and special programs; showcase the best of the nation's craft spirits in our annual Judging of Craft Spirits and biennial Heartland Whiskey Competition; and we continue to present in-depth insight and intelligence for the entire craft spirits universe via *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine and craftspiritsmag.com. Finally, we continue to produce the Craft Spirits Data Project in collaboration with our hand-picked partner, Park Street. Now in its sixth year, the Craft Spirits

Data Project is the chief economic data study for craft spirits producers.

We invite you to read the 2021 Annual Report and let us know what you think. Your insight is critical as we move forward as an organization and as an industry.

Who We Are

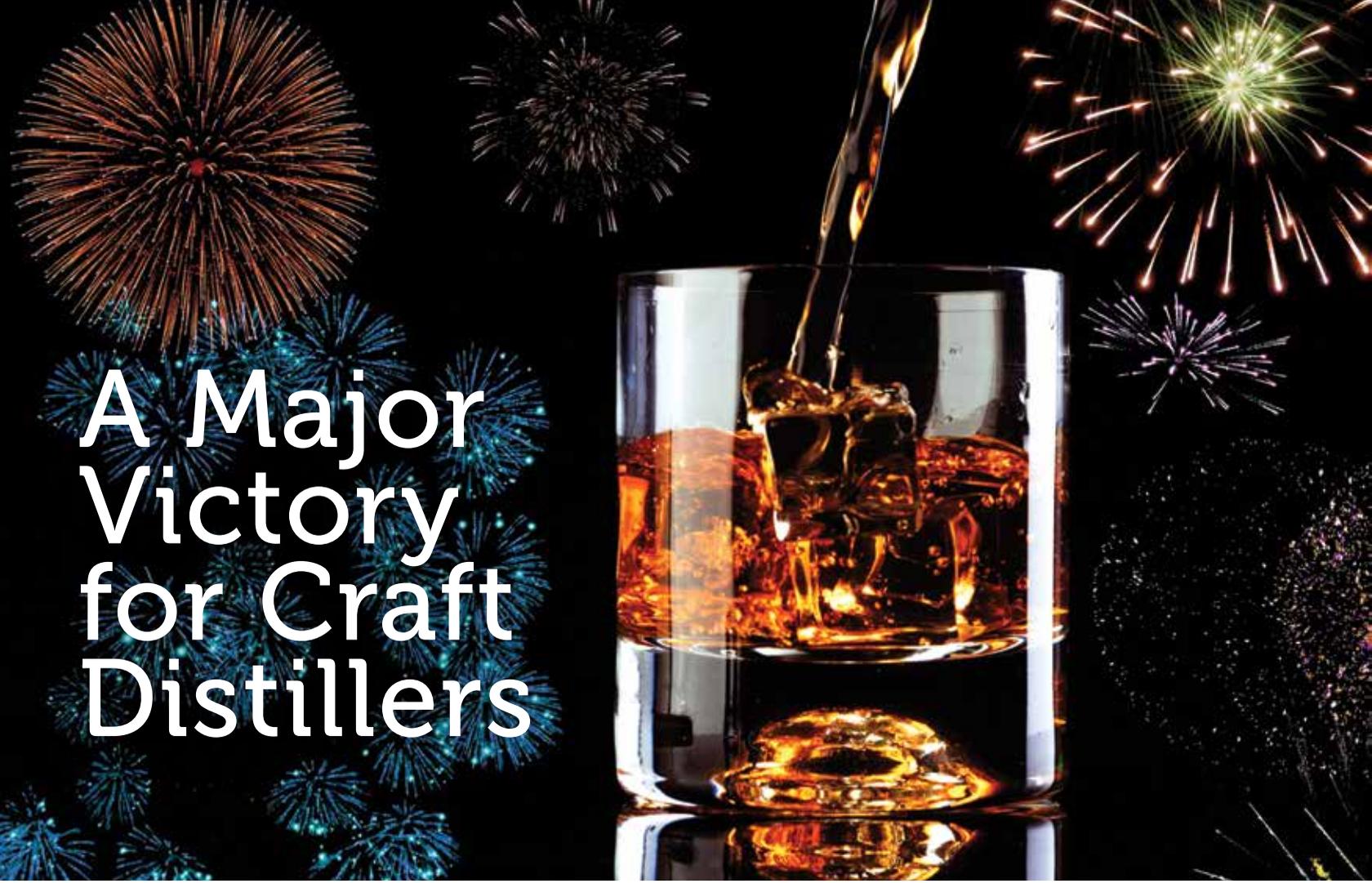
The American Craft Spirits Association is the only registered national nonprofit trade group representing the U.S. craft spirits industry. Members vote for the 15 democratically elected representatives who make up the Board of Directors, and this Board collectively works to govern the ACSA in a transparent, responsive manner and in accordance with our bylaws.

Member Owned

Membership in ACSA is open to anyone, although Voting Members must be independent licensed distillers with a valid DSP, subscribe to ACSA's Code of Ethics, have no more than 50% of the DSP owned (directly or indirectly) by a producer of distilled spirits whose combined annual production of distilled spirits from all sources exceeds 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond, and annually produce fewer than 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond (the amount on which excise taxes are paid).

In case terms, 750,000 proof gallons is 315,451 9-liter cases (12 750 ml bottles) of 100 proof spirit. A DSP may not be a Voting Member if another producer of distilled spirits whose combined annual production of distilled spirits from all sources exceeds 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond and directly or indirectly holds an ownership interest of greater than 50% of the DSP.





A Major Victory for Craft Distillers

ACSA Toasts to Permanent FET Relief

Following approvals in the U.S. House and Senate, then-President Trump signed the Craft Beverage Modernization and Tax Reform Act (CBMTRA) on Dec. 27, 2020, as part of an omnibus and stimulus package, giving the country's 2,200 craft spirits producers much-needed, permanent tax relief and parity with their counterparts in beer and wine, who have enjoyed lower rates for many years. Federal excise tax (FET) reform has been ACSA's top legislative priority, and the president's signing marked a major victory for the distilled spirits industry. In addition to the hardships the industry faces as it crawls back from COVID-related distillery closures, distillers would have faced a 400% tax hike come Jan. 1, 2021, had there been no legislation.

Prior to passage, ACSA, together with other major beverage industry groups, worked tirelessly to rally support for FET relief, which was set to revert back to \$13.50 from \$2.70 for the first 100,000 proof gallons removed from bond annually. CBMTRA had garnered tremendous bipartisan support with endorsement by more than three-fourths of the House and Senate. This permanent extension provides significant, continued relief, and marks the culmination of more than a nine-year push for tax parity.

Since 2011, craft spirits producers across the U.S. have rallied together in an effort to push forward long-term FET relief, and it is clear that this grassroots storytelling effort has worked. Over the past five years, ACSA has facilitated thousands of meetings with members of Congress and their staffers. Even amid a COVID-19 shutdown, ACSA brought 150 craft spirits producers and the entire Board of Directors and past presidents to the Hill virtually to share their stories.

"As our country and industry face a challenging year ahead as we collectively recover from the direct, devastating impact on our businesses due to COVID-19 shutdowns, we applaud Congress—and in particular, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO)—for working together on both sides of the aisle to support our community of 2,200 small businesses and do what is vitally important to keep our industry afloat," said ACSA CEO Margie A.S. Lehrman after CBMTRA was passed. "This isn't just a victory for our industry, but also the peripheral industries we support, including U.S. agriculture and hospitality. Today, we celebrate a major milestone in the fight for parity with craft beer and wine and thank the key Congressional leadership for their tireless efforts."

"We raise a glass to a monumental, near-decade-long effort and to a triumph for our community of craft distilleries," said Mark Shilling, ACSA past president and chair, government affairs, founder of Shilling/Crafted and partner at Big Thirst Consulting. "Finally, this permanent FET reform eliminates what has become a cycle of uncertainty around temporary or even permanent reform. Our industry has a long road ahead as we crawl back from the impact of COVID-19 on our small businesses, but permanent FET reform is one massive roadblock we no longer need to face."

"As President of ACSA and a craft spirits producer myself during what has arguably been the toughest year in recent history to be a small business owner, I know firsthand the struggles we all face in forecasting our financial futures," said Becky Harris, president, ACSA, and president and chief distiller, Catocin Creek Distilling Co. "This passage is a major, monumental moment and the culmination of nearly a decade of craft spirits advocacy efforts."

ACSA Praises HHS Action to Exempt Craft Distillers from Surprise Sanitizer Fees

After the surprise announcement that craft distillers that produced hand sanitizer in 2020 would have to pay \$14,060, ACSA praised the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for crafting a long-term solution to exclude craft distilleries and other small producers from paying the onerous Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fees.

On the heels of ACSA discussions with HHS Chief of Staff Brian Harrison and senior HHS leadership, together with an intensive outreach campaign to congressional legislators and members of the media, HHS in early January withdrew the FDA's scheduled fees. ACSA will be a key stakeholder as HHS and FDA review future processes. As such, these alarming and sudden payments were no longer due on February 11, 2021.

As we learned in October, the FDA will withdraw temporary guidance, effective Dec. 31, 2021, which allowed distillers to register, manufacture and sell hand sanitizer under the temporary guidelines must cease by the end of the year. Should a distiller wish to produce hand sanitizer on or after January 1, it must comply with the monograph for over-the-counter topical antiseptics. Moreover, hand sanitizers produced

under the temporary guidance can no longer be sold or distributed by producers after March 31, 2022.



DtC Efforts

In the first half of 2021, ACSA unveiled a direct-to-consumer (DtC) shipping campaign and threw its support behind a new bill that would allow the United States Postal Service (USPS) to ship spirits.

Assets for the DtC shipping campaign were unveiled during a state distilling guilds roundtable moderated by ACSA's state guilds committee co-chairs P.T. Wood (Wood's High Mountain Distillery in Salida, Colorado) and Gina Holman (J. Carver Distillery in Waconia, Minnesota) in February. Dan Farber—chair of ACSA's DtC committee and founder and distiller of Osocalis Distillery (Soquel, California)—provided an update on ACSA's efforts to pave the way for DtC shipping and shared details on a collection of resources for guilds and distilleries to advocate for DtC changes.

In May, members of Congress introduced bipartisan legislation that would allow the USPS to ship alcohol—including distilled spirits—directly to consumers in accordance with state laws.

Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA), Congressman Dan Newhouse (R-WA), and 17 original House co-sponsors introduced the United States Postal Service Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 2517). This bipartisan bill—which now has 47 co-sponsors—would end the Prohibition-era ban that prevents USPS from shipping alcoholic beverages to consumers. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) introduced companion legislation in the U.S. Senate, as well, and ACSA endorses the act.

ACSA continues to work with state guilds to advance DtC legislative efforts.

Competition and Trade

In 2021, ACSA joined dozens of associations representing all tiers of the beverage alcohol industry in the launch of the Toasts Not Tariffs Coalition to advocate for the permanent removal of all EU, U.K. and U.S. tariffs on beverage alcohol products in connection to the steel and aluminum and World Trade Organization Boeing/Airbus disputes. Recently, we celebrated when the U.S. and EU announced an agreement to end their dispute.

ACSA also submitted comments to the federal government on competition and trade. In late July and early August, ACSA asked American craft spirits producers to take a short survey about the most important issues facing them as it relates to competition in the American economy in order to respond to give comments to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). Market access was, unsurprisingly, the primary issue. In our survey, most producers considered this issue to be of the highest importance (ranking 5 out of 5) in their ability to enter a market. Additional important issues included lack of parity between beer, wine and spirits; common business practices employed by large producers making for an uneven playing field in the wholesale and retail tiers; and federal (TTB) regulation.

And in October, ACSA filed comments with the United States Trade Representative, sharing specific examples of barriers to entry in foreign markets. Chief among those barriers is bottle size. For example, the EU has not extended the privilege to spirits exported into their member countries the use of a common standard bottle size or an agreement by export markets to accept the U.S. approved standards of fill. Other barriers identified included inconsistencies in labeling, age statements and use of botanical ingredients.



ACSA Launches STEPUP Foundation

In August, ACSA proudly launched the Spirits Training Entrepreneurship Program for Underrepresented Professionals (STEPUP) Foundation, a diversity initiative that aims to provide underserved and underrepresented individuals with training, encouragement, and opportunities to enter the craft spirits community through a comprehensive yearlong, immersive internship program. ACSA has long recognized a lack of diversity in the alcoholic beverage industry and has been working behind the scenes for some time now to develop a comprehensive program aimed at increasing talent through facilitation of workplace diversity. STEPUP will engage diverse applicants with an interest in the beverage sector and help those of different races, color, national origins, genders and sexual orientations to acquire the skills and experience they need to succeed in the industry.

Together with a selection committee, the Board of Directors have created an immersive internship program for underrepresented individuals in the alcoholic beverage industry. Margie A.S. Lehrman (CEO of ACSA) currently serves as the organization's president, working together with secretary Becky Harris (president of Catoctin Creek Distilling Co. and president of ACSA) and treasurer Julie Kinch (CEO/Founder of JK Leadership Advisors, LLC). They are joined by a seasoned board of directors, including Chris Montana (CEO and head distiller of Du Nord Social Spirits); Chris Underwood (CEO, of Young's Holdings); David Cid (rum master of Bacardi); and Ingrid Wetzell (HR director of Bently Enterprises). These critical liaisons will help identify potential partners, secure financial resources, and develop training materials to ensure the program's success.

The STEPUP internship program will be primarily funded through cornerstone partners and other major donors. Diageo North America will serve as the first cornerstone partner and has made a \$1.2 million commitment over three years. In addition, the company will also hold a seat at the STEPUP advisory board. Donor contributions, of any size, will also be welcome from anyone supporting the mission to open up and embrace diversity in the distilling community. STEPUP has also received significant financial commitments from Young's Holdings, as well as contributions from other leaders in craft distilling, including Leopold Bros. and Smooth Ambler Spirits.

STEPUP Foundation participants will be guided through every facet of operating a distillery, with the added bonus of an immersive internship opportunity with a wholesaler. Interns will experience hands-on training and job exposure to several facets of the alcoholic beverage industry, including distillation production and safety, sales and marketing, business and finance, tasting room operations, and distribution. In an effort to remove any financial impediments that may limit applicants, the internship will also include a stipend, travel expenses and lodging. In its inaugural year, the STEPUP Foundation will run two candidates through the program with the expectation to run another six interns in its second year and 10 or more interns in year three and beyond.

"While we recognize we cannot change our industry landscape overnight, we are pleased to be moving in the right direction and are equally inspired by the unwavering support we've seen from the craft community for initiatives like STEPUP," said Lehrman. "Though we've been working behind the scenes for well over a year, we are excited to formally introduce this program in our ongoing effort to spark as much change in our industry as we can."

"We are thrilled to be launching this critically important effort," added Montana. "We acknowledge the real lack of diversity in the alcoholic beverage space and

hope to provide all of those interested in the industry, regardless of background, with thorough training and real-life experience."

Nicole Austin, general manager and distiller of Cascade Hollow Distilling Co., who will serve on the advisory board on behalf of Diageo and their cornerstone partnership, added, "I look forward to serving on the board of STEPUP and working to continue the important mission of increasing diversity in the alcoholic beverage industry. The community and leadership I found in the American Craft Spirits Association has enriched both my life and career, and I am thrilled Diageo is supporting ACSA as they provide opportunity, training and experience to all who are interested in this space."

Underwood, whose company has also provided a significant financial commitment to fund STEPUP's launch, added, "The board is excited to be working to advance STEPUP's mission to change the face of the industry by creating this unprecedented program. We are proud to put real action around the words of diversity and inclusion."

The STEPUP Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity with donors able to deduct contributions. To learn more about the foundation or to apply, visit stepupinternship.org or email info@stepupinternship.org.



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Hundreds of Distillers Virtually Visit with Members of Congress in Public Policy Conference

Distilling dominated Congressional appointment books in late May as more than 200 craft spirits producers from nearly every U.S. state talked COVID-19 relief, trade tariffs and direct-to-consumer (DtC) shipping with Senators and Representatives on both sides of the aisle. The spirits community gathered for more than 150 virtual meetings during the American Craft Spirits Association (ACSA) and Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) Public Policy Conference on May 25-26.

On the COVID-19 relief front, distillers urged support for bills related to COVID-19 relief, like the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, a \$28.6 billion program that included help for craft distillers. Other major objectives on spirits producers' agenda included tariffs and the USPS Shipping Equity Act.

On the first day of the conference, about a dozen officials from the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) generously offered their time to address attending distillers and answer any TTB-related questions. The big theme of the discussion was "streamlining," as the regulatory officials discussed new technologies and protocols that will enhance efficiency of processes related to label approvals, permitting and filing and resolving claims.

Susan Harwood Grant

ACSA has committed to focus on distillery fire safety through the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Susan Harwood Grant Training Program. The purpose of the grant program is to equip nonprofit organizations to provide training and education programs for employers and workers on the recognition, avoidance and prevention of safety and health hazards in their workplaces, and to inform workers of their rights and employers of their responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act. Through this program, ACSA, in partnership with Industrial Safety & Training Services (ISTS) will develop training for distillery employers and workers, covering fire prevention and protection topics specific to distilling at a craft scale.

Craft Spirits Classroom: Quenching Your Thirst for Knowledge

In collaboration with the Education and Safety Committees, ACSA continued to build upon its foundation of educational programming by hosting 23 (and counting) webinars in 2021. Topics ranged from technical and production topics to Facebook marketing for craft distillers. Some of this year's most popular webinars included:

- How to Stay Out of Trouble When it Comes to Dealing with Waste Water: Mike LoCascio, Soluble Organic Solutions
- Distilling With Heirloom Corn: Lisa Wicker, Widow Jane Distillery; Gary Hinegardner, Wood Hat Spirits; Alan Bishop, Spirits of French Lick
- Fermentation Techniques: Kevin Kawa, AB Biotek

8th Annual Judging of Craft Spirits

In August, ACSA announced the medalists from its 8th Annual Judging of Craft Spirits, who were honored during a livestream awards ceremony. Medalists were hand-selected from among a pool just shy of 550 entrants.

During the event, ACSA proudly bestowed the evening's ultimate honor, the Best of Show award, to Milam & Greene Whiskey Distillery in Blanco, Texas, for its Port Finished Rye. Dan Garrison from Garrison Brothers Distillery served as the evening's emcee. The stream also featured welcome remarks from Margie A.S. Lehrman and Maggie Campbell. Entries were submitted from 42 states across the country in seven main categories: whiskey, gin, rum, vodka & grain spirits, brandy, distilled specialty spirits, and ready to drink (RTD). In addition to a Best of Show and the Best in Class distinctions, the judging panel awarded 12 gold, 228 silver, and 242 bronze medals.

The 2021 Best in Class distinctions, the highest honor in each of the seven judging categories, were awarded to a mix of both established, award-winning distilleries and younger newcomers. These winning distilleries will be presented with hand-carved barrel heads courtesy of Thousand Oaks Barrel Co., and all medal recipients will receive custom medals generously provided by Apholos.

Best in Class honorees in each category included: whiskey: Port Finished Rye, Milam & Greene Whiskey Distillery; gin: 28 Mile Gin, 28 Mile Distilling Co. (IL); rum: Navy Strength Rum, Star Union Spirits (IL); vodka & grain spirits: San Luis Valley Potato Vodka, Wood's High Mountain Distillery (CO); brandy: Pear Brandy XO Edition, Peach Street Distillers (CO); distilled specialty spirits: Carlino Bro's Bootleggers Edition Barrel Finish, 3 Hundred Days Distilling (CO); RTD: Copperwing House Calls Wilderness Downtown, Copperwing Distillery (MN).

ACSA would like to thank its competition sponsors, which include Glencairn, Heinz-Glas, and Top Shelf Logistics; host facility Cardinal Spirits in Bloomington, Indiana; and our panel of 29 judges.

The complete list of medalists is available on the ACSA website.



Craft Spirits Packaging Awards

In late 2020, ACSA and *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine launched the Craft Spirits Packaging Awards. Sponsored by the Glass Packaging Institute, the competition celebrates the best in craft spirits labels and packaging. Its president, Scott DeFife, presented Best of Show to the makers of Brooklyn Gin. Gold medals were awarded in the following categories: portfolio: The Family Jones, Denver; gin: Brooklyn Gin, Brooklyn, New York; rum: Esencia Barrel Aged Spiced Rum, Burl & Sprig, Muskegon, Michigan; RTD: Gin & Tonic, Social Hour Cocktails, Brooklyn, New York; specialty spirits: Roy's Demon Barley Shochu, American Shochu Co., Frederick, Maryland; vodka: Banyan Reserve Vodka, St. Petersburg Distillery, St. Petersburg, Florida; and whiskey: Organic Red Rider Rye Whiskey, Rockfilter Distillery, Spring Grove, Minnesota. All of the medalists were featured in the January 2021 issue of *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine. Medalists from the second annual competition will be announced at ACSA's 8th Annual Distillers Convention & Vendor Trade Show in Louisville, Kentucky, and will be featured in the January 2022 edition of the magazine.

Bar Convent Brooklyn

After COVID-19 forced the cancellation of last year's Bar Convent Brooklyn, the U.S. version of Europe's biggest trade fair for the bar industry returned in August to the Brooklyn Expo Center. ACSA once again sponsored a pavilion featuring member distilleries from across the country. Participating distilleries this year included Backwards Distilling Co. (Casper, Wyoming), Distillery 291 (Colorado Springs, Colorado), Martin Ryan Distilling Co. (Portland, Oregon), New York Distilling Co. (Brooklyn, New York), Round Turn Distilling (Biddeford, Maine), Wiggly Bridge Distillery (York, Maine) and Wigle Whiskey (Pittsburgh).



Guild Outreach: Stronger Together

ACSA strives to be a source of information and a national conduit for state distilling guilds. Currently, ACSA is helping state guilds with efforts to facilitate distribution of spirits directly to the consumer (DtC) through legislation or regulatory relief that provides parity with other alcohol categories. ACSA offers in-kind memberships for all formalized state guilds with an executive director and complimentary registration to ACSA's annual conventions. ACSA also engages, upon request, with state guilds to fight unique challenges. Most recently, ACSA provided direct feedback on why New York City's proposed fire code with a separate chapter devoted to distilleries, was particularly burdensome, onerous, and overly prescriptive. ACSA used its own fire safety expert to provide potential solutions to ensure safety of life and limb. In addition, ACSA sends out a quarterly newsletter to all guild leadership on important facing issues, and our CEO, Margie A.S. Lehrman, regularly attends state guild meetings upon request.

— 2021 — HEARTLAND Whiskey COMPETITION

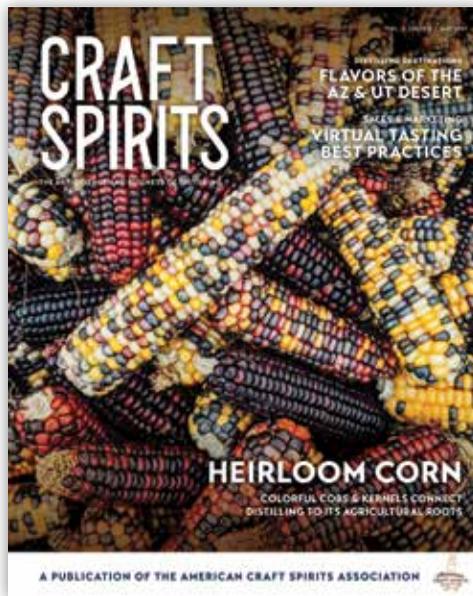
Heartland Whiskey Competition

In September, ACSA announced the medalists of the 2021 Heartland Whiskey Competition, which was open to craft whiskeys from all 50 states that incorporate corn in their mash bill. In this third, biennial blind judging event, whiskeys from 17 "Heartland" states also competed for Best in State, and all entries competed for Best of Show and in their select whiskey sub-categories.

The competition, which was generously sponsored by state corn marketing associations, took place in late July in Louisville, Kentucky. ACSA facilitated the judging process and its former board president—Chris Montana, owner of Minneapolis-based Du Nord Social Spirits served as the judging director. The Bard Distillery, in Graham, Kentucky, assisted with pre-competition logistics. Judges selected from the local Kentucky whiskey industry were chosen for their knowledge and expertise of craft whiskey.

Best of Show was captured by Weldon Mills Distillery from Weldon, North Carolina, for its Rockfish Whiskey, which also earned the top score in the Corn Whiskey category.

A full list of medalists can be found at americancraftspirits.org/programs/special-events.



Insight and Intelligence

ACSA regularly updates and engages with its members about news and topics that affect their DSPs and livelihoods. The bi-monthly *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine delivers in-depth insight and intelligence for the entire craft spirits universe; Craft Spirits Weekly and The Monthly Mash provide breaking news and more via email; and Craft Spirits Live, Craft Spirits TV, and The Craft Spirits Podcast offer wisdom from craft spirits producers, thought leaders and more.

While the digital-only magazine continues to be available at no charge for regular subscribers, we recently launched the V.I.P. Lounge to further support our cutting-edge features, business insights and entrepreneurial advice from and for the craft spirits community. For a modest fee, participants can now unlock premium reader experiences, like early access to magazine issues and a set of *CRAFT SPIRITS*-branded Glencairn glasses.

