

Dark Spirits - US - October 2014

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“Dark spirits, whiskey in particular, have managed to grow sales fairly strongly in recent years, yet they remain far from routine in consumers’ alcohol-consumption routines.

Flavor innovation is drawing the interest of some consumers, but such efforts may be overshadowed by the rush of RTD alcoholic beverages.”

– William Roberts, Jr., Senior Food and Drink Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Dark spirits remain a niche product, consumed by roughly half of adults
- Building dark spirits brand awareness among young adults
- Can brandy, cognac, and Armagnac escape the shadow of whiskey and establish a niche of loyal consumers?

This decade has seen steady, if slow, growth in the dark spirits category, with volume sales growing since 2012. Throughout the period under review, volume sales increases in whiskey outperformed brandy, cognac, and Armagnac, whose sales growth has been flat. The segment is poised to reap the benefits of flavored additions, an area of interest for women, who traditionally under index in the consumption of dark spirits.

Young dark spirits consumers are experimenting with a variety of beverages, including brandy and cognac, but they appear to have not settled upon a favorite brand, indicating a potential for manufacturers large and small.

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