Global Trends - Beverages

Top 10 best-selling Cognac and brandy brands

The world’s Cognac and brandy categories faced mixed fortunes in 2016 – but which fell back as others flourished? Our top 10 bestsellers list paints the global picture.

1. Emperador
2. Old Admiral Brandy
3. Dreher
4. McDowell’s No. 1 Brandy
5. Martell
6. Rémy Martin
7. Paul Masson Grande Amber
8. Courvoisier
9. Torres Brandy
10. Old Kenigsberg

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Global Trends - Wine Industry Key Elements

Why you should be wary of going to work with a hangover

Hangovers are often mistakenly thought to be caused solely by dehydration. However the physical symptoms are caused by several factors, including dehydration and electrolyte imbalance (the thirst and light-headedness), inflammation of the stomach and intestines (the nausea and vomiting), disturbance of sleep and alcohol metabolism (the sweating). The cause of the psychological consequences is less well known, but it is likely that the cognitive and mood effects of hangover involve changes in neurotransmitter function in the brain.

Hangovers have also been linked to increased conflicts at work, reduced job completion and inefficiency. A recent survey showed 83% of employees felt that being hungover made a difference to their work. Of these, 22% admitted making mistakes as a result of being hungover and a third admitted that they “drift off and don’t work at their usual pace”.

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Cheap wine quality sinks to new low

by Wine Curmudgeon 26 Jun 2017

The current round of samples from Big Wine (and not so big wine) has not been worth drinking — to be polite

How bad has cheap wine quality become? So bad that most of the samples I’ve tasted over the past month have not been worth drinking. The always willing and ever amiable Lynne Kleinpeter tastes most of these wines with me, and even she has had enough: “I’ll drink anything, and I’m going to pour this one down the sink before you even ask what I thought of it.”

What has been wrong with these wines?

• So-called dry roses that are actually sweet, with about 1 or 1.2 percent residual sugar. That’s about as sweet as something like Apothic Red, E&J Gallo’s best-selling sweet red blend.

• Red wines that make no pretense of tasting like wine, but are instead loaded with extra sweetness, coloring agents like Mega Purple, and evil tasting fake oak. The red Lynne poured down the drain had so much cheap chocolate flavor that it made me gag.

• White wines reduced to inoffensiveness, with the acidity and freshness taken out. In one case, that included the calories — a reduced calorie pinot gris that tasted like club soda spiked with NutraSweet. This seems to be part of a trend I’ve noticed in a lot of corporate food, as well — remove the flavor and make the product as bland as possible. Why anyone thinks this is a good idea is beyond me.

This is the worst stretch of samples since I started the blog. The only thing that prevents me from calling them out by name is that snarkiness won’t solve the problem. Besides, I don’t want to give them any chance to show up in a Google search.

Rather, we have to understand what’s going on and refuse to buy these kinds of wines. That’s why I made another of my 12 wines for $100 trips last week.

First, the cynicism among wine companies big and almost big that we’ll drink anything that is priced in the current hot zone, about $12 to $18. The most disgusting wines I tasted were at the high end of that price range, festooned with clever names and tricky labels.

Second, trend hopping. I’ve gotten roses from companies that know as little about pink wine as my dogs do, figuring that if the label says dry rose everyone will buy it; isn’t rose the new moscato? That the wines are poorly made and don’t taste like dry rose doesn’t seem to bother them.

Third, lots and lots of cheap grapes in California, so they can do crap like this. That’s the worst part about what’s going on — the poor quality of the grapes being used to make more expensive wine.

How do you identify these wines so you don’t buy them? First, look for labels and names that talk about lifestyles instead of wine; one particularly wretched sample waxed poetic about hippies. Second, is there too much winespeak? The minute you see terms like “black pepper flavors followed by gentle oak spice,” run as far as you can in the other direction. Finally, these are mostly California wines, and my samples from other states and countries were drinkable, and sometimes even better than that.