TODAY’S HIGHLIGHTS
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• EU alcohol imports blocked in Indonesia
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CONTROL STATE NEWS
MI: MSP: Breath and alcohol testing devices have performance-related issues
WNEM
By Whitney Bryan
January 12, 2020

Michigan State Police has stopped their contract with the breath and alcohol testing device vendor due to reported performance-related issues.

MSP has been working with the vendor for more than 20 years.

The stop order was issued on January 7, 2020.

According to a letter wrote by the department, MSP will assume the duties previously contracted to the aforementioned vendor and fully certified MSP personnel will ensure that all Datamaster DMTs are certified, calibrated, and serviced according to the state law and industry standard.

VA: How new tariffs could impact Virginia wine shops, restaurants, and your budget
WTVR CBS 6
by Robey Martin
January 12, 2020

American wine shop owners and importers already dealing with tariffs on European imports are pleading with US trade officials for relief, arguing that adding a 100% tariff on French wine and Champagne threatened by President Donald Trump would devastate their industry. The wine industry is caught up in two separate trade spats.

The Trump administration imposed a 25% tariff on most European wine in October, in retaliation for the subsidies Europe provided to aircraft maker Airbus. Since then, the administration has threatened to raise the rate because of a lack of progress in resolving the issue.

President Trump has also threatened a new tariff on sparkling French wine, including Champagne, to punish France for imposing a tax on digital services. A report released by the US Trade Representative’s Office last month found that the tax, which affects large American tech companies like Facebook and Google, represents a barrier to trade.

But unlike other imports targeted by Trump — Chinese-made industrial materials, for example — wines are highly specific. Sellers can’t simply substitute a sparkling wine from California for a French Champagne.

David Witkowsky, of Potomac Selections, answered some questions to more elaborately, but easily digestibly answer what is happening as it relates to wine.

After reading, it’s up to you to decided whether you’d like to contact your representatives in Congress to express you opinions.

What You Should Know

There are two tariffs being proposed in addition to the Airbus/Boeing dispute tariff that went into effect in October. The first includes up to 100% tariff on French sparkling wines (and many other goods, see attachment here and here for full list published by the US Trade Representative) in retaliation for France’s Digital Services Tax. The DST is 3% on revenues generated in France by
digital companies who generate revenue of at least €750 million globally and €25 million in France.

In short, it’s a small tax on large companies like Google, Amazon, etc. The goods being tariffed have no connection to the source of the dispute and the nature of the tariff (up to 100%) is extreme compared to the 3% tax. The second tariff is an escalation in the Airbus/Boeing dispute which was the reason behind the tariffs enacted in October (25% on many European wines). This new proposed tariff would include up to 100% on all European wines (and many other products, too).

The tariffs are paid by the US companies who import the goods, and ultimately the consumers who buy the products. Europe [does not pay] these tariffs.

For importers, distributors, retailers, and restaurateurs in the United States, we’ll be left with the tough decision of whether we should pay large tariffs and pass along that cost in price increases, or forgo importing altogether. Best case, we lose significant revenue; worst case, we go out of business.

There are wines from other countries (and, of course, domestic wines), but there aren’t reserves of unsold wine waiting for this new attention to make up the absence of affordable European wine. My company [Potomac Selections] works with other wine regions and domestic producers, but they don’t have the extra wine to make up for the business we do in European wine. Not to mention, consumers have preferences!

Ray Isle, the Executive Wine Editor for Food and Wine Magazine, has a great analogy for this: Imagine there were a prohibitive tariff on country music, and country music listeners were told that they should just listen to more jazz music.

What price impact (in round numbers) will this have on my $20 bottle of red?

Assuming the importer doesn’t decide that it makes bad business sense to continue to import the wine with the proposed tariffs, that wine will become a $40 red or close to it. The importer has to pay the tariff up front when the wine arrives in port, so it’s likely that they decide not to import the wine altogether.

Few, if any importers, have the extra cash lying around to pay 100% tariffs on frequent shipments of wine. You won’t just see price increases, you’ll see a decline in the variety of wines that get imported.

This affects just European wine? Or cheese, meats, seafood, olive oil, textiles, and many other European goods. The complete lists of goods affected.

Will this close wine shops?

I certainly hope not. That is up to wine drinkers! If we see significant tariffs, the landscape of what is available and what those wines costs will change, but wine shops and restaurants will continue to find good values and delicious wines worth recommending to wine lovers. As always, trust your independent retailer! I promise they will take care of you, but you’ll need to be more open minded about which $20 red you’re getting.

What will you guys do? Sell more California and Virginia wine?

Certainly, along with wine from the southern hemisphere. However, there does not exist a volume of domestic wine that can functionally replace the amount of wine that is imported from Europe. There aren’t warehouses full of wine nobody has previously wanted to buy and it takes years for a winery to increase its production in a significant way.