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Virtual Board of Directors Retreat

The coronavirus may have precluded travel and in-person meetings, but it in no way altered the dedication and commitment of the ACSA Board of Directors. Besides meeting at least four times in little square boxes (yes, meetings morphed into Zoom calls), the board held a virtual retreat

in September with all board members contributing over the course of two days to review and refine ACSA's strategic plan. It also analyzed finances, as good stewards of ACSA's monies, and evaluated projections moving forward.

Statement of Financial Activity

Three-Year Comparison

				Change from 2018	Change from 2018
	(\$) 2018	(\$) 2019	(\$) 2020	(\$) CHANGE	(%) CHANGE
REVENUE					
ALL PROGRAMS	754,732	706,401	224,223	(530,509)	-70
MEMBERSHIP	167,750	196,168	171,767	4,017	2
SPONSORSHIP	157,500	120,000	63,100	(94,400)	-60
TOTAL REVENUE	1,079,982	1,022,569	459,090	(620,892)	-57
EXPENSES					
ALL PROGRAMS	443,310	513,865	263,353	(179,957)	-41
OPERATING	349,121	461,025	395,380	46,259	13
TOTAL EXPENSES	792,431	974,890	658,733	(133,698)	-17
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	287,551	47,679	(199,643)	(487,194)	-169

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our donors and sponsors, whose generous support enables us to move the craft spirits industry forward.

3x3
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A Toast to 2022

While the global pandemic made an impact on all businesses and organizations, we are emboldened by the grit and tenacity of craft spirits producers and suppliers. In 2022 and beyond, we are eager to continue our mission of elevating and advocating for the community of craft spirits producers. Here's to a safe, successful and spirited 2022!

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THERE IS STRENGTH IN MEMBERS



The American Craft Spirits Association (ACSA) is the only national association of craft distillers created and governed by craft distillers.

Our mission is to elevate and advocate for the community of craft spirits producers.

WHY JOIN?

- Build long-term relationships and enhance industry connections
- Engage in the battle to make permanent the reduction in the Federal Excise Tax
- Learn from industry thought leaders
- Increase market access

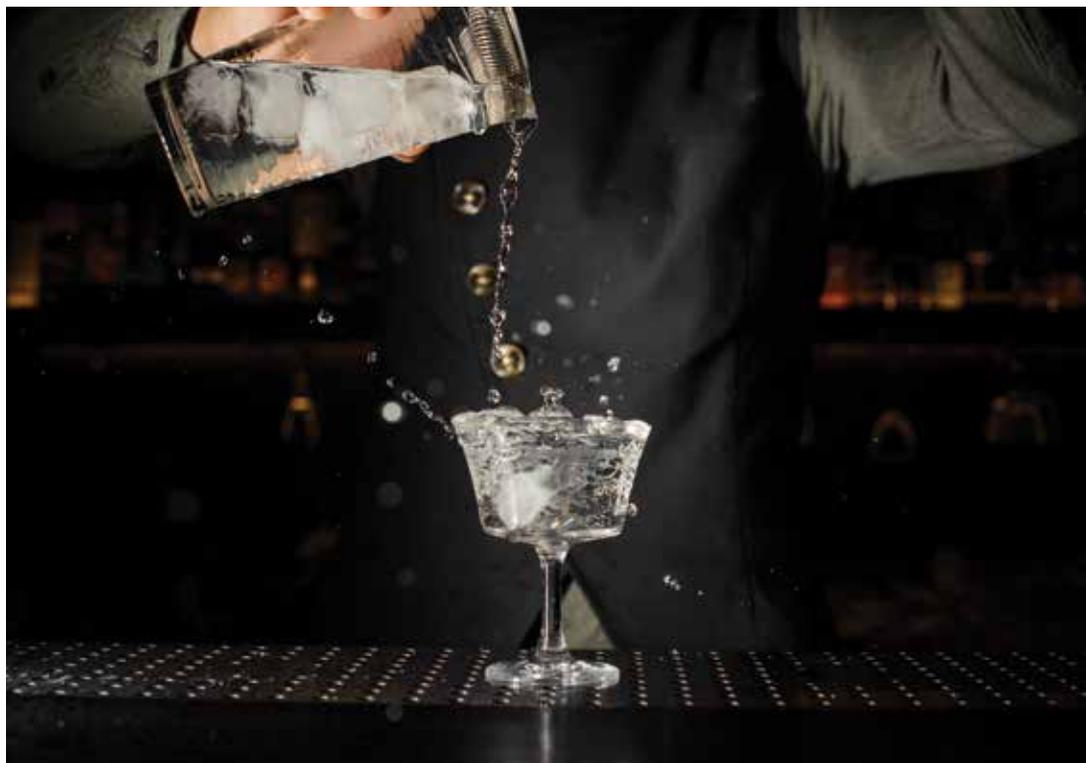
**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP ONLY OPPORTUNITIES BY
JOINING TODAY!**

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E: membership@americancraftspirits.org**



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A directory of vendors and more for the craft spirits community



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(See also: Lab Equipment)

DraughtLab Sensory Software

draughtlab.com

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Email: lindsay@draughtlab.com

Phone: (530) 902-4704

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fwcvision.com

Contact: Peter Fuller

Email: seamscope@fwcvision.com

Phone: (617) 699-2201

Hartwick College Center for Craft Food and Beverage

1 Hartwick Dr.

Oneonta, NY 13820

hartwick.edu/about-us/

center-for-craft-food-and-beverage

Contact: Harmonie Bettenhausen

Email: bettenhauseh@hartwick.edu

Phone: (607) 431-4232

Montana State University

(See also: Education)

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hdai.com

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Joseph & Joseph + Bravura Architects

550 S. 4th St.

Louisville, KY 40202

josephandjoseph.net

Contact: C.M. (Cash) Moter IV

Email: c.moter@josephandjoseph.net

Phone: (502) 583-8888

The Koetter Group

(See also: Safety Equipment/Systems)

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737 South 3rd St.

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luckett-farley.com

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Email: jmoneypenny@luckett-farley.com

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designopa.com

Contact: Stephen Oliver

Email: admin@designopa.com

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POD Architecture & Design

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Phone: (503) 228-5617

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(See also: Software)

Overproof

(See also: Software)

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parkstreet.com

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Email: epennington@parkstreet.com

Phone: (305) 967-7440

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Phone: (315) 939-3741

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640 Chinook Ave. SW

Avon, MN 56310

thebarrelmill.com

Contact: Richard Hobbs

Email: richard@thebarrelmill.com

Phone: (320) 356-7125

Gainesville Cooperage

456 Industrial Boulevard

Gainesville, GA 30501

gainesvillecooperage.com

Contact: Lee Arnold

Email: gainesvillecooperage@gmail.com

Phone: (770) 443-9300

Hall-Woolford Tank Co., Inc.

(See also: Fermenting Tanks)

H&A Barrel Management

1225 E. MacArthur Street

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ha-barrelmanagement.com

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Email:

ken.seymour@habarrelmanagement.com

Phone: (707) 732-8013

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independentstavecompany.com

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teri.smith@independentstavecompany.com

(573) 442-5707

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innerstave.com

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Email: sales@innerstave.com

Phone: (707) 996-8781

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Email: noah@kentuckybourbonbarrel.com
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Mio Vigneto Products, INC

(See also: Fermenting Tanks)

Nadalié USA

P.O. Box 798
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nadalie.com
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Phone: (707) 942.9301

Northeast Barrel Co.

751 Maple Ave.
Lansdale, PA 19446
northeastbarrelcompany.com
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Phone: (215) 402-7700

Oak Solutions Group

oaksolutionsgroup.com
Contact: Amy LaHue
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Premier Wine Cask

1710 Soscol Ave., Ste. 5
Napa, CA 94559
premierwinecask.com
Contact: Eric B. Mercier
Direct email: eric@premierwinecask.com
General email: office@premierwinecask.com
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Mobile: (707) 290-2321

Seguin Moreau Napa Cooperage

151 Camino Dorado
Napa, CA 94558
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Phone: (707) 252-3408

Speyside Cooperage Kentucky

805 North Buckman Rd.
Shepherdsville, KY 40165
speysidecooperageky.com
Contact: Gina Ray
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Phone: (502) 543-3101

Thousand Oaks Barrel Co.

9113 Euclid Ave.
Manassas, VA 20110
1000oaksbarrel.com
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Phone: (508) 577-6867

The Vintner Vault

(See also: Equipment Dealers)

West Virginia Great Barrel Co.

546 Mountain Home Dr.
Caldwell, WV 24925
wvgbc.com
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Email: cate.crabtree@wvgbc.com
Phone: (304) 520-0645

ZAK Cooperage

9372 Bardstown Rd.
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BARWARE**Barfly Mixology Gear**

dba Mercer Culinary
1860 Smithtown Ave.
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
barflybmercerculinary.com
Contact: Joe Flaherty
Email: jflaherty@mercerculinary.com
Phone: (773) 844-7256

Cocktail Kingdom

31 West 8th St., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10011
cocktailkingdom.com
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Phone: (978) 808-9199

Kulero (Sustainable Cocktail Straws)

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Sterling Cut Glass

(See also: Glassware)

Urban Bar

Sandbar AP Ltd
The Glasshouse, Highfields Business Park
Kneesworth, Royston
Hertfordshire SG8 5JT UK
Netherlands Address:
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2902 KM Capelle a/d
IJssel, Netherlands
urbanbar.com
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BITTERS**Bittermens LLC**

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Copper & Kings Old Fashioned Bitters

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Dashfire

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Minnetonka, MN 55345
dashfire.us
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Dunrobin Distilleries

10 Terry Fox Dr.
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18.21 Bitters

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Fee Brothers

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Hella Cocktail Co.

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Novato, CA 94949
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San Francisco Herb Co.

(See also: Ingredients and Flavors)

BOILERS**Allied Boiler & Supply, Inc.**

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Rite Engineering & Manufacturing Corp.

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BOTANICALS**American Mercantile Corporation**

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BSG

(See also: Grain and Malt)

Filter Process & Supply

(See also: Filtration)

Horner International

(See also: Ingredients and Flavors)

Mueggenburg Farms

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San Francisco Herb Co.

(See also: Ingredients and Flavors)

The Spiritual Machine

(See also: Consultants)

BOTTLES**Anchor Hocking**

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Columbus, Ohio 43215
theoneidagroup.com
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Flow-Design

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Fusion Glassworks

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Glencairn Crystal

(See also: Glassware)

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 globalpackage.net
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Imperial Packaging

(See also: Packaging/Secondary)

Liquor Bottle Packaging International

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 Frankfort, KY 40601
 liquorbottle.net
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Loggerhead Deco

1640 La Dawn Dr.
 Portage, WI 53901
 loggerheaddeco.com
 Contact: Steve Gilbertson
 Email: steve@loggerheaddeco.com
 Phone: (608) 320-2846

NimbleJack Partners

(See also: Bottle Closures)

Nouvel

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 Naucalpan, Mexico 53500
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 Email: isaacj@nouvel.glass
 Phone: 525520462272

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 Perrysburg, OH 43551-2999
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 Phone: (469) 367-2566

Packaging Logistics Inc.

(See also: Packaging/Secondary)

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Phoenix Packaging

(See also: Packaging/Secondary)

Saverglass

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 Fairfield, CA 94534
 saverglass.com
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 Concord, CA 94520
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 Phone: (514) 696-7474

Stoelzle Glass

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 stoelzle.com
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 Phone: (800) 325-7782

United Bottles & Packaging

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 Email: arek.froundjian@unitedbottles.com
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 Vernon, BC, Canada V1T8T2
 thinkuniversal.com

Contact: Amy Haselman

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(866) 549-1323

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Veritiv, dba All American Containers

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allamericancontainers.com
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Vitro Glass Containers

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Mobile: (203) 561-4081

BOTTLE CLOSURES**ACIC Cork & Closure**

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Actega North America Technologies, Inc.

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

APHOLOS Metal Labels & Closures

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Berlin Packaging

(See also: Bottles)

Bostocap

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Bostocap is a European-based company. Our main field of action is the crafting and distribution of bottle stoppers, capsules, seals and boxes for the spirits and drinks industry. Our production facilities are in Spain, France, Belgium and Portugal. You can find out more by visiting our website bostocap.com. We would be more than happy to send you prices and samples for any of our products.

**Cork Supply USA**

531 Stone Rd.
Benicia, CA 94510
corksupply.com
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Phone: (707) 746-0353

Danforth Bottle Stoppers

Danforth Pewter
52 Seymour St.
Middlebury, VT 05753
danforthpewter.com
Email: info@danforthpewter.com
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EnoPlastic USA

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Flow-Design

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Global Package LLC

(See also: Bottles)

J.C. Ribeiro USA, LLC

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Louisville, KY 40204

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45 Executive Ct.
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Liquor Bottle Packaging International

(See also: Bottles)

NimbleJack Partners

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Packaging Logistics Inc.

(See also: Packaging/Secondary)

Phoenix Packaging

(See also: Packaging/Secondary)

Reed Wax

(See also: Packaging/Secondary)

Supercap Srl

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TALIS

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corksupply.com/us/products/talis
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587 Skippack Pike
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Universal Packaging

(See also: Bottles)

Veritiv, dba All American Containers

(See also: Bottles)

Vinoseal/Vinolok

vinoseal.us

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BOTTLING EQUIPMENT**Briggs of Burton, Inc.**

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

DTM Packaging & Custom Automation

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Hingham, MA 02043

dtmpackaging.com

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Filamatic

4119 Fordleigh Rd.

Baltimore, MD 21215

filamatic.com

Email: info@filamatic.com

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Fogg Filler

3455 John F Donnelly Dr.

Hollan, MI 49424

foggfiller.com

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FT System

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

GEA North America

9165 Rumsey Road

Columbia MD 21045

gea.com

Phone: (844) 432 2329

IC Filling Systems Inc.

3558 Round Barn Blvd., Ste. #200

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Mio Vigneto Products, INC

(See also: Fermenting Tanks)

Pack Leader USA

(See also: Labeling Machines)

Prospero Equipment Corp.

(See also: Still Manufacturers)

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US Bottlers Machinery Co.

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**BRANDING/MARKETING/
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(See also: Consultants)

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to your brand than meets the eye—standing out is simply not enough anymore. We help you define, position and activate your brand—ultimately connecting more deeply with your consumers and forging a long-term bond with your product.

Our capabilities include design for packaging, logos, custom bottles, marketing materials and websites, brand strategy, positioning and naming.

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Flow-Design

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

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High-Proof Creative is an award winning, woman-owned marketing agency for the craft beverage industry. We provide services for companies worldwide in branding and packaging, website development, design, marketing strategy, social media, content SEO and more. In 2020, High-Proof Creative launched the WomXn in Distilling movement to highlight and map marginalized people in the industry (distillingwomen.com).

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CREATIVE

Hired Guns Creative

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Spirits Consulting Group

(See also: Consultants)

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(See also: Consultants)

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**BULK SPIRITS/CONTRACT
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Phone: (502) 233-4769
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1701 West End Avenue, Ste. 400
Nashville, TN 37203
bbirdbarrel.com

Contact: Prentiss Nelson
Direct email: prentiss@bbirdbarrel.com

General email:
info@bbirdbarrel.com
Phone: (615) 873-1612

Blackbird Barrel Brokers is a leading supplier and broker of bulk aged American whiskeys. Specializing primarily in aged Kentucky, Indiana and Tennessee bourbons and ryes, Blackbird Barrel Brokers provides bulk spirits inventory for both new and growing brands. Contact Blackbird today about our current inventory. Minimum orders apply.



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2185 Town Line Rd.
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cayugaingredients.com
Contact: Eduard Zaydman
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Phone: (315) 515-9598

CIE

2955 W. Delphi Pike
Marion, IN 46952
cie.us

Contact: Jason Drook
Email: jdrook@cie.us
Phone: (765) 384-4001

Corsair Distillery

601 Merritt Ave.
Nashville, TN 37203
corsairdistillery.com
Contact: Darek Bell
Email: darek@corsairartisan.com
Phone: (615) 351-9442

Filter Process & Supply

(See also: Filtration)

Florida Caribbean Distillers

530 Dakota Ave.
Lake Alfred, FL 33850
floridadistillers.com
Contact: Latisha George
Email: latisha.george@floridadistillers.com
Phone: (863) 956-1116

Glacial Grain Spirits, LLC

270 20th St. NW
Benson, MN 56215
glacialgrainspirits.com
Contact: Claire Goff
Email: cgoff@cvec.com
Phone: (320) 842-3255

Good Time Beverages

9234 Hall Rd.
Downey, CA 90241
goodtimebeverages.com
Contact: Robert Whyte
Email: bob@goodtimebeverages.com
Phone: (562) 291-6291

Green River Spirits

10 Distillery Rd.
Owensboro, KY 42301
greenriverspirits.com
Contact: Jacob Call
Email: jacob.call@greenriverspirits.com
Phone: (270) 691-9001

J. B. Thome & Co., Inc.

1110 Boca Ciega Isle Dr.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33706
bulkspirits.com
Contact: Heather Thome-Polansky
Email: heather@bulkspirits.com
Phone: (727) 642-0588

MGP Ingredients

100 Commercial St.
P.O. Box 130
Atchison, KS 66002

mgpingredients.com
 Contact: Matt Krusemark
 Email: m.krusemark@mgpingredients.com

Midwest Custom Bottling
 (See also: Contract Packaging)

Moonshine University
 (See also: Education)

New Age Renewable Energy
 2185 Genoa Venice Town Line Rd.
 King Ferry, NY 13081
 narenewableenergy.com
 Contact: Eduard Zaydman
 Email: eduard@narenewableenergy.com
 Phone: (917) 754-6052

Next Century Spirits
 8601 Six Forks Rd.
 Ste. 260, Forum 1
 Raleigh, NC 27615
 nextcenturyspirits.com
 Contact: Yolanda Castillo
 Email: yocastillo@nextcenturyspirits.com
 Phone: (919) 324-1932

Southern Distilling Co.

211 Jennings Rd.
 Statesville, NC 28625
 southerndistilling.com
 Contact: Tom Wiberg
 Email:

cheers@southerndistilling.com
 Phone: (704) 978-7175

Southern Distilling Co. is one of the largest artisan distilleries in the nation. We offer product development, contract distilling (standard and custom mash bill whiskeys, rum, and agave spirits), barrel warehouse aging, batching, blending, bottling and co-packaging of award-winning products. We also keep an extensive inventory of aged bourbon and rye whiskey available year-round. We can barrel and warehouse age your product to meet both short and long-term goals. At Southern Distilling Co., you

get standout spirits that make brands unforgettable.



Tennessee Distilling Group
 1929 Ridgecrest Dr.
 Columbia, TN 38401
 tndistilling.com
 Contact: Rob Bourdon
 Email: rfbourdon@tndistilling.com
 Phone: (315) 750-6074

Ultra Pure LLC
 Signature Spirits Division
 50 Old Kings Highway North
 Darien, CT 06820
 ultrapure-usa.com
 Contact: Alyssa Gianino
 Direct email: alyssa@ultra-pure-usa.com
 General email: beverage@ultrapure-usa.com
 Phone: (203) 662.9761

White Dog Trading and Storage
 P.O. Box 150
 Frankfort, KY 40602
 whitedogllc.com
 Contact: Mark Harris
 Email: charris@whitedogllc.com
 Phone: (859) 321-2049

CAN CARRIERS

Gamer Packaging
 (See also: Bottles)

PakTech
 1680 Irving Rd.
 Eugene, OR 97402
 paktech-opi.com
 Contact: Elizabeth Kouns
 Direct email: elizabeth.kouns@paktech-opi.com
 Main: (541) 461-5000
 Direct: (541) 743-4057
 Mobile: (541) 517-6762

Roberts PolyPro
 5416 Wyoming Ave.
 Charlotte, NC 28273
 robertspolypro.com
 Email: robertspolypro@promachbuilt.com

Phone: (800) 269-7409

CAN SUPPLIERS

Actega North America Technologies, Inc.
 (See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Ardagh Group S.A.
 (See also: Bottles)

Ball Global Beverage Packaging
 9300 West 108th Cir.
 Westminster, CO 80021
 ball.com
 Contact: Shelby Terrill
 Email: skscott@ball.com
 Main: (303) 460-4302
 Mobile: (720) 646-7496

Berlin Packaging
 (See also: Bottles)

BSG
 (See also: Grain and Malt)

Cask Global Canning Solutions
 5100 64 Ave. SE
 Calgary, AB, Canada
 cask.com
 Contact: B.H. Jamison
 Email: bh.jamison@cask.com
 Phone: (403) 640-4677

Fast Track Packaging
 545 Speedvale Ave. W
 Guelph, ON, Canada N1K 1E6
 ftpackaging.ca
 Contact: Mike Bedrosian
 Email: mike@ftpackaging.ca
 Phone: (519) 835-8381

Gamer Packaging
 (See also: Bottles)

CANNING EQUIPMENT

BevCorp.
 37200 Research Dr.
 Eastlake, OH 44095
 bevcorp.com
 Contact: Eileen Bewley
 Email: ebewley@bevcorp.com
 Main: (440) 530-2132
 Mobile: (216) 559-1413

Cask Global Canning Solutions
 (See also: Can Suppliers)

CODI Craft Canning Systems

14352 West 44th Ave
Golden, CO 80403
codimfg.com
Email: sales@codimfg.com
Phone: (303) 277-1542

FT System

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

FWC Vision LLC

(See also: Analyzing/Quality Control Equipment)

G&D Chillers, Inc.

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

Iron Heart Canning Co.

200 Perimeter Rd, Ste. 2
Manchester, NH 03103
ironheartcanning.com
Contact: Roger Kissling
Email: roger@ironheartcanning.com
Phone: (908) 619-5449

KHS USA, Inc.

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

Krones USA

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

Prospero Equipment Corp.

(See also: Still Manufacturers)

Twin Monkeys Beverage Systems, Inc.

5105 E. 39th Ave.
Denver, CO 80207
twinmonkeys.net
Contact: Garrett Lockhart
Email: garettl@twinmonkeys.net
Main: (888) 315-7462 Ext. 33
Mobile: (770) 354-5808

Wild Goose Filling

633 CTC Boulevard, Ste. 100
Louisville, CO 80027
wildgoosefilling.com
Contact: Elle Wood
Email: ewood@WildGooseFilling.com
Main: (720) 406-7442 ext. 112
Mobile: (540) 416-3579

CASE PACKERS

Douglas Machine Inc.

1705 34th Ave. W
Alexandria, MN 56308
douglas-machine.com
Email: sales@douglas-machine.com

Phone: (320) 763-6587

Prospero Equipment Corp

(See also: Still Manufacturers)

CHILLERS/TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Fluid Chillers Inc.

3005 Alpha Access St.
Lansing, MI 48910
fluidchillers.com
Email: info@fluidchillers.com
Phone: (517) 484-9190

G&D Chillers

760 Bailey Hill Rd.
Eugene, OR 97402
gdchillers.com
Contact: Scott Timms
Email: scott@gdchillers.com
Phone: (541) 345-3903

Pro Chiller Systems

Pro Refrigeration Inc.
326 8th St
Auburn WA 98001
prochiller.com
Email: sales@prorefrigeration.com
Phone: (253) 735-9466

CLEANING PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Five Star Chemicals

6870 W. 52nd Pl., Ste. #205
Arvada, CO 80002
fivestarchemicals.com
Contact: Erin Hamrick
Email: ehamrick@fivestarchemicals.com
Phone: (800) 782-7019

Maroon Group, HI&I Division

Barentz US
1390 Jaycox Rd.
Avon, OH 44011
barentz-na.com
Contact: Rosado Schuyler
Email: schuyler@jtechsales.com
(561) 995-0070

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Briggs of Burton, Inc.

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Dixon Sanitary

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Pewaukee, WI 53072
dixonvalve.com
Email: sanitarysales@dixonvalve.com
Phone: (800) 789-1718

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CLIMATE CONTROL SYSTEMS

Big Ass Fans

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bigassfans.com
Email: sales@bigassfans.com
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Super Duty Fans

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Pilot Point, TX 76258
superdutyfans.com
Contact: Robert Hignite
Email: rob@superdutyfans.com
Phone: (469) 934-6633

COCKTAIL MIXERS

Avec Drinks

avecdrinks.com
Contact: Rebecca Robinson
Email: rebecca@avecdrinks.com

Green Grove

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King Floyds Inc.

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Phone: +49 (0) 151 195 064 55

Thousand Oaks Barrel Co.

(See also: Barrel Suppliers/Cooperages)

COMPLIANCE**American Spirits Exchange**

(See also: Back Office Solutions)

The Digest of Wine and Spirits Law

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Myrtle Point, OR 97458
wineandspiritslaw.com
Contact: Alex Heckathorn
Email: admin@csa-compliance.com
Phone: (541) 217-2727

Distillery Compliance

2465 Centreville Rd., Ste. J17-732
Herndon, VA 20171
distillerycompliance.com
Contact: Kevin Anderson
Email: kevin@alcoholconsulting.com
Phone: (703) 593-9936

CONSULTANTS**Alcohol Tax Consultants, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1595, Madison Square Station
New York, NY 10159-1595
alcoholtax.com
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Email: info@alcoholtax.com
Phone: (917) 771-9906

BEC Network

New York, NY
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Email: lady@brieconway.com
Phone: (347) 451-7918

Big Thirst Marketing

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

BKM Next

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Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India 226010
maitin.org

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Brewing and Distilling Analytical Services LLC

1141 Red Mile Rd., Ste. 202
Lexington, KY 40504
alcbvtesting.com
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Phone: (859) 278-2533

Briggs of Burton, Inc.

