



Top 2021 Consumer Wine Trends

It goes without saying that 2020 was a rough year for the wine industry, especially for on-premise accounts that were forced to close as consumers were required to adopt a more solitary life at home. But there is always a silver lining even in the darkest hour, and we've uncovered a few wine trends for 2021 that indicate brighter days ahead.

The Current State of the Industry

The National Restaurant Association says that "As of Dec. 1, 2020, more than 110,000 eating and drinking places were closed for business temporarily, or for good," because of the economic effects of the pandemic. A survey of members indicates that "40% of operators say they are unlikely to stay in business six months from now if there are no additional relief packages from the federal government."

For restaurants that did survive, many have tried to shift to a to-go wine model, but many have had little success. Our own anecdotal evidence from our distribution partners across the country suggests that most restaurants have not updated their inventory over the past year, focusing on selling through their existing cellar. It's likely to take several months or years to bounce back.

From [Bloomberg](#)



"During the coronavirus pandemic, people are drinking less. (Yes, you read that correctly). While the masses are buying more booze from grocers and liquor stores to drink at home, that hasn't been enough to fill the gaping hole created by declines in shipments to restaurants, bars and sporting venues that were closed to slow the virus."

From [The IWSR Drinks Market Analysis](#)

"Global wine consumption has been severely affected by Covid-19, with the downturn of the on-trade, damage to travel and tourism, and a weakened economy driving what IWSR estimates will be a -9.7% volume and -9.5% value decline for the market in 2020...Although the category's recovery will be fragmented, consumption is expected to bounce back in 2021. Globally, still wine volume is forecast to remain short of pre-Covid levels by 2024, while sparkling wine is predicted to experience good health throughout the recovery, with parity likely to be restored by 2023."

	2019	2020(est.)
Total U.S. Alcohol Volume	+0.3% ▲	-1.8% ▼
Cider	-3.8 ▼	-5.7 ▼
Beer	-2.0 ▼	-3.7 ▼
Wine	-0.8 ▼	-2.1 ▼
Spirits	+3.1 ▲	+0.3 ▲
Ready-to-Drink	+43.1 ▲	+21.9 ▲
NA Beer	+71.6 ▲	+32.5 ▲

Source: IWSR Drinks Market Analysis
 Note: The ready-to-drink category includes hard seltzer brands such as White Claw and Truly.
 Performance for 2020 is an estimate.

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Silver Lining – More Wine Exploration by Consumers at Home

With more time at home, consumers have been expanding their horizons from classic “grocery store” wine favorites.

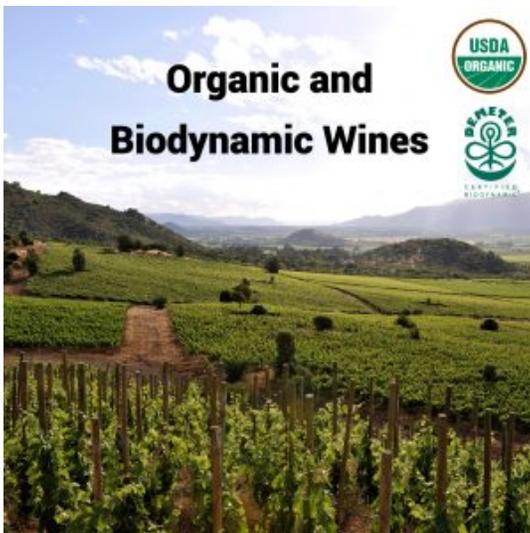
“Although wine suffered heavily from the economic and on-trade downturn, the low-tempo nature of lockdown, more time for meal preparation, digital meet-ups and a propensity to treat oneself more often sparked a rediscovery of the category,” says says Daniel Mettyear, research director for wine at [IWSR](#).

This sense of rediscovery has opened wine up to new at-home occasions, a trend that looks set to remain in the year ahead. Beyond Covid, a broader set of trends has been exposing wine to new occasions over a number of years.