One of the many unconsidered consequences that has California wineries worried is that their distribution often relies on distributors who also sell European wine. If those distributors suffer or go out of business, it will negatively impact them, too.

How can I make my voice against this heard?

The comment period for the French Digital Services Tax has ended, but the comment period for the aviation dispute (100% on all EU wines, plus dozens of other goods) doesn’t end until Monday January 13 (soon!). Please submit comment to the USTR and your representatives in Congress. Here’s a link with great information to further research that’ll tell you where to comment. For a shortcut, the National Association of Wine Retailers has links for submitting emails directly.

Most importantly, if these tariffs do take effect, the best thing anyone can do is continue to be a customer as they’ve always been and keep an open mind. I’m not asking anyone to double their budget, but if everyone refuses to buy wine because they assume the tariffs have ruined the value in a bottle of wine, we’ll all go under.

Trust your local wine buyers to continue to find you value!

CNN Wire contributed to this report.
WASHINGTON – Forgive John Reardon if congressional wrangling in the waning weeks of 2019 left the founder of the popular Deep Ellum Brewing Co. and Deep Ellum Distillery in need of a stiff drink.

Tens of thousands of dollars, after all, were at stake on his ledger.

Reardon and other beer, wine and spirits producers – small and big, in Texas and beyond – were waiting to see if Congress would keep the tap flowing on a significant cut to federal alcohol taxes that began in 2018 and was set to expire at the end of last month.

It took lawmakers until almost the last possible day to extend the perk for another year.

“We were definitely hanging on with bated breath,” said Reardon, who explained that his distillery “probably wouldn’t have survived” if the tax cut had not gone into effect just over two years ago.

The extension came via a late-hour inclusion in a $1.4 trillion spending package, which lawmakers sent to President Donald Trump for his approval right before they left the nation’s capital for a multi-week recess over the holidays.

Reardon and others had hoped Congress would make permanent the tax break. While the boost has not and is not expected to reduce the price of a six-pack, it has been crucial in helping many craft producers add staff, invest in infrastructure and take chances on new products.

But no one is complaining about getting a reprieve at least through the end of this year.

Trade groups had estimated that reinstatement of the levies would’ve cost the alcohol industry hundreds of millions of dollars, with small-time distillers, for instance, facing a tax increase of 400% on the whiskey, gin and other spirits they produce.

“It was quite the last-minute save,” said Michael Peticolas, who said an estimated annual tax savings of $20,000 has helped his Peticolas Brewing Co. in Dallas’ Design District add a staff member and start canning its beer.

This battle has been brewing for some time.

The alcohol industry had long complained about the dizzying array of excise taxes on beer, wine and spirits. So they pushed Congress in recent years to decrease the financial burden – in some cases, to a fifth of the existing tax rate.

Craft alcohol producers were pitched as the big potential winners, though heavyweight brands would also prosper.

The boozy benefit garnered broad, bipartisan backing, but supporters were unable to pass it as a stand-alone measure. It eventually found favor in late 2017 as a minor part of the sweeping tax overhaul that Congress passed with only Republican support.

Hopheads, grape growers and cocktail connoisseurs rejoiced.

“It’s very significant to our bottom line,” said Kat Thompson, founder and CEO of Texas Ale Project, another brewery in Dallas’ Design District.

Federal excise taxes decreased for all different forms of alcohol. But given that beer, wine and spirits are taxed in different ways to reflect different means of production, lawmakers took varying approaches to achieve lower tax burdens for each type.

Consider the perk for beer.

Big brewers had been paying a tax of $18 per barrel, which consists of two kegs. Producers making fewer than 2 million barrels a year, meanwhile, had been doling out $7 per barrel on their first 60,000 barrels and then the higher rate after that.

The change reduced the tax on big operators to $16 per barrel. Craft outfits, including the couple hundred brewing in Texas, saw the levy drop to $3.50 per barrel on the first 60,000 barrels and then to the new $16 per barrel rate after that.

“That’s a sizable sum,” Peticolas said.

There was one skunky note, though.

The overarching tax overhaul in 2017 came with a massive $1.5 trillion price tag, largely to fund lower tax rates for businesses and individuals. To keep that sticker shock from reaching even higher, lawmakers made several components expire over time.
The tax break for beer, wine and spirits was set to disappear after two years, leading to the will-they-or-won’t-they moment last month before Congress decided on the one-year extension.

That continued uncertainty has caused consternation for many producers. Thompson, the Texas Ale Project CEO, said she was frustrated that she couldn’t reliably budget in future savings, though she explained that the money has still been helpful in launching new products.

“It’s enabled us to experiment a little more,” said Thompson, who’s now rolling out a hard seltzer called TAP WTR.

Efforts are already underway to seek a permanent break or at least a longer extension, said Chris Swonger, a Texan who serves as CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

“For the small guys, it’s a significant lifeline,” he said, noting that distilled spirits are among the most-taxed consumer goods in the world.