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

Brindiamo Group

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Nashville, TN 37205
brindiamogroup.com
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Email: jeff@brindiamogroup.com
Phone: (615) 668-7696

BT Alcohol Consulting, LLC /Gray-Robinson Law Firm

460 N Winnebago Dr.
Lake Winnebago, MO 64034
gray-robinson.com
Contact: Dave Bateman
Email: davebateman@att.net
Phone: (816) 876-6416

Burch Partners

31 E. 8th St., Ste. 200
Holland, MI 49423
burchpartners.com
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Email: brian@burchpartners.com
Phone: (616) 828-9813

The Business Development Partnership

London, UK
Contact: Dan Gasper
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Phone: +44 7949 801 001

Crafted ERP

(See also: Software)

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(See also: Compliance)

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(See also: Import/Export Services)

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Evergreen, CO 80439
1stwestma.com
Contact: Martin W Saylor
Email: m.saylor@1stwestma.com
Phone: 303-915-2134

Fisher & Co.

126 River Ranch Rd.
McCall, Idaho 83638
Contact: John Fisher
Email: fisherco@earthlink.net
Phone: (650) 400-3396

Flavorman

(See also: Ingredients and Flavors)

Gain Grain

Fairfax County, VA
gaingrain.com
Contact: John Hannon
Email: john@gaingrain.com
Phone: (434) 202-5873

High-Proof Creative

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

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Danville, KY 40422
highspiritsenterprise.com
Contact: Dave Scheurich
Email: bourbondave@gmail.com
Phone: (859) 536-2369

Mezcal Educational Excursions of Oaxaca

Sierra Nevada 164, Col. Loma Linda
Oaxaca, Mexico 68024
mezcaleducationaltours.com
Contact: Alvin Starkman
Email: mezcaleducationaltours@hotmail.com
Phone: 52 (951) 505-7793

MK Wine & Spirits Contract & Consulting

5356 Buffalo River Rd.
Earlsville, VA 22936
linkedin.com/in/getmarikelly
Contact: Mari Kelly
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Phone: (434) 987-1717

Montana State University

(See also: Education)

Moonshine University

(See also: Education)

MV Performance LLC

7213 Edmonson Pl.
Prospect, KY 40059
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(See also: Back Office Solutions)

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tessposthumus.com
flyingdutchmencocktails.com
Email: info@flyingdutchmencocktails.com
Phone: +31 619 812 2716

Quixotic King Bar

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Phone: (917) 673-6986

Robin Robinson, LLC

50 Roosevelt Ave.
Westwood, NJ 07675
robinrobinsonllc.com
Contact: Robin Robinson
Email: robin@robinrobinsonllc.com
Phone: (201) 527-7733

Sales Systems Development, Inc.

(See also: Sales Tools)

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Spirits Consulting Group

800 Third Ave., 28th Floor
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spiritsconsulting.com
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Piazza Teresa Noce 17/D
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thespiritualmachine.it/en
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Email: teo@thespiritualmachine.it
Phone: +39 3403077404

Thoroughbred Spirits Group

510 Quail Ridge Dr.
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tbspirits.com
Contact Name: Liz McGillis
Email: lm@tbspirits.com
Phone: (312) 809-8202
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timeandtasks.com
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Tucker Creative

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Princeton, NJ 08542
verstill.com
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Email: matan@verstill.com
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1447 Peachtree St. Ne, Ste. 700
Atlanta, GA 30309
VictorySpirits.com
Contact: Michael Shoer
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Phone: (678) 578-7204

Whisky Education Foundation

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Zepponi & Co.

200 Fourth St., Ste. 250
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
zepponi.com
Email: info@zepponi.com
Phone: (707) 542-7500

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Bluegrass Bottling

1065 Hwy 78 E.
Stanford, KY 40484
bluegrassbottling.com
Contact: Lisa Strevels
Email: bluegrassbottling@gmail.com
Phone: (859) 329-8877

Florida Caribbean Distillers

(See also: Bulk Spirits/Contract Distilling)

Midwest Custom Bottling

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Pewaukee, WI 53072
bottlingllc.com
Contact: Matthew Kastern
Email: matt@bottlingllc.com
Phone: (262) 522-6939

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Winnipeg, MB R3E 2J7 Canada
slotdrainsystems.com
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Email: hbunko@slotdrainsystems.com
Phone: (855) 497-7508

E-COMMERCE

accelPay

accelpay.io
Contact: Joshua Walker
Email: josh@accelpay.io
Phone: (818) 294-2093

Activ8 Commerce

(See also: Software)

DSDLink

(See also: Software)

Handoff

handofftech.com
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Email: tommy@handofftech.com
Phone: (719) 371-0350

Scoular Co.

(See also: Ingredients and Flavors)

Speakeasy Co.

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San Diego, CA 92101
speakeasyco.com
Contact: Josh Jacobs
Email: josh@speakeasyco.com
Phone: (978) 973-5507

Spirit Hub

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Lincolnwood, IL 60712
spirithub.com
Email: cgoldman@spirithub.com
Phone: (224) 251-8459

Thirstie

1740 Broadway, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10019
thirstie.com
Contact: Kelley McGann
Email: kelley@thirstie.com
Phone: (845) 494-3784

EDUCATION

A-B Technical Community College- Brewing, Distillation, and Fermentation

340 Victoria Rd.
Asheville, NC 28801
abtech.edu/programs/academic/
brewing-distillation-and-fermentation
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Email: jeffreymirvin@abtech.edu
Phone: (828) 398-7191

The Academy Drinks

220 Weston Rd.
Weston, CT 06883
theacademydrinks.com
Contact: Jessica Spector
Email: jspector@theacademydrinks.com
Phone: (203) 623-6665

American Rum Report

5904 B Carl Pl.
Nashville, TN 37209
americanrumreport.com
Contact: Will Hoekenga
Email: arr@americanrumreport.com
Phone: (615) 440-0863

Artisan Spirit Magazine

P.O. Box 31494
Spokane, WA 99223
artisanspiritmag.com
Contact: Ashley Monroe
Email: ashley@artisanspiritmag.com
Phone: (509) 991-8112

Eastern Michigan University

541 Mark Jefferson
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
emich.edu/chemistry/programs/undergraduate-programs/fermentation.php
Contact: Cory Emal
Email: cemal@emich.edu
Phone: (734) 487-0305

Export-Import Bank of the U.S. (EXIM)

(See also: Consultants, Imp/rt/Export Services, Insurance Agencies)

Montana State University

119 Plane Bioscience
Bozeman, MT 59717
montana.edu/barleybreeding
Contact: Hannah Turner
Email: hannah.turner2@montana.edu
Phone: (406) 599-2189

Moonshine University

801 South 8th St.
Louisville, KY 40203
moonshineuniversity.com
Contact: Lindsey Davis
Email: registrar@moonshineuniversity.com
Phone: (502) 301-8149

TIPS

Health Communications Inc.
1501 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 500
Arlington, VA 22209
gettips.com
Contact: Trevor Estelle
Email: estellet@gettips.com
Phone: (800) GET-TIPS

Whisky Education Foundation

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Wine & Spirits Education Trust (WSET)

WSET Americas
71 Raymond Rd.
West Hartford, CT 06107
wsetglobal.com
Contact: Rob McCaughey
Email: rmccaughey@wsetglobal.com
Phone: (609) 433 7912

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Bonded Lightning Protection

(See also Safety Equipment and Services)

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8900 Greenway Commons Pl., Ste. 200
Louisville, KY 40220
briggsplc.com
Contact: Annemarie McCloud
Email: annemarie.mcloud@briggsplc.com
Phone: (585) 426-2460

C&I Engineering

Watterson Tower
1930 Bishop Ln., Ste. 800
Louisville, KY 40218
cieng.com
Email: info@CIEng.com
Phone: (502) 451-4977

Fogg Filler

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

FT System

30 Corporate Park Dr., Ste. 230A 02359
Pembroke, MA 02359
ftsystem.com
Contact: Joe Aleszczyk
Email: joe.aleszczyk@ftsystem.com
Phone: (781) 336-6959

G&D Chillers, Inc.

760 Bailey Hill
Eugene, OR 97405
gdchillers.com
Email: info@gdchillers.com
Phone: (800) 555-0973

JCS Process & Control Systems

172 Metro Park
Rochester, NY 14623
jcs.com
Contact: Yamille Mendieta
Email: ymendieta@jcs.com
Phone: (585) 943-0109

Kason Corporation

(See also: Material Handling Equipment)

Luckett & Farley

(See also: Architects)

Malek Brautech

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

MXD Process

(See also: Fermenting Tanks)

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Shrout Tate Wilson Consulting Engineers

118 East Main St., Ste. 101
Louisville, KY 40202
stweng.com
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Phone: (502) 819-7484

VITOK Engineers LLC

1900 Plantside Dr.
Louisville, KY 40299
vitok.com
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EQUIPMENT DEALERS

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3230 Riverside Ave., Ste. 140
Paso Robles, CA 93446
thevintnervault.com
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Email: info@thevintnervault.com
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FERMENTING TANKS

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Brewmation

19 Donovan Dr.
Hopewell Jct, NY 12533
brewmation.com
Contact: John Kalinowsky
Direct email: jkalinowsky@brewmation.com
General email: sales@brewmation.com
Main: (845) 765-8395 Ext. 412
Mobile: (845) 447-3012

Briggs of Burton, Inc.

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(See also: Filtration)

Hall-Woolford Tank Co., Inc.

5500 N. Water St.
Philadelphia, PA 19120
wooldtank.com

Contact: Jack Hillman
Email: 5500 N. WATER ST.
Phone: (215) 329-9022

Mio Vigneto Products, INC

8075 Wayland Rd.
Loomis, CA 95650
miovigneto.com
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MXD Process

4650 Middle Rd.
Jeffersonville, IN 47130
mxdprocess.com
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General email: sales@mixr.odoo.com
Main: (812) 202-4047
Direct: (503) 308-0134

Silver State Stainless

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Mound House, NV 89706
silverstatestainless.com
Contact: Richard Sharke
Email: sales@silverstatestainless.com
Phone: (775) 246-1180

Spokane Industries

3808 N. Sullivan Rd., Bldg. 1
Spokane Valley, WA 99216
spokaneindustries.com
Contact: Ken Ovnicek
Email: ken@spokaneindustries.com
Direct: (509) 921-8868
Mobile: (509) 998-4470

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(See also: Still Manufacturers)

Vendome Copper & Brass Works

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Phone: (732) 329-2500

Gusmer Enterprises

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Russell Finex Inc.

625 Eagleton Downs Dr.
Pineville, NC 28134
russellfinex.com
Email: inquiries@russellfinex.com
Phone: (70) 588-9808

Scott Laboratories

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American Whiskey Capital

907 Westwood Blvd., #206
Los Angeles, CA 90024
snlcapital.com
Contact: Denise Longarzo
Email: denise@snlcapital.com
Phone: (310) 503-3727

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First Beverage Group

firstbev.com
Contact: Kristen Bareuther
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General email: info@firstbev.com
Phone: (310) 481-5100

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Live Oak Bank

100 B St., Ste. 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
liveoakbank.com
Contact: Tracy Sheppard
Direct email: tracy.sheppard@liveoak.bank

North Star Leasing

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Burlington, VT 05401
northstarleasing.com
Contact: Jay Conder
Email: jay@northstarleasing.com
Phone: (844) 805-3273

South Central Bank

386 Waller Ave., Ste. 110
Lexington, KY 40504
southcentralbank.com
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Email: coby.adkins@southcentralbank.com
Phone: (859) 608-5889

Truist Bank

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Email: joseph.goode@truist.com
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FLOORING

Brew Floors

805 Lehigh Ave.
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brewfloors.com
Email: info@brewfloors.com
Phone: (833) 273-9235

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Sublimity, OR 97385
cascadefloors.com
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Email: chris@cascadefloors.com
Phone: (503) 769-6823

Dex-O-Tex

3000 E. Harcourt St.
Rancho Dominguez, CA 90221
dex-o-tex.com
Phone: (310) 886-9100

Duraamen Engineered Products Inc.

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New York, NY 10011
duraamen.com
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Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
usa.silka.com
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New Bremen, OH 45869
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Phone: (419) 629-2311

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Cleveland, OH 44124
hyster-yale.com
Phone: (800) 531-3964

Hyundai Material Handling

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hyundaiforkliftamericas.com
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Summerville, SC 29483
kion-na.com
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Mitsubishi Caterpillar Forklift America

2121 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. North
Houston, TX 77043
mcfa.com
Phone: (713) 365-1000

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5559 Inwood Dr.
Columbus, IN 47201
toyotaforklift.com
Phone: (812) 341-3800

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(See also: Filtration)

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Phone: 44 (135) 527-9717

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PlastDiversiity

(See also: Barware)

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Germany
rastal.com
Contact: André Klaus
Email: andre.klaus@rastal.com
Phone: +49 (2624) 16-283

Riedel

Weissachstrasse 28-34
6330 Kufstein
Austria
riedel.com
Email: info@riedel.com
Phone: +43-5372-64896

Sterling Cut Glass

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Erlanger, KY 41018
sterlingcutglass.com
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General email: cs@sterlingcutglass.com
Phone: (800) 543-1317

SRI Ohio

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Urban Bar

(See also: Barware)

Whisdom

whiskeywhisdom.com
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Email: rk.huneidi@gmail.com

GRAIN HANDLING/ STORAGE

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abmequipment.com
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(See also: Ingredients and Flavors)

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vincentcorp.com
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Phone: (813) 248-2650

GRAIN AND MALT

Adams Grain Co.

P.O. Box 799
Arbuckle, CA 95912
adamsgrp.com
Contact: Dave Holland
Email: dholland@adamsgrp.com
Phone: (530) 908-6346

Admiral Maltings

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Alameda, CA 94501
admiralmaltings.com
Contact: Ron Silberstein
Email: ron@admiralmaltings.com
Phone: (510) 666-6419

Briess Malt & Ingredients Co.

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Chilton, WI 53014
briess.com
Contact: Mike Scanzello
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Phone: (920) 849-8212

Brooks Grain, LLC

1047 S. 15th St.
Louisville, KY 40210
brooksgain.com
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Email: jeff.mosier@cgb.com
Phone: (502) 439-8232

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bsgdistilling.com
Email: orders@bsgdistilling.com
Phone: (855) 819-3950

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Country Malt Group

700 Washington St., Ste. 508
Vancouver, WA 98660
countrymaltgroup.com
Contact: Justine Johnson
Email: jjohnson2@canadamalting.com

Hartwick College Center for Craft Food and Beverage

(See also: Analyzing/Quality Control
Equipment)

Highland Milling LLC

20841 Barrel Ln.
Caldwell, ID 83607
highlandmillingllc.com
Contact: David Sanders
Email: daves@highlandmillingllc.com
Phone: (360) 901-8332

Integrity AG

14633 Timber Rd.
Lanark Illinois 61046
integrityag.com

Contact: Terry Sweitzer
Email: terry@integrityag.com
815-541-0082

Nestled in the northwest corner of Illinois, Integrity Ag / Ironwood Farms is a certified organic producer. We currently have Bloody Butcher Red as well as yellow corn available. The farm has a number of fields with natural boundaries allowing for a variety of crops to be

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General email:
customersuccess@malteurop.com
Main: (844) 546-MALT
Mobile: (414) 336-8744

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50 Sod Farm Rd.
Butte, MT 59750
montanacraftmalt.com
Contact: Matt Drew
Email: matt@montanacraftmalt.com
Phone: (406) 493-2558

Montana State University

(See also: Education)

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Sheboygan, WI 53081
praiiemalt.com
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General email: sales@praiiemalt.com
Phone: (800) 669 6258

Root Shoot Malting

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Loveland, CO 80537
rootshootmalting.com
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Email: todd@rootshootmalting.com
Phone: (970) 227-0475

Rovey Seed Co.

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roveyseed.com
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Email: derekr@roveyseed.com
Phone: (217) 227-4541

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Email: sales@atxliquor.com
Phone: (512) 582-0102

Enovationbrands

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Miami, FL 33180
enovationbrands.com
Contact: Letizia Bertelli
Email: l.bertelli@enovationbrands.com
Phone: (305) 726-5641

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Washington, D.C. 20571
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Contact: Elizabeth Thomas
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(See also: Grain and Malt)

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aevalabs.com
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Email: steven@aevalabs.com
Phone: (919) 351-5917

Amoretti

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amoretti.com

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San Ramon, CA 94583
brecktech.com
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(See also: Grain and Malt)

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Phone: (973) 886-3202

Dutch Gold Honey Inc.

2220 Dutch Gold Dr.
Lancaster, PA 17601
dutchgoldhoney.com
Contact: Evan Himes
Email: ehimes@dutchgoldhoney.com
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flavorman.com
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hornerinternational.com

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actega.com
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Direct email:
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Mobile: (401) 408-8772

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2100 196th St. SW, Ste. 131
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Email: mike.bates@resourcelabel.com
Phone: (425) 776-4315

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allamericanlabel.net
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Email: ken@allamericanlabel.net
Phone: (925) 803-5709

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Email: dgeneri@apholos.com
Phone: (213) 399-6228

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Email: kwebber@blancolabels.com
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Lancaster, OH 43130
bluelabelpackaging.com
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General email: info@bluelabelpackaging.com
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ilslabels.com
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Email: kristenwaite@ilslabels.com
Phone: (513) 860-2457

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Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
ink360.com
Contact: Kenneth Matthews
Email: ken@ink360.com
Phone: (262) 617-2342

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608 Rye Beach Rd.
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labelaidinc.com
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Phone: (419) 433-2888

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Macaran Printed Products

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Email: tfaugno@macaran.com
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Email: francisco.siller@mcclabel.com
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monvera.com
Contact: Caitriona Anderson
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12715 Lewis Rd.
Akron, New York 14001
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Contact: Tina Lemley
Email: tina@niagaralabel.com
Phone: (716) 542-3000

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paragon-napa-sonoma/
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Email: michael.panconi@resourcelabel.com
Phone: (707) 773-4363

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2500 W. Sunset Dr.
Waukesha, WI 53189
redoaklabel.com
Contact: Charlie Nevermann
Direct email: charlien@redoaklabel.com
General email: sales@redoaklabel.com
Main: (262) 565-1323
Mobile: (262) 894-3049

Resource Label Group

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Franklin, TN 37067
resourcelabel.com
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Email: marketing@resourcelabel.com
Phone: (224) 315-4851

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serigraphierichford.com
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Email: ccopin@srimtl.com
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stanpacnet.com
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Email: mike.bates@resourcelabel.com
Phone: (503) 699-5000

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weberpackaging.com
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Main: (800) 843-4242
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atip-usa.com
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Phone: (201) 529-0202

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FT System

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ksidrane.com
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LabelMate USA

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Henderson, NV 89014
labelmateusa.com
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 Email: rkeenan@pdc-corp.com
 Phone: (732) 245-8344

P.E. Labellers

Via Industria, 56
 46047 Porto Mantovano (MN), Italy
pelabellers.it
 Email: pelabellers@pelabellers.it
 Phone +39 0376 389311

Resource Label Group

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Shemesh Automation

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

Taylor Made Labels: A Resource Label Group Co.

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

The Vintner Vault

(See also: Equipment Dealers)

Weber Packaging Solutions, Inc.

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

LAB EQUIPMENT/ SERVICES

Anton Paar USA

2824 Columbia St.
 Torrance, CA 90503
anton-paar.com

Contact: Mark Coombs
 Email: mark.coombs@anton-paar.com
 Main: (310) 775-2196 ext. 461
 Mobile: (704) 491-4880

Ferm Solutions

(See also: Yeast/Fermentation)

FT System

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

Rudolph Research Analytical

55 Newburgh Rd.
 Hackettstown, NJ 07840

rudolphresearch.com

Contact: Larry Martin

Email:

lmartin@rudolphresearch.com

Phone: (973) 584-1558

Rudolph Research is the manufacturer of the DDM 2911 PLUS, a TTB-approved Density Meter for alcohol proof testing and the AlcoTest-RI for proof testing of obscured spirits.

Rudolph is a worldwide supplier and manufacturer of rugged, high accuracy laboratory instruments with over 8,000 customers worldwide. Our instruments are made in the USA and all carry a guarantee of support and service for 20 years. Customers have trusted Rudolph since the 1940s.



LEGAL SERVICES

Distillery Compliance

(See also: Consultants)

Husch Blackwell LLP

750 17th St. NW, Ste. 900
 Washington, DC 20006

huschblackwell.com
 Contact: Leigh Barber
 Email: leigh.barber@huschblackwell.com
 Phone: (512) 479-1138

Lehrman Beverage Law PLLC

2911 Hunter Mill Rd., Ste. 303
 Oakton, VA 22124
bevlaw.com
 Contact: Robert C. Lehrman
 Email: rclehrman@bevlaw.com
 Phone: (202) 449-3739

Malkin Law PA

260 95th St., Ste. 206
 Miami Beach, FL 33154
malkin.law
 Contact: Ryan Malkin
 Email: ryan@malkin.law
 Phone: (305) 763-8539

McDermitt Will & Emery

444 West Lake St.
 Chicago, IL 60606
mwe.com
 Contact: Cheryl Lynn McGlynn
 Email: CMcGlynn@mwe.com
 Phone: (202) 756-8867

Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP

11377 W Olympic Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90064
msk.com
 Contact: Daniel Hayes
 Email: kjt@msk.com
 Phone: (310) 312-3216

Neal & McDevitt, LLC

1776 Ash St.
 Northfield, IL 60093
nealmcdevitt.com
 Contact: Rick Biagi
 Email: rbiagi@nealmcdevitt.com
 Phone: (847) 881-2455

Waller Law

511 Union St., Ste. 2700
 Nashville, TN 37219
wallerlaw.com
 Contact: Rob Pinson
 Email: rob.pinson@wallerlaw.com
 Phone: (615) 850-8642

LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN SERVICES

Greystone Logistics

(See also: Pallets)

iGPS

(See also: Pallets)

MHW Ltd.

1129 Northern Blvd., Ste. 312
Manhasset, NY 11030

mhwLtd.com

Contact: MaryAnn Pisani

Direct email: mpisani@mhwLtd.com

General email: hello@mhwLtd.com

Phone: (516) 869-9170

Park Street

(See also: Back Office Solutions)

Top Shelf Logistics

1660 West Linne Rd. Ste. J10
Tracy, CA 95377

topshelflogistics.com

Contact: Richard Baduini

Email: rbaduini@topshelflogistics.com

Phone: (209)-627-3100

MASHING EQUIPMENT

Brewmation

(See also: Fermenting Tanks)

Carl Artisan Distilleries and Brewing Systems

(See also: Still Manufacturers)

MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT

Carleton Helical Technologies

30 South Sand Rd.
New Britain, PA 18901

feedscrew.com

Contact: Sabin Haas

Email: shaas@feedscrew.com

Main: (215) 230-8900 Ext. 105

Mobile: (702) 682-8011

DTM Packaging & Custom Automation

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

FT System

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

Kason Corporation

67-71 East Willow St.

Millburn, NJ 07041

kason.com

Contact: Jim Ling

Email: distilling@kason.com

Phone: (973) 467-8140

Maspac Packaging USA

(See also: Palletizers/De-palletizers)

Polymer Solutions International

(See also: Pallets)

PTM (Plásticos Técnicos Mexicanos)

(See also: Pallets)

The Vintner Vault

(See also: Equipment Dealers)

MERCHANDISE COMPANIES

The Alison Group

(See also: Point of Sale Displays/Marketing)

Birch Grove Branding

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Brewery Branding Co.

5841 SE International Way
Portland, OR 97222

brewerybranding.com

Contact: Jeremy Wood

Email: jeremy@brewerybranding.com

Phone: (503) 701-5175

Custom Shot Skis

1785 Kayscreek Cir.
Layton, Utah 84040

customshotskis.com

Contact: Jim Hardin

Email: jim@customshotskis.com

Phone: (801) 628-7122

Distillery Products

439 Grand Dr.
Bigfork, MT 59911

distilleryproducts.com

Contact: Janie Sciacca

Email: cheers@distilleryproducts.com

Phone: (844) 837-1515

88 Design Group (a division of GrandStand)

3840 Greenway Cir.
Lawrence, KS 66046

88designgroup.com

Contact: Josh Christie

Direct email: joshc@88designgroup.com

General email: hello@88designgroup.com

Main: (785) 856-88DG

Direct: (785) 312-5311

Grandstand

3840 Greenway Cir.

Lawrence, KS 66046

egrandstand.com

Email: sales@egrandstand.com

(800) 767-8951

Image Apparel Solutions

860 Chaddick Dr., Unit E
Wheeling, IL 60090

image-apparel-solutions.com

Contact: Tim Kelliher

Email: tim@image-apparel-solutions.com

Phone: (847) 229-2000

Innovative Marketing Consultants

4284 Shoreline Dr.

Spring Park, MN

imcsuccess.com

Contact: Adam Tschida

Email: adam@imcsuccess.com

Phone: (952) 512-7759

Interstate Graphics Inc.

