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Princess Cruises Adds Austrian Alcohol-Free Wine

Zeronimo’s bottles will be served on 17 ships this summer, reaching about two million passengers a year.

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An Austrian producer of alcohol-free wine is heading to the high seas, with two of its bottles set to be served this summer on 17 Princess Cruises ships, reaching about two million passengers a year and marking what the company says is the first time alcohol-free wines from Austria have appeared on a beverage list of this scale.

The wines, Zeronimo Grüner Veltliner and Zeronimo Sparkling Select, come from the Heribert Bayer winery in Neckenmarkt, in Austria's Burgenland region. Princess Cruises said it chose the wines for its new premium beverage program, POURS, which is meant to offer guests both indulgence and lower-alcohol or alcohol-free choices. The cruise line, based in Santa Clarita, Calif., is one of the largest in the world and operates a fleet of 17 ships.

For Zeronimo, the placement is another sign that alcohol-free wine is moving beyond a niche market. The brand was launched by Katja Bernegger and Patrick Bayer as part of the family winery's effort to build a premium alcohol-free category without using added flavors or additives. The company says it works only with Austrian quality wines and removes the alcohol at the end of the winemaking process under vacuum at low temperature.

Bernegger said the cruise listing was an important step for a family business that has spent years trying to persuade drinkers that alcohol-free wine can stand on its own. Bayer said Princess Cruises had selected two Zeronimo wines to represent the premium category in POURS, calling it a recognition of their approach to craftsmanship and inclusion.

The move comes as demand for alcohol-free drinks continues to rise in Austria and abroad. Zeronimo cited recent Marketagent surveys showing that about one-third of Austrians want more alcohol-free alternatives, rising to half among people under 30. The company also said nearly 20% of people in Austria do not drink alcohol at all.

That shift has helped fuel growth for producers trying to make alcohol-free wine taste closer to traditional wine rather than fruit juice or flavored beverages. Zeronimo argues that its wines remain part of the wine world because they are fermented grapes made in the same way as conventional wines before de-alcoholization. The company says that distinction matters for consumers who want to take part in wine culture without drinking alcohol.

The cruise listing follows other recent expansion for the brand. In Austria, Zeronimo's alcohol-free wine tonics were recently added to Billa and Billa Plus stores nationwide. The company now says its range includes six alcohol-free wines and two alcohol-free

wine tonics sold in Austria, Europe, Britain and North America.

Zeronimo is also using this week’s VieVinum wine fair in Vienna to introduce two new products: a rosé made from Blaufränkisch and Zweigelt, and Century Blend No. 2, which it describes as a 22-year-aged red blend made from Blaufränkisch, Pinot Noir and Merlot. Both are scheduled for public tastings at the fair from May 16 to 18 at the Hofburg palace.

Princess Cruises has been expanding its beverage offerings as cruise lines compete for travelers who want more choice at sea, including premium nonalcoholic options. For Zeronimo, the partnership places an Austrian alcohol-free brand before a global audience at a time when more passengers are asking for drinks that fit different habits and health preferences.