There’s not so much a problem of finding lawmakers who support the idea, though a report from the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank, has raised concern that large distillers have found a loophole that allows them to access a perk designed for smaller outfits.

An overwhelming majority of lawmakers – Republican and Democrat – have signed on as co-sponsors to legislation that would solidify the lower alcohol taxes.

“‘It’s not a party-line issue,” said Joanna Salinas, co-founder of Still Austin Whiskey, who traveled to Capitol Hill last fall as part of an advocacy campaign organized by the Distilled Spirits Council. “It’s a small-business issue.”

But inertia remains a powerful force in Washington, and so-called tax extenders have been known to persist in purgatory for years.

So the stakes going forward remain high for all manner of booze barons. Distillers like Salinas and Reardon, the Deep Ellum producer, have perhaps the most on the line. Liquor has long faced the highest levies – and accordingly, received the most substantial tax cut.

Salinas said her distillery, which launched two years ago, likely would not have made it without the added financial windfall.

“It changes the entire dynamic for us,” she said, estimating her company’s savings in terms of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

MN: ‘We Are Definitely Against It’: Liquor Store Owners Lament Possible 3.2 Beer Law Change

CBS Minnesota
By Jeff Wagner
January 12, 2020

MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) — Grabbing booze on a Sunday at a liquor store is a luxury Minnesotans have happily embraced for more than two years.

But it’s different feel for liquor store owners like Dan Campo. He owns South Lyndale Liquors.

“We haven’t gotten enough sales to justify it, but it’s a consumer access thing, so we’re open,” Campo said.

His store and several others have weathered the change, but Campo’s now concerned about another potential shift to the state’s alcohol laws regarding the sale of 3.2% beer.

“As liquor store owners we are definitely against it,” Campo said.

Minnesota grocery stores and gas stations can only sell beer with an alcohol content of 3.2%, also known as “3-2” and “near beer.”

State Sen. Karin Housley said the law is outdated and hurting those businesses since Minnesota is now the only state still selling it.

“The manufacturers are like, ‘You know what, it’s too expensive for us to even make it. We’re not gonna make it just for Minnesota.’ So they’re now pulling out of the 3.2 beer business. So the grocery stores and the gas stations don’t even have a product anymore,” Housley said.

She added that because of Sunday liquor sales, those same gas stations and grocery stores have lost customers.

Sen. Housley plans to introduce a bill in the next session making it so the same wines and strong beers on Campo’s shelves can be found in grocery store aisles and gas station coolers.

“Thirty-nine other state have passed this. They do sell beer and wine in their grocery stores and they’re able to coexist along with the liquor stores in those states,” she said. “They have to continue to compete in the free market which is what we’re all about. We want free market competition for our stores and businesses.”

Campo fears some smaller liquor stores will struggle to exist if the law changes, since customers might opt to buy
booze at a big box store like Walmart instead of mom and pop shops.

He said grocery stores can survive with or without selling booze since people will always need groceries. For liquor stores, selling alcohol is all they’ve got.

“For almost 100 years, people like myself and other small business owners have invested in small business as a way of life with the ability and training to be able to sell these kind of products,” he said. “By changing a law like this, it puts all of us who put our life savings, our families, everything that we have into these businesses and it just completely says, ‘Now we’ve created access and it’s going to be at your detriment.’”

Housley feels her bill has bipartisan support. The Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association is strongly opposed to changing the law.

At 14 cents a gallon, New York’s beer tax ranks 39th in the U.S., according to the Tax Foundation, an independent group in Washington. Tennessee is highest at $1.29. Epstein said he wanted to bring the levy in line with the state’s 30-cent wine tax.

The state has been searching for ways to make public higher education more affordable. The Excelsior Scholarship, a new program for families earning $125,000 or less, helped 24,000 SUNY and City University of New York students attend tuition-free in its second year.

SUNY, with 64 campuses across the state, doesn’t comment on pending legislation, said spokeswoman Holly Liapis. Last year, roughly one-third of its $13 billion budget came from the state.

SUNY and CUNY need the money, said Robert Jackson, a Washington Heights Democrat who is sponsoring the bill in the state senate.

The industry said the proposed increase is ill-conceived. “It targets a small but important part of the New York business scene,” said Chris Ericson, president of the New York State Brewers Association.

“It’s a drop in the bucket,” said Ericson, who owns two microbreweries in Lake Placid. “It’s not even going to a brewing aspect of the state university program -- it goes to a general fund.”

The connection between beer and college isn’t as solid as other types of levies, such as a gas tax to benefit roads, said Ulrik Boesen, a senior policy analyst at the Tax Foundation.

“Your appropriation has no relation to the product and that’s not normally sound tax policy,” he said.