Sparkling wine, and Prosecco in particular, has spearheaded the diversification of wine’s consumption occasions. The category has steadily moved away from its one-dimensional image as a special celebratory drink to align with more regular occasions, such as the aperitivo hour.

With its glamorous lifestyle associations and refreshing taste profile, the booming rosé category works across a number of social situations. More generally, lighter style wines are attracting new consumers with their accessibility and versatility.”

***Our pick:**We have a plethora of [Proseccos from Cantina Pizzolato](#) to enjoy for every occasion!



Sustainability – Interest in Organic and Biodynamic Wines on the Rise

Throughout 2020, sales of our organic wines were up overall for the year. We also found a marked increased number of consumer inquiries through our website in all parts of the country. The wine trend and catch phrase “**clean wine**” had its moment, but more importantly the idea that organic wine is “**better for you and better for the planet**” really took hold.

According to [IWSR](#):

“As a result of the pandemic, the importance of sustainability has been reinforced in the minds of consumers. In tandem with increasing the focus on environmental concerns, the pandemic has amplified the trend towards health and wellness. **Together, these issues have acted as major drivers of the organic, biodynamic, and low-intervention wine movement.**”

“With the pandemic highlighting the fragility and vulnerability of our place within the natural world, the focus on ingredients, authenticity, proximity, wellness, and taking care of yourself, society and the planet, are all climbing fast,” says Mettyear.

“Now more than ever, alignment with environmental and social issues is badge of honour for brands, particularly in the minds of younger LDA millennials and Gen Z. The industry is gradually catching up with consumer need, creating the necessary certifications to instill trust in such products.”

[Fortune predicts:](#)

Sustainability will be the big eco-word

“Once just a meaningless feel-good term in the wine industry, “sustainability” is starting to reflect serious commitment to organic vines, green winery design, carbon neutrality, and more. But wineries are expanding sustainability to mean economic and social accountability, too, which includes promoting racial and gender diversity and taking care of workers—concerns especially important to younger drinkers. In 2021, more wineries, including luxury wine giants, will promote new “ethical wine” initiatives such as the certified regenerative farming program, started by eco-warriorin clothier Patagonia Inc.”

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Wines that Work for “Biohacking”

Another wine trend catch phrase being thrown about in the natural wine world is the concept of “biohacking.” **Biohacking** can be described as citizen or do-it-yourself biology. For many “**biohackers**,” this consists of making small, incremental diet or lifestyle changes to make small improvements in your health and well-being. Biohacks promise anything from quick weight loss to enhanced brain function. **In the wine world, this refers to wines that are low in sugar and alcohol that can be incorporated without dire effects into a diet such as Paleo or Keto. The wines have low-enough sugar (under 1 g/l) and alcohol to keep the body from going out of Ketosis, when consumed in moderation.**

Kroger grocery chain’s number one trend prediction for 2021 is “Futureproof Foods.”

“From immune defense to mood management, consumers are increasingly looking for flavor and functionality in their favorite foods and beverages, especially as the nation continues to navigate a public health crisis. As “futureproofing” and “**biohacking**” trends continue to accelerate in 2021, more foods with added benefits to support immune health, gut and brain health, energy levels, and stress management will make their appearance on store shelves.

The Specialty Food Association says:

“Sugar as the devil will become a more prominent message in 2021. We will continue to see a decline in the levels of sugar in foods and drinks.”

***Our Pick:** We have a host of Sugar Free wines that are perfect for keeping the Keto diet on track.

Non-Alcoholic and Low-Alcohol Products will Continue in Popularity

The initial Covid lock-down period saw consumers “hording” alcohol, perhaps with fears that all stores were going to shut down. Then with nothing more to do, drinking increased substantially during the first few months of the crisis. From the American Heart Association: Nielsen reports alcohol sales in stores were up 54% in late March compared to that time last year, while online sales were up nearly 500% in late April.” But as the months have worn on, a large number of consumers have sought non-alcoholic alternatives.