7817 Burden Rd.

Machesney Park, IL 61115

igiprint.com

Contact: Brian Boub

Email: brian@igiprint.com

Phone: (815) 877-6777

Nouvel

(See also: Bottles)

ProActive Sports Group

dba Tempercraft

1200 SE 2nd Ave.

Canby, OR 97013

tempercraft.com

Contact: Bob Johnson

Email: bobj@proactivesports.com

Phone: (503) 678-9348

SpreadShop

1572 Roseytown Rd.

Greensburg, PA 15601

spreadshop.com

Contact: Zack Bowman

Direct email: zack.bowman@spreadshop.com

General email: help@spreadshop.com

Main: (800) 381-0815

Direct: (724) 961-3911

Sterling Cut Glass

(See also: Glassware)

Thousand Oaks Barrel Co.

(See also: Barrel Suppliers/Cooperages)

**MIXING APPLIANCES/
BLENDERS****Briggs of Burton, Inc.**

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

JCS Process & Control Systems

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

StillDragon

(See also: Still Manufacturers)

**MOLASSES AND
SUGARCANE****BSG**

(See also: Grain and Malt)

Buffalo Molasses

P.O. Box 74

East Aurora, NY 14052

buffalomolasses.com

Contact: Joshua Prezyna

Email: buffalomolasses@yahoo.com

Phone: (716) 860-7437

International Molasses

88 Market St.

Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

internationalmolasses.com

Email: info@internationalmolasses.com

Phone: (800) 526-0180

Lula-Westfield LLC

P.O. Box 10

Paincourtville, LA 70391

luwest.com

Phone: (985) 369-6450

PACKAGING/SECONDARY**APHOLOS Metal Labels & Closures**

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Berlin Packaging

(See also: Bottles)

Cask Global Canning Solutions

(See also: Can Suppliers)

Douglas Machine

(See also: Case Packers)

Gamer Packaging

(See also: Bottles)

Imperial Packaging

601 Skokie Blvd. #2D

Northbrook, IL 60062

imperial-packaging.com

Contact: Beth Hurwitz

Email: beth@imperial-packaging.com

Phone: (847) 219-7311

International Paper

6400 Poplar Ave.

Memphis, TN 38197

internationalpaper.com

Contact: Katie Diley

Email: Katie.Diley@ipaper.com

Phone: (901) 299-2208

KHS USA Inc.

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

Liquor Bottle Packaging International

(See also: Bottles)

Loggerhead Deco

(See also: Bottles)

Packaging Logistics Inc.

9380 Central Ave. Northeast

Minneapolis, MN 55434

packlogic.com

Contact: Rachael Nelson

Email: sales@packlogic.com

Phone: (763) 754-9461

PakTech

(See also: Can Carriers)

Phoenix Packaging

2530 Lapierre

Montreal, Quebec, Canada H8N 2W9

phoenixpackaging.com

Contact: Joel B Miller

Email: joel@phoenixpackaging.com

Phone: (514) 487-6660

Roberts PolyPro

(See also: Can Carriers)

**POINT-OF-SALE
DISPLAYS/MARKETING****The Alison Group**

2090 Northeast 163rd St.

North Miami Beach, FL 33162

alisongroup.com

Email: info@alisongroup.com

Phone: 305-354-3300

Displaycraft Inc.

dcigo.com

Email: info@displaycraftinc.com

Phone: (706) 277-2209

Pratt Industries**1800-C Sarasota Pkwy.****Conyers, GA**

prattindustries.com

Contact: Doug Thiesse**Email:****dthiesse@prattindustries.com****Phone: 615-692-9869**

Pratt Industries has been America's leading recycled paper and packaging company for over 30 years—dedicated to the sustainability of our planet, our customers, and our people—and is recognized around the world for its environmental stewardship. At Pratt, sustainability is always part of the package.

**Reed Wax**

167 Pleasant St.

Reading, MA 01867

reedwax.com

Contact: Peter Griffin

Email: peter@reedwax.com

Phone: (781) 944-4640

Resource Label Group

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Retail Pak

P.O. Box 467

Valrico, FL 33595

retailpak.com

Contact: Chad Geertsma

Email: chad.g@retailpak.com
Phone: (813) 924-7429

SigmaQ/Bufkor Inc.

1955 Lakeway Dr. Ste. 210
Lewisville, TX 75057
sigmaq.com
Contact: Mario Serrano
Email: mserrano@sigmaq.com
Phone: (469) 794-5996

SRI Ohio

(See also: Bottles)

Stanpac Ink

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

St. Francis Packaging

9121 Sibley Hole Rd.
Little Rock, AR 72209
stfrancispackaging.com
Contact: David Yim
Email: david@stfrancispackaging.com
Main: (501) 455-0000
Mobile: (713) 248-7732

Tape-Rite Co., Inc.

131 Lakeville Rd.
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
taperite.com
Contact: Andrew Machover
Email: andy@taperite.com
Phone: (800) 882-7348

Turner Labels Inc.

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Universal Packaging

(See also: Bottles)

PALLETIZERS/ DEPALLETIZERS

ABC Packaging Machine Corporation

811 Live Oak St.
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689-1239
abcpackaging.com
Contact: Marc Antonio
Email: mantonio@abcpackaging.com
Main: 800.237.5975
Direct: (727) 937-5144
Mobile: (727) 793-4502

Cask Global Canning Solutions

(See also: Can Suppliers)

Douglas Machine Inc.

(See also: Case Packers)

DTM Packaging & Custom Automation

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

Maspack Packaging USA

2224 Northpoint Pkwy.
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
maspackusa.com
Contact: Dan Bock
Email: dan@maspackusa.com
Main: (707) 757-7725 ext. 106
Mobile: (707) 320-3403

Prospero Equipment Corp.

(See also: Still Manufacturers)

Shemesh Automation

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

The Vintner Vault

(See also: Equipment Dealers)

PALLETS

A&S Products

10238 S. 96th East Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74133
asproductsllc.com
Contact: Arlin Plender
Email: arlinasproducts@gmail.com
Phone: (918) 557-8602

Craemer US Corporation

30725 US Hwy. 19 N #304
Palm Harbor, FL 34684
craemer.com/usa
Contact: Axel Breitkreuz
Email: axel.breitkreuz@craemer.com
Phone: (727) 312-8859

Greystone Logistics

1613 East 15th
Tulsa, OK 74120
greystonelogistics.com
Email: sales@greystonelogistics.com
Phone: (918) 583-7441

Haidlmair GmbH

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A-4542 Nussbach, Austria
haidlmair.at
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Email: armando.jimenez@haidlmair.com
Phone: (248) 659-7302

iGPS

315 E. Robinson St., Ste. 520

Orlando, FL 32801

igps.net
Contact: Graham Connor
Direct email: gconnor@igps.net
General email: switch@igps.net
Main: (866) 557-0716
Direct: (714) 862-8883

Kruger Family Industries/Trienda

N7660 industrial Rd.
Portage, WI 53901
krugfamilyindustries.com
Contact: Sarena Krueger
Email: skrueger@trienda.com
Main: (608) 742-9439
Mobile: (608) 566-4107

Orbis

1055 Corporate Center Dr.
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
orbiscorporation.com
Contact: Ashley Krysik
Email: ashley.krysik@orbiscorporation.com
Phone: (262) 560-5317

Perfect Pallets

450 West 16th Pl.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
perfectpallets.com
Contact: Amy Haag Lathrop
Email: amy.lathrop@perfectpallets.com
Phone: (317) 924-5284 ext. 305

Polymer Solutions International

prostack.com
Contact: Ryan Overcash
Email: rovercash@prostack.com
Main: (610) 325-7500
Mobile: (215) 805-1544

PTM (Plásticos Técnicos Mexicanos)

Carretera México Tequisquiapan KM 3.0
Valle de Oro Industrial Zone
San Juan del Rio, Querétaro, Mexico
ptm.mx
Contact: Pedro Sergio Rubio Alcántar
Email: pedro.rubio@ptm.mx
Main: +52 818 328 6717
Mobile: +521 818 098 7121

Rotational Molding Utah

1720 North Airport Rd.
Brigham City, UT 84302
rotationalmoldingutah.com
Contact: Mallin Brough
Direct email: mallinb@rmutah.com
General email: info@rmutah.com
Main: (435) 734-9920
Mobile: (435) 770-6435

PROCESS EQUIPMENT

Briggs of Burton, Inc.

(See also: Engineering Equipment/Services)

Dixon Sanitary

(See also: Clean-in-Place Equipment)

Proofing Equipment

Anton Paar USA

(See also: Lab Equipment)

PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCIES

Balzac Communications & Marketing

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Big Thirst Marketing

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Blaze PR

1427 Third St. Promenade

Santa Monica, CA 90401

blazepr.com

Contact: Matt Kovacs

Email: mkovacs@blazepr.com

Phone: (310) 395-5050

Burch Partners

(See also: Consultants)

Cast Iron Communications

710 NE 15th Ave.

Minneapolis, MN 55413

castironcommunications.com

Contact: Kelsey Perrigo

Email: kelsey@castironcommunications.com

Phone: (763) 245-1973

Deussen Global Communications, Inc.

339 Fifth Ave.

New York, NY 10016

deussenglobal.com

Contact: Christine Deussen

Email: cdeussen@deussenglobal.com

Phone: (917) 545-1459

Emblem Public Relations

emblempr.com

Contact: Colin Baugh

Email: colin@emblempr.com

Phone: (323) 219-3427

Estes Public Relations

1938 Frankfort Ave.

Louisville, KY 40206

estespr.com

Contacts:

Jamie B. Estes

Email: jamie@estespr.com

Phone: (502) 614-5991

Tracy Green

Email: tracy@estespr.com

Phone: 614-5994

5W Public Relations

299 Park Ave., Floor 10

New York, NY, 10171

5wpr.com

Email: info@5wpr.com

Phone: (212) 999-5585

The Gallavant Group

thegallavantgroup.com

Contact: Amber Gallaty

Email: amber@thegallavantgroup.com

Phone: (917) 653-5244

GATHER PR

gatherpr.com

New York, NY

Contact: Alexandra S. Clough

Email: alexandra@gatherpr.com

Phone: (516) 428.7210

GATHER is a boutique marketing and public relations consultancy that delivers big ideas. We specialize in strategic brand building, brand communications, message development, executive and spokesperson media training, targeted media relations, and customized event activations to elevate budding and established drinks brands to the next level.



Hanna Lee Communications

New York, NY

hannaleecommunications.com

Contact: Hanna Lee

Email: hanna@hannaleecommunications.com

Phone: (646) 752-1526

High-Proof Creative

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

RadCraft

736 Main Ave. Ste. 9

Durango, CO 81301

radcraftbeer.com

Contact: Emily Hutto

Email: hutto@radcraftbeer.com

Phone: (303) 503-4796

Spirits Consulting Group

(See also: Consultants)

Tucker Creative

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Whisky Advertising Foundation

(See also: Branding/Marketing/Advertising Agencies)

Willow PR

2025 Riverside Dr.

Columbus, OH 43221

willow-pr.com

Contact: Allison Bowers

Direct email: allison@allisonmbowers.com

General email: hello@willow-pr.com

Phone: 614-420-5895

RACKING SYSTEMS

Age-N-Time Steel Ricks

age-n-time.com

Contact: Ken Osborne

Email: ken.osborne@age-n-time.com

Phone: (859) 361-3979

Frazier Industrial Co.

91 Fairview Ave.

Long Valley, NJ 07853

frazier.com

Email: frazier@frazier.com

Phone: (908) 876-3001

K-RAX Barrel Storage Systems

7393 Pete Andres Rd.

Floyds Knobs, IN 47119

kraxbarrelstorage.com

Contact: Hayley Vaughn

Email: hayley@thekoettergroup.com

Main: 812-923-5585

Direct: (502) 296-8727

Rack & Maintenance Source

400 West Whitman Dr.
College Place, WA, 99324
rackandmaintenance.com
Contact: Brian Richards
Direct email: brian@wegotracks.com
General email: office@wegotracks.com
Main: (509) 524-8500
Direct: (509) 386-6628

Twinlode

635 S. Lafayette Blvd., Ste. 108
South Bend, IN 46601
twinlodeautomation.com
Email: info@twinlodeautomation.com
Phone: (574) 271-2300

Western Square Industries

1621 N. Broadway Ave.

Stockton, CA 95205

westernsquare.com

Contact: Dan Humphries

Email: dhumphries@western-square.com

Phone: (209) 944-0921

Western Square Industries, family owned and operated, was founded in 1976. They are the world leader in the manufacturing of barrel racks and barrel pallets for the winery, brewery, distillery and beverage industries. Western Square has winery, farm, ranch and vineyard equipment divisions featuring vineyard and harvest trailers, shade trailers, farm gates and STOKES winery ladders. All products are proudly made in California.

WESTERN SQUARE

I N D U S T R I E S

RECYCLING**Parallel Products**

401 Industry Rd., Ste. 100
Louisville, KY 40208

parallelproducts.com

Contact: Monica Lurie
Email: monical@parallelproducts.com
Phone: (502) 471-2456

RETAILER**Binny's Beverage Depot**

1720 N Marcey St.
Chicago, IL 60614
binny.com
Contact: Brett Pontoni
Email: brett@binny.com
Phone: (888) 817-5898

Total Wine & More

6600 Rockledge Dr.
Bethesda, MD 20817
totalwine.com
Contact: Eli Aguilera
Email: eaguilera@totalwine.com
Phone: (301) 795-1000

SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES**Birko Corporation**

9152 Yosemite St.
Henderson, CO 80640
birkocorp.com
Contact: George Allen
Email: gcallen@birkocorp.com
Phone: (720) 315-2606

Bonded Lightning Protection

2080 W. Indiantown Rd., Ste. 100
Jupiter, FL 33458
bondedlightning.com
Contact: Mike Dillon
Email: mike@bondedlightning.com
Phone: (561) 746-4336

Industrial Safety and Training Services

12308 Aiken Rd., Ste. 11
Louisville, KY 40223
istsky.com
Contact: Gary Yurt
Email: gary@istsky.com
Phone: (502) 716-8985

The Koetter Group

7393 Pete Andres Rd.
Floyds Knobs, IN 47119
thekoettergroup.com
Email: oneteam@thekoettergroup.com
Phone: (812) 923-9873

Reardon Fire Consulting P.C.

Sykesville, MD
rfcfireprotection.com
Contact: Michael Reardon
Email: mreardon@rfcfireprotection.com
Phone: (443) 974-6705

SALES TOOLS**Arryved (Point of Sale)**

Boulder, CO
arryved.com
Contact: Rachel Kesley
Email: rachel@arryved.com
Phone: (720) 441-4863

Orchestra Software

(See also: Software)

Sales Systems Development, Inc.

Two Worlds Center, Ste. 71
100 W El Camino Real
Mountain View, CA 94040
salessystems.net
Email: bob@salessystems.net
Phone: (650) 619-1993

SAMPLER/SUBSCRIPTION BOXES**Bootlegger Co.**

3512 Marquette St.
Dallas, TX 75225
bootlegger-co.com
Contact: Robert Davies
Email: robert@bootlegger-co.com
Phone: (650) 468-4266

SHRINK SLEEVES (LABELS)**Axon Corp.**

3080 Business Park Dr., Ste. 103
Raleigh, NC 27601
axoncorp.com
Email: axon@promachbuilt.com
Phone: (800) 598-8601

Fast Track Packaging

(See also: Can Suppliers)

ILS: Innovative Labeling Solutions

(See also: Label Suppliers/Designers)

Sleever International

6815 Columbus Rd.
Mississauga, ON, Canada L5T 2G9
sleever.com

Contact: Luc Silbermann
Email: luc.silbermann@sleever.com
Main: (905) 565-0952 ext. 205
Mobile: (416) 702-5131

Traco Packaging

620 South 1325 West
Orem, UT 84058
tracopackaging.com
Contact: Rich Smith
Direct email: rsmith@tracopackaging.com
General email: info@tracopackaging.com
Main: (800) 284-9727
Direct: (801) 225-8040 ext. 282
Mobile: (801) 372-6658

SHRINK WRAPPERS/ STRETCH WRAPPERS

BOSTOCAP

(See also: Bottle Closures)

DTM Packaging & Custom Automation

(See also: Bottling Equipment)

Mr. Shrinkwrap

P.O. Box 697
Media, PA 19063
mrshrinkwrap.com
Email: sales@mrshrinkwrap.com
Phone: (866) 824-9011

PolyPack Inc.

3301 Gateway Centre Blvd.
Pinellas Park, FL 33782
polypack.com
Contact: Richard Gardner
Email: rgardner@polypack.com
Phone: (727) 331-7423

Tapi USA

(See also: Bottle Closures)

SOFTWARE

Activ8 Commerce

1530 Finley Road
Pleasanton, CA 94588
Activ8Commerce.com
Phone: (877) 441-2582

Arryved

(See also: Sales Tools)

Crafted ERP

1512 Larimer St., Ste. 150
Denver, CO 80202
craftederp.com
Contact: Jennifer Smith
Email: jennifer@craftederp.com
Phone: (720) 699-0200

Doozy Solutions

1512 Larimer St., Ste. 150
Denver, CO 80205
doozysolutions.com
Contact: Jennifer Smith
Email: jennifer@doozysolutions.com
Phone: (720) 699-0200

DraughtLab Sensory Software

(See Also: Analyzing/Quality Control Equipment)

DSD Link

Encompass Technologies
420 Linden St. #200
Ft. Collins, CO 80524
dsdlink.com
Contact: Kristen Mangham
Email: Kristen@DSDLink.com
Main: (970) 449-8000
Mobile: (303) 880-4879

FIVE x 5 Solutions

Whiskey Systems
3489 W 72nd Ave., Ste. 210
Westminster, CO 80030
fx5solutions.com
whiskeysystems.com
Contacts: Caroline Calhoun, Randall Buxbaum
Email: caroline.calhoun@fx5solutions.com
Email: randall@whiskeysystems.com
Phone: (720) 638-4958

Gain Grain

(See also: Consultants)

Handoff

(see also: E-commerce)

OnBatch

105 Westpark Dr., Ste. D
Athens, GA 30606
onbatch.com
Contact: Shawn Patrick
Email: shawn@onbatch.com
Phone: (706) 621-5091

Orchestra Software

1750 NW Naito Pkwy. #150
Portland, OR 97209
orchestrasoftware.com
Contact: Jake Sampson
Email: jake@encompass8.com
Phone: (970) 988-5084

Overproof

360 NW 27th St., 8th Floor
Miami, FL 33127
overproof.com
Contact: Jasper Nelissen
Email: jasper.nelissen@overproof.com
Phone: (305) 778-9193

Sovos ShipCompliant

200 Ballardvale St., 4th Floor
Wilmington, MA 01887
sovos.com/shipcompliant
Contact: Barbara Fusco
Email: barbara.fusco@sovos.com
Phone: (720) 325-3346

Speakeasy Co.

(See also: E-Commerce)

Thirstie

(See also: E-Commerce)

Vermont Information Processing

402 Water Tower Cir.
Colchester, VT 05446
vtinfo.com
Contact: Lindsay Hawkins
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AK: Distillers Guild of Alaska

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Contact: Lucas Heger
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AZ: Arizona Craft Distillers Guild

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Phone: (520) 369-3421

AR: Arkansas Distillers Guild

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 Phone: (501) 627-0722

CA: California Artisanal Distillers Guild

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CA: San Diego Distillers Guild

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 Contact: Geoff Longenecker
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 Phone: (619) 300-1624

CA: San Luis Obispo Distillers Guild

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CA: So Cal Distillers Association

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CT: Connecticut Spirits Trail

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OH: The Ohio Distiller's Guild

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OR: Oregon Distillers Guild

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PA: Pennsylvania Distillers Guild

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TN: Tennessee Distillers Guild

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TX: Texas Distilled Spirits Association

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UT: Distiller's Guild of Utah

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VT: Distilled Spirits Council of Vermont

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WI: Wisconsin Distillers Guild

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American Single Malt Whiskey Commission

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Bourbon Women Association

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 bourbonwomen.org
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Brewers Association

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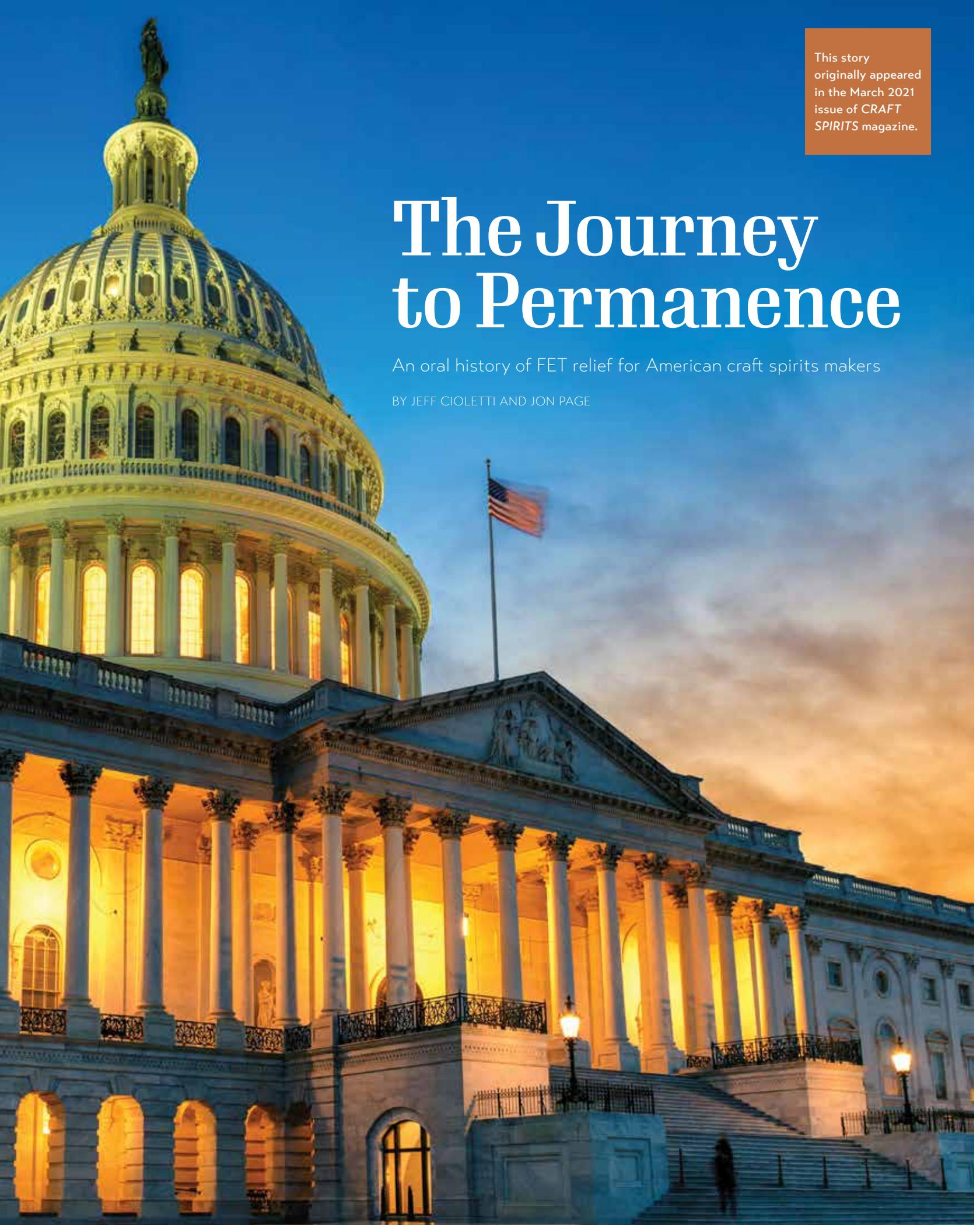
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The Journey to Permanence

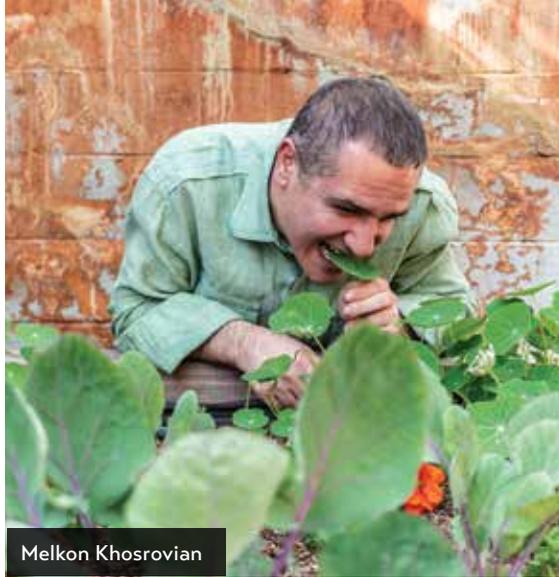
An oral history of FET relief for American craft spirits makers

BY JEFF CIOLETTI AND JON PAGE





Nicole Austin



Melkon Khosrovian



Mark Shilling



Ralph Erenzo



Ted Huber

“I give credit to Ralph [Erenzo] and Melkon [Khosrovian] for being the ones that really originated this. I often call them the godfathers of FET.”

—Mark Shilling

In the first decade of this century, American craft spirits makers started to dream.

What if their businesses—minuscule in comparison to the behemoth, corporate, well-known distilleries whose brands dominated liquor store shelves and back bars—could enjoy a reduced federal excise tax (FET) rate that was comparable to the reduced rate on craft breweries and small winemakers?