Epstein said he doesn’t want to overtax New Yorkers, but higher education needs better resources to make it accessible.

“If we get more people to complete higher education, we will do better,” he said. “Education is a pathway to the middle class.”

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**Australia: ABAC advises breweries to audit social media**

Brews News
by Clare Burnett
January 13, 2020
Alcohol advertising watchdog ABAC has advised companies to go back and scrutinise their past digital marketing postings in light of recent rulings.

In the past quarter, ABAC has ruled on a number of complaints about social media posts which were up to five years old.

As a result, it advised breweries and other alcohol companies to audit their entire digital marketing presence, “particularly when purchasing a new brand,” it said.

This is a reference to Pirate Life, now owned by CUB. The South Australian brewery has been the subject of a number of complaints in recent months, far outstripping the number against any other brand.

Pirate Life was responsible for seven of the breaches of the code which ABAC ruled on in the last quarter of 2019.

This included one in which ABAC warned against the use of the term ‘milkshake’ in relation to alcoholic beverages, as it could imply a strong or evident appeal to minors, it said.

Last month ABAC’s Adjudication Panel made judgements relating to complaints about two YouTube videos published on its official account in 2014 and 2015, well before it was acquired by CUB in 2017.

At the same time, BrewDog faced its first complaints to the watchdog, in relation to posts between 12 and 19 months old. It removed the posts in question, which were published prior to its official launch in Australia with the opening of DogTap Brisbane.

According to the ABAC code there is no statute of limitations on historic social media posts and their vulnerability to complaints and judgements.

Overall, the final quarter of 2018 saw the highest level of determinations and breaches in ABAC’s history, with the vast majority of these breaches relating to social media marketing.

This follows the previous quarter, in which ABAC reported that it had received more complaints in the previous three months than it usually did in a year.

The most recent quarter has beaten those records. 27 complaints were made in that quarter, but only 13 were determined.

36 determinations were made in the most recent quarter.

Of these, 22 were upheld as breaches of the code. ABAC noted that in all but one case the breach decisions related to marketing which was not pre-vetted by the scheme.

Over the time period, 685 pieces of marketing were pre-vetted, it said.

In addition to its warnings regarding historic social media, a forward, ostensibly by ABAC chair Harry Jenkins, highlighted the number of packaging complaints it had received.

Five of these complaints resulted in breaches, and Jenkins encouraged all alcohol marketers to become familiar with the organisation’s alcohol packaging compliance guide.

United Kingdom: UK Law firm appoints sober chaperones to keep boozy lawyers in check

NZ Herald
By Michael O’Dwyer for the Telegraph
January 13, 2020

A sober supervisor scheme has been launched by Magic Circle law firm Linklaters to keep its staff in check at boozy social gatherings.

The policy was in place for last month's Christmas party season, with partners appointed to supervise staff at lunches and other festive celebrations.

As well as requiring at least one supervisor to stay sober at events where alcohol is served, it is understood that Linklaters has been encouraging its teams to call time on social events that revolve around drinking as part of an effort to make the firm more inclusive for staff who do not want to take part.

A spokesman for Linklaters said: "Our people work hard and we recognise the value of teams socialising together to help provide a healthy work-life balance.

"As part of a wider set of guidelines covering social activities, we have recommended to partners, directors and business leaders that they designate a non-drinking role to a senior person to assist the smooth running of our social events."

The measures reflect a wider crackdown on the City’s drinking culture as professional services firms move to protect potentially vulnerable employees amid rising scrutiny of workplace culture.
Accounting firm BDO introduced a "sober chaperone" policy similar to Linklaters' to protect staff at its Christmas parties last year, the Financial Times reported.

Linklaters' Magic Circle rival Slaughter and May is banning staff ski trips after an internal review singled them out as particularly high risk.

One of Slaughters' solicitors left the firm in 2019 following allegations he harassed a female colleague of similar seniority during a winter getaway.

The professional body for lawyers in England and Wales called on firms last week to consider ditching alcohol-fuelled events and replacing them with other activities such as "escape rooms", treasure hunts, quizzes and tea ceremonies.

Its recommendations are part of a campaign by the Law Society's Junior Lawyers Division to improve mental health and diversity in the profession, and crackdown on bullying.

Sebastian Bailey, of workplace culture advice company Mind Gym, said that other firms have introduced caps on the amount of alcohol staff can consume at parties.

Gatherings outside work are a risk for firms because they blur the line between work and employees' personal lives.

Many employees feel pressure to attend because "if it starts at work, it is work," Mr James said.

Last year, insurance market Lloyd's of London gave its security guards new powers to prevent anyone under the influence of alcohol and drugs from entering its offices in a bid to stamp out a culture of hard drinking.

Insiders had branded the operation a "meat market" because of widespread sexual harassment claims. Lloyd's also converted its on-site bar into a coffee shop.