ISWR

“Throughout the pandemic, no- and low-alcohol products have performed strongly, and there is an untapped opportunity for wine to participate in the movement to a greater extent in the future. No- and low- alcohol wines currently represent a tiny fraction of global still and sparkling wine consumption – however, they are experiencing double-digit growth rates globally.”

Fortune

“Expect many of 2020’s trends to evolve in 2021—the health and wellness alcohol-free drinks boom...”

Beverage Daily

“Health-conscious consumers-**more low and no alcohol drinks** for physical and mental well-being.”

Wine Enthusiast

Look for more low- and no-alcohol offerings: “This was big in 2020, with growth that is building,” says Kara Nielsen, director of food & drink with trend forecaster WGSN.

***Our pick:** Win Non-Alcoholic Wines from Ribera del Duero y Rueda, made by Bodegas Matarromera are coming soon and we are taking pre-orders now.



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Online Sales and Virtual Tastings Will Continue to be Hot

We have seen a large number of retailers increase their online offerings, and have helped accounts across the country to create interesting virtual wine tasting events with our winemakers. From wine clubs to restaurants offering weekly meal and wine pairing events, virtual tastings are likely here to stay in some form for the foreseeable future.

ISWR

“Covid-19 has spurred an exponential increase in alcohol ecommerce and digital engagement – and the high level of investment and recruitment into the space over the past year means its success will not be restricted to the short term.”

Fortune

“Online sales will continue to boom, up for small wineries by 154% in 2020.

Virtual wine tastings will become company perks, allowing drinkers to get up close and personal with brands they love.”

Martha Stewart.com

“DTC shopping to continue to thrive: In a survey of new customers to [Wine.com](https://www.wine.com), 88 percent said they planned to keep buying wine online and were happy with the experience. Odds are, we’re all going to be buying a lot more wine online in 2021.

Wine apps: It’s not just wine shopping websites that we’ll be spending more time on: The other growing digital push where wine meets tech is in the world of smartphone apps. Apps like [Drizly](https://www.drizly.com) put wine-on-demand in your pocket as they connect you to local wine and liquor stores offering delivery within the hour. Drizly also saw a surge in sales this past spring, with a 550 percent increase over baseline in April—and now that we’re drinking almost exclusively at home, that convenience is something we’ll continue to take advantage of in 2021. It’s not all about purchasing wine, though: Apps like [Vivino](https://www.vivino.com) have become an increasingly popular.”

On-Trend Wine Varieties

Rose all day, every day of the year

Real Simple

“To put it simply, rosé has exploded in popularity in the last few years, but it also has a lot more versatility and seasonal range than most people realize,” explains Ian Cauble, [SommSelect](https://www.sommselect.com). We already know about the delicious, quaffable examples that are perfectly designed for poolside sipping in the summer. But according to Cauble, there are also some highly complex, more intense examples of rosé that are ideal for drinking in the winter. FYI, rosés like this should be served closer to “cellar temp” (about 50-55°F), as opposed to the ice-cold poolside rosé many of us associate with summer.

***Our pick:** Year-round favorite [Les Hauts de Lagarde Rosé](https://www.leshautsdeagarde.com)

Fortune:

Rosé is still hot, and Rosé Prosecco will be the next big thing in 2021

“John Gillespie, founder and chief executive officer of market research firm Wine Opinions, says that combining the prosecco trend with the rosé trend is as close to a sure thing for success in the U.S. as he’s seen.”

***Our pick:** We’ve got the first organic brand!: [Pizzolato Organic Rosé Prosecco DOC](https://www.pizzolato.com)

Kroger: The top-selling wine varietal for 2020 was Sauvignon Blanc.

Our pick: Vina Koyle [Costa La Flor Sauvignon Blanc](https://www.costalaflores.com) from Chile

Fortune:

“The wine country of 2021 will be Portugal for its quality-price ratio.”

***Our pick:** The elegant [Capella Santa Margarida](https://www.capella.com) from Quinta da Plansel in Portugal



We’re excited to see what’s in store for the remainder of 2021 and look forward to embracing the “new normal” as we all navigate these crazy uncharted waters together.

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