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Wine Industry Sees 87% Lighter Bottles as Alternative Packaging Gains Ground

Producers embrace aluminum, recycled plastic, and paperboard to cut emissions and attract younger, eco-conscious consumers nationwide.

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Winemakers across the United States are turning to alternative packaging formats in an effort to broaden wine’s appeal and reduce its environmental impact. Traditionally, wine has been sold in 750-milliliter glass bottles, but producers are now experimenting with materials like aluminum, recycled plastic, paperboard, and lightweight glass.

These changes are driven by both sustainability goals and shifting consumer preferences.

Last year, Bogle Family Wine Collection launched Element[AL] Wines in 750-milliliter aluminum bottles. Jody Bogle, vice president of consumer relations, explained that the new packaging is designed to be lightweight and infinitely recyclable while maintaining the familiar shape of a wine bottle. She noted that glass bottles are the largest contributor to wine's carbon footprint, prompting the company to seek alternatives that could help move the industry toward more sustainable practices.

O'Neill Vintners & Distillers soon followed with aluminum bottle packaging for its FitVine line. The company targeted outdoor enthusiasts and urban consumers who want wine for occasions beyond traditional meals. The aluminum bottles are resealable and unbreakable, making them suitable for activities like hiking or picnics.

Supermarket chain Albertsons introduced Bee Lightly, a private label wine packaged in bottles made from 100% recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET). These bottles are 87% lighter than standard glass and have a flat-pack design that reduces shipping emissions by allowing nearly twice as many bottles per pallet.

At Whole Foods Market, Bonny Doon Vineyard's Carbon…Nay! wine is sold in a paper bottle created by FrugalPac. The package consists of a paperboard exterior with a PET pouch inside to hold the wine. Kara Chavez, principal category merchant for adult beverages at Whole Foods Market, said the packaging fits with the retailer's commitment to sustainability and meets growing customer expectations for environmentally friendly products.

Boxed wine remains popular, especially in larger three-liter formats. Delicato Family Wines reports continued strong sales for its Bota Box brand and notes that Tetra Pak cartons are also gaining traction. Kathy Pyrce, vice president of marketing at Delicato, said that consumers appreciate the convenience of 500-milliliter Tetra Paks.

Precept Wines has offered boxed and canned wines under its House Wine label for years. Chief marketing officer Alex Evans said that portable packaging appeals to all consumers but is especially popular among younger drinkers who are quick to adopt

new formats.

In addition to exploring new materials, many wineries are reducing the weight of their glass bottles as a way to cut emissions from production and transportation. Cuvaison winery in Napa Valley began switching to custom lightweight bottles last year, reducing bottle weight by 27% and eliminating foil capsules. President and CEO Daniel Zepponi said this move aligns with Cuvaison’s core value of sustainability.

These efforts reflect a broader trend in the wine industry as producers respond to environmental concerns and changing consumer habits. By offering more portable and sustainable options, winemakers hope to reach new customers and expand the occasions when people choose to enjoy wine.