The drinking culture at City law firms has come under the spotlight in recent months.

A former partner at another top firm, Freshfields, was fined £35,000 and ordered to pay £200,000 in costs after engaging in sexual activity with a junior female colleague.

The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal was criticised for stopping short of banning the lawyer, Ryan Beckwith, from the profession.

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**PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

Study assesses variation in 'maturing out' of alcohol use in young adulthood

News Medical & Life Sciences
Reviewed by Kate Anderton, B.Sc. (Editor)
January 12, 2020

Rates of heavy drinking and alcohol use disorder peak in the late adolescent and early adult age-group (19-25 years), before decreasing from around age 26. This supports the notion that many young people 'mature out' of heavier drinking behavior. However, changes in young adults' alcohol consumption vary widely, and depend on a range of factors including role transitions (e.g. marriage, parenthood), social networks, and personality. Dr. Michael Windle from Emory University, Georgia, assessed the variation in 'maturing out' by evaluating trajectories of alcohol use from adolescence through young adulthood, up to around 33 years of age. The study, published in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, also explored whether different alcohol use trajectories were associated with other indicators of young-adult functioning, relating to health, sleep, and social and occupational functioning.

Data were analyzed from over one thousand young adults who had provided detailed information on recent alcohol use at various timepoints between the ages of around 15 to 33 years. At the final timepoint, participants gave additional information on other aspects of their lives and functioning. Using statistical modeling, participants were grouped into three different alcohol use trajectories. Most (around two thirds of the sample) fitted a 'normative use' trajectory, characterized by stable low alcohol use from adolescence to young adulthood. A smaller group (just under one third of the sample) was assigned to a 'moderate increase' trajectory, in which moderate drinking increased slowly from adolescence to emergent adulthood (age 23 years) before decreasing slightly to young adulthood. Around 6% of the sample fitted a 'high increase' trajectory, characterized by a high, increasing pattern of alcohol use from adolescence to emergent adulthood, followed by a small decrease to young adulthood.

At age 33, those in the high increase group showed poorer functioning than the normative use group across the assessed indicators – with greater alcohol and illicit drug use, more partner and work/family conflict, poorer physical health and sleep, and lower job-related motivation. The moderate increase group also scored
worse than the normative use group for most of these measures.

The findings confirm that patterns of change towards maturing out of alcohol use are not uniform. Most young people maintained a pattern of low stable use and did not mature out, largely because they never had a high level of consumption. The moderate and high increase groups did show a pattern of modest decline with age, indicating that maturing out applies to a smaller subset of heavier and more frequent drinkers. Further, the data suggest that young adults with either a high or moderate increase trajectory for alcohol use warrant attention and intervention to reduce the risk of poor life outcomes.

Source: Research Society on Alcoholism

Journal reference:

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Alcohol Deaths Have Risen Sharply, Particularly Among Women
An analysis of death certificates over nearly two decades contained several troubling findings.

The New York Times
By Matt Richtel
January 10, 2020

The number of women drinking dangerous amounts of alcohol is rising sharply in the United States.

That finding was among several troubling conclusions in an analysis of death certificates published Friday by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The analysis looked at deaths nationwide each year from 1999 through 2017 that were reported as being caused at least partly by alcohol, including acute overdose, its chronic use, or in combination with other drugs.

The death rate tied to alcohol rose 51 percent overall in that time period, taking into account population growth. Most noteworthy to researchers was that the rate of deaths among women rose much more sharply, up 85 percent. In sheer numbers, 18,072 women died from alcohol in 2017, according to death certificates, compared with 7,662 in 1999.

“More women are drinking and they are drinking more,” said Patricia Powell, deputy director of the alcohol institute, which is a division of the National Institutes of Health.

Still, far more men than women die from alcohol-related illnesses, the study showed. In 2017, alcohol played a role in the deaths of 72,558 men, compared to 35,914 in 1999, a 35 percent increase when population growth is factored in.

Like much research of its kind, the findings do not alone offer the reasons behind the increase in alcohol deaths. In fact, the data is confounding in some respects, notably because teenage drinking overall has been dropping for years, a shift that researchers have heralded as a sign that alcohol has been successfully demonized as a serious health risk.

Experts said that the new findings could partly reflect the fact that baby boomers are aging and the health effects of chronic alcohol use have become more apparent. The increase in deaths might also reflect the increase in opioid-related deaths, which in many cases can involve alcohol as well, and that would be reflected on death certificates.

But these factors do not appear to wholly account for the increase in deaths among women, according to researchers. Aaron White, a senior scientific adviser to the institute, who analyzed the death-certificate data, said that a growing body of research shows that alcohol tends to harm women more than it does men, for example, involving heart health and some cancers.

He also noted that teenage use of alcohol, while in decline from earlier generations, has also reflected a narrowing of the gap between the behaviors of girls and boys; 10th grade girls are now as likely to drink as boys, he said, a sharp change over the decades.