In the following years, their dreams came to life. They banded together and formed their own nonprofit organization—the American Craft Spirits Association (ACSA). Their numbers grew from hundreds to thousands. They made countless phone calls and visits to members of Congress and walked countless miles on Capitol Hill. They celebrated temporary relief in 2017 when the FET rate was reduced from \$13.50 to \$2.70 per proof gallon (for the first 100,000 gallons removed from bond annually) and refused to rest until FET relief was made permanent at the end of 2020.

In recent interviews with *CRAFT SPIRITS*

magazine, some of the key players in pushing for FET relief recalled the struggles and highlights from a victory more than a decade in the making.

Part I: Grassroots Take Hold

Years before the first bill was introduced in Congress, craft distillers frequently discussed the need for FET relief. Ted Huber of Huber’s Orchard, Winery & Vineyards and Starlight Distillery recalls those conversations picking up in 2005 or 2006 at American Distilling Institute (ADI) conferences that rotated between his distillery and St. George Spirits in Alameda, California.

Ted Huber (master distiller at Starlight Distillery in Starlight, Indiana): There [were] only a few of us craft distillers in the U.S. at that time. ... A lot of us had functioning wineries or functioning breweries and knew what the FET reduction was because we were taking advantage of those things with our

wineries and our breweries, but yet we were paying the full tax on our distilled spirits. What a wonderful thing it [would be] if we could take some of that tax credit from the federal government and reinvest back into [our distilleries.]

Around the same time, Ralph Erenzo of Tuthilltown Spirits Distillery started lobbying the state of New York to change its laws to allow distilleries to sell their products on site.

Ralph Erenzo (co-founder of Tuthilltown Spirits Distillery in Gardiner, New York): Shortly after it got passed here in New York [in 2007], our phone and email started filling up with people from all over the country asking, “How did you do this? Please send us a copy of your law so we can use it as a template.” And so we sent out a lot of copies and directed them to the New York State Liquor Authority’s site, where they could actually read the law and then use that as a template.

“So much of the early years was spent, for all of us, just learning how passing a law works and learning that the “Schoolhouse Rock!” video that you watched was not at all accurate.”

—Nicole Austin

Once we got New York settled, I turned my attention to the FET, the federal level.

Melkon Khosrovian (co-founder and spirits maker at Greenbar Distillery in Los Angeles): I wrote the proposal that morphed into our current law back in August 2008. It was a post on ADI’s forums that spurred discussion and got most craft distillers to co-sign. ... I didn’t have any real government policy experience beforehand. But I had worked in crisis communications and knew that we’d need a clear message and a unified voice to carry it to lawmakers if we hoped to get anything accomplished.

I think it took a good three to four years before we got our first bill introduced. ... It felt like an eternity.

Erenzo: [Former U.S. Representative from New York] Maurice Hinchey was the first one to act on our behalf [by introducing H.R. 777, the Small Distillery Excise Tax of 2011]. And that was a result of me reaching out to him. We were, at the time, the only distiller in New York. So we had a little bit of weight behind our request. Because I went to him and pointed out, “If we’re successful and if this New York state law turns out to be successful, then this industry is going to take off and the biggest beneficiaries are tourism, agriculture, tax revenue and employment.”

The distillery-specific bill had tax credits, rather than a reduced tax rate, on the first 65,000 proof gallons only for distilleries pro-

ducing no more than 100,000 proof gallons. It languished, only gathering 15 co-sponsors.

Nicole Austin (general manager and distiller at Cascade Hollow Distilling Co. in Tullahoma, Tennessee, and former co-chair of ACSA’s legislative affairs committee):

We thought we had done this big thing when we had a bill and it was introduced and it had a bill number. I’ll never forget H.R. 777. It burned in my mind because it felt like, “We did it! We did it! There’s a bill!”

Khosrovian: I—naively—thought that our chances were decent, especially after Ralph helped pass legislation in New York. Boy, was I off by a country mile.

Erenzo: We ultimately agreed that tax credits were not the way to go because it isn’t a direct-cash-in-your-pocket method of relieving the tax burden of the small distiller. We really needed to have the reduced rate. Plus, it was not parity with wine makers and beer makers and that’s what we were looking for. We made that point over and over again to legislators. This is not a special consideration. The beer makers and the wine makers already have this consideration. We’re just looking for parity.

Khosrovian: We had lots and lots of discussion about who this legislation would cover and who it would leave out. Was 65,000 proof gallons too big or too small? Would DSPs that bought neutral spirits for their gins and liqueurs qualify or would everyone need to ferment and distill their own spirits? We spent many late nights arguing about issues that today seem academic but that meant everything at the time.

Austin: So much of the early years was spent, for all of us, just learning how passing a law works and learning that the “Schoolhouse Rock!” video that you watched was not at all accurate.

Mark Shilling (ACSA past president, chair of ACSA’s government affairs committee, founder of Revolution Spirits, and partner in Big Thirst Consulting): I think I remember saying way back in the beginning that my expectations were that it would take 10 years. Now, that was completely made up at the time. It just seemed like based on my previous experience that getting anything done in Congress would take a long time and require a lot of education and build up.

Austin: It’s a little like when you’re hiking a mountain. You think you see the top of it and you get there and you realize that was a false peak and 75% of the mountain is still in front of you.

Shilling: If you’re planning to push an issue in Congress, don’t expect anything to happen over night. Plan well; build a large coalition; include as broad a variety of stakeholders as possible; and be prepared to work your ass off and don’t give up. I think the lesson here is perseverance.

Khosrovian: I honestly thought that we’d get a bill introduced and turned into law in two years. There were similar laws for breweries and wineries, so I thought that we’d get there on simple equivalency and opportunity for a young industry following in the footsteps of those two types of alcohol makers.

Huber: I thought [Congress] would look at the beer industry and the wineries and say, “Look at the microbreweries, how they’ve done. Imagine if we had distilleries like the microbreweries or the wineries.”

Erenzo: Part of the problem was that the legislators really didn’t comprehend what we were talking about in the beginning. They kept referring to us as brewers.

Huber: I think a lot of people thought distilleries were factories. That’s the image that they had in their minds.

Austin: Early on, most of our time lobbying was spent explaining to people that distillers are not the same as brewers.

Huber: I had a couple of conversations with key senators and they were like, “Well you know that brewery over there, they went into that part of town and took that building over and put their brewery there and everybody started flocking there. Now you can’t park three blocks from there. All the stores, all those blighted buildings now have something. And the first thing that went there was a brewery.”

We would say, “That’s what distilleries are going to do.”

Part II: The Rise of ACSA

As the early fight for FET relief continued, a growing group of distilleries saw the need to form a nonprofit organization to better represent their interests. In 2013, the American Craft Distillers Association was incorporated. A year later, its name was changed to the American Craft Spirits Association.

Tom Mooney (ACSA’s first president, founder and CEO of Westward Whiskey in Portland, Oregon): It was clear to many of us that we would fail, both in the FET fight and as an industry, if we didn’t have an association representing us.

Scott Blackwell (founder and co-owner of High Wire Distilling in Charleston, South Carolina): I was glad to see it come together,

but I remember thinking, boy, what a long shot. FET reduction? Huh. Little did I know that I would get totally wrapped up in it, kind of by mistake.

Austin: If there was one message that I'd want people to take away from reading this oral history, it's how critical it is for us to have ACSA in the first place. Having a genuinely professional nonprofit trade association that represents your interests—none of this would have happened without that, because we would never as individuals have been able to shepherd this through the most critical parts of this process, which are really “inside baseball” in D.C.

Mooney: We created ACSA to give craft distillers a voice, and at least a snowball's chance in hell to change the industry landscape in a way that would allow us to survive. FET was the first priority because we knew that an excise tax that took more than 10% of revenue away from producers—most of whom lost money or barely broke even—would mean craft spirits could never take off. FET was not only the glue that held ACSA together, it was the gravitational pull that brought us there in the first place.

Erenzo: There was a time in the beginning when we were struggling with the ADI question. ADI was representing themselves ... in some circumstances, as *the* industry

association. And it took a while for us to make everybody understand that that particular industry association was privately owned and was a profit-making corporation and that the ACSA was industry-owned, member-owned and member-directed.

Mooney: At the start, the ACSA board were also the association's staff. We had no CEO or executive director, and no money to hire one. Everyone on that first board worked two jobs, one for their distillery and the other for the future of the industry.

Austin: I was on the first board that we elected, and that was also when we created our committee structure. That was when I got really committed, it was when Mark and I started co-chairing that [committee] together.

Shilling: Because of my background in lobbying, I saw this as a place that as I was getting ready to enter this industry, an area that I could give back, that I had some knowledge and experience with. And I said, you know this is one of the things that I'm going to do to become a part of the industry.

Austin: Todd Leopold [of Leopold Bros. in Denver] gave us the first \$5,000 so that we were able to hire Jim Hyland. That was a big deal.

Mooney: Nicole Austin, Steve Johnson and I met up on May 19, 2015, at Kings County Distillery, in Brooklyn, New York, to interview our finalists. There, in a room full of whiskey

and brandy barrels, we met Margie and immediately knew we had our leader.

Austin: Hiring Margie was one of the best things [we've] ever done.

Mooney: ACSA would not have survived a year without its first board, but it would have accomplished nothing without Margie. She is our industry hero.

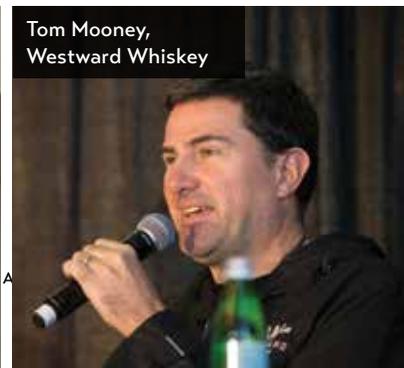
Soon after she was hired as ACSA's interim executive director, Margie A.S. Lehrman attended the organization's first joint legislative fly-in with the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) at a Holiday Inn on Capitol Hill. It was her birthday, and she was surprised to see her old neighbor, Jim Hyland.

Margie A.S. Lehrman (CEO of ACSA): Our kids grew up together. Same culdesac, same playground. So when I saw Jim, honestly, can you imagine how befuddled I was thinking, why is he at this meeting?

I was uncertain whether this group was something that I really wanted to get engaged with. I was content practicing beer, wine and spirits law and wasn't sure I wanted to really switch careers, going back to my roots in association management. So that was my compromise to them saying, “How about I serve as your interim until I figure out whether this is a fit for both of us?” But then when I

“It was clear to many of us that we would fail, both in the FET fight and as an industry, if we didn't have an association representing us.”

—Tom Mooney



saw Jim there, I'm thinking, okay, this could be really fun. I get to work with Jim and we get to do some really cool things for the industry. Maybe this is something to really sink my head into.

Jim Hyland (ACSA's public policy adviser, The Pennsylvania Avenue Group): I remember one of the big distiller lobbyists I saw there, who was like, "Oh, so you guys are like a real association?"

Lehrman: I remember that, too! And I remember we talked about craft spirits and how they were in fact safe to drink! We had to validate ourselves as recently as 2015, that craft producers were not hobbyists—that it's a real business that was really here to stay.

Erenzo: Margie was another huge asset to us and I enjoyed working with her entirely. And her husband was very helpful as well. She really pulled the whole thing together as a professional.

Khosrovian: Starting the FET effort when the industry was in its infancy was fairly easy. Most of us knew each other, which made it easy to hash out ideas, reach consensus and organize outreach. What we failed to grasp was how lobbying actually works and how closely we'd need to coordinate our efforts with larger players in the industry. Mark, Margie and the rest of the ACSA team understood this much better and got the job done.

Erenzo: Everybody hates lobbyists, you know. They have such a bad rep. But when you want to get a law changed, you need them. They're your best friend because they have the roadmap through the system. Jim Hyland, he was fabulous. He was extremely helpful. And I think that ACSA owes him a great debt of gratitude—[as do] the small distillers around the country.

Austin: Working with Jim has been incredible. Just getting you into the room. Knowing where people are. Knowing who actually is doing the work so you can talk

to the right person. And helping you build those relationships and helping you show up and look professional.

Part III. Unity and Advocacy

Many of the people interviewed for this oral history agree that the fight for FET relief received a major boost thanks to the efforts of DISCUS. They only wish it happened sooner. Shilling recalls a 2011 meeting he had with DISCUS lobbyists in D.C.

Shilling: Their initial reaction was, "No. We're afraid that even talking about this will result in excise taxes going up." By the end of the conversation it was, "Well, whatever it ends up being, we won't support anything that doesn't treat everybody equally." That's how we ended up with the "up to 100,000 proof gallons." ... The original bill was that it would only apply to distilleries that made less than 100,000 proof gallons. It turned out DISCUS pushing us in that direction was good. Putting that hard limit means that it's a disincentive for a distillery to grow beyond that. Having that meeting, it was beneficial because it did move DISCUS to get on board.

Mooney recalls attending a fly-in hosted by DISCUS later in 2011.

Mooney: My greatest takeaway was that nobody in Congress had ever thought about this issue, and I spent a good amount of time after the fly-in corresponding with staff members from the various offices I visited. As the adage goes, if you aren't at the table, then you're probably on the menu.

Erenzo: The biggest stumbling block there was that [DISCUS] simply didn't want to give up or appear to give up any control or authority at all over anything distilling-related. And it took quite a while for us to convince them that we were not the enemy, that, in

effect, many of us were the next acquisition targets and that our efforts were being made by distillers in every single state. Whereas DISCUS's efforts in the U.S. were really being driven by a handful of very large distilleries in a few states.

Austin: I can't speak for them but [they were probably like], "Are these guys going to be able to be professional?" We were a bunch of rogue distillers in Carhartts. And then we were like, "Are they really going to work with us or are they just trying to crush us?"

Erenzo: At first they wanted too much. For instance, they wanted us to dissolve our organization and blend into DISCUS. And we said, "Well, we're in the same industry, but we're not in the same business. And your interests won't always match ours and we didn't want to be run by the big guys." And so we elected to stay independent and continued to support ACSA. And eventually DISCUS did come around, but it took a long time.

Hyland: I think they thought this had very little chance of getting enacted. But then I think they came around to a conclusion that an offense was a good defense. In other words, a way to prevent us from seeing our FET go up is to be advocating for it to go down.

Paul Hletko (Past president of ACSA, founder and distiller at FEW Spirits in Chicago): Once DISCUS finally got involved, and started promoting, it definitely was helpful.

Austin: Ted was really important to helping kind of bridge that and see that we had a lot of shared interests and that we could really complement each other in terms of what we brought to the table. ... When we got over that hump and started working well and professionally together, that was really important.

Hyland: It wasn't until [DISCUS president and CEO] Chris Swonger came on [in 2018], in my view, that they aggressively decided this industry has changed. He saw that this industry had changed and there

“Having a genuinely professional nonprofit trade association that represents your interests—none of this would have happened without that, because we would never as individuals have been able to shepherd this through the most critical parts of this process, which are really ‘inside baseball’ in D.C.”

—Nicole Austin

“We were doing a lot of phone calls and talking to a lot of staff members, just doing all of that hardcore groundwork.”

—Ted Huber

were grassroots that could fight for distilled spirits fairness.

Lehrman: And, clearly, ACSA, with members in all 50 states, helped what ultimately remained a battle for parity.

Following H.R. 777, several members of Congress (including Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), Rep. Christopher Gibson (R-NY), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Rep. Todd Young (R-IN) and Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI)) introduced similar bills that would benefit craft distilleries. However, none of them garnered more than 15 co-sponsors. In June of 2015, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced S.1562, the Craft Beverage Modernization and Tax Reform Act (CBMTRA), which included benefits for makers of spirits, beer, wine and cider. The following month, Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN) introduced a companion bill in the house. The bills had tremendous support, with 51 and 288 co-sponsors, respectively. But they lacked a vehicle to move them forward.

Mooney: Our initial efforts were a bit like rolling a boulder uphill, and things would have continued that way if Sen. Wyden hadn't stepped in. The senator and his staff were initially drawn in by a raging battle between large and small brewers, but they quickly realized there was an opportunity to develop consensus, industry-wide legislation to support beverage alcohol. The senator, his chief of staff Chris Arneson, and many others put hours and hours of work into bringing everyone together.

Austin: Everyone uses the phrase “a vehicle,” where you needed a vehicle, some other bill to have enough momentum behind it that it was going to pass, that you could attach yourself to and that that was the gateway that kept you from actually becoming a law. And we didn't control that, and we still don't. ... That started to feel a little bit daunting and a little bit frustrating, because it felt like we had reached the absolute limits of what we could achieve.

Shilling: It's unusual for a standalone bill to get passed. Particularly a standalone tax bill.

So there's always going to be the prospect [that it] gets rolled into this omnibus bill here or this tax extender bill here or some other thing somewhere else. This is a big frustration I think a lot of people have with Congress, is the way that they operate in terms of just waiting and rolling dozens and dozens of issues into one giant bill.

Mooney: We felt that we had it in the bag toward the end of 2016. And then, we didn't. Our bill made it to the second-to-last draft of a year-end tax bill, and we were edited out the day before the vote. It was crushing, and it meant that we would need to start from scratch in the new Congress in 2017. Then, we did what craft distillers always do—we picked ourselves back up and got to work. Sen. Wyden and his staff did what they do, too, and they pursued the bill with even more energy than ever before.

Throughout the years, ACSA members and distillers regularly made calls to members of Congress, sometimes in person as part of public policy conferences. Most were planned, but one initial meeting was spontaneous.

Austin: D.C. is not cheap. Most of us were spending our own money, getting ourselves to D.C., buying our D.C. hotel rooms. Most of us were shelling out \$1,000 every time we went there of our own money because it's not like our businesses have that kind of money. It was time and money and miles walked in very impractical shoes for women. It was absolutely miserable and sweaty to be walking around D.C. carrying a heavy bag of stuff and trying to look like a professional when your armpits are disgusting. It was just not easy.

Huber: We were doing a lot of phone calls and talking to a lot of staff members, just doing all of that hardcore groundwork. I would just take some afternoons and just pick the phone up, just start calling, talking to staffers. I'd say, “Please go visit my website and look at what a distillery is.”

Austin: I was doing a lot of reminiscing—all the silly stories about our first public policy conferences, late night stapling of packets,



Ann Marshall and Scott Blackwell



Sen. Rob Portman



Sen. Ron Wyden and Tom Mooney



Rep. Erik Paulsen

and just calling people and calling people and calling people to say, “Did you call? Did you call? Did you call?”

Blackwell: Probably in 2015, Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) visited the distillery. His son was living in Charleston and we knew his son and he loved what we did. They came in, [he] showed his dad, “Hey, here’s this cool place.” I remember [Sen. Portman] said, “Hey if there’s ever anything I can do, let me know.” In the back of my mind I’m thinking, “I doubt it.”

Shilling: I give credit to Ralph and Melkon for being the ones that really originated this. I often call them the godfathers of FET. Scott, I think, is probably the guy that had the greatest single impact on this issue without ever being known for it. And that’s entirely because of his relationship with Rob Portman.

Part IV: Temporary Relief

By 2017, former President Donald Trump’s first year in office, bipartisan support for CBMTRA continued to grow. The bills had 303 co-sponsors in the House and 56 in the Senate, respectively. That year, ACSA held its own legislative fly-in to Washington, D.C., with members and suppliers from all over the country.

Lehrman: It was incredibly important then, and moving forward, to let their stories be told. Legislators heard first-hand how the tax savings would be used.

Hyland: Trump surprises D.C. [and] gets elected. But I figured, okay, there’s going to be a tax bill because that’s a big issue with [Trump]. Sure enough that happened, but we didn’t get in the House bill. ... We have to get a [Senate] amendment going here to get something in. And Margie and I had remembered that Scott Blackwell is close to Rob Portman’s son.

Portman serves on the Senate Finance Committee.

Blackwell: Margie and Jim reached out and said, “You mentioned that you know Portman. Would you be willing to reach out to him?” Kind of as a Hail Mary because it was in that subcommittee. I said, “Yeah, I’ll reach out to him.” I thought, I don’t know how much he’ll listen to me. I’ve never done this before. I got in touch with him and he said, “Actually you’d be better to get in touch with my tax counsel and talk it over with him.” ... They call back a day later, they inserted it. It was one of 12 things that got put into the bill and Portman said he made it one of his top priorities to get us in the bill. He pushed it in the bill.

Hyland: But it got in there for only two years because the [Joint Committee on Taxation] scored it as being very expensive—losing like \$4 billion over two years, which is a crazy amount of money. That’s all we could get.

Collectively, I think we were like, “We’ve got to take two years. We live to fight another day.”

Austin: We always were told, “It’s too expensive.” We kept having to say to people, “We’re not brewers. We can’t turn anything around in a year. Whiskey takes a long time to plan. We need stability.”

Becky Harris (Current president of ACSA and president and chief distiller at Catocin Creek Distilling Co. in Purcellville, Virginia):

I remember changing in my spreadsheet the tax rate from \$13.50 to \$2.70. It was like, “What! ... Oh my God!” We had been paying the original rate all along and it was a really nice ability to make some changes in our production team that we had wanted to for a while ... we basically added one more person full time in production.

Hletko: It really helped us increase our investments behind the business. With the temporary passage, we were able to move to U.S. glass, and we were able to increase our sales force.

Blackwell: We were paying \$50,000 [in taxes] a year. That allowed us to actually add an employee. ... When you’re a young business, everything gets reinvested. It was rubber meets the road. But I was always sort of on pins and needles when we would look at costs going forward.

Austin and Shilling celebrated the tempo-

Craft distillers at the Capitol for the ACSA and DISCUS Public Policy Conference in 2019



rary relief with a permanent impression. During a visit to Pittsburgh for ACSA's Distillers' Convention and Vendor Trade Show in 2018, they got tattoos.

Shilling: I'm going to give all of the credit and the blame for that to Nicole. It was 100% her idea. I will say I didn't resist too much on it because I thought it was a pretty great idea. What we ended up with, it's sort of a parchment scroll, which is to represent the legislation itself. It has the year 2017 in Roman numerals and the initials CBMTRA. I want to say that 90% of that design was Nicole's idea.

Also in 2018, ACSA formed a PAC to add focus to its legislative goals. Once again, a \$5,000 check from Leopold kicked it off.

Stephen Johnson (ACSA PAC): FET reduction was the only issue that really mattered at the time to the smaller distillers. A handful of the members had plenty of experience pushing the topic in Washington, D.C., and all of us had made at least one trip a year to meet with our elected officials. In short,

Visit americancraftspirits.org to learn more about the ACSA PAC.

ACSA board and staff members await the arrival of Sen. Ron Wyden in the Oregon senator's Capitol Hill conference room.

Past ACSA presidents Paul Hletko, Tom Mooney, Mark Shilling and Chris Montana at an ACSA board retreat in 2018

we knew what to do and decided that ACSA having its own PAC would let the association pursue this original goal on our own terms.

Lehrman recalls that a coalition of alcohol beverage groups—including ACSA, DISCUS, the Brewers Association, the Beer Institute, WineAmerica, the Wine Institute, the United States Association of Cider Makers and American Mead Makers Association—began holding weekly meetings to discuss the passage of CBMTRA.

Lehrman: Knowing craft spirits had the most to lose, I would continue to bombard Jim with ideas from videos to infographics to personal appeals in our communications with Congress. More often than not, I'd repeat to Congressional staffers, "This is the farthest thing from Politics 101! With this much support, why can't we move this forward? Aren't you tired of seeing us sharing the exact same stories? Common sense would dictate passage, right?"

In 2019, ACSA facilitated more than 1,000 meetings with members of Congress and their staff.

Lehrman: In 2019, stories of reinvestment became even more critical. If Congress wanted us to show them how the FET reduction was going directly back into the distillery, our members stepped up and gave us the data we needed: jobs, benefits, expansions, more grain. In short order, distilleries were building the economies throughout the country. We peppered House and Senate offices with story after story of reinvestment in American small businesses.

Also in 2019, ACSA brought more than 150 craft spirits producers and its entire board of directors and past presidents to Capitol Hill to share their stories. Lehrman secured a meeting with the group from the Joint Committee on Taxation which had previously suggested CBMTRA would be expensive. She was joined by Jim Hyland and Chris Montana, who was president of ACSA at the time.

Chris Montana (ACSA past president, founder and CEO of Du Nord Social Spirits in Minneapolis): Some of the assumptions they were making maybe could have been possible, but only by folks who had a few million dollars to spend, and that's not our industry. ... They were asking questions and my answers often rang contrary to the assump-

tions that they based their score on.

Lehrman: There were lots of mistaken assumptions that Chris was able to set right.

Montana: I think they were under the assumption that we could [all of a sudden produce a whole bunch of whiskey and remove it from bond] and that distributors would just take our product and store it, which is absolutely not true. No distributor is going to take a bunch of craft products and just sit on it. They're only going to take what they can sell.

Hyland: It's not like selling socks at a big box retailer where they just put 99 cents on it and put it in a big bin and hope it disappears in two weeks. Chris was able to inform them more about our industry.

Montana: I didn't leave that room thinking that we had convinced them, but subsequently they re-evaluated the score and reduced it. Reducing that score was critical because the higher that score was, the harder it is to get passed. We walked in there with data. We could show [that] we've been doing this and tax receipts are up. So as far as this costing the government a ton of money, it's just not true.

