

## Americans Drank 3.345 Billion Cases of Alcohol in 2018

**New York, NY** – American consumers drank more distilled spirits and wine in 2018, but total beverage alcohol consumption in the United States declined for the third consecutive year, as a result of continued weakening beer volume.

In preliminary figures released today by the IWSR, the leading authority on data and analysis of the global beverage alcohol market, total alcohol volume in the U.S. declined -0.8% last year to 3.345 billion 9-liter cases, which is slightly worse than the -0.7% slip the year prior. Distilled spirits were up +1.9% and wine grew slightly by +0.4%. Innovations in the cider and mixed drinks categories helped reverse their decline from 2017, to post increases of +4.1% and +6.1%, respectively. Beer, which at 2.62 billion 9-liter cases has long dominated the alcohol market in the U.S., was down -1.5%.

These initial 2018 category results for the U.S. market are part of the IWSR U.S. Beverage Alcohol Review (US BAR) database, available to IWSR's global customers.

"Spirits and wine showed slight growth in 2018, but those category increases weren't as high as previous years. It's clear that Americans are drinking less overall, which is likely a result of the continued trend toward health and wellness," said Brandy Rand, IWSR's U.S. President and global Chief Marketing Officer. "We've also seen for some time now that consumers aren't necessarily loyal to just one category, which leads to less volume for individual brands. Also, the aging baby boomer population, the largest group of legal drinking age consumers, is contributing to slowed growth as well."

### **Beer Market Share Declines, Craft Beer Rises**

As beer volumes have declined, so has the category's share of the total U.S. alcohol market. In 2018, beer commanded 78.3% of U.S. alcohol volume, down from 78.9% in 2017. Consumer interest in craft beer remains healthy, however, with a 2018 increase of +4.7%, and a continued rise in on-site consumption at domestic breweries.

### **Mezcal Gains**

Total spirits in the U.S. reached 230.2 million 9-liter cases in 2018, driven by whisky (up +4.1%), tequila (up +8.5%), cognac/Armagnac (up +5.6%), and brandy (up +1.7%). Yet the largest gain was in the fast-growing mezcal category, which saw an increase of +32.4%, albeit from a relatively small base of 261,000 9-liter cases.

### **24<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year of Wine Growth**

In 2018 wine achieved its 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of volume growth in the U.S., aided by more than 13,000 wineries in the country, a number which increased by almost 1,000 in 2018. The still wine segment, which commands 87.3% of the total wine category, was up only 0.2%. Sparkling wine, led by prosecco (+11%), increased by 4.3%.

## **Alcoholic Seltzers and Ciders Prove Popular**

The mixed drinks category (how the IWSR defines ready-to-drink, flavored malt beverages, and other pre-mixed cocktails) was the most buoyant segment within U.S. beverage alcohol in 2018, up +6.1%, driven by increased thirst for alcoholic seltzers, which consumers often perceive as healthier alternatives to other products. Additionally, rose-flavored ciders and local craft ciders helped drive +4.1% growth in that category.

To calculate these figures, the IWSR carefully collects and analyzes data from the trade with verification from supplier-provided financial releases and other proprietary data collection. This information is considered preliminary data (p) and is subject to revision with the official IWSR 2018 global database release in May 2019.

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### **About the IWSR US Beverage Alcohol Review**

The IWSR US Beverage Alcohol Review (US BAR) is the most comprehensive source in the United States covering the entire beverage alcohol universe: spirits, beer, wine, cider and the important craft segment. Available as an interactive online dashboard in addition to a comprehensive written report, the US BAR includes consumer demographics, state data, five-year forecasts by category, brand advertising spends, all beverage alcohol brand volume and value data, new products, innovation and trend insights, e-commerce data, and more.

### **About the IWSR**

The IWSR is the leading source of data and analysis on the alcoholic beverage market. The IWSR's database, essential to the industry, quantifies the global market of wine, spirits, beer, cider, and mixed drinks by volume and value in 157 countries, and provides insight into short- and long-term trends, including five-year volume and value forecasts. The IWSR tracks overall consumption and trends at brand, price segment and category level. Our data is used by the major international wine, spirits and beer companies, as well as financial and alcoholic beverage market suppliers. The IWSR's unique methodology allows us to get closer to what is actually consumed and better understand how markets work. Our analysts travel the world in order to meet over 1,600 local professionals to capture market trends and the 'why' behind the numbers.