“Part of being liberated from male dominance is being able to behave in which way you choose,” Ms. Powell said. “Some women have gotten the message that it’s liberating to drink like a man.”

But that problematic message, she noted, doesn’t include the part about how dangerous alcohol is or that women who match a man drink-for-drink are likely to suffer worse health effects.

The researchers said that the new figures, for men and women, may be vastly below alcohol-related death rates because death certificates often do not mention alcohol, even when it is a significant or partial cause. Alcohol can be left off death certificates when coroners or others identify a more immediate and obvious cause, such as a
fall that broke a hip, not the alcohol that caused the person to fall in the first place.

Researchers noted that there might be positive trends underneath the raw data. Specifically, the increase in alcohol deaths may reflect a bubble of baby boomers while the dropping rates of alcohol use among teenagers may portend a brighter future.

“If you want to look at this optimistically, we may be a tipping point,” Ms. Powell said. “Millenials may be more interested in health.”

### INDUSTRY NEWS

**EU alcohol imports blocked in Indonesia**

The Drinks Business  
by Rupert Millar  
January 13, 2020

Indonesia is clamping down on imports of European wine, spirits and dairy products in an escalating dispute over the Asian country’s palm oil.

Flying under the radar of the more headline-grabbing spat between the US and European Union in which wine is being heavily penalised, another feud has been bubbling away in south Asia.

The dispute arose last year after the EU declared in March 2019 that as palm oil causes deforestation it is not considered a sustainable or renewable resource anymore.

As such, the trading block said it would be phased out as fuel for transport between 2023 and 2030.

The news was badly received in Indonesia which is one of the world’s leading producers of palm oil – with Malaysia.

The EU biodiesel market is worth an estimated €9 billion a year, with €400 million worth of that coming from Indonesia.

Tensions ratcheted up throughout the year with tariffs being imposed on biodiesel by the EU and then spirits, wine and dairy products by Indonesia in late December 2019 it was reported by agencies that alcoholic products were no longer being issued import licenses.

A predominantly Muslim country, Indonesia regulates alcohol imports through an import and distribution plan.

### DAILY NEWS

**Among the Sober and ‘Sober Curious’? Your Bartender**

As interest in Dry January and sobriety rises, and as social media opens up new conversations, the bar industry has begun to evolve.

The New York Times  
By Becky Hughes  
January 13, 2020

When Jade Golden, a bartender at 169 Bar in Manhattan’s Chinatown, was in Alcoholics Anonymous, her sponsor strongly recommended that she stay out of the bar business.

“The mentality was that if you stay in the barbershop long enough, you’ll end up getting a haircut,” Ms. Golden said. “I don’t believe that. I believe I could grow my hair to my feet standing in a barbershop. I sit down in the chair and tell somebody to cut my hair — that’s how I get a haircut.”

Ms. Golden has been sober for eight years, balancing her personal life with the demands of the field in which she works. Like other sober bartenders, who have long been a presence in the industry, she isn’t just hanging around the shop; she’s the barber.

Interest in going dry, or drinking less, has been on the rise broadly in recent years. Semi-sobriety is no longer confined to Dry January (or Drynuary), the monthlong challenge that rose to popularity five years ago, and the “sober curious” movement is giving people who don’t necessarily identify as having a drinking problem a framework for abstaining.

Within the beverage industry, low-alcohol and nonalcoholic beverages are gaining popularity. Retail sales of nonalcoholic beverages have grown by $3.2 billion, to $87.2 billion, in the last year alone, according to Danny Brager, a senior vice president at Nielsen, which tracks sales. “Abstinence — or reduction — of alcohol consumption has taken on a new life,” he said in an email.

Nonalcoholic bars are opening in cities across the country. Venerable cocktail bars are adding booze-free drinks to their lists. And there is a growing sense among professional bartenders that their business culture may be changing, too.

In 2010, when Jack McGarry opened the Dead Rabbit in Manhattan’s financial district with Sean Muldoon, stereotypical back-of-house debauchery was commonplace. “I was at the forefront of that free-for-
all,” Mr. McGarry said. “I would’ve drank during shifts, I would’ve drank afterward.”

But Mr. McGarry, who first went sober three and a half years ago after recognizing that he had addictive tendencies, said he has noticed a heightened interest in sobriety over the past few years, and a far more open discourse. “People in the industry approach me often,” seeking advice on cutting back their drinking, he said.

In late September, he went to a drink tasting after a long run on an empty stomach and got drunk, a story that he shared in an Instagram post. (To sample cocktails, Mr. McGarry dips a straw into the drink and suctions out a sip to taste, then spits it into a cup.)

The post was to hold himself accountable, he said, and to announce that day as his new sober date. One of the first comments on that post read, “But if we all gave up we’d have no industry.” The commenter was a brand ambassador for a liquor company.

