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Mexican imports and flavored malt beverages lead 2024 hot brands list in US beer market

Shifting consumer preferences drive growth for imports, hard teas, and ciders as domestic beers lose ground

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Impact Databank has released its latest “Hot Brands” list for beer, cider, and flavored malt beverages (FMBs), highlighting the top performers in the U.S. market for 2024. The annual list, published in the June 1&15 issue of Impact, recognizes brands that

have shown strong growth and influence in a challenging year for the overall beer industry.

The 2024 list features 34 brands, with 16 making their debut. The selection criteria include established brands with double-digit growth over the past three years, those with at least 15% growth in 2024, brands among the top ten in their category with at least 5% growth last year and 15% since 2021, and significant new product launches.

Mexican imports continue to dominate the beer segment, led by Constellation Brands' Modelo, which grew from 196.2 million to 210 million cases—a 7% increase. Pacifico, another Constellation import, posted a notable 21.5% jump to reach 25.2 million cases. Modelo Chelada also made the top five with a 5% increase.

Domestic beers are present but less prominent on the list. Coors Banquet from Molson Coors saw an 11% rise to 26.2 million cases. Boston Beer Company's Twisted Tea led the FMB category with a 10.5% increase, reaching 47 million cases.

FMBs and hard ciders accounted for most of the new entries, reflecting shifting consumer preferences toward flavored and alternative beverages. Of the 34 brands recognized, 22 were FMBs or ciders, and 14 of these were new to the list this year. This turnover highlights how quickly tastes are changing in this segment.

The report also notes that while Mexican imports remain strong, their growth rates are slowing compared to previous years. Imports outnumbered domestic beers among Hot Brands seven to five in 2024. Thirteen brands that appeared on last year's list dropped off, with nine experiencing volume declines.

Emerging sub-categories such as non-alcoholic brews and hard teas are gaining traction as beer marketers look beyond traditional offerings. Athletic Brewing's non-alcoholic beer improved its performance over last year, as did Modelo Ranch Water.

The full analysis and data behind these trends are available to Impact subscribers. The findings underscore ongoing changes in American drinking habits and the growing importance of innovation in both flavor and format within the beverage alcohol industry.