Lehrman: The ACSA board of directors held its annual retreat in Baltimore in December 2019, in the event we needed to make an end-of-year push for FET reform. We piled into a bus to make it to the Capitol, repeating the stories Congressional staff heard again and again.

Montana: Every person that we talked to knew about our bill. Everyone knows what's going on. We had damn near everybody in D.C. signed on to this bill, so there was no question about that. So we weren't even there to educate anyone about the bill. We were ... pleading with them to just remember us at the 11th hour. It was just, "Please remember us."

Support for CBMTRA was indeed strong. S.362, sponsored by Sen. Wyden and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO), eventually garnered 76 co-sponsors (36 Democrats, 36 Republicans and one independent). H.R. 1175, sponsored by Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) and Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA), counted on 350 co-sponsors (180 Democrats and 170 Republicans). But in 2019, permanence remained elusive. Distillers received a one-year extension of FET relief in a year-end tax package.

Lehrman: Once we learned of a one-year extension, it was hard to be overjoyed. We had worked so hard for only 365 days of additional relief.

Hyland: I was always worried that we would be in an extension mode for a while. There's

another bill that the regional railroads have wanted made permanent and this has gone on for 18 years.

Shilling: The most frustrating thing about it is that for so many years it was always just out of reach. It seemed like we were always just right around the corner and it was never about not having enough support in Congress to pass it. It was about other things getting in the way.

Part V: Permanence

In early 2020, ACSA's board of directors and member distilleries expected another year of political efforts, filled with trips to Washington, D.C., to ask legislators in person for permanent relief. But a global pandemic had other plans. In late March, hundreds of distilleries shifted their focus to making hand sanitizer amidst a nationwide shortage. Later in the year, ACSA and DISCUS hosted a virtual Public Policy Conference and ACSA members participated in multiple call-to-action days in which they reached out to the offices of representatives and senators.

Lehrman: The pandemic caused lots to change. We learned how our senators and representatives decorated their homes as Zoom calls were frequently held from their kitchens or home offices or living rooms.

Harris: From the beginning of 2020, before the pandemic hit, it was like, this is going to be the year. We're going to do it. And then it was like COVID-19 took up all of the air in the room and it was really hard to see whether there was going to be a path forward to get this to be permanent.

Montana: COVID shattered the distilling industry. It was the perfect storm, with limited access to distribution cutting off revenue from the shelves. The bars shut down, cutting off another source of revenue. And then people's own bars, their tasting rooms, get shut down, cutting off—for many of us—our primary source of income.

Johnson: Last October we made a big push for funds to contribute to the November elections and it was clear that members were weary from the major challenges of 2020 and that funds were very tight. We didn't have a choice really, but to say that if the bill is only extended for 12 months, that we had to just jump right back in, saying to the membership, "Yes, I know we just asked for your financial support and asked you to write letters and call your congressmen and senators, but we're asking you to do it again."

Shilling: In the last month or six weeks

“COVID shattered the distilling industry. It was the perfect storm, with limited access to distribution cutting off revenue from the shelves. The bars shut down, cutting off another source of revenue. And then people's own bars, their tasting rooms, get shut down, cutting off—for many of us—our primary source of income.”

—Chris Montana

there was always some little grain of hope that there would be a possibility of permanency. It kind of ebbed and flowed.

Harris: From a political standpoint I made it pretty clear to my representatives in Congress that this was something we had to have done this year. ... At one point I said, "If I just end up getting a temporary extension, you know you'll see me in January."

Harris remembers seeing Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), who had yet to throw his support behind CBMTRA, at a county business round-table meeting late in the year.

Harris: It was kind of funny because he saw me and was making his rounds in the room and came over and said, "Alright, I've been thinking about the FET thing ... maybe I'm letting the sausage making get in the way. I'm not going to push against you guys on this. I haven't been for it, but I think I'm going to change my mind on this." And I was like, "Yes! Finally!" That fact that I had been up in his grill enough that he recognized me at that point felt like a success.

Blackwell: Mark was knocking down walls, Jim, Margie [and] all these folks that I was talking to on these legislative calls [were] doing everything that they could to push it over the line and it just felt like we were just one yard away and couldn't quite get it there.

Hyland: The House started working hard in December and started checking the boxes, like, "Okay, if we're going to make this permanent, what do we need to do?" The Customs and Border Protection said, "Well,

we can't enforce this. We don't know what these people are doing overseas. They could be making more than 100,000 proof gallons in a foreign country, and they're trying to ship it over here." So they wanted to fix that problem ... and they started working on it. So they got it to a point where it was fixable and because it was fixable, [the Joint Tax Committee] was going to score it as "costing less money."

In December, as Congress was laying the groundwork for an omnibus and stimulus package, Blackwell asked if he should place another call to Sen. Portman.

Blackwell: Margie said, "Listen, it won't hurt." So I called and I talked to his tax counsel yet again because I just felt like it was the most effective ... like this was the person that was on the ground that was writing and helping him put these packages together. She called me back at 10 one night. They were up there in the middle of negotiations and she said, "I can't promise anything but it's looking really good."

My wife, Ann, and I are sitting there on Sunday night, just before Christmas. ... It's a D.C. number [on my phone], so I thought it was his tax counsel. I pick up the phone and he's like, "Hey Scott, Rob Portman. I just wanted you to be the first person I called, because I know we started working on this several years ago and I just felt like there weren't many more times that I could pull the genie out of the bottle—but we got permanency." And I was just like, "Oh my God. ... That's the best Christmas gift ever."

There were other levers getting pushed, so it wasn't like Portman was it. But ... this is a guy who's sitting there on this committee, in there in meetings with these other people and he knows from the front lines what's happening.

Lehrman: Scott called me right after he heard from Portman. Few things make me cry. Feeling a victory after the enormity of the day-in and day-out fight was an enormous relief. Knowing how this relief would be the very lifeline for so many struggling distilleries, and how it would provide the much-needed hope for a brighter future, was somewhat overwhelming in that moment.

Hyland: It just all came together in one big fat package of 5,000 pages. ... And it was permanent. And we were all like, "Oh my God, they actually did it." We were thinking one year, three years, you know, who knows? And then, Trump didn't want to sign the bill! We're all thinking we've got it. He's threatening to veto the bill! We're like, "Oh ----!"

Harris: That week of limbo before the president had signed the bill, I was really considering what would happen if he didn't. And how much that was going to cost me if I had to pay the increased excise tax in January. I had a big bunch of shipments that were going to be going out and would it be possible for me to get enough bottled in that week that I could take it out of bond to try to save the thousands of dollars that it would make the difference? We were busting our hump trying to get stuff in bottles just in case.

Lehrman: That week felt like a decade. Just put the pen to paper!

Blackwell: Trump wouldn't sign the damn bill! So we were back on pins and needles for a few days there. But thankfully he signed it.

Hyland: It was a cliffhanger. Ironically, something that helped: the two Georgia Senate races were up on Jan. 5 and he signed the bill on Dec. 27. One of them, David Perdue, had called Trump and asked him to sign the bill because it was creating problems. Had David Perdue won and therefore Republicans controlled the Senate, [Trump] might've felt like he could have vetoed it.

Harris: And once he had signed it I was like "Oh wow, I can take a day off."

Johnson: So many distillery owners had contributed so much of their time and personal resources for nearly a decade. The win was even better after the brutal year the craft distillers faced due to COVID-19.

Mooney: It's fair to say we wouldn't be here without Sen. Wyden and his staff. They promoted the bill, they spent time with us helping us understand the playing field so we

could do our part. The Senator even came in person to the ACSA board retreat at Westward Whiskey [in 2018]. He was our biggest advocate, coach, cheerleader and friend.

Blackwell: Once we got this, I looked at my wife and said, "Finally, we can really count on this and look at this as we go forward as investing this money annually into more jobs or whatever it is to growing the business." Now we can count on it. It's not like, "Well, we can do it this year but we don't know about next year." It really came down to that. If we didn't get it this year, with COVID-19, we'd probably be faced with laying somebody off. It's that thin right now.

Montana: That it was going to be permanent, that told me that Du Nord could grow. Outside of that FET permanence, that was an open question. Could Du Nord grow? Or did we need to go into turtle mode to survive until we could reopen the cocktail room?

Shilling: If you look at all the added pressures over the last 12 months or so on distilleries, not passing this would have really just been like a chop block at the knees for a lot of folks.

Blackwell: It's good for our suppliers, it's good for our communities. This is just more money that we can put into our businesses that help ripple out and affect all these other businesses and potential employees. ... If we're successful, all ships rise with the tide.

Khosrovian: [I feel] like a proud parent—or maybe grandparent—I'm overjoyed. We can finally plan our businesses around it and grow our segment to its full potential to offer variety and quality on a smaller scale for drinkers who crave something different

Austin: What we've accomplished here is pretty exceptional. ... It's genuinely remarkable.

Erenzo: It's rare that anyone in the states has an opportunity to directly affect legislation and law. ... We were not professionals at lobbying. We were stumbling through.

Austin: We went from nothing. It wasn't like we were an established lobbying organization that was taking on a new initiative. We knew nothing. We knew nothing and we had no money. All of our money came from membership and the conferences. And even those—we were strapped in the early years. We were a scrappy little agency and we got a lot done with that.

Hletko: I think it speaks to the power that we all have collectively—together, our voice gets heard and makes a difference.

Huber: Getting the big distilleries and small distilleries, the big wineries and small wineries, the big breweries and small breweries—to get

everybody together and to look at a common good is something that I'm not sure the last time it happened.

Shilling: There's really no way to know if there was that sort of seminal thing that some distiller in say Iowa or Florida or wherever else happened to have a member of Congress out for a tour and talked about this. And it really

“In short order, distilleries were building the economies throughout the country. We peppered House and Senate offices with story after story of reinvestment in American small businesses.”

—Margie A.S. Lehrman



Sen. Mark Warner, with Margie A.S. Lehrman and Becky Harris, in 2019.

“It’s good for our suppliers, it’s good for our communities. This is just more money that we can put into our businesses that help ripple out and affect all these other businesses and potential employees.”

—Scott Blackwell

made an impact on that person and they went from being opposed or not even knowing about it to becoming a supporter. And everyone of those adds up, right? There’s just no way to know who and where and when all those little things happened.

Lehrman: Associations are about community. I could not be more proud how ours came together. Grit, determination and perseverance within our family of craft distillers enabled our success. ■

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Bitter, Sweet & Everything in Between

Liqueur producers tune in to the evolving tastes of the consumer base.

BY JEFF CIOLETTI



Depending on when (and where) you read this, there's a good chance that summer is now upon us (how's that for a qualification?). And anyone with an internet connection likely has found it hard to avoid the barrage of articles touting the top cocktail recipes for the warm months. This is not one of them.

Generally, we're not too keen on season-specific stories in this space, given their limited shelf life. But we're making an exception in this case because summer means it's time to hit the patio—and hopefully more a choice than a necessity this year as much of the country heads toward fully reopening. And more and more, *al fresco* sippers have been taking a cue from Italy's aperitivo culture, integrating spritzes into their warm-weather drinking routines.

That's just one of the trends that's providing an opportunity to grow the liqueurs category—because it's certainly not the bubbly wines that are giving those mixed refreshers their character.

"Those drinks, historically, have always been big hits on the patio, they've always been patio pleasers," says Robby Haynes, co-founder of Apologue Liqueurs in Chicago, whose offerings include Aronia, Celery Root, Persimmon and Saffron liqueurs. "I think we'll see a lot less brown and stirred [on the patio] which are more suited for a moody corner at a nice cocktail bar. These sort of thoughtful sippers are going to be in short order for summer, but when cold weather hits, it'll swing around the other way."

The glasses that sit atop the outdoor tables at Washington, D.C.'s Italian-style liqueur maker Don Ciccio & Figli on a Saturday afternoon sometimes work better than any thermometer could. President and master distiller Francesco

Amodeo has it down to a science.

"If the temperature outside is above 70 [Fahrenheit], you'll see that every single table will get a spritz," Amodeo reports. "When it was lower, around 65, people start gravitating to things like the Sidecar, heartier things, to give them psychological warmth. There have been weekends that we sold 80 to 100 spritzes and our patio only has eight tables."

Producers also credit spritzes with being a sort of gateway drink that leads to further investigation across the category.

"I think the spritz trend has been a really positive thing for inspiring consumers to try new things, to look at different sections of the spirits store and branch out," says Michael Foglia, director of production at Wigle Whiskey, which boasts an extensive line of liqueurs, including amari. "All of the publications, *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appetit*, the blogs, have really made that a familiar idea to the hip drinking community at large."

BITTER BUMP

The popularity of Stateside spritzes stems from the gradual shift of the American palate toward a greater appreciation of bitterness—enabling the amaro segment of the broader liqueurs category to have its time in the sun.

The tipping point for the bitter trend occurred early in the last decade—Amodeo goes so far as identifying an exact year.

"The palate switch happened in 2014," declares Amodeo. Not coincidentally, that's the same year his nearly-decade-old company produced its first amaro.

"We started the company in late 2011, early 2012, with the idea of showcasing some of the sweeter cordials that were more known in the market, like limoncello," Amodeo recalls. "A couple of years later we saw that the palate

was changing and the way the consumer was purchasing products was changing."

Don Ciccio & Figli's amaro portfolio eventually would expand to nine products, including Amaro Don Fernet, Amaro Delle Sirene, Amaro Tonic Ferro-Kina, Cinque Aperitivo, Cerasum Aperitivo, Luna Aperitivo, C3 Carciofo, Donna Rosa Rabarbaro and Ambrosia. They sit on various points across the bitterness spectrum from predominantly sweet, to full-on bitter.

Outside of amari, Don Ciccio & Figli's range of traditional liqueurs include Limoncello (lemon), Mandarinetto (mandarin orange), Nocino (walnut) and the espresso-infused Concerto.

Apologue's Haynes points to broader consumer lifestyle trends for the shift toward more assertive flavors.

"People found a new appreciation for bitter as part of a larger macro trend where they're more adventurous," Haynes notes. "Anthony Bourdain and that kind of foodie movement of the last 10 years had pretty far-reaching effects where people are open to trying new flavors and ingredients."

Wigle's Foglia has observed that culinary shift right within the four walls of the distillery.

"I use my production team as an example," Foglia says. "Four or five years ago if we were sampling a fernet, you'd get practically all of the faces making that wild, puckered face, like 'What the hell is that?' There wasn't so much appreciation for bitterness as there was a suffering through it. Now everyone on my staff has fernet at home and they even look for amari that are more bitter."

Wigle's own amari include Amaro Vermut, a copper-pot-distilled spirit infused with wormwood, cacao nibs, cinnamon and cloves and finished with apple cider; and Saffron Amaro, an apple brandy infused with 12 botanicals, including, of course, saffron. Wigle's non-amaro range includes Limoncello, as well as Coffee, Maple and Rhubarb Liqueurs.

Consumers' exploration extends beyond just the flavors themselves, into the history of how bitter and/or herbal-forward spirits emerged. They tend to share a common origin story, usually in the backroom of an 18th or 19th-century apothecary, somewhere in Europe. And there's a certain romance to such tales—regardless of how many actual facts may or may not be involved.

Becherovka is a prominent example that comes to mind. It began as a digestive aid around 1807 in what is now the Czech Republic and today is regarded as a Czech national beverage.

The iconic Italian amaro Fernet-Branca

Randy Mann of Up North Distillery





“I think the spritz trend has been a really positive thing for inspiring consumers to try new things, to look at different sections of the spirits store and branch out.”

—Michael Foglia of Wigle Whiskey



was first marketed as a remedy for cholera and menstrual cramps when it burst onto the scene in 1845. Both have since emerged as darlings of the modern bartending scene—the latter of which having achieved mythical status in San Francisco before exploding across the U.S. The relative stardom of those brands—as well as other international herbal offerings like Hungary’s Unicum—is evident to anyone who’s ever attended an international drinks trade fair like Bar Convent Berlin.

OFF-PREMISE JUMP

Total volume for the liqueur category, which includes everything from amari and fruit liqueurs to nut and cream-based products, grew 3.8% in 2020, according to IWSR —thanks, mostly, to off-premise sales, as COVID-19 sent on-premise channels into a freefall. Off-premise volume was up a strong 15.3%, offsetting the predictably dismal on-premise drop of 44.7%. For comparison to a non-pandemic year, on-premise volume growth actually surpassed the increase in the off-premise in 2019, 3.0% and 2.3%, respectively.

As is the case with many spirits categories, products within the super-premium price tier—which includes craft—enjoyed growth of around 7% in 2020 according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

The pandemic certainly has helped shift consumption habits—where, when and how people drink—at least in the short-term.

Since consumers, over the past year and a quarter, had been mixing drinks at home more than they had when bars were at full capacity and generally taken for granted, many may have opted for ingredient simplicity over complexity. From a flavor perspective, liqueurs of many sorts have their own built-in complexity that limits the number of components a drink requires.

THE SIMPLE TOUCH

But even before COVID hit, minimalism was the direction in which a growing number of bar menus had been trending.

“I’d say over the last couple of years, we’ve seen a shift with fewer-touch drinks, cocktails with two or three ingredients,” says Haynes.

That could mean taking a basic highball or gin and tonic and replacing the whiskey or gin with a liqueur—not only providing a different flavor experience, but also, in many cases, satisfying a consumer’s desire for a lower-proof cocktail.

The orientation toward simplicity may not only be a matter of taste, but one of



Sonat Birnecker Hart and Robert Birnecker of KOVAL Distillery



“You can make liqueurs out of so many berries and fruits and combinations thereof, that I think that drinking them by themselves, they’re delicious. It’s almost like a mini-dessert.”

—Sonat Birnecker Hart of KOVAL Distillery



Don Ciccio & Figli's portfolio includes nine amaro products and a range of additional liqueurs.



practicality, as well. Jordan Tepper, another of Apologue's co-founders, suggests that personnel trends may have influenced the movement.

"A big contributor to this is staffing shortages," Tepper says. "Cocktail menus in general are shorter and there's been a bias toward simple, but interesting cocktails that maybe are a little easier to execute, that are friendlier to outdoor patio-type environments."

Don Ciccio & Figli's Amodeo also is a fan of keeping it simple.

"I'm a strong believer in 'one-two-three,'" Amodeo offers. "When I was behind the bar and I was working as a consultant for different restaurants in the area, [on] the menu [there were] three ingredients per cocktail, maximum four. I'm a huge believer in simplicity, and allowing the units to shine through."

At Bar Sirenis, the cocktail venue Don Ciccio & Figli operates in the building that houses the distillery and tasting room, the menu's first page showcases simple classics. "You have a spritz, a Negroni, a Boulevardier and an Americano," Amodeo says, "where you can select your favorite bitter liqueur of the nine, as well as the style, and the bartender will craft it based on your choice. Then there's the craft cocktail section, with more of the modern cocktail recipes, but those are still three to four or five ingredients."

Like Don Ciccio & Figli, Chicago-based KOVAL Distillery's story is very much rooted in European traditions. When Sonat Birnecker Hart and her husband, Robert Birnecker, left their careers in academia to launch the distillery, they drew much of their inspiration from Austrian-born Robert's family. KOVAL might be best known for its extensive line of whiskeys and its gin, but its portfolio of liqueurs has a deep connection with that family history.

"Robert's grandmother, who makes amazing liqueurs, [would] bring them out after a meal and ... they were always conversation extenders," Birnecker Hart recalls.

KOVAL's range includes Caraway, Coffee, Chrysanthemum Honey, Ginger and Rose Hip Liqueurs.

"You can make liqueurs out of so many berries and fruits and combinations thereof, that I think that drinking them by themselves, they're delicious," she says. "It's almost like a mini-dessert."

Though, she concedes, the majority of liqueur consumption in the U.S. remains largely cocktail-based.

"I hear a lot of people when they use our Chrysanthemum Honey Liqueur or our Ginger Liqueur, they add it to their teas or they add it to their cocktails," she notes. "I've heard people

making ginger margaritas, adding our Ginger Liqueur. But I personally really appreciate liqueurs just by themselves, and that, for me also goes for amaro and any bitter liqueurs."

LOCAL FLAVOR

You're more likely to find widespread neat liqueur consumption throughout Europe, given that many countries across the continent have had centuries to develop that sort of culture. (And even though craft cocktail scenes are thriving in major European cities, those places, for the most part, are following America's lead in that department).

"When I travel through Europe," Birnecker Hart says, "I absolutely appreciate the regional nature of them. ... You go to all the different places, [like] Milan, [where] it's so amazing to have the Fernet Brancas and the different varieties thereof. [Drinking those liqueurs] makes me think of those places and I think there's an amazing regional opportunity here."

Spirits producers already are talking about terroir—whether you buy into the concept or not for distilled beverages—and fashioning liqueurs out of whatever type of flora makes your backyard unique is just another way to assert hyper-locality in your branding.

That's why it was a no-brainer for Roswell, Georgia's liqueurs-only operation, Blended Family Spirits, to make a product out of—what else—peaches.

Operating partner Scott Mayer, who brings a hospitality and brand management background to Blended Family, was surprised there were remarkably few such competing products in a state that's synonymous with the fuzzy stone fruit.

Still, he's not a fan of using the 't' word, even though he sources the fruit for his Peach, Raspberry and Blueberry Liqueurs as close to home as possible.

"I'm not a 'terroir' guy," Mayer says. "[As for] regionality, much of that is just being responsible citizens of the planet. Why would I source something from across the world when I can source it from down the street? Our preference is to source everything as close as humanly possible to the distillery."

It's also good business to be a steward of the community, building strong relationships with area farmers and showcasing the fruits of a particular region.

"We're not making mangoes because there aren't any mangoes around here," he says.

The closest Mayer is willing to get talking terroir relates to how different fruits behave at different times of the year and how he strives for consistent flavors given

Extracting the Secret

Even though Scott Mayer had a great deal of experience with amaro brands throughout his career prior to launching Blended Family Spirits in Roswell, Georgia, he opted to focus, instead, on fruit liqueurs.

"I worked for Branca for many years and I've kind of stayed away from that world for now," Mayer says. "I would never say never. But certainly my knowledge of amari and their production informs a lot of what we do at Blended Family."

The extraction techniques he learned within the world of amaro production have been applied to fruit. "Not every single botanical or every single fruit needs to be extracted the same way," he says. "Different methods produce different results."

For example, Blended Family steeps honeysuckle in its Peach Liqueur to achieve the desired result. But when it comes to its Triple Sec, each botanical is individually distilled.

"We vapor distill every single flavor that goes into the Tripel Sec," he says. "What I really learned working in amari is that you just can't throw a bunch of stuff in a barrel and hope it comes out well."



Scott Mayer of Blended Family Spirits

To Everything, There Is a Season

Seasonality is often a key consideration any time fruits or other botanicals are involved—but not always in the most obvious ways. Take Wigle's Coffee Liqueur for instance. "That's something that we're much happier to make in the winter time when our production space is reasonably cold," says Michael Foglia, Wigle's director of production.

But last year, there was a run on just about everything thanks to COVID and the distillery needed to build up more inventory over the summer. "Normally we wouldn't choose to make Coffee Liqueur in July," he says. "Part of the process is making a super-concentrated cold brew and if we make that in December, we can feel pretty confident about that cold brew remaining stable from off flavors for four days."

In July, that window shrinks to about 36 hours, Foglia says.

Additionally, when Wigle's able to produce all of its batches of Limoncello in the winter, its margins are appreciably better. "I'm able to access domestic lemons October through April, I might have some coming in May," he says. "You really start getting into international sourcing and price increases are regular when we're out of the domestic citrus season. When I have a choice, I always choose to do those two products in winter."

For something like rhubarb, though, consumers are more in tune when it's in season because it starts showing up in bakeries and on restaurant menus in April and May—a period when, Foglia says, Wigle's Rhubarb Liqueur had been "absolutely flying off of the shelves."

those seasonal quirks. "My blueberries that I get in March are very different from the blueberries that I get in May," he points out. "The color's different. And the products that out [in the summer] will not look the same as the Blueberry Liqueur that we put out in November, and that's just a function of the blueberries. Different times of year, different parts of the harvest, year over year, you try to maintain a consistent level of sugar content



Members of the team at Apologue Spirits

"People found a new appreciation for bitter as part of a larger macro trend where they're more adventurous. Anthony Bourdain and that kind of foodie movement of the last 10 years had pretty far-reaching effects where people are open to trying new flavors and ingredients."

—Robby Haynes of Apologue Spirits

and all of those things."

Sometimes, he says, it's necessary to manipulate some of those factors to achieve consistency.

Going local in liqueurs doesn't just mean harvesting nearby fruits from vines and trees. Sometimes you can capture your regional flavor from the tree itself. That's what Up North Distillery in Post Falls, Idaho, does for its North Idaho Pine Liqueur, which incorporates pine cones from Western White Pines—Idaho's state tree—forged along the Coeur d'Alene River, sweetened with local honey. The cones steep in an apple brandy base for about two months to achieve the optimal pine character. It goes in the vessel at about 100 proof and comes out just below 80 proof when it's ready for bottling.