That reaction, Mr. McGarry believes, is emblematic of a larger problem: peers assuming, incorrectly, that he prescribes sobriety to his colleagues and employees.

“Alcohol will always be there,” he said, and people will always drink it. What the industry needs isn’t more sober people, necessarily, but more transparency.

Joanna Carpenter, a cocktail consultant who works primarily with liquor brands, attributes some of the changing attitudes toward sobriety in the industry to “how we communicate in the digital age, and the pervasiveness of call-out culture” — people are now more forthcoming on social media about their own experiences, and the ways in which they feel others may have crossed lines.

Ms. Carpenter stepped away from alcohol because of her family history with addiction, going sober for six months in early 2018 and taking steps to reduce her consumption ever since. She found solidarity on a private Facebook thread with other women in the business who are sober, or semi-sober. Offline, though, safe spaces were harder to find.

“If you did not drink, you got bullied,” she said. “You got questioned. You got made fun of.”

One of her goals is to normalize conversations about substance abuse and mental health among bartenders. (In an industry that rarely offers insurance to employees, mental health resources are difficult to access. As Ms. Golden put it, “We don’t get health insurance, but we get free drinks.”)

The writer Julia Bainbridge, whose cookbook devoted to nonalcoholic drinks will be published in October, also attributes the trend toward less drinking in the industry in part to the #MeToo movement. Bad behavior in the restaurant business often goes hand in hand with the copious consumption of alcohol. (In November, The New York Times reported on allegations by four women in the wine industry, who accused a celebrated sommelier of sexually assaulting them or attempting to do so.)

Ms. Bainbridge is optimistic about the state of the industry, and has seen an uptick in sober-curiosity in her circles. “The conversations, and actions, are taking place,” she said. “I see people creating best practices, hiring H.R. personnel, or otherwise trying to professionalize.”

But the idea of a sober bartender still takes some bargoers by surprise. When Adrienne Oakes, a bartender at Up & Up in Greenwich Village, explains to customers that she’s sober, the reaction is often respectful, but not always.

“There are some guests that are like, ‘Oh, that’s like a chef that doesn’t eat,’” she said.

She gave up alcohol at her doctor’s suggestion, but often has to lie to customers until they drop the subject. “I have to make up reasons that I don’t drink,” she said. “Me saying that I don’t drink should be enough.”

And, Ms. Oakes pointed out, she is not obligated to be anyone’s drinking buddy.

“That’s actually not a part of my job description,” she said. “I’m supposed to give you hospitality and make you a proper cocktail and make sure you’re enjoying your time in this space that we’ve curated. Me drinking, or not, is not a part of that experience.”

**Study: Binge drinking on the rise, officials believe new drinks hide alcohol taste**

**WBAY**

**January 11, 2020**

Health officials say a new study reinforces the idea that binge drinking is a leading cause of alcohol related deaths around the country.

Some health officials believe binge drinking is on the rise because many new drinks hide the taste of alcohol, making it harder for people to know exactly how much they’re putting in their body.
"In Wisconsin, data is actually showing that alcohol related injuries that result in death overshadow those that are related to alcohol-related diseases themselves," says Melissa Moore, with the Marathon County Health Department.

The study was done by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Is poverty causing more alcohol-related deaths? (opinion)

Washington Examiner
by John Patrick
January 9, 2020

Many people love a cold beer and a happy hour, but a troubling new study on alcohol-related mortality has many health experts warning that it may be time to rethink our relationship with alcohol.

Published in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, the study says the rate of deaths involving alcohol has risen more than 50% over the last two decades, from 16.9 deaths per 100,000 in 1999 to 25.5 deaths per 100,000 in 2017.

While alcohol can factor into death in different ways, researchers identified liver disease and accidental overdose due to alcohol or drugs mixed with alcohol as the two leading causes of alcohol-related mortality. Together, these two outcomes account for roughly half of all deaths caused by alcohol annually.

In addition to identifying a steep increase in the rate of alcohol-related deaths, the study’s authors also presented other findings showing an increase in the annual number of alcohol-related injuries. From 2006 to 2014, the rate of emergency room admissions due to alcohol consumption increased 47.3% among those older than 12, while alcohol-related hospitalizations increased 51.4% between 2000 and 2015.

In 2017, roughly 70% of the population reported having consumed alcohol in the past year, with an average of slightly more than two drinks a day. Based on medical guidelines of no more than two drinks a day for adult males and one drink for adult females, a large number of people would thus be classified as “heavy drinkers,” according to CNN.

According to a University of Michigan gastroenterologist and alcohol researcher who was not affiliated with the study, Dr. Elliot Tapper, the rise in alcohol-related deaths among adults can largely be attributed to three factors.

First, alcohol abuse combined with a metabolic condition such as obesity can accelerate the rate of overall damage to the liver, known as cirrhosis, which in turn reduces the ability of the body to metabolize the toxic effects of alcohol, and can become life-threatening after a certain stage.

Secondly, Tapper believes that the alcohol content in popular drinks has also risen significantly in recent years, as well.

"I live in a college town, and I see college kids drinking products that are sweeter, easier to drink, and have a higher percentage of alcohol," Tapper noted. In recent years, many have embraced carbonated beverages with a stronger alcoholic content.

Tapper also believes there may be a socioeconomic link to recent increases in drinking habits, noting that the overall increase in recent alcohol deaths rose dramatically following the 2008 economic crisis.

"This is more speculative, but there is some cultural social force which is leading people to drink more," Tapper said. "That could be related to changes in socioeconomic status, but it is true we are seeing people drinking more in one sitting, and there is much more binge drinking, which puts people at risk."

This study confirms what conservatives have long suspected: Societal and economic collapse lead people toward vice and despair. Now we just need to do something about it.

Column: On Prohibition’s 100th anniversary, do we expect the same fate for marijuana?

The Eagle-Tribune
By Donald J. Boudreaux and Adam C. Pritchard
January 12, 2020

Alcohol prohibition became the law of the land 100 years ago — on Jan. 16, 1920 — following ratification of the 18th Amendment and enactment of the Volstead Act. Progressivism played a driving role, with Americans possessed by reformist fervor set to cure the ills of society by banning the manufacture and sale of liquor.

Today, progressive reformers are pushing in a seemingly opposite direction, seeking to undo a longstanding ban on marijuana.

What lessons do the demise of alcohol prohibition provide for modern-day marijuana advocates? The circumstances are not as similar as you might think, and
we should not expect a federal marijuana policy reversal in the near future.

The marijuana effort has found success in a growing number of states. Somewhat incongruously, however, the federal government retains its criminal prohibition on marijuana, despite an apparent policy of non-enforcement.

Efforts to repeal the federal ban and conform the law with practice have gone nowhere.

The high-school history account of alcohol prohibition suggests that Congress will eventually relent and legalize marijuana, like it did alcohol, once it becomes clear that prohibition is futile. People did not give up drinking in the 1920s, and worse, prohibition created opportunities for mobsters and other lawbreakers to grow rich while inflicting collateral damage on their neighbors.

Congress, we’re told, recognized the failure of this “noble experiment” and repealed alcohol prohibition in late 1933.

Despite this common interpretation, it is unlikely that Congress will follow a similar pattern in repealing the marijuana ban. The tale makes an important omission: that the 1920s witnessed precious little momentum among citizens and politicians for ending Prohibition.

Here’s how historian Norman Clark described it: “(B)efore 1930 few people called for outright repeal of the (18th) Amendment.... The repeal movement, which since the early 1920s had been a sullen and hopeless expression of minority discontent, astounded even its most dedicated supporters when it suddenly gained political momentum.”

Something else happened in 1930 that suddenly changed the dynamic: the Great Depression, and specifically its effect on federal revenues.

Alcohol prohibition was very closely linked to the federal income tax. Before the first national income tax in 1913, liquor taxes accounted for about one-third of annual federal revenue. Income taxes went from supplying about 16% of the federal government’s revenues in 1916 (the year before American entry into World War I) to supplying double that proportion in 1917.

By 1918, the income tax supplied nearly two-thirds of federal revenue, and by 1920 it produced nine times more revenue than liquor taxes and customs duties put together.

So while Congress did eventually acquiesce to a popular social movement, it did so only after its coffers were being filled by another reliable source of revenue.

Then, for more than a decade, Congress gave no hint that it would undo mandatory virtue. Prohibition, however imperfectly enforced, was on solid ground as a legal matter until things changed dramatically again in the 1930s. The Depression hit and income-tax revenues fell by 60% between 1930 and 1933.

Naturally, Washington was desperate for a solution, and its power brokers knew where to find one: at the bottom of the (legally purchased and taxed) bottle.

One anti-Prohibition congressional leader acknowledged that if his faction “had not had the opportunity of using that argument, that repeal meant needed revenue for our government, we would not have had repeal for at least 10 years.”

Sure enough, Prohibition’s repeal did indeed generate the hoped-for tax revenues. As a percentage of federal government revenues, liquor taxes jumped from 2% in 1933 to 9% in 1934, then to 13% in 1936.

The public and its leaders were not blind to Prohibition’s failure up to that point. Nor were they blind to the attendant disrespect for the law that it enabled.

But as is often the case in American politics, winning the argument isn’t always enough, and fiscal incentives can matter every bit as much as — or more than — public opinion polls.

So, if the history of alcohol prohibition is a guide, those seeking to legalize marijuana at the federal level might need to persuade our leaders that a major windfall awaits them. The politics of prohibition inevitably revolve around the eternal quest for tax revenue.

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