Like many of the liqueurs mentioned previously, there's a bit of a European backstory to the creation of North Idaho Pine Liqueur. The inspiration was Zirbenschsnaps, pine cone liqueur popular around the Austrian Alps. When Up North co-founder and owner Randy Mann first tried it during a visit to the region, he immediately fell in love. It turned out that the trees from which the cones were sourced for Zirbenschsnaps were very close relatives

of the Western White Pines. "Just one species off," notes Mann.

Up North then set out to make its own twist on it.

"We use it in place of sweet vermouth in a Manhattan and a Rob Roy," says Mann. "I actually used it in place of gin for a traditional gin fizz and it was really, really nice. ... It cuts down on some of the sugars you add to drinks that take liqueurs because it's sweetened with honey."

Eventually he hopes to produce it from an Idaho elderberry base to add to its hyper-local character.

Over the next handful of years, spotlighting those homegrown elements is likely to become even more critical as the number of craft distilleries continues to grow, along with the number of those producing liqueurs.

"When it comes to three, four, five years down the road, people are going to need to innovate," says KOVAL's Birnecker Hart. "And I think that a lot of times, innovation starts in your own mind, in your own backyard, in your own community, because these are the treasures that belong to you. No one can tell your own story, your own regional story, better than you can. And I think that is an asset." ■



APOLOGUE



PAWPAW

FRUIT LIQUEUR

BRIGHT, RICH, EXOTIC

33% ALC/VOL | 1000ML

GETTING OUTSIDE THE BUBBLE

BY LEW BRYSON

Did you like your mom's cooking? I did, and it took me almost 10 years after moving out to realize what everyone else in the family already knew: Mom wasn't a great cook. Almost everything she made included cans of processed vegetables and soups, Minute Rice and pre-blended spices.

When I got out on my own, I had to learn to cook. I wasn't good, and I knew it, because when I dined out, or at friends' homes, the food was a lot better. I'd ask how they made things, then go home and try these new ideas, and make them mine.

I never would have become a better cook by continuing to do what I did. I wouldn't be poaching salmon, or making Spanish butter beans, or picking wild wineberries to make sorbet if I hadn't tasted those things in the great wide world. I wouldn't have created my own recipes if I hadn't spread my wings and got out of town.

Getting outside my bubble made me dissatisfied with what I was cooking and eating. That drove me to get better, to get more inventive, to learn better techniques and get better tools, better ingredients.

This obviously has nothing to do with your mom making her own gin with essences instead of actual botanicals. But it has everything to do with drinking widely. If you're going to make spirits, you've got to taste them often: for quality control, for sensory consistency. But you've got to taste the competition, too, because you can be sure that your customers are.

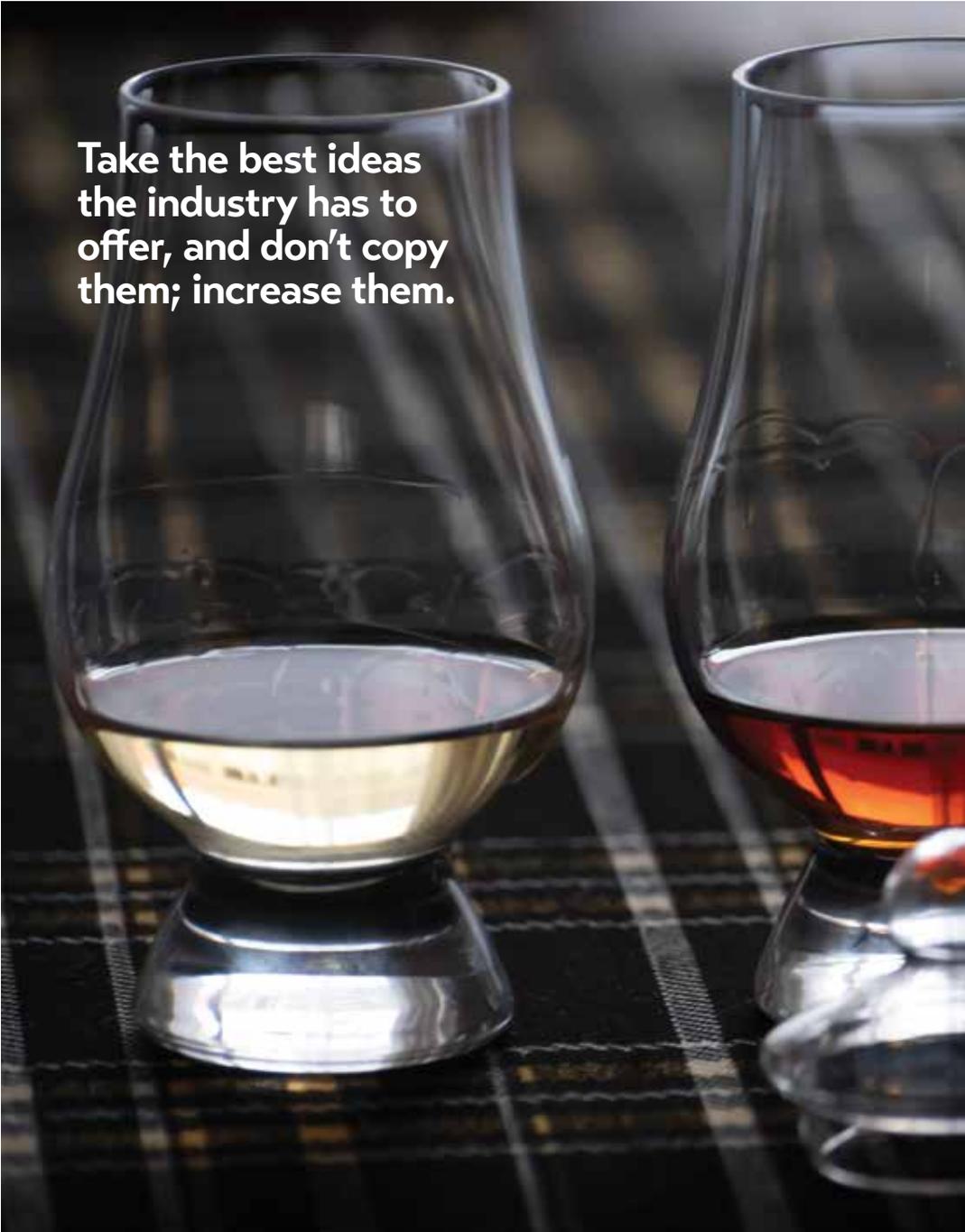
If you only drink your own stuff, you can start to think that's how all gin, or bourbon, or rum is *supposed* to taste. It's good to be different, but it's better to be different and good. The way you find out what's good is the same way drinkers do it; by tasting.

You have to be honest when you do. If your spirits are always the ones you like the best, well ... they might be the best. It's possible. But it's likely that there are at least a few that you'll taste and think something like, 'Damn, I like that minty note; that would be really good in mine.' And you'll try it, and tweak it, and

maybe you get one or two steps closer to your spirits truly being the best.

You can do it while contributing to the industry by judging competitions. You get to taste a wide range of spirits, from the

questionable stuff to the best bottles on offer. It's all blind, so there's no distraction of price or reputation. It's just you and the booze, and you can think about why yours is better—or not—and what you might want to take with



Take the best ideas the industry has to offer, and don't copy them; increase them.

you and try to emulate. You might taste something blind and recognize a similar taste from your own product, and decide that maybe that's not so great after all.

There's no shame in learning from the competition. It happens every day. Picasso may have said "Good artists copy; great artists steal." But T.S. Eliot said it first, and better.

"Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different than that from which it is torn."

If someone in your category is doing something smart, or new, or bold, you need to know about it. Because craft brewing's trajectory

of experience will show you that consumers want new things, that despite being mavericks they are still influenced by trends. It also clearly shows that flagship brands, like actual flagships, eventually are surpassed by newer, faster, fancier bottles.

You've probably experienced that already, if you've been open more than a couple years. Things change, and you can't stop them. Instead, become the change. Take the best ideas the industry has to offer, and don't copy them; increase them.

To do that, though, you'll have to go out and drink. It's not a bad idea to put aside the last few hours of the week for that. Gather your crew, get some glasses and three or four bottles of someone else's spirits, and one of

yours, and do some research. Keep at it, and you're going to find some new material.

Chances are, another distiller is drinking your stuff right now, and thinking about how to do it better. That's not a bad thing. It's how we all get better. ■



Lew Bryson has been writing about beer and spirits full-time since 1995. He is the author of "Tasting Whiskey" and "Whiskey Master Class."



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SHEAVES OF GOLD

Corn, rye and malt have all had their time in the whiskey spotlight. Why not wheat?

BY JEFF CIOLETTI



This story originally appeared in the September 2021 issue of *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine.

The category of wheat whiskey—many would argue—is smaller than it should be, considering the abundance of the grain in the U.S. Tradition is partly responsible for that—corn, rye and barley tend to have more prominent roles throughout distilling history. And then there's the cost issue. Sure, wheat generally isn't prohibitively expensive, but you get what you pay for. If you're talking wheat with Denver's Laws Whiskey House, don't even mention commodity grains.

"We'll pay two to three times commodity prices for farms and farmers who grow for us," says Laws founder Al Laws. "We recognize that this isn't going to happen if you're trying to minimize cost. We're not interested in that. ... We're interested in presenting flavor and we're going to pay for that."

Much like farm-to-table in the culinary world, Laws says, it's not about yield, it's about differentiation.

"People are looking for more flavors," notes Peyton Mason, CFO at Laws. "[The grain] is going to be grown for specific nuances, rather than how many bushels for the acre I could possibly get. People are starting to get that quality is better than quantity, that's for sure."

When Laws first started making wheat whiskey, it was using Midwestern hard red wheat. "It presented us with all of the elements of wheat that we were looking for: baking spice, orange—all of the stuff it brings to the distillate," Laws remembers. "We ran into this really interesting situation where we were able to try some of this heirloom variety, Centennial, in a malted form because we ran out of some of the other product. Once we tried [the heirloom variety], it was no contest. This was what we were going with."

The heirloom grain in question, soft white

"When you malt [rye], you leave a lot on the table because it doesn't fully attenuate. The wheat fully attenuates. It ferments pretty viciously and we're happy with how that works."

**—Al Laws of
Laws Whiskey House**

Centennial spring wheat, offered much more robust flavors. The red exhibited more traditional, hay-like grain flavor. Centennial, on the other hand, showcased more pronounced fruity elements."

Centennial has since become the base of Laws's 100% wheat offerings, Centennial Straight Whiskey Bonded and Straight Wheat Whiskey finished in curaçao casks.

The whiskeys incorporate a combination of malted and raw wheat.

Not too far from Laws in Longmont, Colorado, Dry Land Distillers has been producing two separate 100% wheat whiskeys, each based on a single variety. Sonoran white is the grain of choice for Dry Land's Heirloom Wheat Whiskey.

"When we set out to create Dry Land Distillers, we were looking around for what we could do as a distiller to really, genuinely, authentically represent Colorado, the American West, in our spirits," says Dry Land co-founder Nels Wroe. "When we started to dig into ... the idea of grain to glass, we realized that—while there's a lot of great traction there—we're also missing one more step, which is—is the grain we're using appropriate for the place we're living or the place we're celebrating?"

That ultimately led Dry Land to grains that had been recovered from the Sonoran Desert, which—as Dry Land's name suggests—gets a similar amount of moisture that Colorado gets.

White Sonora wheat fit the bill.

The other variety Dry Land uses is Antero, which local growers developed in partnership with Colorado State University, to cultivate a grain that would do well in the state's climate. Colorado Antero Wheat Whiskey has a spicier edge than the Heirloom spirit, balanced with caramel, vanilla and black cherry.

Dry Land promotes Colorado Antero Wheat Whiskey as a "30-mile whiskey," as the grain is grown (at Arnusch Farms in Prospect Valley, Colorado), harvested, malted and distilled within a 30 mile radius. Even the spent grain's final destination—Black Cat Farm in Boulder—fits within that distance.

"[Antero]'s a very uncommon grain, it's a low protein grain that kind of fell out of favor because it doesn't have the protein content—bakers don't like it as much," Wroe says. "Our grower, as far as we know, is the only grower left growing that grain and it's a phenomenal grain. It's got some lovely backbone to it and it's got some rye-like characteristics in our whiskey."

The Sonoran white's kernels are tiny compared with those of the Antero. "So you've got some sensory difference and visual differences in the grain itself," Wroe notes.

Flying Leap Vineyard and Distillery knows a thing or two about white Sonora, thanks to the fact that its Elgin, Arizona, base is located within the desert in question. So it was only a matter of time before president and CEO Mark Beres started making a whiskey with it. Some of it's been available unaged as a moonshine, while the rest has been aging in the cellar. "The moonshine has been wildly popular," Beres says. "We make some, it sells out, we make some more, that sells out."

Unlike Laws and Dry Land, Flying Leap decided against a 100% wheat mash bill for its products.

"The Sonoran wheat is a little different than soft winter wheat," Beres says. "As a 100% wheat whiskey, I think it'd be very good—it'd be very smooth—but I don't think it'd have enough flavor. So I put in some sweet corn and some roasted malt and that roasted caramel malt is really going to give it a lot of richness in texture and flavor. I don't think the wheat by itself is going to make as remarkable a whiskey."

The "very soft, very mild" wheat needs to be ground very fine, Beres notes.

When Middle West Spirits in Columbus, Ohio, first started producing wheat whiskey about 12 years ago, it relied on a mash bill that was exclusively wheat. But the distillery ultimately realized that a small proportion of barley malt would enhance the process and the product. "We were doing a 100% wheat mash and then converting with liquid enzymes," recalls co-founder and head distiller Ryan Lang. "Since then, we realized that the flavor was too singular and we needed to beef up the product some more."

Middle West turned to different varieties of malt, primarily for starch conversion.

"It's not a high percentage [of barley malt], it's just another component," Lang says. "It gets the sugars where they need to be for the yeast to consume them."

KO Distilling in Manassas, Virginia, found its magic number to be 60/30/10—the percentages of wheat, rye and malted barley, respectively, in its Bare Knuckle Straight Wheat Whiskey—a product that launched in 2016 and was the first aged spirit the distillery released. The 2016 iteration was bottled at a year old.

"Probably for four years running it was our most flavorful drink—nothing came close," says KO co-founder Bill Karlson. "It really popped, the combination of the sweet wheat taste on your first sip, but then the rye on the backend that gave it a little heat. It was definitely our most flavorful spirit until we started to have our bourbons and our ryes getting up to four years."



KO currently offers three wheat expressions: small-batch multi-barrel, cask-strength and single-barrel. The distillery is releasing them older and older and Karlson expects to have a four-year-old, bottled-in-bond version some time next year.

Karlson has observed that, comparatively speaking, KO's bourbon was more of a "late bloomer" than the wheat.

"Bourbon needed more time in the barrel, but from the get-go, the wheat has always been more flavorful," he notes.

KO head distiller Ryan Hendricks adds that the raw grain flavor comes through a lot more in younger barrels, but the wood can easily overpower the wheat if it spends more than a few years in the cask.

As for how the grain behaves before it gets to the barrel—or the still for that matter—well, it depends on whom you ask.

Hendricks reports that wheat is relatively accommodating, especially when compared with rye, noting that he's found fewer yield issues with the former than he has with the latter. "They're basically similar plants, but rye will foam up really bad on us and get sticky," Hendricks says. "So it's definitely a lot easier to work with than 100% rye, but a little more difficult than corn."

Meanwhile, Laws has found that, during fermentation, wheat tends to get a "gooey-ness" that's similar to rye at the same stage.

"We attribute some of the flavor to its gooeyness stressing out some of the yeast and giving off different flavor compounds," Laws reveals.

He also touts wheat's diastatic power, versus rye.

"When you malt [rye], you leave a lot on the table because it doesn't fully attenuate," he explains. "The wheat fully attenuates. It ferments pretty viciously and we're happy with how that works."

Despite that, the grain still can be a "pain in the ass" in other ways, says Dry Land's Wroe. Failure to pinpoint the precise fermentation temperature could turn the process into a bit of a nightmare. "I only wish it would behave," Wroe offers. "We battle with every mash. We have this thing dialed in, but [with] every mash, we can miss our temperatures by—I'm not kidding—two degrees and we'd have a problem. So it's super-sensitive to all of our temperature breaks and temperature rests."

Any slight thermal deviation means you're either going to end up with a "sticky, gooey mess" or dramatically lower yields. Distillers can mitigate the yield issue with added enzymes, but Dry Land's goal is to use only the

enzymes that are native to the grain itself, without having to add any. "I know we have some cheats if we had to," Wroe says, "but at this point we're just unlocking what's available in the grain itself."

For Spirit Works Distillery in Sebastopol, California, however, the use of added saccharifying enzymes is as much by design as Dry Land's avoidance of them is. Not only does it help the mash process and deliver the conversions the distillery desires, but it influences the character, as well. "That part of it is very specifically intentional and we do the same thing for the base of our white spirits, as well," says Ashby Marshall, co-founder and brand director. "We didn't want a malted flavor coming over [the white spirits] and [our] whiskey shouldn't go over that way as well."

From a milling and mashing standpoint, Marshall has found wheat to be a bit easier to work with than rye and corn, which tend to get thicker and clump a little more than wheat.

"We've got the right mill, the right sieve for [wheat], so it processes really well here," she says. "We're lucky that we get through about 2,000 pounds of grain, which is the size of our batches, in an hour and a half with the mill we have here—which is fast and quite nice."

Each batch yields about two barrels of whiskey.

Beyond its 100% Straight Wheat Bourbon, organic California red winter is very much a part of Spirit Works's brand identity across its portfolio. In addition to forming the base of its Gin, Sloe Gin and Vodka, it's a key component of the distillery's Four Grain Straight Bourbon and it's 40% of the mash bill for its Wheated Bourbon.

Marshall believes that the grain is very much rooted in the heritage of the Golden State. It's likely that any distillation that was happening on the West Coast in the 19th century was largely wheat-based. "This is what easily, naturally grows out here, versus what easily, naturally grows on the East Coast," she points out. "I will [offer the] caveat that I haven't done extensive research, but it is our assumption. It just makes sense."

And it's just one more element that could add to the appeal of distilling wheat and grow a category that is massively overshadowed by whiskeys made with more historically prominent grains.

"Wheat whiskeys are a lovely addition to our spirits culture," says Dry Land's Wroe. "If you look at the fun differences, the flavor profiles that you can get from true whiskey wheat, it opens up a whole new world. ... Come on guys, this is a category of its own, that deserves to get some attention on its own." ■



Ryan Lang of Middle West Spirits



COPING WITH THE 'CANDEMIC'

How the ongoing shortage of cans is threatening the growth of ready-to-drink cocktail programs

BY ANDREW KAPLAN

The Hawaii-based Kupu Spirits had been mostly spared the effects of the pandemic, what many call the can shortage that has been plaguing segments of the beverage industry.

A local can plant on the islands had kept Kupu's supply of cans steady. But then recently, Kupu's CEO, Garrett Marrero, noticed that was beginning to change. While it used to take a week or two for Kupu to get its cans, the distiller now often has to wait four to six weeks.

"The plant has recently started to make cans to ship to the mainland," explains Marrero. "Even though we still get all of the cans we need, the response time is longer."

Still, Marrero considers himself fortunate. "I'd rather that than not have cans," he says.

As Kupu's experience shows, the pandemic shows no signs of abating, and even continues to deepen. In fact, some estimates say it could be years before the supply of cans loosens for beverage manufacturers.

An informal survey of craft distillers around the country reveals that delays in obtaining cans are quite common, as are price increases due to the scant supply. Marrero says he has experienced two price increases in the

past year. On the other side of the country, in New York City, Jesse Ferguson, founder of Interboro Spirits & Ales, says he's also seen costs for his cans rise in the past year.

The reason for the tight supply has been described as a perfect storm of events. After demand fell for a while, the aluminum can has experienced a huge resurgence—and it has done so faster than the can suppliers can churn them out. Cans have become the package of choice for expanding alcohol beverage categories like craft beer and hard seltzers and non-alcohol such as sparkling waters, energy drinks and iced coffee.

"COVID added further to demand as consumers bought more beverages in aluminum cans for home consumption," says Scott McCarty, director, strategic communications, beverage packaging North & Central America, for Ball Corp., one of the major can manufacturers in the U.S. "Demand hasn't slowed and remains at unprecedented levels."

Adding to the problem, are supply chains that are backlogged and short of personnel, such as truck drivers, as the economy tries to reopen from the pandemic. And McCarty says

last year's unusually harsh winter also didn't help. "Winter storms impacted many companies, including some suppliers," he says.

For the craft spirits industry, less reliant on cans than some of these other beverage categories, the pandemic hasn't been too severe—yet. But some worry this could change, and just as the industry is demanding more of them thanks to the strong success many distilleries are seeing with canned cocktails.

While distillers say they are able to get most of the cans they need, they say some types are now harder to come by than others. It appears to be more difficult to obtain sleek cans, for example.

Roger Kissling, vice president of sales and customer management for Iron Heart Canning Co., which operates 75 canning lines in 25 states, says he has seen an especially acute shortage of 12-ounce printed sleek cans.

"Where a can manufacturer only has so much line time to produce different can sizes, it's almost impossible to get in the queue to get sleek printed cans made for you, especially if you're a smaller producer that doesn't plan on ordering truckloads and truckloads,"







he says. "I think one of the major reasons for that is the can manufacturers are prioritizing standard cans where they need to because there's a shortfall there. And some of our larger customers rely on that."

Kissling says recent months have seen

international supply coming into the market that has relieved some of the shortfall and the market has stabilized some, but these international cans have come with higher costs.

While craft distillers are doing their best to adjust to the shortage, there are signs that it

is already hampering what was supposed to be one way the industry emerged from the devastating impact of the pandemic.

PLANS POSTPONED

For many craft distilleries, the pandemic has

upset their ability to plan like they would in normal times. This can be especially unsettling for businesses that are young and trying to expand. In some cases, in fact, what should be a time of celebrating the popularity of new canned cocktails is instead being spent worrying about whether there will be enough cans to grow the business to its maximum potential.

Adam Quirk, co-founder of the Bloomington, Indiana-based Cardinal Spirits, for example, wonders what will happen if sales of the distillery's new Bourbon Cream Soda keep growing. "The sales of that have outpaced everything else we sell. It hasn't caused us any can problems yet, but if it keeps growing, it could cause a problem," he says.

He also says the long delays in being able to get a supply of printed cans also led the distillery to put off plans for a significant packaging change. "We actually were planning to transition from sleeved cans to printed cans last year, and put in an order, and our order got delayed by something like six months," he says. "From a marketing perspective we had this new rollout planned and just had to push things down the road a little bit."

Cardinal uses cans strategically, Quirk says. It will roll out a new product using sleeved cans. If the product sells well, they will move it to a printed can because the higher volumes justify the extra up-front cost. "When we launch a new product, we usually do that in a sleeve can because it's faster, first of all, and the minimums are lower. We don't have to commit to a full truckload," he says. "Having to order a whole truckload of cans almost a year before you get them, in an industry where innovation is so important, is very difficult."

For Lansdale, Pennsylvania-based Boardroom Spirits, the pandemic has resulted in a stronger working relationship with Iron Heart, which they source from, and they are shifting away from sleek cans because sleek cans have been so hard to come by. "Right now, we're working with the 12-ounce traditional beer cans complemented with a fun, customized label," says Marat Mamedov, co-founder. "We'd love to do sleeks eventually, but for right now they require more planning due to the shortage."

Today, four of the top six Boardroom Spirits products are ready-to-drink canned cocktails. "COVID created the shock to our system, but we needed to really move forward with it," Mamedov says. "It allowed people to really interact and get introduced to our brand through a different avenue. Cans have brought new, different consumers to us that

enjoy our cocktail culture and in the last year it's grown to be a healthy portion of our sales."

CANDEMIC WORKAROUNDS

Craft distillers say the key to ensuring an ample supply of cans today is the ability to plan ahead.

For example, the Newport, Oregon-based Rogue Ales & Spirits began creating a backup supply of cans early on, stockpiling about a quarter of a million dollars worth of cans. "We saw this coming about a year ago, if not more, and so started planning for it then," says the company's president, Dharma Tamm.

Rogue uses 12-ounce printed sleek cans for its spirits. To be safe, Tamm says they began stockpiling unprinted cans. "So, we had these unprinted cans which we then will either label or shrink sleeve if we run out," he says.

The lesson Tamm learned is to try to provide your supplier with as big a lead time as possible for your orders. "If you're in a production-constrained industry you have to help make that production as smooth as possible. So, working much further out than we're used to and then finding other sources where possible," he says.

Rogue was also able to draw on the relationships with suppliers it had cultivated on the brewery side. "A lot of this is based on relationships and making sure that we're all trying to figure it out at the same time," Tamm says.

In fact, drawing on relationships was cited by several distillers as a critical tool when it came to obtaining enough cans. This could be a relationship with a supplier, but some also said they helped other craft distillers find cans if they could.

In New York City, Ferguson, of Interboro Spirits and Ales, says contracting with Berlin Packaging has helped ensure his distillery's uninterrupted supply. "We have a really good relationship with them and basically contracted with them to buy cans," he says. "So, they in turn guaranteed that we wouldn't run short."

Mamedov says Boardroom uses Iron Heart to can its flagship larger-volume products, and will can its smaller releases itself. "Iron Heart is able to bring everything to you, including cans and ends," he says. "You can even get pre-sleeved cans as well which really makes it super convenient. ... It may not work out as much for someone who's doing smaller volumes, but it's been kind of a saving grace as we grow our canning program."

Also, baking into your business plan the possibility of further can price increases is probably a good idea at this stage. Kissling predicts that price volatility will continue.

After demand fell for a while, the aluminum can has experienced a huge resurgence—and it has done so faster than the can suppliers can churn them out.

"Where in previous years, if you saw one or two price changes the entire year, that's all you would expect," Kissling says he's already seen more than that in 2021.

ANY RELIEF IN SIGHT?

How long will the pandemic last? One report, from Credit Suisse, said it could stretch until 2025 or 2026.

Kissling likens the industry's adjusting to the demand for cans to trying to turn a barge. "Getting new can manufacturing plants and facilities online is a slow process," he says. "And I believe for the can manufacturer, from a business standpoint, it's much better for them to be slightly behind the curve than ahead of the curve when it comes to demand. They like to run these facilities to maximum efficiency."

McCarty says Ball is aggressively expanding its U.S. can manufacturing production to meet long-term domestic demand growth by installing two new lines in existing facilities (which are now running at speed) and building state-of-the-art plants in Glendale, Arizona; Pittston, Pennsylvania; and yet another recently announced in Concord, North Carolina, that is scheduled to start up in late 2023 or early 2024. It is also building a can ends plant in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

"Ball is working with our customers to minimize short-term impacts by supplying cans from our global plant network, as well as continuing to improve the efficiency and production of our existing aluminum can, bottle and end lines," he says.

In the meantime, a more reliable supply of cans cannot come too soon for those craft distillers, such as Cardinal Spirits, looking to take advantage of the consumer's love of canned cocktails. Says Quirk: "If someone wanted to create a business that would create cans faster for smaller producers, I think that would be a very successful business." ■

AVOIDING MISTAKES

Planning, thought and a willingness to adapt can help startup distilleries succeed.

BY JOHN HOLL

Talk to most distillers on their first anniversary and ask them what they know now that they wish they had known when they opened. It might take until the second anniversary for them to finish.

Mistakes are going to happen, and they will come unexpectedly, but as the craft spirits industry grows there is a foundation of institutional knowledge that exists and a lot of sage advice that can help newcomers avoid pitfalls.

As a new generation of distillers make plans to fire up their stills and fill bottles, *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine asked some professionals to share their expertise and words of wisdom on mistakes that are bound to happen but can be avoided.

"If I had taken notes along the way, during my career, I'd have a three-volume set on the

mistakes I've made," says Mark Shilling, a partner of Big Thirst Consulting.

Unsurprisingly, what first comes to mind is capital funding.

"Often when people raise capital they raise the minimum amount," says Scott Schiller the managing director of Thoroughbred Spirits Group, LLC. He notes that it cannot simply be enough to price out a still, a few months' rent, and maybe some payroll. There are always going to be unforeseen expenditures, delays and more that will quickly eliminate those funds. Having extra funding is often critical to helping smooth over what would otherwise be a bumpy start. "The big thing we always preach is putting together a very detailed financial plan with lots of contingencies for good and bad reasons," he says.

It is also critically important, early on, to

look outside of your distilleries four walls and beyond just generating revenue from on-site tasting and sales.

"It's very easy to focus on what's in front of you, like your tasting room. The margins are great, bottle sales are good but the problem with that business model is that it's not one that can really be scaled," says Schiller. "Really focusing on the distribution end, even though it's a slower return with lots of money up front, frustrating as all get out, the business that focused on that found, especially when the pandemic hit, that it was smart money."

Distillers also quickly realize that it takes a lot more money than originally planned to do proper marketing and support.

"You spend all of this money developing recipes, getting it into bottles and out the door and then you realize that you have no budget left for expanding and increasing sales," says Shilling, who is also a past president and chair of the Government Affairs Committee for the American Craft Spirits Association. "Without really thinking about the long-term you're always going to be playing catchup."

Schiller also cautions on pricing a product correctly. Taking the time to do market research within your distribution footprint

"Whatever you think is going to happen, or what you want to happen, it will change several times."

—Mark Shilling

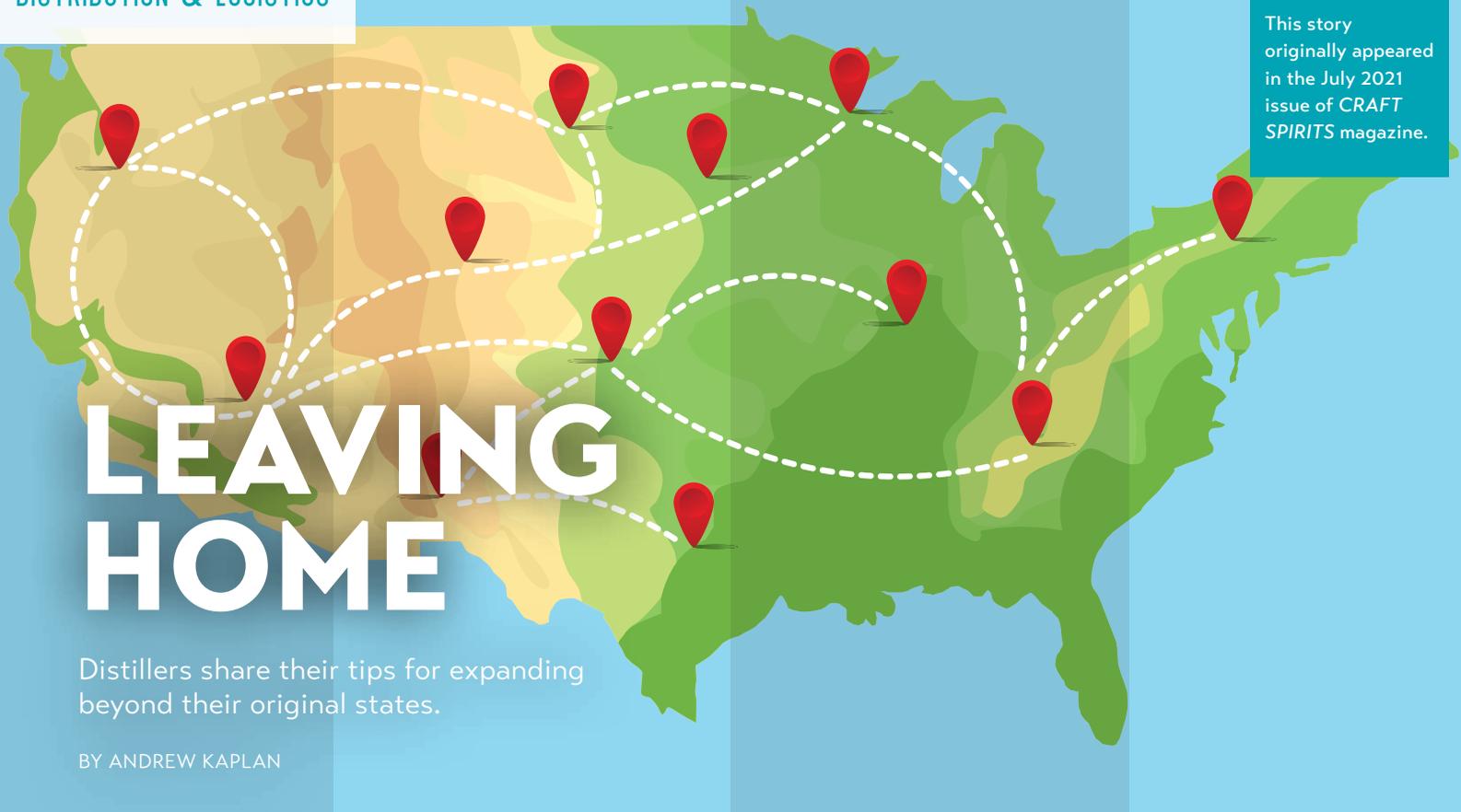
Scott Schiller



Mark Shilling



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LEAVING HOME

Distillers share their tips for expanding beyond their original states.

BY ANDREW KAPLAN

When is the right time to expand into a new state and how do you do it successfully? These are questions that many craft distillers find themselves eventually faced with.

Craft distillers have entered new states for all different reasons. Some have driven the expansion themselves into key markets like New York City or Chicago, viewing those places as springboards to broader distribution.

But oftentimes, craft distillers find themselves being pulled by market forces—by tourists who have visited their tasting rooms and then returned home and want to continue the relationship, for instance. Or it can be a distributor who learned about their product in some way and is looking to boost their craft spirits portfolio.

However, expanding into a new state can be a tricky game to play. Those with a lot of experience say it's quite easy to get caught up in the excitement that comes with a distributor expressing interest and jumping on the opportunity, only to discover pretty soon that you moved too fast.

"I think the biggest thing that many people do is they just rush in," says Karen Hoskin, founder and owner of Montanya Distillers in Crested Butte, Colorado, whose products are now sold in 44 states. "They feel like it's such a compliment to be asked or for a distributor to say, 'Yes.'"

"But," she then adds, "the risk for the distributor is almost nil."

"It just makes good business sense, right?" adds P.T. Wood, co-founder of Wood's High Mountain Distillery in Salida, Colorado, whose products are currently in five states. "We love our Colorado distributor and they're fantastic and a great partner. But it's always nice to have a little income coming in from multiple places."

Distillers that have successfully expanded their brands into new states say many tend to underestimate just how much work is involved on the part of the distiller to make it work.

What follows are some of their experiences, along with examples of mistakes to avoid when expanding into a new state, and ways to reduce the chances of making them.

THE BIG MISTAKES

One of the biggest mistakes distilleries make is underestimating the amount of resources and focus from them that expanding into a new state will require. It's not about just signing up with a new distributor and then thinking your job is finished, those who have done it say.

For instance, Ann Moran, managing director of industry consultant Thoroughbred Spirits Group, calls "launching and leaving," a big mistake. "This is where you come in, you launch, and then your whole team goes back

to your home market and you literally don't have anyone there to support the market and continue to build the brand," she says. "You definitely do not want to get yourself in a position where you launch and leave. As a supplier you are going to have to do the bulk of the work in the market."

She says it's important to keep in mind when working with one of the bigger distribution houses that a smaller craft brand will not necessarily be a priority for them. "There's a lot of excitement when you're launching a brand," she says. "The distributor's excited and it's very genuine. But if you are not there to keep up that excitement, it quickly fades and then you are simply relying on the distributor that's just unfortunately not giving your brand the attention that you expect and that it needs."

The fact is a brand needs TLC to sprout roots in a new market. Ryan Christiansen, president and head distiller for Caledonia Spirits in Montpelier, Vermont, whose products are found in 34 states today, likes to adhere to the adage, "Don't go too wide too fast," stressing the importance of a methodical approach to growing a brand in a new state.

"I think it's a more rewarding journey—and in the long term the right way—to build it slow," he says. "Ultimately, it's about starting conversations that support your brand

“You definitely do not want to get yourself in a position where you launch and leave. As a supplier you are going to have to do the bulk of the work in the market.

—Ann Moran of Thoroughbred Spirits Group



and if you're just scattered in the sea, there's really nobody talking and thinking about your brand. The product needs people to see it all the way through the three tiers because there's no shortage of customers [who] want to taste what we're distilling. It's just a matter of getting the product through the various layers of commerce."

Colin Keegan, founder of the 11-year-old Santa Fe Spirits in New Mexico, whose products are now sold in 11 states, says he learned early on where the distributor's role stopped and his began, and the outlay of money that is needed to bring attention for his small brand in a new state.

He remembers a learning curve with the first state he expanded into, Colorado. "I presented to the [distributor's] whole sales force and it went nowhere," he says. "I mean, we were selling two or three cases a month." He eventually realized he needed to support the market with more money, boosting his spending for marketing and sales promotions. "And by that I mean discounts on volumes, sales incentives for the salespeople and the distributor, and tastings and sales people. We had to educate ourselves, because sales is very expensive," he says.

After a few years, Santa Fe moved to a smaller distributor which fit its needs better. "We were actually allowed direct access to the sales people, which meant we could tell our story better," he says. "And when somebody was leaving, they would call up and say, 'Hey Colin, I'm leaving, here's my replacement.' So we could talk to the new guy. That was key to us. That we had the ability to get into the market and tell our story."

Hoskin adds that "mutually understood expectations at the beginning of the relationship" with a distributor are also vital. And even better is finding a distributor that is just as passionate about your brand as you are.

It doesn't happen all the time, but it does happen. She points to her relationship with Cask & Cork Distributing in South Dakota as an example. It began after one of Cask & Cork's sales reps saw her speak at an industry

event and expressed an interest in carrying Montanya's rum.

"She really got galvanized about the brand and did a lot of hand selling throughout her territory," Hoskin says. "And then, when she left, those customers not only remained committed to Montanya but they also had customers that were committed and so it created this little organic growth engine."

The result? "They have sold more Montanya Rum than the state of New York or Texas," she says. "They are just this little engine that could. They do an amazing job; they really do, and that's not the only example like that. There are others in other states that have done really well for us with zero investment from me."

IT PAYS TO PLAN AHEAD

With consolidation in recent years leaving fewer wholesalers as the number of craft brands continues to grow, distillers are under a lot of pressure to make sure they are prepared when the chance to expand into new states arises.

"Once you get shelf space, you have to be able to maintain that shelf space," Wood says. "And if you ... lose that shelf space then it's twice as hard to get it back in the future."

There are no guarantees that things will go smoothly when expanding into a new state, experts say, but you can minimize the chances of big blunders by taking the time to plan ahead. Which is why Moran recommends a detailed route-to-market plan, like the ones she regularly creates with her customers. Such a plan can provide an important framework for expansion into new states, she says.

A solid route-to-market plan, Moran says, will logistically and geographically map out the expansion, provide a window into its cost, and predict for you how much manpower and marketing support will be needed.

"That plan ensures that you've put everything in place, you've done all of your research and all of your homework to ensure absolute success," she says. "We look at all of those things and build them into the plan and into a

model so that we can pull different levers."

Such levers can include how to adjust if sales are lower than anticipated, or higher, and what that means for the level of intended personnel for that market, or for the intended advertising spend or marketing spend.

"The plans that we put together have very extensive built-in metrics and evaluation so that you are constantly evaluating where you are," Moran explains.

Basically, a good route-to-market plan can set up the guardrails for the expansion. "You always want to go back to your plan because opening a new market is a massive undertaking," Moran says.

Along with the excitement around expanding into a new market, also comes some drudgery. Each state has its own sets of rules and regulations. So, many find partnering with a good back-office solutions provider can free them up from dealing with such minutiae so they can focus on distilling and other things they'd rather spend their time working on. Park Street, and other such providers, can handle regulatory compliance services to reduce time-to-market.

"It would be a headache if I did it myself," says Hoskin, who uses Park Street. "It would keep me awake at night, for sure, because I couldn't possibly follow all the deadlines and submissions and requirements of 44 states."

Keegan also recommends really doing your research when working with a new distributor in a state. Ask the distributor for references and reach out to other craft distillers in that state to learn about their experiences. "No one understands the pain of lack of distribution or market access better than a craft distiller, so you want to talk to them," he says.

Many craft distillers, like Keegan himself, will often be happy to pass on what they've learned.

"I feel for new guys getting into it," Keegan says, "because I know how much pain and heartache we went through to learn. And I'd like that to be easier for the next guy, you know, even if it is competition. Because, hey, we're all in this together." ■

THE PROOF IS IN THE PROCESS

Process issues affecting alcohol yield with tips for prevention

BY PATRICK HEIST, PH.D. AND COLIN BLAKE

When you look at the process for making distilled spirits, there are certain criteria that must be met to get good alcohol yields.

First, let's define the term *yield* as it pertains to making alcohol. *Alcohol yield* is the amount of alcohol produced (normally expressed in proof gallons) per unit of feedstock. For grain-based fermentations, it would be the number of proof gallons of alcohol produced per bushel of grain. Good quality grain and an optimized process should get you over 5 proof gallons of alcohol per bushel of grain.

Here, Colin Blake and Patrick Heist, Ph.D., of Moonshine University, discuss the top areas of the distilled spirits production process that can affect yield and tips for how to prevent those losses. For simplicity, we will focus on grain-based distillates, but these can apply to other feedstocks like sugar, agave, honey, and molasses.

GRAIN QUALITY

It all starts here, folks—good quality grain should be visually pleasing and contain the proper moisture (~14%) and starch content (>65%).

If the grain is too moist, not only are you paying grain prices for water, but you might also experience issues in storage or milling. The starch is what contains the fermentable sugars, so an appropriate starch content is required for good alcohol yields.

Further, you want to make sure your grain is not discolored or particulate. It should be free from excess foreign material (cobs, stover, etc.) as well as insects. Milling and processing of the grain is also important to yields, but for the sake of brevity, let's assume we are starting with a properly milled grain flour.

INCOMPLETE STARCH CONVERSION

The cooking and mashing process is where the complex polysaccharide *starch* is enzymatically converted into fermentable sugars.

Excellent starch conversion is key to getting a good yield and is dependent on factors like grain quality, cooking temperature and time, and having the enzymes required to break down the starch. For example, complete gelatinization of corn starch requires 175-185 F for one and a half to two hours. Enzymes such

as alpha and glucoamylases are present in the malted grains, but commercial preparations are also commonly added. It is also important to remember that enzymes are sensitive to temperature—sustained temperatures over 195 F can denature the enzymes, which often occurs when there is an issue with starch conversion.

FERMENTATION ISSUES

Fermentation is the part of the process where yeast consume fermentable sugars—like glucose and maltose—to produce ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide. Of course, there are a bunch of different things that can screw up your fermentation.

We already talked about grain quality and starch conversion—so what else can go wrong? The fermentation process requires a good distiller's yeast strain capable of finishing off the available sugars and maximizing alcohol production.

Parameters like temperature and pH are also important for successful fermentation. The yeast gives off heat from metabolism, so the fermenters must be cooled to prevent

overheating. Depending on the yeast strain, a good target temperature range for fermentation is between 85-95 F.

pH is a measurement of the acidity and will normally decrease over the course of fermentation. Grain-based fermentations will normally start somewhere close to pH of 6 and finish in the low 4s to upper 3s. Abnormal pH drops can be an indication of microbial contamination and is discussed below in more detail.

MICROBIAL CONTAMINATION

Microbial contamination is a very common means by which alcohol yield is affected.

Overgrowth of bacteria and/or wild yeast competes with the distiller's yeast for sugar and nutrients. This results in production of organic acids instead of alcohol, which can reduce the pH of the mash and create a toxic environment for the yeast, greatly impacting alcohol production.

In addition to lower alcohol yield, serious bacterial contamination scenarios can result in increased residual sugars, which pose the risk of burning onto distillation and stillage equipment. The consequences of this are more frequent preventive maintenance.

Contamination with unwanted microbes is almost always a function of inadequate cleaning and sanitation. The area most often implicated in microbial contamination events is the piping and pumps between the mash cooker and the fermenter. This is compounded if there is an external heat exchanger. In addition to cook and fermentation vessels, these areas must be cleaned thoroughly to avoid serious contamination issues.

DISTILLATION

Up to this point, we have done a great job selecting good quality grains, the cooking process resulted in excellent starch conversion, we provided a clean environment for fermentation, kept our temperature in line and the yeast consumed all the sugar and made as much alcohol as we can expect from the amount of grain we used.

I am assuming we are in the clear as far as yield is concerned? Not quite. We all know what happens when we ASSUME things, right? Just because we did a great job making the alcohol, doesn't mean we are going to do a great job recovering it in distillation.

The most likely distillation issue resulting in lower alcohol yield is leaving behind alcohol in the stillage. The stillage is the grain and water left over after the alcohol has been removed from the distiller's beer. It should be relatively devoid of any residual alcohol (if the stillage



To get a quality product and excellent consistency from batch to batch, you'll need to pay close attention to every detail—grains, cook temperatures, enzymes, cleanliness, yeast strain and distillation equipment.

is 0.1% ABV, we wouldn't be too worried). In a column still, any alcohol left behind in the stillage is referred to as *base loss*—and arguably could also be referred to as the *Angus Share*.

You must ensure the proper temperatures and conditions for removal of alcohol from the finished beer. Beer feed rate, top and bottom column temperatures, beer temperature/pre-heating, doubler temperature and steam rates are among the many important aspects of distillation that can affect yield.

Pot stills can also have issues with leaving behind excess alcohol in the stillage. Having quality and functional distillation equipment is also important to avoid yield losses in distillation.

BALANCING QUALITY & FLAVOR

We have just begun to scrape the surface of all the things that can affect alcohol yields in grain-based distilled spirit production. Aside from alcohol yields, you can imagine how any of these lines of inquiry might also affect other important aspects of what makes a great distilled spirit—namely, flavor.

Take these same points across various bourbons and whiskies, vodka and single malts, and then things can get much more

complex. For example, as discussed above, bacterial contamination can cause a reduction in alcohol yield, which is perceived as a bad thing; however, it has also been argued that contamination with certain bacteria can improve the flavor—so which is more important? Having great flavor or alcohol yields above 5 proof gallons per bushel? Answer: Both.

You want to have a great-tasting product and optimize alcohol yields. It's all a balancing act. To get a quality product and excellent consistency from batch to batch, you'll need to pay close attention to every detail—grains, cook temperatures, enzymes, cleanliness, yeast strain and distillation equipment.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Overall, this comprehensive list provides a summary of the first places you would want to look when troubleshooting a process issue; but if you're looking to get more advanced in diagnosing potential production problems, then consider taking the two-day Fermentation Workshop at Moonshine University. You can also work with partners like Ferm Solutions, which can advise on and supply quality enzymes and distiller's yeast for your unique operation. ■

SEXISM IN THE SPIRITS INDUSTRY

Rooting out toxic culture requires a unified effort.

BY SARA BETH URBAN

When the stories about widespread sexual harassment and discrimination in the beer industry came out this May, I knew that the Tennessee Distillers Guild and the entire spirits community needed to address this issue immediately. It was not that I thought we needed to get ahead of it, because you cannot get ahead of something that is already happening. And I knew for certain it was already happening. How did I know? Because I'm a woman, and I've experienced some form of sexism in every job I've ever been in.

It was that male colleague in a senior position who made an inappropriate remark about my appearance that I felt compelled to laugh at; it was that disgruntled ex-board member who suggested the president of the board was acting like "my boyfriend;" and it was the male colleague who called my idea stupid and then proceeded to offer a lengthy explanation that I didn't ask for (which for those of you who don't know, is the definition of mansplaining.) This type of behavior is prevalent to say the least. And in an industry that is majority male and makes a product that lowers inhibitions, sexual harassment is not only happening, but as the revelations from the beer industry proved, it could escalate to something much worse.

That's why the impetus is on men and women to end this toxic culture. It can only be done through a unified effort that combines women standing up for themselves; male allies listening to women's stories and believing them; and everyone recognizing that this is a real and significant problem that can be fixed.

For the women out there currently in the distilling industry, my message for you is: We belong here. We add value and bring a unique perspective to this industry. There will be people out there who try to devalue the work you do by belittling you or harassing you, but know that that is a reflection of their insecurities and issues and not an accurate judgment of your effort and contributions. To stop this behavior

We can fix this problem; it just takes work. It takes partnerships. It takes calling out people who are problematic.

though, you have to speak up. You have to say something when you're uncomfortable; you have to listen to your female colleagues' stories and take action; you have to be an advocate for yourself and other women. Change won't happen without women owning their place in this industry and demanding a culture of respect.

For the male allies that are already working to correct these issues, my message for you is: Keep it up. Keep speaking out; keep talking to your colleagues; keep amplifying women's stories. While women are the ones who carry the burden of the actual experiences, you can be a part of the change. The distilling industry needs men who are willing to call out other men, whether those are the social media trolls or the master distillers, it includes everyone who is part of this industry.

For the rest of the industry, if you are unsure whether this behavior is happening in your state, at your distillery, in your tasting room, at the retail store or anywhere else for that matter, my message for you is: Yes, it is happening in all of those places. It is happening online and in person. It is happening in overt sexual harassment like groping, as well as passive sexism like only hiring men for distillation or management positions. It is happening within the industry from the owner to the bartender, but also among the customers and enthusiasts who enjoy the products. It is not one isolated incident, it is countless stories, some that have been reported and some that have been ignored or silenced.

I'm not saying this to make the situation sound hopeless. I'm not ringing the death knell of sexual equality in the distilling industry. We can fix this problem; it just takes work.

It takes partnerships. It takes calling out people who are problematic. It takes creating an environment at your distillery and in your tasting rooms for your employees and customers to know that sexist behavior will not be tolerated.

If you do not know where to start, reach out to the American Craft Spirits Association or Women of the Vine & Spirits to discuss training opportunities for your workplace. Establish a code of conduct for your employees and customers so that the guidelines are clear on what kind of behavior you expect from your staff and patrons. Most importantly though, listen to your female employees and take them seriously. When they say they have been harassed, felt unsafe or feel discriminated against, listen to their stories and take action.

I feel like Dolly Parton said it best: "As soon as you realize that [something] is a problem, you should fix it. Don't be a dumbass." ■



Sara Beth Urban is the executive director of the Tennessee Distillers Guild, working with distilleries statewide to manage and

grow the industry as well as to promote the Tennessee Whiskey Trail. She has 10 years of experience in management and marketing and is a passionate advocate for gender equality in the workforce.

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